

## Culture



# Claudia NOTZKE, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, North York: Captus University Publications, York University, 1994

Mike Robinson

Volume 15, Number 1, 1995

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1083738ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083738ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### 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

Robinson, M. (1995). Review of [Claudia NOTZKE, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, North York: Captus University Publications, York University, 1994]. *Culture*, 15(1), 105–106. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083738ar>

Tous droits réservés © Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie, 1995

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

others would call a "legal person"; in Appell's (1976) terms "it has the power as a social entity to enter into jural relations."

Above the level of the *zanjera* there may be a confederation of several such groups that share a dam and primary canal several kilometers distant. When the main dam is washed away in the annual floods, up to 1,000 male farmers whose lands are watered by it assemble under a headmen to repair it with bamboo and rocks. The government's National Irrigation Authority, inclined to fixed arrangements in concrete dams and bureaucracy, is less able to respond flexibly to the shifting streams and local currents of opinion.

In contrast to the *zanjera* irrigation societies, the Ilocano bilateral kindred supplemented by ritual kin, age-mates, friends, neighbours and work-mates, lacks well-defined boundaries and corporate definition – and constantly shifts in composition. At most, Filipino bilateral kinship can give rise to a personal "alliance" centred on a leader, who must constantly reinforce it by reciprocal favours. The *barangay* (village), is the state-imposed lowest unit of local government. But in Ilocos Norte it does not hold fiestas, while exchange labour is rare, families act as economic isolates and village-wide networks of reciprocal obligation are poorly developed. In Isabela, where villages have fewer families, farms are bigger, *zanjeras* are not the rule, but exchange of labour is common and the village has more social "substance."

The bulk of the book consists of one very long chapter on corporate groups, with major and minor divisions. This hides its greatest strength: the detailed account of the land and water rights and organization of the *zanjera*. At 32 pages, this discussion deserves its own chapter. Six clear maps locate the study areas and show schematically their field and irrigation patterns. There are eleven black and white photographs with informative captions. Appendices present samples of irrigation agreements, land agreements and an extended legal case beginning in 1775 that indicates how rights to water were exchanged for rights to land. The glossary, bibliography, and index are useful.

Claudia NOTZKE, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, North York: Captus University Publications, York University, 1994.

By Mike Robinson

Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary

*Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* is the first comprehensive treatment of historic and contemporary resource management issues on First Nations' land and water bases in Canada. The author, a geographer by training, works out of the Centre for Aboriginal Management Education and Training (CAMET) at the University of Lethbridge in southern Alberta. The book is divided into ten chapters, covering Native perspectives on natural resources management, water resources, fisheries, forestry, wildlife, land, non-renewable resources, protected areas, environmental impact assessment and synthesis and outlook. Overall the work relies heavily on published sources, sometimes at the expense of original analysis by the author. Certain authoritative authors such as Richard H. Bartlett (eight citations), Fikret Berkes (occasionally *et al.*; eleven citations), Harvey Feit (five citations), Milton Freeman (six citations), Evelyn Pinkerton (six citations), Edward Struzik (six citations), Peter Usher (occasionally *et al.*; fifteen citations) recur throughout the text with much frequency, and their analysis subsequently forms much of the book's analysis.

Having rendered this criticism, one cannot fault the overall and somewhat Herculean task that the author has accomplished in pulling together so many diverse sources to describe the mushrooming practice of co-management on First Nations' traditional lands. It will be hard to avoid consulting this book as a first "port of call" in future thesis and research projects that consider any aspect of co-management in Canada, from both disciplinary and inter-disciplinary viewpoints.

From the standpoint of alternative models of sustainable development, the book provides several perspectives on aboriginal stewardship of lands and species. In this respect communal resource management is as well covered as is co-management. For those who are interested in postindustrial models of stewardship and who wish to speculate on a return to more communal forms of land

and water management, the book also provides a good grounding in the literature.

There is still a book to be written that offers direction in the cause of establishing new resource sharing and management frameworks on First Nations lands. Comparative analysis of the existing models of co-management, with clear delineation of their flaws and successes, would be timely as British Columbia's Treaty Commissions begin to grapple with the unresolved claims of the B.C. First Nations. It would also be useful to apply the same kinds of analysis to customary and common law legal models for dispute resolution. Can traditional models be resurrected to fulfil modern dispute resolution needs in actual resource management? Is mediation a better tool than adversarial dispute resolution in reconciling these kinds of conflict?

*Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* is a valuable tool and should be purchased by First Nations, college and university libraries, and consultants with an interest in First Nations approaches to stewardship of the commons. Hopefully the author will keep the book current by updating subsequent editions, and the Captus Press will make a strong effort to market it in the provincial mid-North, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Michael D. LEVIN (ed.), *Ethnicity and Aboriginality: Case Studies in Ethnonationalism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. 179 pages, \$19.95 (paper), \$50.00 (cloth).

By Millie R. Creighton

*University of British Columbia*

The self-awareness of cultural identity distinct from other groups and a corresponding assertion of ethnic identity can find political expression in the desire for a state for every ethnic group. This is the basis of "ethnonationalism." There are more ethnic groups than possible states, and most modern governments, however, despite some nationally constructed myths of denial, are culturally pluralistic. The eight case studies collected in this volume address ways modern states attempt to manage the paradox of fostering national unity while dealing with the needs or demands of distinct ethnic communities. There is sophisticated treatment

of the problematic connotations surrounding the word "ethnicity." The title reflects the authors' recognition that Aboriginal groups reject the suggestion of immigrant groups often associated with the word. A basic premise of the book is that ethnicity is not limited to minorities, but refers to any group sharing cultural characteristics.

Although the book promises Canadian and international perspectives on ethnicity and aboriginality, the case studies are heavily oriented to the Canadian context (four of eight essays) with a mixed assortment of remaining examples. Nonetheless, together the essays do a good job of revealing the complexities surrounding ethnic issues in modern states, and the variation in claims and aspirations of different groups. They also show that ethnic identities are situated both within relations of power in hierarchical state structures and utilized to legitimate struggles against subordination or, conversely, to realize more effective domination.

The first two essays deal with the relationship between Native groups and the Canadian legal system. Macklem's essay discusses "the dilemma of difference," or "the recognition that acknowledgement *and* denial of difference can perpetuate inequality" (p. 11). He argues that legal logic perpetuates hierarchical relationships between First Nations and the Canadian state by treating Natives the same as other citizens when this best reinforces Canadian legal categories, but different when it is to the advantage of Canadian sovereignty. Asch takes on what he calls the ideology of universalism in Canadian law, suggesting that it has both colonial and racist overtones. Although universalism, which means that the state must see only individuals and must see each individual as structurally equal, sounds democratic, by denying the existence of cultural difference it leads to emphasis on majority rule that can negate the inherent rights of minority peoples.

Tanner's article exemplifies how local identities and specific circumstances can give rise to different behaviour among those who otherwise share an ethnic identity. The radical ethnonationalist political position taken by the Aboriginal Innu of Labrador is quite different from the moderate stance of Quebec Innu. Tanner relates this to a relatively recent and rapid decline in Labrador Innu autonomy and their situation of extreme social isolation.