

PREFACE

Edward S. Rogers remarks in this volume that for several decades he thought that the issues surrounding the Northern Algonquian system of land tenure had been resolved. After Leacock's 1954 study of Montagnais land tenure (*The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*. American Anthropological Association Memoir 78. Menasha, Wisconsin: American Anthropological Association), it became orthodoxy to view the European fur trade as giving rise to this individualized and privatized form of territoriality. Beginning in the 1960s, more intensive regional, ethnographic, and historical studies began to undermine some of the specific tenets of the general theory. By the 1970s, it was becoming evident to a small core of specialists that an accumulation of data pertaining to a variety of times and areas, combined with theoretical and conceptual refinement, was challenging the applicability of the general theory itself.

Awareness of these new developments in the field led to a decision to present and discuss in public forum recent research findings and the ideas that these findings generate. A symposium was held during the joint annual meetings of the Canadian Ethnology Society and the American Ethnological Society in Toronto, Canada, May 9-12, 1985. Unfortunately, Eleanor Leacock, whose work is central to the debate, was unable to attend because of prior commitments. Now, her untimely death has robbed us of her valued insights.

Although the idea for this volume began with that symposium, this volume is considerably different. A stimulating paper by Harvey Feit titled "Eastern Subarctic Hunting Territories: Evidence and Interpretations" was committed for another publication and does not appear here. Shortly after the conference, we learned that Regina Flannery and Mary Elizabeth Chambers had been reworking Father John Cooper's and Flannery's own field notes on hunting territories, and these researchers were invited to make a contribution. We are especially pleased to have their paper because it incorporates the important evidence collected by two of the pioneers of Subarctic research.

The papers and commentaries in this volume raise a great many issues that need not be itemized. Rather, we intend to offer a few brief comments on several topics that are not adequately discussed. First, the history of the debate centering on Algonquian land tenure should be seen not simply as a parochial concern of a small group of regional specialists, but rather as interconnected to a number of broader issues such as questions of fundamental characteristics of precontact culture. The focus of this debate on substantive questions of aboriginality, private or communal property, and the impact of colonialism on small-scale societies elevates the debate to the theoretically significant in social theory. Consequently, its importance to studies of band societies in particular, and social evolution in general, cannot

be ignored. Thus, so much would be revealed about the development of anthropological ideas over the past seventy-five years that a thorough history of the debate is warranted.

Second, the current disagreements in the literature stem from four main problems:

1. There has been a tendency to generalize from particular cases to the Northern Algonquians as a whole.
2. Because of its greater accuracy and detail, some scholars still tend to push the ethnographic evidence acquired through fieldwork back in time. Consequently, history gets collapsed into the ethnographic present, and important changes are disregarded. We suggest that those who choose to ignore history are doomed to become part of it.
3. There is a failure to define concepts adequately and to make assumptions explicit. This results in a lack of comparability among the studies. Also, concepts present data in an either/or fashion rather than permitting scholars to view, for example, hunting territories along a continuum or to conceive of them as oscillating among several types in both the short and the long run.
4. The issue as to whether certain institutional features among Northern Algonquians are a consequence mainly of internal development or of external stimuli needs further refinement so that an appropriate balance can be attained.

Although the above problems have not been entirely ignored in the literature, they require further scrutiny. We suggest that the history of the debate over Northern Algonquian land tenure forms can be seen in dialectic terms, the thesis being developed by Speck, Cooper, and Lowie, who championed the precontact origins of the family hunting territory system. The antithesis—that family hunting territories were a response to the postcontact fur trade—first emerged in the writings of Diamond Jenness and Alfred G. Bailey, and culminated in the influential work of Eleanor Leacock. The trend towards synthesis is currently underway and reflected in the papers presented here. What is now required is theoretical and ideological flexibility of the type demonstrated by Edward S. Rogers, who has altered his own position in the light of new findings.

We thank the authors for their cooperation and for these important contributions to a reexamination of Northern Algonquian land tenure forms. Although Richard J. Preston has not formally written on family hunting territories, we have all benefited over the years from his cogent observations on the subject, and we are especially pleased that he accepted our invitation to set some of these down for us. Likewise, we are very grateful to Edward S.

Rogers for his reappraisal and direction as encapsulated in the Epilogue. Rogers has been too modest about his role in the ongoing controversy. His detailed and non-categorical discussions of Mistassini hunting territories, along with the very important distinctions he drew twenty-five years ago between group and territory, are still valid and have guided many of us newer researchers in our search for more balanced representations of family hunting territories. We thank him for his stewardship in this.

We also would like to express our appreciation to Kathryn Molohon for her invitation to us to publish this work in ANTHROPOLOGICA, for her faith in all of us getting it done, for the innumerable tasks she personally and professionally undertook in producing this, for her gentle nudging, and for her good humor throughout. We wish her very well in her continuing and capable editorship of ANTHROPOLOGICA.

We are grateful for the assistance of William Donoghue, Simon Laflamme, and Robert Toupin, who graciously helped with the French text. We are also extremely appreciative of the hard work contributed by Carolyn Malott and, especially, by Lucie Sabel. We would also like to thank Franz Sabel for his gracious help with computer techniques, including graphics, and Crystal Sabel and Candie Sabel for their bilingual good cheer.

We are, as well, most grateful to the Ontario Heritage Foundation for a grant in aid of publication. Elizabeth Price, senior consultant of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, is to be commended for her professionalism and kind patience. This grant made possible the expert copy-editing services of John Parry.

Charles A. Bishop
Toby Morantz

Montréal, Québec
July, 1987