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Authors
Salée, Daniel
Lévesque, Carole

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The Politics of Indigenous Peoples-Settler Relations in Quebec: Economic Development and the Limits of Intercultural Dialogue and Reconciliation

Daniel Salée and Carole Lévesque

Introduction

In Canada, it is almost impossible today to gain access to natural resources and economic goods on lands associated with indigenous communities without the community's full involvement in the conception and realization of economic development ventures—or at the very least, without their explicit assent. Settler governments and society are now considerably more willing than in the past to establish genuine economic alliances with indigenous communities and to include them directly, as equal partners and beneficiaries, in development plans concerning their territory. This change in attitude is due largely to the struggles of indigenous peoples for self-government and self-determination and to their ability to convince the courts to force settler governments and society to respect their cultures and ways of life. Over the past decade a few landmark rulings of the Supreme Court of Canada have clearly

Daniel Salée is professor of political science in the School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. His research interests focus on the sociopolitical dynamics of interaction between indigenous peoples and settler society in Canada. Carole Lévesque is a professor of anthropology at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique–Centre Urbanisation Culture Société in Montreal, Quebec, and co-director of DIALOG, a Quebec-based research and knowledge mobilization network focusing on issues related to Indigenous peoples. Her scholarly interests include indigenous traditional knowledge, community integration, and social dynamics in indigenous contexts.

established that economic development plans cannot be elaborated and implemented without consultation and the prior consent of the indigenous communities that are affected by such plans.[1]

Government policies regarding indigenous communities abide quite readily by such judicial injunctions. The province of Ontario's Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, for example, acknowledges that the "contributions of the North's young and growing Aboriginal population will be critical to the region's future success," and stresses that "[m]ore integrated economic development planning of Aboriginal communities with other regional efforts, along with support for regional Aboriginal economic development organizations, will help bolster economic development goals across the North."[2] Similarly, the province of Quebec's Plan Nord is premised on the government's commitment to address and satisfy the concerns of indigenous peoples every step of the way. The Quebec government thinks of its northern economic development plan as "an additional tool through which First Nations and the Inuit can participate more extensively in the coming years in the development of the territory." It advocates the maintenance of harmonious relations with Aboriginal communities as "essential to the creation in the new economic space of genuine synergy that promotes the emergence of partnerships between the Aboriginal peoples, entrepreneurs, regional communities and the gouvernement du Québec."[3]

As our review of the literature will show, a number of scholars have inferred from this apparently encouraging transformation that the relations between indigenous peoples and settlers are increasingly guided by a logic of hybridization and interculturalism. They suggest that settlers and indigenous peoples influence each other positively and progressively integrate each other's social norms and culture. They see settler state and society as more respectful of indigenous ways and traditions, even to the point of being open to indigenizing some of their own cultural and institutional practices. They present this as a heartening change, which they believe can be attributed in part to indigenous agency, and a sure sign that a more harmonious, fair, and balanced relationship between indigenous peoples and settler Canadians is being developed.

We take issue with this analytical perspective. This new turn in the way economic development policy concerning indigenous peoples seems to be handled may one day produce some new form of cultural and normative interpenetration, or at least a more respectful interface between settlers and indigenous peoples. We contend, however, that existing patterns of economic competiton on the ground do not support such an optimisitic outlook. Our view is based on our reading of a little examined, but telling source of documentary evidence: the briefs presented by various representatives of civil society at the public hearings held by the Commission des Institutions of Quebec's National Assembly in the winter of 2003 over the Agreement-in-Principle the Quebec and Canadian governments had struck with four Innu communities (of the Lac Saint-Jean and North Shore areas) a few months earlier.

The Agreement—also dubbed "Approche commune" at the time—was the culmination of more than twenty-five years of negotiation and, technically, the last step before the final ratification of a comprehensive land claim.[4] The vehement and well-organized opposition to the Agreement voiced by the non-indigenous population of

the region, however, forced the Quebec government to retreat temporarily. The signature of the Agreement-in-Principle, which was ready for endorsement by all parties in the spring of 2002, was delayed until March 2004. Today, more than a decade later, there is still no final agreement.[5]

The public reaction to Approche commune is instructive. It illustrates the current dynamics of power that shape the interaction between settler Canadians and indigenous peoples (and, more broadly, between majority and racialized minorities). For one, it shows that economic competition and differing conceptions of the land—how it should be managed, the purposes it should serve, who should benefit from it—can be significant obstacles to positive, transformative intercultural contact. Seeing promising manifestations of *métissage*, hybridity, or interculturalism in northern economic development plans and economic partnerships between settlers and indigenous peoples may well be not only a premature assessment, but also an inaccurate one. It also underscores the inherent ambivalence of settler attitudes towards indigenous claims—the good intentions and official pronouncements in favor of indigenous rights easily dissolve when actual commitment to said rights is required. Finally, it points to the theoretical limits of liberal citizenship and its inability to translate the recognition of difference and otherness into politically satisfactory institutional arrangements.

The present article explores these aspects of the public controversy over the Approche commune. First, we briefly review recent scholarship assessing the nature of relations between indigenous peoples and settlers in the context of economic development policy and self-government claims. We then move on to a quick overview of the main components of the Agreement-in-Principle before presenting the key elements of the public reaction to the Agreement-in-Principle expressed in the briefs presented to the Quebec National Assembly's *Commission des Institutions* in 2003. We close with concluding remarks on the limits of intercultural dialogue and the discourse of reconciliation.

Seeing the Intercultural

The idea that relations between indigenous peoples and settlers have taken an intercultural or hybridizing bend is not quite new. More than a decade ago, cultural anthropologist David Natcher concluded his study of Aboriginal management of land and resource in the north-central Alberta Cree community of Whitefish Lake First Nation by noting that the strategic decision of the community to seek out cooperative management arrangements with government and industry demonstrates that "Aboriginal communities are effectively influencing the behavioral patterns of government and industry so as to allow for institutional change to occur. This in turn has allowed for the integration of local value system with new knowledge, skills and capacity-building opportunities that together can enhance ecological resilience as well as their own cultural sustainability."[6]

Cultural geographers Philip Morris and Gail Fondahl have come to a similar conclusion in their study of the negotiation of the Tl'azt'en with the government in the 1970s over the construction of a new railroad that was to cut through their northern

British Columbia territory. Focused on highlighting the role played by First Nations "in shaping the hybrid spaces of today's British Columbia," they argue that "Tl'azt'en and Government spatial strategies both acknowledged the value of forestry and of legal rights to land. And Tl'azt'en spatiality, as well as Government and industry spatial and economic goals, imbued the social and legal spaces created through negotiations."[7]

