INTRODUCTION: TRANS-NATIONAL PROBLEMS AND NORTHERN NATIVE PEOPLES[1]

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The papers presented in this volume are an outgrowth of a thematic symposium held at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Ethnological Society in 1984. The symposium's purpose was to examine the assimilative threat to western Fourth World (see Müller-Wille and Pelto 1979:5) northerners in terms of the processual similarity present in both northern North American and Fenno-Scandian experiences of the intrusions of the surrounding national majorities.

This pragmatic approach, rather than one focussed on the apparent uniqueness of any single group's experience, was chosen for several reasons. The first was that, despite differences of ethnicity among these Native societies and the characteristics of the surrounding national majorities, many of the basic forces and methods used by these majorities transcend, at least in the West, national boundaries. The second was related to the fact that much recent research on the situation of Native northerners has been concerned with the political relations between these groups and the governing majority, while specific, and often local, consequences of contemporary contact are far less known (as an exception, however, see Paine 1982 and Freeman 1984 concerning the consequences of highly localized events).

It was felt by the symposium participants, therefore, that to focus our attentions exclusively on Fourth World political processes in relation to Western national states and majorities would beg comparative analysis across this broad spectrum of indigenous groups if only because the national legislative and judicial approaches in each state toward Native peoples have their own histories and complexities. Furthermore, as we well know in Canada, a satisfactory political articulation between native groups and national majorities has not yet been constructed.

One further point also contributed to the selection of this pragmatic focus. This is that it can no longer be said that all confrontations between Native

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minority and national majority are conflicts embodied on the majority side by the State or large-scale industrial interests. As several authors remark, situations now exist in which northern societies are in conflict not with formal government or economic interests, but with popular movements of "conscience" which, in some cases, advocate causes that are seen by movement members to override indigenous political, legal or cultural rights. Therefore, to limit the symposium to a discussion of formal Native/State political articulation and separateness would overlook a major contemporary influence upon northern Native culture.

Trans-National Problems and the Papers

As originally organized for the Canadian Ethnology Society meeting, the symposium included presentations focussed on societies as diverse as the Aleut of the Pribilof Islands and the Sami of Norwegian Finnmark. In all, six papers were presented, covering the Pribilof Island Aleut (Oran Young, Center for Northern Studies), The Dene Nation (Michael Asch, University of Alberta), East Baffin Inuit (Wenzel), Québec James Bay Cree (Alan Penn, Grand Council of the Cree) and Norwegian Sami (Myrdene Anderson, Purdue University; Tom Svensson, University of Oslo). In each paper, the author sought to examine in detail some of the major elements or results of tacit or direct majority society intrusion into and upon local indigenous social, political or economic development.

The topics covered in the symposium spanned the involvement of the Dene in Mackenzie Delta oil development, the local impact of anti-sealhunt protests on the Aleut and Inuit socioeconomic situations, the problems of mercury leaching in the James Bay watershed used by the Cree in the aftermath of local hydro development, the human ecological implications of hydro-electric construction for Sami reindeer herders and the partial factionalization of Norwegian Sami society as a result of inter-ethnic institutional polarization. All these papers underscore the fact that within the political struggles facing indigenous northern cultures there are serious social, cultural and economic implications.

Unfortunately, not all the papers presented at the 11th Canadian Ethnology Society symposium were available (Asch, Penn) for inclusion in this volume. However, the papers presented here include four of the original contributions (Young, Anderson, Svensson, Wenzel) with the valuable addition of a new paper by Robert Paine on the Sami, as well as a comment on it by Vigdis Stordahl. The intent of the volume remains the same as that originally expressed through the CES symposium; that is, the importance of understanding local consequences within the larger framework of northern minority/national majority relations. While recent attention has tended to

centre on the larger political-economic scope (see Dacks 1981; Asch 1984; Boldt and Long 1985; see also Svensson 1976), considerably less currency seems to now be paid to the analysis and understanding of small-scale, local reverberations that occur as a result of these macro-developments.

Two Sami[1] papers in this volume (Anderson, Svensson) ostensibly focus on two different aspects of Sami/Norwegian relations, but in fact articulate well in presenting the severe internal consequences that have resulted from Norway's institutional and economic intrusions into Sami life. Svensson deals directly with one major conflict, the confrontation between the Sami and the Norwegian State over the development of the Alta/Kautokeino hydro-electric project. In his presentation of this material, Svensson underscores situational elements which evoke strong parallels to the Cree-Inuit problems as a result of the James Bay Project in Nouveau Québec.

