



REFLECTIONS ON THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUÉBEC AGREEMENT

REGARD SUR LA CONVENTION
DE LA BAIE-JAMES ET DU NORD QUÉBÉCOIS



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The Agreement and Québec : Totality, Polity and Behaviour

Louis-Edmond Hamelin

"It would be natural to assume that Québec has always been fully exercising its powers and authority everywhere in its domain... but that has not exactly been the case."

John Ciaccia, *Philosophy of the Agreement*,
National Assembly of Québec, November 5, 1975.

"To know where this Land of Québec ends, lost in the fog of the North... and of geopolitics."

Translated from Pierre Lahoud and Henri Dorion, *Le Québec vu du ciel* (Montréal : Éditions de l'Homme, 2001), p. 220.

The program of this conference proposes four sectoral approaches to the Agreement, respectively considering : regional development, environment, governance and implementation. My objective here is to offer an overview of the treaty in terms of Québec as a whole.

Evaluating an accord as existential as the Agreement of 1975 from a geopolitical perspective, in the space of a conference session, is a difficult and perhaps absurd exercise. And yet it is a question of paramount importance : It relates to the structure of a political whole, to the ways in which the South has dealt with its remote regions as well as the ways in which the North pursues its own goals for progress. The Agreement, which might be described as the greatest joint undertaking between the North and South of Québec, simply provides us with an opportunity for reflection here.

Did the Agreement specifically take into account the geopolitical reality it was intended for? How did the treaty consider all the ties between Québec's North and South? In the post-Agreement environment, should we still be concerned with the objective of a "unitary Québec"? Do northern self-governing structures threaten the current totality of Québec? Can

the South's policy toward the North affect Québec's relations with the Territory of Nunavut, Crees outside Québec, the Innus of Labrador and other neighbouring peoples? In short, what kinds of internal and external Québec identities are conveyed, expressly or not, by the Agreement? Is the post-Agreement Québec identity different from the pre-Agreement one?

A probe of the characteristics of Québec as a spatial entity may trouble both the people of the South, for whom the treaty of 1975 solved everything, and the people of the North, who may fear a new phase of expansion from Laurentian (or Southern) Québec. In fact, an examination of a Québec whole or plenitude¹ is neither an anti-Aboriginal strategy nor a plea in favour of Southern Québec alone (see the ideology of coexistence, below).

1. The Threefold Notion of Plenitude

The issue of a Québec seen as a whole is usually not even raised: it simply seems to go without saying. This assurance rests on the fact that a government normally acts over its entire territory through its laws and institutions. However, some thinkers worry about this aspect of "wholeness" when specific events occur such as the significant enlargement of Labrador in 1927 and the Aboriginal No votes in the 1995 referendum. The cross-border reality of Mohawk, Micmac, Montagnais, Cree and Inuit populations is another source of concern.

The notion encompasses at least three aspects. The most visible one, and often the only one considered, relates to spatial integrity, i.e. establishing and preserving the maximum Québec territorial extent. Next, the notion of plenitude refers to the best "State" practices, in terms of both overall leadership and day-to-day management. In other words, how is regional polity² best defined? Who should be responsible for managing a heterogeneous territory in optimal fashion? The South? But for a long time the South neglected its northern responsibilities. The North alone? But the North is neither an independent country nor a territory able on its own to cover the cost of its infrastructure or its current public expenditure. At best, it is up to the North and the South, in cooperation, to contribute to the future of this land. Both authorities would thus be involved in the pragmatic construction of a whole Québec of one kind or another at a given moment. Lastly, the ever-present mental aspect expresses the citizens' views that determine what action is taken. Under what circumstances would the inhabitants of the South and the North be most pleased with a vision of a whole Québec? Are there limits of provocation that would be intolerable for either northerners or southerners? The psychological aspect of plenitude is at the very heart of the issue. The large cultural gap between North and South justifies an interest in the northern identity, a question that is often overlooked.