Political scientists also claim that the interaction of indigenous peoples with settler Canadians has led to the creation of hybrid political and institutional spaces. In his famous *Citizens Plus*, Alan Cairns suggests that self-government agreements blend elements of indigenous sociocultural norms into the Canadian system of governance just as Aboriginal governance incorporate non-indigenous political features and structures.[8] Graham White's analysis of Aboriginal-government lands claims boards in Northern Canada has shown that claims-mandated co-management and regulatory boards can "bring Aboriginal perspectives and priorities into decision making in real and effective ways," and though he remains careful not to overstate the influence of indigenous ways and culture in the operation of the boards, he argues that as an expression of treaty federalism, they are "about relationships, about sharing of jurisdiction and authority, about multilevel governance capable of melding very different cultural perspectives and socio-political priorities, and about practical accommodation of Aboriginal and EuroCanadian needs and traditions."[9] Christopher Alcantara and Greg Whitfield's survey of fourteen Aboriginal constitutions in Canada point out conceptual similarities with non-Aboriginal democratic constitutions and find that Aboriginal constitutions interweave Western notions and Aboriginal concerns for the recognition of indigenous traditions and cultures. Although they refrain from classifying those documents as hybrid, they claim that they "represent practical attempts to marry Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal constitutional orders and legal traditions in the contemporary context."[10]

Recent scholarship has been pushing the notion of hybridization further. Cultural geographers Caroline Desbiens and Etienne Rivard argue that a process of *métissage* is in fact at work in the way economic development plans for the North are being formulated. They understand *métissage* as being "less about cultural merging and cohesion than about confrontation and dialogue" and thus "as the product of (inter) cultural dialogue forged by power relations."[11] They distinguish between "passive" and "active" cross-cultural dialogue. The former implies cultural exchange based on highly asymmetrical power relations, which tend to silence the more vulnerable group; the latter entails the appropriation of the language of the dominant by the dominated so as to challenge hegemonic definitions of sociopolitical norms that operate to the advantage of the dominant. Although active dialogue is preferable, for it indicates the recognition of the dominated as a legitimate interlocutor by the dominant and thus "willful two-way cultural negotiations," "passive and active cross-cultural dialogues have in common the fact that they bring cultures into contact, and in so doing, have the potential of modifying Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal territorialities."[12] Taking stock of recent developments in Quebec's northern policy, Desbiens and Rivard admit that *métissage* may have been somewhat shallow at time, involving more passive intercultural dialogue, but they find that Aboriginal peoples now have, more than ever,

a genuine say in land planning in northern Quebec. "Aboriginal people and governments," they conclude, "remain committed to an active form of cross-cultural dialogue." Indeed, "[a]ctive cross-cultural dialogues and *métissage* have become a goal to be attained in crafting Quebec's future."[13]

Recent history calls for a more guarded verdict on this point. As the next section documents, the settler discourse of opposition to the Agreement-in-Principle struck with four Innu communities a little more than a decade ago reveals the difficulty for indigenous peoples/settler relations to internalize a genuinely interculturalist logic. While contact zones where different cultures and languages cohabit or share institutional commons may be exciting sites of innovating hybridity, they remain nonetheless, as linguist and literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt reminds us, "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power."[14]

The Agreement-in-Principle

The Agreement-in-Principle resulting from the Approche commune involved the Quebec and Canadian governments and four Innu communities (of the nine present on Quebec territory), including Mashteuiatsh in the Lac Saint-Jean area, and Essipit, Pessamit, and Nutashkuan on the North Shore of the Saint Lawrence River. Two of these communities are established in close proximity to settler towns: Mashteuiatsh is located just outside Roberval and is within a twenty-minute drive from Saint-Félicien, both being significant municipalities on the western shore of Lac St-Jean; Essipit is an enclave within the town of Les Escoumins, fifteen minutes away from Grandes-Bergeronnes and less than half an hour from Tadoussac. Pessamit is not as close to a settler town, but is less than one hour by car from Baie-Comeau, a major regional industrial center. Nutashkuan is further down the Saint Lawrence River, 370 kilometers east of Sept-Iles in a sparsely inhabited part of Quebec, but it neighbors small non-indigenous settlements and is a gateway to new Hydro-Quebec's inland hydroelectric-development projects. The territory at stake is in some of the poorest and most economically depressed areas of Quebec, but is also rich in undeveloped land and unexploited natural resources. Demographically, the Innu are but a tiny minority surrounded by a substantial Eurodescendant majority of French Canadian Quebecers.

The negotiation process that led to the Agreement-in-Principle was part of a general policy framework put forward by the Parti Québécois government of Lucien Bouchard in 1998, which was designed to promote a more cordial and productive political and economic interface with indigenous peoples in Quebec.[15] The logic of *rapprochement* and co-management of economic initiatives that underscored the framework had already opened the way to two major comprehensive land and self-government agreements, notably with the James Bay Cree (Paix des Braves in 2002) and the Inuit of Nunavik (Entente Sanarrutik in 2002). The Agreement with the Innu was continuing the government's commitment to its new Aboriginal policy.

The Agreement-in-Principle pursued four objectives: (1) recognizing Innu Aboriginal rights; (2) determining the ways in which Innu rights were to be exercised;

(3) creating opportunities for the Innu to work toward greater self-determination and autonomy; (4) fostering harmonious interactions between Quebec society and the Innu. The general terms of the Agreement consisted of the full recognition of ancestral rights, including Aboriginal title; a new land regime with two types of territory—Innu Assi, where the Innu would enjoy full ownership of the land, and Nitassinan, which represents the broader Innu territory, the management of which the Innu would share with the state; a large measure of self-government on Innu Assi; direct cash transfer of $275 million ($102 million to be paid out by the Quebec government); financial support to Innu enterprises and manpower training; and nonjudicial mechanisms of conflict settlement.[16]

The Agreement-in-Principle is unique in modern treaty negotiation in Canada, for contrary to its usual practice, the state agreed not to extinguish the land rights of the Innu. On Innu Assi, participating Innu communities would no longer be on federal land and would see their original reserve territory increased (by up to 2,500 square kilometers in the case of Nutahskuan). Each community could have a constitution of its own and the power to raise taxes and legislate on its own terms on a wide range of issues, including Innu language and culture, education, traditional activities, family law and public security; however, on issues related to construction, labor safety norms, animal health, and food inspection Innu laws would have to conform with Quebec laws. On Nitassinan, the Innu would be able to continue their traditional activities of hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering, but they would be regulated to harmonize with activities of Quebecers. The Agreement also gives them the choice to be involved in governmental development projects or to be compensated financially when they are not interested in partnering with the state. The Agreement guarantees the protection of patrimonial sites and gives the Innu the power of oversight in the creation of parks and ecological sanctuaries. Finally, the Innu are to be paid 3 percent royalties on the value of natural resources extracted from their territory.

