

# Fourth World Nations in the Era of Globalisation

## An Introduction to Contemporary theorizing Posed by Indigenous Nations

by Kathy Seton

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In this article I explore the challenges that the rise of Fourth World theory and indigenous politics pose to contemporary political economic analyses. There are two themes prominent within contemporary political economic analysis; globalisation and the ever-growing emergence of difference (localisation). Many of these analyses are underpinned by the notion that a world system exists as a single entity (see, for example, Wallerstein 1974), under globalisation. However, this does not account for the increasing action of peoples at the local level, who are identifying with one another on the basis of, for example, nationhood (i.e. indigenous nations), ethnicity, or sexual preference; they are sustaining, creating and asserting their difference. This is particularly relevant when it is noted that in any exploration of difference, differentials in access to power must be considered. Images of the 'Other' may be related more closely to the perpetuation of the interests of those in power, than to reality. Images of "Self", conversely, may be a response to that power.

### **Indigenous Social Movements as Sites of Power**

The rise of indigenous social movements in world politics, as well as the single international indigenous movement, signifies that international solidarity is a 'real world' event. Indigenous nations everywhere are demanding the right to self-determination. They are asserting their sovereignty as distinct and autonomous nations of peoples. Popular stereotypes of indigenous nations as having 'primitive', 'backward' cultures have helped cover-up and often rationalize the reality of their ongoing marginalisation. This process of marginalisation has frequently been motivated and legitimized by colonial powers under the banners of 'modernization', 'development' and 'progress' (see Tauli-Corpuz 1993; Wilmer 1993).

The powerful notions of 'progress', 'development' and 'modernization' have led to a conception of a hierarchy of States delineated as the 'Three Worlds' (see Worsley 1984) based on contrasts of ideology (i.e. First World capitalism versus Second World socialism/communism) and contrasts of wealth (i.e. the industrialized First and Second World versus the underdeveloped Third World) (see Nietschmann 1987). However, indigenous nations are not recruited to their political situation on the basis of either ideology or their economic well-being. Instead they are "peoples and political movements in the same moment of space and time" (Brough 1989:5). They are temporally united through their histories and traditions passed on with their own languages. They are spatially united through their powerful links to their land and water territories. Their struggles for self-determination are struggles to retain and/or regain cultural solidarity which unite them as a distinct people.

The challenge for contemporary theorists is how to work out a mode of investigation that accounts for both the processes of integration on a global scale (globalisation) and the processes of self-identifying on the local indigenous level (localization). By moving away from an all-encompassing global narrative of history and politics, and stressing the local and particular forms of difference and struggle, new outlooks on power-relations are achievable; essentially power can be considered in terms of micro-political levels (subsiding indigent pockets throughout societies) not just in terms of macro-political levels such as classes or States (see Brough 1989). Culture then becomes connected to 'real life' experiences and theorists can encompass

forms and occasions of representations as sites of power in themselves.

### **The Rise of Fourth World Theory**

Through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Fourth World theory "emerged to explain persistent global patterns of ethnocide and ecocide" (Nietschmann 1994:225) perpetrated against the 6,000 to 9,000 (note 1) (see Griggs 1994a, 1994b; Ryser 1996) ancient but "internationally unrecognized nations" (Griggs 1992:NET) of the Fourth World. These nations represent "a third of the of the world's population" (Griggs 1992:NET) whose descendants maintain a distinct political culture that predates and continues to resist the encroachment of the 192 (note 2) (see Ryser 1996) recognized States now in existence. Fourth World theory was fashioned by a diverse assortment of people, including "activists, human rights lawyers, and academics but principally leaders of resisting [indigenous] nations" (Nietschmann 1994:225). Through information networking they share thoughts, knowledge and resistance tactics in meetings and by photocopy, mail, telephone, fax, computer modem, and computer bulletin boards (see Field 1984; Nietschmann 1994). As Nietschmann (1994:225; see also Field 1984) delineates, the doorway to Fourth World analysis cannot be found in library catalogues, because:

1. Fourth World theory seeks to change the world, not just describe and publish an article on it;
2. Fourth World advocates rely on the electronic circulation of firsthand information; and
3. it is counterproductive to discuss plans, strategies, and an overall theory that are aimed at resisting and reversing the territorial and political occupation of nations by states.

Indigenous nations' political solidarity is founded on their cultural solidarity. Thus, more recently the term 'Fourth World' has been applied to indigenous peoples in acknowledgment of the limitations of the Three Worlds schema (see Dyck 1985; Graburn 1981; McCall 1980). The Bartels (1988:249; see also Griggs 1992) have criticised both Graburn (1981) and Dyck (1985) for characterising the 'Fourth World' in "terms of a set of static criteria which aboriginal groups may or may not presently fulfill." All these theorists draw on the work of Manuel and Posluns (1974), however, the fundamental difference is that Manuel and Posluns (1974:5-7) refer to the 'Fourth World' as a product of struggle and development: they juxtapose the growth of a 'Third World' from former colonies, against the [then] future emergence of a 'Fourth World' from diverse aboriginal peoples struggling to achieve more acceptable relations with the States that encapsulate them. Manuel and Posluns (1974) formulation of the term 'Fourth World' has become the most widely used definition; that is, 'aboriginal peoples' who have special non-technical, non-modern exploitative relations to the land in which they still live and are 'disenfranchised' by the States within which they live (see for instance Griggs 1992; Hyndman 1991; Ryser 1996). Hyndman (1991:169; see also Duhaylungsod and Hyndman 1993; Weyler 1984) notes that "[i]ndigenous peoples themselves are popularising the term Fourth World, and it is still being circulated for validation."

