TERRITORIALITY AMONG NORTHEASTERN ALGONQUIANS

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Depuis que Frank Speck décrivit le premier le système de chasse familiale algonquin du nord-est, les spécialistes ont essayé de rendre compte de ses origines et de son existence dans l'espace et dans le temps. Parce que les études historiques ont contesté le caractère aborigène de ce système, l'évidence séduisante qui suggère le pré-contact avec le territoire a été ignorée et/ou justifiée en termes de facteurs d'un commerce historique de la fourrure. Étant donné qu'elles influencent les modèles d'usage de la terre, les données du territoire des Grands Lacs du Haut-Saint-Laurent et des forêts boréales du Québec et de l'Ontario sont examinées en termes de développements sociopolitique et économique. Depuis que quelques groupes du début du 17ième siècle dans la région des Grands Lacs du Haut-Saint-Laurent semblent avoir été divisés en rangs sociaux, il appert que les positions socialement importantes ont été en relation étroite avec le système régional des transactions relatives aux alliances, ce qui comprend l'entretien des frontières sociales. Il est aussi suggéré que les positions socialement importantes ont été étroitement reliées au contrôle territorial de l'échange des richesses. Quoique les peuples préhistoriques de la forêt boréale qui faisaient partie du système d'alliances avaient aussi des territoires indéfinis, les développements ultérieurs au contact avec les Européens aident à expliquer les très anciens exemples de ce phénomène.

Since Frank Speck first described the Northeastern Algonquian family hunting (trapping) system, scholars have attempted to account for its origin and spatio-temporal existence. Because historical studies challenged the aboriginality of this system, enticing evidence suggesting precontact territoriality has been ignored and/or explained away in terms of historic fur trade factors. Inasmuch as they influence land use patterns, data from the St. Lawrence-Upper Great Lakes area and the boreal forests of Québec and Ontario are examined in terms of sociopolitical and economic developments. Since some early seventeenth century groups in the Upper Great Lakes region appear to have been socially ranked, it is shown that socially important positions were closely related to a regional transactional alliance system that included the maintenance of

social boundaries. It is also suggested that socially important positions were closely related to the territorial control of exchange resources. Whether prehistoric boreal forest peoples who were part of the alliance system were also territorial is uncertain, although postcontact developments help to explain very early examples of this.

There is now a large literature on Northeastern Algonquian land tenure and land use, focused particularly on the so-called family hunting territory system. Since this system is now assumed to have emerged after contact (Leacock 1982:167), there has been considerable attention devoted to the conditions under which it developed and persisted. Various ecological, economic, and acculturative factors have been documented to explain the emergence of individual and seemingly private rights to certain animal resources within roughly bounded regions. So far, so good.

Questions remain, however, concerning the starting point from which these changes occurred. Given the argument that individualization and privatization, sometimes equated with increasing sociocultural atomism, are postcontact trends, aboriginal Indians are then assumed to have practiced some form of communal land use characteristic of an ideal model of egalitarian foragers. Thus, according to Leacock and Lee, among such societies as the Cree and San there is collective ownership of the means of production, "the land and its resources—by a band, 'horde', or camp" (1982:7-8).

While there may indeed have been foraging societies that closely approximated the egalitarian model, problems arise when all Northeastern Algonquians are forced into this mold. Communalism, in fact, appears to have been a matter of degree. So much attention has been devoted to disproving that individually owned territories could exist among aboriginal Indians that there has been no attempt to understand other forms of territoriality. In addition to good evidence for boundary defense and "tolls," there is the indirect suggestion that particular sorts of resources were territorially controlled by specific groups.

Further, the nature of territorial practices (and the lack of them) appears to have been closely related to other sociopolitical factors. Although indirect and even limited direct European trade antedates the early historic records by as much as a century in some regions, the evidence suggests that groups living near the Great Lakes and Ottawa/St. Lawrence valleys were ranked rather than egalitarian societies. Chiefs were more than simply "first among equals," although their power was limited. At elaborate funerary feasts, feasts of the dead, closely resembling Northwest Coast mortuary potlatches, gifts validated hereditary

or quasi-hereditary chiefly positions. There is some evidence for their precontact existence on a reduced scale.

The degree to which any group approximated the egalitarian ideal varied with both geography and time. The most egalitarian groups appear to have been those furthest north of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence watershed. Some groups became ranked during the early historic period. As opportunities for political and economic gain lessened following contact, all Algonquians shifted to increasingly egalitarian patterns—and individualistic ones, insofar as needs were being satisfied through the fur trade. The forces that gave rise to individualistic trapping patterns also opened the system and blurred, blended, and ultimately erased status differences.

Early-contact sociopolitical organization varied regionally as well as temporally, as it probably had among prehistoric Algonquians. Since forms of land tenure are related to other cultural variables, it will be argued that those Algonquians who deviated most from the egalitarian model were also the most territorial in regard to certain resources. Undeniably, the historic fur trade initiated territorial behavior among the most egalitarian groups as furs grew increasingly important to their lifestyle and/or as these groups began to emulate the territoriality of those around them. The data, however, make an equally robust case for arguing that, among other groups, the fur trade intensified existing forms of territoriality.

To assess the nature of territorial behavior at any given time and place, we must place such behavior within the context of other cultural variables. Among the most important of these were sociopolitical relations within and between groups. In usual systemic fashion, certain aspects of these relations derived from, as well as themselves generated, territorial behavior.

Two interrelated aspects of territoriality operated during early historic and probably prehistoric times. The first aspect pertained to boundary defense between groups. Members of one group might prevent those of another from passing through their lands to trade with a third group. Or, if permission were granted, sometimes the traveling group was expected to give a portion of the goods to be exchanged. What was being defended was not the land per se but a position in a regional transactional network that facilitated access to luxury/prestige goods which, when exchanged or given away, bestowed prestige on the donors. Extrapolating from C. A. Smith's discussion of regional exchange networks, we can say that such a system need not involve markets (regular, periodic, or even occasional), that it "has no central place," and exchange is "regularly interrelated by trade, but the flows are primarily horizontal. . . . This kind of system may be found in regions where [trade] is disassociated from [central

place] provisioning, or it may involve a kind of trade irrelevant to urban centers" (C. A. Smith 1976(1):33).

