

## **Indigenous Peoples, Ethnicity and Globalization: Modernity and its Malcontents**

### **Chapter Twelve**

>I have white men all round me. By force they have taken the countries of all my neighbours. If I do not give them rights here, they will take them. Therefore I give them when they pay. Why should we not eat before we die=

Swazi King Mbandzeni on the eve of the conquest of Swaziland by Europeans. From D. Schreuder, p.253, *The Scramble For Southern Africa* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1980)

>Next to shooting indigenous peoples, the surest way to kill us is to separate us from our part of the Earth=, World Council of Indigenous People statement, 1985, quoted in A. Durning, >Guardians of the Land: Indigenous Peoples and the Health of the Earth=, World Watch Institute, Washington DC World Watch Paper No. 112, Dec. 1992,

### **Characteristics of Indigenous Groups**

Common geographic origins

Language

Religion, faith

Traditions, values, and symbols

Literature, music, and folklore

Nutrition

Social and political organizations

An internal sense of distinctiveness

An external perception of distinctiveness

Shared/communal territory and systems of production

Self-identification as indigenous

Sources:

G. Psacharopoulos and A. Patrinos. *Indigenous People in Latin America: an empirical analysis*  
(World Bank, Washington, 1994)

Perhaps one of the most difficult things for us to reconcile in our modern world is the apparent paradox between the increasing interconnections of our globalizing world which tend toward the creation of one global culture and the remarkable diversity of people and environments that exist. We have already considered the complex and fragile nature of ecosystems on the planet (see chapter on the environment) and the dynamic interconnections which link and threaten them. Now we need to consider the diversity of human cultures. Since the emergence of the earliest human communities, different people in different parts of the world have developed a myriad of ways to meet their

material needs, and to express their social and spiritual selves. Over time, many, but certainly not all, peoples coalesced into increasingly large communities -villages grew to towns, cities and drew upon the resources of states and empires. In these societies, there was a demand for and certain logic to people agreeing on the same sorts of practices and codes of living in order to improve efficiency, and serve the interests of those who dominated the hierarchy of these civilizations. People, for example, agreed to speak commonly understood languages, abide by the same laws and conduct business according to shared rules. Yet not all people chose to join create larger societies and the drive for material progress.

Many people in different cultures either chose to follow alternative trajectories, or were forced by circumstance and marginalization to interact with the globalizing world economy in more tangential ways. These were the people whom we now refer to as >indigenous people= -some refer to themselves as First Nations (for being the original inhabitants of a particular place), Fourth World peoples (following from the notion of the Third World) but who previously were called >native= or >tribal= peoples. These are people who claim descent from the first inhabitants of a particular region, and in some cases they think of themselves as the original local people. In this way, they often define themselves on the basis of their relationship with the local environment that they interact with so intimately and rely upon so heavily. While these peoples are not essentially different from any of us, and they too seek material progress, they strive to do so on their own terms. They typically do not have a formal state as we think of it, though some from these communities are now choosing to represent their people (though not always with the consensus support of the entire community) in the international political arena. As we shall see, historically,

indigenous people have been pushed to the margins of the globalizing world, and in many cases driven to extinction. They have been perceived by most mainstream societies that are engaged in material progress and capitalism as malcontents of modernity and therefore obstacles to progress in need of being remade or removed. As William McNeill has theorized, the march of human civilization has been akin to a macro-parasite descending upon less new ecosystems and feeding off of the resources there while the indigenous inhabitants who had not the means to defend themselves were consumed in the disease-like process.<sup>i</sup>

Yet Indigenous people have played and can continue to play two important roles in our world. First, they make up the greatest variety of cultural diversity in terms of indigenous knowledge, languages, cultural practices and traditions, religions and a symbiotic relationship with the environment. In many ways, they represent an important alternative to the ways mainstream societies have developed. They show us how we might better interact with the environment and put less pressure on our resources. They also reflect on the status of our world in terms of the environment and impact that development and globalization has had on the planet. Although they make up a small proportion of the world's population (less than 5 percent) they represent the largest share of our cultural diversity, and they have undertaken to be the custodians of the last remaining refuges for biological diversity on the planet. The fate of Indigenous peoples also reflects many of the themes and issues we have dealt within this text. They have lived in societies since long before the formation of nations states and so have had to struggle to maintain their basic human rights, they are more vulnerable to the effects of violent conflict and infectious diseases than members of dominant societies; they have found peaceful and sustainable ways to live with the environment, and they have

recently become the focus of attention of international organizations because their fragile state is a key indicator of the general well-being of our world. To understand their importance we must first consider who indigenous people are, and how the dominant mainstream societies have perceived and treated them.

### **Who are the indigenous people and how do we perceive them?**

At the most basic level, Indigenous peoples are who they say they are. Although this may seem a simplistic and obviously subjective way to approach defining indigenous peoples, it is nonetheless important. Throughout much of our history, dominant societies have denigrated, conquered, displaced, devalued and marginalized indigenous people. One of the critical ways in which this was accomplished was through labeling and vilifying them as less worthy, less >human= than ourselves. We did this because we perceived their different cultures and lifestyles as being in need of being remade or removed. Although the driving force behind the assault on indigenous peoples has largely been to gain access to resources in lands they control, there has also been an underlying ethnocentrism to these processes.<sup>ii</sup> Ethnocentrism is the belief in the innate superiority of one's own culture. The dominant cultures of the world imposed their ethnocentric values upon indigenous people, and in so doing defined them as >other= lesser peoples based on perceived attributes which have been, historically devalued. Not surprisingly, these negative definitions and perceptions have been rejected by indigenous people, and rightly so for they are not accurate or fair. As we shall see (table below) this has resulted in a dichotomy of our perceptions between attributes of indigenous people which mainstream society values and those which we find abhorrent. Put another way, we

have tended to see indigenous peoples as >noble savages= -those who live in a pristine state attuned to nature- or as primitives -those who for no (discernible) rational reasons defy progress and modernity.

A poignant case in point of European perceptions of indigenous people as being the >other= and savage is that of Saartje (Sara or Sarah) Baartman, the >Hottentot Venus= Saartje was as a Khoekhoe woman from the Cape region of South Africa. According to her own statements, she joined a white farmer, Hendrik Cezar, on a trip to Europe in 1810. While in London and Paris, Cezar and a partner charged curious and voyeuristic members of the public money to view what they termed >extraordinary phenomena of nature=. Sara had certain physical characteristics, including an enlarged or steatopygous buttocks and unusual genitalia which were different from then perceived norms in Europe (and were exceptional among the Khoekhoe as well) and were thus of prurient interest to the paying gawkers. She was seen as a freak and curiosity, yet she had apparently agreed to be so viewed. Her physical appearance was seen as a negative stereotypical view of all black females, and these views contributed to perceptions of their inferiority. Indeed, such perspectives called into question whether 'other' people were even human. Sara died in Paris in 1816 at the age of 26. Even after her death, Sara Baartman remained an object of imperialist scientific investigation. In the name of science, her sexual organs and brain were displayed in the Musee de l'Homme in Paris until as recently as 1985. Her remains were only finally returned to South Africa in 2002, and her plight highlights the long persistent degradation of indigenous peoples as less than human objects.<sup>iii</sup> Through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, other scientists and anthropologists sought to study and classify indigenous peoples. As they did so, they often assigned them to lower ranks on a supposed

(but clearly now understood as without foundation or merit) >chain of being=, and argue that they were in need of uplifting and being civilized. In their own words, these men of learning and science sought to learn about the >wild savages= and their environment so as to better be able to better tame and control them. So who are indigenous people really, and how do they live?

