

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Date:	12/05/2015	Entry Number:	1353
Case Study Name:	"Property" and Aboriginal Land Claims in the Canadian Subarctic: Some Theoretical Considerations		
Authors:	Paul Nadasdy		
Document Type:	Journal article		
Year:	2002		
Language:	English		
Document Location:	<i>Wisconsin, USA</i>		
Full Citation:	Paul Nadasdy, 2002. "Property" and Aboriginal Land Claims in the Canadian Subarctic: Some Theoretical Considerations," <i>American Anthropologist</i> 104, no. 1 , 247–61, doi:10.2307/683774.		
Region:	North America		
Country:	Canada		
Ecosystem Type:	Mountain, grassland, woodland		
Social Characteristics:	Indigenous community		
Scale of Study:	National		
Resource Type:	Land		
Type of Initiative:	Research-driven project		
Community-Based Work:	Land claims and agreements		

Keywords:	Property, First Nations, aboriginal land claims, Canada, Subarctic.
Summary:	<p>Many of the world's aboriginal peoples are currently engaged in struggles over land and self-government with the states that encompass them. In Canada, aboriginal people have effectively used the concept of "aboriginal title" to force the government to negotiate land and self-government agreements with them. Such agreements, however, along with the notion of "aboriginal title" itself, are based on the European concept of "property"; they grant First Nations "ownership" of certain lands and spell out the rights they possess in relation to those lands. This means that aboriginal people have had to learn to think and speak in the "language of property" as a precondition for even engaging government officials in a dialogue over land and sovereignty. Yet the concept of property is in many ways incompatible with many Canadian First Nation people's views about proper human-animal/land relations. In this article, I argue that the land claim process - because it forces aboriginal people to think and speak in the language of property - tends to undermine the very beliefs and practices that a land claim agreement is meant to preserve.</p>