Starting from a "Fourth World perspective" (Ryser 1996:8) allows a more all-encompassing analysis than pure economic theorizing, which tends toward a core-periphery structural analysis of the world capitalist system. While economic analyses are important, it must be noted that the political interests of indigenous nations cannot be reduced to purely economic considerations that disregard their struggle for cultural autonomy. Fourth World analysis "produces a dramatically distinct, "ground-up" portrait of the significance and centrality of people in most world issues, problems, and solutions" (Nietschmann 1994:225).

## Persistent Cultures and Hidden Nations

Analyses that ignore culture over pure economics also deny those aspects of life that persist. Spicer (1971:799) has developed the notion of persistent cultural systems, defined as a cumulative cultural phenomenon, an open ended system that defines a course of action for the people believing in it. These persistent systems, according to Spicer, are more stable than political organizations, and furthermore, States depend on the accumulated energy of persistent peoples for their impetus. Spicer (1971:796) suggests considering more fully the links between political systems and identity systems. He concludes that an oppositional process between identity systems and State apparatus exists, which can lead to either the breakdown or reinforcement of an identity system.

In more recent theorizing, Spicer (1992) advances the notion of "hidden nations" to explain how States' have continued to subjugate persisting indigenous nations. Hidden nations "are not hiding" (Spicer 1992:30) themselves, rather States suffer from "cultural blindness" or "insulation against reality" (Spicer 1992:36, 47). Cultural blindness is integrally based in power relations:

Dominant peoples control the institutional relationships of nations in their state. The dominant people do not have to adjust to others; they can require the subordinated peoples to adjust to them...The dominant people do not ordinarily experience any pressures to see the subordinated peoples as the subordinated peoples see themselves (Spicer 1992:37).

Thus, the cultural blindness of States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries facilitated their governing of indigenous nations "whom they believed were like themselves already, peoples who could be made into images of themselves, or peoples who were hopelessly inferior and could not be changed" (Spicer 1992:34).

However, while there can be no denying the fundamental importance of recognizing the growth and impact of colonialism, capitalism, bureaucracy and the division of labour as central features of contemporary history, the understanding that these factors would eventually destroy persistent cultural systems is clearly false. Thus, indigenous nations' struggles for cultural autonomy (self-determination and sovereignty) have been unjustifiably ignored or distorted; a serious flaw when theorizing about indigenous nations and their political movements, considering the culture concept is so central to their 'being'.

### **Time and Space: Ideologically Construed Instruments of Power**

The new European states have worked diligently to wipe out indigenous history and intellectual thought and replace these with European history and intellectual thought. The great lie is simply this: IF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WILL ONLY REJECT THEIR OWN HISTORY, INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE AND REPLACE THESE THINGS WITH EUROPEAN VALUES AND IDEALS, THEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WILL SURVIVE (Ryser 1986:NET; emphasis in original).

The history of indigenous nations is integrally connected with the history of colonialism. Colonialism represents the imposition of the power of one State or nation over the territories of another in order to gain economic and/or political advantage (see Brough 1989). Thus, colonialism is about the spatial expansion of one people and the corresponding constriction of another; colonialism is about the discovery and exploitation of 'frontiers'. By calling indigenous territories, 'frontiers', colonialists can debase any prior political attachments to that territory and deny the existence of the original owners of those territories. Frontiers are seen as abstract spaces devoid of human connections; they are wildernesses which require 'taming'. Indigenous nations

and their territories become conceived in economic terms, as "untapped natural resources" (Tauli-Corpuz 1993:7) waiting for the taking. Indigenous nations' natural resources become "national and transnational resources" (Hyndman 1988:281).

Colonialism also established the foundations for all future relations between colonizers and colonized. The fact that indigenous nations continue to be marginalized (in a comparative sense) is testament to this ongoing problem. Further, colonialism is a process through time and space, and, as such, indigenous nations have not only been dispossessed of their lands but also of their histories (see Brough 1989). The history of indigenous nations is often portrayed as 'peripheral', 'backward', and 'doomed to extinction', "by the dogma of colonialist notions of the 'progress' of 'civilisation'" (Tauli-Corpuz 1993:10; see also Wilmer 1993). Indigenous nations are not only resisting the spatial relationship ("ever expanding space" (Brough 1989:24)) that advances their lands as underdeveloped frontiers, they are resisting an augmented sense of time:

...the expansive, aggressive, and oppressive societies which we collectively and inaccurately call the West needed Space to occupy. More profoundly and problematically, they required Time to accommodate the schemes of a one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition) (Fabian 1983:144).

Thus time and space become "ideologically construed instruments of power" (Fabian 1983:144; see also Brough 1989). These trends continue today to marginalize indigenous nations in both colonial and neo-colonial situations, resulting in clashes between ideas and philosophies.

## **THE GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF FOURTH WORLD THEORY**

Fourth World theory scrutinizes how colonial empires and modern States invaded and now encapsulate most of the world's enduring nations and peoples: "It also explores how this destructive expansion jeopardizes the world's biological and cultural diversity and ultimately rebounds to break down and break up states" (Nietschmann 1994:225-6). Through a different geopolitical perspective, Fourth World analyses, writings, and maps (see for instance Griggs 1994a, 1994b) rectify the distorting and obscuring of indigenous nations' identities, geographies and histories (see Spicer 1992); "that make up the usually hidden "other side" in the invasions and occupations that produce most of the world's wars, refugees, genocide, human rights violations, and environmental destruction" (Nietschmann 1994:226, 230). To understand this different geopolitical perspective, some clarification of terms is necessary. The political terms nations, States, nation-States, a people, and ethnic group/minority are commonly used interchangeably in both popular and academic literature despite the fact that each has a distinct connotation (see Griggs 1992, 1994b; Hyndman 1994a; Nietschmann 1987, 1994).