As a result of externally imposed and derogatory labels, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP—a collective of self-identified representatives of indigenous communities from the Americas and the Pacific rim which has consultative status to the UN) has resolved that only indigenous people can define indigenous people. They have further stated a formal legalistic definition.

Indigenous people shall be people living in countries which have populations composed of different ethnic or racial groups who are descendants of the earliest populations which survive in the area, and who do not, as a group, control the national government of the countries within which they live.<sup>iv</sup>

Yet there is clearly much more to indigenous peoples than a simple claim to the first peoples of a given region (and by the definition if they did gain political power, they would cease to be indigenous). It is also worth noting that Indigenous peoples have often had to define and redefine themselves within conditions that were not of their own choosing, such as how to live after sustaining the loss of land, or how to maintain communal ownership of common resources in a capitalist society.<sup>v</sup> Above all else, indigenous people want the right to >self-determination=, a fundamental human right recognized by the UN and other major international organizations as well

as most NGOs. As they describe it, this would provide them full economic, political, and cultural autonomy -the ability to control their own affairs free from outside interference, but not necessarily in complete isolation from the rest of the world.<sup>vi</sup>

Indigenous people represent a broad range of changing lifestyles and histories and they inhabit a wide variety of ecosystems in just about every region of the world. Many of them organize their societies into comparatively egalitarian kin-based social groups. This tends to prevent the tendency for any one person or group from gaining an overwhelming amount of power or wealth in an indigenous society. One estimate suggests that of the 6,000 identifiable cultures in the world today, probably 5,000 of them are indigenous.<sup>vii</sup> Indigenous peoples= cultures are also rich in linguistic diversity. Although indigenous peoples account for no more than 600 million and probably less than 300 million people (depending on how they are defined), yet they speak more than 6,000 different languages. Many of these are, however, on the brink of disappearing because of the rising dominance of just a few >global= languages such as Mandarin Chinese, English and Spanish. Indigenous languages are important for they represent, and hold the key to understanding the diverse ecological regions that indigenous people live in. Indeed, it is now clear that our world=s biological diversity overlaps with the cultural diversity of indigenous peoples.<sup>viii</sup> In one extreme, the Inuit, for example, live in the arctic regions of the world where they move about Ice floes, hunting and fishing, and using all available resources, snow and ice for home-building included. In another extreme, the San communities of southern Africa survive in the hot, dry and sparse Kalahari Desert where there is little water or vegetation. Some groups, such as the Quechua of South America number more than 10 million while others, such as the Gurumalum of Papua New Guinea have

only ten members. As we shall see, they represent enormous diversity in terms of aspects of their culture such as language, the adaptation to a unique ecosystem, and unique conceptions of their identity, including their ways of dress. Each indigenous people is unique. Yet they all share some important characteristics and this chapter will consider their shared experiences with world history, the land and nature,

For indigenous people, their ties to the land are paramount. For most indigenous societies, there is no concept of individual ownership of the land or its resources; rather these are held communally so that all may have access to them, but no one can alienate the land for their own exclusive use or profit. Indigenous people also have a wide variety of approaches to living with their local environment and the wider world, but there are a number of important shared characteristics. They are all intimately linked to the natural environment, and because of this, they husband their lands with great dedication. Indeed, many feel that their role is to act as custodians of the land for future generations, not to exploit it for what they can get from it today. Most indigenous peoples did, at one time, derive their economic sustenance entirely from the land they inhabit, even if changing circumstances and the intrusion of the capitalist world has meant this is no longer possible for most. They did so with comparatively little detrimental impact, and in ways that were renewable and sustainable as opposed to exhaustive of natural resources as is much of industrial capitalism, although this was in part because of lower population density and numbers.. This is not to suggest that they left their environments in some primordially untouched state. Indeed, indigenous peoples have been (where this is still possible) constantly managing their environments for a long time. In

some cases, as with Indigenous peoples in rainforests, they could hunt and forage for available foods and resources without engaging in extractive or ecosystem altering activities such as clear-cutting timber or strip-mining. In other cases, they managed the land in sustainable ways, burning off vegetation to renew grazing grasses for herd animals or planting desired plants in ideal locations. They all managed to derive subsistence from the land without jeopardizing their ability to continue to do so in the future. They did so with hunting, fishing or low-impact seasonal herding, and shifting forest agriculture.

It is important to note that indigenous people do not live static lives entirely isolated from the rest of the world. Indeed, they are engaged in many creative and proactive ways to cope with challenges of the intrusions of mainstream economies and societies. As we shall see (below) indigenous people have also been profoundly affected by the intrusions of other cultures and the world economy, often to the detriment of their traditional culture and practices. It is, therefore, not accurate to suggest that indigenous people dwell in some timeless past where they uncritically follow traditions passed down from time immemorial. Indeed, they seek to preserve aspects of their customs which fit their ever-changing needs, instead of casting them aside just because they do not fit with the modernizing imperatives of the nation state or the capitalist economy. In this way, they are perhaps best understood as engaging in adaptive forms of resistance to the totalizing imprint of modernity.

One of the most important characteristics of indigenous people, and one that we all must share a concern about -for we all stand to lose the knowledge and diversity they represent- is their relatively

fragile natures, and the precarious position they have in the world today. As we shall see Indigenous people have a long history of being marginalized, and are so particularly vulnerable. They live in fragile ecosystems that are under constant assault from pollution and >developers=; their economic livelihoods are being displaced by other land intensive and market oriented capitalism; the health of indigenous peoples is significantly poorer than for nearly all categories of people in mainstream society. There are clear indicators that, despite some new economic opportunities such as the ownership of casinos by some American Indian nations, or the establishment of a development bank by the Cordillera people of the Philippines, many indigenous people suffer from abject poverty and social and economic inequities.<sup>ix</sup> They are more susceptible to many infectious diseases because of their relative isolation from contact with populations which could help them develop immunities. As their local environments are compromised, they are increasingly unable to use the herbal and natural treatments for sickness that they have been able to use in the past. In Colombia for example, the U.S.-backed Plan Colombia effort to eradicate drugs and to help stabilize the region has led to intensified military conflict among government forces and rural guerillas and drug lords. It has also seen the use of massive amounts of herbicides to wipe out plants used as drugs. These herbicides, however, are indiscriminate killers of all plants, and they have drastically reduced the availability of natural herbal remedies for indigenous peoples in the region as well as possibly causing other illnesses among the indigenous people.<sup>x</sup> They do not, moreover, have the monetary incomes and access to advanced health care that can help moderate the effects of ill-health.<sup>xi</sup>

