

Theorizing the Origins and Advancement of Indigenous Activism:  
The Case of the Russian North

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By

Irina L. Stoyanova  
Master of Science  
George Mason University, 2006

Director: Peter J. Balint, Professor of Environmental Policy  
Department of Public and International Affairs

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Fairfax, VA

## **DEDICATION**

За Лидия и Любомир

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### *United Nations System*

ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DSPD	Division of Social Policy and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
SR	Special Rapporteur
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UNSPFII	Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCIP	World Council on Indigenous Peoples
WGIP	Working Group on Indigenous Populations
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

### *Indigenous Organizations*

CONAIE	<i>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)
CONFENIAE	<i>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon)
NAIB	North American Indian Brotherhood
RAIPON	Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East

### ***Non-Governmental Organizations***

DoCip	Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, Research and Information
IWGIA	International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs

### ***Russian Political Parties and Government Agencies***

RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

### ***Others***

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THEORIZING THE ORIGINS AND ADVANCEMENT OF INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM: THE CASE OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH**

Irina L. Stoyanova, Ph.D.

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Peter J. Balint

“Why and how do indigenous peoples’ rights movements arise?” This is the most fundamental question this dissertation sets to answer. In seeking to better understand contemporary indigenous movements, I examine the broad historical and sociopolitical trends of indigenous activism and then use the relatively recent emergence of indigenous peoples’ mobilization in the Russian North as a case study.

The study makes three contributions to the scholarship on indigenous activism. First, I propose an original theoretical model, based on a review of the literature and my immersion in the real-world process of indigenous activism, which identifies the principal stimuli that trigger and shape indigenous movements across the world. To my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to construct a theoretical model that accomplishes that. I believe that examining national indigenous movements through the suggested theoretical model may possibly lead to much needed standardization of future

comparative analyses within the subject area. Second, I argue that studying the institutions involved in indigenous discourses, i.e. identifying the key actors and the interactions between them, provides valuable insights on the emergence and development of indigenous rights movements. The *actors* are thus the unit of analysis in my research; they are the lens through which I examine the indigenous activism in the Russian North and compare it to the movements from other parts of the world. Finally, this dissertation presents a comprehensive case study account on the indigenous peoples' mobilization in the Russian North – a subject matter that to my knowledge has not yet been thoroughly examined in scholarly literature.

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

*“The indigenous movement has been among the strongest civil society interlocutors at the UN, and this involvement has produced at least three key outcomes: a) a new awareness of indigenous peoples’ concerns and rights at the international level, b) recognition of indigenous peoples’ invaluable contribution to humanity’s cultural diversity and heritage, and c) awareness of the need to address the problems of indigenous peoples through policies, laws and budgets” (Victoria Tauli-Corpuz; Tauli-Corpuz 2008).*

*“You [indigenous peoples] have brought vital new issues to the agendas of United Nations bodies in the areas of traditional knowledge, sustainable development, environmental custodianship, and collective rights. You were a dynamic presence at the Earth Summit in Rio 10 years ago, and an articulate voice one year later at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, where the proposal for a Permanent Forum was first discussed. And thanks to your active presence last year in Durban, the World Conference against Racism adopted many important recommendations relating to indigenous peoples” (UN General Secretary Kofi Annan 2002).*

Indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup> have long formed and participated in various collective actions to redress past wrongs and to protect and promote their present and future rights (Hodgson 2002). Indigenous representatives have addressed the international community in regards to the abrogation of their rights as early as the 1920s (see Appendix A). While in the early 1900s, indigenous activism tended to be eminently local, scattered, disenfranchised, and out of sight, in the 1970s and 1980s indigenous mobilization

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<sup>1</sup> A rather heated debate exists around the question “Who is indigenous?” I will analyze in more detail why “indigenous peoples” is such a contested concept in Chapter III. There, I will also offer a set of factors relevant to the understanding of the term “indigenous peoples.”

transformed into a much more noticeable global phenomenon, bursting on to the national and international stages (Passy 1999; Smith 1999). Ever since, indigenous peoples throughout the world have actively sought legal recognition in local, national, regional, and international political processes and policy fora.<sup>2</sup> Their participation is evident in national political outcomes, such as constitutional reforms, and in the increased number of new legal instruments dealing with indigenous peoples. Indigenous concerns have gradually become issues of wide public awareness and debate in many sectors of society (Blaser et al 2004). A diverse array of advocacy organizations, concerned with native peoples, has surfaced. United by the common problems of their past – extreme discrimination, dispossession by more powerful groups, and consistent violation of their basic rights – a rather uniform global indigenous culture has emerged. It has been growing through the joining of networks and alliances that promote indigenous mobilization. Indigenous peoples from across the world have increasingly demanded recognition and rights from their respective nation-states and the international community at large (Hodgson 2002; L  m 1992). Moreover, a number of intergovernmental

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<sup>2</sup> Indigenous peoples have participated in various global conferences on environment, population and development, social development, human rights, women’s rights and racism. Among these venues are: the 1981 NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Land, the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro; the 1992 Fourth World Parks Congress in Caracas; the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo; the 1995 UN Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen; the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing; the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban; and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. By holding caucus meetings alongside the official UN meetings and conferences, indigenous peoples have been able to discuss strategies on how to influence the outcomes of those processes and elaborate their own declarations and programs of action, for example: the 1992 Kari-Oca Declaration; the 1995 Beijing Indigenous Women’s Declaration; the 2002 Kimberly Declaration; and the Johannesburg Indigenous Peoples’ Implementation Plan of Action for Sustainable Development (Tauli-Corpuz 2004). Indigenous peoples have also taken part in the Ministerial conferences of the World Trade Organization. Among the regional fora, indigenous peoples have participated in, are: the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the European Union and the Arctic Council.

organizations and institutions (e.g. ILO, UNDP, and UNEP) and international development donors (e.g. ADB, IFAD, and the World Bank) have strengthened their work regarding indigenous peoples and development and have produced policies and operational guidelines.

This global social and political movement, referred to by scholars as “indigenism” (Jentoft et al 2003; Niezen 2003, 2000), “transnational/international/global indigenous movement” (Eide 2007; Hodgson 2002; Koester 2005; Minde 2008), or “Fourth World movement” (Gray 1998; Manuel and Posluns 1974; Wilmer 1993; Young 1992), has arisen out of the shared experience of marginalized groups facing the negative impacts of various factors. These include: resource extraction, frontier expansion, population displacement, military intervention, extension of governmental control, massive migrations, implementation of land policies, cultural, ethnic, and religious polarization and educational policies modification, and in general the process of economic modernization (McMichael 2000; Niezen 2000; Passy 1999; Robbins 2002). In a 2005 background paper prepared for the UN Workshop on Engaging the Marginalized: Partnerships between Indigenous Peoples, Governments and Civil Society, the UN Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues emphasizes that non-inclusive policies and governance practices have caused numerous problems for indigenous peoples. Many indigenous populations have been severely affected by large scale infrastructure projects, by internal displacement, and by environmental toxicity and pollution caused by extractive industries. Moreover, their treaty rights have often been abrogated. Many indigenous peoples have seen their traditional lands, territories, and



natural resources forcefully taken away, depriving them of the means for their physical and cultural survival. Mandatory educational systems that disregard indigenous cultures and languages have had further devastating effects on many native communities (UNSPFII 2005).

Throughout the centuries of territorial encroachment and dispossession, racial discrimination and subjugation, indigenous groups worldwide have not merely remained as helpless and passive victims. On the contrary, in the face of tremendous adversity, they have long shown remarkably resilient efforts to survive and flourish as distinct peoples on their ancestral lands. As General Assembly President, Sheikha Rashed Al Khalifa, said at the 2007 opening sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues [which I attended]: “Indigenous peoples are a dynamic collection of communities ... Their knowledge, culture and environmentalism offer lessons that all of us can learn from.” The tools in their quest for survival have been equally resourceful – armed resistance, nonviolent protests, diplomacy, and, more currently, international law. Their resistance has occurred both within the institutional setting of the states in which they were colonized, as well as within regional and international fora (Anaya 2004; Martin and Wilmer 2006).

Initially, in the 1970s, the spotlight was very much focused on the rights and threats to the survival of native peoples from Australia (the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders), New Zealand (the Maori), northern Scandinavia (the Saami), Canada (the Inuit and Indians), the United States (the Inuit and the Indians), and Latin America (the

Indians).<sup>3</sup> Gradually, less well-known native groups from Asia and Africa (regions that did not face European colonization in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) joined the transnational network of indigenous peoples (Muehlebach 2002; Niezen 2003; Wiessner 1999).

Currently, in addition to the indigenous peoples from the regions identified above, representatives of the Cordillero Peoples Alliance of the Philippines, the Ainu of Japan, the Maasai of Kenya, the various indigenous groups of the Russian North, and many others have become regular participants in international indigenous dialogues.

The most fundamental question which triggered my interest in this social phenomenon is: “Why and how do indigenous peoples’ rights movements arise?” In seeking to better understand indigenous movements, in this research I examine the broad historical trends of indigenous activism and then use the relatively recent emergence of indigenous mobilization in the Russian North as a case study. Accordingly, my research has two thematic foci – 1) the historical analysis of the indigenous rights movements in several regions of the world contributes to the formation of a rather global perspective of the phenomenon, and 2) the Russian North provides a local illustration of how indigenous peoples’ movements arise.<sup>4</sup>

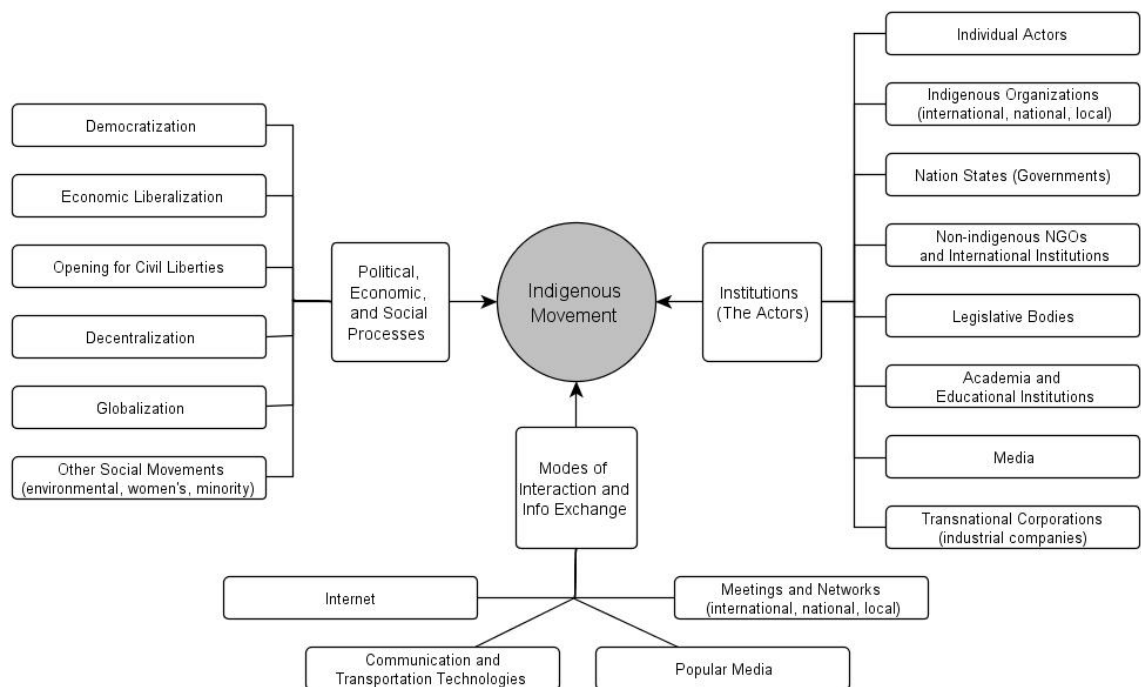
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<sup>3</sup> Refer to the international indigenous activism chronology provided in Appendix A. Indigenous organizations that were established by that time include: the Saami Council (originally representing Saami peoples from Scandinavia; after 1992 the Saami Council also represents the Saami of Russia), the National Indian Brotherhood (Canada), the Coordination of Indian Peoples of Central America, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Arctic), the Indian Council of South America, and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (international).

<sup>4</sup> Many anthropologists and social scientists have successfully utilized this approach of focusing on the intricacies of “the local” in order to understand global phenomena. See for example Crate 2006; Gray 2005, 1998; and Rethmann 2001. As Rethmann (2001: 2) put it, “local meanings and interpretations are never entirely divorced from global process and change.”

## Introduction of My Theoretical Model

To understand the overall picture for the emergence of the indigenous movement, I examined the various dimensions of, and contributors to, the political mobilization around indigenous-based claims. Based on my analysis of the literature and my own experience with indigenous rights discourses, I propose the following tentative general theoretical model for the origin and development of indigenous rights movements:



**FIGURE 1:** Tentative Theoretical Model Outlining the Key Stimuli of Indigenous Movements.

Figure 1 graphically depicts the key forces and enablers that drive the emergence of indigenous movements. I conceptualized this original theoretical model after reviewing and synthesizing existing case studies on indigenous peoples' movements and

personally engaging myself in the fora where indigenous peoples are constructing discourses, devising strategies, and making alliances. Lewis-Beck et al (2004) indicate that theoretical models are used to provide an abstract account of how various forces interact to produce certain outcomes. To capture this process, the researcher creates an argument, or tells a story, about how real-world outcomes or events occur and, in doing so, identifies the key factors and mechanisms that lead to these outcomes and events. Hence, my proposed theoretical model identifies the principal stimuli that trigger and shape indigenous movements across the world.

My tentative model, based on a review of the literature and my immersion in the real-world processes of indigenous activism, suggests that there are at least three key structural conditions (or stimuli) which contribute to the development of indigenous movements. On the left side of the model, I distinguish the major *political, economic, and social processes* that create an environment suitable to accommodate and nurture a new category of thought, a new social formation, a new sense of identity, a new social movement. These processes establish the contextual conditions according to which indigenous movements occur. They open up new playing fields for relatively weak political actors at local and regional levels (this is where indigenous peoples are often concentrated demographically). In the case of the origin of indigenous movements, among the prevailing processes registered in the existing literature are: the democratization of societies and the normative developments associated with this process; economic liberalization and reform; opening for civil liberties and decentralization; and in general the process of accelerated globalization. Other social

movements, such as the environmental movement and the women's and minority rights movements, have also significantly provided a contextual framework and have affected the development of indigenous movements worldwide.

On the right side of my proposed model, I distinguish the key *institutions*, or *social units*, i.e. the *actors*, that through their concrete actions shape and spearhead the movement. The institutions have the important functions of stabilizing, legitimizing, and perpetuating the indigenous movement at the local, national, and international level. For example, nation state actors (governments, parliaments, and state organizations) are the ones who implement changing norms concerning indigenous peoples thus granting or withholding indigenous status. The academia and media publicize injustices committed towards indigenous communities. Charismatic individuals in position of power and/or decision-making have often inspired the need for change in the public's perception towards indigenous peoples. International institutions monitor and promote implementation of indigenous policies through a series of specific procedures. Any social movement is made up of complex relationships among various actors – “activists, constituents, targets, authorities, allies, rivals, enemies, and audiences” (Tilley 2004: 6). The major actors in indigenous activism include the following groups: individual actors; local, national, and international indigenous organizations; local, national, and international non-indigenous NGOs; international and regional intergovernmental organizations; parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments; legislative bodies; academia and educational institutions; the media; and most recently

transnational corporations (TNCs)<sup>5</sup>. These actors may, in turn, assume the role of indigenous movement “activists” or movement “supporters”. Policy analysts tend to define activists as “those who are committed to public actions intended to influence the behavior of the policy system and of the broader population” (Stern et al 1999: 82). For the activists, Stern et al (1999) indicate, the movement becomes an “important part of their life and central element in their identity.” On the other hand, movement supporters are defined as “those who are sympathetic to the movement and who are willing to take some action and bear some costs in order to support the movement” (1999: 82). The level of commitment of these actors is inevitably essential for the way the indigenous movement will move forward. Not all of the actors presented in my tentative theoretical model are present in each national indigenous movement. Moreover, it should be noted that the order of the institutions in my model does not reflect any particular hierarchy as to the relevance of their work. Same is true for the political, economic, and social processes that I have outlined in the model. I also like to acknowledge that there are other actors and processes that might influence how indigenous movements develop. Here, within my original theoretical model, I specifically identify the most central ones.

In between these two structural stimuli – processes and institutions – I place what I refer to as the *modes of interaction and info exchange* that allow the movement to grow and further develop. These modes of interaction foster contact between the different *institutions*, provide the capacity for mobilization, and also link the *institutions* with the *processes* developing on a national and international level and vice versa. For example,

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<sup>5</sup> The TNCs, also referred to as multinational corporations (MNC) or simply international corporations, most relevant to indigenous peoples’ issues tend to be in the mining and oil and gas sectors.

the multitude of international meetings within the United Nations system and the increased facility and accessibility of technology and communication mechanisms have not only allowed for international indigenous mobilization, but also has promoted information and knowledge exchange and greater cooperation among indigenous leaders both nationally and internationally. The Internet, on the other hand, has greatly simplified and accelerated the ability of indigenous groups to communicate. The revolution in communications (cross-regional, cross-national and cross-institutional) has thus increasingly transformed the indigenous discourse into a global one, and messages between most distant indigenous communities can now be shared instantaneously. Moreover, indigenous peoples around the world are becoming more interested in various forms of information technology as a way to preserve their traditional cultures for future generations and to provide their communities with economic and social renewal (Dyson et al 2006).

In principle, this tentative theoretical model may also have predictive value – it may enable us to make potential assumptions and predictions about indigenous movements. Changes in the characteristics of the driving forces in the model (i.e. the type of *institutions* and their degree of involvement, the type of *processes* most prevailing within a country, and the types of *interaction channels* available) will ultimately lead to variations of indigenous activism. The model thus may provide a unified approach according to which indigenous movements may be conceptualized. I believe that examining national indigenous movements through the lens of this tentative model may possibly lead to the standardization of future comparative analyses within the subject

area. Ideally, the model might also offer indigenous peoples space to plan, strategize, and take greater control over their resistances, organizing and determining action – a need expressed by indigenous peoples themselves (see Smith 1999). For instance, as I have acknowledged earlier on, not all of the actors identified in my theoretical model are present in each national indigenous movement. Moreover, even if they are present, they might not exercise that much power or might not identify themselves as supporters for indigenous peoples' rights. Hence, by referring to the model, indigenous groups could identify potential category of institutions they can attract as allies in their future quests for rights recognition. Given that this is a first effort to synthesize the literature and provide a theoretical foundation for emergence and evolution of indigenous movements, the presented model is tentative, certainly incomplete and subject to testing.<sup>6</sup>

In this dissertation, I argue that studying the institutions involved in indigenous discourses, i.e. identifying the actors and the interactions between them, can also provide valuable insights on how indigenous movements originate and develop. Consequently, in this research I am interested in revealing the principal *actors* (particularly non-state actors on a national level) behind indigenous movements. I thus focus primarily on the right side of my model. I aim at analyzing *who* raises indigenous issues in political discourses (i.e. who are the participants within indigenous movements) and *how* indigenous mobilization is achieved (i.e. what have been the participant's tactics, ideologies, and

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<sup>6</sup> Scholars have indicated that all interpretations, whether or not they have the features of theory, are “temporally limited” since they are “always provisional, they are never established forever; their very nature allows for endless elaboration and partial negation (qualification).” Moreover, like many other kinds of knowledge, “theories are limited in time: Researchers and theorists are not gods, but men and women living in certain eras, immersed in certain societies, subject to current ideas and ideologies, and so forth. Hence as conditions change at any level of the conditional matrix, this affects the validity of theories – that is, their relation to contemporary social reality” (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 279).



goals and how have the participants organized themselves). The *actors* are thus the unit of analysis in my research; they are the lens through which I examine the indigenous activism in the Russian North and compare it to the movements from other parts of the world. I do acknowledge that the three structural conditions in my theoretical model do not exist in a vacuum – the presence of the actors is indeed closely linked to the simultaneously-occurring political, economic, and social processes and a clean separation of the two is virtually impossible. My line of reasoning is that I am not going to explore in such detail why indigenous movements emerge at one point in time rather than another; instead, I wish to examine the participants responsible for leading the movements and what their actions have been.

## Significance of the Study

To my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to construct a theoretical model that explains how indigenous movements originate and develop. Much of the existing literature has had the tendency to be descriptive and to focus predominantly on the historical *processes* and stories associated with indigenous activism. In other words, scholars have primarily examined and theorized the contextual conditions in which indigenous movements have originated (see Blaser et al 2004; Brysk 1996; Lâm 2000; Niezen 2003; Rodríguez-Piñero 2005; and Wilmer 1993). This means that the majority of the literature on indigenous movements falls within the left side of my tentative model. For example, scholars have suggested that indigenous social and political mobilization has arisen in the context of shifting citizenship regimes, changing international contexts, and progressing electoral processes (see Postero and Zamosc 2004). Moreover, theorists

have looked at indigenous movements largely from the perspective of specific international legal and policy changes – theorizing why indigenous peoples deserve special normative rights and examining the developments within international legal instruments to accommodate indigenous rights.<sup>7</sup>

Comparative studies among indigenous peoples' movements across national boundaries are largely absent. When comparative studies are attempted, they do not specifically compare and contrast the institutions involved in indigenous mobilization.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, comparisons are not done through a unified approach. This dissertation research contributes to filling this gap by proposing a theoretical model that could potentially be used in the standardization of future comparative analyses within the subject area.

I chose the case of the Russian North for detailed study because much of this geographic region remains to this day *terra incognita* to Western scholars, except for specialists who know the Russian literature (Ziker 2002). Despite the growing international interest in the cultures and rights of the world's indigenous peoples, and in comparison to the plethora of scholar research published for example on indigenous movements in Latin America, relatively little is written on the *activism* of Russia's northern indigenous populations (Xanthaki 2004). The articles and books available tend

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<sup>7</sup> Especially noteworthy are James Anaya's and Patrick Thornberry's detailed accounts and analyses of global and regional instruments, procedures, and decisions that concern indigenous peoples (Anaya 2005 and Thornberry 2002). See also Alston 2001; Castellino and Walsh 2005; Ghanea and Xanthaki 2005; Kingsburry 1998; Lâm 2000; Niezen 2003; Rodríguez-Piñero 2005; Sanders 1983, 1994, 1999; Stamatopoulou 2007; Von Lewinski 2008; Wiessner 1999; and Xanthaki 2007.

<sup>8</sup> For example Blaser et al (2004) have assembled an insightful volume of statements, case studies of specific struggles and situations, and wider thematic explorations on indigenous peoples from several continents.

to examine Russia's indigenous groups in the context of locally-based ethnographic or social anthropological explorations (Crate 2006; Forsyth 1992; Freeman 2000; Kerttula 2000; Lee and Daly 1999; Ziker 2002); Arctic natural resource studies, environmental degradation, and health impact reviews (AMAP 2004; Krupnik and Jolly 2002; Nuttall 1998, 2000; Vakhtin 1994); Soviet and post-Soviet historical and economic developments (Fondahl 1995, 1997; Kasten 2000; Pika and Grant 1999; Slezkine 1994; Slezkine and Diment 1993); and legal developments (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Osherenko 2001; Pika and Grant 1999). Academic research has also explored the traditional economies of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and their special relationship to the wild animals that sustain them (Anderson and Nuttall 2004).

Scholarly literature solely examining the indigenous activism in Russia as activism per se (particularly literature in English) is recently starting to take shape (e.g. Gray 2005; Donahoe et al 2008; Fondahl 1997; Poelzer and Fondahl 1997) and there are a number of issues that merit exploration. Moreover, to my knowledge there is yet no research that specifically looks at and analyses the *actors* behind the indigenous mobilization in the Russian North. My dissertation will contribute to filling this gap by further advancing existing knowledge regarding the dynamics of indigenous activism in the post-Soviet Russian North. The research seeks to add new dimensions to the discourses on *identity*, *ethnicity* and *indigeneity*<sup>9</sup> among northern indigenous peoples.

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<sup>9</sup> *Identity*, *ethnicity*, and *indigeneity* are considered to be the vital elements of the political platform of indigenous peoples, striving to build global alliances to resist the global processes of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion and/or discrimination.

## Preliminary Examination of the Institutions/Actors

A range of entities – states, international organizations, peoples, individuals, legal bodies, transnational corporations (TNCs), etc. – presently participate in political, economic and social processes, international policy and world politics, and law in general relevant to indigenous activism (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Among the key non-state actors that have contributed to the international convergence of concern for indigenous rights have been: the indigenous peoples themselves, the international institutions (the UN and its specialized bodies, multilateral donor agencies, advocacy and conservation NGOs), and the academia. These are the actors that in my opinion have been instrumental to the globalization of indigenous activism. Part of this research, is examining more closely whether they have played an equally important role within the mobilization of indigenous peoples in the Russian North.