1. A number of terms and concepts may be used to express the thematic and spatial whole of Québec: amplitude, completeness, absorption, togetherness, entirety, integrity, plenitude, Québec identity, totality. All of these words have been employed here, and their meaning can be determined by the context in which they are used. Obviously, this discussion of spatial totality, polity and attitudes acknowledges the current provincial situation within Confederation. It is in this context of shared jurisdiction that the word "plenitude" derives its meaning.

2. *Polity* refers to any kind of organized political entity or territorial administration. The Nunavik project in the northern part of the territory covered by the Agreement is a polity. The word is used by political analyst Gérard Bergeron.

The notion of plenitude refers to territorial extent, as well as the political and administrative framework and the emotional ties between man and his environment. What impact will the Agreement have on each of these areas?

2. The "Peninsula" Argument

Totality first of all denotes a physical aspect, a "walkable" expanse, a raw space. Here, the very existence of the "Québec-Labrador peninsula," to quote Jacques Rousseau's 1949 expression, comes to the fore. In terms of natural layout, there are fairly clear external boundaries: James Bay, Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, the Labrador Sea, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Baie des Chaleurs. In the south, the stem of the peninsula is marked by a series of waterways that almost make Québec an island; these include the Harricana, Ottawa and upper St. Lawrence rivers, tributaries of the Saint John, and the Ristigouche. Thus, hydrography provides Québec with natural borders, an advantage long sought by countless governments for their own territory. However, there remains the anomaly of "1927 Labrador."

Within the peninsula and over the centuries, the North Shore Innus-Montagnais have shown a mega-territorial awareness by hunting caribou up to Ungava Bay and by using the "great portage" that leads to the Mistassini and on to James Bay. Moreover, European cartographers even before Champlain depicted a large, unified land mass located between the *Sinus S: Laurentij* in the South and the *Golfo de Merosro* in the North.³

In the twentieth century, actions by the Québec Government have reflected the notion of an entire peninsula: the extension of the province's borders in 1912, the Mining Act of 1946, the Direction générale du Nord du Québec 17 years later, and above all the Agreement of 1975. The joint signing of this last document by northerners and southerners constitutes the most remarkable act in a project affecting the majority of the territory of Québec, the immense Hudson basin. In addition, roads and high-voltage power lines between the Middle North and Southern Québec form lengthy, permanent links that are undoubtedly peninsular.

The projection of southern organization into the North comes under the "sector" theory of geopolitics, applicable here in a non-maritime situation. According to this conception, the ambitious elements of society embark upon expansionist political or economic activities. The argument for basing one's action on some spatial connection, namely being located upstream or downstream, above or below, North, South or around, has been used by colonial governments, the Hudson's Bay Company, Aboriginal peoples, 1927 Labrador as well as southern Québec; in this last case, the regional name *Nouveau-Québec* clearly demonstrated that the project for territorial expansion was of southern inspiration. Outside Québec, the "sector" argument has occasionally been proclaimed by various nations. Expansion into immediately adjacent areas adds depth and extent to a State's root territory if its residents and neighbours allow this.

But the sector theory, like colonization, like the American Frontier in the nineteenth century, like the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1930s, falls within the ideologies of growth and

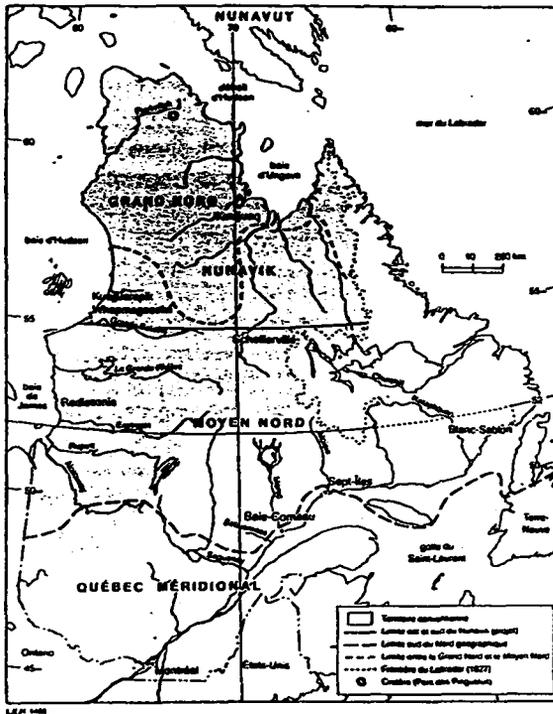
3. The Portuguese term (Mercator, 1569) came before the English name *Hudson Strait*. As for the Latin hydronym, it was replaced by *Gulf of St. Lawrence*.