### **Fourth World Perspectives on Terminology**

#### **A State**

Within Fourth World theory a State represents a centralised political system with a recognised civilian and military bureaucracy established to enforce one set of institutions, laws and sometimes language and religion within its boundaries (see Hyndman 1994a; Nietschmann 1987). The modern state grew from "European kingdoms, overseas colonialism, and the division of large colonial empires into smaller and smaller neo-colonial pieces" (Nietschmann 1994:227). The State, as a political entity, is a legal creation which comes into being on a specific date (see Nietschmann 1994), is comprised of a "set of internationally recognised boundaries that comprise greater than one (>1) nation" (Griggs 1994b:260; see also Nietschmann 1994; Spicer 1992), and is acknowledged by other States.

## A Nation

Nations, on the other hand, are not so easily defined since nations are a less tangible phenomenon. A nation is a people with a distinct culture evolved over time "as a product of human interaction with their environment (on the earth and in relation to the cosmos) and with the spiritual realm" (Ryser 1996:11). Nations are bound together by such common attributes as ancestry, history, society, institutions, ideology, language, territory and religion (Nietschmann 1987:1, 1994:261). Nations are, thus, self-defining (see Connor 1978, Nietschmann 1994) and are created by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a historically common territory and a national consciousness. The term nation also refers to the geographically bounded territory of a people. Further, as no nation has ever deliberately dispensed with their territory, resources or identity, "a nation is the world's most enduring, persistent, and resistant organisation of people and territory" (Nietschmann 1994:226).

Only when nations and States coincide with cultural and legal boundaries (less than 5% of the world's States), can the term nation-State be used (see Griggs 1994b; Nietschmann 1987, 1994; Wilmer 1993). Spicer (1992:30; emphasis in original) notes that the political environment in which indigenous nations are 'hidden' is "currently labelled the nation-state." As discussed above, every State is fundamentally a plural entity (comprised of two or more nations);

*...yet, the term nation-state tends to perpetuate the obscuring of this fundamental fact, because it suggests that a modern state is composed of a welded unity - a single nation within a state. Insofar as it suggests this kind of entity, the term perpetuates misunderstanding and obfuscation (Spicer 1992:31; emphasis in original).*

Fourth World theory focuses on analysing nations, however, at this stage of research Fourth World theorists have categorised nations in terms relating to the State (see Table 1). Both Nietschmann (1994) and Morris (1992) have noted that characterising nation types is an important developing area of Fourth World theory. As Morris (1992:NET) states:

*Fortunately, among the ranks of indigenous peoples a discussion has begun that calls into question the usefulness of forcing indigenous reality into the forms developed by Europeans. Consequently, new descriptions of the historical organisation of indigenous societies, as well as indigenous aspirations, are being formulated. The result may be the evolution of completely novel international relationships between and among peoples.*

Ryser (1996; see Table 2) has taken up the challenge and developed terms for the new and evolving political status relations indigenous nations are forging for themselves.

**Table 1: Types of nations in terms relating to the State (Griggs 1993, Nietschmann 1994:233)**

Autonomous nations	Nations that have endured long-standing state attempts at cultural and territorial assimilation and whose autonomy is recognised by the State, e.g., Catalonia, Kuna Yala
Enduring nations	Nations that have endured long-standing State attempts at cultural and territorial assimilation and have achieved a partial or limited autonomy, e.g., Saamiland, Yapti Tasba
Renascent nations	Historical nations that are becoming stronger by cultural renaissance and political movements seeking greater political recognition, e.g., Scotland, Wales

Remnant nations	Long-dormant nations (low levels of cultural activity) that have weak, incipient national movements, regenerating because of the example of neighbouring nations.
Nation cores of States	Most States have and are run by nation cores that become both the point of expansion and the hegemonic culture of the idealised nation-state, e.g., England/ UK, Russia/USSR, Castile/Spain, Java/Indonesia, Han/China.
Irredenta	Parts of nation cores of States lost to States by treaty or war. In some cases, groups within the "broken piece." Nations see themselves being ruled by the "wrong" State, e.g., Northern Ireland.
Recognised nations	Nations that endured State occupation and won independence, e.g., Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Eritrea.
Fragmented nations	Many nations are occupied by two or more states, which often hinders political mobilisation and territorial reconsolidation, e.g., Kurdistan is occupied by 5 States, Saamiland by 4, and Kawthoolei (in Burma) by 2.
Militarily occupied nations	Many nations have all or part of their territories militarily occupied by one or more States, e.g., the northern one-third of the Miskito nation is occupied by Honduras, and the southern two-thirds have partial autonomy.
Armed resistance nations	Of the world's 120-some wars (as of April 1993) 80 percent involved Fourth World nations resisting State military forces, e.g., Kawthoolei versus Burma, West Papua versus Indonesia, East Timor versus Indonesia, Chittagong Hill Tracts versus Bangladesh, Saharawi Republic versus Morocco.

## People

A people in Fourth World theory is also self-defining: "A people considers itself to be distinct from other peoples, adjacent or far, who may, in turn, recognise the difference" (Nietschmann 1994:227). A people is distinguished by a common history, a common geographical location and homeland, cultural or linguistic links, religious or ideological links, racial or ethnic ties, a common economic base, and an adequate number of individuals asserting common identity (see Nietschmann 1994). Sills (1993) and Smith (1986) (note 3) advance the perspective that it is when a people become politically mobilized, claiming the right to self-determination, that they appear to form nations. When faced by threats from common enemies a people politically organize and mobilize against these threats:

*For example, the Dine (Navajo) used to be a people who traditionally lived in a very dispersed, non-national pattern, organised in clans as basic operational units, until they were faced with a need to form a nation under military leaders (like Manuelito) who united them to defend their lives against encroachment and genocidal attacks by Euro-American invaders. Today, some 130 years later, the "Navajo Nation" is recognised juridically within the United States (although that recognition is full of contradictions) (Sills 1993: 9).*