### ***Increased Mobilization of Indigenous Peoples within their States at both Local and National Levels***

Indigenous peoples and minority groups are among the “latecomers” within participatory decision-making.<sup>10</sup> As Wilmer (1993: 38) argues, indigenous peoples have

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<sup>10</sup> Midgley (1986) argues that “community participation” (including indigenous peoples’ participation and local communities’ participation) is a new catchword in development studies and particularly in the field of social development. According to Midgley, while the idea of community participation in social development emerged as a part of the broader popular participation debate, it is more specific in its focus on deprived and disadvantaged groups in small communities and with the mechanisms of direct involvement in decision-making. Moreover, Midgley points out “the notion of community participation is being applied in health, education, housing, social work and urban and rural development in both non-governmental and statutory social development programs.” The paradigm of participatory development was popularized by the United Nations. It started to govern the work of the UN and specialized agencies since the early 1970s, in the context of the UN second development decade. The key concepts and assumptions are found in two key UN reports: *Popular Participation in Development: Emerging Trends in Community Development* (UN Doc Sales No E.71.IV.2) and *Popular Participation in Decision Making for Development* (UN Doc Sales No E.75.IV.10). An ECOSCO resolution provided a canonical definition of

until very recently “occupied a marginal site in the study of international politics.” Similarly, Lee (2006: 458) indicates: “after centuries of denigration, being recognized as indigenous has become an avenue for entitlement, enfranchisement and empowerment. As such, it has provided for formerly oppressed peoples a proverbial ‘seat at the table’ in negotiations with governments over land rights, compensation packages and acknowledgement of past wrongs.” Indigenous peoples have arrived at their present status by a variety of pathways – armed resistance, nonviolent protests, diplomacy, and more currently international law (Anaya 2004). According to Wilmer (1993: 135), indigenous peoples have used “all of the strategies typically associated with social movements and indigenous groups. Where possible, they participate directly in the political process of national government. Where this is not possible or effective, they have mobilized resistance efforts, engaging in protest and other kinds of direct, ‘extraordinary’ politics.” Across the different regions of the world, indigenous peoples have become politicized to a greater or lesser extent and no one would claim that their aspirations have been identical. For example, according to Lee (2006) most communities appear to be subdivided into at least two groups – “modernizers and assimilationists” and “traditionalists and resisters”. National indigenous concerns first appeared in Canada and the United States, Australia and New Zealand, the Nordic countries, and throughout Latin America (refer to Appendix A), but have more recently spread to every corner of the

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participation in development in the following terms: “a) contributing to the development effort; b) sharing equitably in the benefits derived from there; and c) decision-making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implementing economic and social development” (ECOSOC Res 1929(LVIII) May 1975). For an institutional history of the notions of participatory development and community development in modern development discourse, see for example Midgley 1986. For an analysis of participation in development as an element of the international right to development, see for example Orford 2001.

world. In some cases, indigenous peoples achieved worldwide attention for their genuine grassroots origins and coordinated resistance – for example the 1970s Shuar grassroots associations in Ecuador which formed to promote and defend indigenous interests and the 1970s Chipko movement in India in which villagers fought to defend their traditional forest rights against commercial forestry interests (Brysk 1996; Mulder and Coppolillo 2005).

The proliferation of contemporary indigenous mobilization is partly attributed to advances in literacy and education attained by indigenous peoples. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many of the indigenous leaders are no longer non-literate and politically disenfranchised. Instead, many have become politically articulate, and in pressing their claims, they have started to hold press-conferences, hire lawyers, and operate websites. At the same time, there is an increase in cultural revival processes in which the generation of younger and more educated indigenous peoples plays a significant role.

***Normative Shifts within International Institutions (international intergovernmental institutions, international NGOs, and advocacy groups)***

Indigenous peoples themselves have, to a large degree, driven the process of indigenous activism (Anaya 2004). Yet, much of the process has been dramatically reshaped by others. The international support has been crucial in validating indigenous rights and in proliferating human rights organizations (Blaser et al 2004). International institutions (identified in the paragraphs below) have played a number of roles within the indigenous movement in an effort to bring the movement closer to achieving its goals. They have greatly influenced national indigenous struggles by promoting compliance

with human rights norms, framing indigenous movements' agendas, cultivating collective identities, and mobilizing collective action.

Among the international organizations, the United Nations (UN) and its specialized bodies have been increasingly involved in international law developments and in offering political opportunities for social movements (for reflections, see Mills 1997; Passy 1999; Simpson 1996). As a result, in their quest for justice, indigenous representative have reoriented their protests towards the UN and have greatly depended on the UN and its international legal standards (for an overview of some of the activities carried out in the UN system in relation to the human rights of indigenous peoples refer to Appendix A and C). This has been particularly true for indigenous peoples living within nation states that lack national political opportunities, especially states with non-democratic regimes (Passy 1999). But the UN was not always as receptive to indigenous peoples' demands, specifically when it comes to indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. As Malezer (2005: 73) illustrates the "League of Nations gave a lot of thought to the situation of minorities and the United Nations, until recent years, emphasized the rights of individuals and the rights of states, but assumed no other entities existed in between to have rights." This changed in the aftermath of World War II (I will discuss some of the reasons behind this change in Chapter IV). Consequently, the UN system has been essential in the emergence and elaboration of new standards regarding programs involving indigenous peoples.

Particularly since the 1970s, the UN has modified its rules and mechanisms to accommodate indigenous peoples and their claims (UNDG 2008; Xanthaki 2007). The

International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) currently all have operational policies and frameworks for implementing a human rights based, and culturally sensitive approach, to development for and with indigenous peoples.<sup>11</sup> The 2002 report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, presents a partial overview of some of these activities: For example, in 1995, UNDP issued draft guidelines for support to indigenous peoples, in which four fields of action are identified: cultural revitalization, improvement of living standards, preservation of natural resources, and economic and technical development. The UNDP “Policy of Engagement”, adopted in 2001, underlines the main principles guiding the relationship with indigenous peoples and identifies five areas of support to indigenous peoples: participation, self-determination, conflict prevention and peace building, environment and sustainable development, and the effects of globalization. During the 1990s, UNESCO organized a number of international seminars and adopted resolutions and recommendations regarding rights and policies involving indigenous peoples within the organization’s areas of competence, that is, principally education, culture, science and communications, with emphasis on the fields of bilingual education, language rights, indigenous knowledge and the use of the media to protect and stimulate indigenous cultures. WHO has become involved in issues dealing specifically

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<sup>11</sup> These operational policies are intended as a “live document”, which is to be revised and periodically modified as necessary.



with the health of indigenous peoples. WIPO has been devoting some of its activities to the intellectual property of indigenous peoples (i.e. their cultural heritage), which included the information, practices, beliefs, and philosophy that are unique to each indigenous culture. It has organized seminars, workshops, fact-finding missions and studies, together with indigenous organizations, on issues related to the impact of corporate business interests on indigenous knowledge and heritage. WIPO is also developing guidelines for the protection of indigenous intellectual property rights (Stavenhagen 2002).

The establishment of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1983 was an important milestone for indigenous peoples from across the globe. This was followed by the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous peoples in 2000 and the creation of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples that same year. The most important mechanism on indigenous peoples' issues within the UN System is the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in 2007 – a document that recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples on a wide range of issues and provides a universal framework for the international community and states.

Since the 1980s, the multilateral finance institutions (such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral development banks) and the international NGOs significantly restructured their operational policies towards indigenous peoples and have thus further framed indigenous struggles. The World Bank

Group<sup>12</sup> adopted a number of policies designed to mitigate harm to indigenous peoples in Bank-financed projects (MacKay 2005). For instance, in 1981 the Bank published a study entitled “Economic Development and Tribal Peoples: Human Ecologic Considerations” and in 1989 a study entitled “Developing Partnership of Indigenous Peoples, Conservationists, and Land Use Planners in Latin America.” These policies sought to provide guidelines for Bank operations. It should be noted that multilateral organizations initially played a slightly different role in the emergence of indigenous political mobilization. Many indigenous resistance movements arose namely in reaction to the paternalistic policies of the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks (the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the African Development Bank). Through pressure from indigenous, human rights and environmental organizations, multilateral finance organizations were quickly forced to comply with indigenous demands – i.e. at the minimum provide for indigenous peoples’ free, prior and informed consent, recognition and protection of territorial rights, self-identification, a prohibition of involuntary resettlement, and respect for indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination – and revise their policies (MacKay 2005). The World Bank and the Regional Development Banks now have operational policies and guidelines in line with current international legal norms and standards on indigenous peoples.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The World Bank Group comprises the following international organizations: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association, the International Finance Corporation, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

<sup>13</sup> Starting in 1996, the mainstream international conservation NGOs, Conservation International, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund-International, also have developed such policies. I was

Among the widely known international specialized NGOs who have consistently provided support to indigenous peoples (both advocacy NGOs for indigenous rights and other established NGOs in the area of human rights, ethnic identity and group survival) are: Amnesty International, Cultural Survival, Indian Law Resource Center, the Indigenous Peoples Center for Documentation, Research and Information (DoCIP), the International Work Group for International Affairs (IWGIA), Survival International, and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) (Brysk 1996; Wilmer 1993).<sup>14</sup> These organizations were originally founded predominately by non-indigenous anthropologists.<sup>15</sup> They focused over the years specifically on the abuses committed against indigenous peoples and asserted that respect for “cultural differences are a viable alternative to integrationist development” (Blaser 2004: 5). Moreover, these NGOs played key roles in facilitating and documenting indigenous meetings and in coordinating campaigns against mega-development projects (Mulder and Coppolillo 2005). They also actively provided funding, organizational skills, publicity, technical assistance, international contacts and solidarity to indigenous groups. IWGIA and Cultural Survival reach the widest audience through publication activities – Cultural Survival, for example, publishes a quarterly journal *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, books, and working papers, and funds activist organizations controlled by indigenous peoples (Wilmer 1993). In

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personally involved in the initial steps of developing official policies and guidelines for The Nature Conservancy’s work with indigenous population in protected areas.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to Appendix A to find out when and where these NGOs were established.

<sup>15</sup> For example, of the twenty people serving currently on the board of directors of Cultural Survival, six are from various departments and schools - founder of Cultural Survival David Maybury-Lewis, Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University; Jean Jackson, Chair of the Department of Anthropology at MIT; Laura Graham, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Iowa; James Howe, Professor of Anthropology at MIT; Dinah Shelton, Manatt/Ahn Professor of International Law at George Washington University Law School; and Rosita Worl, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Southeast.

addition to the quarterly journal *Indigenous Affairs* and the yearbook *The Indigenous World*, IWGIA publishes numerous books, handbooks and reports on the conditions and situations of indigenous peoples throughout the world. Survival International and Amnesty International are primarily involved in advocacy. A number of domestic indigenous rights groups were established with significant international support from these NGOs (Willetts 1982). For example, the indigenous advocacy group Cultural Survival has explicitly identified “institution building” as a program goal: Cultural Survival supported the development of national Indian federations in Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru in one year alone (Smith 1984). Likewise, IWGIA advised the WCIP during its formation (Brysk 1996).

In addition to human rights and development-focused organizations, another special subcategory of advocates for indigenous rights worth mentioning is the sustainable development activists – among them scientists, environmentalists, and a host of environmental NGOs (Conservation International, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Action Network, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund).<sup>16</sup> Together they have been lobbying for the critical role indigenous peoples play in maintaining a region’s plant and animal species (i.e. its biodiversity) in managing natural resources and applying traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the complex interaction between the international indigenous movement and the environmental movement, see Brysk 2000; Jentoft et al 2003; Keck and Sikkink 1998; and Watters 2004.

<sup>17</sup> “Traditional knowledge” (TK) most generally can be defined as: “all tradition-based (i.e., generally developed on the basis of transmission from generation to generation) intellectual (i.e., based on intellectual activity) creation and innovations, in the very broadest sense, which are constantly evolving in response to a changing environment and are generally regarded as pertaining to a particular people or territory. ... Categories of traditional knowledge could include: agricultural knowledge; scientific knowledge; technical knowledge; ecological knowledge; medicinal knowledge, including related medicines and remedies;

Since the 1970s, in light of the strong pressures on their ancestral lands and way of life, independent indigenous organizations at the regional, national and international level were strengthened by their alliance with the environmental movement (Conklin and Graham 1995).<sup>18</sup> The indigenous movement was further strengthened in the late 1980s when the “sustainable development” rhetoric gained momentum.<sup>19</sup> Along with the sustainable development discourse, the claim that indigenous peoples have intimate knowledge of their local ecosystems and that they share a special relationship with their local environments advanced (Stephens et al 2006).<sup>20</sup> The heightened environmental awareness provided indigenous peoples and their advocates not only with a way to frame conventional development practices as inherently abusive of their universal human rights, but also with a platform to build the argument that indigenous cultures are a critical resource in the global search for sustainability because of their traditional ecological knowledge (Blaser et al 2004). Along with preserving nature, safeguarding indigenous

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biodiversity-related knowledge; ‘expressions of folklore’ in the form of music, dance, song, handicrafts, designs, stories and artwork; elements of languages, such as names, geographical indications and symbols; and movable cultural properties” (WIPO 2001: 25). The knowledge that indigenous peoples have in relation to the environment has come to be referred to as “traditional ecological knowledge” (TEK). TEK is accrued over a long period of time through a spatial, emotional, and spiritual connection with a specific local environment (Klubnikin et al 2000). Yet, as Crate (2003: 508) points out, indigenous knowledge is not just “gleaned from oral histories and describing the past, but also includes contemporary knowledge.”

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that the problems as well as the achievements of the conservation movement have been subjected to a good deal of academic scrutiny in recent times. Many critics have argued that the conservation movement has ignored or even harmed indigenous communities by shoving them aside to create protected areas and denying them access to traditional resources. For accounts on the failure of the traditional fences and fines approach to protected area management, see for example Dove 2006; Oates 1999; Redford and Sanderson 2000; and Watters 2004.

<sup>19</sup> In its most basic terms, sustainable development means “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987). Caldwell (1996: 243-244) defines it further as “meeting of today’s true needs and opportunities without jeopardizing the integrity of the planetary life-support base – the environment – and diminishing its ability to provide for needs, opportunities, and quality of life in the future. As policy, its objective is to prevent development or demographic ‘overshoot’ that could result in a sociaecological collapse or irreversible impoverishment.”

<sup>20</sup> This too remains a controversial issue among academics. For discussions on this controversy, see for example Dove 2006.

peoples and their cultures also became an important goal of environmental conservationists. Consequently, current environmental law recognizes the importance of indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly their traditional knowledge about environmentally-sustainable practices. For example, Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration refers to indigenous peoples, stating:

*“Indigenous people and their communities, and other local communities, have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and fully support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.”*

Indigenous peoples’ participation in key international environmental forums has been steadily growing over the last years: the 1981 NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Land; the 1992 Environmental Summit in Rio de Janeiro and its preceding Indigenous Peoples World Conference on the Earth, Environment and Development; and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Indigenous peoples were present during the Rio + 5 and Beijing + 5 events related to these conferences (Tauli-Corpuz 2004). Indigenous groups have also actively taken part in the sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the mechanisms of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Climate Change Convention.

### ***Increase of Supportive Scholarly and Popular Writings***

Indigenous intellectuals and scholars have been forging new pathways and making positive contributions towards their own indigenous research. For example, educational advances in Latin America (particularly in Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru) in the 1960s created an educated, Spanish-speaking, politically awakened

leadership class – lawyers, anthropologists, ethnolinguists, economists, literati – which has been crucial to the formation of international indigenous cultural politics (Muehlebach 2002). The new generation of indigenous intellectuals and activists with academic degrees has “carved new political positions for indigenous peoples within and outside the governments, and [has] participated in a number of diverse organizations and political parties” (Escárcega 2003: 96). In some cases, these indigenous intellectuals have created their own research centers, publishing houses, and transnational networks (Warren and Jackson 2002). They have thus assumed the dual role of both activists and scholars. The First Nations scholars of Canada, for example, have started to develop and affirm new methodologies and processes of research that strengthen indigenous peoples’ lives (see Absolon and Willett 2004; Louis 2007). Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori scholar from New Zealand has undertaken a similar initiative in offering research protocols and methodologies that are more respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful towards and for indigenous peoples (1999).

Since the 1970s, there has been an increase of supportive scholarly and popular writings from moral and sociological, as well as judicial, perspectives (Anaya 2004; Roy and Alfredsson 1987). Anthropologists and sociologists have long been interested in indigenous peoples. They have respectively offered a wealth of information about indigenous cultures and cultural change and have exposed the contemporary social conditions and problems that confront indigenous communities (Poelzer 1996). While initially these disciplines were dominated by purely descriptive studies of human societies, more recently they have added an activist component. The 1971 Barbados

Declaration, for example, called for an engaged anthropology, one which does not relate to indigenous peoples “as objects of study”, but rather which “perceives the colonial situation and commits itself to the struggle for liberation. In this context we see anthropology providing on the one hand, the colonized peoples those data and interpretations both about themselves and their colonizers useful for their own fight for freedom and on the other hand, a redefinition of the distorted image of Indian communities extant in the national society, thereby unmasking its colonial nature with its supportive ideology.” Human rights, environmental justice, and social equity have thus become topics of central interest to anthropologists and sociologists across the globe, both in terms of practical work and academic research (Halme 2005).<sup>21</sup> According to Albert (1997), combining ethnographic research with advocacy work has become the basic fieldwork situation for many anthropologists in countries with indigenous populations.<sup>22</sup> The same is also becoming to be true for the research conducted by other social scientists. In the case of geographers, Louis (2007) emphasizes that presenting geographic “knowledge for knowledge sake” is no longer enough; research should benefit the indigenous community by extending the quality of life for those in the community. Since the 1980s, international relations scholars began to pay increasingly

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<sup>21</sup> The American Anthropological Association, for example, founded a Human Rights Committee in 1995, aiming to “stimulate informed involvement in human rights among professional anthropologist through publications, panels and network building” and to “gather information on selected, anthropologically relevant, cases of human rights abuse and to propose action in the name of the AAA.” For more information see the AAA official website at: [www.aaanet.org](http://www.aaanet.org) (last visited February 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Anthropologists have also helped for the organizations of indigenous organizations, such as Bolivia’s Indian federation Central Indígena del Oriente Boliviano (Brysk 1996). Anglo-American anthropologists Dr. Richard Chase Smith and Dr. Shelton Davis, for example, were instrumental in establishing the Indigenous Peoples Network (IPN), an association with the purpose to enable indigenous peoples and their organizations to identify each other and to create an information base about the international indigenous situation (Wilmer 1993).



attention to the political situation and activism of indigenous peoples. Consequently, more and more scholars, particularly those working in interdisciplinary studies, have assumed the role of advocates for indigenous voices. As indigenous rights began to be ever more protected by international declarations (see Appendix C), law specialists started to offer their judicial perspectives on the legislative developments in regards to indigenous peoples' rights and claims (see Anaya 2004, 2000, 1994; Eide 2007; Lâm 2000; Rodríguez-Piñero 2005; Thornberry 2002). Scientists too have assumed an activist role and have demanded that policymakers and health professionals support indigenous people worldwide to achieve equity and ensure survival (see Anderson et al 2006; Montenegro and Stephens 2006; Ohenjo et al 2006; Stephens et al 2006). By bringing indigenous peoples' resilience to the attention of not only influential intellectual and elite circles, but also the public at large, all these scholars have helped establish indigenous movements as legitimate actors, worthy of respect and legal protection (Anaya 2004; Postero and Zamosc 2004).

The activist role of both indigenous intellectuals and Western scholars supporting indigenous communities has not remained without its criticism and ethical dilemmas (Dove 2006; Hale 2007, 2001; Smith 1999). Dove (2006: 202) suggests: "That the topics of anthropological interest have become the tools by which indigenous peoples articulate their identities, stake claims to local resources, and fight for their rights in regional, national, and international arenas poses moral and ethical challenges to anthropologists – challenges that require new responses." Smith (1999: 71) illustrates how indigenous intellectuals have had to "position themselves strategically as intellectuals within the

academy, within the Third World or indigenous world, and within the Western world in which many intellectuals actually work. The problem for Third World intellectuals remains the problem of being taken seriously.” Smith further notes that while on the one hand indigenous communities often criticize native people who have been educated at universities, on the other, many struggle and save to send their children to university. Similarly, Western scholars (anthropologists, sociologists, and social scientists) have been apprehensive in conducting politically engaged research, fearing that their activism might erode their respective discipline’s credibility. Despite this controversy, Hale (2007 and 2001) argues that the relationship between politically engaged research and indigenous movements offers fruitful advantages. One of them is the fact that this type of research is both theoretically driven and intended to be put to use.

Through the interactions of all these institutions, a modern regime on indigenous rights – a set of norms, principles, and institutions specifically concerned with the rights of indigenous peoples under international law – started to take shape in the late 1970s and 1980s (Rodríguez-Piñero 2005).<sup>23</sup> Consequently, major political representation for indigenous peoples’ rights has occurred in many countries.

## Preliminary Theory: How Does Indigenous Mobilization Emerge

What causes indigenous movements to occur as they do? Earlier in this chapter, when I was introducing my tentative theoretical model for the origin and development of indigenous movements, I argued that variations in indigenous activism will emerge from

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<sup>23</sup> For an overview of the existing international legal norms and standards regarding indigenous peoples, refer to Appendix C.

differences in the driving forces in the model (i.e. the type of *institutions* and their degree of involvement, the type of *processes* most prevailing within a country, and the types of *interaction channels* available). For example, indigenous peoples (as *actors*) are always present in some way when issues of indigeneity arise on the political scene. However, they may not always be the main protagonists or have control over the way indigenous issues are framed or decided. Consequently, in some cases national indigenous movements originate strictly from the bottom up, i.e. indigenous groups are the ones who organize their base membership, craft their agendas, and engage in political actions to influence the national government and the society (see Postero and Zamosc 2004). This is pertinent for many of the Latin American indigenous movements. Yet, in other cases, local movements of indigenous resistance seem to be mobilized by actors other than the indigenous communities. I shall thus attempt to answer the question of “What causes indigenous movements to occur as they do?” In particular, in addressing this question I will focus on the indigenous activism in the Russian North.

There is a common sense assumption that the people who personally identify themselves with the “indigenous cultures” should lead indigenous movements. Indeed, if “standard” models of social movements are applied in the context of the rise of indigenous movements, then we can premise that indigenous peoples start to mobilize first at the local level, then at the national, and finally at the international level. Warren and Jackson (2002), for example, talk about a predictable chain of events: a nation state violates indigenous human rights, indigenous peoples react, NGOs intervene by submitting the indigenous case to international forums, international forums censure the

nation state, and the nation state takes measures to ease the pressure. Such a bottom-up-driven process is visible in the following testimony of Ted Moses, chief of the Grand Council of the Crees of Northern Quebec, Canada and long-time advocate of indigenous rights at the United Nations:

*“The Crees brought their issues to the international community as a last resort ... it was easier to gain a hearing in Canada by stepping outside of Canada and speaking to the rest of the world,” and “when domestic laws fail to provide adequate protection against racism, the antidote is recourse to international human rights law”* (Chief Ted Moses; cited in Allmand et al 2005).

In examining Chukotka’s indigenous peoples, Gray (1998) however argues that while “classic” social movement literature “tends to favor large-scale, mass forms of protest that typically arises from a grassroots upswell, usually involving hundreds or thousands of people and often resulting in a violent conflict”, such a model is not much use in trying to understand the native social movement in the Russian North. Similarly to Gray’s argument, King (2000) suggests that in the Russian Far East there is a “counter-intuitive situation where culturally Russian politicians are likely to express sentiments of Koryak [one of the many indigenous groups in Russia] ethnic nationalism, and ‘ethnic Koryaks’ reject nationalist projects in education and politics.” Why is there a difference between the case of the Crees in Canada and that of the small-numbered peoples of Russia? And is indigenous mobilization indeed a self-initiated empowerment process?

## My Central Argument: Top-down vs. Bottom-up

By using my original tentative theoretical model as a point of departure, I argue in this dissertation that more recent indigenous mobilization (in the case of the Russian North, but also applicable to the indigenous movements in Africa and Asia) is not driven

as much as it might be expected by national grassroots desires and involvement. Rather, it is significantly influenced and framed, even in some cases triggered entirely, by the international trends and events on indigenous rights. My premise is that the initiatives of various UN bodies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, international human rights, environmental, health, labor and development NGOs, and international indigenous NGOs have helped tremendously in mobilizing indigenous peoples from the Russian North and in constructing and shaping the agendas for further acceptance and accommodation of Russia's indigenous peoples at both national and international level. The indigenous peoples' identity formation, political awakening, and desire for activism in Russia has thus been, in my opinion, significantly prompted from "outside", i.e. it is an example of externally-driven social movement. As such, the type of *institutions*, or *actors*, and their degree of involvement would be one important structural condition, or stimulus, which contributes to the development of indigenous movement within the Russian North.

A clarification is in order here. In arguing that indigenous peoples in the Russian North have been mobilized greatly by outside forces, I am not downplaying the fact that there have been indeed local indigenous expressions of discontent and demands for recognition of indigenous rights (see Chapter VI). Furthermore, by no means do I claim that these groups are less indigenous or that they are less entitled to the protection of their rights. I do however believe that this significant degree of internationalization of the indigenous movement has posed some impediments for the indigenous movement in the Russian North.

The global indigenous rights movement, the international discourse, and definition of “indigenous”, have been shaped by the experiences of indigenous peoples from the Americas, the Pacific and northern Europe. The extension of indigenous identity to the Russian North, Africa and Asia has thus provided us with a different model of activism on behalf of the oppressed and marginalized indigenous peoples.

## Research Questions

Utilizing my tentative model as a point of departure, this dissertation sets out to answer the general question “Why and how do indigenous peoples’ rights movements arise?” In order to better respond to this question, I pose the following additional **broad questions**: Do indigenous rights movements take different trajectories, i.e. are there indeed diverse forms of indigenous mobilization throughout the world? What demands do indigenous peoples worldwide pose? Do these demands change over time, and if so how?