Settler Envy: Reacting to the Agreement-in-Principle

Unsurprisingly, the Agreement-in-Principle was considered a good thing by supporters and the parties involved in its elaboration. They argued that negotiation was preferable to costly judicial contestation; that the state had to abide by the Constitution Act of 1982 and the jurisprudence recognizing Aboriginal ancestral and land rights; that the Agreement clarified the rights that Innu could or could not claim; and that it would foster needed economic development in the region and reduce the Innus' economic dependency.[17]

Opponents were not so sanguine. Following the public release of the Agreement in May, 2002, a number of regional citizens' groups emerged with the specific and unequivocal aim of denouncing and mobilizing against it. L'Association pour le droit des Blancs (the Association for the Rights of White People) felt that the Agreement unjustly cast the white Euro-descendant population aside. La Fondation Équité territoriale (the Foundation for Territorial Equity) criticized the Agreement for being unfair to non-Innu landowners and insisted that everyone should have the same

opportunity to access the land. The Pionniers septiliens (Sept-Iles' Pioneers) argued that the Agreement was an act of dispossession against the non-indigenous population and bemoaned the presence of indigenous people in the region. Public debates about the Agreement became more widespread when, in mid-summer, Bloc Québécois MP Ghislain Lebel launched a vitriolic attack in the media against it, triggering a province-wide controversy.[18] Lebel claimed in essence that the Agreement severely compromised Quebec's territorial integrity and unduly benefited the Innu to the detriment of French Canadian Quebecers living in the region covered by the Agreement.[19] Lebel's parochial brand of ethnic nationalism did not resonate well with the Quebec sovereignist establishment, which distanced itself from him.[20] A few weeks later, former Quebec Premier and high profile Quebec sovereignist Jacques Parizeau weighed in on the debate with all his intellectual and political influence, publishing a clinical but scathing indictment of the Agreement in the prominent Montreal French language daily *La Presse*.[21] Parizeau argued that the recognition of the rights of the Innu was based on principles derived from the Canadian Constitution. He contended that this was highly problematic, for it not only reaffirmed the federal government's sway over Quebec's affairs, but was also tantamount to ratifying and therefore accepting the legitimacy of the Constitution Act of 1982, something all Quebec governments since then, whether from the Liberal party or the Parti Québécois, have refused to do.[22] He further warned that the multiplication of orders of government created by the Agreement would lead to administrative and legal entanglements impossible to manage. Finally, he could not help but note that the non-indigenous population had rights as well, which should not be superseded by Innu prerogatives.

Parizeau's intervention was not without effect. As his substantial public voice gave ammunition to the mounting opposition, the government dispatched Guy Chevrette, a former cabinet minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs, to travel the regions covered by the Agreement through the fall of 2002 and gather information as to the nature of the discontent expressed about the Agreement. In addition, the government entrusted the Commission des Institutions of the National Assembly to hold public hearings on the Agreement-in-Principle during the winter of 2003.

The deal with the Innu had become by then a full-blown policy controversy, which underscored the unease with which contemporary liberal democracies handle ethno-cultural diversity. Many felt that by being so generous and accommodating with a minority group like the Innu the Agreement-in-Principle presented the risk of creating a societal environment fraught with institutional asymmetry, social fragmentation, and political divisiveness. In the context of Quebec's particular politics, this is a substantial concern. Sizable numbers of people are naturally inclined to believe that, as a vulnerable minority with a suppressed and unrealized nation-building project of their own, French Canadian Quebecers cannot afford to give any other culturally distinct group any degree of self-rule and territorial autonomy without jeopardizing the integrity of their own political community and national aspirations.[23] The debates around the Agreement-in-Principle provide a revealing window into the contemporary nature of the politics of citizenship and recognition.

In all, eighty-four briefs were submitted to the Commission des Institutions. They represented the position of eighty-eight organizations and individuals (a few briefs were written jointly by two or three organizations) and included a good cross section of the major socioeconomic stakeholders in the Lac Saint-Jean and North Shore regions, as well as stakeholders from the broader Quebec society. The majority of the briefs (sixty-seven) were from non-indigenous organizations and individuals; seventeen came from indigenous organizations and individuals.

The public reaction to the Agreement-in-Principle has been examined in a number of recent studies focusing mainly on op-ed pieces, columns, editorials, and news reports found in the regional press at the time the Agreement was released[24] and on the discursive context, which it brought about.[25] While these studies shed valuable light on public opinion regarding the Agreement, they are somewhat constrained by the very nature of the body of documentary evidence upon which they direct their attention. The journalistic material about the Agreement was produced by but a handful of individuals—a relatively small circle of reporters, columnists, public intellectuals, and anti- or pro-Agreement activists—who used the regional press to convey their self-interested messages and debate with each other. They typically wrote or spoke only in their own name. The briefs tabled with the Commission des Institutions, on the other hand, came from an appreciably wider spectrum of stakeholders, which included major companies, business advocacy associations, interest groups from a variety of sectors, community organizations, labor unions, municipalities, and political parties. In most cases, they represent the official position of significant segments of the regional and Quebec's civil society. Their tone tends to be more measured and shuns the ranting rhetoric published or aired in media outlets. A close look at their contents therefore complements existing studies: it affords more precision with regard to the representativeness and reliability of the opinions.[26]

On the whole, one can distinguish three groups among those who presented briefs to the Commission des Institutions: the "Clear Supporters" (36 percent of the briefs); the "Unequivocal Opponents" (19 percent of the briefs); and the "Ambivalent" (45 percent of the briefs), so called because although they would not openly disparage the Agreement, they expressed strong reservations about it and refrained from endorsing it. Nearly two-thirds of concerned stakeholders ultimately opposed the Agreement or contested one aspect of it or another.

The Clear Supporters included a mix of business-advocacy organizations, one large pulp and paper company (Bowater), the town of Roberval, the three regional county municipalities of the areas covered by the Agreement,[27] Quebec's major labor unions, three political parties (Liberal Party, Parti Québécois, and Bloc Québécois), a few individual citizens, five academic experts, and Mamuitun mak Nutashkuan (the Innu tribal council that was party to the Agreement). They generally welcomed the Agreement as an important step toward more harmonious relations between indigenous and non-indigenous populations in Quebec. They saw it as a renewed social contract that would lead to new socioeconomic partnerships between concerned communities for the benefit of all and the development of the region. Most stated that the Agreement was necessary to bring back respect and dignity to the Innu and allow

them to take control of their destiny; it was in keeping, they felt, with the moral and ethical obligations of a democratic, open, and pluralist society such as Quebec.