absorption (see below). Under this approach, the cultural values of the area subject to absorption are threatened by indifference, assimilation and non-participation. What improvements does the Agreement offer?

3. Three Zones : Southern Québec, Middle North, Far North

Zones of human habitation, which may cover areas of varying size, possess their own cultural values. Québec is made up of three vast zones, two of which lie within the territory governed by the 1975 Agreement.

Map : North of Québec



Source. Cartography lab., Dept. of Geography, Université Laval

Comments. The James Bay Territory of 1975 is bounded on the North by the 55th degree of latitude, and on the East by the 70th degree of longitude. In the spirit of the Agreement, the 55th parallel separates Cree territory (in the South) from Inuit territory.

Southern Québec, or basic or Laurentian Québec, lies to the South of the geographic North (starting around the 50th parallel).

Geographically, the Québec-Labrador peninsula is made up of four parts : Southern Québec (in the South), the Middle North (in the Centre), the Far North (at the northern extremity) and Labrador (in the east), which is part of Newfoundland. The land inhabited by the Crees is found mostly in the Middle North, whereas that of the Inuit lies mainly in the Far North.

The boundaries of the future region of Nunavik (planned for 2011) have not been definitively set.

Southern Québec, sometimes more familiarly called *Laurentia*, corresponds to a historic territory, i.e. the area settled by a characteristically French-speaking population, and the seat of the highest level of political authority within the Canadian confederation. The northern limit of this part of Québec runs approximately along the 50th parallel, a line of human creation that stretches from the Mingan Islands to a point just North of Abitibi. Through an abuse of language as well as a habitual under-appreciation of the North, many authors from the South, in their ideology, discourse and writings, still confuse Southern Québec with Québec as a whole. The Agreement, which defends the North, will shake up this unhealthy situation of southern absorption (see below).

North of this mainly Laurentian Québec extends the *Middle North*. This area of boreal forest, where Indians form the largest group of Aboriginals, has for the last few decades been the site of the Manicouagan-Outardes and Churchill reservoirs and generating stations in the East, and those of the Grande Rivière in the West. The Cree and Naskapi territories in the Middle North are covered by the Agreement.

Above the 57th or 58th parallel, the northern third of Québec corresponds to the lands inhabited by the Inuit, the land of Arctic tundra, where the government of Nunavik⁴ is in the planning, following the 1975 Agreement. This is the *Far North* zone of Québec.

Together, the Middle North and the Far North, which form the true North of Québec, cover 70 % of Québec and make it the northernmost province in Canada. Unlike most human activity in Southern Québec, that in the North has been conducted for the most part by Aboriginal people. Thus, in a way, Québec identity is northern above all, and Québec northern identity is mainly Aboriginal; these two aspects, though significant, seldom appear in official discourse rooted in a western Europe that has no Aboriginals and is warmer than even southern Québec. For northerners, there was nothing "new" about the Nouveau (or New) Québec of 1912. For the majority of southerners, however, it resembles the Québec of the South, a Québec simply "continued" from the South. This type of southern illusion does not erase the lack of similarity between the North and the South. There is little cohesion between the Laurentian and northern entities, and the Agreement has revealed this lasting trait of human geography.