By using the Russian North as a case study I aim to find answers to the following more **specific questions**: What is the nature of indigenous activism in the post-Soviet Russian North? How did this phenomenon originate? What type of people were among the major leaders in the indigenous mobilization? What other actors have emerged as promoters for indigenous mobilization? How does indigenous activism in the Russian North compare to activism in other regions of the world? The case of the Russian North will further be used to test my original tentative theoretical model outlined in this preliminary chapter. A detailed analysis to what degree my case study of the Russian North fits within the proposed theoretical model will be presented in Chapter VII.

## Delimitations of the Study

Here I establish the limits of the research. Indigenous peoples throughout the world exhibit a wide diversity in lifestyles, cultures, social organization, histories, and political realities. As such, a thorough treatment of the historical, sociocultural, and socioeconomic worlds in which indigenous peoples live is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. I consider it critical to present a *brief* overview of several broad generalizations and historical trends in order to impart a sense of the contexts in which the indigenous peoples' activism is shaped. However, the reader should keep in mind that my main contributions through this dissertation research are the original theoretical model I propose and the analytic review I conduct to assess the appropriateness of the model. Hence, the dissertation is not as descriptive as it would have been, had I assumed a more anthropological role as a researcher.

There is also a time dimension involved in this research. I concentrate on the development of indigenous movements since the late 1960s, focusing in more detail on the last twenty five years (mid 1980s to early 2009). The literature consulted (i.e. grey literature reports, academic research, and legal documentations) covers the period through January 2009.<sup>24</sup>

## Layout of the Dissertation

I have divided the dissertation into eight chapters. The current **Introductory Chapter** serves the parallel aims of providing a preliminary context for the chapters that

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<sup>24</sup> A few important developments occurred in the period January-April 2009 in regards to indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia and I have referred to these events. The literature consulted for that particular time period however was not examined in the same depth.

follow, presenting my original theoretical model for framing indigenous movements, identifying the main research questions, and justifying the significance of the study. In each of the following chapters, I begin with a brief introduction that offers the reader an idea of what will be discussed within the chapter and how the content of each chapter relates to my research questions and my tentative model. Each chapter also ends with a brief conclusion.

I have devoted **Chapter II** to the methodology I have used in conducting this research – participant-observation techniques, informal discussions, formal interviews, and archival research. Since the conceptualization of this dissertation is a result, to a large degree, of my participation in three annual sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, I include a specific section in this chapter where I provide a detailed description of my experience at this venue. In addition to explaining and justifying the methods used, I also acknowledge the limitations of the research design.

**Chapter III** provides a general preliminary discussion of what the international indigenous movement entails. It begins with a definition and analysis of the well established but notoriously ambiguous term “indigenous peoples”. After a brief examination of the polemic surrounding the term, the Chapter then moves to a discussion of the international movement on indigenous rights. Here I also address the following questions: “What common challenges do indigenous peoples face?” and “What are indigenous peoples fighting for?” I conclude the chapter with a brief examination of the language of sustainability within the indigenous rights discourse.



In an effort to demonstrate that other national indigenous movements may be analyzed through the lens of the principle actors involved in the process (i.e. through my proposed theoretical model), in **Chapter IV** I briefly describe indigenous activism in other regions of the world. The chapter thus offers a comparative perspective and places the indigenous movement of the Russian North in a wider geopolitical context. In this section, I briefly present my findings on the origins, agendas, and dynamics of the indigenous rights movements throughout the world. I also reveal the similarities and differences between the key actors in these indigenous movements.

According to Anderson (2004), claims of indigeneity ought to be situated in historical and ethnographic context. Thus, in **Chapter V** I present a historical examination of Russian indigenous peoples. The chapter starts by discussing the specificities in the definition of “indigenous” within the Russian federal legislation. The chapter further addresses the following topics: demographic and socio-economic statistics on the Russian indigenous population, traditional livelihoods, legal developments, and specific rights indigenous peoples of the North are fighting for.

**Chapter VI** provides my findings on the emergence, growth, achievements, and challenges in the indigenous rights movement in the Russian Federation. In this chapter, I analyze the relevant internal (domestic) actors within the indigenous movement of the region. I also assess the role of the Russian government and its policy towards indigenous communities. In the last section of the chapter, I present the main external (international) players – the international institutions and organizations – involved into the policy-making concerning Northern indigenous peoples.

**Chapter VII** presents further analysis of my tentative theoretical model and assesses its appropriateness for the case study of the Russian North. In a table format, I succinctly summarize some of my key findings in regards to the principal actors behind the indigenous movement in the Russian North, as well as within the four regional groupings discussed in Chapter IV. In another table, I qualitatively compare my actual findings to the predictions made by the theoretical model and to my initial arguments. I conclude this chapter by offering a few potential avenues for future research.

In **Chapter VIII**, I provide some final conclusions to this research by revisiting the broad and specific research questions I have posed in this Introductory Chapter.

I have also included pertinent supplemental information in the form of seven appendices: In **Appendix A**, I arranged a comprehensive chronology of international events, initiatives, and standard-setting instruments that offer provisions for the protection of indigenous peoples. The Appendix provides a record of the rise and development of the international indigenous movement and cooperation on indigenous issues. Appendix A thus offers the background against which the indigenous rights movement must be understood. Most importantly, the Appendix systematically identifies the principal social actors and institutions involved in the process and also characterize the global context out of which the international indigenous movement emerged. To my knowledge, no one so far has presented a detailed chronology of the international indigenous activism in an easy-to-reference-timetable manner. I feel this makes the Appendix a useful and valuable contribution to the existing literature.

In **Appendix B**, I identify the three key international documents which outline the factors relevant to the understanding of the concept of “indigenous peoples”: the Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO Convention No. 169), the Study on the Problems of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations (The José R. Martínez-Cobo Study), and the Working Paper on the Concept of Indigenous Peoples prepared by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

**Appendix C** summarizes the legal foundations of indigenous rights. In it I present both the general international human rights instruments, from which indigenous rights can be deduced, as well as the current legal instruments that are specifically devoted to the protection of indigenous peoples. By doing so I illustrate how the global indigenous movement has broadened the scope of international law. In addition to listing the legal instruments, I provide some basic information about the instruments, including reference to the articles most relevant to indigenous peoples, and in some cases examples of relevant comments and observations made by the monitoring bodies of the treaties.

In **Appendix D**, I provide a list of some of the actors and organizations engaged in international indigenous peoples’ discourses. The list demonstrates the diversity in governmental and non-governmental bodies, specialized agencies, and indigenous organizations and groups involved in furthering indigenous rights and issues. I have taken the information from the actual attendance roster of the Seventh Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which I attended.

Similar to my approach in Appendix A, in **Appendix E** I trace the events of significance for the advancement of indigenous issues; only this time I have singled out

the developments occurring solely within the Russian Federation. This provides the reader with a quick chronological reference of how indigenous activism originated and progressed within the Russian context.

In **Appendix F**, I have attached the text of the official Charter of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation. The text serves to identify the strong orientation indigenous peoples of the Russian North have towards their past and future generations (kinship), towards their traditional knowledge and experiences, and towards their surrounding environment (sustainable development).

**Appendix G** is a supplement to my methodology chapter. In it, I list the questions used in my formal interviews. I also present some additional information on how the interviews were conducted.

Finally, in **Appendix H** I arranged a glossary of special terms. This list presents terms that are commonly used when speaking about indigenous peoples' rights. Included in the glossary are also some legal terms that may assist the reader in understanding the legalities of the United Nation system and international law associated with indigenous peoples' issues.

## CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

In the previous introductory chapter, I began to frame my research as an academic exercise by presenting my broad and specific research questions, identifying the current gaps in the literature, and clarifying the significance of this study. In this chapter, I proceed by providing information on the methodology used in conducting this research.

Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) demonstrate that due to the “absence of methodological dogmatism in the social movement field” a full range of methods and techniques have been fruitfully applied in studying the processes of mobilization and social movement participation. The authors illustrate that students of social movements have conducted quantitative and qualitative studies, surveys and in-depth interviews, archival studies and participant observation, single-case studies and complex comparative designs, mathematical simulations, ecological studies of multi-organizational fields and life-history interviews, network analysis, discourse analysis, and studies of narratives.

My research was conducted over a three-year period, between February 2006 and January 2009. While the focus area of this dissertation is indeed Russia, the study was carried out solely in the United States and no fieldwork outside of the United States took place.

The research consisted of: a) participant-observation techniques, b) informal discussions and formal interviews, and c) archival research – these are methods largely employed in qualitative ethnographic research. Scholars refer to this technique as the “triangulation”<sup>1</sup> approach – the use of multiple, overlapping methods, data sources, investigators, and even theoretical perspectives in the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings (Bickman and Rog 1998; Denzin 1989; Emerson 2001; Lewis-Beck et al 2004). According to Denzin (1989), findings may be judged valid when different and contrasting methods of data collection yield identical findings on the same research subjects. Triangulation is one of the main techniques, used by social science researchers, which may be considered as an alternative method of validation. Validity is claimed because replication of the findings by different methods minimizes the possibility that the findings may be the result of particular measurement bias (Emerson 2001).

Collectively the chosen three qualitative methodologies allowed for better understanding and analysis of the issues at hand. What was read in the printed material of other scholars, who have previously examined indigenous activism, was compared to what I personally saw and heard at the fora where indigenous peoples convene. My

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the idea of triangulation, see for example Denzin (1989). Denzin distinguishes four basic forms of triangulation with a range of sub-types: 1) data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered; 2) investigator triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data; 3) theoretical triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data; and 4) methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data. Methodological triangulation is the type of triangulation applied in this dissertation. Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) suggest that the application of multi-method approach in the study of social movements is highly desirable. Fielding and Fielding (1986) offer a very extensive discussion of triangulation as a validity-testing strategy in qualitative research. Fielding and Fielding emphasize the fallibility of *any* particular method and the need to design triangulation strategies to deal with specific validity threats.

personal inferences from what I read and observed, were then weighed against what key indigenous peoples and activists said in interviews. These three methodologies tend to be among the most widely utilized techniques by scholars who have studied the history, agenda, and dynamics of the indigenous peoples' movement in other regions of the world.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, I used these three research approaches for the conceptualization and development of my original theoretical model.

A combination of qualitative methods was the most appropriate approach given the type of questions this dissertation sets out to answer. The **broad questions** this research poses are: Why and how do indigenous peoples' rights movements arise? Do indigenous rights movements take different trajectories, i.e. are there indeed diverse forms of indigenous mobilization throughout the world? What demands do indigenous peoples throughout the world pose? Do these demands change over time, and if so how? The more **specific questions** I ask include: What is the nature of indigenous activism in the post-Soviet Russian North? How did this phenomenon originate? What type of people were among the major leaders in the indigenous mobilization? What other actors have emerged as promoters for indigenous mobilization? How does indigenous activism in the Russian North compare to activism in other regions of the world?

I also refer to some material acquired through quantitative methodology (such as official census data). I used that data to acquire information on indigenous peoples' demographic trends, health and well-being indicators, economic and social developments. I then used the socio-demographic data to make comparisons between the situation of

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<sup>2</sup> For review of the literature on the movement in Latin America, see for example Warren and Jackson 2002; for Africa and the Americas, see Hodgson 2002.

indigenous peoples in the Russian North and other indigenous populations across the globe.

## Participant-Observation / “Fieldwork”

### *What the Method Entails*

“Participant-observation” involves long-term observation in which the observer becomes a regular participant in the activities of those being observed (Johnson and Reynolds 2005). The goal of this approach is to directly and freely observe the behavior and activities of the group being studied in a natural setting. Participant-observation allows for first hand interaction between the researcher and those being studied. The primary value of direct contact and observation is in allowing the researcher to see for him or herself rather than in providing access to subjective meaning or perspectives (Emerson 2001).

“Field research” (or “fieldwork”) is a classic example of participant-observation approach. In its most inclusive sense, field research is simply research conducted in natural social settings, in the actual contexts in which people pursue their daily lives. Emerson (2001: 1) argues that the first commitment of the fieldworker is to “enter the ongoing worlds of other people to encounter their activities and concerns firsthand and close up.” Clifford (1997: 186) views fieldwork as “an embodied special practice” involving both “displacement” (i.e. “physically going out” from “home” to some other “different” place of setting) and “focused, disciplined attention.” Similarly, Gupta and Ferguson (1997) note that “the field” is defined by its radical separation from “home” – the former is “distant and exotic”, the later is “familiar, safe, and known.”



The concept of classical field research has grown over the years. It is no longer strictly limited to living within the community a researcher is interested in – a method coined and applied by classical anthropologists such as Franz Boas, Clifford Geertz, Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Meade, and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown. Hodgson (2002) for example encourages researchers who are interested in indigenous peoples to extend their horizons to new sites of research – workshops, websites, meetings, publications, and offices of indigenous peoples – rather than just the customary sites of households, ceremonies, and marketplaces where indigenous peoples are usually observed. Although Hodgson makes her address largely to anthropologists and ethnographers, I believe her idea is applicable to scholars from other social science disciplines as well.

Becker (2001: 321) argues that the nearer researchers get to the “conditions in which [people] actually do attribute meanings to objects and events the more accurate our descriptions of those meanings are likely to be.” Consequently, I chose to conduct my “fieldwork” by directly participating in a key international venue where indigenous peoples convene. I was unable to travel to all the international sites where indigenous peoples (indigenous peoples from the Russian North in particular) are constructing discourses, devising strategies, making alliances, and learning from each other. As such, I decided to focus my study on one of the international fora where indigenous peoples convene, namely the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sylvia Escárcega applied this form of fieldwork in her research on how indigenous activists and intellectuals from Mexico brought forward their own problems and difficulties to the global level (in her case the Working Group on Indigenous Populations) with the UN being the most important arena (See Escárcega 2003). Other researchers, who have examined how indigenous peoples’ human rights are being negotiated at the UN, have also utilized this form of field research (for example see King-Levangie 2004).

The Permanent Forum is the main international forum created with the aim to discuss economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health, and human rights as they relate to indigenous peoples from all parts of the world. It is the foremost body for dialogue between indigenous peoples, UN agencies, and states. According to its mandate, the Permanent Forum is to provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as well as to programs, funds, and agencies of the United Nations<sup>4</sup>, through the ECOSOC. Further goals of the Forum are to raise awareness, to promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system, and to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues. The Forum is financed from the UN regular budget and from voluntary contributions.

Of particular importance is the composition of the Permanent Forum. It is comprised of sixteen independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity. Eight of the members are nominated by governments and elected by ECOSOC, and eight are nominated directly by indigenous organizations in their regions. It is important to note that the members are not representative of either governments or indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum does not have the mandate to promote the interests of indigenous peoples as such, but must deal with indigenous issues objectively. It ensures broad participation of indigenous peoples, not only as members on equal footing with governments, but representatives of indigenous organizations, peoples and communities

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of UN agencies include: FAO, ILO, UNCHR, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, WHO, WIPO and many others which have general or special programs that affect indigenous peoples.

may also participate as observers<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the same procedures which have been applied by the WGIP (namely, they do not need to belong to an NGO with ECOSOC consultation status).

The UNPFII holds an annual two-week session which takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. A number of satellite expert groups and workshops concurrently convene on particular topics and feed into the Forum's session. I have attended three consecutive sessions of the Forum – in May 2006, May 2007, and April 2008. The respective special themes of the Permanent Forum in those years were as follows: The Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Re-drafting the Millennium Development Goals (2006); Territories, Lands and Natural Resources (2007); and Climate Change, Bio-cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges (2008).<sup>6</sup>

The UNPFII, more than any other international organization, has created a voice for indigenous peoples internationally. Since its establishment in 2000, the Permanent Forum has been more or less the largest international meeting of indigenous peoples and experts from throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, it seems that the meetings of the Forum

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<sup>5</sup> Even though in legal terms all participants in the annual meetings of the Permanent Forum (apart from the sixteen appointed member-experts) are called “observers”, they do enjoy full participation in the discussions, i.e. they can present oral or written interventions on all agenda points. In their interventions, observers can provide information, comments, proposals, etc. to be considered by the Forum's members.

<sup>6</sup> The preceding themes of the Permanent Forum were as follows: Indigenous Children and Youth (2003); Indigenous Women (2004); and Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples with a Focus on Goal 1 to Eradicate Poverty and Extreme Hunger, and Goal 2 to Achieve Universal Primary Education (2005). For more info on the work of the UNPFII, see the official website of the organization: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html). For scholarly analysis on the establishment and work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, see for example: IWGIA 2000, 1999; Lile 2006; Lindroth 2006; López-Reyes 1995; and Malezer 2005.

<sup>7</sup> The only other global institution that has discussed longer indigenous identity and consistently offered indigenous peoples the possibility to comment on local, regional, national, and international developments

may be the largest annual events in the UN after those of the General Assembly. The Forum has offered indigenous peoples from every region of the world the possibility to fully articulate their problems on a regular (yearly) basis, to voice their opinion on how these problems should be addressed, and to participate actively in the development of international legal standards for the protection of their rights. Moreover, the Permanent Forum has facilitated the creation of transnational linkages between indigenous organizations by offering a space where they can meet, exchange information and experiences, and organize protests. Indigenous participants have ranged in their level of education – some are trained lawyers, while others are community leaders or elders with a limited level of formal education.

In addition to indigenous representatives, these high-level meetings bring together parliamentarians, NGOs and academia, senior and other representatives of member states, UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations (see Appendix D). High level officials such as Ban Ki-moon (UN Secretary General), Kofi Annan (former UN Secretary General), Evo Morales (President of Bolivia), the President of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs have consistently addressed the Permanent Forum and participated in its discussions.

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pertaining to the situations of indigenous peoples is the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the WGIP has certainly been at the forefront of indigenous peoples' advocacy efforts. The WGIP held its last session in 2006. Following a reform of the UN human rights machinery, in 2007 the Human Rights Council decided to establish a new expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples instead of the WGIP. Muehlebach (2001) argues that if one is to study the transnational indigenous social movement in its entirety, the WGIP is a point from which to start. I would argue that the UNPFII is the institution with which to continue.

One of the most important features of the Permanent Forum is its significant convening power. Participation in the UNPFII has steadily grown over the years. The first session of the Permanent Forum, held in 2002, drew some 900 observers representing Governments, the UN system, indigenous peoples' organizations and other NGOs. In comparison around 1,200 indigenous peoples' representatives, representatives of around 55 member states and some 31 UN agencies attended the 2006 Session of the Forum. The 2007 Session attracted some 1,500 indigenous peoples' representatives, some 30 indigenous parliamentarians, representatives of around 70 member states, some 35 UN system entities and close to 100 representatives of NGOs and academia. At the most recent, 7<sup>th</sup> session of the UNPFII in 2008, there were an unprecedented 3,300 participants. The Forum has also succeeded in bringing high-level officials or representatives of the UN system, including the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in its sessions.

### ***Significance of the Method***

Attending the meetings of the UNPFII was critical for my understanding of the process and significance of the advancement of indigenous peoples' rights. It gave me a better knowledge about the problems indigenous peoples face in regards to human rights, education, culture, environment, and health. This type of research investigation also provided valuable insight into the daily operations of the Permanent Forum – currently the foremost international body for dialogue between indigenous peoples, UN bodies and special agencies, and member states. I would argue that there is no better place to

decipher and meet the major players (i.e. the *actors*) in the international indigenous peoples' movement – indigenous leaders, activists and experts, NGOs representatives, government representatives, UN bodies, etc. It is also an ideal venue to directly hear recommendations made by indigenous peoples and indigenous peoples' organizations. Furthermore, during the sessions of the Forum I was able to get an idea which institutions are the ones most vocal on and concerned with indigenous peoples' issues and to what degree they have attempted to improve or hinder the lives of the indigenous peoples across the world. I also distinguished potential future players who could be further educated on indigenous peoples' issues and rights – an avenue for possible future research for the academy. For example, it will be extremely beneficial for indigenous peoples across the world if their respective local and national judicial practitioners (e.g. lawyers and judges) start using international indigenous rights legislation (such as the newly adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention No.169) in their decisions. Same is true for national parliamentarians and UN agencies' members.

The Permanent Forum is also an ideal venue to witness the informal interactions between government representatives and indigenous peoples from the respective states. For example, I discovered that the most vocal and participatory nation states (i.e. representative of these nation states took the floor most often) tend to be Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Guatemala, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

Being at the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum further allowed me to find out what is happening with indigenous peoples in the different regions of the world. I witnessed firsthand indigenous peoples' testimonials and learned about their specific and most current aspirations. I heard direct recommendations made by the indigenous individuals and by indigenous peoples' organizations to the Permanent Forum.

Most importantly, my participation in the Permanent Forum led to establishing close rapport with indigenous intellectuals, human rights experts (including international law specialists), key policymakers, and leading scholars in the field of indigenous activism. More specifically, I had the opportunity to observe and interact with representatives from RAIPON and the Russian government.<sup>8</sup> All these contacts allowed for arranging informal discussions and formal interviews (a research method to be discussed later in this chapter).

An essential aspect of any field study is note taking. An essential ethnographic principle is that the fieldworker is not restricted to recording "only those events which fit within some predefined theoretical framework or set of categories"; moreover fieldwork "should not be filtered through some specific, invariant frames of relevance, and researchers should be open to unanticipated findings" (Emerson 2001: 301). Hence, during my participation in the UNPFII sessions, I recorded various discussions, activities and statements made during the Forum's sessions. Records of all the formal and informal statements made during the Forum's sessions – all the official and unofficial daily

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<sup>8</sup> The current First Vice-President of RAIPON, Pavel Sulyandziga, has been for the last four years one of the members of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In the years that I attended the sessions of the Permanent Forum, RAIPON's delegation consisted of around 10 individuals.

interventions, reports and statements made by indigenous representatives and other UNPFII participants – are also publicly available at the Documentation Center for Indigenous Peoples (doCip) in Geneva, Switzerland and on the official website of doCip.

Attending the Permanent Forum allowed me to acquire copies of all the informational packages, booklets, pamphlets, and handouts circulated during the sessions and special events, which in turn I used in my archival research. One such example is the IWGIA “Yearbook: The Indigenous World.” The latter is an annual publication which contains comprehensive update on the situation of the world’s indigenous peoples and their human rights, and provides an overview of the most important developments in international and regional processes over the years. I also attained access to the most current materials (resource kits, guidelines, recommendations, strategic papers, etc.) being produced by the various UN agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

As part of my data-gathering process, I also conducted “mini fieldworks” by regularly attending other workshops and expert group meetings discussing issues related to indigenous peoples. The most recent one was the “International Expert Groups Meeting on the Implementation of Article 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” held at the UN Headquarters in New York (January 2009). The three-day-long expert group meeting was attended by indigenous experts and UNPFII members, interested member states, UN agencies and indigenous peoples’ organizations. Previous expert workshops have included topics such as: data disaggregation and



collection; free, prior and informed consent; indigenous traditional knowledge; and the Millennium Development Goals.

A lecture series entitled “Indigenous Peoples’ Issues: International Perspectives and Global Challenges,” co-sponsored by The Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University in New York and The Secretariat of the UNPFII, further provided fodder for my thoughts. Special topics discussed during the lecture series were: “Why are Only Indigenous Peoples Internationally Entitled to a Specific Right to their Own Culture” (January 2009), “We the Peoples: Indigeneity in Globalization” (October 2008), and “Indigenous Peoples: A Global Historical Overview” (September 2008).

My earliest “mini fieldwork” was a workshop entitled “Indigenous Peoples’ Resistance to Economic Globalization: A Celebration of Victories, Rights, and Cultures,” sponsored by the International Forum on Globalization in New York (November 2006).

All these extended fieldwork experiences provided important insights to my research and contributed to my analysis. Moreover, my participation in these fora enlightened me to some potential roles the academy could play in the process of strengthening indigenous peoples’ movements. For example, both in the discussions at the sessions of the UNPFII, as well as at the special expert group meeting I attended, it was repeatedly emphasized the contributions the academy plays in promoting the implementation of indigenous rights policies and laws, i.e. through publications scholars further raise awareness on indigenous peoples and their needs. These venues also highly encouraged the participation of the academy into future meetings, workshops, and conferences that relate to indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum consistently

expressed the need for future analytical reports from the academy on regional and/or country specific developments regarding indigenous peoples.

I should emphasize that while I was conducting my fieldwork, my degree of involvement ranged from being a “complete observer” on the one hand, to being an “observer as participant” on the other. For example, during the formal UNPFII sessions I assumed the role of a researcher who sits among the group members, carefully observes, takes notes, but yet takes no part in the proceedings. Hence, I acted as a fieldwork *observer*, making direct observations of the actual behavior of the actors involved in indigenous peoples’ discourses. During the UNPFII side events, the special workshops and expert groups meeting related to indigenous peoples, I assumed a slightly less distant role of a researcher who participates with the group as an observer, who is studying the group process, and is welcome to make comments. On those occasions I became a more active participant. I introduced myself and my academic research interests, asked questions, and contributed to the discussions. I thus further immersed myself into the fora where indigenous peoples interact and gained even deeper familiarity of what indigenous peoples’ activism entails.