There were, to be sure, trade rendezvous, some quite regular, but the evidence indicates that regional exchange networks were predicated essentially on a series of links in a trade network. The positions and their varied occupants have come to be identified as components in the "middleman system of exchange," which controlled and regulated the flow of goods through the maintenance of geographic and social boundaries. Though the postcontact fur trade intensified and perhaps even exacerbated the problematic dynamics of initiating, sustaining, and elaborating upon particular positions in the system, many, if not most, of these networks antedated European influences. Among protohistoric Algonquians, such links helped to maintain alliances and provided information and favors in time of need. The symbolic and sociopolitical value of goods may often have been more important than the ostensible primary purpose. This may have remained true for a short time after European goods entered the system.

As the historic fur trade expanded and grew in importance, however, and as furs came to be the chief medium of exchange, the commodity value of items quickly came to dominate. There was a florescence of ritual activities and a geographic expansion of the middleman/boundary defense system. The increase in material wealth offered new opportunities to enhance prestige, but the westward movement of European fur traders undermined chiefly positions by destroying their trade advantages. Chiefs and their kinsmen found themselves in competition with each other and also with emerging entrepreneurs, often in areas where fur and game had become exhausted. To stay on top, they had to move further west, ahead of the Europeans. This many of them did, until they too were engulfed by the expanding fur trade (Bishop 1974:308-326).

So long as competition among Europeans for furs remained, attempts to maintain middleman roles and the desire for trade goods made for so dynamic and volatile a system that there was a decline in earlier values attached to social linkages or prestige markers and to transactional processes themselves. Although trade rituals, involving Indian captains and Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company fur traders, persisted into the nineteenth century, once Europeans ceased giving deferential treatment to these persons, their special status, but perhaps not their prestige, was destroyed.

The second aspect of territoriality involves, in its later manifestations, the familiar hunting territory system described by Speck and others. While individual territories were probably a strictly postcontact phenomenon, territoriality probably was not. Territoriality, where it existed, in both pre- and protohistoric times was instituted to control access to the resources of ex-

change by group leaders (trade chiefs or "big men") with the support and collaboration of their groups. In precontact times these resources might have included anything from copper mines to beaver lodges. Provided that the quantity of beaver pelts exchanged was regular and relatively large, it is suggested that a chief might determine where the families of his band would trap; that is, an allotment system would exist. Territoriality, then, would have been a group concern under the aegis of the chief, who would represent his band in matters of trade and diplomacy. As the European fur trade grew more important, beaver and other fur bearers became the objects of defense strategies among Indians where such behavior had not previously existed. Likewise, group territoriality, the allotment system, gave way to individual/family forms once captains lost support, perhaps quite rapidly near newly established centers of trade. Then individuals who formerly gave their furs to the captains to be exchanged could now trade directly with Europeans.

Territoriality, in defense of regional networks or spatially defined resources, existed not because any particular group needed the resource for local consumption (even though this was usually the case) but rather because that resource could be exchanged in a predictable fashion for other desired materials unavailable or in short supply locally. If a group in a particular favorable position in the network could amass a sufficient quantity of valuables, the chief and leading men might host a feast or giveaway. While the explicit purpose of these feasts was to resuscitate the dead, especially chiefs, and to validate publicly the heirs to chiefly positions, the chief and his associates of the host group could demonstrate their social importance through acts of generosity and conspicuous consumption. Such events were often characterized by dancing, gambling, and non-ritual trade.

During the protohistoric period some groups were able to extend their networks and acquire more fur pelts than they could have obtained previously because of the influx of new and highly coveted items into the system. Certainly they could amass more furs through trade than they could have trapped themselves within the areas they exploited for subsistence purposes. This desire for trade goods had the effect of depleting the supply of furbearers in an ever-widening area around the home ranges of pivotal middleman groups. Local scarcity, however, probably did not motivate conservation if furbearers could be obtained from other groups in sufficient numbers to meet trade needs. Indians apparently believed that reincarnated animals and/or game spirits would maintain a sufficiency, provided that Indians did not breach taboos and/or were not the objects of sorcery. They perhaps recognized that leaving a breeding pair of beaver in a lodge would allow the stock to be replenished, but under postcontact conditions of intense competition they would be inclined to exterminate them, lest others take them first. Later, when

Indians exchanged scarce pelts directly with European traders, they would again emphasize conservation. The fur traders themselves encouraged such practices (Bishop 1970, 1978).

Several implications can be drawn from the above. (1) Early historical examples of territoriality suggest that it may have antedated European intervention. (2) Defense of certain resources developed out of regional transactional alliances that controlled the flow of exchange goods and elevated the status of the chief participants. (3) Territoriality existed to protect local resources from members of other groups who would have been able, with direct access, to circumvent and/or undermine the position of those with whom they had an alliance. Indeed, this was no small concern, and there are historically documented attempts at such deception. (4) Aboriginal territoriality was a group phenomenon since the resources were funnelled through the chief, who in turn redistributed materials for which the resources were exchanged to members of his band. (5) When the exchange resources were furbearers, particular families and/or individuals would exploit sectors of the group's foraging range determined by the chief and elders. (6) Because of the Indian world view involving the special relationship between humans and animals, territoriality existed in the absence of true conservation practices among pre-and protohistoric Algonquians. While Indians recognized that by not killing all the beaver in a house there would be some for the future, reincarnation would have the same results. Conservation to promote sustained yields rather than leisure became important later, under altered ecological and trade conditions. (7) Finally, territoriality was not a simple reflex of ecological necessity, intended to maximize or optimize energy return per unit of foraging time. Models derived from Optimal Foraging Theory work best when applied to twentieth-century foragers. Such models, however, might also be applied to protohistoric Indians, provided that ideological and sociopolitical variables are incorporated and weighted appropriately in explanations of behavior (E. A. Smith 1983).