Indeed, the fate of indigenous peoples has been one of a frightening, and now accelerating disappearance. It is impossible to estimate how many cultures have disappeared over time, but we do

have some indication of the loss of cultural diversity by considering the loss of languages over time. Around 1500 C.E. there appeared to be at least 15,000 different languages spoken around the world. Since then, by one estimate, we have lost 9,000 distinct languages. These have been lost as a result of wars of conquest, genocide whereby a dominant cultural group systematically seeks to wipe out an entire people and all trace of their culture, legal bans where a government forces people to abandon their native tongue and other processes of assimilation.<sup>xii</sup> These processes accelerated at an alarming rate in the 20th century. There have been more extinctions of indigenous peoples and languages in the past hundred years than in any other century history. During this time in Brazil, 87 tribes of indigenous peoples disappeared while one third of North American Indian languages were lost as were nearly two-thirds of Australian Aboriginal languages.<sup>xiii</sup> Cultures are, moreover, dying out even faster than the peoples who belong to them as globalization and the homogenization of language and culture take over. Indeed, many languages and cultures may simply die out as future generations decline to take up learning about the heritage in favor of pursuing more mainstream cultures. In the U.S., some indigenous languages such as Couer D=Alene have fewer than five speakers, and few of these are likely to survive into the next generation. The disappearance of this cultural and linguistic diversity -which has been matched by a similar demise in biological diversity for the two are closely linked (see below)- has been the result of a long process of the rise of world civilizations and dominant cultures. Their success, however, has been at the expense of the diversity that we are only now coming to appreciate.

### **History and the Fate of Indigenous peoples**

Historically, dominant societies have most often perceived indigenous people as at best obstacles to progress, at worst, vermin to be exterminated. (See table of comparative perceptions). How did this come to be? As noted earlier, the history of indigenous people beyond their own remarkable stories of development in relationship to the natural environment has largely been one of displacement and disappearance. This has been the case because the progress of civilization had, historically, entailed the marshaling of people and resources under a single, unifying bureaucratic state. As governments have worked to coordinate their control over resources and the labor needed to produce a surplus from them, they have typically demanded conformity with common rules and practices which facilitate the more efficient running of the economy. This has also included wresting ownership of the land from people in order to ensure that the state can extract a rent or tax from those on the land. Where people sought to resist this process, violent conflict often ensued, and this was certainly the case for indigenous peoples who were most closely tied to the land as they resisted their dispossession by outside forces. It was at the time of the acceleration of the pace of globalization, during the era of European exploration and conquest, that indigenous people came under threat of extinction as they were caught up in the forces of historical change.

The historical forces of change that impinged on Indigenous peoples intensified with the European exploration and conquest of so-called >new lands. Indeed, the prevailing European legal and ethical opinion about the lands they >discovered= was that they were >terra nullius= , meaning empty and ungoverned. Of course this was simply not the case. Indigenous peoples certainly did claim these

lands, even if their shifting patterns of cultivation or foraging, hunting and herding meant they did not use them as intensively as Europeans. Yet, many indigenous societies did feel the need to develop the complex legal systems and rhetoric which Europeans used to justify their claims to the land by right of conquest, or >superior civilization= and >god=s sanction=. The occasionally mutually beneficial trading relations which had emerged between Europeans and indigenous peoples quickly gave way to a conviction on the part of Europeans that the political economy of >natives= was incompatible with that of civilization. In these ways, Europeans explicitly devalued indigenous cultures. Yet they went far beyond this in their quest to wrest the land and resources away from indigenous peoples. As we have seen (chap. On war) Europeans embarked on visiting death and destruction on native peoples in the Americas, Africa and Asia from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In his book, *The Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, the Spanish priest, and former conquistador and slaver, Bartolomé de Las Casas described the inhumanity that was a large part of Spanish efforts to install their civilization in the Americas. He noted that:

...the Spaniards passed over the Island of Cuba . . . with incomparable cruelty. Hatuey [the Indian leader said] . . . At they come to do this because they have a God whom they greatly adore and love; and to make us adore Him they strive to subjugate us and take our lives@ He had near him a basket of gold and jewels and he said: A Behold here is the God of the Christians... if we preserve the gold, they will finally have to kills us to take it from us@. [He noted that one Indian chief] merely because he fled from such iniquitous and cruel people was . . . burnt alive.= After all the

Indians of this island were reduced to servitude and misfortune, and when they saw they were perishing inevitably, some began to flee to the mountains, others to hang themselves . . . In this way the numberless people perished.<sup>xiv</sup>

Such were the atrocities committed by Europeans in the distant lands of indigenous peoples. These events set the stage for the emergence of Europeans referred to as the >frontier=. On one side were newly arrived Europeans who were to civilize the land and people according to their values and dominant culture. On the other side were the >savages=; indigenous people who were striving to maintain their way of life while adapting to the exigencies of the globalizing economy. In fact, the frontier was a zone of interaction where Europeans adapted to and adopted aspects of indigenous culture just as local peoples accommodated and even embraced certain features of European society. As we have seen (chap on war) this interaction soon gave way to conflict as Europeans sought to take and control the land and the people on it. Although >frontiers= emerged at different times and places, there were some common features among most of them. >frontiers emerged. Europeans had superior weapons, and so were able to defeat most Indigenous people=s efforts to defend their territories. Such was the case with the >pacification= of American Indian nations on the Great Plains. In many instances, Europeans applied a vile and inhumane rhetoric to justify the killing and displacement of indigenous peoples. The San of southern Africa, for example, were labeled >vermin= or pestilential animals and white frontiersmen shot them as sport. As the indigenous peoples lost the military battles, so too did they lose the lands which were vital to their existence. This was the case especially in regions where later European settlers sought to move in and use the

land intensively for farming or mining. In other cases, Europeans forced their new political economy on the people and regions they conquered.

While this process was brutal and bloody, and combined with the devastating effects of disease it wiped out many indigenous societies wholesale, it was not always the intention of the conquerors to engage in genocide as they did. Indeed, over time there were other imperatives, not least of which were imperialistic motives to convert the >heathen savages= to Christian Civilization= and to make them work for the new capitalist economy. These emerged as the industrial revolution in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century started to change social and economic relations around the world. Imperialism is the common term used to describe the values of and the process by which European nations implanted its economy, culture and institutions in lands they had conquered. In many places, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, part of this imperial mission was accomplished by merchants and companies which sought to make the new lands pay. They introduced new demands for cash crops such as rubber and cocoa and induced indigenous peoples to give over their lands and labor to these new products. In some cases this was done by rewards or implementing tax demands; in others, by brutal coercion. In the case of Papua New Guinea, for example, the occupying Australian government used a series of base camps to extend material rewards such as tools and salt to the indigenous people to entice them to stay within reach of government officials and labor recruiters. In the case of the Congo region in Africa, the Belgian officials whipped and even amputated the hands of African workers who did not produce sufficient supplies of rubber to meet demand. Yet these efforts were also attended by other measures calculated to transform indigenous people into compliant and subservient parts of the new colonial hierarchy.