Fieldwork findings can be subject to challenges related to the issue of how the researcher understands, processes, and assembles data and evidence in making descriptive and analytic claims (Emerson 2001). As Emerson indicates, these challenges take the form of questions: “How do we know that the observer did not simply restrict his observations so that he sees only what supports his prejudices and expectations? How do we know that the fieldworker considered all relevant events, and interpreted and

categorized events in a consistent fashion? How do we know that different researchers would not have interpreted events in different ways?”(2001: 301). I avoided these challenges through the fact that while in the field I had not yet worked out the direction and details of my analysis. Hence, in recording extensive data from the field it was not truly possible to introduce self-deception and biased selectivity. As Katz (1983) argues, “the researcher will often be unable to grasp immediately whether what he is recording is supporting or contradicting his current analysis.” Moreover, the very nature of the fieldwork method – the compilation of sustained, detailed, and varied observations – creates a rich enough set of data that makes it difficult for the researcher to only observe and record what supports his or her preconceptions (Emerson 2001).

While all fieldworkers emphasize going to the field – “being there” (Gubrium and Holstein 1997) in some specific local setting – different researchers organize and understand their “being there” – what they actually do in the field – in different ways. Hence, prior to discussing the other two aspects of the methodology used in this research, I would like to devote the following paragraphs on the dynamics of the Permanent Forum and my personal account of “being there.” Ethnographers tend to pride themselves on providing dense, detailed descriptions of social life, the kind Clifford Geertz (1973) terms “thick” descriptions. Since this dissertation incorporates teachings from several disciplines, particularly policy and anthropology, I deem that a “thick” description of my experience at the UNPFII is appropriate.

## Being There

*“... the establishment of the Permanent Forum constitutes the start of a new era for indigenous peoples internationally. We are now visible for the first time. For the first time we have seat of our own in the chambers of power in the United Nations. For the first time we can voice our own concerns through our own experts – not just like spectators, booing and cheering on the sideline” (Magne Ove Varsi, a Saami; cited in Lile 2006).*

*“You have a home at the United Nations... Indeed, you have rights, needs and aspirations that can and must be addressed by the world Organization ... With the inauguration of this Forum, indigenous issues assume their rightful place – higher on the international agenda than ever before... On behalf of the United Nations family, I would like to pledge our strong commitment to your cause and your concerns” (UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan 2002).*

## How I Got There

I first became aware of the work of the UNPFII during my internship with The Nature Conservancy in Washington, DC. At The Conservancy, I worked under the supervision of the Director of Global Partnerships and assisted the Indigenous Peoples Committee. I was part of a team of three, dedicated to investigate actions The Nature Conservancy should take to strengthen its position with respect to its work with or in territories affecting indigenous peoples. During my internship with the Global Partnership team, I had to closely follow the policies and thematic developments on indigenous peoples’ issues raised at international conservation, development, and policy fora – one of them being the 2005 Session of the UNPFII. While I did not personally attend that years’ Session of the Forum, my supervisor did, and through her, I became exposed to the most current international discourse on indigenous peoples’ rights. Part of my responsibilities at The Conservancy necessitated researching the already existing operational policies and guidelines of conservation NGOs (e.g. Conservation International and WWF), aid donors (e.g. the World Bank) and specialized agencies (e.g.

ILO) concerning building genuine partnerships and solidarity with indigenous communities. Ultimately, the efforts of my team were used to promote the initial steps of developing official policies and guidelines for The Nature Conservancy's work with indigenous peoples in protected areas. My involvement with The Conservancy exemplifies well the organizational changes various agencies have had to go through in the past years as a result of the significant growth in indigenous activism, both nationally and internationally.

### ***The Venue***

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in 2000 as an advisory subsidiary body to the UN Economic and Social Council (refer to Appendix A for more information on the events leading up to the founding of the Forum). Its establishment is important because it is the only UN body in which indigenous peoples are given equal status with UN member states, and because indigenous peoples can participate directly in the decision-making process. The Forum's first meeting was in 2002. Ever since, the Permanent Forum meets annually for two weeks (ten working days). The meetings generally take place in the month of May. The sessions of the UNPFII always take place at the UN headquarters in New York.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, I attended three consecutive sessions of the Forum – in May 2006, May 2007, and April 2008. The 2006 Session of the UNPFII was particularly special in that its opening ceremony was held at the UN General Assembly Hall. As Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UNPFII, noted in the opening session of the Permanent Forum that year, the General Assembly Hall is a “historic hall” where

“many significant decisions for the world have been made” (Tauli-Corpuz 2006). What made the day even more significant was the fact that for most of the indigenous peoples present, it was the first time they entered this hall. The 2008 Session was also especially significant since it was the first session to take place after the adoption of the long-awaited UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The sitting arrangements during the formal proceedings of the Permanent Forum allow for easy identification of the participants and their affiliation: Members of the UNPFII are always seated in the center of the circular plenary room. Government officials have a seat, in alphabetical order, on the far left side of the room. UN bodies and specialized agencies sit on the far right side of the room. The space in between is designated for indigenous organizations and NGOs. This seating allows indigenous, state and agency delegates to face each other directly. All of the participants in the plenary sessions have a plaque in front of them identifying their member state or organizational affiliation. These plaques are also used as a way for the chairperson to identify when a participant wishes to make an intervention – a raised plaque signifies that the representative wishes to make an oral statement. In the outer circles, as well as in the gallery of the room, journalists and other observers can be seated. The conference room has a capacity for a little over 600 people.<sup>9</sup> Each seat has its own audiphones with which it is possible to listen to the simultaneous translations.

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<sup>9</sup> The demand for seating on opening day, as well as during the speeches of high-level officials, often exceeded the capacity of the room. In those situations, the adjacent conference room was open up to accommodate unseated delegates and a screen was set up to broadcast the proceedings.

### ***The People at the UNPFII***

During the annual sessions each year, a number of key UN and other intergovernmental organization representatives, indigenous men and women, youth and elders, representatives of non-governmental organizations from around the world, join the 16 members of the Permanent Forum for an interactive dialogue. Participation in the annual meetings of the Permanent Forum are open to: representatives of government delegations; representatives of UN agencies and bodies; representatives of indigenous organizations, peoples and communities; representatives of NGOs with or without consultative status<sup>10</sup> with ECOSOC; and representatives of specialist organizations, experts (including academic institutions) or other interested people.

It is a rather special experience to witness indigenous peoples from all over the world wearing their richly colored traditional regalia within the halls of the UN. Kenneth Deer, a Mohawk activist and Chair of the Indigenous Peoples Caucus, describes the sight at the First Session of the UNPFII as such:

*“Stepping into United Nations Meeting Room Two, you come upon a sea of people from all corners of the world. Some are dressed in typical Western attire of suit and tie for men and trim business outfits for women. But also in this room, there are far more colorful traditional dress of Indigenous peoples from around the world.*

*There are Inuit from Greenland with their brightly colored sweaters and sealskin boots and leggings. The Sami of northern Europe are wearing red and blue felt tunics decorated with silver clasps and medallions.*

*Mayan women from Guatemala are wearing vibrant blouses and skirts that reflect their regional hallmarks. People in ribbon dresses and ribbon shirts are scattered about the room with a great accumulation in the area where the Haudenosaunee are sitting” (Deer 2002).*

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix H for clarification of the term “consultative status.”

For most indigenous representatives, being able to present their distinct cultures, way of life and identity at the UN is a matter of great honor and pride. Displaying their traditional clothing is a particularly important part of many indigenous cultures. For example, at the 2006 Session of the Permanent Forum, indigenous peoples from several Latin American states were extremely upset when UN security guards asked them to remove, for security reasons, their traditional hats while at the UN. For them this was a form of insensitive cultural discrimination.

For some indigenous representatives, being at the UN Headquarters was a new experience; others, well familiar with international fora, found their way around more easily. Some indigenous groups were represented by only one or two individuals; others had big delegations representing them. As indicated earlier, the indigenous delegates who attended the UNPFII had a wide array of previous experiences and education – among them there were activists, organizers, lawyers, anthropologists, film producers, artists, scholars, community elders, and officials in indigenous organizations. Regardless of where they were coming from, indigenous peoples always referred to other indigenous peoples as “brothers and sisters.” This to me illustrates well that over the years of collaboration indigenous peoples have discovered that in light of the various colonial practices they have been faced with, they all share rather similar experiences of oppression and dispossession<sup>11</sup>, have common values, pursue similar collective strategies, and intensely strive to continue collaborating with one another.

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<sup>11</sup> Experiences of oppression do vary in their level of discrimination, i.e. in certain countries (e.g. Norway, Sweden, Finland and Greenland) indigenous peoples were confronted with rather “mild” racial discrimination; in other regions of the world (e.g. Australia, Brazil, Guatemala, Hawaii, Southeast Asia, and the US), indigenous peoples have faced severe ethnocide and genocide.



### ***Agenda, Special Themes, and Program of Work of the UNPFII***

In addition to the six broad areas the UNPFII deals with – economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights – each session has thematically focused on a specific issue. During the Forum’s first six sessions, a specific theme was discussed each year. The respective special themes of the Permanent Forum, in the years I attended, were as follows: The Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Re-drafting the Millennium Development Goals (2006); Territories, Lands and Natural Resources (2007); and Climate Change, Bio-cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges (2008). Since the sixth session, the Permanent Forum has decided on a bi-annual working method of one year of policy discussion and the second year dealing with implementation. Thus, themes for the Forum sessions change every two years. The theme of the upcoming 2009 Session, which I also plan to attend, is the same as the 2008 one.

### ***How the Days Progressed***

The sessions of the Permanent Forum always opened and closed with traditional prayers by indigenous delegates, primarily elders (whoever wished to offer them was invited to do so). This is a rather unique tradition which can also be observed in the work of the WGIP and the Indigenous Caucus. Because the prayers are not part of the official agenda, they are usually not noted in the UNPFII reports. In those prayers indigenous delegates tended to honor and give thanks the Creator, Mother Earth, Nature, the spiritual beings in the world, the indigenous ancestors and the generations to come. They offered words of welcome in the name of certain indigenous group(s) and honored and paid

tribute to the indigenous peoples on whose lands the meetings took place. In essence, these traditional prayers were performed to ensure the well-being of all participants and to make the event prosper. At the very First Session of the UNPFII, UN General-Secretary, Mr. Kofi Annan made the following remark:

*“Among the traditions I find particularly powerful is the respect given to elders as carriers of wisdom, to women as carriers of language and culture, and to children as carriers of the identity that is transmitted to future generations”*  
(Annan 2002).

This is exactly the message that I too took from the various traditional prayers and speeches made by indigenous peoples at the annual sessions of the Forum.

The two-week-sessions of the Permanent Forum were always very intense, packed from the morning until the evening with formal deliberations, hallway lobbying and discussions, and special events. The days usually started at 10am. From 10am until 1pm, there were formal dialogues (formal plenary meetings) open to all participants in the Session. Each year specific dialogue sessions were scheduled with the UN agencies, with indigenous peoples, and with governments. These dialogues continued in the afternoons from 3pm-6pm. During these dialogues anyone who wished to deliver statements to the Permanent Forum (be that an indigenous individual, high-level and other representative from the UN bodies, representative of member states or NGOs) may do so. In other words, all participants, without distinction, registered to attend the session may present oral or written statements (in the UN vernacular called interventions) on all agenda points. In their interventions, participants can provide information, comments,

proposals, etc. to be considered by the Forum's members.<sup>12</sup> Oral statements do need to adhere to the time determined by the chairperson leading the meeting – normally the time limit for interventions varies between five to ten minutes, depending on the number of observers who ask for the floor. Governments, UN bodies and specialized agencies are often given more time to make statements. Indigenous representatives have also opted to give collective interventions (i.e. several indigenous organizations would produce joint consensus statements and recommendations), thus giving them the opportunity to address the Permanent Forum within a longer time limit. The sixteen members of the Permanent Forum may introduce items, ask questions, and make statements whenever they judge appropriate and as often as they wish on any agenda point. They have priority over the rest of the participants in the Forum. Should an indigenous delegate, NGO, agency, or government wish to make a longer intervention and/or recommendation to the Permanent Forum, they may do so in a written format. Oral statements and written submissions need to be in one of the six official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Simultaneous translation in these languages was available at all times during the formal proceedings.

Each year a scheduled dialogue was set with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and other

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<sup>12</sup> Those interested in presenting an intervention, do need to register on a list prepared by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum for each agenda point. The Secretariat's representative informs all participants of where they can register to present interventions. The Secretariat draws up a registration list for interventions, which remains open until the start of the debate on that specific point. Participants are called upon by the Chairperson to present their intervention and do so in the order in which the speakers were registered.

Special Rapporteurs. During that time, the Special Rapporteur provided a summary report of his work and also heard public statements by indigenous organizations.

During the two-week sessions there were one or two mornings when the meetings were closed – open either for bilateral discussions (between member states and the sixteen members of the Permanent Forum) or trilateral discussions (between member states, members of the Permanent Forum, and UN agency representatives). Given the time constraints during plenary meetings and the need for the sixteen members of the Permanent Forum to consult among themselves on their work, they also held closed meetings daily from 8:30 to 10am and sometimes in the evenings after 6pm. The aim of these private meetings is to discuss the progress of the Forum's session and prepare decisions and recommendations to be included in the final report. At the end of each session, the members of the Permanent Forum produce an official report with recommendations to the ECOSOC – the outcome of the annual session. ECOSOC then considers the report at its regular session in July. The Permanent Forum Special Rapporteur is the one who drafts the report, which then is distributed (in the six official UN languages) to all relevant UN bodies and agencies, indigenous and other organizations, civil society, the media and the private sector as a way, among other things, of encouraging dialogue on indigenous issues within the United Nations system. These recommendations serve as the primary platform for advocacy and program implementation during the year. The recommendations have a thematic focus and outline specific action that is needed to promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples and to improve their lives overall.

Among the items discussed during the formal dialogues of the Forum was also the implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum – economic and social development, environments, health, education, culture, and human rights. In addition, there were also always half-day thematic discussions dedicated either to a specific region of the world or specific topic – for example, in 2008 there was a half-day discussion on the Pacific and on indigenous languages; in 2007 there was a half-day discussion on Asia and on urban indigenous peoples and migration; in 2006 there was a half-day discussion on Africa.

The time between 1pm-3pm was dedicated to a variety of side events – special caucus meetings, workshops, lunch meetings, lobbying in hallways, prayer meetings, etc. Each year, there were over 50 side events scheduled during the two weeks the Forum is in session. These special events were organized by governments, agencies, indigenous organization, NGOs, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum and others attending the UNPFII. The goal of these side events is to discuss and share points of view, or take a deeper look at specific issues of particular relevance to indigenous peoples in relation to the activities of the Permanent Forum. These side events also offered the participants and panelists an opportunity to network and establish contact with other indigenous organizations, and official or unofficial institutions that have an interest in that particular issues or area of work. Here are some sample topics from the 2008 Session side events: *UNDP Consultation with Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change and Biodiversity; UNEP and Indigenous Peoples: Partnership in Promoting the Environment and Human Well-being; Indigenous Peoples Leading the Way on Climate Change; Climate Change*

*and Reindeer Herding; Symposium on the Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples; Indigenous Youth Issues and Challenges from Global and Regional Perspectives; The Potential Role of a UN University Traditional Knowledge Institution; Managing Indigenous Local Governments: Balancing Traditions with Emerging Challenges; The Revitalization of Threaten Languages; Wood Based Biofuels and Genetically Engineered Trees; The Future for Indigenous Australian Higher Education; Indigenous Peoples and the Private Sector; Indigenous Writers on Writing.*

As it is evident from these titles, the special events covered a variety of areas of concern to indigenous peoples – environment, culture, languages, education, participation in decision-making, social wellbeing, etc.

The last few days of the Sessions were dedicated to the ongoing priorities, themes, follow-up and future work of the Permanent Forum, including emerging issues.

The evenings, a favorite time for many, were dedicated to cultural events – indigenous exhibitions, crafts, music, dance and theatrical performances, and receptions – which brought together an impressive array of indigenous artists from around the world. Each year there was an annual indigenous art exhibit – for example, in 2008 there was a photo project with and for indigenous peoples titled “We the Indigenous Peoples: Self/Portraits.”

## Interviews

### ***What the Method Entails***

While I directly observed the behavior and activities of the indigenous peoples, the various UN agencies, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and member

states, all present at the annual sessions of the UNPFII and the special expert meeting, I also conducted interviews. Interviewing thus formed the third anchor in my triangulation research approach. As Jones (1985: 46) puts it:

*“In order to understand other persons’ construction of reality, we would do well to ask them ... and to ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings.”*

I divide interviews into two categories: formal and informal interviews (discussions). The *formal interviews* were semi-structured, open-ended, conducted individually and arranged ahead of time *as* an interview. For these interviews I had a set of general questions in mind (see Appendix G). These general questions were used to get the interview going and to keep it moving. Specific questions emerged as the interviews unfolded, and the wording of those questions depended upon the direction the interviews took. I explicitly took notes during these interviews. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews (sometimes referred to as “ethnographic interviews”) are appropriate when the researcher attempts to *understand*, rather than to *explain*, complex behavior of members of society “without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 366). Semi-structured, open-ended interviews allow respondents to state what they know and think (Johnson and Reynolds 2005).

The *informal interviews/discussions* constituted any conversation I had, brief as it might be, with anyone who yielded information that was relevant to my research and in some way advanced my dissertation. Any question or two I asked of someone and for which I got an answer that constituted usable data, I considered being informal interviews. Sit-down interviews have the virtue of giving the researcher considerable

control over the interaction no matter how unstructured the interview questions are (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). Yet, Gubrium and Holstein argue that this virtue is also a potential weakness, because the control that shifts to the researcher can threaten the respondent and give rise to problems that impede communication. The authors suggest that through informal discussions, the researcher can get around such problems – the interviewees assume more of a control in that setting. The advantage of informal interviews further lies in their brevity – respondents are not pressured to set specific time to meet with the researcher, if their schedules do not so permit.

Both types of interviews varied in length – some of my informal discussions lasted only a few minutes, while some of my formal interviews took as long as two hours. The extent of the conversations depended largely on participants' schedule and time constraints and on their level of interest in sharing their knowledge and observations. Interviewing was done in-person and was carried out in English. Interviewing took place in the United States primarily during the annual sessions of the UNPFII in New York, as well as during the year-round special workshops and expert group meetings organized by the Permanent Forum conducted also in New York. Since the people who attend these fora do so, to a great extent, for networking purposes, approaching participants with the request for interview and/or informal conversation was relatively straightforward. Finding free time to meet in between the hectic schedule of the Sessions was more of an issue.

Each conversation I had, started with me introducing myself – where I come from, where I study, and what I am interested in. In all of the formal interviews, I



explained the general scope of my research. As indicated earlier in this chapter, while I was in “the field”, I had not quite worked out the specific direction and details of my research analysis. This in turn helped me avoid introducing any bias and expectations into the conducted interviews. I found that not-being affiliated with any specific organization (i.e. my research was completely independent and no organization or individual provided funding support) made it easier for establishing a level of trust with the interviewees – I was a graduate student genuinely interested in what is happening with indigenous peoples across the world, and more specifically within the Russian North.

Questions asked during the formal interviews were broad and focused on interviewee’s personal knowledge and experience with advancing the rights of indigenous peoples and more broadly the indigenous peoples’ movement. Leaving questions open-ended allowed the interviewees latitude to talk in more depth about specific issues or to add things not contemplated in the initial general questions.

Interviewees included persons who had specific expertise and experience regarding either indigenous activism overall and/or indigenous activism in the Russian North. Among them were intellectual professionals, political activists, and officials and staff members of RAIPON all of whom were participants at the annual sessions of the UNPFII in New York and the year-round special workshops and expert group meetings organized by the Permanent Forum conducted also in New York. The fact that I was able to interact with these individuals consecutively during the above-mentioned meetings (these were also the venues during which interviewing took place), allowed for the

establishment of close rapport, and as a result more reliable understanding of the agendas and values of both interviewer and interviewee. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out that establishing rapport is a key goal if the aim of the researcher is to *understand* certain phenomenon. The authors further argue that close rapport with respondents opens doors to more informed research.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) indicate that because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human being, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them. Ethical concerns have revolved largely around three key issues: informed consent, right to privacy, and protection from harm. *Informed consent* means that the interviewees have been carefully and truthfully informed about the research (including the research procedure, its purpose, risks and anticipated benefits) they are about to participate in. In addition, the interviewees are given a statement offering them the opportunity to ask questions and to withdraw from the research at any time. This information and statement are conveyed in a manner that is comprehensible to the interviewees and the consent of the interviewees is voluntary (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Johnson and Reynolds 2005). *Right to privacy* guarantees interviewees that the researcher will protect their identity. *Protection of harm* insures that there will be no physical, emotional, or any other kind of harm to those who are being interviewed. These three ethical concerns have been upheld in this dissertation research. Prior to conducting my interviews, I completed a mandatory training in human research subjects protection. I also received a written approval from the George Mason University Human Subject Review Board (an institutional review board to which researchers must submit description of proposed research involving

human subjects for the purpose of ethics review). The Board's approval signifies that my procedures of research adequately protect the rights and welfare of the interviewees (subjects of research).

In my formal interviews, I requested interviewees consent and offered confidentiality. I gave each person the option to keep his or her comments off the record and not for attribution; as such names of the interviewees are not disclosed in the dissertation in order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. I refer to some of the interviewed individuals only in relation to publicly available statements made by them – for example, official reports, statements, and interventions made by these individuals at the sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The majority of these reports, statements, and interventions are available on the official website of the Documentation Center for Indigenous Peoples (doCip). In several other instances, instead of identifying the names of the people I interviewed, I provide a general description of their affiliation – i.e. a representative from RAIPON, representative of the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

### ***Significance of the Method***

I used the information obtained from the interviews to supplement the credibility of my archival research. In providing useful insights, interviewees above all confirmed if what was available in the literature-to-date accurately portrayed the real situation and aspirations of the indigenous peoples (I was mainly inquiring about the mobilization of indigenous peoples in the Russian North). Leaving the questions open-ended, allowed interviewees to address topics they deemed relevant and thus to educate me on issues I

had not initially considered in my questions. In my conversations, interviewees often suggested other people whom I could contact and speak to on the subject, as well as additional references I could consult.

## Archival Research and Document Analysis

### *What the Method Entails*

Archival research provided the central anchor in my triangulation research approach. I drew information from a range of sources, including: “grey literature”<sup>13</sup> reports, academic research, and legal documentation. As indicated in Chapter I, in this research I am interested in revealing the principal *actors* (particularly on a national level) behind indigenous movements. As such, I chose these particular types of archival research because they represent respectively the work of the following actors: the international donor organizations, NGOs and indigenous organizations; the academia; and the legislative bodies. I observed and interacted with many of these actors during my “fieldwork” experience (to be elaborated later in this chapter). Consequently, through my interactions with many of the representatives present at the UNPFII, and through their side events presentations and statements made during the sessions, I was able to personally assess, at least to some degree, whether these actors were the ones promoting and encouraging indigenous rights (or for that matter suppressing indigenous rights) or if

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<sup>13</sup> “Grey literature” is a term used to refer to a body of materials that cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers, but rather through specialized channels. Examples of grey literature include technical reports from government agencies or scientific research groups, working papers from research groups or communities, fact sheets, white papers, conference proceedings, committee reports, or preprints. Grey literature can be produced by government agencies, universities, corporations, research centers, associations and societies, and professional organizations – in essence, largely by researchers and practitioners in the field.

they merely constituted “actors on paper.” I recognize that in order to know these tendencies more fully it would have been best to witness how these actors worked on the national and local levels. However, due to my constraints I was not able to complete such work.

The *grey literature reports* I looked into were issued by intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies, NGOs, and indigenous organizations. Among the organization were the United Nations and its specialized bodies (the UNPFII in particular, but also UNEP, UNDP, IFAD, ILO); the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks; international NGOs such as Cultural Survival, the Indigenous Peoples Center for Documentation, Research and Information (DoCIP), the International Work Group for International Affairs (IWGIA), and Survival International; and indigenous organizations such as the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), the Saami Council, and of course the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)<sup>14</sup>.

The *academic research* I consulted included both peer-reviewed scientific journal articles and published books. Given that the research questions posed in this dissertation are highly interdisciplinary (i.e. I tried to weave together the cultural, environmental and political realms), the literature that provided the backbone of this study came from a variety of disciplines – anthropology, cultural studies, environmental science and policy, history, human ecology, international law, public policy and social science. Moreover,

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<sup>14</sup> RAIPON is the indigenous umbrella non-governmental organization recognized at the federal level in Russia, as well as by the international community as the “plenipotentiary representative” of the indigenous peoples of Russia (Hariuchi 2001). The Association aims at protecting the human rights and legal interests of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. More information on RAIPON is presented in Chapter VI.

the authors, whose work I examined, came from diverse backgrounds and trainings – Western non-native scholars, Russian non-native scholars, and indigenous scholars. I explored literature dealing with political participation of indigenous peoples and the justification for it and literature defining the central concepts on indigenous mobilization. I looked also into academic studies that provided information about indigenous peoples, i.e. various ethnographic and anthropological case studies. Substantial information also came from academic scholarship on political participation and international law dealing with the right to political participation, minorities, indigenous peoples, and human rights.

I consulted *legal documents* including international treaties and declarations and national legislations. Two legal documents that specifically target indigenous peoples and to which I refer frequently throughout the dissertation are the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention No. 169. I examined key international human rights instruments and have summarized them in Appendix C.