Unequivocal Opponents, on the other hand, routinely denounced the government for having failed to consult with the population before settling with the Innu and invoked a variety of additional reasons for their objection. Chief among them was their view that the Agreement was based on an unacceptable double standard: the Innu were getting an incredibly good deal and everyone else was relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Opponents insisted that in a democratic society everybody must be treated equally without distinction and without special privileges. Believing that indigenous peoples were getting enough privileges as it is (such as they don't pay taxes; everything is paid for by the state), they asked, "why give them more?" Some, armed with what they claimed was solid historical evidence, also maintained that modern-day Innu are not the descendants of the indigenous people present at contact four hundred years ago, so they have no legitimate claim to ancestral rights.[28] Further, in many ways non-Innu have just as much attachment to the land as the Innu allegedly do, if not more, and therefore just as much right to claim the land as they do. Other reasons put forward to justify opposition implied that the Agreement was divisive and would bring civil unrest; that it was tantamount to partitioning Quebec; that it was a ploy to weaken French Canadians and the French language; and that it would unduly submit non-indigenous people to the rule of the Innu.

The briefs presented to the Commission des Institutions by Unequivocal Opponents came from some business advocacy organizations (non-indigenous trappers in particular), a few municipalities, and several individual citizens and citizen groups. Given their target audience, their authors toned down the vehemence of the opposition that regularly was aired on local public affairs radio shows and published in op-ed articles and columns of the regional press, but they clearly echoed the deep resentment and dissatisfaction that some segments of the settler population, both in the region and in the rest of the province, felt about the Agreement-in-Principle.[29]

The position of the Ambivalent group of stakeholders best illustrates the inherent difficulty in achieving effective cross-cultural dialogue and the eventual métissage that might stem from it. While one could, to a certain extent, dismiss the Unequivocal Opponents as relatively marginal, or even as extremists whose openly xenophobic and chauvinistic discourse hardly reflects the sentiments of the broader, modern, forward-thinking Quebec society, the Ambivalent are a different matter. None of the briefs they tendered explicitly condemned the Agreement-in-Principle. They typically concurred that a settlement of that kind was needed or that it was important to clarify Innu land rights, and that in this sense the government was on the right track. On the other hand, they also expressed thinly veiled alarm that the Agreement left unaddressed some questions related directly to their area of expertise or activities. They wanted reassurance that the Agreement was not going to be detrimental to their particular interests.

The Ambivalent shied away from speaking ill of the Agreement, likely for fear of being cast as anti-Innu or racists, but at the same time they held views which reflected a certain amount of prejudice against the Innu. The most common of these came

from groups and associations representing the interests of recreational hunters and fishermen and businesses associated with the hunting, fishing, or trapping industry. They worried that allowing Innu traditional practices would leave what they considered abusive indigenous practices unregulated. Concerns that the Innu would deplete the game and fish stocks and therefore jeopardize economic gains are a leitmotif in these briefs. The underlying charge is that the Innu are not the good stewards of natural resources that they claim to be and they are too often guilty of improper practices that negatively affect the environment. From this perspective, the Innus' traditional knowledge is no guarantee that natural resources will be properly managed in accord with the sound and rational principles of sustainable development. Although it is possible to envisage partnerships with the Innu in managing renewable resources, existing non-indigenous stakeholders have the right expertise and equal claim to access available resources as the Innu. In the end, where access and usage of the territory are concerned, the Ambivalent echoed the Unequivocal Opponents' position: everybody should be treated equally and be submitted to the same regulations and restrictions, without exception.

The notion that the Agreement will give the Innu unfair economic advantage recurred with various degrees of explicitness and clockwork regularity in virtually all of the briefs presented by the Ambivalent. They feared, quite simply, that they were going to lose out to the Innu on some of the advantages they had been enjoying, which would make the pursuit of their economic activities difficult. Sawmills and pulp and paper companies, for example, were particularly worried that their harvesting quotas would diminish to benefit the Innu and result in loss of profits and employment. This fear was made unambiguously clear in the brief of giant pulp and paper company Abitibi-Consolidated. It argued that the *Paix des Braves* negotiated with the James Bay Cree has been detrimental to its ability to maintain its operations, and considered the provisions of that particular agreement with another indigenous group to be a "mistake." It implored the government not to repeat the mistake in the Agreement with the Innu. The implication of Abitibi-Consolidated's position is plain: do not let the Innu have too much and do not make the company pay them financial compensation. Interestingly, although Bowater, another big player of the pulp and paper industry in Quebec, and the Quebec Forest Industry Council both favored the Agreement, they nevertheless shared Abitibi-Consolidated's view and hastened to clarify that the Agreement was fine as long as it did not adversely affect the profitability of corporations tied to the forest industry. They insisted that the compensation, dividends, or royalties the Innu were to receive should all come out of the state's coffers, not from the industry.

Several settler towns and regional county municipalities also expressed similar concerns. Innu communities, they contended, would benefit from further fiscal and economic advantages, which will prevent non-Innu from competing fairly with the Innu. In addition, as existing municipal territories would be reduced so would the fiscal returns accruing from them. The case of Essipit was mentioned on a few occasions as a thriving Innu community that did not really need further help. The Agreement would just strengthen its economic position even more and would weaken the neighboring settler community of Les Escoumins as a result. The idea that the Agreement

would give too much to the Innu to the detriment of non-Innu is a central motif in the Ambivalents' briefs. Echoing the Unequivocal Opponents, equality of treatment between the communities was also a paramount principle that should be guiding the Agreement.

Pleading formal equality is a well-known, standard discursive device used by dominant groups in liberal democratic societies to justify their resistance to any initiative or social process of change that might ultimately disrupt dynamics of power working to their advantage.[30] The reaction of the Ambivalent to the Agreement-in-Principle embodies the uneasy relationship that hegemonic majorities in liberal democratic societies have with Otherness—that is, with minority groups who hold on to or live by a set of cultural or social norms that differ markedly from that espoused by the majority. A theoretical willingness to help out or accommodate the vulnerable Other fades away when concrete economic or material stakes are in play; when that Other may come to demand a share of that economic terrain they have controlled for so long; when, in other words, that Other may exercise real power and threaten to upset established socioeconomic hierarchies.

Faced with that perceived threat, dominant groups show little or no compunction in standing in the way of the Other and curtailing bids for capacity-building and empowerment. The deliberate misrepresentation of the prevalent societal dynamics of power is a strategy frequently used to that end, particularly so when the dominant think of themselves as victims or are unwilling to acknowledge that their group actually occupies a position of hegemony within society. They rationalize their lack of generosity toward the vulnerable Other by casting the reality of social power in a different (if inaccurate) light. Those Others are portrayed as the mighty ones; they simply defend themselves against their deleterious sway.[31]

Singling out Essipit as an Innu community that benefits from unfair advantages and in no need of help is a case in point. Essipit is indeed a community that has done relatively well for itself. Its unemployment rate is appreciably lower than that of the neighboring settler community of Les Escoumins (12 to 13 percent compared to 20 to 21 percent) and that of all the other Innu communities.[32] The band council owns and efficiently manages a number of successful businesses in the hospitality, tourism, forest, and fishing industries. As one commentator aptly observed, those who depict Essipit's economic success as the result of policies that unduly privilege indigenous peoples over settler Quebecers conveniently fail to mention the tax contributions of the band council's businesses to both the federal and provincial government; that a majority of the jobs created by those businesses are held by non-indigenous individuals; and that 80 percent of the business expenditures of the band's companies and the band itself directly benefit other enterprises and service providers owned by settler Quebecers in the neighboring towns of the region. They fail to point out, in other words, that Essipit is a direct and positive contributor to the economy of the region.[33]