4. Ideologies of North/South Relations

The division of Québec as a whole into a South and a North (the latter made up of Middle North and Far North) is the context surrounding the current discussion. Totality is mainly a feature of southern discourse and mythology; the Aboriginal peoples of the North are little concerned with the maximum territorial extent of Québec, even though they have close ties to the land. They are more sensitive to the way in which the South tries to accommodate them within the Québec framework, in accordance with the sector theory (see above). On the ground, the question of plenitude becomes a two-headed beast: the application of an expansionist policy in accordance with the historical positions of the South, on the one hand,

3. Nunavik Commission, *Amiqqaaluta. Let us Share Mapping the Road Toward Government for Nunavik* (Canada: Ottawa, 2001), XII + 101 + 17 p.

and the northerners' supreme efforts to push for their regional Aboriginal identity, on the other. This striking contrast underlies any geopolitical process for Québec as a whole. How, then, can Québec's North and South engage in a fruitful dialogue and make the political entity of an entire Québec function harmoniously when both groups, in addition to being bound to different inhabited areas, have vastly different major objectives? With naiveté, and without much information, the Agreement inherited this gulf. Can we not assume that a better understanding of the dichotomy within Québec would have led to a different geo-cultural Agreement?

In short, the notion of plenitude is neither a question of little importance, nor a permanent state, nor a closed case.

The following discussion of three pertinent ideologies takes us a little farther. These ideologies are defined as absorption, distance and coexistence; from a northern perspective, they are of unequal value.

Absorption [of the North by the South]. Under the conditions left by colonial history, this is the commonest of the three processes.

This view leads to "constitutional" statements such as "Aboriginal peoples are recognized as having only those rights that are already accepted." This cautious attitude, which offers the advantage of legal protection against any kind of expanded interpretation, puts the consideration of unresolved issues at a disadvantage. According to this utterly timid approach, to say the least, any subject that has never been directly discussed should simply remain that way. What is worse, the rigorous and permanent implementation of such a system will restrict the examination of new issues. In addition to producing considerable disappointment, such an attitude of discretion does not even represent a neutral opinion; non-involvement constitutes a rather clear bias toward the status quo. Thus, over the centuries, very few proposals for coexistence have made it to the negotiating table with non-Aboriginal decision makers.

Absorption expresses the hope that Southern Québec's decision-making leadership will exercise its power in "inalienable" fashion throughout Québec. As recently as the 1960s, three leaders belonging to different parties (Liberal, Union Nationale and the soon-to-be Parti Québécois) could venture into the heart of the Montagnais Middle North and trumpet the slogan *Maîtres Chez Nous* (*Masters in Our Own House*), appreciated elsewhere but conveying a hostile thinking in the eyes of the Aboriginal peoples. This rallying call is an example of the Laurentianization of Northern lands by Southern Québec. In any case, the celebrated "Manic" was carried out without the consent of the Innu inhabitants of the region. In Canada in 1973, three judges, including Albert Malouf, issued a pro-Aboriginal caveat. Two short years later came the James Bay Agreement, which some Aboriginal people complained of having been forced to enter. Regardless, conveniently for the South, Aboriginal title was extinguished.⁵ Although the South has had trouble giving up its customary hierarchical position, southerners are learning to no longer speak of assimilation or paternalism. In my opinion, the softening in tone is not so innocent, however. In 1999, for example, a flurry of a hundred southern literary expressions landed at Lake Caniapiscau.

5. Québec, *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (and Complementary Agreements)* (Québec City : Éditeur officiel, 1984), 640 p. Reference to sections 2.1 and 2.6.

Distance [of the North from the South]. Under the second ideology, the Aboriginal peoples of the North take control of the discourse, but have little control over the initiative for activities other than traditional ones. The very real substratum of North/South differences, which are not always easy to understand, has prompted Aboriginal peoples to set political objectives that include self-government. Some would even like to establish "government to government" relations within Québec. Regionally, this divergent and increasingly robust northern thinking confirms the rejection of both the "sameness approach" proposed by some and the quasi-ethnic hierarchy advocated by others, two prospects considered highly desirable by the majority governments of multiethnic countries. Roméo Saganash illustrates this separation of views: "The opportunities for discussion between our two peoples are almost non-existent."⁶ Obviously, this lack of opportunity does nothing to encourage North/South dialogue. In 1993, some northerners went so far as to demand: "The Middle North for the Crees." Such a violent exclusivist statement nevertheless expresses the North's persistent refusal to be defined only by the South. In terms of the environment, Québec has committed itself to protecting natural habitats in the Agreement, and so Aboriginals have every right to fight tooth and nail for significant compensation for all the broken promises. Québec's fear of being condemned by the Court seems to have contributed to the introduction of certain government policies (agreement with the Crees, October 2001).

