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Professor Stephen Grant Baines: The Power of International Networks

Professor Stephen Grant Baines: o poder das redes internacionais.

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Stephen Grant Baines' essay reveals an exceptionally energetic career in anthropology, focusing on what I call "useful anthropology," which addresses dilemmas facing real people and communities in the present day. He does this by employing conventional anthropological methods and theory, in particular ethnographic fieldwork, in a wide variety of locations, including prisons, rural Indigenous communities, urban settings, government offices, and many more. His aim, in one branch of his work, has not been to study the Indigenous cultures of Brazil, but rather to see them in relation to the nation, to law, and to industry. His approach to theory, I believe, foregrounds efforts to understand these relationships.

As is often the case with anthropologists, his work is among the least powerful members of society and among the cultures most susceptible to destructive forces. Professor Baines' approach is also comparative, but not in the enervating sense that characterized the period of the critique of anthropology several decades ago, but rather for two reasons, it seems to me. The first is so that he can follow the developments in anthropology abroad and, second, to develop social networks which have enabled him to draw on the synergies between groups of scholars and Indigenous peoples worldwide.

My own career in anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, has intersected with his at various points, and I can most meaningfully comment on Professor Baines' work from this vantage point, and specifically his influences on my own work. As he notes in his essay, Professor Baines and I first encountered each other in Vancouver in 1995 during one of his visits to Canada as part of his comparative program of study. I made it a point of introducing him to Indigenous people, communities, and issues in Canada and also the United States. Over several decades, I have taken Brasilian anthropologists, including Stephen Baines, to Indigenous potlatches, repatriation events, museums, community gatherings, archaeological sites, dinners at my house with Indigenous community leaders, and political events in British Columbia. Brasilian anthropologists have reciprocated. Professor Baines has stayed with me in Vancouver, and I have lodged with him in Brasília. We have organized conferences together (for example, Miller and Baines 2021) and have continued to consult each other on whatever we have been writing about. In addition, we co-taught a course at UnB, and he has spoken to my undergraduate classes and with graduate students at UBC. We have also shared graduate students, including the late Dr. Daniel Brasil, who received the PhD from both of our universities. From my perspective, a highlight of this exchange was the months Stephen Baines spent in residence at UBC on a sabbatical leave. In this instance, he was able to participate directly over a longer period in the life of the anthropology department at UBC. But my most vivid memories of Professor Baines have been from the trips we have taken together across Brasil — to Manaus, Curitiba, *Goiânia, São Paulo, and elsewhere. These trips have enabled me to think more broadly about the ways in which Indigenous peoples engage the mainstream population. I believe his visits to Canada have had the same effect on him.*

Professor Baines' interest in Indigenous peoples at the borderlands of nation-states mirrors my own, since in both Brasil and Canada, many of the Indige-

nous communities overlap two countries. In my case, I have used the US-Canada border, which bifurcates the Coast Salish peoples on the west coast, as a research device to study how differences in history and policy effects the lives of related peoples from the same larger linguistic/cultural group. And further, the presence of the border creates practical problems for members of these groups, for example, by creating inaccessibility to their historic fishing stations or in posing problems for ritualists attempting to cross the border to conduct spiritual work. Problems for non-state peoples in a statist environment are present worldwide even though the nuances are local. As Professor Baines has demonstrated, an anthropology of the borderlands, both physical and cultural, has been an important development in Indigenous research, particularly in regard to the study of shifting, situational identities.

My work in this vein has for a number of years taken me to communities "hidden in plain sight" as a method of evading intrusive nation states (Miller 2004). Further, as economic development now occurs in regions which were previously marginally profitable and into which Indigenous peoples have been historically pushed, the questions about identity have become more significant as struggles over ownership of the land have grown. In the case of Brasil, the displacement of Indigenous peoples by farming and mining interests has come into conflict with FUNAI efforts to demarcate Indigenous lands. Professor Baines has pointed to the ways in which national regimes have treated Indigenous peoples in these borderlands and marginal areas as potentially disloyal and as posing a threat to the state and the implications for these communities. He also indicates how attributions of identity by *outsiders* "reaffirm the hegemonic ideology . . .," presenting "a vision that concealed and disguised the asymmetrical and contradictory relations of subjection/domination . . .".