Essipit should hardly be taken as a reflection of the economic condition of all Innu communities. The unemployment rates of the other Innu communities that are party to the Agreement-in-Principle, Mashteuiatsh, Pessamit, and Nutashkuan, oscillate between 25 and 35 percent, with peaks around 45 to 50 percent in the other Innu

communities that were not involved in the Agreement. This is considerably more than the unemployment rates in most settler towns in the region. Those can be high, for the regional economy is largely seasonal and chronically depressed, but by and large they rarely rise above 15 percent. Essipit's success stands out, but it is the exception rather than the rule. Overall, the Innu fare poorly in a poor economy, indeed more poorly than anyone else. They are quite far from wresting economic control of the region away from settler Quebecers, as some were inclined to infer.

Yet this image of the Innu as a menacing economic competitor is pervasive and well imprinted in the collective mind. Not long after the Agreement-in-Principle was signed, a dispute arose over logging rights on René-Levasseur Island, located in the northern section of the territory attached to the Innu community of Pessamit. It involved the Pessamit band council and the Kruger corporation, a major pulp and paper company. Pessamit contested Kruger's right to log on René-Levasseur and obtained a court injunction forcing the company to stop its logging activities on the island in June 2005. Kruger appealed the Superior Court ruling and was allowed to resume its activities by the Quebec Court of Appeal in April 2006. The dispute exacerbated social tensions in the region. The settler population expressed clear resentment at the Pessamit band council's stand for its land rights. Kruger's unionized workers were particularly active in this regard. They held demonstrations enjoining the general population to pressure the government to suspend negotiations with the Innu, blocked a major local highway, and disrupted Innu public gatherings. At one midsummer open-air concert in the community of Pessamit, they flew a plane trailing a banner that read: "Picard, touche pas à nos jobs" (Picard! Hands off our jobs!).[34] The banner was addressed specifically to Raphaël Picard, who, as chief of Pessamit, was mainly responsible for his band's legal contestation. The message could not have been clearer. To Kruger's workers, Innu claims were an unacceptable irritant that threatened their livelihood. Seeing things the other way around—that logging was a threat to the livelihood of the Innu—was definitely not an option they were prepared to entertain.

Labor unions had stood in favor of the Agreement-in-Principle before the Commission des Institutions, yet when it appeared that the actualization of Innu claims might make them lose something, unionized workers did not hesitate to oppose an Innu community vigorously—and distance themselves from the supportive and accommodating rhetoric of their unions.

The public reaction over the Agreement-in-Principle serves as a reminder that the official discourse of openness and commitments to engage in partnerships with indigenous peoples do not easily stand the test of politics on the ground and competition over highly coveted resources. Plan Nord, which was proposed by the Liberal government of Jean Charest in 2010 (and continued by the successive governments of Pauline Marois and Philippe Couillard) emerged chronologically after the Agreement-in-Principle.[35] Given the Quebec state's basic commitment to consulting and partnering with indigenous communities, one may presume that in the interim it has reconsidered and amended its approach and is now prepared to fuse its vision of northern development with that of the Innu. How then, can one explain that the Agreement-in-Principle is still not a final agreement more than a decade after its signing?

Admittedly, circumstantial factors played a part. Since 2004, for example, some Innu and government negotiators resigned and the contracts of others were not renewed. When new negotiators have to be found and acquainted with the whole dossier, the negotiation process is unavoidably stalled or slowed down. In the fall of 2010, the Innu decided to withdraw from the negotiation table after the federal government indicated it no longer agreed that Innu Aboriginal rights should not be extinguished. This was unacceptable to the Innu, for whom the recognition of their rights is not negotiable. Although they eventually resumed negotiation, this federal move away from the original intent of the Agreement-in-Principle dampened the mood. Finally, the Quebec government has been moving gradually toward piecemeal negotiations on very specific issues such as hydroelectric projects or administrative arrangements and it feels both less pressed to settle comprehensive agreements like the Approche commune and less compelled to engage in more difficult talks over the broader, more substantive high-stake issues contained in the Agreement-in-Principle which stand at the heart of Innu claims—namely, Aboriginal rights and territorial autonomy.

Such factors, however, are but surface causes. Deeper, more fundamental reasons having to do with the societal logic inherent to the Lac Saint-Jean and North Shore areas, and most of northern Quebec in general, account for the glacial pace of the negotiation process. It is important to bear in mind that the political economy of the region is shaped essentially by three interrelated parameters: dependency on the willingness of large resource-extracting corporations to invest massively in the region and provide needed jobs to a labor force regularly faced with economic precariousness and uncertainty; an unabashedly capitalist model of economic development agreed upon and internalized by the vast majority of the population; and historically determined dynamics of power and socioeconomic hierarchy which give social primacy to Eurodescendant settlers over the indigenous population. Any attempt at modifying the inner structure—the organizing principle—of this political economy, or the way its parameters are interconnected, is bound to upset those who largely depend on its preservation, as the opposition of Kruger's unionized workers to Innu claims illustrates. As the Agreement-in-Principle can potentially reconfigure the dynamics of power between EuroCanadian settlers and indigenous people in the region in more socially and politically balanced ways, it threatens to undo prevailing socioeconomic hierarchies.[36] It is not inconceivable then that in hindsight, with the memory of the initial public reaction to the Agreement-in-Principle still clear, the government is now more reluctant to finalize the Agreement-in Principle for fear of the political cost it would almost certainly incur. Buying time may not be the most honorable strategy, but as it unsettles little of the dominant power dynamics, it may easily seem like the safest.[37]

Conclusion

New evidence comes to light on a regular basis showing that indigenous peoples in Canada, while not advantaged by the dynamics of power, have always devised strategies to adapt, make the best of, and indeed overcome adverse circumstances, often forcing the Canadian state and society to amend their ways and establish fairer

social relations of power.[38] The literature reviewed in the first section of the paper represents this growing tendency in the field of Aboriginal studies. It is concerned to present indigenous peoples not as passive victims of history, but as conscious social agents, capable of shaping their destiny on their own terms. It is committed to point out that the relationship between indigenous peoples and settler state and society is much more complex and textured than what might be believed, and that in fact indigenous peoples contribute directly and in effective ways to the institutional reconfiguration of Canada.