The next stage of settling the lands across the frontier was the extension of state control over them. European imperial bureaucracies employed various tactics with laws and governmental apparatus to extend their control over the land and the people that they conquered. In some cases, they implemented direct forms of rule where European officials oversaw society and the economy instead of indigenous leaders. In other cases, where there were too few personnel, or where local resistance had been strong, the Europeans implemented >indirect rule= where by they sought to rule through local leaders. Some of them were compliant, while others struggled with having to do the bidding of the colonial powers and trying to safeguard their people=s interests. In either case, the new colonial governments fundamentally altered the patterns of life and governance for indigenous communities. The new governments also changed the whole basis of land ownership and people=s ability to gain access to their lands. In most cases, new governments alienated the land completely from indigenous peoples. Often with the stroke of a pen in some distant city, people who had lived on their lands since time immemorial were suddenly and summarily turned into squatters who had to pay a rent to a new European landlord, or were evicted and relegated to some marginal patch of poor land while their lands were opened for settlers. Adding insult to injury, in some cases such as in the U.S., government treaties with Indian nations to safeguard at least some of their lands were later abrogated to make way for the westward push of settlement. In these ways, Europeans destroyed the autonomy of most indigenous peoples, and relegated them to subordinated and fragmented groups who had to struggle for cultural survival.

After the start of the industrial revolution, Europeans also sought to modify the culture and practices

of indigenous peoples to fit with modernizing capitalist society. It was the arch-imperialist of Africa, Cecil Rhodes, who believed the idea of imperialism was to >teach the natives to want=. <sup>xv</sup> Europeans were convinced that civilizing the >natives= was for their own good. In keeping with this notion, indigenous people faced a barrage of different efforts to modify their culture and dispossess them of the traditions and practices which tied them to the land that Europeans wanted and which kept them from working in the wider capitalist economy. New jobs and new economies forced many indigenous people to accommodate industrial time with its work hours, days and weeks and abandon the seasonal rhythms of nature. They were taught to engage in >progressive= farming techniques, even though many of these were later shown to cause erosion and environmental degradation as opposed to many low-impact indigenous agricultural techniques. In some cases, colonial governments implemented forced labor schemes or even slavery to get indigenous peoples to work in the wider economy. The argument made was that since indigenous people appeared to need little in the way of material goods, they could be paid nothing and have to rely on their own subsistence from the land. In most cases resistance to forced labor was met with severe brutality and the conditions of work were notoriously bad. In the forced labor regimes to mine silver in Spanish Central and South America, the death rate for indigenous people was often over 60 percent. <sup>xvi</sup> Where indigenous people were allowed to remain on the land, they were forced to shift their cultivation from a diverse range of useful food and craft crops to single cash crops under intensive and environmentally unfriendly agricultural commodities such as cotton or rubber. This often led to a collapse of the local economy when world prices dropped and indigenous producers had nothing to fall back on. Of course, this logic failed in the face of the loss of their land. In other cases, indigenous people were paid low wages which then had to be used to pay taxes or purchase

European-made goods, thereby further facilitating the cultural transformation of the local people.

There were broader and perhaps more subtle forces of imperialism which were aimed eroding indigenous cultures and transforming them into more >civilized= people. Religion, and specifically mission Christianity was introduced to >uplift the heathen= and to educate them in a formal western literate tradition. Both Christianity and formal education were means of cultural modification which were at direct odds with indigenous cultures. First, they implicitly denied the value of traditional oral forms of education and religion within indigenous society. Indeed, missionaries often had to use force and physical punishment such as beatings to instill their values and >correct behavior=. Christian missionaries typically prevented indigenous people from maintaining their own faiths and spiritual practices. They also undermined the traditional lines of authority embodied in elders and tribal leaders. In Australia, for example, Aborigine children were often separated from their parents and raised in special schools under the authority of Christian ministers and government officials. In these schools, the children were forbidden to use their native languages, to practice their faiths or to refer to their spiritual guides. They were, moreover, harshly schooled to wear western attire, and to learn a >useful= trade. This meant some form of servile labor activity which would be of service in the white colonial community.<sup>xvii</sup> Overall, the clear pattern that emerged was one in which it was increasingly difficult for indigenous people to find a viable economic lifestyle beyond the reach of the nation state and capitalism.

Of course, in some instances, indigenous people sought to take advantage of new opportunities afforded by the wider colonial social and economic spheres, and so they embraced the new culture

and religion, leaving many elements of their own culture behind. In this way, succeeding generations of some indigenous peoples have been losing touch with their heritage. These patterns persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. First Nations People in North America, the Indians, for example, were still losing land because of federal government limits on treaty land grants and reservations. Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Islands, the Philippines, and all over Central and South America -especially in the rain forest regions where the land is in high demand for timber, farming and development- are still subject to land loss and extinction. Given that access to relatively undisturbed lands is a crucial element to the survival of indigenous people both in terms of culture and material subsistence, we must now consider impact of land loss on societies, and on the world in general

### **Indigenous People, Diversity and the Land**

For indigenous people, loss of land has meant loss of their way of life. So much of their culture is defined by their economic and spiritual link to their land. Most indigenous people meet their food and material needs directly from the land and most have the belief systems tied to ancestors and spirits associated with the land they have always inhabited. For all of us, their loss of land has also meant the loss of diversity both in terms of the biological world and in terms of the cultural world of indigenous people. It has now become clear that our increasing concerns about the health of the global environment are inextricably bound up with the indigenous peoples who inhabit some of the most ecologically important and sensitive regions of the planet.

As a Yaqui person from Mexico has stated

The defence [sic]of our territory has deep meaning for the Yaqui, it is the defence of much more than a piece of land. For the Yaqui, the territory is like a nest or a receptacle, a great space that contains. The sense of property and identity around our territories has mystical value. We feel that a Yaqui outside his territory is less of a person because being Yaqui includes an identity which is the sum of many things: land, water, culture, language, sea, mountains, forests and much more.<sup>xviii</sup>

As we have seen, in the past, dominant societies viewed indigenous people as locking up the land by underutilizing it for unproductive purposes. As imperial powers expanded their grasp and gaze, Europeans believed low intensity foraging, shifting agriculture, hunting and pastoralism were backward and a waste of the land. Of course, this view was presented as a justification for settlers taking the land and putting it to more productive use while turning off the indigenous people and pressing them into laboring in the wider economy. Indigenous peoples have, until recently (see below) found it difficult to assert or protect their rights to the land. As they lost wars of imperial conquest, indigenous people were subjected to European legal principles that alienated their lands to the victor. Even in cases where the land was to be held in trust for native people, their rights were slowly eroded by the pen and the plow. Colonial legislation was often written to support white settlers as they took over lands they sought to put to productive use. Indigenous people, without any

experience of these complex written laws had no way to defend their communal rights to the land in a colonial society that privileged individual ownership and paper deeds. In cases where they were granted title to the land, it was most often of very poor quality without the necessary range of soils and vegetation or in upland and mountainous areas where maintaining customary foraging and farming had to be drastically changed. In most cases, the land they were assigned was far from their ancestral lands or truncated vital spiritual spaces from the community.