Detailed long-term studies of the Northern Algonquians, such as those of Bishop (1974) and Morantz (1983), identify some of the factors that help to explain change. But the data base, primarily fur trade records, tends to give priority to ecological/economic factors at the expense of ideological and sociopolitical ones. While the material conditions cannot be neglected in any adequate explanation of territorial behavior, especially under marginal subsistence, neither can social and cognitive ones. As Gledhill and Rowlands state:

> Economic and socio-political conditions cannot . . . be separated, and both are equally "material": we cannot understand economic processes in the narrowest sense in isolation, but neither can we argue that real development trajectories are determined by purely "cultural"

> or "political" process. . . . [T]heorizing about long-term socio-economic change . . . involves us in the construction of models of total social systems in which ideological, political and economic processes are linked to each other in a dialectical interplay rather than as determinate levels in a social formation. . . . What we are trying to grasp, then, are dynamic processes which generate spatial and diachronic variation in individual and socio-political units. (1982:145, 148).

An approach that considers all facets, similar in scope to that of Rogers (1963) for the Mistassini, would seem appropriate.

Data to support the above model will be drawn from historical records for two regions, the Upper St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley-Upper Great Lakes area and the boreal forests of Québec and Ontario. Clearly, the two areas overlap somewhat. Obviously, coverage of such vast areas will require simplification of spatio-temporal variations and permutations. By treating two regions separately, however, we can highlight and explain the differences. Simplification helps to resolve some theoretical problems emerging from more detailed but geographically restricted studies.

There is always the danger of misinterpreting or reading too much into early historical sources (Trigger 1976(1):17). These records contain the biases of their authors and are far from complete. Nevertheless, when taken as a whole, they permit reasonably accurate reconstruction of sociocultural processes. Comparative ethnographic data and ethnological models facilitate interpretation. Further, no matter how good the studies based on recent field work, their results cannot simply be extended uncritically to earlier periods on the assumption that Indians will necessarily behave in similar ways under what are inferred to be similar conditions.

AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERRITORIALITY

While there is no consensus concerning what constitutes territoriality (Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978; Malmberg 1980; Cashdan 1983), the term will be defined here as *the exclusive use by humans of one or more culturally identified and defined resources within a specified area by a specified individual or group.* Ideally, resources should be spatially bounded and/or controlled by a specified individual or group so as to permit defense or defensive communication (Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978:23). Although anything, whether beaver pelts or leisure, with use-value may be categorized as a resource, it is analytically useful to restrict discussion to resources with both corporeal substance and exchange/consumption value. For example,

while leisure may be a highly valued resource, attempts to maximize or optimize it among foragers are related to foraging efficiency strategies and as such are indirect. Leisure can be defended only by maintaining or reducing efforts involved in the production of corporeal goods. If, in turn, these corporeal goods are scarce, they may be the object of defense strategies and hence territorial behavior.

To date, most studies of territoriality among foragers look at subsistence resources. But territoriality can involve non-subsistence resources also. Further, defense and control of the latter can lessen subsistence efficiency and increase risks, a point sometimes ignored in Optimal Foraging Theory or where simplistic cost/benefit models are employed. Here, then, *a resource is any corporeal good that can be consumed and/or exchanged and is valued for its economic, social, political, and/or symbolic qualities.*

Rules of exclusive access may be only part of what constitutes territoriality. Territorial rules may also restrict how and with whom resources may be consumed and/or exchanged. A sub-type of exchange rule involves the management and maintenance of regional transactional networks. Rules of access and exchange are aspects of social organization: they define relations both within and between social groups with respect to the "who, when, where, and how" of resource exploitation, exchange, and consumption. When such rules become highly formalized and ritualized, usually other, related features of social organization affect, and are affected, in the process.

Territoriality and resource management need not go hand in hand. Where they do coincide, as among the Waswanipi (Feit 1973) and many other contemporary groups, they are a means not only of increasing harvesting efficiency but also of conserving resources, to sustain yields. Together, they presuppose scarcity, either periodic or ongoing. In modern cases, they are applied also to basic resources—foodstuffs and/or fur pelts exchanged for store necessities.

Resource management, however, can exist without defense strategies, where outsiders cannot or do not threaten the resource or take more than is required to satisfy basic needs. In the absence of defense mechanisms, resource management does not imply scarcity but, rather, may simply be a means of optimizing leisure. Thus, insofar as paleolithic affluence characterizes aboriginal foragers, subsistence resources were managed either deliberately or unwittingly as a byproduct of optimizing leisure or some other valued material or activity. Since Indians understood well the habits of game, they may have consciously regulated kills to reduce effort, even though they usually explained animal population dynamics supernaturally. It is unlikely, however, that they applied territorial regulations to

the basic resources needed to sustain life. Among Northeastern Algonquians it is merely coincidental that beaver were the object of territorial behavior: defense rules existed primarily because pelts were an important exchange item, not because beaver flesh was a valued food.

Territoriality need not involve resource management and can, under certain conditions—contrary to Hardin's (1968) "tragedy of the commons" view—lead to over-exploitation. Where this occurs, territorial defense may simply be designed to keep others out, with the owners having little regard for or understanding of the consequences of their own exploitative behavior. It sometimes involves a scorched-earth policy.

Finally, a situation can exist where neither territoriality nor resource management exists. This arrangement characterizes areas only recently occupied by new arrivals. Over-exploitation is possible, as in the case of the emergent Northern Ojibwa (Bishop 1974:246-249, 277-283) and, conceivably, the Paleo Indians (P. S. Martin 1973). Probably more than one form of land tenure existed, either at the same time in different geographic areas and/or among the same group, depending on seasonal/annual resource use patterns.

In his study of the hunting group-hunting territory complex among the Mistassini, Rogers (1963) considers alternative aboriginal land use forms. He (1963:82) suggests that a hunting range system was basic. In it, a group possessing no exclusive rights to the resources returns to roughly the same area each year. This, I argue here, was the basic form for subsistence materials among all aboriginal foraging Algonquians north of the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes region. Although Rogers, like most recent Subarctic scholars, rejects the idea that hunting territories were aboriginal, his view would apply only to more remote, northerly groups. Algonquians further south, it is hypothesized, were territorial, but rules applied to prestige/exchange resources, not subsistence ones.