**Table 2: New and evolving political status relations forged by indigenous nations (Ryser 1996:Chapter 4)**

<b>Integrated nation</b>	No internal sovereignty and no external sovereignty, participation or sharing in political instruments of State or dominant nation, exercise delegated powers of government, constitutionally defined or impliedly understood to be an integral part of State domain or
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	dominant nation's domain, no inherent collective rights - individual and group rights defined in State constitution or reduced rights as a result of unstated principles, full economic dependency, e.g., Kalaallit Nunaat.
<b>Autonomous nation</b>	Governing authority delegated to nation from State-limited internal sovereignty, no external sovereignty, limited collective rights - State constitution defines individual and collective rights, partial economic self-sufficiency, e.g. Yapti Tasba.
<b>Associated nation</b>	Exercise inherent powers of government - full internal sovereignty, government to government relations - limited external sovereignty, partial economic self-sufficiency, e.g., Lummi.
<b>Independently federated nation</b>	Exercise inherent powers of government - varying degree of negotiated internal sovereignty, government to government relations - varying external degree of sovereignty, substantial economic self-sufficiency, e.g., Catalunya
<b>Independent Nation-State</b>	Exercise constituted powers of government, full internal sovereignty and full external sovereignty, economic dependency, e.g., Federation of Micronesia.

Almost no nation or people in the world calls itself by the terms used by most academics, journalists and States: "ethnic groups, minorities, peasants, tribes, herders, agriculturalists, lower class, or, simply, a group, a population or the poor" (Nietschmann 1987:4, 1994:230; emphasis in original). For instance, the term 'ethnic group' conflates two distinct geographical processes: "immigration to a place, and territorial annexation by an expansionist state or nation" (Griggs 1994b:259). From the perspective of Fourth World theory, all these terms have the common strategy of supporting States by obfuscating nations. Terminological confusion goes further: by centering on 'legitimate' political units at the level of States, the notion of 'sovereignty' (and nationalism) becomes distorted, ignoring the role of nations (see Brough 1989; Griggs 1994b). Sovereignty, in political theory, refers to the notion that all societies must have some absolute power of final decision, executed by a person or group identified as both able to determine, and capable of enforcing, the decision: "Sovereign rule then, refers to a notion of legitimate rule, not necessarily State rule" (Brough 1989:14). It is upon this understanding that most indigenous nations, all of who have their own names for themselves and their own territories, seek the right to self-determination internationally and resist incorporation (both peacefully and through conflict) into one or more States.

## **NATIONS ENDURE**

### ***The Westphalian System of States***

One of the oldest social practices is the conduct of international relations, however the history of relations between peoples is punctured with "new beginnings, collapsed old orders and proclaimed new arrangements" (Ryser 1996:139). The present political order was instituted at the Congress of Munster and Osnabrug in 1648 and is known as the Peace of Westphalia:

*This treaty brought an end to the Thirty-Years War between the keepers of the flame for the Holy Roman Empire in Austria and Spain, and the monarchies of France and "Swedeland." At the same*

*time the peace treaty created new structures between emerging "European Christian States," established monarchs as sovereigns in their own right, formalised borders between separate sovereigns, affirmed that all states would be ruled under the guiding hand of the Catholic Church and established mutual recognition of sovereignty as the basis for state legitimacy (Westphalia, 1648) (Ryser 1996:140; see also Ryser 1994b).*

Instead of an individual or family unit being the focus of sovereign authority, the Peace of Westphalia established a new political order typified by the distribution of sovereignty between States (see Wilmer 1993). Exercising governmental power within the framework of a State evolved into a "generally accepted system predicated on the principles of legal universality and of individual rights" (Ryser 1994b:NET). Initially only affecting Western Europe, as a result of global colonization by a few European States, the Westphalian political order spread across the world: "Independent states loosely connected to each other and supported by international and regional organizations defined the new international political order of the 19th and 20th centuries" (Ryser 1996:142-143).

The Westphalian system of States has functioned for close to four hundred years on a basic premise: "Universal standards for political sovereignty and political organization would ensure peaceful relations between peoples and promote global stability" (Ryser 1996:145). However, just as smaller political units (States) contested and eventually supplanted empires, even smaller units of human political organization have arisen to challenge the power and legitimacy of modern States:

*These smaller units (sometimes much larger than many individual modern states) are the world's more than five thousand nations; the original peoples whose cultures distinguish them one from the other. The peoples and territories that are these nations are the building blocks from which virtually every state is made (Ryser 1996:145).*

### **The Repressive State**

"Bedrock nations" (Griggs ND:NET; 1992) existed prior to all States (see Nietschmann 1994, Ryser 1996). War became, and remains, the vehicle by which States appropriate ('State-building') the territories and peoples of bedrock nations. State governments tend to share and reproduce State-building strategies, and since "the common underpinnings of such strategies are force and tyranny, most are repressive and are reeled out with but minor variations" (Nietschmann 1994:234; emphasis added). The 'theory of the repressive State' proposes that because no indigenous nation cedes its independence freely, State-building proceeds through "various military and legal mopping-up stages," many of which may exist simultaneously "creating a single historical geographic process" (Nietschmann 1994:234). Viewing State-building as a historical-geographical sequence facilitates the defense of nations and understandings of State buildup and breakdown.

While nations predate States, all States attempt to erase the histories and geographies of the nations they occupy, through programs commonly referred to as 'nation-building': programs which are "based on political, cultural and territorial integration and development and education" (Nietschmann 1994:229) through the creation of common symbols (flags, national anthems, history and school-map geography). However, when States speak of nation-building they are, in most cases, undertaking "state-building by nation-destroying" (Nietschmann 1986:2, 1994:229; see also Connor 1978).