In other cases, >conservationists= and state governments sought to protect parts of the natural environment, but at the expense of indigenous peoples. States have asserted their sovereignty and created national parks and nature reserves all over the world, and in so doing either restricted the a-priori rights of indigenous peoples living on these lands, or forced them to remove from the area completely. In the U.S. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, the Miwok Indians and the Shoshone, Lakota, Crow and Nez Perce and other First Nations peoples were either exterminated through war or forcibly removed from their ancestral lands in order to create the Yosemite and Yellowstone parks. These were demarcated in or to preserve a pristine, uninhabited >wilderness= despite the fact that the Indian nations had actually been managing these natural areas for centuries. As with other parks in other parts of the world, these areas have lost the advantages of indigenous management practices which promoted biodiversity just as the indigenous peoples have lost access to their lands, or had their use of park lands severely restricted. Similar problems have persisted in parts of Africa and Asia where indigenous peoples have been excluded from access to game parks set aside for wild animals on lands previously held by them. In some cases indigenous peoples have more recently shared in the advantages of these game parks through jobs as park wardens or in related tourist

activities (see below). Yet, in some of these parks, the state has actually turned indigenous people into tourist attractions where they are expected to don 'traditional dress' and perform for tourists. In other cases, however, the demarcation of game parks has forced indigenous people into criminal acts as poachers of animals and resources from the lands that once were theirs.<sup>xix</sup>

More recently, indigenous peoples have faced increased pressures to leave their lands. Civil conflict in places such as Colombia, Surinam, Indonesia and the Congo have forced indigenous peoples off their land and into refugee status, causing a crisis of international proportions.<sup>xx</sup> Indigenous refugees often have a difficult time adjusting to life outside their usual environments. Indeed, in some cases, such as in North America, Indians face problems with high rates of unemployment, disease and alcoholism. In other cases, with few alternatives, indigenous peoples have been driven to more drastic measures. In Colombia, for example, some displaced indigenous peoples have taken up producing illegal drugs for sale to survive in the increasingly violent civil conflict there, and in India Maria tribal people forced off their land to make way for a conservation reserve have joined military insurgents who poach in the reserve and attacks park guards.<sup>xxi</sup> Yet, indigenous peoples still inhabit a range of relatively undisturbed lands in the last refuges left to them -about 15-20 percent of the earth's total land area- the land that, until recently, most people from dominant societies had little interest in. So why are these lands, together with the indigenous peoples who live in them so important?

In a word, it is diversity which is so important to and yet so threatened in our globalizing world. As we have seen, indigenous people represent the critical overlap of cultural and biological diversity.

Scientists consider just 17 countries in the world as places with >megadiversity= which house more than two-thirds of the Earth=s biological resources (They are: Indonesia, India, Australia, Mexico, DR Congo, Brazil, China, Colombia, Peru, The Philippines, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Venezuela, The U.S.A., Ecuador), and these countries also home to the most culturally diverse indigenous peoples.<sup>xxii</sup> Not only have they learned to adapt to a broad, albeit shrinking, range and amount of lands, they have in many cases done so with remarkable sensitivities and insights into the workings of our natural world. While much of the world=s original forests have been denuded of trees and settled, indigenous peoples live in a symbiotic relationship with some of the last remaining large tracts of forest land. These forests are also crucial for regulating the planet=s climate, and helping to purify the air we breathe.

We are only now coming to learn that many indigenous peoples who inhabit important and sensitive ecological regions such as rainforests, deserts, and the arctic have accumulated an immense range of knowledge about these parts of our global ecosystem and how they may be linked. Referred to in various ways -indigenous knowledge, local ecological knowledge (LEK), and traditional herbal and medicinal knowledge- the knowledge the many indigenous peoples have of their local environments is crucial not only to our understanding of how global ecosystems operate, but also for potential future discoveries of medical and chemical products from nature.<sup>xxiii</sup> As we have seen (chap on health) a remarkable number of our most prescribed medicines (more than 80 of the top 150 most used) have their origins in nature. More than 80 percent of the world=s population, moreover, uses traditional herbal medicines found in plants, and we have much to learn about how these work, and what other curative potentials they have.<sup>xxiv</sup> As is sometimes asked, does the cure for cancer lie

somewhere out there in a rainforest plant and known only to indigenous people? Their encyclopedic knowledge extends to the identification of hundreds of plant, insect and animal species, many unknown to outside scientists, to a precise understanding of microclimates and plant development. This knowledge is imbedded in long-established folkways and cultural practices unique to indigenous peoples. Oral traditions and unique religious practices which revolve around the intimate link between indigenous people and the environment would be lost forever without the elders, and especially indigenous women who preserve and transmit this traditional knowledge. Without them, we would lose all this information, and the insights that come from their unique perspective on nature.

Contrary to some views, indigenous peoples have not lived according to static, >timeless= ways, nor have they left nature alone. They have managed their environments, most often to all our benefit, by increasing biological diversity and selecting desired for medicinal or food value plants over other. Fostering a healthy range of plants is vital to our planet, especially when (see chap on food and population) commercial agriculture has reduced the number and range of plant strains through genetic engineering and modification. If these modified plants should fail, we would be lost in terms of regenerating food supplies without the potential of the diversity of rainforests under the care of indigenous people. We have much to learn from their low-impact techniques of sustainable agriculture, herding and foraging in a range of ecosystems.

Of course not all indigenous peoples follow a path of sustainable use of land resources. Historically, some indigenous peoples have exhausted local resources or over-hunted game animals. Others have

introduced new plant species which have displaced native ones, or inadvertently altered river flows causing erosion.<sup>xxv</sup> The Kayapó Indians of Brazil, for example, have made lucrative but illegal deals with miners and loggers to allow the intensive extraction of mahogany and gold from their lands. These are the same lands that the Kayapó had so vociferously, and with significant worldwide sympathy and support, demanded and received rights in the form of a protected reserve from the Brazilian government in the late 1980s. At the time of the establishment of the reserve logging and mining companies were banned from exploiting the Kayapó=s resources for the Indian=s own protection. The temptations of large sums of money from the international market proved too much for a number of Kayapó leaders, and a few of them profited enormously while most of the tribe remained destitute.<sup>xxvi</sup> Despite these problems, it is clear that in many ways, the practices and knowledge of indigenous peoples with regard to sensitive ecosystems remain in place and important.

