

Culture



Noël DYCK and James B. WALDRAM (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993; 362 pages, \$19.95 (paper)

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Volume 13, Number 2, 1993

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1083126ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083126ar>

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Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Gareau, M. (1993). Review of [Noël DYCK and James B. WALDRAM (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993; 362 pages, \$19.95 (paper)]. *Culture*, 13(2), 93–93. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083126ar>

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Noel DYCK and James B. WALDRAM (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993; 362 pages, \$19.95 (paper).¹

By M. Gareau

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In this volume Noel Dyck and James Waldram collaborate with numerous other authors in discussing the past and present role of Anthropology in the context of the Canadian Aboriginal population and the creation of policy. The introduction to this volume provides the reader with an historical overview of Anthropology from its previous colonial origins to its present focus which often involves advocacy. The remainder of this publication is divided into three sections: Historical Perspectives on Native Policy Issues, The Politics of Anthropological Research, and Anthropological Involvement in Native Policy Issues.

When reading Peter Usher's contribution, "Northern Development, Impact Assessment, and Social Change" I found myself cringing at phrases such as "less advanced" (p. 104) when used in reference to foraging societies. However, having developed a respect for Usher's research, I realize that perhaps he is experiencing the same dilemma that many of us are facing. What words can we use to describe a situation without inadvertently reinforcing negative stereotypes?

I was especially pleased to read the contributions by Ron Ignace, George Speck and Renee Taylor in "Native Perspectives". As a Native woman, new to academia, I found that these authors discuss many of the dilemmas that I and other Native students have faced within the discipline of Anthropology. I also, have found myself questioning why anthropologists choose to document certain cultural aspects, while appearing to ignore the results of the on-going destruction of our various cultures by the dominant social structure.

The essays in *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada* discuss these issues. In "Telling It Like It Is" (p. 192) Noel Dyck provides some explanation as to why anthropologists censor their ethnographies. Dyck accurately describes our depen-

dence upon public opinion as a political resource (p. 196) and in doing so acknowledges what we have suspected for years. Namely that the Canadian government has little intent of honouring their own laws and Treaty negotiations of the past unless forced to. Therefore, since the onus is placed upon us to appear "worthy" of support, some anthropologists who have developed allegiances with Native peoples have chosen to censor their ethnographies. In view of the fact that anthropological advocacy does not conform to the agenda of the dominant social structure, it is hardly surprising that the discipline is now being criticized for its reliance upon "soft" qualitative data (p. 12). It was not criticized for this in the past, when it was still being used as a "tool" of colonization.

As anthropologists find themselves playing increasingly different roles, often outside of universities and museums, they need to find solutions to these new dilemmas. This volume strives to provide some. Joe Sawchuk and Sally Weaver stress that anthropologists who hope to influence the creation of policy must understand both the agency and the goals of those who are involved in the creation of policy. Both authors provide an analysis of their experiences with research and the creation of policy. In reference to the self-imposed censorship concerning the documentation of social difficulties, Noel Dyck provides an extremely reflective contribution concerning the importance of maintaining the credibility of anthropological research while at the same time providing a context that will inform the general population of the "...nature and source of these problems" (p. 197).

In this volume Dyck and Waldram have compiled a variety of well-written and reflective essays that provide a valuable contribution to the discipline of Anthropology and its role in advocacy.

1. The review process for Dyck and Waldram's book was facilitated by the Anglophone Editor, Margaret Seguin Anderson.