Otherwise, despite its massive investments, the South continues to learn very little about the specific cultures of the North. In terms of total Québec plenitude, the northernist adjustment made by many southerners has made less progress than the political structures of the State and the economic activities of developers such as Hydro-Québec.

Consequently, the gap between the groups conjures up the image of two parallel tracks, carefully laid side by side, much like the Mohawk Two Row Wampum. The distance between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals corresponds to a philosophy of separation of peoples. This way of thinking cannot lead to the best political arrangement nor optimum polity for northern inhabited lands.

Future political and administrative structures should aim for the level of autonomy necessary to establish a minimum degree of respect for clearly distinct cultures, those of the North being characterized by an almost acrobatic overlapping of the traditional and the modern. In favouring traditionality, despite the mixed nature of Aboriginal reality, the Agreement proved unable to properly identify this fundamental level of respect.

Coexistence. This is the third formula for political action in a multicultural environment. Complementing the metaphor of the tracks running strictly parallel, we now add that of a service train that uses them to the benefit of all categories of the population. Another image of "togetherness" might come from the team of arctic sled dogs, where each dog runs in its own track while sharing in pulling the sled. As opposed to the vocabularies of the two previous processes, which express either actions expressing authority over frontier areas (absorption), or northern demands and resistance (*distance*), the third course uses terms that suggest dialogue, respect, sharing, convergence, confluence, coming together, joint management, cohe-

6. Translated from Roméo Saganash, "L'occupation conjointe d'un pays revisité," Hydro-Québec. *Autres temps, autres défis*, ed. Yves Bélanger and Robert Comeau (Québec City: PUQ, 1995), p. 26.

siveness, harmony, partnership. The Supreme Court, for its part, has spoken of reconciliation. Coexistence requires an advanced form of pluralism to be put into practice.

While absorption is a top-down approach, and the marking of differences relates to regional authority, coexistence depends on creative dialogue, in which both North and South voluntarily and simultaneously participate with the aim of arriving at a more functional total Québec.

Whatever its merits in theory, coexistence will not affect all areas and will not have an equal effect everywhere. Even in the best of arrangements, many activities will continue to be conducted mainly by either the South – national defence or the application of international charters, for example – or the North – Aboriginal languages, for instance. In Nouveau-Québec, strictly southern and strictly northern initiatives will therefore be found together side by side, rather like the lands identified as Category I, II or III in the Agreement. No doubt there will always be disagreements, but all relevant solutions inspired by an intercultural approach will be less difficult to negotiate and then to implement.

The “Eastmain-Rupert” agreement of October 2001 signed, to the surprise of many, by the Crees and the Québec Government, is more closely aligned than the Agreement with the desirable objective of coexistence. In addition, it broke new ground by considering resources – electricity, forests, mines – as a whole and not separately, as before. This intention to do things at least a little differently is to be applauded.

In comparing the three ideologies, we may therefore conclude that absorption expresses a mainly Southern idea, and distance a mainly Northern one, whereas coexistence calls for a meeting of the two through a grammar of civility jointly used. The polity resulting from these different courses of action is somewhat forced in the first case, frustrating in the second, and freely consented to in the last. The Agreement of 1975 expresses a great deal of absorption, encourages distance and only imperfectly promotes coexistence. In this respect, the Agreement of 1975 seems a confused, hesitant act.