We do not necessarily disagree with this perspective.[39] However, as major economic development plans such as Quebec's Plan Nord are presented by governments as the new panacea and the beginning of a more egalitarian sociopolitical dynamics in indigenous peoples/settler relations—and because much rides on such plans as a solution to the woes of indigenous peoples—it is important to comprehend their ability to deliver on their underlying promises of renewal. Our examination of the Approche commune episode in Quebec indicates that buoyant visions of productive and favorable relations between indigenous peoples and settlers are in fact not supported by the power dynamics and sociopolitical realities in play. There are still numerous contact zones in Canada where, despite the best official intentions to smooth out differences and consider the Other's norms, intermingling of cultures and values, if not impossible, remains uneasy. That is particularly so when the economic future of individuals and communities is at stake or divergent understandings of development are at odds. It is quite telling that since 2004, opposition to the Agreement-in-Principle has not relented. Several regional organizations claiming to represent the territorial and economic rights of public land lessees, farmers and property owners, the high-profile mayor of Saguenay, and local activists have lobbied persistently to suppress the Agreement. One such organization consists of a group of white settlers who claim Aboriginal ancestry and insist that as "Métis" they are as entitled as the Innu to exercise control over the land and that, ultimately, everyone should be treated the same.[40]

In his closing remarks to the Socioeconomic Forum of the First Nations held in Mashteuiatsh at the end of October, 2006, Quebec's then-Premier, Jean Charest, responded in the following terms to a statement made by Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, at the outset of the three-day gathering of government officials and civil society and indigenous stakeholders:

> So ladies and gentlemen, I wish to conclude by reminding Ghislain Picard that at the very beginning of our deliberations he said one thing that really moved me. He said: I am not Québécois and I am not Canadian, I am Innu. . . . [T]here is a distinction made by certain Chiefs and by certain members of the First Nations communities who say: I do not feel like a Québécois citizen or a Canadian citizen. Ghislain, Chief Picard, I am the Premier of all Québécois. It is not up to me to decide your identity, but regardless of their sense of attachment, I am the Premier of all Québécois, including the First Nations and Inuit. I would be very happy if one day in my life if one day they were able to say: "Yes I am also a Québécois." If

> the members of the First Nations felt as though they were full fledged members of Quebec society and contribute to its development so that they could say, "I am also a Québécois."[41]

Charest's appeal was meant to resonate with solicitude and solidarity, as if to say "We are all in this together, let us all be friends, let us all be brothers." That is essentially the message behind Plan Nord—we can all benefit from Quebec's northern resources; let us work in concert toward that goal. The subtext, however, conveys a different message. Premier Charest's cordial and hopeful injunction was, at at its core, imbued in true liberal democratic fashion with a totalizing, politico-administrative vision of the place minority groups should occupy in the public arena. Their claims to a different identity and cultural norms are fine as long as they know to adjust to the values of the mainstream culture. Their difference is welcome provided it can be contained within the normative framework of the dominant majority and remains unthreatening to those who benefit by it. Genuine empowerment of indigenous peoples is not really on the agenda. This is a familiar pattern. Political scientist Thierry Rodon summed it up best when, considering nearly two decades ago whether the co-management regime established in Nunavut had empowered the Inuit, he concluded: "not if one believes that the empowerment of Aboriginal peoples is related to their ability to make choices within a framework that they themselves define. The answer is affirmative if one believes, as do governments, that empowerment is based on the ability to make choices within the context defined by the Canadian system."[42]

With the election of the new Liberal government of Justin Trudeau in October 2015, a new optimism has arisen in Canada with respect to relations between indigenous peoples and settlers. In some ways, this optimism does seem warranted. On December 15, 2015, upon receiving the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which examined the grievous legacy of Canada's residential school systems, Prime Minister Trudeau committed his government unreservedly to implement the recommendations of the Commission.[43] Those recommendations require a significant rethinking on the part of the Canadians vis-a-vis indigenous peoples. They suggest nothing less than the reconfiguration of the cultural and institutional norms that inform the Canadian state and society in line with indigenous wishes and priorities, and they imply a strong commitment to respecting scrupulously the claims of indigenous peoples to social, cultural, and even political difference.

Whether the Canadian government's good intentions will materialize and trigger a new era of genuine equality and social justice in indigenous peoples-settler relations remains to be seen. The recent case of the Approche commune reminds us that it will take considerably more than the reassuring vocabulary of reconciliation, dialogue, and partnership to achieve the kind of profound change in power relations suggested by the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

One cannot deny that Canadian (and Quebec) liberal democracy has been for several decades now steeped in a strong culture of genuine respect for human rights, which makes past policies toward indigenous peoples virtually unthinkable in today's context. Failing to acknowledge these developments is to neglect the considerable and

often successful efforts made by indigenous activists and politicians to improve the socioeconomic situation of indigenous peoples and transform the institutional framework that put them at such a disadvantage. Through political mobilization and dogged determination to compel the state to respect the individual and collective rights of their peoples, indigenous leaders have significantly enhanced the sphere of democracy in Canada. Thanks in part to their struggles, the exclusionary, scornful, and malicious mentality, which long characterized mainstream Canadians' attitudes toward minority groups, is no longer acceptable in public discourse and policy.

On the other hand, as this paper has tried to show, the upbeat interculturalist understanding of recent developments in indigenous peoples-settlers relations may well be overstating the case. The vast majority of settler Canadians and Quebecers takes comfort in the advances of democracy and in the knowledge that they contribute through the Canadian state substantial aid toward the improvement of the socioeconomic situation of indigenous peoples. They feel that a society that spends huge sums of money earmarked specifically for a small ethnocultural minority cannot be all that bad—"things may not be perfect, but we've mended our ways and we're improving, so where's the problem?"[44]

There is no foolproof recipe delineating how to bring settlers to reconsider the nature of their relationship with indigenous peoples. At the least, if we are serious about the exercise we should think hard about the kind of society we want—that is, the kind of democracy we should aspire to. Without a genuine commitment to disrupt historical social relations of power and domination, particularly in the economic sphere, which have been and continue to be so damaging to the future of indigenous communities and individuals, and without the appropriate degree of freedom indigenous peoples must secure to determine their collective destiny, it is unlikely that our relationship with indigenous peoples will improve appreciably. Piecemeal measures change nothing, and well-intended policies, however well-funded they may be, only serve to assuage the Judeo-Christian guilt of settler Canadians if those policies are not purposely designed to reconfigure the dynamics of power.

For scholars interested in furthering our understanding of the relations between indigenous peoples and the Canadian state and fostering ideas and conditions that result in a greater measure of social justice and a truly level playing field for indigenous peoples, the intellectual challenge is to develop a clearer sense of the dynamics of power and domination that presently prevent those conditions from developing. With this kind of knowledge in hand it will be possible to map out new interventions specifically designed to neutralize old practices of power and invalidate the hegemonic pretentions of settler Canadians.