UPPER ST. LAWRENCE-OTTAWA VALLEY-UPPER GREAT LAKES ALGONQUIANS

Groups located between Québec City and Sault Ste. Marie were influenced by Europeans by at least the early sixteenth century. The fur trade had become a major concern of Europeans and Indians several decades before good historical records appear. It would be naive to think that Indians further west, in the central Great Lakes region, and perhaps as far north as James Bay, were unaware of European goods by the late sixteenth century. Modification in Indian sociopolitical and economic organization had probably already occurred by the time of Champlain's visits to Huronia.

The issue, nevertheless, is not whether change had occurred, for cultures are constantly in flux, but rather the nature of the changes. Were these early shifts qualitative or quantitative? Did they radically transform Indian society or did they simply elaborate upon existing themes and trends? One's answer depends as much on one's theoretical orientation as on the almost nonexistent data. It is argued here that—except along the St. Lawrence, where Indians experienced direct contact with Europeans—groups further inland, both north and west, simply elaborated upon indigenous institutional structures. Their even more isolated neighbors, in turn, may, through association, have adopted patterns to facilitate transactional relationships. It is maintained, though, that radical change did not occur for most Indians until after the 1630s, when many groups were dislocated and/or reduced in numbers by Iroquois raids and epidemics, such as smallpox. Not until the Huron were routed in 1649, however, were many interior and western Algonquians directly affected; and for even more isolated Cree, further north, radical change may not have occurred until after the 1670s, when Hudson's Bay Company posts were established along the coast. Even then, in the area east of James Bay, processes appear to have been gradual and accretive rather than sudden and dramatic (Morantz 1983:157-161). The historical record can be employed to assess the nature of change, provided that one controls spatio-temporal factors.

There were twenty to twenty-five identifiable groups exploiting the resources on or near the main water route between Québec and Sault Ste. Marie during the early seventeenth century. The size of groups varied, seemingly according to resource densities and seasonal variations in availability. Groups moved about seasonally, separating when foods became more difficult to obtain and gathering when they were more plentiful or concentrated. The Jesuits who traveled the route to Huronia usually described it as having, among other food, abundant fish and game (Thwaites 1896(21):239-241; Cleland 1982). Granted, there may have been belt-tightening during the winter, but starvation doesn't seem to have occurred until epidemics and Iroquois raids weakened and dislocated groups after the 1630s.

Something approximating a home range system was perhaps in effect here, just as Rogers (1969) suggests was the case further north, albeit the size of the nothern ranges was somewhat smaller. There is no evidence that groups prevented others having access to subsistence resources, although inability to gain access to foods may have been an indirect byproduct of boundary defense of prestige/luxury materials.

The early historical records indicate that most or all St. Lawrence-Great Lakes Algonquians were linked into one or several exchange systems. Exchange may indicate, among other things, a lack of access to some particular resource(s). However, if

concern for boundary recognition is the crux of an encounter, the "exchange" of a gift for through-passage may involve receipt of a good not scarce or needed. In either case there are some good examples in the *Jesuit Relations*. When some Abenaki were attempting to reach Trois-Rivières in 1637, Father LeJeune (Thwaites 1896(12):189) remarked that a Montagnais captain went to block their passage:

> These Barbarians have a very remarkable custom. When other nations arrive in their country, they would not dare pass beyond without permission from the Captain of the place; if they did, their canoes would be broken to pieces. This permission to pass on is asked for with presents in hand; if these presents are not accepted by the Chief, not being minded to let them pass, he tells them he has stopped the way, and that they can go no further. At these words they have to turn back, or run the risks of war.

It is moot as to whether the "presents" were required because they were locally unavailable or as symbolic markers of control. These Abenaki had come to trap beaver and trade, not to obtain food. Beaver had become an important exchange resource to the Montagnais, and so such intrusion was perceived as trespass and a threat to their own trade. Whether this was an aboriginal "toll" system cannot be determined—1637 is late in terms of postcontact fur trade activities. If it developed after contact, then the Montagnais may have obtained it through the formalization of an exchange relationship with Algonquian neighbors to the west. Indeed, there are earlier examples among these latter peoples.

Perhaps the most celebrated example of boundary defense pertains to the Allumette (Kichespiirini) Algonquians of the Ottawa Valley. As early as 1609, Champlain reported that these people tried to prevent the Huron from reaching the French (Biggar 1922(2):71). The Allumette had probably long been controlling access to European goods on the Ottawa route and continued to do so until disease and the Iroquois devastated them. In 1613, they prevented Champlain from visiting the Nipissing (Biggar 1922(2):285). Twenty years later, LeJeune (Thwaites 1896(6):19) wrote that these Algonquians, "in order to monopolize the profit of the trade, prefer that the Hurons should not go down the river to trade their peltries with the French, desiring themselves to collect the merchandise of the neighboring tribes and carry it to the French; that is why they do not like to see us go to the Hurons, thinking that we would urge them to descend the river, and that, the French being with them, it would not be easy to bar the passage."

The Allumette were not the only people to control an important trade network system. From the earliest observations by Champlain, the Nipissing had a well-traveled, and probably close-

ly monitored, trade route to the Kilistinon (Cree) of the James Bay area. Prior to the 1630s, beaver pelts obtained by the Huron from the Nipissing were made into robes, there being insufficient game in the vicinity of the large Huron towns to clothe the inhabitants. Probably, then, the Huron-Nipissing alliance had developed during the century and a half prior to Champlain's trek to Huronia.