Another fruitful area of research concerns legal regimes and the relationship of Indigenous law to state law. Professor Baines writes in this journal: "The recognition of indigenous autonomy and written customary laws by the Brazilian government is a relatively recent issue in Brazilian history . . .". The recognition of Indigenous law and legal/justice practices is also a recent development in other parts of the world, and anthropologists are well situated to address the associated conceptual and practical problems. Brasilian anthropologists are now deeply engaged in examining law and Indigenous peoples from a variety of perspectives and Professor Baines is in the forefront of this movement. The studies of the incarceration of Indigenous peoples into jails and prisons by members of the Brasilian Association of Anthropology (ABA), Christian Teófilo da Silva, Rodrigo Arthurso, Gustavo Menezes, Stephen Baines and others is an important example of this work. Another thread is the study of historic Indigenous legal practices — sometimes glossed as *customary law* — and the process of recording this on paper.

In the Province of British Columbia, where I live and work, understanding customary law (I prefer the term "historical law," which allows for change to take place) takes on great significance because British Columbia has undertaken the

terms of UNDRIP and the process of reading provincial law in light of Indigenous law. This process will require considerable effort and time to carry out, and Baines' parallel efforts to make the study of Indigenous law a priority in Brasilian anthropological studies are astute and timely. As relations with the state shift and as Indigenous organizations gain political clout and legal traction, in both Brasil and Canada, it will become increasingly important for there to be an informed conversation between practitioners of different legal regimes. My own efforts at this work have resulted in a monograph (Miller 2001) and a number of journal papers. Professor Baines has documented his own relevant publications above.

Professor Baines has kindly provided his insights into my own legal work over several decades and this exchange has sharpened both of our publications. My work as an anthropological expert witness in human rights tribunals and federal and local courts in both Canada and the United States, has culminated in an ethnography of the BC Human Rights Tribunal (Miller 2023), studies of the obstacles faced in working in courts (Miller 2021) and a journal publication (Miller and Menezes 2015) with Gustavo Menezes examining comparatively the role of anthropology in courts. The Brasilian online journal *Vibrant* contains some of this work (Baines 2021). These sorts of studies have been used to inform and train judges in Indigenous perspectives and anthropologists in order to improve their understanding and performances in courts.

There is a useful exchange of ideas between anthropologists in all of the countries in which Professor Baines has worked and he has been central to the development of these exchange networks. A recent example is a conference convened in Taiwan by Kun-Hui Ku and colleagues at the National Tsing-hua University in Hsinchu with presentations by anthropologists as well as judges and community members concerning Indigenous peoples and law there. (This was the "Conference on Indigenous Courts and Indigenous Rights in Taiwan and Globally, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan)." Indigenous communities have been accorded federal recognition only recently, and Taiwan is now envisioning a new relationship between the state and the Indigenous peoples, and this conference included presentations by Professor Baines, myself, and our student Rodrigo Arthuso (Miller 2022). In brief, there is a world-wide conversation about Indigenous peoples and law, and Stephen Baines is helping make anthropology central to this, rather than leaving the field solely to legal scholars and practitioners. As Baines demonstrates, the work with Indigenous communities should be historically, culturally and legally contextualized.

My several experiences in Brasil with Professor Baines have been stimulating and I cannot resist telling this story — I wrote the entirety of my book *Oral History on Trial* (Miller 2011) from the top of a stack of papers on one of Stephen's desks in his office at the time in the Minhocão, the curvy 700-metre long social science building at UnB. It was a great environment for conversation, thinking and writing albeit entirely crowded with papers. From this cramped office (and his new one) Stephen Baines has been a principal force in pushing anthropology in Brasil and elsewhere towards engaged, useful work. As he has written here and I have

pointed to, this is in part a result of his effort to move the discipline in new theoretical directions. But it is also in Baines' case a reflection of the energy, drive, and discipline he brings to his work. I have found him after several decades of working together to be profoundly ethical but also brave in his advancing of an anthropology which, from the perspective of public officials and industry, can only be described as intrusive and unsettling. Anthropology is at its' best when it is intrusive and unsettling, I believe, not for the sake of being disruptive, but to hold a mirror to our contemporary world and to ask that we all be more informed, engaged, and connected to all of our fellow citizens. Stephen Baines does this as well as anyone I know. Better, if truth be told.

About the aurthor

Bruce Miller has been a professor at UBC since 1990. His research concerns Indigenous peoples and their relations with the state in its various local, national, and international manifestations. In recent years his work has particularly overlapped with colleagues in archaeology and in law.

He is member of the board of the Museum of Vancouver and chair of the collections committee, which has initiated a progressive program of repatriation to First Nations. From 1995-98 he was Anglophone Editor of Culture, the journal of the Canadian Anthropology Society.
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Author's contribution

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