### ***Significance of the Method***

Conducting archival research and document analysis served three key purposes: First, the archival research was instrumental in helping me generate my tentative theoretical model presented in Chapter I and analyzed in Chapter VII. Reviewing and analyzing previous research on indigenous peoples allowed me to synthesize the various dimensions of and contributors to the political mobilization around indigenous-based claims. Second, the archival research helped me to present the background theoretical and historical information for Chapters III and V. Finally, I utilized the archival research to reconstruct the origins, and by extension identify the key actors, of the indigenous

movement in the Russian North and within the comparative regions (these findings I present in Chapters IV, VI, and VII). As indicated in my introductory chapter, up till now there has been no research that specifically identifies and analyses the *actors* behind the indigenous mobilization in the Russian North. Consequently, as I was examining the existing scholarly literature on indigenous peoples, I specifically paid attention to the segments that addressed, in some way, the institutions involved in the process. I then used the piecemeal information to reconstruct a more thorough account of the key participants responsible for leading the indigenous movement in the Russian North, their specific intentions and actions, and the relationships between these key actors.

## Limitation of the Methodology

I am aware of the limitations of my relatively brief “fieldwork.” Initially, I desired to conduct extended fieldwork in Russia, Moscow to be exact where RAIPON’s headquarters is located. While I agree that this kind of approach would have yielded valuable information for my research, time and limited financial resources pre-empted this original aspiration of mine (as indicated above this research, its analysis and write-up was completely independent and was carried out with minimal resources). I do consider that my fieldwork experience at the UNPFII, offered indispensable data regarding indigenous activism in the Russian North. Moreover, it presented a more thorough outlook of indigenous aspirations and mobilizations from other areas of the world – I would have not been aware of this perspective if I had pursued an extensive fieldwork in Russia. In this sense, I have taken what some might consider a limitation of my study and turned it into an advantage.

The majority of the literature consulted for this research was in English. There were some materials in Russian and while I do read and comprehend Russian relatively well, I would like to acknowledge that I might have missed some of the language nuances.

Born and raised in Bulgaria (a country that has no indigenous population), I do not belong to any indigenous group, nor do I speak for any particular indigenous population, no matter how deeply I care about them. I am a non-indigenous person interested in indigenous issues. Consequently, I know that my approach in analyzing the indigenous peoples' movement is inevitably limited and can hardly do justice to the topic from an indigenous point of view. Nevertheless, I have tried to the best of my ability to objectively present the situation.



## CHAPTER III: PRELIMINARY ISSUES: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

*“Whereas in the mid-1970s indigenous questions were an ‘exotic’ item in international conferences and institutions, today it is difficult to find an international gathering – be that on environmental issues, colonization, labor, children, women, nuclear arms, or education – that does not incorporate indigenous representation” (Maignashca 1994b: 367).*

Thanks to the great flow of contemporary discussions and debates, the international public at large has become increasingly aware of the presence of peoples described as “indigenous” (Thornberry 2002). The term is not only increasingly recognized by the UN and its special bodies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other organs of the international order. It crops up in global fora in Rio, in Kyoto, at biodiversity conferences and in a host of other contexts (Lee 2006). Lee (2006) identifies that even Pope John Paul II acknowledged to the world’s native peoples the injustices committed upon them in the name of the Church of Rome (along with *mea culpas* to Jews, women and others).

The umbrella term “indigenous peoples” emerged in the 1970s out of the struggles primarily of the Native American Indian movement in the United States and the Canadian Indian movement (Smith 1999). Today, the term collectivizes diversified peoples in different corners of the world, with different lifestyles, living conditions and

relations to their respective nation states with a variety of constitutions, system of government, law, and administration. The collective nature of the term has enabled these diversified communities and peoples “to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages” (Smith 1999: 7). These are not merely groups organized around particular issues, rather long-standing communities with historically rooted cultures and distinct political and social institutions (Xanthaki 2007). Widely known groups include the First Nations in Canada, the Native Americans in the United States, the Indians throughout much of the Americas, the Inuit of the Arctic, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia, the Maori in New Zealand, Tribal People in India.<sup>1</sup> They are *indigenous* in the sense that their “ancestral roots are embedded in the lands in which they live, or would like to live, much more deeply than the roots of more powerful sectors of society living on the same lands or in close proximity ... they are *peoples* to the extent they comprise distinct communities with a continuity of existence and identity that links them to the communities, tribes, or nations of their ancestral past” (Anaya 2004: 3).

International agreements and organizations have also progressively used the terms “aboriginal,” “native,” “tribal” or even “Fourth World People”<sup>2</sup> when referring to

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<sup>1</sup> Often in their own languages the names, indigenous peoples use to define themselves, mean simply “the people.”

<sup>2</sup> In the context of the indigenous peoples discourse, “Fourth World” is used to define nations forcefully incorporated into states which maintain a distinct political culture but are internationally unrecognized. Developed since the 1970s, the term is used to distinguish the way of life of the indigenous peoples from those of the First (highly industrialized; developed countries), Second (former Soviet Union and its communist-socialist allies), and Third (developing or less-developed countries) Worlds. In making a distinction between the four worlds, Burger (1990) argues that the First, Second and Third Worlds believe

indigenous peoples collectively<sup>3</sup> (to this day the term “indigenous” remains the preferred one in international discourse). These four terms are used almost interchangeably because all of them have the imperfection of having been used by outsiders. While these terms have become acceptable labels in some regions of the world, scholars such as Minde (2008) and Warren and Jackson (2002), warn that caution should be exercised when using them due to their strong colonial, authoritarian, and socialistic connotations.

This chapter begins by examining the question: Why is “indigenous peoples” such a contested concept? I then briefly address the difference between indigenous peoples and minorities. Following that, I clarify a few terms and conceptual frameworks, which are relevant to the indigenous movement discourse. I then provide an overview of current realities confronting indigenous populations. I summarize some of the main challenges and problems indigenous peoples across the world face in relation to national policies of forced assimilation, relocation, and encroachment on indigenous resources. I evaluate the living conditions, socioeconomic development and survival challenges of indigenous peoples around the globe. This then leads into a discussion on the principal common rights indigenous peoples across the world demand – these are the key aspirations the international indigenous movement has build on; they are also the ones expressed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I have devoted the

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that “the land belongs to the people” while the Fourth World believes that “the people belong to the land.” For further explanation of the term, see Wilmer 1993, as well as the Center for World Indigenous Studies, *Background on the term “Fourth World,”* available at <http://www.cwis.org/fourthw.html> (last visited December 2008).

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that in some countries occupational and geographical labels (e.g. hunter-gatherers, pastoralist, nomadic or semi-nomadic, hill people, etc) can be used instead to refer to “indigenous peoples” (UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008). Some indigenous groups prefer the labels that connect them to Mother Earth, and to deeply significant spiritual relationships (Smith 1999).

last section of this chapter to a brief examination of the language of sustainability within the indigenous rights discourse.

## “Indigenous Peoples”: Well Established but Notoriously Ambiguous Term

*“The term ‘indigenous’ can have very different uses, the understanding of the term has developed over time and the interpretation of how it should be defined has been (and is) an ongoing political struggle” (Minde 2008).*

*“Despite the suggestions of those who may claim to have a golden key to definition, it is unlikely that any single factor is adequate to capture all the nuances of ‘indigenous.’ ... To search further for a ‘universal’ formula ... is perhaps misguided” (Thornberry 2002: 56-57).*

*“We may not have a formal definition but we do have a concept ... We do not need a formal definition in order to articulate the interests that should be protected ... it is in our interest ... to avoid the pitfalls of creating a label. Otherwise, in our attempt at being all encompassing, we may hurt those whom we most aim to protect” (Dias 1999).*

*“Efforts to define who or what are indigenous peoples are seen as further attempts to dispossess and take away our inherent right to be. Indeed to assume a right to define indigenous peoples is to further deny our right of self-determination” (a Cree representative).<sup>4</sup>*

The preceding quotes illustrate the rather heated debate that exists around the question “Who is Indigenous?” Indeed, it is not easy to give a precise definition of what the term “indigenous peoples” entails since no single definition can capture the diversity of indigenous peoples worldwide – different states adopt different definitions in terms of their particular contexts and circumstances. In some countries, no formal designation exists even though there might be general agreement that such populations do in fact inhabit certain areas of the country. In other countries (mostly Asian and African

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<sup>4</sup> The representative spoke in the name of International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA); cited by Sjorslev (1996).

states<sup>5</sup>), the existence of indigenous groups is denied altogether by the state as a way to avoid fulfilling its obligations towards indigenous peoples and thus making their definition even more problematic (Stavenhagen 2002).

Experts and academic scholars, states, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and overall international organizations and fora, have all been struggling with the term “indigenous” and “indigeneity” for more than three decades.<sup>6</sup> To this day, the international community has not adopted a common legal definition of “indigenous peoples.”<sup>7</sup> As pointed out in recent United Nations Reports, the prevailing view today is that no formal universal definition is necessary for the recognition and protection of

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<sup>5</sup> China, for instance, has long maintained that there are no indigenous peoples in China or in the whole of Asia (see Barsh 1996). Same is true for Bangladesh, Indonesia, and India. Matthews (2006) argues that in Rwanda, it is against the law to be Batwa (also known as Pygmies), or even to recognize that such a people as the Batwa might exist. Instead of using the term “indigenous”, the Rwandan government has proposed identifying the Batwa as “historically marginalized” or “vulnerable”, and equating their needs to the special rights of women and children.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Rodolfo Stavenhagen states: “Indigenusness, independently of biological or cultural continuity, frequently is the outcome of governmental policies imposed from above and from the outside. It also quite often is the product of a ‘constructed discourse’ enunciated by the emerging intellectual elites of the Indigenous Peoples and their sympathizers among other sectors of the population... In any case, the discourse of ‘indigenusness’ leads to denunciation of injustice (and crimes) committed against the Indigenous Peoples (genocide, plunder, servitude, discrimination) and to the formulation of specific rights that derive from the injustices suffered and from the quality of being indigenous (‘the first in time, the first in right’; ‘recuperation of historical rights’). The discourse of ‘indigenusness’ sustains and legitimizes the demand for specific human rights for the indigenous peoples” (1994).

<sup>7</sup> Examples of international legal usage of the term “indigenous peoples” can be found in: the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and General Recommendation 23(51) concerning Indigenous Peoples adopted by that Committee in 1997; the views and Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee in relation to implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the reports and decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the resolutions of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the European Union; the World Bank’s Operational Directive 4.20; and the Asian Development Bank’s 1997 policy on indigenous peoples. Examples of the use of the term “indigenous peoples” in the practice of States are numerous. These include constitutional guarantees, legislative enactments, judicial decisions, negotiated treaties and agreements, and national and local policies. To name a few: Australia’s 1993 Native Title Act; the Constitutions of Colombia (Article 246), Bolivia (Article 171), Malaysia (Article 151), Mexico (Article 4), Nicaragua (Article 5), and Paraguay (Article 62); Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act (1982); Denmark’s 1994 strategy for support to indigenous peoples; Germany’s 1996 policy for indigenous peoples in Latin America; the Philippines 1997 Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act; the United Kingdom’s 1995 Guidance on Ethnicity, Ethnic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples.

indigenous peoples' rights (See for example UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008). Scholars also have expressed that the lack of consensus on a definition, or even on the need for a definition, should not obscure the fact that a range of nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations have institutionalized a concern with "indigenous peoples," bringing the category within contemporary international human rights discourse and practice (Sanders 1999).

Despite the lack of a clear cut definition, there are several important documents that legal experts (including indigenous legal experts and members of the academics), nation-states, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and indigenous peoples themselves refer to for definitions of the term. They are: the ILO Convention 169, the José Martínez-Cobo Study, and the Working Paper on the Concept of Indigenous Peoples (See Appendix B).<sup>8</sup> All these documents allow for some fluidity in the definition, i.e. they recognize indigenous peoples through a cluster of associated factors.

This dissertation also refrains from providing a rigid definition of the term "indigenous peoples" and instead considers a set of factors relevant to the understanding

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<sup>8</sup> The newly adopted by the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Doc A/RES/61/295) deliberately contains no definition of "indigenous peoples," just as no definition appears in the mandate of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues or any of the other United Nations bodies or special procedures that relate to indigenous peoples. All wording put forward to date have been either over-inclusive or under-inclusive and neither scenario is helpful – i.e. too narrow of a definition could leave vulnerable indigenous groups without even the most modest international recourse; too wide of a definition could flood international rights machinery with claims by large minority groups who have resources and political clout that indigenous peoples lack. Indigenous peoples themselves generally deny the need for a definition and instead emphasize the right to self-determination. Significant discussions on the question of definition were held within the context of the preparation of the Declaration by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) since 1982. Ultimately, WGIP consciously decided to forego any attempt at a definition, stating that "the concept of 'indigenous' is not capable of a precise, inclusive definition which can be applied in the same manner to all regions of the world" (Daes 1996). The difficulties with defining the term "indigenous" are also emphasized in Operational Directive 4.20 of the World Bank, which states: "Because of the varied and changing contexts in which indigenous peoples are found, no single definition can capture their diversity."

of the concept of “indigenous peoples” (See Table 1).<sup>9</sup> Contemporary scholars on indigenous issues tend to agree that these are the essential elements in indigenous descriptors – ancestral occupation of land, separation from colonizing peoples, distinct language and culture, self-identification, and group recognition. Of these, self-identification is central (Anaya 2004). These salient characteristics are also the ones outlined in the most recent publications of internationally-recognized organizations and aid agencies (for example, UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues 2008; UNDP Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples 2001; UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008; World Bank Operational Policy and Bank Procedures 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples 2005) and are used by these institutions to differentiate indigenous peoples from other groups (such as ethnic or racial minorities). For the most part, indigenous peoples themselves do seem to be in agreement with these “guidelines for being ‘indigenous.’”<sup>10</sup> For instance, Les Malezer, native Australian of the Gabi Gabi community and Chairperson of the Indigenous Caucus to the UN expresses:

*“As indigenous peoples we have identifying characteristics that clearly distinguish us from other populations and nation states. In general these distinguishing features are racial, linguistic, social, ideological, political, economic and religious. Our claim to a global identity is based upon our ancient cultures and viable relationships with our territories, in contrast to the modern political entities of nation states and consumer cultures. However, our identity can also be attributed to a history of oppression and the blatant inequalities that*

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<sup>9</sup> The plural term “peoples” is adopted in this dissertation following the usage in international law, which accords “peoples” rights of recognition and self-determination.

<sup>10</sup> The educational awareness-raising documentary “Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Vol.1”, produced by filmmaker and human rights advocate Rebecca Sommer, has assembled statements by indigenous peoples from around the world (Sommer 2006). In these statements indigenous peoples disclose, among other things, what they mean when they identify themselves as “indigenous” (documentary was shown during the 2006 Session of the UNPFII). The interventions made by indigenous representatives during the annual sessions of the UNPFII further provide evidence that indigenous peoples at large are in agreement with these guidelines for being “indigenous”.

*have been allowed to develop, establishing the vast gap of disadvantage for indigenous peoples compared to other peoples of the world” (Malezer 2005).*

**TABLE 1:** Guidelines for Being “Indigenous”.

- Identify themselves as indigenous peoples and are, at the individual level, accepted as members by their community (*self-identification* as distinct indigenous group).<sup>11</sup>
- Have historical continuity or association with a given region or part of a given region prior to colonization or annexation (*long, unbroken continuity and connection with a particular place* – a locality, region, country, state; *prior inhabitation*). Colonization and invasion play a significant role in constituting indigenous peoples’ preexistence.<sup>12</sup>
- Have strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources (*special relationship to the land and resources*).
- Maintain, at least in part, distinct social, economic and political systems.
- Maintain, at least in part, distinct languages, cultures, beliefs and knowledge systems (*cultural difference*).
- Are resolved to maintain and further develop their identity and distinct social, economic, cultural and political institutions as distinct peoples and communities (wish to retain a *distinct identity*).
- Form non-dominant sectors of society (being only partly integrated into the dominant nation state; often excluded or marginalized from political decision-making).

Note: The following list builds on guidelines presented in UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA (2008). It is strongly grounded in the legal documents that address indigenous peoples (see Appendix B). I further developed the list by incorporating information obtained from the consulted literature on indigenous peoples (refer to the first section of my bibliography).

<sup>11</sup> Self-identification thus consists of two elements: the group consciousness of persons who believe they belong to a certain indigenous groups, and the group’s acceptance that the respective individual is a part of their community (von Lewinski 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Requiring some sort of historic continuity is the one criterion that has been criticized by some as being too limiting, i.e. limiting the definition essentially to indigenous peoples in countries with European colonization and thus excluding indigenous peoples in Asia and Africa (see von Lewinski 2008). Xanthaki (2007) argues that historical continuity should not be confused with historical priority. The historical continuity criterion, Xanthaki explains, requires an extended period of occupation of ancestral lands reaching to the present; common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands; culture and/or specific manifestations, such as religion, history, oral traditions, customs; language; and other relevant factors. Historical priority, on the other hand, is what would eliminate many groups in need of indigenous protection since it is linked primarily with colonized parts of the world.



The criteria identified in Table 1 are inevitably open to interpretation, strategic use, and opportunism, not only by people claiming indigenous status but also by lawyers and academics. The precise combination of these guidelines varies from country to country and from group to group. No one characteristic may be necessary or sufficient for the wholly appropriate employment of “indigenous.” Only a few indigenous peoples would satisfy all characteristics; some would satisfy most. In the past characteristics such as statelessness or nonindustrial mode of production were used as additional criteria to identify indigenous peoples. Currently these characteristics are discouraged as they perpetuate the stereotype of “backwardness,” of a people frozen in tradition (see Warren and Jackson 2002).

### ***Indigenous Peoples vs. Minorities***

An important issue that emerges at the outset is the problem of distinguishing indigenous peoples from other kinds of cultural groups such as ethnic or racial minorities (or “stateless nations” as some scholars have referred to), who too have often been victims of state-sponsored discrimination or assimilation. In the area of group rights international law has generally avoided definitions. As Thornberry (2002) points out “it has not been regarded as necessary for the international system to define canonically all its components.” As such, the term “minority” is also not formally defined in international law. The Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities proposed in 1979 a definition that has over the years gained wide acceptance:

*“A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language” (Capotorti 1979).*

It is certainly easy to ascertain that most of the criteria that characterize “indigenous peoples,” such as a common language and common culture, are also applicable to many minorities. Both minorities and indigenous peoples aim for perpetuation as distinct groups, including the preservation and promotion of their culture, customs, and language, and both are in a non-dominant position in the wider society. However, one of the most central distinctions in international law between the two groups is that a minority does not constitute a “first people” – that is minorities do not have a prior history of territorial occupation and an ancestral attachment to their land before it was conquered and occupied by others; indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of their countries, having settled there before the majority population. Some scholars refer to this key feature of distinction as the “inherent right” of indigenous peoples (see Warren and Jackson 2002). The inherent right argument thus strengthens indigenous peoples’ claims to autonomy and self-determination – it is this priority of residence that justifies creating a set of claims about indigenous peoples that are distinct from claims made about minorities or about peoples subject to discrimination or oppression.

Grey (2005: 20) adds several other distinctive features that differentiate indigenous peoples from minorities, namely:

*“the centrality of land in group identity, including a claim to land rights; a focus on internal self-determination as a principal goal, signifying autonomy, self-directed development, and communal control of traditional resources; collective decision-making as a norm; self-identification, on the part of the group and*

*individual, as the basis for membership; and a shared history of injustices and continuing state of inequality based solely on indigenous status.”<sup>13</sup>*

### ***Indigenous Peoples as “Traditional” Peoples***

A further area of discussion concerns the characterization of indigenous peoples as “traditional” peoples. In using the term “traditional” by no means do I wish to imply that indigenous peoples are stuck in the past. Indigenous peoples’ identity is not atemporal, but rather adaptive. As Brysk (1996) shows, indigenous cultures are “not static or primordial” but they do evolve like all other cultures. Within the indigenous peoples’ discourse, terms such as “traditional culture”, “traditional (ecological) knowledge”, “traditional worldview”, “traditional practices”, “traditional lifestyles or way of life”, and “traditional lands and territories” often crop up. The “traditional” component in these terms indicates that the culture, knowledge, worldview, practices, etc. were acquired through personal experiences and close observation, they were then preserved and transmitted within the given community or group over a long period of time. Thus, indigenous peoples have developed their cultures, knowledge, worldviews, practices, and lifestyles through generations of intimate contact with their lands and surrounding environment, but they have inevitably also incorporated certain contemporary aspects of everyday “modern” life.

A caveat is in order here: The attempt to define “indigenous peoples” as an international concept has been controversial and highly politicized particularly in the context of current legal politics. In fact, both elements of the terms – “indigenous” and

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<sup>13</sup> For more thorough review of the differences between indigenous peoples and minorities refer to Thornberry 1996. See also Eide and Daes 2000.

“peoples”<sup>14</sup> – are contentious, and the battle over their definition is far from over.<sup>15</sup> I am well aware that in many instances, nation-states, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and indigenous peoples themselves perceive the term “indigenous peoples” differently and thus utilize the meaning and application of “indigenous peoples” for diverse purposes.<sup>16</sup> As Nuttall (1998) indicates, the flexibility of the definition of indigenous peoples “allows for many different groups already identified in ethnic terms to claim the right to be recognized as indigenous.” Nuttall further points out that assertion of “indigenous-ness” becomes politically potent especially in situations where land rights and the legal, social and economic status of minority or ethnic groups remain controversial issues; i.e. because of the greater

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<sup>14</sup> The term “peoples” is regarded as crucial by indigenous activists because it is “peoples” who are recognized in international law as having the right to self-determination (Smith 1999). Some state governments oppose the use of the word “peoples” in regard to indigenous peoples because they fear its association with the right of territorial secession and independent statehood (or substantial internal autonomy). Warren and Jackson (2002) clarify the difference between the two terms: “‘people’ fits into the traditional notion of a nation coterminous with a state in which all individuals have equal rights.” On the other hand, they argue, “‘peoples’ suggests membership in a potentially rival collectivity which demands recognition of certain rights to which members are exclusively entitled.” As such, some states would prefer the terms “tribes” or “populations,” which do not have those “explosive” associations. For more on this so called “battle of the ‘s’” see for example Barsh 1994. Indigenous representatives have defined the term “peoples” as follows: “The term *peoples* is applicable to any group which is geographically and culturally distinct from the State administering its territory (quote from a statement given by a delegate from the Sante’ maw’I omi wjit mikmaq, Mikmaq Grand Council at the WGIP in 1987 and cited by Muehlebach 2002). For more on the position of indigenous peoples in regard to the use of the term “indigenous peoples” in the UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, see UN Doc E/CN.4/2000/NGO/120, a Joint Statement submitted by the Indigenous World Association and other indigenous organizations at the UN Commission on Human Rights Inter-sessional working group in 2000.

<sup>15</sup> For a brief summary of the academic controversies over the term “indigenous” see Minde 2008. Also refer to the correspondence published in *Anthropology Today* 18(3): 23-25 under the title “Defining Oneself, and Being Defined As, Indigenous,” 20(2): 4-9 “Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and the Politics of the term ‘Indigenous;’” and 16(4): 12-16 “Should We Have a Universal Concept of ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Rights”? Ethnicity and Essentialism in the Twenty-first Century.” Academic exchanges on the ongoing debate on rights and the use of the term “indigenous” can also be found in *Current Anthropology* 44(3), 45(2), and 47(1) and the *New Humanist* 118(3).

<sup>16</sup> Some states, such as Bangladesh, persist with the characterization of the whole population of the state as “indigenous,” a characterization which, as Thornberry (2002) argues, is increasingly likely to be challenged.

protection, support and resources offered under emerging international law, minority groups and a range of disenfranchised, marginalized social groups who are otherwise struggling to assert their rights to land and to identity and to regain control over their lives, are more likely to seek to identify themselves as “indigenous peoples.”

One additional key point ought to be briefly recognized – the term “indigenous” is a time-bounded concept. In many world regions today, those presently considered indigenous peoples took over the land from inhabitants at an earlier time. Case in point are the Bantu peoples in Sub-Saharan Africa, who were in the process of conquering other populations when the first Europeans arrived. Similarly, the South Africans found a large empty land because of previous attacks by the previous native inhabitants, and as the South Africans were moving north they met King Shaka and the Zulus moving south (Talbot 2009). Hence, in these specific cases and also in other isolated cases in the world, what current discourse calls “indigenous” really represents a snapshot in history – these were the peoples inhabiting the lands when “white” colonizers arrived. While “indigenous peoples” clearly deserves a comprehensive discussion on the controversies surrounding the term, providing one here is beyond the scope of this research.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Some Key Definitions***

Before I proceed any further, I wish to clarify a few terms and conceptual frameworks which are relevant to the indigenous movement discourse:

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<sup>17</sup> For further reading on the international dynamics and indigenous peoples in general see: Anaya 2000; Minde 2008; Stamatopoulou 1994; Von Lewinski 2008. On the concept of “indigenous peoples” from the perspective of law, see especially Kingsburry 1998 and Wiessner 1999; also Anaya 2005; Barsh 1986; Eide 2007; Firestone, Lilley, and de Noronha 2005; Minde 2008; Sanders 1983, 1994, 1999; and Thornberry 2002. For anthropological sources on indigenous struggles for rights, see Niezen 2000, 2003; Stavenhagen 1986, 2002.