Notes

1. Three decisions in particular have played an important role. In 2004, in *Haida First Nation v. British Columbia* and *Taku River Tlingit v. British Columbia*, the Supreme Court ruled that the government has a duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal nations prior to making decisions that might adversely affect their Aboriginal rights and title claims. In 2014, building on those two cases, the Court established land title for the Tsilhqot'in Nation in *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* and

recognized that the government had breached its duty to consult. This ruling maintained that provincial governments cannot engage in logging activities on land protected by Aboriginal title without the prior consent of the title holders. See John Olynyk, "The *Haida First Nation* and *Taku River Tlingit* Decisions: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities for Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation," Lawson Lundel LLP, 2005, http://www.lawsonlundell.com/media/news/236_ Negotiatorarticle.pdf; Woodward and Company LLP, "Blazing a Trail for Reconciliation, Self-Determination and Decolonization: *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*," 2015, http://www.woodwardandcompany.com/?page_id=87.

2. Government of Ontario, *An Introduction to the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, 2011), 13, https://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/GPNO-Introduction-final.pdf.

3. Government of Quebec, *Plan Nord. Building Northern Quebec Together. The Project of a Generation* (Quebec: Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, 2011), 25, http://caid.ca/QueNor2011.pdf.

4. Strictly speaking, Approche commune is the name given to a shorter pre-Agreement document released in January 2000. See "Négociation entre le Conseil tribal Mamuitun, le Québec et le Canada: Approche Commune," January 19, 2000, http://www.versuntraite.gouv.qc.ca/documentation/publications/approche_commune.pdf. The official title of the Agreement-in-Principle is "Agreement-in-Principle of General Nature between the First Nations of Mamuitun and Nutashkuan and the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada," http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100031951/1100100032043. Although the Approche commune and the Agreement-in-Principle are two distinct documents made public at two different moments (winter 2000 and spring 2002), the rather unwieldy official designation of the Agreement-in-Principle has resulted in the recourse to the term *Approche commune* in common parlance to refer to the Agreement-in-Principle. Even though the use of the expression *Approche commune* is not quite accurate in reference to the Agreement-in-Principle, everyone interested in or concerned by the Agreement in Quebec knows that it is about the comprehensive land and self-government claims of the Innu.

5. Although there is no hard-and-fast rule as to what constitutes an acceptable delay for the official ratification of a Final Agreement to follow an Agreement-in-Principle, in most cases, final agreements are signed fairly soon after an Agreement-in-Principle has been endorsed by all parties. The Agreement-in-Principle is the deal-making stage: the issues forming the Final Agreement have been agreed upon. At the Final Agreement stage, there is technically no need to renegotiate the terms and conditions of the Agreement-in-Principle. The process leading up to it should therefore be done with relative celerity as nothing substantive is open for discussion. See Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, *Resolving Aboriginal Claims. A Practical Guide to Canadian Experiences* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2003). Since 2004, the negotiation process with the Innu has been replete with setbacks, about-faces, and unanticipated twists and turns. Little information about it trickles out in the press. It was rumored at one point that the parties were confident that they would arrive at a final agreement by December 2015. As this paper is being prepared for publication (July 2016) there is still no agreement.

6. David C. Natcher, "Institutionalized Adaptation: Aboriginal Involvement in Land and Resource Management," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 20, no. 2 (2000): 278.

7. Philip Morris and Gail Fondahl, "Negotiating the Production of Space in Tl'azt'en Territory, Northern British Columbia," *The Canadian Geographer* 46, no. 2 (2002): 122, doi: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2002.tb00734.x.

8. Alan C. Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000).

9. Graham White, "Treaty Federalism in Northern Canada: Aboriginal-Government Land Claims Boards," *Publius: Journal of Federalism* 32, no. 3 (2002): 114.

10. Christopher Alcantara and Greg Whitfield, "Aboriginal Self-Government through Constitutional Design: A Survey of Fourteen Aboriginal Constitutions in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 122.

11. Caroline Desbiens and Etienne Rivard, "From Passive to Active Dialogue? Aboriginal Lands, Development and Metissage in Quebec, Canada," *Cultural Geographies* 21, no. 1 (2014): 102.

12. Ibid., 103.

13. Ibid., 110.

14. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33–40, jstor.org/stable/25595469.

15. Known under the title *Partenariat, développement, actions* (partnership, development, actions).

16. See Agreement-in-Principle of General Nature Between the First Nations of Mamuitun and Nutashkuan and the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/mamu_1100100031952_eng.pdf.

17. Paul Charest, "Qui a peur des Innus? Réflexions sur les débats au sujet du projet d'entente de principe entre les Innus de Mashteuiatsh, Essipit, Pessamit et Nutashkuan et les gouvernements du Québec et du Canada," *Anthropologie et sociétés* 27, no. 2 (2003): 194, doi: 10.7202/007453ar.

18. The Bloc Québécois is a Quebec-based sovereignist political party active in the House of Commons advocating the secession of Quebec from Canada.

19. Ghislain Lebel, "Après la Paix des Braves, la Paix de la peur!" *Le Quotidien*, August 9, 2002, 8.

20. Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe hastened to dismiss Lebel's stance as unrepresentative of his party's position and that of the sovereignist movement in general. He quickly released Lebel from his function as party spokesperson. Lebel, a staunch Quebec nationalist activist from the early days of the sovereignist movement, resigned immediately from both the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois to sit as an independent MP. See Mylène Moisan, "Le bloquiste Gilles Lebel claque la porte," *Le Soleil*, August 10, 2002, http://vigile.quebec/archives///ds-souv/docs3/02-8-10-soleil-bq-lebel.html.

21. Jacques Parizeau, "De la dynamite potentielle," *La Presse*, August 28, 2002, A16–A17.

22. In 1981, the Canadian government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau initiated the process of patriating the Canadian Constitution from the United Kingdom so as to assert Canada's full independence and include in a refurbished Constitution a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This initiative entailed negotiation between the federal government and the provinces over the terms of the new Constitution. Quebec was eventually shut out of this process and would not agree with the final outcome. As a result the province of Quebec was not party to patriation and the new Constitution Act of 1982. Attempts at renegotiating the deal and at "bringing Quebec back" into the Constitution were made by the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but failed. For this reason, it is widely considered in Quebec sovereignist circles that the Canadian Constitution is not legitimate. See Alain G. Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino, *Federalism, Citizenship and Quebec: Debating Multinationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), chapter 2 in particular.

23. See for example Jacques Beauchemin, *L'histoire en trop* (Montreal: VLB, 2002); Mathieu Bock-Côté, *La dénationalisation tranquille* (Montreal: Boréal, 2007).

24. Paul Charest, "Les relations entre les Innus et les non-Innus en Sagamie: une double analyse «impressionniste» et discursive," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 43, no. 1 (2013): 9–24; Ariane Loranger-Saindon, "Médias, Innus et Allochtones: l'image des Premières Nations dans les journaux de la Côte-Nord et ses effets sur les rapports interethniques" (Master's thesis, Université Laval, 2007); Audrey Lord, *L'Approche commune: nouvelle alliance innue-québécoise. La réaction au Saguenay Lac*

Saint-Jean. Analyse des échanges dans les journaux (2000–2004) (Chicoutimi: Groupe de recherche et d'intervention régionale, 2010).