### **The Definition of Statehood by the Terms of the**



*The specific definitions frequently cited...include a political entity which: (1) exercises independent sovereignty (Article 73), (2) is recognised by other states (Article 76), (3) has the capacity to defend specific boundaries or lines of demarcation within which it exercises absolute power, and (4) maintains the Catholic religion (Article 77: "The most Christian King shall, nevertheless, be oblig'd to preserve in all and every one of these Countrys the Catholick Religion, as maintain'd under the Princes of Austria, and to abolish all Innovations crept in during the War.") (Westphalia, 1648) (Ryser 1996: 143).*

### **States Breakup or Breakdown**

As States are "artificial creations" (Nietschmann 1994:238) they breakdown and breakup as a part of their life cycle. State breakdown results when new internal boundaries permit greater autonomy for nations within a State (Griggs 1994b:260). State boundaries are generally subject to reorganization when "the political and economic costs of occupation exceed returns, and the empire becomes too expensive to maintain" (Nietschmann 1994:238). Spain's post-Franco development of 17 Autonomous Communities is an example of State breakdown (Griggs 1994b). State breakup refers to "the breakup of a state into 2 new ones" (Griggs 1994b:260). Recent examples of State breakup include Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union.

State-building by nation-destroying "sows the seeds" (Nietschmann 1994:238) for the State's eventual breakup or breakdown. Particularly significant is the notion that State breakup and breakdown occurs most commonly along the boundaries of historic nations (see Griggs 1994b; Ryser 1992, 1993). Griggs (1994b:260) states that "[t]hese old nation boundaries can be considered cultural faultlines since nations often persist in cultural form centuries after their legal boundaries have been absorbed by expansionist states or nations." When confronted with the reality of internal disintegration due to political turmoil, economic stagnation, and environmental devastation, States typically facilitate their own demise:

*They may expand further (e.g., the USSR's movement into Afghanistan, Argentina's into the Falklands, Morocco's into Saharawi Republic); apply more repression (e.g., Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Sri Lanka in the 1980s and Burma in the 1980s and 1990s); loosen up economic control but maintain the political and military occupation of nations (e.g., the USSR in the later 1980s); try to decentralise as little as possible within the existing state system (e.g., Canada and Quebec and home rule for indigenous peoples in the north); or develop a new method of international governance based on federations or confederations of nations that run their own affairs domestically and loosely unite to run the affairs of regions (trade, pollution, communications, defence and illegal drugs) (Nietschmann 1994:238-239).*

Griggs (1994a, 1994b) and Ryser (1994b) offer an example of a new method of international governance based on confederal organising along national and regional lines; the emerging Europe of Regions (ER) movement (State breakdown). Encompassing 130 nations inside the boundaries of 35 States, discussions are taking place within the framework of the European community (see Griggs 1994a, 1994b; Ryser 1994b). The central goal is to create a European Union (EU) (State breakup) that more closely aligns with geographic realities:

*For instance, the physical geography of Europe does not always fit*

*well with economic dominance by state capital. Malmö, the capital of Skaneland, is hundreds of kilometres closer to Copenhagen than it is to Stockholm but politics rather than local geography dictates that Skaneland make its trading hub the latter rather than the former (Griggs 1994b:263).*

The EU seeks to encourage trade and free regional economies by reinvigorating old trading regions that emulate geographic logic rather than politically bounded spaces: "One example is the European Union-sponsored Atlantic Arc that renews the ancient trading line among Cornwall, Brittany, Galicia, and Portugal" (Griggs 1994a:6, 1994b:263; see Figure 4). This new international endeavour places States under serious pressure, as do international conflicts which contribute to the breakdown or breakup of States (I will return to nation-State conflicts shortly).

## **RAPING THE WORLD: MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT ( note 4)**

*The needs and interests of political states and indigenous groups are in many ways diametrically opposed to one another. Political states view uncontrolled growth and progress as the highest idea, while indigenous groups regard balance and limited growth essential to their livelihood. From all appearances these ideas cannot be reconciled. We must reconcile the differences or a great deal of humankind will not survive (World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) 1979:NET).*

In the globalized world, industrialization, capitalism and modernization have increasingly alienated peoples (indigenous and non-indigenous) from land and nature in differing ways. ( note 5) The past few decades have witnessed a massive acceleration in the rate at which indigenous peoples have been deprived of their lands and livelihoods by imposed development programs. Characterized by unchecked resource exploitation, these development programs have increasingly been brought to international attention; especially at a time when it has become apparent that they pose grave and irreversible threats to the earth's bio-cultural diversity.

### ***The New Wave of Colonialism***

Third World colonialism has replaced European colonialism as the main global force threatening indigenous nations' survival today. The wave of post-WWII decolonisation created the boundaries of Third World States "largely on the artificial outlines of the vanquished colonial empires" (Nietschmann 1986:2). As the notion of decolonisation was not extended to indigenous nations, Fourth World nations are now the subjects of recolonization and internal colonialism. In artificial Third World States, like the Philippines, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Indonesia and Bangladesh, economic development is used to invade Fourth World nations (see Duhaylungsod and Hyndman 1993; Hyndman 1994a; Nietschmann 1986). For example,

*The mining frontier expands in Indonesia and PNG by dispossessing indigenous nations from their land and resources and degrading the environment. Nations manage resources and states consume them. Melanesian indigenous nations maintain the quality of their lands, waters and resources but Third World states like Indonesia and PNG do not. A system that does work is being destroyed to maintain a system that does not work (Hyndman 1994a: 177-178).*