## *Indigenism*

“Indigenism” refers to the recent global movement of indigenous peoples at the international level working towards the recognition and respect of their basic rights. Niezen (2003: 4) defines indigenism as “the international movement that aspires to promote and protect the rights of the world’s first peoples.” The global phenomenon of indigenism, also referred to by scholars as a “transnational indigenous movement” or a “Fourth World movement”, has been taking shape throughout the world since the 1970s. It has further been described as “a social force that has unleashed a rising tide of political consciousness among aboriginal peoples locked into states they can never hope to control” (Young 1992: 235). Tilley (2002: 526) interprets the transnational indigenous peoples’ movement as “the global network of native peoples’ movements and representatives – and of sympathetic institution, non-governmental organizations and scholars – which, through the decades of international conferences, has formulated certain framing norms for indigenous politics now expressed in several international legal instruments.” Maiguashca (1994b: 364) characterizes the overall functioning of the movement as “an unstructured, decentralized network of local, national, regional, and international organization linked to each other, either directly or indirectly, by means of advanced communication technology.”

More recently, Niezen (2003) has argued that one of the distinguishing characteristics of indigenism is the extent to which the movement has become grounded in international networks and alliances, particularly since the late 1990s. In essence, Niezen reasons that unlike ‘pure’ ethnic group activists, indigenous peoples exhibit a

greater degree of global interaction – they share experiences, pursue collective strategies, and intensely strive to collaborate with other indigenous populations throughout the world – making it possible to build globally applicable analytical models regarding the different approaches to indigenous activism (an objective also of this dissertation).

Bowen (2000) argues that the current discussion of indigenous peoples takes place against the background of two other conceptual frameworks that emerged in the aftermath of World War II, namely human rights and collective rights. These conceptual frameworks merit brief clarification:

#### *Human rights framework and approach*

Initial discussions of human rights were focused on the individuals as human beings. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants of 1966 (on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights) emphasize a series of rights of the *individual* vis-à-vis the state. Among these standards are protection from genocide, arbitrary execution, torture, forced relocation, or assimilation; rights to freedom of expression, association and religion; and equal opportunities for education, health care, work and other basic needs.

In the context of indigenous activism, the *human rights framework and approach* entails the application of the basic human rights standards to the specific circumstances of, and demands from, indigenous populations (Rodríguez-Piñero 2005). More applicable to indigenous peoples' human rights standards are the principles of universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependence and inter-relatedness, non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of

law (UNSPFII 2005). As Kenrick and Lewis (2004) argue the indigenous peoples' rights approach makes a "claim to legitimacy and authority that is not about individual rights in a state context, but about community rights in relation to nation-states in an international context." Moreover, the authors assert that the phenomenon is best understood as a response to processes of severe discrimination and dispossession.

The human rights framework and approach has provided the premise on which recent international legal and policy developments (especially within the UN system) have advocated on the need for full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in matters that concern them in national and local governance (UNSPFII 2005).

### *Collective rights*

In contrast to classical Western rights thought, which is built upon the understanding of rights attached to an *individual* human being, indigenous peoples generally give a central role to group rights or *collective* rights. The group thus forms an integral part of the identity of its members. The collective element is prominent in indigenous claims. The collective rights include indigenous peoples' right to their land, territories and resources, to maintain their culture, to recognition of their distinct identities, to self-government and self-determination, and to be asked for their free, prior and informed consent in decisions that may affect them – refer to the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (I will elaborate on the specificities of these rights later in this chapter). As indicated in the 2008 *UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*: "such rights are considered the minimum standards for the protection of [indigenous



peoples'] survival as distinct peoples and are intended to address the challenges most indigenous peoples face around the world.”

The Charter of the UN is based on the notion of the rights of “peoples” as human collectives – “We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to...”. Yet, the collective rights explicitly recognized by international law are relatively few (Colchester 2002). “Peoples” enjoy the inherent rights to “peace”, “means of subsistence”, and “self-determination” (refer to the texts of the UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).<sup>18</sup>

#### *Indigenous peoples' rights movement discourse*

The *indigenous peoples' movement* is rooted in the recognition and the application of universal human rights to indigenous peoples – these are rights which have been already contained in international human rights treaties, but which have been denied to the indigenous peoples. Thus, the indigenous peoples' movement discourse centers largely around the issues of greater political autonomy, and self-determination for indigenous populations within the states of which they are part. The concept of rights was briefly outlined above. Self-determination means, in essence, that “every people has the right to be in control of its own destiny, and remedial measures are required when a people is denied this right” (Saugestad 2001: 49). For the indigenous peoples, the term *self-determination* relates to the right to “freely determine their political status and freely

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that while the UN remains a political power center where various important normative rules (such as those related to indigenous peoples) are elaborated, the means for implementation of these rules and, above all, the sanctions are very weak. Nation states are, after all, completely autonomous with regard to the implementation of international norms. As Passy (1999: 151) points out, most of the time, “sanctions are simply moral and never, or almost never, coercive.”

pursue their economic, social, and cultural development” inside the country in which they live; in essence, to freely chose and control their way of life (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 3). As Elsa Stamatopoulou, Chief of the Secretariat of the UNPFII discloses, “indigenous peoples want to be able to choose their mode of development. They want to be able to, if they wish, integrate partly to the mainstream development efforts, or partly keep their own development systems or simply, completely, pursue their own development without integrating” (cited in Sommer 2006).<sup>19</sup>

The movement has been largely spearheaded by two key international mechanisms specifically targeting indigenous peoples – the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations<sup>20</sup> (established in 1982) and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (inaugurated in 2002). It is through the creation and activities of these two institutions that local indigenous peoples came to be taken seriously by the international community. Moreover, various debates, meetings and resolutions have taken place within the United Nations system. Most importantly a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the newly created UN Human Rights Council (the premier international body to deal with human rights and successor of the Commission on Human Rights) in June 2006. In September 2007 the Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee as a comprehensive international standard on human rights, marking another major step

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<sup>19</sup> This last statement of Elsa Stamatopoulou is in relation to certain indigenous groups who chose to live in voluntary isolation and refuse all contact with the outside world (among these indigenous populations are some of the Huaorani groups like the Tagaeri and Taromenanes from Ecuador) (Bangert et al 2006).

<sup>20</sup> The Working Group on Indigenous Populations was replaced in December 2007 by an Expert Mechanism of the Human Rights Council.

forward towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.<sup>21</sup>

### *Statistics on Indigenous Peoples*

The contentious issue of defining “indigenous peoples” inevitably makes the question of how many indigenous peoples exist on the planet also contentious. Statistics abound but are not entirely consistent. Recent United Nations publications (for example UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008) commonly estimate that indigenous peoples constitute some 370 million individuals<sup>22</sup> (or a little over 5 percent of the world’s population), representing more than 5,000 distinct peoples living in more than 70 countries and occupying 20 percent of the world’s surface area.

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<sup>21</sup> In her statement to the UN General Assembly, the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, called the adoption of the Declaration “a historical milestone in [the United Nations] long history of developing and establishing international human rights standards” and a “major victory for indigenous peoples, who actively took part in crafting this Declaration. This day will be forever etched in our history and memories as a significant gain in our long struggle for rights as distinct peoples and cultures.” Ms. Tauli-Corpuz characterized the Declaration as “a strong Declaration which embodies the most important rights we and our ancestors have long fought for; our right of self-determination, our right to own and control our land, territories and resources, our right to free, prior and informed consent, among others,” and added: “It is a key instrument and tool for raising awareness on and monitoring progress of indigenous peoples’ situation the protection, respect and fulfillment of indigenous peoples’ rights. It will further en flesh and facilitate the operationalization of the human rights–based approach to development as it applies to Indigenous Peoples. It will be the guide for States, the UN System, Indigenous Peoples and civil society in making the theme of the Second Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples ‘Partnership for Act on and Dignity’ a reality” (Tauli-Corpuz 2007).

<sup>22</sup> The three hundred million figure is widely circulated and accepted in international legal literature on indigenous peoples, yet nowhere in the literature consulted, scholars seem to know how this estimate was made or where it was first published. According to World Watch Institute, there are globally four thousand to five thousand indigenous societies, in total comprising something between 190 and 635 million individuals. Niezen (2003) suggests that this tremendous range between the high and low population figures suggests that three hundred million is merely a convenient estimate and that “more precision is confounded by both the paucity and irregularities of national census information and the problem of defining ‘indigenous peoples’ with the kind of consistency that would lend itself to statistical analysis.” Thornberry (2002) also emphasizes that figures shift depending on who defines and who counts. Thornberry particularly warns of “statistical ethnocide” cases, that is the systematic under-enumeration of indigenous populations by many governments. “Ethnocide” is defined as the intentional eradication of culture; the cultural variant of genocide (see Grey 2005).

Indigenous peoples often tend to inhabit some of the most biodiversity-rich habitats of the world – much (by some estimates over 85 percent) of the planet's protected areas are either inhabited or claimed by small-scale traditional and indigenous cultural groups (Mulder and Coppolillo 2005). The Amazon River Basin for example is home to about 400 different indigenous groups – while this territory accounts for just 7 percent of the world's surface area, it harbors more than half of its biodiversity (IFAD 2007). Moreover, the majority of the world's remaining natural resources – minerals, freshwater, potential energy sources and more – are found within indigenous peoples' territories (Victoria Tauli-Corpuz 2007; statement made during a press conference at the 2007 Session of the UNPFII which I attended).

Indigenous peoples are mostly living in remote areas of the world where conditions are harsh, i.e. in extremely vulnerable ecosystems: the Arctic and tundra, tropical rainforests, the boreal forests, riverine and coastal zones, mountains and semi-arid rangelands (Alston 2001). In many instances, marginalized indigenous peoples live in the outskirts of big cities together with other excluded communities (Stephens et al 2006).

The relative shares of indigenous and non-indigenous populations vary significantly in each region of the world (See Table 2). According to IWGIA figures, the largest number of indigenous peoples (about 70%) is found in Asia with over 150 million, followed by Central and South America with over 40 million (about 20%).

**TABLE 2: Proportion and Distribution of Indigenous Populations.**

Country	Year	Total Population	Indigenous Population	% Indigenous*
Greenland	2007	57,000	51,300	90%
Bolivia		7,960,000	5,652,000	71%
Guatemala		10,801,000	7,129,000	66%
Peru		24,797,000	11,655,000	47%
Ecuador		12,175,000	5,235,000	43%
Nepal	2007	22,700,000	8,400,000	37%
Hawai'i	2000	1,200,000	240,000	20%
New Zealand	2001	3,580,140	526,280	15%
Mexico		95,831,000	13,416,000	14%
Malaysia	2007	28,600,000	3,432,000	12%
India	2001	1,028,050,000	84,300,000	8%
Chile		14,824,000	1,186,000	8%
Canada	2006	31,612,890	1,138,280	4%
Australia	2001	10,112,500	492,700	2%
Colombia		40,803,000	816,000	2%
Venezuela		23,242,000	465,000	2%
Norway	2006	4,600,000	43,000	1%
Argentina		36,123,000	361,000	1%
USA	2007	286,842,660	2,151,320	.75%
Brazil		165,851,000	332,000	.20%
Russia	2002	145,166,730	232,266	.16%

Note: \* Represents what percentage out of the total population of the country, indigenous peoples constitute. Data in this table are drawn from several sources and from different times. The majority of the information is taken from the 2006 Series on Indigenous Health published in *Lancet* 367 and the 2008 edition of IWGIA's publication *The Indigenous World*. The estimates provided for the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are for the period late 1990s - early 2000s. For the rest of countries the years of population estimates are given in a separate column. It should be noted that it is quite hard to provide precise population estimates since different countries often have different ways of defining and measuring indigeneity. As indicated earlier, in many countries there are many more ethnic groups that could qualify as "indigenous" but are not officially recognized by their respective governments as such. Moreover, even in the cases where indigenous peoples are recognized, data may be scarce for particular groups or particular countries.

In most countries, indigenous peoples are not members of the dominant, majority groups. They are, as Warren and Jackson (2002) call them, "dispersed microminorities with divergent pasts, social organizations, languages, and beliefs." In Argentina, Brazil, Russia, and the USA, for example less than 1% of the population is indigenous. Mexico and India make interesting cases. Although 14% of Mexico's population is indigenous,

the country still has the largest number of indigenous peoples within Latin America – more than 13 million. The same is true for India – while the indigenous peoples (or *scheduled tribes* as they are referred to in India) comprise only a little over 8% of the total population of the country, their estimated population is over 84 million. Moreover, India's indigenous population numbers more than the sum of all the indigenous populations listed in Table 2.

Indigenous peoples are not always in the minority. In some countries they do form a substantial proportion of the national population, arguably the majority. In the self-governing Danish territory of Greenland, around 90% of the population is Inuit. In the autonomous territory of Nunavut<sup>23</sup> – the largest and newest federal territory of Canada – Aboriginal Inuit make up 85% of the population (Stavenhagen 2005). In Bolivia, indigenous people make up more than 70% of the population. In Guatemala, the Mayas represent a little over a half of the total population. Still, in the cases where indigenous peoples represent the majority of the population, they are without real power or decisive influence.<sup>24</sup>

## Ongoing Common Challenges Indigenous Peoples Face

*"For far too long, the hopes and aspirations of indigenous peoples have been ignored; their lands have been taken; their cultures denigrated or directly attacked; their languages and customs suppressed; their wisdom and traditional knowledge overlooked; and their sustainable ways of developing natural*

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<sup>23</sup> Nunavut was officially separated from the Northwest Territories in April 1999. The territory of Nunavut were actually established several years earlier, in 1993, via the Nunavut Act and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act.

<sup>24</sup> It can be argued the Bolivia does make an exception. The Bolivian public has been rather sympathetic to the indigenous demands and thus indigenous presence has been steadily expanding in Bolivia's public and political realms. The country has had an indigenous president (Evo Morales) since 2006 and thus indigenous issues have been relatively high on the government's agenda.

*resources dismissed. Some have even faced the threat of extinction ... Indigenous peoples continue to suffer from prejudice and ill-will. In many cases they are trapped in the middle of conflict, conscripted into armed forces, faced with summary executions and relocated from their lands. They are subject to extreme poverty, disease, environmental destruction and sometimes permanent displacement. The answer to these grave threats must be to confront them without delay"* (former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan; at the opening session of the 2004 UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues).

Quite often scholars, human rights groups, and indigenous activist themselves, have been defining indigenous peoples in terms of the problems that have threatened and still threaten these populations. While they are from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, the world's indigenous peoples do share some common challenges – among them abject poverty, poor health, limited access to education, historical human rights violations, landlessness, and economic and social marginalization. The work of such organizations as Cultural Survival, Survival International, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and many local organizations have documented over the years the numerous hardships and injustices that indigenous peoples have endured. Table 3 provides some statistics of the serious threats indigenous communities from around the world have faced. In the following paragraphs, I provide a quick summary of those historical, yet in most regions still current, common inequities and challenges that are fundamental to indigenous cultures and can essentially be found in every indigenous group.<sup>25</sup> I have grouped them into six

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<sup>25</sup> While indigenous peoples have in general similar historical experiences and common ongoing problems, each region of the world is somewhat diverse as to issues pertaining to indigenous peoples and as such, generalizations must be treated with the utmost caution. Indigenous peoples really differ in their positions

larger categories – 1) depopulation, 2) dislocation from traditional indigenous territories, 3) environmental degradation, 4) modern social conflicts and violence, 5) indigenous poverty and standards of living, and 6) challenges to and repression of culture, cultural identity, and dignity.

**TABLE 3:** Snapshots from Around the World.

**Depopulation:** Military conquest, ecological destruction, forced labor and lethal diseases reduced indigenous populations in the Americas and Australia by as much as 95% (Snyder 2000).

**Diseases:** It is estimated that 87 Indian groups in Brazil alone become extinct in the 20th century as a consequence of epidemic diseases (ICHI 1987). In Bolivia, the Guaraní, with a population of 153,483, show a prevalence of tuberculosis five to eight times that of the national average (Montenegro and Stephens 2006). In some regions for Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have diabetes prevalence rate as high as 26%, which is six-time higher than in the general population (Hanley 2007).

**Living Conditions:** In Rwanda Twa households, the prevalence of poor sanitation and lack of safe, potable water are respectively seven-times and two-times higher than for the national population (Ohenjo et al 2006). In Thailand, more than 40% of indigenous girls and women who migrate to cities work in the sex trade; the majority of females trafficked across state borders in south-east Asia come from indigenous communities (IFAD 2007).

**Reproductive Health:** For ethnic minorities in Viet Nam (the Vietnamese government recognizes the term “ethnic minority” rather than the term “indigenous peoples” as used internationally), more than 60% of childbirths take place without prenatal care compared to 30% for the Kinh population, Viet Nam’s ethnic majority. Over 40% of ethnic minority women are reported to deliver without trained assistance (WHO 2003).

**Suicide:** Among young Inuit in Canada, suicide rates are among the highest in the world, at eleven-times the national average (Health Canada 2003).

**Infant and Maternal Mortality:** Average infant mortality among indigenous children in Panama is over three-times higher than that of the overall population (60-85 deaths per 1,000 live births versus the national average of 17.6) (PAHO 2003). Infant mortality in Ecuador is as high as 100 per 1,000 infants for the indigenous communities compared with a national average of 30 per 1,000; maternal mortality is 74.3 per 100,000 people nationally, whereas in remote indigenous communities it is 250 per 100,000 (Montenegro and Stephens 2006).

with respect to many issues and to claim otherwise would deny them their different cultures, histories, and positions in the world. As Postero and Zamosc (2004) argue, indigenous movements and the struggles in which they are involved are “highly specific to the countries and regions in which they act.” They reflect the interactions of numerous factors, among them: “the demography of the countries or regions in which they act; the history of relations with the state and the assimilation policies the state has implemented; the place indigenousness plays in the imaginary of the nation; and the political system and traditions of the country.”



## *2) Dislocation from Traditional Indigenous Territories*

Scholars agree that all too often, indigenous communities have been forcibly displaced and dislocated from their ancestral lands in the name of development (Blaser et al 2004; Rodríguez-Piñero 2005; Wilmer 1993). Studies by the World Bank Group have also recognized that indigenous peoples “have often been on the losing end of the development process” (Bhatnagar et al 1996). Wilmer (1993) argues that indigenous peoples’ cultural, social, political, economic, and physical integrity has been directly attacked in the name of development. Mainstream development is regarded as one of the root causes of indigenous peoples’ problems (UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008). The increased exploitation of oil and gas or other natural resources, the ecologically unwise construction of dams, the creation of protected areas, natural parks and buffer zones, the introduction of vast commercial plantations, roads or other national development priorities, have all posed significant threats to indigenous people’s lands. The process of progressive and accelerated land loss has and still is a very common and widespread reality for indigenous peoples. Lands that have been traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples are often being taken over for logging operations, mining (e.g. coal, gold, diamonds), oil extraction, international large scale tourism (e.g. reservations), agricultural production (e.g. cattle ranches, palm oil plantation), and infrastructure works (see Wilmer 1993). Table 4 presents some well-known examples of the extent of multinational involvement in projects negatively affecting indigenous peoples and the issues at the center of those conflicts.

**TABLE 4:** Multinational Corporations and Indigenous Peoples.

Source: Wilmer 1993.

<b>Indigenous Peoples / Location</b>	<b>Corporation</b>	<b>Issues / Conflicts</b>
Navajo and Hopi / USA	Pittsburg and Midway Amcoal, Carbon Coal, Burnham	Loss of sacred lands, relocation, legitimacy of US- backed tribal leadership
Yanomami / Brazil	Swift-Armour, Bordon, Anglo, Jari Forestry, Ranching Liquigas, Mitsui	Encroachment by settlers, random private violence, disease
West Papuans, Irian Jaya / Indonesia	Agip, Chevron, Conoco, Shell, Texaco, Petroma Trend	Transmigration and forced resettlement
Boruca, Cabagra, Rey Curré, Salitre, Térraba and Ujarrás Indians / Costa Rica	Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA)	Flooding indigenous homelands
Aboriginals / Australia	Rio Tinto Zinc	Mining, resource rights, forced resettlement
Guajiros / Colombi	Exxon	Environmental impact, land rights

Such development projects have inevitably led to the progressive destruction of indigenous peoples' traditional means of subsistence, further impoverishment, decrease in their living standards in the future, and also the gradual destruction of their lifestyle and culture (Stavenhagen 2007). The lost of control over traditional lands, territories and natural resources has indeed been identified as one of the root causes of poverty and marginalization for indigenous peoples (UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008). According to Erica-Irene Daes, UN Special Rapporteur in 2001, "The gradual deterioration of indigenous societies can be traced to the non-recognition of the profound relation that indigenous peoples have to their lands, territories and resources (Daes 2001).

Development and natural resource exploitation projects have often been designed with

either inadequate prior consultation or without any form of consultation with indigenous peoples at all.

In his 2007 annual report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, once again indicated the substantial number of reports and complaints he has received from indigenous communities whose resources have been appropriated and are being utilized by powerful economic consortia, with neither their prior consent nor their participation, and without the communities securing any of the benefit of that activity. According to the Special Rapporteur this is currently one of the most controversial issues involving indigenous peoples, the state, and private enterprises, and also the international financial institutions.

### *3) Environmental Degradation*

Over the last few decades substantial environmental destruction and degradation has taken place on indigenous territories. Plant and animal species have become extinct or endangered. Unique ecosystems have been destroyed in the search for natural resources, for example by the phosphate mines of Nauru, Banaba, and Makatea Islands (South Pacific), and the copper and gold mines of Ok Tedi and Panguna (Papua New Guinea), Freeport (Indonesia), and Vatukoula (Fiji) (Dodson 2008). Streams, rivers, and lakes have been heavily polluted. The Gold-mining in San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipakapa in Guatemala, the nickel extraction in the Goro and Prony deposits in New Caledonia, the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, the gas pipeline in Camisea in the Peruvian Amazon, the copper mining activities in Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea, to name a few,

have all had devastating effects on the biological systems and the indigenous peoples in those regions. For instance, the increased sedimentation from erosion of waste rock and the disposal of tailings directly into the Ok Tedi River choked the river bed causing flooding and vegetation die-back. Fish numbers have been dramatically reduced, and many claim that the Ok Tedi River system downstream of the mine is “biologically dead.” The fish, forests, and plains of this river system sustained more than 40,000 indigenous peoples (Rosenbaum 1993). All these development practices, imposed largely from outside, have directly impacted indigenous societies’ ability to subsist in a traditional fashion.

The activities of the extractive industries and the implementation of unsustainable cash crops policies on indigenous territories have not only led to local environmental degradation; they have also contributed to climate change and widespread transboundary pollution (Gupta 2005). Various environmental contaminations have posed serious threats to the health of indigenous peoples. Dumping toxic or radioactive waste from industrial or military operations on indigenous territories has been the cause of many abortions and cases of cancer and other diseases among indigenous women (Dodson 2008). For example, through the mining of tungsten, titanium, gold, uranium, bauxite, and tin in Brazil, the Yanomami have been exposed to mercury in the rivers and have become more susceptible to malaria<sup>26</sup> (Brysk 1996). Between 1991 and 1995, 25 of the Yanomami in Venezuela died from malaria that had been brought to the area by artisanal

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<sup>26</sup> For isolated indigenous peoples, like the Yanomami, malaria brought by the miners is a “new” disease. Hence, the population is highly susceptible to it. Moreover, miners tend to leave stagnant ponds of water in abandoned mining spots, providing an ideal environment for mosquitoes to breed (Sweeting and Clark 2000).

miners (Sweeting and Clark 2000). In 2006, in the district of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, a ship called the Probo Koala (chartered to the Dutch company Trafigura) offloaded up to 500 tons of toxic waste for disposal. The toxic waste, which was composed of an alkaline mix of water, gasoline, and caustic soda, allegedly gave off many poisonous chemicals, including hydrogen sulphide. According to official statistics from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, a total of 16 persons died and up to 100,000 sought medical treatment due to exposure to these wastes (Ibeanu 2008).

#### *4) Modern Social Conflicts and Violence*

Another serious situation in a significant number of indigenous communities is the presence of different forms and types of conflict – inter-tribal conflicts, resources wars, transmigration, state aggression and militarization, local armed groups, and leadership battles, among others. Social and political violence is still a reality for many indigenous communities, with repercussions of deaths in some countries or exile and subsequent mental health difficulties (Montenegro and Stephens 2006). Internal armed conflicts have had a serious impact on indigenous communities in Central America, Southeast Asia, central Africa, and elsewhere.

Many indigenous and civil society organizations, particularly those from Central and South America, have also had to endure the tendency of some governments to criminalize social protest and the repression practiced by the security forces (police, army and sometimes even paramilitary groups) (see Stavenhagen 2007). The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples has documented various cases that include charges of extrajudicial executions,

forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary detentions, intimidations and harassment of indigenous peoples.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Smith (1999) points out that many of the leaders of indigenous protest events were targeted by the police and other surveillance authorities as the “enemies within.” Many of these acts, Stavenhagen (2007) asserts, have taken place in connection with the indigenous communities’ and organizations’ defense of their lands, natural resources, and ancestral territories. The murder of indigenous peoples who have resisted the destruction and takeover of their lands has been a frequent occurrence in the Amazonia. However, the perpetrators of these crimes have been rarely brought to justice (People’s Health Movement et al 2005).

#### *5) Indigenous Poverty and Standards of Living*

It is widely recognized that indigenous peoples are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups around the world (Xanthaki 2007). In many regions, indigenous peoples have low socioeconomic status. They are very often found among the poorest strata in society.<sup>28</sup> Indigenous populations tend to live in areas with harsh climates; isolated upland regions; marginal mountain, forest, coastal, or desert environments with poor soils and water resources; remote places lacking good roads, schools and health care. Even in wealthier countries, most indigenous peoples live in worse socioeconomic conditions than their non-indigenous counterparts. In a publication from 1987, the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICHI) noted major

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<sup>27</sup> For example, some of the indigenous peoples from Latin America who attended international meetings of indigenous peoples (e.g. the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is held in Port Alberni, British Canada) faced imprisonment and, in at least one case, torture after they returned to Latin America (Sanders 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Studies have indicated that indigenous peoples represent 15 percent of the world’s poorest people (UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008).

differences in unemployment rates for the indigenous versus non-indigenous peoples.