There are numerous examples of formal exchange alliances and monopolistic boundary defense patterns pertaining both to other groups and to later periods. While some later cases of boundary defense may have been postcontact extensions that preceded the expanding fur trade, many examples cannot be explained away so easily, contrary to Brasser (1971:261-262). They appear too well established at too early a date. Further, the protocol of trade seems too formalized and complex to have developed within a few years after contact. For example, the Huron right to trade with the Algonquians was a lineage prerogative rarely breached in early years (Heidenreich 1971:221-222, 233). There is, however, historical evidence that the institution was later extended to other groups and/or elaborated upon. For example, by 1636, expanding opportunities were also producing clandestine trade among the Huron (Thwaites 1896(10):223-225), as was seemingly the case in the Abenaki example. The system was not simply imposed on Indians by Europeans, nor did it develop only in response to European intervention. Rather, many early postcontact examples represent an elaboration and/or extension of indigenous institutions under conditions of relative political and economic self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Like the Nipissing, the Ottawa had well-established and time-honored trade networks both to the Petun and to the Algonquian groups north and west of Lake Huron (Biggar 1922(5):103). Champlain said that the Ottawa ". . . have several chiefs, each ruling in his own district. . . . They . . . go in troops to various regions and countries, where they traffic with other nations, distant four or five hundred leagues." The Ottawa also appear to have traded eastward, though there is little evidence that more than a handful had travelled to Québec prior to 1650. For example, Paul Ragueneau (Thwaites 1896(35):239) reported that "the Outaoukotwemiwek . . . are tribes who scarcely ever go down to the French settlements." This suggests that they either were prevented from making the trip by the Hurons or Nipissings and/or continued to observe the proper protocol in regard to trade alliances.

The destruction and/or dispersal of the Huron, Nipissing, and Ottawa Valley groups by war and disease during the 1630s and 1640s, however, left the gateway open after the Iroquois threat subsided. Quick to fill the breach, the Ottawa claimed that "the great river [Ottawa] belongs to them, and that no nation can launch a boat on it without their consent" (Thwaites 1896(51):

21). More westerly Algonquians, often subsumed under the label "Ottawa," traveled with them as their guests.

Further west, and just prior to the Huron dispersal, Ragueneau (Thwaites 1896(33):149) reported that the Saulteurs of the St. Mary's River region between lakes Huron and Superior required the French "to obtain a passage, if we wished to go further and communicate with numerous other Algonquin Tribes" living about Lake Superior.

It would seem that territorial rules applied only to the right to trade and to obtain exchange goods, and not to the right to exploit subsistence necessities. Rules of sharing and hospitality may have prevented the development of rules of exclusivity for basic food needs. Rather, boundary defense during the early seventeenth century probably emanated from sociopolitical relations among peoples. Groups appear to have exploited foods seasonally in predetermined areas, but nothing suggests that others were prevented access.

Indeed, where subsistence resources were concentrated in space and time, several distinct groups might gather at the same locale. For example, in the *Relation* for 1669-1671, Claude Dablon stated that the Saulteur live at Sault Ste. Marie "as in their own Country, and others being there only as borrowers. They compromise only a hundred and fifty souls, but have united themselves with three other Nations which number more than five hundred and fifty persons, to whom they have, as it were, made a cession of the rights of their native Country; and so these live here permanently, except the time when they are out hunting" (Thwaites 1896(54):133). While this union probably occurred after contact, the close relationship among the groups probably would earlier have provided reciprocal access to food ranges. The rich whitefish fishery in the St. Mary's River was a great attraction to numerous Indian groups: "It furnishes food almost by itself, to the greater part of all these peoples" from the surrounding area (Thwaites 1896(54):129-131).

During the years that the Ottawa were living at Green Bay and Lake Superior (1650-1670), the moose population on Manitoulin Island, which the Ottawa apparently had vacated, appears not to have been exploited by Indians, perhaps out of fear of the Iroquois. During the winter of 1670-1671, however, Nicolas Perrot, then living with the Amikouet, stated that they and the Saulteur, who were wintering in the same area, went hunting with snares on Manitoulin and killed "more than two thousand four hundred moose . . ." (Blair 1969(1):221). This might seem a wanton kill (if the figure is correct), but Indians had seemingly depleted the game along the north shore of Lake Huron to provision an important feast of the dead in the summer of 1670, hosted by the Amikouet to honor the recently deceased captain of that group. Indeed, game remained in short supply along the north shore: a year

later, at the mission at Mississague, Dablon (Thwaites 1896(55): 135) reported that "[a]ll those poor people had . . . been suffering from a famine, and . . . reduced to a fir-tree diet."

Whenever food was available, any group in the region might exploit it. Originally, beaver may also have been free to all, at least in areas where their pelts were not traded. With the growth in importance and volume of trade with other groups, including Europeans, Indians quickly came to overexploit beaver. LeJeune in 1634 discusses overexploitation among the Montagnais; if they could be induced to become farmers,

> beavers will greatly multiply . . . When the Savages find a lodge of them, they kill all, great and small, male and female. There is a danger that they will finally exterminate the species in this Region [Trois-Rivières], as has happened among the Hurons, who have not a single Beaver, going elsewhere to buy the skins they bring to the storehouse. . . . Now it will be so arranged that, in the course of time, each family of our Montagnais, if they become located, will take its own territory for hunting, without following in the tracks of its neighbors; besides we will counsel them not to kill any but the males, and of only such as are large. If they act upon this advice, they will have Beaver meat and skins in the greatest abundance. (Thwaites 1896(8):57-59)

Lack of territorial exclusivity and conservation was of concern to the French, and policies were being implemented to promote family hunting territories, so as to ensure conservation. Probably other Indians whose lands had been denuded of game were being told the same thing. That these policies had taken firm hold in some areas is attested to by Alexander Henry, who in 1761 reported: "The Algonquins, of the lake Des Deux Montagnes . . . claim all the lands on the Outaouais, as far as Lake Nipisingue; and that these lands are subdivided, between their several families, upon whom they have devolved by inheritance. I was also informed, that they are exceedingly strict, as to the rights of property, in this regard, accounting an invasion of them an offence, sufficiently great to warrant the death of the invader" (Henry 1969:23).

Other exotic materials, including copper from Lake Superior (Thwaites 1896(50):265-267; 54:153), lead from Iowa, in addition to pigment, mats, nets, pottery, and chert, were also exchanged. Whether Iroquois or Michigan-style pottery was traded into the region north of the Upper Great Lakes, and whether the women who made the pots were married to northern men, are uncertain. Perhaps both were occurring, although, according to Wright (1981:94-95), "[t]he drawing of women from adjacent regions where they had participated in completely different ceramic traditions is

regarded as the major reason for this bizarre heterogeneity of pottery styles."

