

The Politics of Indigenous-Settler Relations in Quebec: Economic Development and the Limits of Intercultural Dialogue and Reconciliation

Daniel Salée and Carole Lévesque

The inclusive nature of recent northern economic development plans in Canada is seen by many as a positive transformation of the way settler state and society relate to indigenous peoples. Several scholars have inferred that indigenous peoples-settler relations are increasingly guided by a logic of hybridization and interculturalism, whereby settler state and society are now more willing to empower indigenous peoples and relinquish the historical dominion they have exercised over them. The public controversy sparked by the provisional comprehensive land claim agreement the Quebec and Canadian governments struck with four Innu communities in 2002 does not support such an optimistic outlook. Rather, this episode shows this notion that northern economic development plans will facilitate the mingling of cultures and a more egalitarian relationship between settlers and indigenous peoples is founded on an improper assessment of the prevailing social dynamics of power.

Keywords: indigenous peoples-settler relations; interculturalism; northern economic development; Innu; Quebec; Canada

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