In recent decades, indigenous people have made significant strides in protecting their land rights, and in some cases even finding redress to land loss. Slowly, indigenous people and their allies there have been making concerted efforts to gain recognition for the human rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to self-determination, self-governance and the right to the protection of their lands, resources and the intellectual property they derive from these through international organizations such as the UN, the International Labor Organization, Amnesty International and (after a virtual explosion in numbers) grass-roots indigenous peoples organizations,. The UN has created a Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and named the period from 1994-2004 The International Decade of Indigenous Peoples to help promote awareness of indigenous peoples=s rights and status. The Draft Declaration specifically states that indigenous lands must be

protected and preserved in accordance with the will of indigenous people, and that indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands and further that no relocation of indigenous peoples takes place without their informed consent and fair compensation.<sup>xxvii</sup>

In Latin America, where indigenous peoples perhaps lost more land than in any other region of the world, peasant resistance and the efforts of dedicated Human Rights campaigners such as the Guatemalan Indian and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Rigoberta Menchu has led to state recognition of large tracts of inalienable indigenous lands. In Africa, outside countries that had significant European settler populations, much of the land is still held under communal tenure. There, in theory at least, most people have traditional rights to land, although social hierarchies and patriarchal domination limit access to land especially for women youth.

In some cases indigenous peoples have won significant landmark cases for rights to the land. In the Philippines, for example, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 2000 provides for native peoples to exercise self-governance, share in national resources that were previously under their control, and to have their ancestral lands restored. In an even more progressive move, the government of Canada and the Inuit indigenous people cooperated to form the Nunavut, (meaning >our land=) Territory and a government with clear Inuit representation in 1999. Nunavut is a vast territory in the Canadian north which was traditionally the home of the Inuit, but which had come under the auspices of the nation state of Canada. At 220,000 square miles it is probably the largest single land claims agreement for indigenous people in North America. It includes specific rights for the Inuit to share in the profits from natural resources, and to govern themselves according to the principles of self-

determination and their traditional ways but under an elected territorial government. Most importantly, the land of Nunavut is to be preserved for the Inuit with sustainable development.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Despite these strides, indigenous peoples and their remaining lands are still under threat and still fragile. Basic resource extraction for profit, in addition to helping foster violent civil conflict, also threatens the environment and the indigenous peoples living in these areas. Logging, especially of the world's old growth forests has intensified in recent years as demand for tropical hardwoods such as mahogany increases. Currently, much of this logging is done illegally on Indian reserves in South America and Southeast Asia. Mining for metals also threaten to destroy indigenous peoples lands around the world. The Yanomami Indians in Brazil, for example, face annihilation because of outsiders gold mining and the use of toxic mercury to purify the gold ore. Perhaps the greatest current and future threat to indigenous peoples comes from oil extraction. As the global demand for petroleum products continues to skyrocket, not only does air pollution increase and damage the environment through global warming, the process of getting more supplies of oil and natural gas destroys indigenous lands.

Indigenous people have argued, mostly in vain, for the better management of and compensation for resources extraction from their lands. They feel that neither mining nor oil and gas production can be considered sustainable if affected indigenous cultures are not also sustained.<sup>xxix</sup> Although the World Bank has sought to facilitate a more equitable distribution of oil revenues for indigenous peoples than has been the case, many indigenous peoples would rather not have oil extraction take place at all on their environmentally sensitive lands. This has especially been the case in countries such as Nigeria where the state government has been in collusion with multinational oil companies,

and has cut indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta out of the profits. Oil spills and pipeline fires have been devastating to Delta region, destroying farming land for generations.

Other development projects, and land settlement for intensive uses also continue to threaten indigenous people=s survival and the health of the environment. Dam building for hydroelectric power, irrigation and flood control has been carried out in sensitive lands such as the Cree Indian areas of James Bay in Canada. These projects have flooded vast stretches of indigenous people=s lands and caused the contamination of remaining waterways. Similarly, intensified commercial fishing with massive factory ships in the world=s oceans has reduced available stocks for indigenous peoples to take by lower-intensity traditional methods. Finally, although it is a less direct effect, the increasing wealth gap in the world caused by the expanding global capitalist economy continues to drive the poor into the unspoiled natural areas to farm, thereby placing more pressure on indigenous lands.<sup>xxx</sup>

A more recent and perhaps more complicated problem is what some in the legal world are terming >biopiracy=. As scientists, especially from the fields of bio-medicine, pharmaceutical and drug development and genetic engineering, take a greater interest in the rich natural resources of the forests inhabited by indigenous peoples, they threaten indigenous rights. These industries have made a strong case for the conservation side of their work since their research requires the protection of sensitive ecosystems such as rainforests where they search for new chemical compounds and plants which hold the key to new drug development. Yet, as these companies find these things they can use for new product development, they have tended to trample on the intellectual property rights of

indigenous peoples who claim custody of these resources, and have often provided the indigenous knowledge clues as to how to find and use these compounds. Other compounds are part of unique and sacred religious rights in indigenous communities. Pharmaceutical companies have, nevertheless, repeatedly sought and gained exclusive patent rights to drugs and chemical compounds once only known to and used by traditional healers in indigenous societies. Now these companies get exclusive profits from the sale of their drugs while the original users get nothing simply because they are unfamiliar with the ways of patent law and the global economy. In one case, Amazonian Indians have declared an American scientist an >enemy of indigenous people= because she obtained a patent for Ayahuasca, a plant derivative which is used to make a hallucinogenic drink used in Indian religious ceremonies, but which has, as yet, unproved potential for medical uses.<sup>xxxix</sup> As the global economy continues to expand, it is likely that it will put increasing demands on natural resources, the global climate and environment and the people who have struggled to maintain a balance with the world.

### **Indigenous peoples and globalization**

The long historical processes of globalization (also referred to here as the historical process of modernization or the emergence and expansion of >civilization=) has both hindered and helped indigenous peoples. To be sure, in some respects, they have benefitted from the technological strides and material progress of civilization. As with the rest of us, they have eventually had access to modern modes of transportation, communication, medicine, etc. Yet in most cases, this has only happened after the complete annihilation of their own culture and practices, and most often with

indigenous people in subordinated positions. Despite their horrific history and the extinction of many indigenous cultures, some indigenous peoples have managed to adapt and survive. For some, the ability of indigenous peoples to cope with and adapt to the modern world is seen as somehow undermining their >traditional= status, especially if this status is supposed to be based on a legitimacy derived from on the longevity of practices dating back to earlier centuries. Yet there is nothing inherently wrong or unethical with people adapting and changing traditional practices to meet modern needs. It is a fundamental principle of the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples as defined by the United Nations.<sup>xxxii</sup> Indigenous people are not a-priori against development, but if it is to be on their lands, it must be under their control and it must be sustainable and not destroy the environment