Aboriginal people consider the Agreement to be merely a single evolutionary phase, not a contract closed forever. While they are not demanding universal and infinite application of its undertakings, they believe that the 1975 document mainly contains an as yet unreleased energy, an energy that could even lead to a form of polity characterized by self-government. Thus, for the Aboriginal peoples, the Agreement opts for distance over absorption, and this ultimately leads to agreements of coexistence.

5. A Geopolitical Assessment of the Agreement

I started by saying that the greatest merit of the Agreement is that it exists. This exceptional State treaty is the product of the political goodwill of Québec and Canada, the skill of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal negotiators, faith in development, and the urgency of reviving work sites that had been opened without due forethought. Taken in its strongest sense, the verb “exist” implies that, from now on, it will no longer be possible to do anything without the Agreement; as circumstances evolve, this formula may constitute either a pedestal or a brake. Through its intention, its magnitude, its originality, its multiethnic and bigovernmental signature, its importance here and now, the Agreement indeed holds the rare title of major

historic document. The solemn accord involves all Québécois, who thus become so many "signatories" to the Agreement, even if they never had the opportunity to directly express their opinion on this major issue.

The most significant contribution of the 1975 treaty lies in the recognition of the Aboriginal peoples' irrevocable status as players in the future of the North of Québec. "The Government proposes to deal with the native peoples as full-fledged citizens," declared the government representative to the National Assembly.⁷ A well-placed witness went so far as to mention the "principle of cohabitation, i.e. the shared use of the territory."⁸ In fact, without the First Nations, the goal of Québec's total amplitude will remain a myth. The Aboriginal peoples have obtained the status of beneficiaries of the Agreement and have since worked extensively with non-Aboriginals.

To begin with, this major new accord pleased nearly everyone: signatories (Inuit, Cree and other), suppliers of goods and services, workers, financiers, and naturalists active at the grass roots of "environmental protection" (chapters 22 and 23). Unfortunately, this original satisfaction would prove short-lived. The disenchantment is not surprising if we consider the brief geopolitical reflection that preceded the project; feats of technical and engineering prowess were obviously not enough to make up for what was missing in terms of geopolitical ideology.

One of the objectives of the Agreement was to remove obstacles to development, in particular to hydroelectric development in the Middle North. Businessmen thought that the treaty would "do away with any remaining doubts as to Québec's rights over this territory"; they viewed it as a straightforward insurance policy for development. In the event, this assertion petered out on its own, and some contractors even claimed that "the Agreement hinders development." The customary ideology of absorption made it difficult to understand that things could no longer be done the same way. This expression of bitterness on the part of diehard supporters of growth constituted an *contrario* demonstration of the very real effects of the Agreement.

Another Southern disappointment concerned the fact that the Agreement did not put an end to claims by the Aboriginal peoples of the North. If the consolidation of territorial integrity is necessary for a country to establish its totality, then northern plenitude requires more than simply fulfilling the conditions specified by the Boundaries Extension Act of 1912; it is a matter of completely revamping the existing polity. This is all the more true considering that at the beginning of the century, Aboriginal peoples were not called upon to participate in formulating the transfer of lands from Canada to Québec. The Agreement of 1975 may well be a very detailed administrative protocol, but it does not lay out all the rules necessary for changing the structure of Québec's North. Aboriginal peoples are intent on being major players in this future process, though non-Aboriginals must not be excluded, either. The current means of coexistence will have to be perfected and new ones invented.

7. John Ciaccia, *Philosophy of the Agreement*, Speech given to the National Assembly of Québec, November 5, 1975, pp. XI-XXIII. Ref. p. XIX.

8. Translated from Armand Couture, "Les apports de la Convention: le point de vue d'Hydro-Québec," *Hydro-Québec. Autres temps, autres défis*, p. 214.

Aside from its detailed provisions, the Agreement constitutes a document of exceptional scope for countries in cold climes. It thus serves as a northern standard, to be followed by some, avoided by others. One issue in particular, the transfer of land rights, suits developers but not the Aboriginal peoples. So many things are said in the document that can be interpreted by observers to support their opinions; this textual abundance explains the number of debates and appeals before the courts. Be that as it may, through its concern for the environment, the treaty of 1975 has helped improve various hydroelectric and other projects, including the Grande-Baleine, Eastmain, Sainte-Marguerite and Betsiamites developments.

