Culture

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)

Millie R. Creighton

See table of contents

Explore this journal

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.

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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.

Weaver turns the focus to Australian Aborigines. She argues that the Australian nation-state, by taking a strong interventionist role in associations that are supposed to be political organs for Aboriginal peoples, has rendered these ineffectual for both Aboriginal and government purposes, thus reversing the cause of self-determination for Fourth World peoples in Australia.

Several case studies deal with the manipulation of cultural symbols and invention of the past in constructing ethnic identities, as well as the shifting nature of ethnic boundaries. In Malaysia the dominant group privileges itself through official sanctioning of Malay identity which is based in part on a presumed status as "sons of the soil." Nagata also shows, however, that certain ethnic markers such as language and religion induce attempts at "conversion" to Malay identity by others seeking the same privileged status. Levin's discussion of Nigeria, commonly portrayed as a nation of three major ethnic groups – Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani – shows how national identity was constructed around the manipulation of symbols that allowed 200 ethnic groups to be symbolically reduced to three, while the ethnic tensions that led to the Nigerian civil war were not as easily dismissed.

The volume as a whole addresses a wide range of issues showing the complexities and contradictions surrounding ethnicity, aboriginality and desires for ethnonationalism. The studies show that while ethnonationalist claims question the very validity of existing states, these states are a major factor in creating, defining and understanding struggles toward ethnonationalism. The volume does have a message regarding the challenge of ethnonationalism in the modern world, which is that governments must be able to reassess their histories and extend their cultural definitions of citizenship. As expressed by Levin: "It is clear that the state, if accommodating, if not tied to a narrow nationalism, may open a society to cultural diversity" (p. 177).

Robert A. STEBBINS, *The Franco-Calgarians. French Language, Leisure, and Linguistic Lifestyle in an Anglophone City*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 152 pages.

By Louis-Jacques Dorais

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Stebbins' book aims at understanding the reasons why francophones living in the big Canadian cities wish to preserve their language, and what means are used to reach that goal. He takes Calgary as an example. In 1991, this metropolitain area of some 600,000 inhabitants had 10,535 residents whose first language was French, plus 3,955 more who claimed French as one of their two or three mother tongues. In this way, Calgary was typical of modern French Canada (outside Québec, eastern Ontario, and northern New Brunswick, that is), whose original rural communities had been almost completely replaced by French speaking urban dwellers, living in the country's major metropolises.

The author's main argument is that the linguistic goals of the Canadian francophones are fourfold: language maintenance; transmission of the language to their children; individual growth through the use of French; development of the francophone collectivity. Extended fieldwork in Calgary shows that these goals are principally reached thanks to leisure activities, that is, all those undertakings that are not defined as being primarily utilitarian (like domestic tasks) and/or obligatory (like work). With the collapse of the rural and semi-rural communities, where most activities were conducted in French, it is mainly through leisure that the modern Canadian francophones can develop a linguistic life-style within which their mother tongue plays an important part.

Stebbins' book describes various aspects of this life-style: running francophone schools; helping with the children's activities; using French in one's own social life; taking part in the francophone community organizations; being present at special events; etc. The author concludes that for most francophones, the French environment "consists in interaction in French at home, at school, at church and in the clubs and organizations, much of which is essentially a leisure environment" (p. 120). The foundation of the urban *francophonie* is a spontaneous informal world, that will not fall if the formal world (best exemplified by the federal pro-