By at least the early seventeenth century, columella shells from the Atlantic seaboard had become the special-purpose money of the entire St. Lawrence-Great Lakes region. LeJeune (Thwaites 1896(5):61), for instance, reported in 1632 that, for the Montagnais, their "gold and silver, their diamonds and pearls, are little white grains of porcelain." These "porcelain collars" were employed to establish alliances, validate positions of chieftainship, and resuscitate the dead and were placed in graves. These shell beads came gradually to be replaced, or at least accompanied, in transactions by beaver pelts, as the fur trade expanded.

Among the Hurons, individuals of particular lineages controlled trade with other tribal groups. According to Brébeuf: "There is also a certain order established as regards foreign Nations. And first, concerning commerce; several families have their own private trades, and he is considered master of one line of trade who was the first to discover it. The children share the rights of the parents in this respect, as do those who bear the same name; no one goes into it without permission, which is given only in consideration of presents" (Thwaites 1896(10):223-225).

Since such lineage trade among the Hurons suggests Algonquian counterparts and similar protocol, I argue that some Upper Great Lakes Algonquians—with well-established, regularized, and ancient inter-group alliances—had developed descent principles analogous to those of the Huron. For example, while the Huron possessed matrilineal clans, most groups later designated Ojibwa had patrilineal clans (Hickerson 1962; Bishop 1976). Alliances, even before contact, were a means of establishing exchange relations, which, in some cases, generated descent principles through which formal rights to trade could be regularized, monopolized, and maintained. A breach of these rights was viewed as an act of hostility, since it threatened the political position of the group and of its leader, in whom those rights were symbolically embodied. Such rights were jealously guarded, especially by the leader, who had the most to lose from transgressions. After contact, however, the opportunities for trespass increased in proportion to the volume and conditions of trade.

Such an alliance system, involving formal relations among structured groups, may have come about through the ripple effect of Mississippian developments in the Midwest during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At the time of contact, an elaborate alliance system is in evidence. Other Algonquians further north and east, more peripheral and hence less equal partners, may have been organized more loosely, forming groups based on ties among males related by blood for purposes of trade, but which remained primarily bilateral for subsistence purposes.

Algonquians near the north shore of Lake Huron had captains or chiefs who were either eldest sons of former chiefs (Thwaites 1896(55):137) or were adopted by the deceased chief's relatives (Blair 1969(1):84). As lineage heads, their primary function was to represent their kin group in trade and war. Thus, while their positions were ascribed by tradition, their prestige depended on personal achievement. Prestige could be enhanced by war heroics and by extending and enlarging political and economic links. To accomplish this, chiefs and their kinsmen had to extend their control over the resources of exchange and/or monopolize alliances with resource suppliers. Asymmetry would then result, when peripheral groups were forced to trade at a disadvantage while centrally located ones demanded, and got, handsome profits.

Chiefly offices also required validation. I suggest that in prehistoric times a successor to a deceased chief was required to give a small mortuary feast—a feast of the dead—to validate his claim and to resuscitate the name of his deceased predecessor. These feasts served essentially the same function as mortuary potlatches on the Northwest Coast. Although Hickerson (1960:87) suggests that aboriginal Algonquians lacked such feasts, evidence of a late prehistoric ossuary burial on Bois Blanc Island in the Straits of Mackinac hints at group solidarity and hence a feast of validation (McPherron 1967:289-293). Further, groups structured by unilineal rules that extended to chiefly offices needed some means of both honoring the high-status dead and publicly validating a successor's claim (Hickerson 1960:91). Thus, in addition to initiating intertribal alliances (of considerable importance during the seventeenth century), the feast of the dead could publicly certify political/territorial claims and enhance prestige.

During the seventeenth century, the European fur trade "led to serious changes in intertribal relations; new commercial relations required a broadening of political perspectives, a growing emphasis on external relations, the necessity for alliances and planned diplomacy" (Hickerson 1960:87). For at least a short period, the feast grew greatly in magnitude and scale to include many different groups and huge expenditures of food and other goods. Like mid-nineteenth-century potlatches, these early-contact feasts contained demonstrations of power by the chiefs. At a feast hosted by the Nipissing in 1641, the chief of each visiting group stands up in his canoe and

> throws away some portion of his goods to be scrambled for. Some articles float on the water, while others sink to the bottom. The young men hasten to the spot. One will seize a mat, wrought as tapestries are in France; another a Beaver skin; others get a hatchet, or a dish, or some Porcelain beads, or other article,—each according to his skill and the good fortune he may have. There is nothing but joy, cries, and public

> acclamations, to which the Rocks surrounding the Great Lake return an Echo that drowns all their voices.
>
> When the Nations are assembled, and divided, each in his own seats, Beaver Robes, skins of Otter, of Caribou, of wild Cats, and of Moose; Hatchets, Kettles, Porcelain Beads, and all things that are precious in this Country, are exhibited. Each Chief of a Nation presents his own gift to those who hold the Feast, giving to each present some name that seems best suited to it. (Thwaites 1896(23):211)

Later, after the Nipissing chiefs had been chosen to replace those chiefs who had died and for whom the feast was held, the new chiefs "gave largess of a quantity of Beaver skins and Moose hides, in order to make themselves known, and that they might be received with applause in their Offices. . . . The presents that the Nipissiriniens gave to the other Nations alone would have cost in France forty or even fifty thousand francs" (Thwaites 1896(23):217). Approximately 2,000 Indians attended this feast.

So competitive had the general situation among Indians become by the late seventeenth century that the aboriginal ethic of generosity had attained new dimensions. According to Nicolas Perrot (Blair 1969(1):135): "Although such generosity may be astonishing, it must be admitted that ambition is more the motive for it than is charity. One hears them boast incessantly of the agreeable manner with which they receive people into their houses, and of the gifts that they bestow on their guests—although it is not denied that this is done smilingly and with all possible graciousness." Some Indians who lived near or with the French had abandoned the pretense of generosity and had become "as selfish and avaricious as formerly they were hospitable" (Blair 1969(1):134-135); individualism and individual hunting territories soon replaced collective rights to resources and/or collective territoriality.