Anderson is concerned with the long-term consequences of Norwegian institutional incursions among the Sami. Similarly, she addresses the problem that members of a colonized indigenous minority become even more marginalized through the emphasis placed on specific cultural symbols and attributes, both in terms of the dominant national majority and by the minority members, themselves.

Wenzel and Young are both concerned with the economic and social effects of the animal rights movement, as represented by seal hunting protests of the 1960s and 1970s, on Canadian Inuit and the Bering Strait Pribilof Islanders. In these papers, the main focus is not on the impact of state-sanctioned activities on native minorities, but rather on how a non-governmental coalition, which bases its concern on the ethically and ecologically wise use of wildlife, has essentially destroyed the basis for local Aleut and Inuit economic control.

The Volume in Contemporary Perspective

Since the time all the papers in this volume were originally submitted, a number of events have occurred which have contributed negatively to the situation of indigenous northerners. Several of these fall exactly within the framework of this volume's theme, although the most dramatic, the Chernobyl nuclear accident, with its consequent effects upon the Sami of Sweden and Norway, may represent only a temporarily unique occurrence and should serve as a warning about the future of the North (see Inuit Circumpolar Conference 1986:14-16, 26). Chernobyl also points out that academic concerns over trans-national northern problems must be forward-looking, as well as retrospective.

The impact of the animal rights movement, addressed by Young and Wenzel, is clearly an area with implications for indigenous hunters and pastoral-

ists living under all national jurisdictions and one which underscores the importance of understanding northern Native relations with southern majorities as a whole, rather than focussing solely on government/industry interactions with indigenous populations. In both Aleut and Inuit cases, the anti-sealhunt protest has clearly succeeded in severely limiting an important element of local northern economy and identity. While the seal "issue" has to a great extent now become history, it is also clear that seals are not the only biological resource of northerners that is of concern to the movement.

The problems of large-scale industrial projects and programs within the traditional territories of Sami, Cree and other Native northerners is also an ongoing one. While hydro-electric development has, for the moment, become an apparently dormant problem, events in Canada and northern Europe suggest that in the future such large-scale intrusion will continue to be a concern of northerners.

In Canada, it appears that the James Bay development project will soon enter a second phase and, although the basic political arrangements of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement remain in place, this new round of industrial expansion will present serious cultural, ecological and economic consequences for the Cree. By the same token, one of the results of Chernobyl may well be the initiation of extensive hydro-electric construction in the Sami homelands, especially if Sweden decides to abandon nuclear power. In such a case, the problems detailed by Anderson and Svensson will, at least, be exacerbated.

Other trans-national problems of concern to northerners, but which have not been raised here, include access to or competition from commercial fisheries (Alaska, Greenland, Canada), forestry developments (Alaska, Scandinavia) and hydrocarbon and other non-renewable resource developments (Fenno-Scandia, Greenland, Canada, Alaska), both on land and along the outer continental shelves bordering traditional northern lands. As well, there remain the secondary problems, discussed by Asch and Penn (original symposium), that arise out of primary industrial development.

If nothing else, it is the hope of the contributors to this volume that students of northern societies and of majority/minority culture relations will continue to critically examine key questions with regard to northern indigenous societies and their homelands. The problems discussed here represent not the end point of a set of conditions and relations, but only a snapshot of an evolving process of intrusion, colonization and assimilation.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks, first, to all the contributors to this volume and to the original Canadian Ethnology Symposium. We have chosen to leave

the different spellings of Sami/Saami and so forth as individual authors wished. I would also like to thank the editors and reviewers of *Anthropologica* for assisting in the publication of this set of papers. To the authors, editors and readers I express my apologies for the slowness in bringing these papers forth.

Note

1. *Editors' Note:* Since this introduction was written, the editors of the journal have received a brief postscript from Myrdene Anderson: "A discrepancy is to be found in the spelling of Sami as it appears in the articles by Svensson, Paine and Anderson (and in the Introduction). The guest editor, while respecting the usage of each author, notes that Alf Isak Keskitalo (1976), a Sami social scientist, has put forth 'Sami' as the preferred linguistic form replacing 'Lapp.'"

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