The strategy that many States like Indonesia and Bangladesh employ to annex indigenous nations' lands, territories and natural resources is termed 'transmigration' - the resettlement of people loyal to, or dependent on, a central government, backed by military force, "with almost all expenses lobbied for by transnationals and provided by international development agencies" (Nietschmann 1986:6). In Indonesia, the Jakarta government lists

seven goals for its transmigration program: "to promote national unity, national security, an equal distribution of the population, national development, the preservation of nature, help to the farming classes and improvement of the condition of local peoples" (Nietschmann 1986:7; emphasis in original). The reality is:

*...the spread of poverty; forced displacement of indigenous peoples from their homes, communities and lands; deforestation and social damage at the rate of some 200,000 hectares per year...destruction of local governments, economies, means of sustainable resource use; forced assimilation programs; wide-spread use of military force to "pacify" areas and to break local resistance by bombing and massacring civilians (Nietschmann 1986: 7).*

It is obvious that the fallacy of 'nation-building' disguises the real situation of 'nation-destroying' by State expansion: "Capture and control of resources, not extension of politics or economic philosophy, is behind the plunder and confrontation for control" (Duhaylungsod and Hyndman 1993:141; see also Hyndman 1994a; Nietschmann 1986) of indigenous nations' frontiers.

### ***Social and Political Issues: Challenging Notions of Sustainable Development***

Like the fallacy of 'nation-building' technical definitions of 'sustainability' also deny the social and political issues implicit in the notion of sustainability (and by extension conservation movements). As Colchester (1994:70) notes:

*As the WCED [World Commission on Environment and Development] study acknowledges, achieving sustainability implies a radical transformation in present-day economies. It requires a fundamental change in the way natural resources are owned, controlled and mobilised. To be sustainable, development must meet the needs of local people, for if it does not, people will be obliged by necessity to take from the environment more than planned. Sustainability is fundamentally linked to concepts of social justice and equity, both within generations and between generations, as well as both within nations and between nations...Achieving sustainability thus implies major political changes.*

Even when government policies are nominally designed to discriminate in favour of indigenous communities, rights to traditional lands and to control of development are systematically denied; disenfranchising policies are underpinned by deeply held prejudices. One example (of many worldwide) is illustrated by Colchester (1994:73):

*These [disenfranchising policies] have been most explicitly stated in Indonesia, where so-called **suku suku terasing** ('isolated and alien peoples') are defined by the government as 'people who are isolated and have a limited capacity to communicate with other more advanced groups, resulting in their having backward attitudes, and being left behind in the economic, political, socio-cultural, religious and ideological development process'.*

It is clear that implicit in the Indonesian government's formulation of development is the notion that societies or nations may be placed on a social Darwinist evolutionary scale; 'developed' States (i.e. Indonesia) are the most advanced and the so-called 'underdeveloped' indigenous nations are those who have not yet undergone the necessary transformations towards prosperity and economic growth (they are in a 'backward' state). Government directed development initiatives are often justified as being 'in the national interest' (national security and identity) and the State is therefore exercising its power of 'eminent domain' in denying local peoples' rights (see Colchester

Indonesia is just one example of a State which considers development to be a transition from one type of economic system to another; a transition which implies both economic growth (increased production and increased per capita income) and socio-cultural change for the better. Intrinsic to the historical development of the capitalist system of production is the tendency to expand frontiers of economic activity in order to amass surplus value:

*Historically, capitalism is thus an expansive or predatory system, constantly in search of new fields of operation. Thus the phenomena of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism may all be interpreted not only as phases in the development of a capitalist productive system, but also as expansions which are necessary in developed countries. (Seymour-Smith 1986:31)*

With capitalist expansionism has come exploitation of indigenous nations and their environments; both ecological exploitation of resources in the environment and economic exploitation with the extraction of surplus value from producers. The capitalist ideologies of expansion and growth also entail the expropriation of indigenous lands; generally carried out by the State as part of programs of land reform or as part of nationalisation schemes affecting foreign or national private capital enterprises. Colchester (1994:75-76) again provides one of many examples:

*The most severe problem that forest peoples face throughout South and South-East Asia is the lack of recognition of their customary rights to their land...The main result of this lack of land security has been the massive take-over of forest peoples' lands by expanding lowland populations and enterprises...The denial of communal land rights and their fragmentation into individually owned plots has undermined traditional systems of resource management, shifting cultivation in particular.*

### **Nation and State Conflicts**

*States and nations represent two seemingly irrepressible forces in collision: states, with their large armies, expansionist ideologies and economies, and international state-support networks, and nations, with their historical and geographic tenacity anchored by the most indestructible of all human inventions - place-based culture (Nietschmann 1994:236-237).*

Nation versus nation and State versus nation conflicts since World War II (WWII) have produced the most extended and abundant wars, inflicted some of the most extreme measures of genocide on civilians, created the greatest number of refugees, and, unfortunately, have the fewest peaceful solutions (see Nietschmann 1987, 1994). Ryser (1996) calculates that of the 250 wars waged since the end of WWII in 1945 until the end of 1994, 145 or 58% are wars between nations and between nations and States - Fourth World wars. Broken down further, 111 or 77% of all Fourth World wars are nation versus State wars and 22 or 15% are nation versus nation wars (see Ryser 1996). Of these Fourth World wars, 85 or 59% continue today (see Ryser 1996), and many will continue into the next century. According to Ryser (1996:25), "intimidation by the use of state power is the single most common explanation for violent contention between nations and states" (note 6). While these violent confrontations tend to be multi-faceted, most are rooted in territoriality and political status issues with the major secondary component being economics (see Ryser 1996). These wars by bedrock nations are essentially about their self-determination.