Indeed, global connections and some aspects of modernity have helped some of the remaining indigenous peoples find new ways to survive. Perhaps the most fundamentally important aspect of our modern world for indigenous peoples is the enhanced means of global communication. Certainly awareness of the plight of indigenous peoples has been enhanced by the new fora available to them since the early twentieth century. Native Americans first addressed the League of Nations (forerunner to the UN) in the 1920s, and although little came of this, we have now seen the UN, and a host of other international organizations and NGOs take up their cause, or provide places where they can make their case known to the world. The UN now has a permanent forum for indigenous peoples, and most international organizations annual meetings provide at least some scope for issues relevant to indigenous peoples and the UN declared 1994-2004 the Decade of Indigenous Peoples. This has also allowed for the rallying of international experts on various issues ranging from

conservation to intellectual property law to the needs of indigenous communities. More significantly, indigenous peoples around the world are able to connect with each other, and join their voices in protests in new ways.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Indigenous peoples have also managed to bring wider pressure on developers by raising awareness of their plight at the hands of large transnational companies. The U=wa of Colombia, for example, got NGOs on their side to fend off a major petroleum company by threatening to commit mass suicide if oil excavations go on.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Indigenous people are now better poised to take advantage of global awareness and interest in their fate than ever before. From the point of view of cultural and biological diversity, indigenous people are slowly getting recognition for what they can teach the world. In addition to the preservation and sharing of indigenous knowledge, they are also sharing their culture through their oral history, music, art and craft works, and especially their links to the environment. The San of Botswana and Namibia, for example, have shown their art to critical acclaim in galleries in Europe, and San music is now recorded on DVDs for sale to international markets. With the help of sympathetic businessmen and lawyers, they are able to create deals with development companies to manage their resources and combine them with sustainable development. One of the most promising prospects for the San, as with other indigenous peoples, has been tourism, and especially eco-tourism where wealthy people pay to view aspects of culture that the San themselves have chosen to retain and display expressly for this purpose. This has long been a controversial issue for indigenous peoples since it requires making aspects of their personal culture objects for display, and in the past this has served to play into stereotyped and negative images. Still, many believe that if they retain control of eco-tourism and cultural tourism this is preferable to other industries which may do even more harm

to their identity.<sup>xxxv</sup> Certainly, eco-tourism would allow some indigenous peoples to retain control of their lands, and to determine how the land and the culture associated with it should be managed and presented to the world.

Modern technology, and especially the Internet has afforded indigenous peoples remarkable new ways to communicate with each other, and this has been particularly important for some groups whose members are scattered over vast distances, or who have been forced to leave ancestral lands and the oral networks that once kept them in touch. Indigenous people can now also recover and archive information about their heritage electronically, and share it with fellow members, and raise awareness across the globe. The Huron Indians in Quebec, for example, who could account for just more than 1000 remaining members a few years ago have now reconnected with 10,000 people claiming Huron identity through e-mail.<sup>xxxvi</sup> All these activities have heightened not just awareness of indigenous people and their plight, but also their importance to the world. This raises an important question for the rest of the world. The question is not, can we afford to accommodate indigenous people and their rights against the demands of the nation states and the global economy, but rather can we afford not to?

There remain certain limits and paradoxes to the effect that indigenous peoples can have. As we have noted, there are some who are skeptical of indigenous people=s efforts to preserve their cultural integrity in the face of clear tendencies to modernize. Perhaps one of the more contentious examples of this issue would be the development of gambling casinos on American Indian reservations in the U.S. There are those that decry these as nothing more than opportunistic efforts at

tax-free revenues from an exploitive capitalist industry which benefits outsiders more than indigenous peoples. Others, tribal leaders among them, who argue that Indians should be entitled to find a way to profit from their lands and resources in ways that had hitherto been lost to them as others took the opportunities away. Similarly, since there has been a veritable explosion of interest in, and communication among indigenous peoples, there has been a dramatic proliferation of the numbers of people claiming some connection to indigenous status. In some cases, these claims have been thin or spurious, and have, therefore undermined the aspirations of other legitimate claims to protected status as indigenous people. In India, where cultural diversity is very great, there are concerns that the assertion of special status by a range of previously unrecognized indigenous people could provoke further social divisions and lead to violent ethnic conflict (although this is probably unlikely according to recent arguments about the underlying bases for violent conflict).<sup>xxxvii</sup> In other cases, there are aspects of traditional indigenous practices or recent adaptations to the global economy that others find illegitimate or morally repugnant. Some indigenous peoples in South America and Southeast Asia, for example, have engaged in the production and trafficking of illegal narcotic drugs. In other cases, indigenous people continue to practice long-standing customs which others find abhorrent such as polygamy, circumcision or female genital mutilation and exposure of parts of the body. This poses a difficult question as to whether the world can stand by and protect the rights of such indigenous peoples when their practices seem so clearly to conflict with the standards of mainstream society?

Perhaps the greatest challenge that indigenous peoples face now that they have a voice in the international community and some safeguards for the protection of their lands, is the erosion of their

culture because of the forces of globalization which tend toward the homogenization of people. The global marketplace is seductive -full of products and ideas which provoke change and assimilation to a universal aesthetic. This presents philosophical challenges in two ways. On the one hand, advocates of indigenous peoples rights to self-determination, and particularly elders in indigenous societies condemn the effect of the globalizing culture of McDonalds and Coca Cola on their people, and especially the younger generations for whom these items are so attractive.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Similarly, western forms of formal education, considered so necessary to cope with today=s world, have had the effect of killing off indigenous languages and cultures. On the other hand, why should indigenous people not have access to the positive features of the developed world and globalization?

It now seems clear that indigenous people can indeed try to benefit from the best of both worlds. Indeed, even Coca Cola has found its way into syncretic indigenous traditions. In Mexico, for example, Indians use Coke in various spiritual and medical ceremonies and rituals where they connect the local and person with the global economy and consumer items. After all, Why should people who believe they have a link to these cultures not be entitled to assert their identity? Why should indigenous people not be able to preserve their language and heritage in protected areas where tourists come to see certain created and re-created aspects of their culture? Why should they not learn just as much about their own history and epic stories of their own as they do Shakespeare and the Greek tragedies? Why should they not be able to benefit from modern technology and medicine while still living in harmony with the land and traditional forms of medicine, especially where these have been shown to be so efficacious?<sup>xxxix</sup> Ultimately, our ability to allow indigenous people to both adapt to the modern context while still maintaining their own distinct culture on their

own lands will be our ultimate test as a global community. It will show us whether we, as a global society, can find a balance between the demands of modernity or globalization and safeguarding indigenous cultures and the environments they and indeed all of us rely upon.

**The International Cancun Declaration  
of Indigenous Peoples. Concerns about the Impact of Global trade and the World  
Trade Organization Policies**

**5th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference - Cancun, Quintana Roo,  
Mexico,**

**12 September 2003 From <http://forestpeoples.gn.apc.org/briefings.htm>**

Loss of livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of indigenous peasants in Mexico who are producing corn because of the dumping of artificially cheap, highly subsidized corn from the USA and tens of thousands of indigenous vegetable producers in the Cordillera region of the Philippines because of dumping of vegetables. The contamination of traditional

indigenous corn in Mexico by genetically-modified-corn is a very serious problem for Indigenous Peoples. All these are due to the liberalization of trade in agriculture and the deregulation of laws which protect domestic producers and crops required by the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AOA). The structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are the foundations for liberalization, privatization and deregulation. High export subsidies and domestic support provided to rich agribusiness corporations and rich farmers in the United States the European Union have also made this possible.

