

INDIGENEITY IN NEW SETTINGS II: INDIGENOUS TRANSNATIONALISM

Session 7

Muehlebach, Andrea. 2001. "‘Making Place’ at the United Nations: Indigenous Cultural Politics at the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations." *Cultural Anthropology*, 16 (3): 415–448.

1. The Working Group for Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) was a “nodal point” in the “global indigeno-landscape”. What does that mean?
2. What are the main issues that are at the focus of international indigenous activism at the UN?
3. What are the main symbols of an international indigenous morality that are deployed at the UN?
4. In which ways can it be argued that indigenous activism represents something fundamentally new in our world?
5. The answer may seem obvious, if you restrict yourself to the simplest and most ordinary of observations—but of what value has transnational indigenous organization been to indigenous peoples and their self-representations?
6. What is the most common core of perspectives voiced by indigenous representatives at the UN? How did this common core come to exist?
7. The author discusses the clash between indigenous visions of justice and liberal conceptions of legal rights. Please explain this, noting the impact this clash has on the language deployed by indigenous representatives.
8. How can the situation of indigenous “moral exclusion” by the West possibly be of value to indigenous activism?
9. What are the main features of the “politics of place” discussed in this article?
10. What are some of the problems that are created by using the language of “self-determination”?

Brysk, Alison. 1996. “Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights.” *Latin American Perspectives*, 23 (2) Spring: 38-57.

1. Why, in Brysk’s view, is the internationalization of the Indian rights movement a paradox?
2. Why does Brysk repeatedly argue that a “social movements approach” is the best suited for analyzing indigenous transnationalism?
3. Which “foreign actors” have been important for indigenous transnationalism? How so?
4. How is it that some of the domestically “weaker” and most remote indigenous communities are some of Latin America’s most connected and prominent on the transnational level?
5. Brysk points to the “inherent irony of identity-based movements.” What is that irony?
6. What are some of the “weaknesses” of the international Indian movement?

Oldham, Paul and Frank, Miriam Anne. 2008. “‘We the peoples...’ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” *Anthropology Today*, 24 (2): 5-9.

1. What is particularly unique about the content of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?
2. What is the range of restrictions and limitations that was faced by indigenous representatives and their supporters in negotiating amendments to the Draft Declaration? What might that tell us about the relationship between the construction of an international discourse of indigenous rights, and local indigenous political realities?

3. How can anthropologists help to further the process represented by the adoption of the Declaration? Do you think they should? What should they (not) do, in addition to what is listed by the authors?

Bowen, John R. 2000. "Should we have a universal concept of 'indigenous peoples' rights'? Ethnicity and essentialism in the twenty-first century." *Anthropology Today*, 16 (4): 12-16.

4. What is distinctive about "indigenous rights" when compared to "group rights" and "human rights"?
 5. Bowen points out how unwieldy the term "indigenous" (if conceived in terms of territorial precedence – who was here first) can be when an attempt is made to apply it to a wide variety of situations across the globe, especially Asia and Africa. Briefly, what is the core of the problem as he observes it?
 6. One of the problems with the internationalized discourse of indigenous rights is that it often does not reflect local diversities in the ways that "indigenous" is conceived. What examples does Bowen offer to illustrate this contrast between the global and the local?
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