These conflicts include wars of environmental destruction where groups on behalf of the State (usually economic developers) generate death and devastation in Fourth World nations: "The act of development instills terror, causes psychological and somatic trauma and produces death either as a result of direct combat or as a consequence of destroyed habitat" (Ryser 1996:18; emphasis in original). Wilmer (1993:193) refers to the psychological trauma experienced by many indigenous peoples ('captive cultures') as a form of "posttraumatic stress disorder"; a disorder which is historical in nature and firmly based in tribal, community and personal histories. As Wilmer (1993:193) states:

*At a very personal level, meaning cannot be created and maintained until, and only as long as, an individual is able to locate herself or himself within a cultural universe of meaning and continuity. The destruction of culture inflicts real harm on individual human beings. One culture cannot simply be removed and another transplanted in an individual without committing a violation of the dignity and integrity of that individual.*

The irony is that in most cases these developers and their States suffer no casualties.

*More than three-fourths of the Fourth World wars studied were of the nation vs state type suggesting that it is in the nature of the failed capacity of the state to accommodate the nation that there is contention in the first place (Ryser 1996:38).*

Much of the violence perpetrated against indigenous nations is hidden by common consensus between States to transform the terminology of conflict: "aggressive conflict between states is called war; a nation's defense against aggression by a state is called terrorism; and the aggressive invasion and occupation of a nation by a State is called development" (Nietschmann 1986:2, 1987). Additionally, despite the fact that so many of the world's wars, refugees and genocide are the result of conflict over territory, resources and political status between States and nations, they do not come under international laws, rules, instruments, conventions or agreements: "States make international laws...From the point of view of the state, only "terrorists" resist state takeover" (Nietschmann 1987:1, 1994:237; see also Ryser 1996). Without new international laws, policies and multi-lateral institutions which recognize nations and their claims, many of these wars will continue, as will the deaths resulting from these nation-State conflicts. (note 7)

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### **The interdependence of biological and cultural diversity**

Since the late 1980s 'sustainable development' (popularized by the United Nations' WCED) has become a major catch-phrase associated with development (and allied to conservation issues); referring "to the means by which "development" is made to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Colchester 1994:70). However, many development institutions have adopted technical definitions of sustainability - "'ecosystems' continued production of goods or services or the maintenance of biodiversity - without any emphasis on human needs or sustaining livelihoods" (Colchester 1994:70). These types of definitions, in their search for ecologically sound production systems, effectively divorce technologies from their wider context; contexts which encompass social, economic, physical, technical and political environments (see Chapin 1991). Any search for ecologically sound production systems must take into account both human cultural resources (eg. applied traditional knowledge and resource management strategies) and biological resources;

both are necessary for the maintenance of the dynamic evolutionary processes involved in plant-human interactions (see Oldfield and Alcorn 1991).

To date, technical definitions of sustainability deny the interdependence of cultural and biological diversity. Nonetheless, concern about the loss of cultural and biological diversity has increased significantly over the past decade (see Hitchcock 1994). The earth's biological diversity, its ecological diversity, "is mirrored by the diversity of cultures humans created over great lengths of time" (Ryser 1996:6; see also Tauli-Corpuz 1993). Biological diversity refers to the variety of species, genes, and environments of the world (see Hyndman 1994b; Nietschmann 1994). Cultural diversity refers to the variety of human life ways, knowledge, and landscapes (see Hyndman 1994b; Nietschmann 1994). Biological and cultural diversity are mutually dependant, they are also geographically codeterminant (see Elford's maps 1995). Nietschmann (1991:373) clarifies:

*In Central America...as in other regions of the world, most remaining wildlife and wildlands exist where indigenous peoples exist. In non-indigenous areas, the same forces that degraded and destroyed biodiversity and environments did the same to indigenous peoples. Where indigenous people survived, so too did biologically rich environments. This means that the best guarantee for the survival of nature is the survival of indigenous peoples, and vice versa.*

By applying the theory of Fourth World environments two rules can be elicited: (1) 'The Rule of Indigenous Environments' - "where there are still indigenous peoples with homelands there are still biologically rich environments" (Nietschmann 1992:3, 1994:239); and conversely, and strikingly, (2) 'The Rule of State Environments' - non-indigenous environments are almost always destructive of generic and biological diversity (see Nietschmann 1994).

### ***Indigenous Nations Fight Back***

*To indigenous peoples sustainable development means meeting the basic needs for subsistence in partnership with nature. It means maintaining a spiritual and reciprocal relationship with nature and all living creatures and non-living things in it. They cannot abuse nature because it is tantamount to abusing themselves or abusing their mothers but also because their needs are very simple and the indigenous technologies, skills and processes they have developed are appropriate and in harmony with nature (Tauli-Corpuz 1993: 12).*

For centuries indigenous peoples have been actively manipulating, modifying, utilising and caring for their homelands, turning their environments into humanised, cultural landscapes and seascapes (see Chapin 1991; Hyndman 1994b) ecologically maintained through established forms of sustainable resource-management. An example of ecologically sustainable resource-management strategies (once again from thousands all over the world) is given by Clarke (1990:24), 'polycultural agricultural systems' in some Pacific communities:

*Recognisable orchards have been described for many Pacific communities, for example, on Santa Cruz by Yen (1974) or the highland fringe of New Guinea by Clarke (1972). Often, too, what looks at first glance like wild forest is really a humanised orchard in which almost all species are useful and many trees and shrubs may have been planted or encouraged. Rather than being a compartmentalised sector of the economy as forestry is today, traditional arboriculture was an integral part of agriculture, housing, medicine, and the production of a wide range of material goods,*

*while at the same time providing ecological services such as shade, erosion control, watershed protection, and habitats for wildlife.*

It is fair to surmise that most of the world's States are essentially governments without environments or resources as they are actually located within the lands and territories of indigenous nations; pre-existing nations who have successfully maintained, and stewarded for future generations, their lands, territories, waters and resources. Most States have come to exist because of their invasion and take-over of indigenous resources and environments; military force is often resorted to in the face of non-consent. However, the intimate association between indigenous peoples and their land, and their determination to maintain their way of life, is most obviously expressed in their worldwide opposition to imposed destructive change. For example, the Dayak peoples of Sarawak have been struggling against loggers and the resultant deforestation of their homelands: -