- · The increasing impoverishment of indigenous and hill tribe farmers engaged in coffee production in Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Vietnam, etc. because of the drop in commodity prices of coffee.
- The increasing conflicts between transnational mining, gas and oil corporations and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, India, Ecuador, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Nigeria, Chad-Cameroon, USA, Russia, Venezuela, among others, and the militarization and environmental devastation in these communities due to the operations of these extractive industries. The facilitation of the entry of such corporations are made possible because of liberalization of investment laws pushed by the TRIMS (Trade-Related Investment Measures) Agreement and WB-IMF conditionalities, regional trade agreements like NAFTA and bilateral investment agreements.
- The militarization of Indigenous Peoples= lands and territories, and the many cases of assassination and arbitrary arrests and detention of indigenous activists and leaders and people who are supporting them, as well as the criminalization of Indigenous Peoples=

resistance, all significantly increased.

- The upsurge in infrastructure development, particularly of mega hydroelectric dams, oil and gas pipelines, roads in Indigenous Peoples territories to provide support to operations of extractive industries, logging corporations, and export processing zones. The infrastructure development, for instance, under Plan Panama has destroyed ceremonial and sacred sites of Indigenous Peoples in the six States of Southern Mexico and in Guatemala.

- The patenting of medicinal plants and seeds nurtured and used by Indigenous Peoples, like the quinoa, ayahuasca, Mexican yellow bean, maca, sangre de drago, hoodia , yew plant, etc. Such biopiracy and patenting of life-forms is facilitated by the TRIPS Agreement.

- Soaring prices of pharmaceutical products and inaccessibility of cheaper drugs for diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS which are diseases in Indigenous Peoples communities and decreasing public health services in these communities.

- Privatization of basic public services such as water and energy in several countries which has spurred massive general strikes and protests such as those led by Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia. The General Agreement on Services (GATS) whose coverage is being expanded to include environmental services (sanitation, nature and landscape protection), financial services, tourism, among others, allowed for this.

- The undermining of international instruments, constitutional provisions, and national laws and policies which protect our rights.

All these developments are alarming. This global situation has undermined self-sufficient economies of Indigenous Peoples leading to food insecurity, worsening poverty and loss of

land, culture and identity.

Ethnocentricity vs cultural relativism

**Perceptions**>Noble Savage=

primordial

custodians of the land

nature knowledge, eco-friendly

plant-medicine, -healing, -foods

>indigenous science=

self-sufficient

hunting, tracking

desert survival

shrewd traders

unique beauty

natural insights/instinct

non-violent

martial prowess

egalitarian society

Primitive Anti-Moderns

obstacles

no development

low-tech

anti-capitalist

inefficient and costly

primitive

brutal

resent/resist change, new

cheats/duplicious

savage sexuality

base instincts

weak

inherently violent

tyrant chiefs/rulers

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- i. See McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (DoubleDay, New York, 1977), chap. 1
  - ii. J. Bodley, *Victims of Progress, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Mayfield Publishing Co, Mountain View, CA, 1990), pp. 10-12.
  - iii. E. Boonzaier, *The Cape Herders. A History of the KhoiKhoi of Southern Africa* (Ohio University Press, Athens OH, 1996) , pp.98-99 and N. Parsons >Review The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: the Hottentot Venus. First Run/Icarus Films, 1998, H-SAfrica, Dec. 2001 found at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/exhibit/showrev.cgi?path=217>.
  - iv. World Council of Indigenous Peoples statement in Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, p. 153
  - v. For a discussion of this process in regard to the San of southern Africa, see R. Gordon and S. Douglas, *The Bushman Myth. The Making of a Namibian Underclass, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Westview Press, Boulder CO, 2000)
  - vi. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, p. 152
  - vii. A. Durning, *Guardians of the Land: Indigenous Peoples and the Health of the Earth, World Watch Paper 112* (World Watch Institute, Washington, 1991)
  - viii.P. Sampat, Last Words, *World Watch Magazine*, (World Watch Institute, Washington DC) May/June, 2001, pp. 34-40
  - ix. G Psacharopoulos and H. Patrinos, *Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America. An Empirical Analysis*. (World Bank, Washington DC, 1994) pp. 4-6, 30-32. See also the UN Economic and Social Council, *Review of Activities Related to Indigenous Peoples, UN Report E/CN. 19/2002/2/Add.8, (New York 9April 2002)*
  - x. See K. Kosec, >The Ones Who Preserve Our Identity: Women, Children and Plan Colombia=,

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xii. P. Sampat, Last Words, World Watch Magazine, (World Watch Institute, Washington DC) May/June, 2001, pp. 34-40

xiii. Durning, *Guardians of the Land*: p. 9

xiv. From *Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Selection of His Writings* translated by G. Sanderlin (Alfred Kopf, New York, 1971)

xv. For this sentiment and others like it see R. Rotberg, *The Founder. Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1988), pp.172-174

xvi. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, p. 118.

xvii. See D. Pilkington and N. Garimara, *Follow The Rabbit-Proof Fence* (University of Queensland Press, Queensland, 1997)

xviii. From M. Colchester, F. MacKay, T. Griffiths and J. Nelson, A Survey of Indigenous Land Tenure (Forest Peoples Programme, Dec. 2001) p. 23. This may be found at:  
[http://forestpeoples.gn.apc.org/Briefings/Landrights/fao\\_land\\_tenure\\_report\\_dec01\\_eng.htm](http://forestpeoples.gn.apc.org/Briefings/Landrights/fao_land_tenure_report_dec01_eng.htm)

xix. J. Lasimbang, 'National Parks: Indigenous Resource Management Principles in Protected Areas', *Cultural Survival* Vol. 28, No. 1, March 2004 and J. Beltran (Editor) *Guidelines for developing co-management systems with indigenous/traditional peoples in protected areas* (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Bern, 2000)

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xxvii. See UN Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at:

<http://www.unchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs9.htm>

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xxxi. T. Roopnaraine, >Indigenous Knowledge, biodiversity and rights=, *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 14, No. 3, June 1998, pp.16-36 and S. Hansen and J. VanFleet, *Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Property, A Handbook* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington DC, July 2003)

xxxii. See UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous persons at:

<http://www.unchr.ch/indigenous/rapporteur.htm>

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xxxv. R. Lee, R. Hitchcock and M. Biesele, >Foragers to First Peoples: The Kalahari San Today=, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, March 2002.

xxxvi. Bench, >Globalization and Policies Towards Cultural Diversity=

xxxvii. B. Karlsson, >Anthropology and the AIndigenous Slot@: Claims to and debates about indigenous peoples in India=, *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Dec 2003, pp. 403-424

xxxviii. For some of the implications of this broader phenomenon see for example, T Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (Anchor Press, New York, 2000) and B. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalization and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (Ballantine Books, New York, 1996)

xxxix. See B. Dean, >Indigenous Education and the Prospects for Cultural Survival=, *Cultural Survival*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Dec. 2003.