In the highly capricious context of the seventeenth century, Algonquian trade chiefs and their followers had to go ever further afield to tap new fur sources in order to maintain and/or enhance their fame and to satisfy their new material wants. As a result, virtually all Northern Algonquians were rapidly drawn into the expanding European fur trade.

BOREAL FOREST ALGONQUIANS

In the boreal forests north of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes region resided various peoples often lumped together as Kilistinon, Montagnais, or some other designation. Although the size of the ranges exploited as well as seasonal activities varied regionally, boreal forest groups had more similarities than

differences. Many of these groups were egalitarian, others less so, apparently supplying Indians to the south with moose hides and beaver pelts. Among the trappers, some form of territorial control may have extended to beaver lodges. Perhaps some of these Cree also consciously practiced resource management; according to Pierre Radisson, as late as the 1660s they still scorned to catch beaver in traps and "kill not the young castors, but leave them in the water, being that they are sure they will take him again, which no other nation doth" (Adams 1961:147).

This situation was soon to change. As the French fur trade spread northeast and northwest of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes region after mid-century, a system of local trade captains was extended and elaborated upon by boreal forest groups. As new groups became part of the expanding trade system, the resources of trade—beaver lodges—came to be coveted and defended, first by leaders on behalf of their groups, and later by individuals (or partners) who exploited on a regular basis particular tracts of fur-bearing territory. Under these new conditions, any attempts to manage resources for future use would have been undermined quickly by the heavy demand for furs. The kind of resource management described by Radisson could exist only under relative stability.

Probably neither territoriality nor resource management was part of the adaptive strategies of the most egalitarian bands of Indians. What is the evidence?

First, the earliest records describe northern foragers as extremely mobile. Provided that they did not exchange regularly the pelts of animals, which might have caused them to kill more than they needed for local consumption, mobility might have latent conservation effects, assuming that the minimal predator level was higher than the prey's minimal recovery level (Brightman 1987). It is maintained, however, that the conscious intent of mobility was to reduce energy costs that would other-wise increase as game in an area grew scarcer, not primarily to allow game to recuperate. Further, because of the vastness of the area which a group might exploit, any particular group or segment of it might not return to precisely the same region each year. However, knowledge of an area would facilitate exploitative efficiency. When a group planned to exploit a different area in the future, which was probably a frequent strategy, there was no reason for selectively killing game. Regardless of how well Indians understood the habits of animals, given a lack of understanding of biomass systematics they could not have known that their hunting strategies were either reducing or increasing the overall game population, which in the absence of territories would have been available to all. Likewise, resource management alone is best suited to harvesting large quantities of a particular species not threatened by outsiders, as may have been the case among the Cree described by Radisson. In the absence of

agreed rules of access, management would be detrimental, since resources spared by one group might be taken by another.

Second, Algonquian beliefs regarding animals were not conducive to resource management designed to maintain sustained yield. Game spirits had to be treated with respect, and the bones of dead animals properly disposed of. Such customs were to ensure that a dead animal would be reincarnated and that game would be available whenever needed. Thus killing animals could not reduce or exterminate them. Indeed, some Indians appear to have believed that exactly the opposite would occur. According to Andrew Graham (Williams 1969:154), the Cree near western Hudson Bay "never have any thought to provide for the future, but lie in their tent and indulge their enormous appetites. They kill animals out of wantonness, alleging the more they destroy the more plentiful they grow." If this statement accurately reflects Indian beliefs, it may indicate a postcontact ideological change, designed to justify killing additional game for purposes of exchange (Brightman 1987). As Leacock (1954) has argued, however, a conceptual distinction between production "for use" and "for exchange" is questionable, since in both instances production was for use value by the producers (Tanner 1979:10-12). Further, some prehistoric Cree had probably produced pelts for exchange to Indians to the south.

Indian beliefs about animals, then, reinforced and were reinforced by values concerning the manner in which needs could be satisfied, whether by exchange or use production. Thus, apparently indiscriminate killing to Indians was not so, albeit the consequence was overexploitation. Such practices, rather than being evidence of a breakdown of the aboriginal belief system, as C. Martin (1978) suggests, were evidence of its vitality (Bishop 1981). Indeed, the idea that the more animals killed, the more there would be, could have a basis in practical observation. Regions temporarily abandoned because of increasing energy costs tend to rebound rapidly, perhaps creating the illusion that animals are inexhaustible and that hunting them would increase rather than reduce their numbers (Brightman 1987). One could argue then, contrary to the Protestant work ethic, in favor of the benefits of being lazy—lazy, of course, being defined ethnocentrically in Western terms.

Earlier it was suggested that some northern peoples may have been territorial in regard to furbearers prior to European intervention. If this is correct, such territoriality may have developed in the following manner. Defense strategies could have arisen when beaver (and perhaps other fur pelts) became important exchange items. When the symbolic and/or material value of exchanges between two or more groups became sufficiently regular and important, representatives would emerge to regulate the flow of such items. When exchanges occurred, rituals would be held to symbolize the alliance and also to elevate the status of the

chief participants. If chiefs monopolized this right to trade and the high status accorded it and transmitted these attributes in an orderly fashion to an heir, as among groups near Lake Huron, ego-focused descent groups would emerge—the corporate patrilineal clans of the Ojibwa. Following the death of such traders, mortuary feasts would announce their high status and validate the right of succession. Among more northerly peoples less able to monopolize transactional networks and transmit them to heirs, charisma, personal abilities, and probably luck would determine trade chiefs (Williams 1969:169-70; Ray and Freeman 1978:67-68). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most trade chiefs maintained high status throughout their lives, perhaps because Europeans continued to recognize it. When trading, Indians would observe a strict itinerary of activities that clearly distinguished and elevated the position of the chiefs. Historic trade rituals were almost certainly modified versions of aboriginal forms. These rituals were so important that, according to Ray and Freeman (1978:55), had Europeans ignored them, Indians probably would have refused to trade.