25. Mathieu Cook, "Les droits ancestraux autochtones: reconnaissance et contestation. La controverse entourant l'« Approche commune »," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 43, no. 1 (2013): 59–68.

26. To our knowledge, Dominique Leydet is the only other author to have used the briefs. Her analysis, however, takes her in a different direction. Her reading of the briefs serves to underscore the limits of the treaty negotiation policy to solve the self-government claims of First Nations. See Dominique Leydet, "Autochtones et non-Autochtones dans la négociation de nouveaux traités: enjeux et problèmes d'une politique de la reconnaissance," *Négociations* 8 (2007): 55–71, doi: 10.3917/neg.008.0055.

27. *Municipalités régionales de comté*, in French, are supralocal administrative entities and regional extensions of the Quebec government. They are usually administered by a collective comprised of the mayors of the towns found within the county.

28. The evidence consisted of a series of studies commissioned by Hydro-Quebec, Quebec's state-owned utilities corporation. See Nelson Martin Dawson, *Des Attikamègues aux Têtes-de-Boule. Mutation ethnique dans le Haut Mauricien sous le Régime français* (Québec: Septentrion, 2003).

29. Loranger-Saindon, "Médias Innus et Allochtones"; Lord, *L'Approche commune*.

30. Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism. A Counter History* (London: Verso Books, 2011).

31. This type of sociopolitical dynamics has been well documented in sociology and political science. See for example Ghassan Hage, *White Nation* (New York: Routledge/Pluto Press, 2000); Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

32. Unemployment rates in this and the following paragraph are drawn from the following documents: Statistics Canada, *2006 Community Profiles* (92-591-XWE), http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/search-recherche/frm_res.cfm?Lang=E; Statistics Canada, *2006 Census Dictionary* (92-566-XWE); and Réseau DIALOG, http://www.atlas.reseau-dialog.ca/Atlas/Atlas_GoogleMaps/fr/index.php?Th=0&Sth= 0&Sr=0&Nav=0&Typ=r.

33. Charest, "Les relations," 196–97.

34. Loranger-Saindon, "Médias, Innus et Allochtones," 56–57.

35. The short-lived Parti Québécois government of Pauline Marois changed the name of Plan Nord to Le Nord pour tous, but the basic policy directions of Plan Nord remained. When the Liberals came back to power under Philippe Couillard in 2014, they reinstated the Plan Nord as the official appellation of Quebec's northern development plan.

36. Étienne Rivard, "L'Approche commune ou l'irrésistible élan vers une definition interethnique de la planification territoriale?" *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 43, no. 1 (2013): 25–38, doi: 10.7202/1024470ar.

37. In the absence of regular and reliable accounts about the current negotiation process, we cannot establish with absolute certainty that this is indeed a deliberate government strategy. In fact, some would probably deny this to be the case, citing news reports suggesting that a final agreement advantageous to the Innu will soon be signed (see "Innu Nations on the Verge of Historic Land Settlement that Would Give them Greater Autonomy," *National Post*, February 7, 2016, http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/innu-nations-in-quebec-on-verge-of-historic-land-settlement-that-would-give-them-greater-autonomy) or that the local settler political elite and Innu leaders are seeking *rapprochement* and working to ease sociopolitical tensions in the region concerned by the agreement (see "Entente historique: les chefs innus et les maires unissent leurs forces," *Le Nord-Côtier*, March 10, 2015, http://lenord-cotier.com/entente-historique-les-chefs-innus-et-les-maires-unissent-leurs-forces/). That may well be, but on a number of occasions, often at key junctures in the negotiation process, governments' actions seem bent on thwarting encouraging developments, which suggests that

the state is not in a hurry to settle with the Innu. In July 2015, for example, just as the negotiations appeared to be progressing well, the Quebec government signed with the James Bay Cree a bilateral forestry deal on land claimed by the Innu, who, understandably, were quite irritated by it. (See "Les Innus du Lac-Saint-Jean contestent l'entente entre Québec et les Cris," *Ici Radio-Canada*," July 13, 2015, http://ici.radio-canada.ca/regions/saguenay-lac/2015/07/13/006-innus-entente-quebec-cris.shtml). This kind of governmental attitude has led some analysts of comprehensive land claim negotiations to conclude that the state is ultimately not interested in transforming the power dynamics between settlers and indigenous peoples. Its objective is rather to dispossess indigenous peoples of their land and limit the reach of their political autonomy. See for example Paul Rynard, "Welcome In, but Check Your Rights at the Door: The James Bay and Nisga'a Agreements in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 2 (2000): 211–43, doi: 10.1017/S0008423900000081; Colin Samson, "Canada's Strategy of Dispossession: Aboriginal Land and Rights Cessions in Comprehensive Land Claims," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 31, no. 1 (2016): 87–110, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/621837). We hesitate to be as categorical in our evaluation of governments' attitude, for equally compelling work by other respected scholars points to significant gains in self-determination capacity made by indigenous communities through a number of agreements, both with the state and the private sector. See for example Joseph Alcantara, *Negotiating the Deal: Comprehensive Land Claims Agreements in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013; Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh, *Negotiations in the Indigenous World: Aboriginal Peoples and the Extractive Industry in Australia and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 2015). Most observers now agree that contemporary indigenous communities are not defenseless victims. They know how to navigate institutional systems and social architectures that were not conceived and developed in accord with their interests and worldviews. Still, at the end of the day, the control that settler governments exercise over the broader socio-institutional framework within which negotiations take place does give them a distinct advantage over indigenous communities. The fact that the latter have achieved some measure of success within this framework does not make it less unreceptive to their fundamental goals and priorities. The Innu are a case in point.

38. See Greg Poelzer and Ken S. Coates, *From Treaty Peoples to Treaty Nation: A Road Map for All Canadians* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2015).

39. See Daniel Salée and Carole Lévesque, "Representing Aboriginal Self-Government and First Nations/State Relations: Political Agency and the Management of the Boreal Forest in Eeyou Istchee," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 41 (2010): 99–135, doi: 10.7202/044164ar.

40. See Charest, "Les relations."

41. Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, *First Nations Socioeconomic Forum Report. Acting Now . . . for the Future* (Wendake: Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, 2006), 3.31–3.32.

42. Thierry Rodon, "Self-Determination and Co-Management in Nunavut," *Polar Geography* 22 (1998): 132, doi: 10.1080/10889379809377641, quoted in White, "Treaty Federalism," 113.

43. "Statement by Prime Minister on Release of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2015/12/15/statement-prime-minister-release-final-report-truth-and-reconciliation-commission.

44. Poelzer and Coates, *From Treaty Peoples to Treaty Nations*, viii–ix, xvi–xvii.