The report documented that in Africa, Asia and Latin America, indigenous peoples are the poorest of the poor.

The health problems facing indigenous peoples also tend to be similar. Most of studies I reviewed showed major inequalities in the health of indigenous versus non-indigenous peoples (Anderson et al 2006; Montenegro and Stephens 2006; Ohenjo et al 2006; Stephens et al 2006; WHO 2003, 1999). These studies documented high levels of infant and maternal mortality, consistently lower life expectancies, lower than average nutritional levels, lack of public services and access to social welfare institutions, inadequate housing and other indicators associates with the idea of human development.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, indigenous peoples are often more prone than non-indigenous peoples to diseases such as tuberculosis, diabetes, heart disease and malaria. Indigenous peoples also do not have easy access to basic western health care when needed – access being constrained by financial, geographic, and/or cultural barriers. Indigenous communities are also disproportionately affected by suicides – for example, the Innu of Labrador have the highest suicide rate in the world (ICHI 1987). Alcohol and drug related problems are also common for indigenous communities. For example in 2002, in an indigenous community in Venezuela, investigators reported serious rates of alcohol use – 86.5% of all men and 7.5 of all women were reported to be heavy alcohol users (Montenegro and Stephens 2006).

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<sup>29</sup> See the UN Special Rapporteur's reports to the UN Council of Human Rights, UN Docs E/CN.4/2003/90 and E/CN.4/2004/80. Also see the 2006 Series on Indigenous Health published in *Lancet* 367.

#### *6) Challenges to and Repression of Culture, Cultural Identity, and Dignity*

For decades, indigenous peoples throughout the world have been pressured to assimilate into a dominant culture, to change their language, religion, customs and traditions, and to endure compulsory boarding-school education which promote Western knowledge systems at the expense of indigenous ones. For example, in Canada the 1927 Indian Act denied the indigenous peoples of Canada from speaking their native languages, or practicing their traditional religions. Moreover, indigenous children attending residential schools were often severely punished for uttering even a single word of their native language. The traditional role of the Indian elders as teachers of the Indian way of life was progressively taken over by white school teachers who taught the children to be ashamed of their race and their heritage (Manguashca 1994b). Such cultural repressions in turn have led to their loss of collective memory and the disappearance of many indigenous rituals and cultural practices.

Scholars have indicated that languages provide a good index of the current global threat to indigenous peoples, as distinct cultures disappear with their languages (Maffi 2001; Mauro and Hardison 2000). Language extinction is a threat acutely felt by indigenous population and a matter of great urgency to them. More than 4,000 of the world's remaining 6,000 languages are spoken by indigenous peoples. Only about 60 of these languages have more than half a million speakers, and hundreds of languages lack adolescent speakers (WHO 1999). Many of these languages are under threat of extinction (Gordon 2005; Maffi 1998; Krauss 1992). Recent estimate suggest that around 90 percent of these 6,000 languages, and the cultures expressed by them, may have



become extinct or face extinction in the next 100 years (Stamatopoulou 2007). Mauro and Hardison (2000: 1264) thus argue that this prediction makes culture loss “of equal or greater magnitude to the ongoing mass extinction of species.” Half of all languages occur in only eight countries: Papua New Guinea (823), Indonesia (731), Nigeria (515), Mexico (295), Cameroon (286), Australia (268), and Brazil (234) (Gordon 2005). According to UNESCO, approximately 600 languages have disappeared in the last century and they continue to disappear at a rate of one language every two weeks. Up to 90 percent of the world’s languages are likely to disappear before the end of this century if current trends are allowed to continue. In Australia alone, some 500 languages have been lost since the arrival of Europeans (Martinez-Herrera 2002). The loss of indigenous languages signifies not only the loss of traditional knowledge but also the loss of cultural diversity, undermining the identity and spirituality of the community and the individual. Moreover, scholars from various disciplines (anthropology, cultural ecology, ethnobiology, linguistics) have identified that biological, linguistic and cultural diversity are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, so when an indigenous language is lost, so is traditional knowledge on how to maintain the world’s biological diversity and address environmental challenges such as climate change (Davis 2002; Maffi 2001).

## Indigenous Peoples in International Law

### ***Rights Indigenous Peoples Seek / The Ideas of the Indigenous Rights Movement / Essential Characteristics of Indigenous Mobilizing***

At the international arena, indigenous struggles have been fought in the language of “human rights” (i.e. under the UN institutions and principles for human rights), since

this has become the dominant legal frame from which to exert influence over nation-states (Anaya 1997). Contemporary aspirations of indigenous peoples have typically included claims for the return of traditional lands, the preservation of culture, and the right as well as the means, to exercise effective self-government. The rights indigenous peoples have long struggled for are now expressed in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* which was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007. The Declaration sets out the rights that countries should aspire to recognize, guarantee, and implement. The text recognizes a wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to indigenous peoples, among them: the right to self-determination, an inalienable collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources, rights in terms of maintaining and developing their own political, religious, cultural and educational institutions, and protection of their cultural and intellectual property. These are the key aspirations of indigenous peoples on which I will focus in the following paragraphs, since they are the claims on which the transnational indigenous rights movement itself has chosen to focus on.<sup>30</sup> While the international indigenous movement is indeed characterized with a shared language, discourse, and common aspirations across indigenous groups, we should not forget, as Smith (1999: 110) reminds us, that this movement also contains many other features

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<sup>30</sup> Different scholars group common indigenous rights differently. For example, Hodgson (2002) classifies indigenous rights into three groups: protection of and control over their property and possessions (such as territories, resources, material culture, genetic material, and sacred sites), practices (cultural performances, arts, and literature), and knowledge (cultural, linguistic, environmental, medical, and agricultural). Passy (1999) groups indigenous demand along the following four main lines: respect of their rights (political, economic, social and cultural rights), territorial integrity (demarcation and control of their land), the preservation of their culture (the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs, as well as the protection of their cultural, intellectual and scientific property) and physical integrity (protection against genocide or other actions of violence). According to Passy, these four points are shared by every indigenous population coming from all the continents.

“which reflect both a huge diversity of interests and objectives, of approaches and ways of working.” The movement is a complex one and it will likely incorporate many new dimensions and reformulations as more and more indigenous groups join the international stage. However, a degree of consensus, i.e. having a unified common voice, will continue to be instrumental for indigenous peoples across the world if they wish to continue bargaining with national states regarding their rights.

*Recognition of Indigenous Self-Determination, Self-Government, Autonomy, and Self-Management*

In the book *Indigenous Peoples: Self-determination, Knowledge, Indigeneity* editor Henry Minde illustrates the interplay between the most important concerns of the indigenous rights discourse:

*“Human rights, social justice and self-determination are all key issues in the global indigenous discourse. Notably, they are not separate but overlapping issues; indeed, they are all elements of the same question. Human rights are basically about social justice; without rights there is no justice. Social justice is a human right that is partially realized through self-determination. To what extent human rights and social justice for indigenous peoples are secured in particular situations is largely determined by the degree to which they enjoy self-determination. Thus, it makes sense to discuss these concepts as elements of the same whole.*

Further on Minde argues:

*Human rights, social justice, and self-determination not only relate to high ideals and principles that still remain to be implemented globally; they also pertain to tangible matters on the ground, for instance to land and resources rights, income distribution and political participation. Thus, human rights, social justice, and self-determination are also micro-issues. They are about the development of local communities, access to and control of natural resources, sustainable livelihoods and food security, and social cohesion and cultural identity. These are all matters of great relevance to indigenous peoples who across the globe often find themselves in a situation where they are discriminated against, impoverished, disempowered and excluded from the political processes that affect their lives” (Minde 2008: 11-12).*

In addition to basic human rights and fundamental freedoms – rights prescribed to all peoples – indigenous peoples demand political, economic, and social self-determination and collective rights, with an emphasis on cultural distinctiveness. Indigenous claims for self-determination<sup>31</sup> are based on Article 1 of both International Covenants, a binding provision for most states, which proclaims:

*“All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”*

Indigenous peoples want the governments of the countries in which they live to respect their ability to determine for themselves their own destinies. They seek to preserve or regain the right to local or regional self-government and the right to political representation as indigenous peoples. Niezen (2003) indicates that indigenous peoples wish to participate in their government institutions, and to have the institutions most directly involved in their communities accurately reflect *their* needs and *their* identities.

The right of self-determination has been the basis of the transnational indigenous movement and as Xanthaki (2007) points out, there is no other more important claim for the survival and development of indigenous peoples than the right to self-determination. At the same time, Xanthaki admits that it is unfortunate that such a central claim to the indigenous movement is such a contested right in international law, primarily because it has been associated with the right to form one's own state.

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<sup>31</sup> Introduced by President Woodrow Wilson, self-determination became a key issue during the Versailles treaty negotiations in the aftermath of World War I. Self-determination is not mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Robbins and Stamatopoulou 2004 argue that the reason behind this is the fact that many of the drafters of the 1948 document had been colonial powers, and thus were not eager to recognize such a right. The right to self-determination is first recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966; it is the common Article 1 of both these instruments. The right to self-determination is also prescribed to “all peoples” in the Charter of the United Nation.

Most international legal experts and scholars agree that for indigenous peoples “self-determination” is understood as the right to autonomy and self-government in matters relating to indigenous peoples’ internal and local affairs – for example, the right to use their indigenous language in courts or local administration, the extent of local or regional autonomy, the guaranteeing of political representation for indigenous peoples, the protection of indigenous homelands from economic development or settlement (Grey 2005; Niezen 2003; Thornberry 2002). This does not mean, as is sometimes misrepresented, that indigenous peoples aspire to establish independent states. It means that indigenous peoples be given the authority to govern their own affairs *within* the national legal and political system; *within* existing state boundaries.

Nuttall (1998), for example, argues that for indigenous peoples, self-determination is the “right to live a particular way of life, to practice a specific culture and religion, to use their own languages, the ability to determine the course of future development and to be involved in the processes of policy making.” Nuttall further states that while self-determination does not in itself mean that indigenous peoples have effective control over resources, self-government is about being able to practice autonomy.

While the concept of “self-determination” does serve the idea of autonomy, it shows a “distinctively *inward* orientation” (Grey 2005). “Indigenous groups, for the most part, seek some form of political and spiritual insulation from state encroachment (as well as control of certain pragmatic resources [for example right to use traditional hunting or fishing grounds, and the right to control indigenous education]), but do not

harbor separatist ambitions” (Grey 2005: 21). Anaya (2004) also points out that while indigenous peoples generally have invoked “a right to self-determination” as an expression of their desire to continue as distinct communities free from oppression, in virtually all instances they have been denied aspirations to independent statehood (this view has also been expressed by Niezen 2003; 2000; Thornberry 2002; von Lewinski 2008; and Xanthaki 2007).<sup>32</sup> The Founding Chairperson and Special Rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Ms. Erica-Irene Daes, also notes that “Indigenous peoples ... have overwhelmingly expressed their preference for constitutional reform within existing states as opposed to secession” (1993: 7). She further adds that “It is not realistic to fear indigenous peoples’ exercise of the right to self-determination. It is far more realistic to fear that the denial of indigenous peoples’ rights to self-determination will leave the most marginalized and excluded of all the world’s peoples without a legal, peaceful weapon to press for genuine democracy in the States in which they live” (1993: 7).

#### *Recognition and Respect of Indigenous Land Rights, Territories, and Natural Resources*

Another major goal of indigenous peoples around the world is securing their collective/communal right to demarcation, ownership, development, control and use of their traditional lands. “Since time immemorial” is the phrase used by indigenous peoples all over the world to refer to their continued occupancy of the lands from which they originate. Indigenous peoples want to enjoy their rights to the lands, territories, and

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<sup>32</sup> Niezen (2000) in effect argues that the consistent reluctance of indigenous peoples, at least up to the present, to invoke secession and independent statehood as desired political goal, is what distinguishes indigenism from ethnic nationalism.

natural resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used and that essentially define the cultural and social space needed for the physical and also cultural survival of the group. As indigenous peoples have explained:

*“The land is the basis for the creation stories, for religion, spirituality, art and culture. It is also the basis for relationship between people and with earlier and future generations. The loss of land, or damage to land, can cause immense hardship to indigenous peoples”* (ATSIC 1997).

*“Next to shooting indigenous peoples, the surest way to kill us [indigenous peoples] is to separate us from our part of the Earth”* (Vice President of the WCIP; cited by Burger (1987: 14).

Land rights often have ramifications for the physical survival of the group.

Xanthaki (2007) explains that since indigenous communities are amongst the poorest in the world, control over their lands can alleviate many of the financial problems they face and, consequently, contribute to the elimination of social problems. Thus, when lands and resources have been taken, confiscated, occupied, used, or damaged without their free, prior, and informed consent, indigenous communities wish to be entitled to equitable reparation, preferably in the form of lands of equal quality and value.

Indigenous peoples want development policy planners to acknowledge that they own or have rights to their lands and resources, and that they have the right to make free and informed decisions about what happens to their lands.

### *Right to Consultation and Meaningful Participation*

Indigenous peoples aspire for the right to participate in all stages of development, from design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to benefit-sharing. Thus, they wish to be considered as both contributors to and beneficiaries of their countries' development. Indigenous peoples seek to be actively involved in the decision-making

process when it comes to forms of their education, health care, economic development, and other services. They often talk about this in terms of the right to give their “free, prior and informed consent” before the carrying out of any legal or administrative measure that might directly or indirectly affect them, thus ensuring that the policies in question are compatible with their cultures and are not imposed upon them.

### *Respect of Indigenous Cultural Heritage Rights and Culturally Appropriate Development*

Past efforts to improve the situation of indigenous peoples were often based on the notion that in order to benefit from development, indigenous peoples needed to sacrifice their culture and identity and become integrated or assimilated into the nation's economy and society. Unfortunately, recent years have also witnessed the further development of abusive cultural practices. Having to endure extensive discrimination and historical marginalization, indigenous peoples aspire more than ever to maintain, develop and pass on to their children their distinct cultural identity and knowledge – this includes their histories and mythologies; their spiritual practices, belief and knowledge systems; their indigenous languages (including the use of mother tongue in education and public communications); their traditions and religions; their modes of internal governance; and all else that makes them who they are.

A more recent and especially interesting demand is the struggle for indigenous intellectual property rights<sup>33</sup>, which are often seen as collectively owned. Property rights

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<sup>33</sup> Intellectual property rights refers to property rights in creations of the mind, such as inventions, industrial designs, literary and artistic works, symbols, and names and images. The notion “intellectual property” is defined in the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), 1967 to include rights related to: “literary, artistic and scientific works; performances of performing artists, sound recordings, and broadcasts; inventions in all fields of human endeavor; scientific discoveries; industrial



are not limited to tangible objects, but can be extended to intangibles. Examples of indigenous intellectual property rights include: expertise in botanical pharmaceuticals, indigenous dance forms, sacred ceremonies and ritual knowledge, and use of indigenous cultural objects. Industries have long exploited indigenous knowledge and resources without asking for consent and without sharing the benefits of such exploitation with the indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples seek a fair share of the benefits generated through the utilization of their traditional knowledge in relation to foods and medicinal plants and traditional cultural expressions, but also wish that their living heritage is treated with due respect. Lewinski (2008) argues that such respect may be expressed in the following ways: asking for informed consent prior to using genetic resources, cultural knowledge, folklore, and indigenous names or sacred designations; refraining from non-customary or offending uses thereof; refraining from the use of sacred-secret knowledge; indicating the origin of the used indigenous resources and knowledge; and refraining from misleading consumers about the authenticity of indigenous knowledge and from interfering with the continued development of their traditions (for more detailed analysis on intellectual property issues around genetic resources, cultural knowledge and folklore, refer to von Lewinski 2008).

### ***The Strong Ecological Thread in Indigenous Peoples' Rhetoric***

*"Our teachings tell us that the Creator placed us here as caretakers of the land, the animals, all living things; that we are placed here with that responsibility"*  
(Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone, USA).

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designs; trademarks, service marks, and commercial names and designations; protection against unfair competitions; and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields" (WIPO 2001: 24).

Until the 1980s, environmental advocacy focused on protecting solely plant and animal species. The presence of people (including indigenous and local inhabitants) tended to be seen as an obstacle to environmental preservation (Conklin and Graham 1995). Following developments such as the 1987 seminal report *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987), the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit), and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, environmental philosophy shifted to emphasize sustainable development rather than strict preservation. Concepts such as *sustainable development* and *community-based conservation* steadily gained importance, and so the search for models for sustainable uses of natural resources created an ecological rationale for defending indigenous land rights (Conklin and Graham 1995). Indigenous peoples began to be recognized for the important role they have and continue to play in the management of biodiversity (Mauro and Hardison 2000). They became eligible for the role of environmental stewards (de la Cadena and Starn 2007). Six months after the Earth Summit in Rio, the UN Secretary-General inaugurated the International Year of the World's Indigenous People by calling on all governments to "listen to, and work with indigenous peoples" (Barsh 1994). As Nuttall (2000) emphasizes, "the application of indigenous environmental knowledge in development projects, environmental management and environmental impact assessment both enhances the likelihood of success and acknowledges that indigenous peoples are environmental experts who possess and have access to information unavailable or denied to scientists." Environmentalists, managers, and policy-makers turned to the value of indigenous knowledge, and environmental organizations began to ally themselves with

indigenous causes (Anaya 2004). Moreover, conservationists have realized that indigenous communities' goals such as territorial sovereignty, livelihood improvement, and protection from predatory interests of outsiders often line up with conservationists' concerns about deforestation, global markets in threatened species, and regional migration (Mulder and Coppolillo 2005). It should be noted that not all indigenous peoples have wanted to be associated with being environmental stewards, and some have actively fought environmentalism (de la Cadena and Starn 2007).

Substantial literature (both popular and scholarly) now exists on the understanding that indigenous lifestyles and activities are much less harmful than other practices and that native communities do in fact possess many characteristics that make them to be identified as environmental conservationists, custodians, guardians and stewards of biodiversity (see Bengert et al 2006; King 2003; Nuttall 2000; Redman 1999). Scholars tend to agree that indigenous peoples have a special spiritual relation to the land which is linked both to their physical and to their cultural survival. For example, Redman (1999) emphasizes that the dominant theme in indigenous societies is *mutuality* - – “existing under a moral order that brings together humans, nature, and sometimes even the gods into one family.”

This special relationship with the land has been confirmed by the UN Human Rights Committee (Human Rights Committee 1994), the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues (Martínez-Cobo 1986), and ILO Convention No. 169. As illustrated by the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment:

*“Indigenous peoples have a special relationship with the land and the environment in which they live. In nearly all indigenous cultures, the land is*

*revered; "Mother Earth" is the core of their culture. The land is the home of the ancestors, the provider of everyday material needs, and the future held in trust for coming generations. According to the indigenous view, land should not be torn open and exploited – this is a violation of the Earth – nor can it be bought, sold or bartered. Furthermore, indigenous peoples have, over a long period of time, developed successful systems of land use and resource management. These systems, including nomadic pastoralism, shifting cultivation, various forms of agro-forestry, terrace agriculture, hunting, herding and fishing, were for a long time considered inefficient, unproductive and primitive. However, as world opinion grows more conscious of the environment and particularly of the damage being done to fragile habitats, there has been a corresponding interest in indigenous land-use practices. The notion of sustainability is the essence of both indigenous economies and their cultures” (Commission on Human Rights 1991).*

The status and the rights of indigenous peoples have ranked high on the agenda of international environmental policy bodies. The overlap of indigenous rights and environmental agendas has been expressed in various international environmental laws: Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration recognizes that “indigenous peoples ... have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices.” Preambular Paragraph 12 of the Convention on Biological Diversity acknowledges the “close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyle on biological resources” and the contribution that traditional knowledge can make to both the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity. Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity further envisages three obligations on the side of member states: to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities; to promote the larger application of traditional knowledge with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices (the right holders); to encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovation and practices.

Whether claimed by indigenous peoples themselves, or ascribed to them by others, a relationship of particular intimacy with the natural environment is typical of many expressions of indigenous identity. This relationship is characterized by coexistence and harmony – nonmaterialist and spiritual relation to the land, consensual decision-making, a holistic environmentalist perspective, and a reestablishment of harmony in the social and physical world. Escárcega (2003: 282) argues:

*“coupling the ideas of ‘indigenous,’ ‘nature,’ and ‘traditional’ is one of the fundamental axes through which indigenous peoples can validate their uniqueness and recognition. Almost all indigenous groups have used these discourses about their relationship to nature and the value of traditional lifestyles during their interventions at international arena. Evidence of this can be seen in the ample participation of indigenous peoples in international meetings and conferences about the environment, as well as in their statements in the UN fora.”*

Anderson and Nuttall (2004) speak of indigenous peoples’ special ways of knowing the world, a type of “personal cultivation employing memory, listening, watching and participating.” Von Lewinski (2008) provides the following conclusion with which I would like to end this discussion: In the human rights context, the discourse focuses on securing the status of indigenous peoples and maintaining their lifestyle, culture, and social order within states and societies, including the right to land and resources. In the environmental policy context, on the other hand, the maintenance of traditional lifestyles and their wider application is sought because they are considered to represent sustainable and environmentally sound uses of land and nature.

## Conclusions

*“What are the lessons to be learned from indigenous peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? ... the main story is how indigenous peoples are connected to the land, how indigenous peoples are living in cultures that are profoundly non-capitalist, and*

*how their ongoing existence bears witness that even in this hard-bitten age of real-politik and globalization, other ways of being, other ways of living in the world are possible” (Lee 2006: 472).*

To sum up so far: Globally there is an increasing awareness for the need to secure the rights of indigenous peoples. Yet, many issues are still unresolved, especially the difficult questions of land rights and compensation for land lost. Across-the-board discrimination and marginalization, particularly involving women and children, is a persistent problem (Stavenhagen 2002). Even in the democratic and affluent nations, indigenous peoples are found among the poorest sections of society, and experiencing a variety of environmental, social, cultural, and economic problems. Debates continue over questions of a definition of “indigenous peoples” and the term remains highly contentious in international discourse and in many national negotiations. As scholars have indicated, the concept is “inconvenient, diffuse and difficult to handle” (Saugestad 2001).

Now that I have provided the framework within which indigenous peoples’ discourse has emerged, I would like to move on to an examination of the indigenous rights movements across the world.

## CHAPTER IV: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS – A BRIEF COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ACROSS THE GLOBE

### Introduction

*“Indigenous peoples invested huge amounts of energy and belief in the notion that appeals to the center of power would work. Many indigenous groups developed or had in place already quite sophisticated ways of conducting encounters between themselves and the heads of state or high-ranking dignitaries. The protocols involved were enormously respectful of colonial officials, even those whose status and powers were low. The lack of respect and the ridicule which was often displayed to indigenous delegations by imperial and colonial powers has never been forgotten by those communities” (Smith 1999: 113).*

Indigenous peoples have long formed and participated in various collective actions to redress past wrongs and to protect and promote their present and future rights (Hodgson 2002). Indigenous issues have emerged as questions of international law and policy as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century when numerous regions of the world were faced with conquest and colonialization (see Anaya 2004 and Sanders 1983, 1980). Sanders (1983) traces indigenous organizing back to the visiting delegations of leaders from colonized peoples, such as the Maori and Canadian Indians who petitioned the King or Queen of England in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Appendix A). Sanders sees this as the first cases of indigenous organizing on the international level, for although these early attempts to solicit help from the colonial center were unsuccessful (indigenous delegates were told their grievances were a “domestic” matter and they should go home to their

local authorities), they signaled the indigenous peoples' recognition that extra-local assistance would best help them solve disputes with local colonial settlers. Scholars concur that indigenous questions re-emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and have been on the broad political agenda of the UN since around the 1960s. In contrast to the formally scattered and disenfranchised local movements, the recent (i.e. particularly post 1970s) indigenous mobilization has transformed into much more noticeable global phenomenon – hence the coining of the term “modern indigenous movement.”<sup>1</sup>

The modern international indigenous peoples' movement came into existence in the former British colonies, i.e. Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the United States (sometimes referred to as the “settler states”), in the Nordic countries, and in Latin America after World War II as part of the global struggle against racial and ethnic prejudice, women's liberation, colonization, student uprisings and the anti-war movements (Smith 1999).<sup>2</sup> Malezer (2005: 73) considers that, after the war, the world seemed to have become “more intolerant of class inequalities in societies and inequalities generated through racial and ethnic prejudice.” In addition to the decolonization of the empires of the West and the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, Thornberry (2002) accounts the development of the contemporary movement to the following processes: the Cold War with the mutual probing between East and West of internal human rights issues, the problems with the concept of development and its neglect of indigenous factors, the alliance (sometimes) with environmentalists, and the growth of international

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<sup>1</sup> For a description and analysis of the origins of the international indigenous rights movement, the politics of indigenism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the emergence of a transnational identity, see Niezen 2003.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the general circumstances, which altered the climate of international politics in the postwar era and which enabled the promotion of indigenous rights see for example Anaya 2004; Niezen 2000; Smith 1999; and Wilmer 1993.



human rights law including its sharp focus on racism. National indigenous organizations flourished through the 1960s in Australia, Canada, and the United States; Central and South America followed in the 1970s; and the international organizations of the indigenous peoples emerged largely in the 1970s (Thornberry 2002).<sup>3</sup> The creation of the World Council on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1975 marked the beginning of indigenous peoples' interaction at a global level – the initiative for the establishment of the WCIP came from Canada, the United States, and northern Scandinavia. In the 1970s, large groups of indigenous peoples' representatives began journeying to the UN in their quest for the basic recognition of their human rights. In the same period, a number of indigenous organizations did receive consultative status with the UN ECOSOC which allowed them to represent indigenous peoples at the global level and enter in consultations with the UN bodies (Malezer 2005). This, together with the systematic documentation of extensive discrimination that was reaching the UN at the time, allowed for the indigenous peoples movement to further accelerate in the 1980s and take an even clearer and ever more transnational shape (refer to Appendix A for a detailed chronology of events related to international indigenous activism).