The Agreement [Hydro-Québec as well as constitutional conferences on Aboriginal peoples] has also indirectly affected Québec as a whole. As a result of events, the South's view of the North and the Aboriginal peoples has evolved; in public opinion, they have attained an identity, a status, a presence, sometimes even precedence. Words, expressions and names of places bear out this change in awareness and behaviour. We associate place names such as Kuujuaq, Kativik, Makivik (Corporation) and soon Nunavik with the Inuit. The Crees, whose land is known as *Eeyou Istchee*, have a Grand Council, a Grand Chief, communities, a Regional Authority, etc. Language does not just offer a way of quickly "taming" cultures which have their own long history in Québec; used collaboratively, it can join them up with the most current realities. For the first time, the whole of Québec is marching together toward completeness.

Could the 1975 Agreement have generated greater benefits? The answer has to be Yes, given the restrictive circumstances of the process: insufficient deliberation in general, lack of northern geopolitical experience, too little time dedicated to drafting of the report (only two years starting in 1973), predominance of administrative concerns, obligatory linguistic conformity with a non-Aboriginal legal framework, vast area to be covered by the planning, lack of preparation on the part of institutions and individuals for the implementation of contractual provisions, absence of arbitration mechanisms, and lack of equivalents for Cree, Inuit, French and English terms. All these factors hampered a more thorough conceptualization and understanding of the things to be changed.

Prior to the negotiation stage, the proposed treaty was not well enough thought-out.⁹ The talented and determined interest in the administrative provisions of the Agreement was no substitute for the serious ideological effort that should have been embarked upon beforehand. Certainly, no one has forgotten the useful preamble that John Ciaccia provided for the Agreement of 1975, but the ideology that is the focus of the present text is not the one that emerged from the Agreement. Here I am referring more to an in-depth consideration, pondered at length, of the identity of a total Québec in which, for one thing, the North is not merely an extension of the South. Perhaps the result of such thinking would have been a true social project, explicitly involving all of Québec's peoples. The insufficient thought given in the late sixties and early seventies came to affect the big issues such as the northern identity of Aboriginal peoples themselves, the forecasting of the political effects of the future treaty, the wide gap between the two fundamental principles (development and Aboriginal renewal), the ways to generate communication between peoples who are far apart, the degree of

9. "Canada does not seem to be very far advanced in the level of the philosophies that should prevail in the forging of durable agreements with the indigenous peoples." Louis-Edmond Hamelin. *Canadian Nordicity: It's Your North Too* (Montréal: Harvest House, 1979), 373 p. Ref. p. 211.

intraterritorial cohesiveness, intercultural understanding between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, the creation of joint plans for development, the prospect of regional self-government, as well as relations between the North of Québec, 1927 Labrador, and the other northern Canadian territories.

As never before, the Agreement revealed the North/South geo-cultural duality of Québec. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, friendship between the peoples of the North and of the South has not developed. In a world of plenitude, the internal view has made little progress.

In the future, the fact that Nunavik will be able to elect representatives to Québec's National Assembly and to the House of Commons in Ottawa constitutes a significant democratic link between different lands in the same country.¹⁰

The Agreement has thus served the overall cause of Québec, but a treaty based on deeper geopolitical reflection would have better paved the way for the future of the North.

The Agreement amounts to an impressive administrative document for part of Northern Québec rather than a handbook for the ultimate, optimal polity for the North.

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10. Nunavik Commission, *Amiqaaluta.*, p. 88. The election of four Aboriginal representatives to the National Assembly had been proposed; two of them would have come from the territory covered by the Agreement. See Louis-Edmond Hamelin, *Passer près d'une perdrix sans la voir ou attitudes à l'égard des Autochtones*. (Montréal : PEQ-McGill, 1999), 91 p. Ref. p. 80.