*...denied legal or political means of defending their lands, [the Dayak] have resorted to setting up human barricades across the logging roads to defend the forests around their longhouses. The government has responded with mass arrests and with a new law making all interference with logging roads a criminal offence. Yet despite the intimidation and threats, the blockades have been persistently re-erected, halting timber extraction on the concessions of prominent politicians such as the Minister for Environment and Tourism (Colchester 1994:82).*

Not all resistance has been subtle, but whether violent or not, and whether successful or not, "the most important and enduring outcome of these conflicts over natural resources has been the local, national and international mobilization and organization that has resulted" (Colchester 1994:85).

### ***The Key to the Future***

#### ***Conservation by Self-determination and Self-determination by Conservation***

Fortunately, in more recent years it has become increasingly clear to some conservationists that biodiversity cannot be sustained without cultural diversity and the preservation of traditional environmental knowledge; "symbiotic conservation" (Hyndman 1994b:300) is essential. However, what still remains contestable is how best to integrate traditional resource management knowledge, and associated customs and techniques, into effective and useful national development and conservation endeavours involving sustainable resource management and protection. As Nietschmann (1991:372; see also Colchester 1994) points out:

*Most indigenous peoples are not simply interested in economic alternatives to resource use, but in reestablishing or reinforcing their control and self-determination over their territory so that they can effectively use their own time-proven and culturally based conservation and resource management systems - sometimes augmented by incorporating the best knowledge and planning from Western societies.*

One recent development, the Miskito Coast Protected Area (MCPA) (which has recently been incorporated into the Windward Project of central American nations) represents a grassroots endeavour which provides an alternate model for protecting environments and wildlife; "it is... forging a different example because its starting point is that indigenous self-determination and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing" (Nietschmann 1991:373; see also Elford 1995; Houseal, MacFarland, Archibold and Chiari 1985 for information on a similar project under the Kuna Yala). Elford (1995:109), in her study of conservation by self-determination in

*conservation by self-determination has potential as a theoretically grounded program of action capable of changing conditions, engendering new understandings, and contributing to the emancipation of the oppressed nations of the Fourth World.*

Nation self-determination by conservation and conservation by nation self-determination, is increasingly (and ironically, since most indigenous societies were sustainable before capitalist invasion and expansionism) being recognized by conservationists and protected-area specialists who are now working more and more with indigenous nations. Similar notions of ethnodevelopment ( note 8) and ecodevelopment (note 9) as alternatives to capitalist economic development projects are also being put forward by some indigenous nations and planners as ways to maintain cultural and biological diversity.

It should not be concluded naively that all established indigenous systems of resource use are undisputedly 'sustainable' and above criticism, but rather that they are far more diverse, complex and subtle than outsiders realise (see Colchester 1994). The social, cultural and institutional strengths inherent in established indigenous systems of resource use need to be built on to achieve sustainability. While States continue to dismiss indigenous resource-management strategies as 'backward' and 'wasteful', environmental and biological devastation will continue at a rapid speed: State environments will remain dominated by State people, "centrifugal economies" and biological impoverishment, while important nation environments - characterised by ecologically adapted and long-standing resident peoples, "centripetal economies" (Nietschmann 1992:3; 1994:259-260; see also Hyndman 1994b) and the world's surviving biological diversity (both land and sea scapes) - will continue to be destroyed to the detriment of all. While it is clear that State-building by nation-destruction is unsustainable, the challenge for the immediate future is how to achieve global environmental security through joint indigenous nation/State co-operation programs (see Hyndman 1994b; Menchu 1994):

If we manage to establish some sort of mutual respect and understanding, and in the process learn to work together toward a set of common goals, we may just succeed in salvaging some of the earth's precious biological and cultural diversity (Chapin 1990:3).

*As the environment of the planet we all share, the source of life which many indigenous people call Mother Earth, continues to deteriorate after centuries of abuse, a philosophy that incorporates all living and nonliving things in its vision is being sought...Long proud of our tradition as "caretakers of the earth," indigenous people are combining energies to raise awareness of the need for everyone to become active defenders of the remaining wildlife and wilderness - a part of the world that has now become totally dependent on human generosity and sensitivity for its continued survival (The Native American Council of New York City 1994:19).*

## **Epilogue**

Much of the political activism of indigenous nations is directed towards the rhetorical issues that underpin their on-going marginalisation. Their demand for inclusion in "global civic discourse" (Wilmer 1993:36) directly challenges and deconstructs the meaning of normative international assumptions and values surrounding the concepts of modernisation, progress and development advanced by the imperialist culture of States:



*In confronting and challenging the legitimacy of policies resulting in forced assimilation, relocation, the introduction of deadly alien epidemics, and the sanctioning of private violence by settlers, indigenous peoples have targeted the source - the meaning of development itself. For instance, representatives of the indigenous Yanomamo people in Brazil travelled to the World Bank in the 1980s and argued before Bank officials that "development can have many meanings. Your interpretation of development is material. Ours is spiritual. Spiritual development is as legitimate as material development." (Wilmer 1993:37; see also Dallam 1991).*

Indigenous nations do not simply oppose modernization or progress. Instead, they assert the right to define and pursue development and progress in a manner compatible with their own cultural contexts. They champion the right to choose the scale and terms of their interaction with other cultures. In order to achieve and secure cultural, political and economic rights, sovereignty and self-determination have become some of the most important values sought by the international movement of indigenous nations. The rise of Fourth World theory offers one of the greatest challenges theorist will have to contend with this century.

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