Trade chiefs who represented their followers at the trading post were obligated to give away most of what they received. Generosity thus established and maintained support and, when given public recognition, exalted the status of the chief. During the early historic period, the status of trade chief may have been higher than in prehistoric times, because more goods were distributed and because Europeans participated in trade rituals. However, new opportunities to circumvent chiefs opened to aspiring individuals. Success as a trade chief depended both upon the willingness of others to provide support and also upon the goodwill of the European chief trader.

The position of trade chief among boreal forest peoples was either prehistoric or an early historic extension derived from and modelled after southern forms. Probably the most important items that Northern Algonquians provided were animal hides, especially moose, caribou, and beaver. Where beaver pelts were traded regularly with southern groups for other materials, trade chiefs would have wished not only to control access by others (boundary defense) but also to protect the resources of exchange from outside threats. Under these conditions territorial defense strategies applied to beaver lodges could arise where such lodges would have become the private property of the group. The leader of a group, along with group elders, would allot sections of a group's territory to family units.

Assuming that early contact developments paralleled or elaborated upon precontact models, a few historic examples suggest that the above argument pertaining to the manner in which territorial rules developed is correct. In 1647, Jerome Lalemant reported that the Attikamek residing north of Trois-Rivières "all assemble, each one in its own district, on certain days of the

year; and, although they have their own limits, if any one advances upon their lands, or rather into the woods, of his neighbors, that occurs without quarrel, without dispute, without jealousy" (Thwaites 1896(31):209).

Prior to the 1640s, the Attikamek may have been peripheral to developments along the St. Lawrence. Nevertheless, within a few years a trade fair came to be held at Necouba Lake in which the Attikamek participated. They soon came to occupy an important position in the trade in beaver pelts. By the late seventeenth century they had become distinctly territorial, with control in the hands of the leaders: "It is the right of the head of the nation . . . to distribute the places of hunting to each individual. It is not permitted to any Indian to overstep the bounds and limits of the region which shall have been assigned to him in the assemblies of the elders. These are held in autumn and in spring expressly to make this assignment" (Le Clercq 1910(2):237).

Five trade routes to James Bay are described in the *Jesuit Relations* for 1656-1658 (Thwaites 1896(44):239-243). While it cannot be determined whether they were all precontact, they became increasingly important as the European fur trade expanded during the seventeenth century. One of these routes was traversed by Father Albanel in 1671-1672. En route he met some Mistassini Indians, who threatened to charge him for passage through their lands. He stated: "It is no new thing for the Savages, obeying a maxim of their policy or of their avarice, to be extremely cautious in granting strangers a passage, by way of their rivers, to distant Nations" (Thwaites 1896(56):171-173). Given this policy, and Albanel's account of a major trading locale on James Bay, one can speculate that an allotment system of land tenure may have emerged in this region, as may also have been the case on the west side of James Bay (Oldmixon 1931:382).

In an allotment system, if similar to the one described among the late-seventeenth-century Attikamek, some leaders, along with tribal elders, determined where other Indians could hunt and enforced territorial boundaries. When Hudson's Bay Company posts were established in areas with an allotment system, local chiefs welcomed the traders, perhaps because they thought that they could control the distribution of a larger and locally available quantity of goods. The authority of leaders near coastal stores, however, was reduced when other Indians took the opportunity to trade directly with the Europeans. Where this happened, the territories assigned earlier by captains, in some cases, continued to be occupied and guarded by the same families but without the control of a centralized authority. This appears to be precisely the situation described by Morantz (1978) for some eastern James Bay Cree during the 1740s.

CONCLUSIONS

In areas where beaver became an important exchange item, territorial defense mechanisms could have arisen among prehistoric Algonquians. Indians under stable conditions could selectively harvest certain species of game, doing so not to promote conservation but rather to reduce foraging effort. While beaver in any given house might all be killed, Indians believed that reincarnation would prevent their extermination. Selectivity was practiced when large numbers of animals were being killed. If demands for the resource grew too great and/or the resource was threatened by others, extermination could result. In the area north of Huronia, this appears to have happened even before the European fur trade had a significant effect. Such a situation explains why the Nipissing and Ottawa had well-established routes to the north and northwest of the areas they occupied. Among some groups it appears that an allotment system of territoriality developed, as a means, I have argued, to guard and control the symbols of social status derived from transactional relationships. Such relations were of social, political, economic, and symbolic importance. Clearly, however, allotment systems were not intended to conserve resources, given Indian beliefs.

The suggestion that some Northeastern Algonquians, particularly the Montagnais, were less than egalitarian might seem to challenge current arguments, unless it is assumed that the European fur trade was responsible for generating social and sexual inequality (Leacock 1978). While this fur trade and European settlements along the St. Lawrence had an enormous effect on Indians, the model of change developed in this essay should apply, whether such inequality and territoriality ante- or postdated contact. Thus we can never be certain that the Montagnais were quite as egalitarian as Leacock suggests, especially since contact antedated historical accounts by at least several decades. The egalitarian model developed by Leacock and Lee (1982) may apply in some areas. The problem, however, is determining whether our examples truly fit their model.

For some, the argument developed here may be too speculative and the supporting data too sketchy. There is, however, some useful comparative evidence. The Carrier Indians of interior British Columbia were involved in a transactional trade system that extended to the Northwest Coast prior to the arrival of North West Company traders. In addition to trading European items acquired from the coast, the Carrier also exchanged strings of dentalium shells; these strings, like eastern wampum, according to Daniel Harmon (Lamb 1957:244), "constitute a kind of circulating medium, like the money of civilized countries. Twenty of these beads, they consider as equal in value to a beaver's skin." Each village had at least one chief and one or more "men of note" whose positions were obtained matrilineally and validated at mortuary potlatches. Demonstration of status involved the distri-

bution of beaver flesh, which, along with the pelts, was the property of the chief and nobles. Although the relatives of the nobles trapped for them, other Indians were barred from taking beaver on the noblemen's territories. The early-nineteenth-century Carrier were structurally very similar to many early-seventeenth-century Upper Great Lakes Algonquians. It would certainly be expected that these Algonquians practiced forms of territoriality not unlike their western brothers.

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