Today the international indigenous peoples' movement builds around numerous networks and loose organizational structures that bring together groups from all over the world; groups as diverse as the !Kung San, the Saami, the Ainu, the Maori, the Touareg.

Certain indigenous groups have used the international structures more extensively than others. As Hodgson (2002) points out, indigenous activists and organizations have a

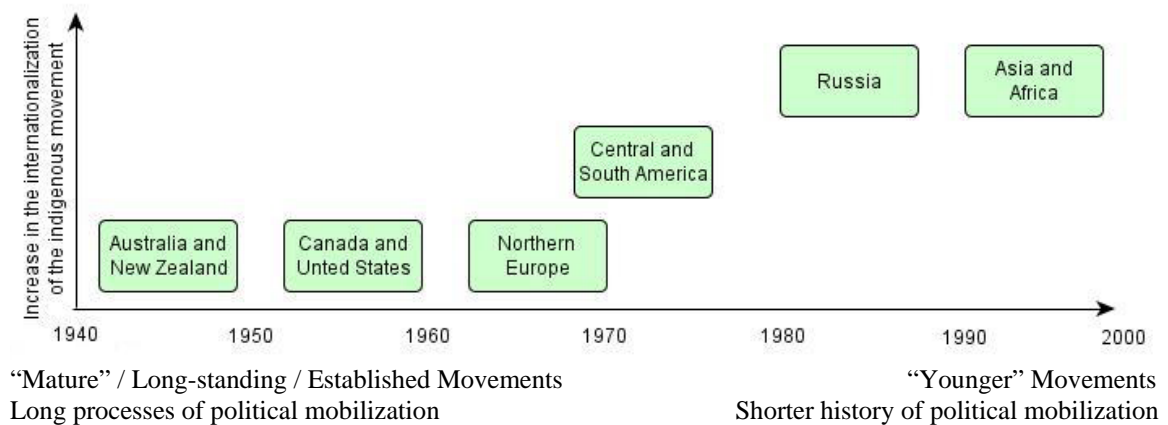
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<sup>3</sup> Muehlebach (2002) points out that the first international indigenous NGOs were formed as early as the late 1950s – e.g. the Saami Council.

much longer history in settler societies such as Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Their status as “first peoples” is generally uncontested in these regions. Mauro and Hardison (2000: 1264) argue that there is “a clear history of colonization, conquest, genocide, and ethnocide” within these countries. Lee (2006) emphasizes that since virtually all the non-aboriginal peoples of North America are post-1492 migrants it is possible (in theory) to draw sharp boundaries around the concept of who can be considered “indigenous”.<sup>4</sup> For similar reasons, Lee notes, Latin America has a long scholarly and political tradition of “indigenismo” (indigenism) and “lo indígena” (indigeneity). Hodgson (2002) argues that indigenous peoples in these areas of the world have been able to more clearly meet the criteria of territorial precedence, historical continuity, and cultural difference set forth in the various international legal definitions. By contrast, Hodgson states, in Africa “the contemporary lack of a dominant colonial population converges with long histories of conquest, assimilation, migration, and movement to make the criteria for deciding who is ‘indigenous’ far murkier.” As Lee (2006: 459) points out, “the black peoples of Africa, whether hunter-gatherers, herders, farmers, or city dwellers, can all claim great antiquity on the continent.” Moreover, Mauro and Hardison (2000) argue that in Africa and Asia, the histories often involve conquest or marginalization from within by other indigenous societies.

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<sup>4</sup> Fitting into the category of “indigenous” of course becomes more difficult for people of mixed ancestry. A large part of the population in Canada and in several Latin American countries is of mixed blood descent. In Canada, these people are referred to as *métis* and in Latin America, they are known as *mestizo*.



**FIGURE 2:** Growth of Indigenous Movements across the World (not comprehensive).

I constructed Figure 2 to graphically depict the progression of modern indigenous peoples' movements. In it, I have placed nation states on a continuum ranging from "mature" to "younger" in regards to the degree of maturation of their respective indigenous movements. Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the United States, and Northern Scandinavia are characterized with more "mature", long-standing indigenous movements. These countries have a long history of indigenous political mobilization. These earlier movements were also a lot more "local-" and grassroots- driven – i.e. because of the lack of global awareness to indigenous peoples' aspirations, indigenous peoples mobilizing in the early- to mid-1990s had to rely solely on local activism and support. Russia, together with Asia and Africa, stand on the other end of the spectrum – indigenous activism in these nation states has a much shorter history. Naturally, the "mature" indigenous movements are largely responsible for the development of an international agenda or platform of action, which in turn has greatly influenced indigenous mobilization within the latecomer nation states. With time, indigenous issues

have gained a more global perspective. Hence, the agenda of the “younger” movements is more and more influenced by the developments in indigenous legal norms on an international level. It should be noted that the increase in the internationalization of the indigenous movement is not the sole variable according to which nation states are arranged in Figure 2. The level of maturation of indigenous movements is also attributable to other crucial factors and processes, among them: the democratization of nation states, the roles played by national governments, and the prevalent geopolitical context. Human agency further constructs and transforms social structures, i.e. ordinary people with their perceptions, values, institutions, technologies and political interests have altered in various ways their cultural and political landscapes. In turn, all these variables interact in complex ways to produce the specificities of each national indigenous mobilization.

In the following paragraphs, I provide a brief historical analysis of the indigenous rights movements in different regions of the world. Doing so facilitates in the mapping of how indigenous movements develop over time. This in turn helps lay the foundation for the later detailed discussion and analysis of my proposed general theoretical model (see Chapter VII). This chapter also offers a comparative perspective which allows for the understanding of the diversity that exists among indigenous movements, their proponents, their demands, and their strategies. For each region, I follow a standard review format, focusing on four critical areas of investigation: First, under the heading *Indigenous Peoples at a Glance*, I identify the specific indigenous groups of the region and some demographic characteristics of the indigenous population(s). Second, under

*Leadership, Organization, and Strategies* I trace the key actors behind the national indigenous movements, their tactics for activism, the time in which national indigenous activism occurred, as well as any relevant specificities of the indigenous movement in the region. In the third area of comparison, *Motivational Dynamics: The Issues at Hand*, I distinguish the particular demands and goals indigenous peoples of that region have been fighting for. Finally, under the category *Outcomes*, I identify some of the major achievements as a result of the indigenous peoples' mobilization within the particular territory.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies recognize “seven indigenous socio-cultural regions”: 1) Africa, 2) Asia, 3) Central and South America and the Caribbean, 4) The Arctic, 5) Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, 6) North America, and 7) The Pacific. Scholarly literature on indigenous movements has not examined these seven regions in equal depth. Part of the reason is identified in Figure 2 – certain indigenous movements have a much longer history than others. As such, in the following paragraphs I have focused on the indigenous movements most thoroughly analyzed. I present findings on four of the above mentioned regional groupings, namely: Central and South America, North America, the Arctic, and the South Pacific. I have omitted a discussion of the Asian and African regions due to the great uncertainty about the criteria for defining “indigenous peoples” in both Asia and Africa. It was only in the early 1990s that the indigenous movement expanded to include peoples from Asia and Africa and as such there are fewer studies conducted on the topic. The majority of the scholarly research thus far has referred to the native populations of

these two regions as “ethnic minorities”, “scheduled tribes” and much more recently as “indigenous peoples”. This makes investigating indigenous activism in Asia and Africa much harder, although a valuable endeavor for the future.

## Central and South America

### *Indigenous Peoples at a Glance*

Over 400 different indigenous groups are estimated to live within the Latin American region, making up roughly 10% of the total population. Among the more well-known indigenous groups are the Aymara, Guaraní, Huaorani, K’iche’, Kuna, Mapuche, Mayans, Quechua, and Yanomami. In Bolivia and Guatemala, indigenous peoples form the majority of the population. In Ecuador and Peru, they are a substantial minority. In Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, indigenous groups constitute a minority (see Table 1 in Chapter II).

### *Leadership, Organization, and Strategies*

There is a wealth of scholarly research that examines how indigenous peoples in Central and South America have become crucial political actors challenging the existing politics and demanding cultural recognition and political rights.<sup>5</sup> In general, the mobilization of indigenous peoples in Central and South American countries has been expressed a lot more frequently in the forms of violent protests, road or street blockades, riots and acts of resistance – examples being the 1994 uprising of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional in Chiapas, Mexico, which challenged the corruption and

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<sup>5</sup> On Latin America’s indigenous movements, see for example Bowen 2008; Postero and Zamosc 2004; Van Cott 2005; Varese 2006; Warren and Jackson 2002; and Yashar 2005.

neoliberal strategies of the PRI-run government<sup>6</sup> (Collier 1994; Postero and Zamosc 2004); the indigenous uprising and its ruthless suppression in the western plateau of Guatemala in 1980 (Comacho 1993; Warren 1998); the numerous strikes and subsequent repression of indigenous organizations in Bolivia<sup>7</sup>, Colombia, and Ecuador<sup>8</sup>. The tension and violence in these countries has been driven largely by poverty, socio-economic inequalities, and political marginalization. A formal social movement for indigenous rights did not arise until the late 1960s and early 1970s (Brysk 1996).

Indians in Ecuador began to organize themselves as early as the 1940s in an effort to defend their rights. In 1944, the Ecuadorian Indigenous Federation was founded. The organization contested the way the government was distributing land. One of the most seminal indigenous organizations, the ECUARUNARI (Quichua phrase meaning, “Ecuadorian Indians Awaken”) of the Sierra Indians was established in the late 1960s. Martin and Wilmer (2006) point out that the Catholic Church provided the initial funds necessary for the organization’s inception, but the ECUARUNARI has since abandoned its connection with the church. In 1980, the Amazonian indigenous confederation, CONFENIAE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon),

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<sup>6</sup> PRI, or the Institutional Revolutionary Party, was Mexico’s political organization from 1929 until the early 1990s. In the 1994 Zapatista Rebellion, several thousand Maya rebels, armed with anything from machetes to AK-47 guns, reminded the people of Mexico that they were the “product of 500 years of struggle” (Salman and Assies 2007).

<sup>7</sup> In one of Bolivia’s most violent protests, the one of 2003, between 80-120 people were killed by the Bolivian military who forcefully responded to the six-day indigenous protest in La Paz, by dynamiting bridges and burning roads (Martin and Wilmer 2006).

<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of the 1990 march of one thousand Amazonian indigenous peoples to the Santo Domingo Cathedral in Quito, the entire country witnessed large scale indigenous protests that caused road blockage and food shortage and as a result of which Ecuador was essentially closed down for one week (Martin and Wilmer 2006, Van Cott 2005). More recently, in 2000, a massive uprising shocked the country when indigenous leaders joined forces with several military officers in a brief coup that ousted President Jamil Muhuad (Bowen 2008).

was founded. Later in the same year, ECUARUNARI and CONFENIAE joined forces and formed the national organization CONAIE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador*), which some consider to be the most successful organization on the continent (see Postero and Zamosc 2004).

In Guatemala, issues of identity and shared “indigenous reality” began to be discussed in schools (fostered largely by the anticommunist struggle of the Guatemalan Catholic Church influenced by liberation theology<sup>9</sup>) and local communities in the 1960s (Blaser et al 2004; Konefal 2003). Konefal identifies the instrumental support Catholic priests provided to indigenous communities – they offered leadership training and helped establish community projects ranging from literacy campaigns, indigenous language radio stations and radio schools<sup>10</sup>, to agricultural, credit and weaving cooperatives. Escárcega (2003: 78) explains that in many Latin American countries, the Churches emerged as important players in human rights struggles, since they were “the only other political actors who could share the public arena with the military and counterbalance its power to a certain degree.” Escárcega further argues that the Churches’ involvement in human rights advocacy and organizing in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been

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<sup>9</sup> Escárcega (2003: 79) clarifies that the liberation theology principle and philosophy called for “the social and political liberation of those who are oppressed and left out of the ‘development’ process. In its broadest sense, it calls for a Church’s commitment to social justice ... Given the aggressive presence of many protestant sects in the Latin America, the Catholic Church developed a new position in the evangelization of indigenous peoples. This new position was to respect indigenous cultures.”

<sup>10</sup> Evans (1981) traces the origins of the radio school movement to Colombia where the long history of ACPO (Acción Cultural Popular) has served as a model and an active source of diffusion for a network of radio schools which currently exists in well over thirty different countries in the region. The radio schools, Evans explains, are typically “church-based and are characterized by educational broadcasts to organized listening groups, created and monitored by a cadre of local leaders. The broadcasts offer sequential courses at different levels of accomplishment in basic literacy and numeracy, as well as topical programs on a variety of development topics” (1981:41).



closely linked to the “Catholic Church’s search and initiatives for social justice throughout the Latin Americas, including Mexico.”

Among the vocal activists who engaged in pan-Indian discussions in the 1970s Konefal also places the indigenous students attending universities, young professionals, literary workers, cooperativists, farm (*campesino*) leaders, and also indigenous community queens.<sup>11</sup>

In Colombia a national indigenous movement has existed since 1971 when the Regional Indian Council of the Cauca was formed, an organization which includes Indians such as the Paez and Guambiano peoples who have been fighting for the restitution of their lands illegally occupied by big landowners (Maiguashca 1994a). In the same time period, late 1970s, the Mapuche Indians in Chile formed ADMAPU, a national organization which brings together 1,350 communities and aims at resisting government efforts to divide up their lands and communities (Maiguashca 1994a).

An active environmental movement grew in Brazil at the close of the 1980s. At that time, indigenous communities discovered a common cause with environmentalists in opposing ecologically destructive dams, roads, mines and colonization schemes, and thus strategically aligned themselves with the environmental movement. Indigenous groups joined forces with a number of US-based environmental NGOs – among them the Environmental Defense Fund, National Resources Defense Council, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Action Network, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, and World

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<sup>11</sup> Indigenous community queens (*reina indígena*) are equivalently chosen as beauty pageant queens. Over the years, indigenous queens in Guatemala have been elected to participate in local fairs and patron saints festivals in Indian communities. In the increasingly politicized context of the 1970s, queen contestants, adorned in community-specific dresses, regularly took on the role of symbolic spokeswomen for indigenous activist community groups.

Wildlife Fund – in defense of native rights to land and resources. One iconic example is the activism work of the Brazilian rubber trapper Chico Mendes, who among other things struggled to defend the rainforest and the rubber trapper's way of life and advocated the idea of creating forest reserves that would be managed by traditional communities (Salman and Assies 2007). Conklin and Graham (1995) note that media reporting on global warming, increased deforestation within the rainforest, declining biodiversity, and the extinction of species further brought local Amazonian conflicts over natural resources to the attention of a broad international audience.

The Brazilian Kayapó, for example, utilized a variety of political tactics through which they emphasized their role as guardians of the rainforest (Conklin and Graham 1995). For example, between 1988 and 1992, the Kayapó leader Payakan made a speaking tour to seven European countries, testified at the World Bank, met with former French president Francois Mitterrand and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, appeared on the Phil Donahue Show, was featured on the cover of *Parade* magazine, and organized hundreds of foreign journalists to the Amazonian town of Altamira (Brysk 1996; Conklin and Graham 1995).<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in Bolivia there was a 35 day, 470 mile march of 700 lowland Indians from Trinidad to La Paz to protest logging on their lands (Wilmer 1993). Asserting their rights to the lands in such a manner, they created a greater awareness among indigenous peoples and opened opportunities for organization, mobilization, and increased political

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<sup>12</sup> This high media visibility unfortunately backfired later when it was discovered that some Kayapó leaders had granted timber companies concessions to log large tracts of tropical forest (see Mulder and Coppolillo 2005). This incident indicates that multinational corporations can indeed lure certain indigenous communities by offering them huge monetary compensation for exploiting their land.

leadership (Martin and Wilmer 2006). In 1992, Bolivia won global media attention after indigenous peoples flowed into the plazas of La Paz protesting their lack of representation and need for rights (Martin and Wilmer 2006).

### ***Motivational Dynamics: The Issues at Hand***

Indigenous peoples from Central and South America have demanded predominately territory, autonomy<sup>13</sup>, cultural recognition, and reforms to existing state structures (Postero and Zamosc 2004). Martin and Wilmer (2006) reveal that indigenous concerns in Ecuador have focused on the issues of natural resource extraction (oil extraction and logging) and issues of agrarian reform and agro industry. Indigenous groups from Ecuador have also expressed demands for recognition of a plurinational state in the Constitution, bilingual education, and legalization of indigenous territories. Escárcega (2003) points out that in Mexico the struggle for indigenous peoples' survival has been framed for decades in terms of social justice and class demands. Konefal (2003) expresses that the shared concerns among indigenous peoples in Guatemala were those of poverty, discrimination, and political exclusion. Konefal also refers to their collective interest in cultural revitalization and in discovering and promoting indigenous history and identity to foster pride in the indigenous "race." Class-based and race-based organizing has been for many years of great importance to Latin American indigenous population, at times even more important than Indian ethnic identity and self-affirmation (see Brysk 1996; Grey and Zamosc 2004).

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<sup>13</sup> As indicated in Chapter II, while some indigenous groups advocate autonomy, they are generally referring to regional autonomy within existing nation-states, rather than to break-away nations, or a return to a presumed pre-conquest sovereignty (Postero and Zamosc 2004).

Scholars point out that one of the main demands of the indigenous movement in Latin America has been recognition of their historic land claims, including recognizing indigenous territories and recognizing or affirming collective land rights (Deere 2001). Warren and Jackson (2002) argue that while territorial rights continue to be a focus of struggle, indigenous activists in Latin America speak of other, newly formulated demands – the right to use their own languages in public affairs, to read about their own cultures and histories in schools and the media, and to have decision-making powers over how they are to be represented.

The Bolivian, Chilean, Ecuadorian, and Mexican indigenous rights movements have taken indigenous mobilization even further. In addition to framing their goals on ethnic identity and increased political and economic autonomy, indigenous peoples from Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico have engaged themselves in the larger, world-wide neoliberal anti-globalization movement. They have led nationwide protests against the policies of the IMF and have organized international conferences in opposition to the extension of free trade regimes into South America (Martin and Wilmer 2006; Salman and Assies 2007).

### ***Outcomes***

The indigenous uprisings and movements in Central and South America have made their presence felt in the domestic politics of their nation states. They have led to important political and cultural changes – indigenous peoples have been granted new forms of individual and collective rights; many states now offer intercultural bilingual education and culturally appropriate development projects (Postero and Zamosc 2004).

Since the 1990s, indigenous peoples have formed their own political parties (i.e. organized around ethnic identity) in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela and these political parties have gained important seats in congresses (Postero and Zamosc 2004; Van Cott 2005). Sixteen Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) have undertaken constitutional reforms in which some rights of indigenous peoples have been recognized (Stavenhagen 2006). For example, the Colombian constitution recognizes a special indigenous jurisdiction and reserves parliamentary seats for indigenous peoples.<sup>14</sup> The Bolivian Constitution of 1993 includes in its first article the pluri-ethnic, pluri-cultural, and pluri-lingual character of the country. The following year the Bolivian Congress also passed the Education Reform Law, which ensures a multilingual, bilingual focus in education, and the Popular Participation law, which recognized traditional indigenous forms of communal organization as legitimate executors of municipal plans (Martin and Wilmer 2006). Moreover, in January 2009, a referendum to amend the Bolivian Constitutions resulted in approximately 60% of the population voting in favor of changes to give Bolivia's indigenous majority more power. The new Constitution provides for dedicated seats in Congress and in the Constitutional Court for smaller indigenous groups and, among other things, grants autonomy to

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<sup>14</sup> For a very comprehensive database on indigenous legislation classified by country and by theme for all countries of Latin America, see the Inter-American Development Bank webpage at: [http://www.iadb.org/sds/IND/site\\_3152\\_e.htm](http://www.iadb.org/sds/IND/site_3152_e.htm) (last visited February 2009). Database includes twenty themes and their respective subthemes, covering from cultural diversity, identification criteria and language to land and territories, economic rights and civil registry.

indigenous peoples that will allow them to practice community justice according to their own customs.

Intensified indigenous activism in Bolivia has led to the election of the country's first indigenous president, President Evo Morales, in 2006. Bolivian indigenous organizations and leaders have become not only respected and known on a state level, but have often appeared in the reports of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, lists of NGO-sponsored workshops participants, and host of international congresses. Leaders of the national indigenous organization CONAIE (the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) also have become well known on the world stage, hosting international conferences in Quito, successfully negotiating agreements with transnational corporations (primarily oil companies) and uniting the frames of human rights and the environment in legal lawsuits (Martin and Wilmer 2006).

In comparison to the rest of the world, Central and South American has notably led the way in constitutional and domestic legal system reforms and the decentralization of power within the political structure in response to the calls from the indigenous movements for legal recognition of their right to protection and control of their lands, territories and natural resources (UNSPFII/DSPD/DESA 2008). While, much remains to be done, indigenous peoples' rights have definitively come to the forefront of political agendas across Latin America.

## North America: Focus on Canada

### *Indigenous Peoples at a Glance*

The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of indigenous peoples – the Indian (who in the Arctic include the First Nations and the Dene), the Inuit, and the Métis peoples. There are over 630 First Nations' communities (also referred to as Bands) in Canada, comprising 52 Nations or cultural groups and more than 60 languages (Wessendorf 2008). About 55% live on-reserve and 45% reside off-reserve in urban, rural, special access a remote areas. The Inuit live in 53 Arctic communities in four Land Claims regions: Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (Quebec), Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. The Métis constitute a distinct indigenous nation, many of whom live in urban centers, mostly in western Canada (Wessendorf 2009).

### *Leadership, Organization, and Strategies*

One of the first attempts at forming a national presence for First Nations came soon after the First World War when the League of Indians in Canada was formed. Unfortunately, the League failed to attract wide-spread support and often faced Canadian government actions that were suppressive and detrimental to their early goals and actions and as such the League was soon disbanded. In the late 1940s, First Nations attempted to form a new national lobby group, the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB). The founder and head of NAIB was the Indian leader Andrew Paull. While the Brotherhood's primary political focus was regional, it aspired to a far wider political role and ventured even into international arenas (Sanders 1980). The organization's letterhead listed

leaders from various parts of Canada and a few from the United States. In the 1950s, NAIB sent three British Columbia Indians and a non-Indian lawyer to New York to represent their grievances to the United Nations. The delegation was referred back to the Canadian government to “work with the domestic legal and political framework” (Sanders 1980). Like its predecessor, the Brotherhood’s efforts were hindered by a lack of nationwide support and suppressive government actions. Additional internal administrative problems fractured the organization into regional groups. In the following years, First Nations re-organized their efforts and in 1961 they formed The National Indian Council. The purpose of the Council was to represent three of the four major groups of indigenous peoples in Canada: the Treaty and Status People, the Non-status People, and the Métis people (the Inuit were excluded) and to promote unity among all Indian people. From this point on, the First Nations of Canada have always had a national lobby group to represent them in Ottawa.

Throughout the 1960s, Inuit political and social awareness as well as participation in local Inuit affairs also increased. The Inuit inability to participate in northern development and government until then, the deteriorating welfare and economic conditions for many Inuit groups, and the weakening of Inuit’s traditional way of life is what greatly triggered Inuit activism. Their political and social involvement in turn resulted in a determination by the Inuit to reclaim their traditional lands – something that they would actually finalize forty years later (see discussion below) (Kersey 1994).

The National Indian Council soon found it difficult to unite all of the various First Nations peoples’ interests into one national lobby. In 1968, by mutual agreement of the



three indigenous groups, the organization split up. Thus, the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada (representing the Status and Treaty groups) and the Native Council of Canada (representing the Non-Status and Métis groups) were formed. Since 1969, the National Indian Brotherhood has become a very powerful and increasingly articulate lobby group for indigenous rights in Canada, addressing issues such as education, housing, health care, and economic development. Among the well-known leaders within the organization are: George Manuel (Shushwap), Walter Dieter (Cree), Noel Starblanket (Cree), Delbert Riley (Chippewa), Dr. David Ahenakew (Cree), Georges Erasmus (Dene), Ovide Mercredi (Cree), National Chief Phil Fontaine (Anishinabe), and Matthew Coon Come (Cree). George Manuel was particularly instrumental in establishing close relations with indigenous communities in New Zealand and Australia (Manuel made several visits to these countries seeking consultation on indigenous governance), with the Saami in northern Scandinavia and with the National Congress of American Indians in the United States. In addition, Manuel traveled to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Ecuador, Greenland, and Denmark with that same goal. Manuel also developed close contacts with international NGOs (IWGIA in Copenhagen, Survival International and the Anti-Slavery Society in London) and with the World Council of Churches in Geneva (Sanders 1980). Through solid research and careful application of political pressure, the National Indian Brotherhood and the Native Council of Canada have been responsible for numerous changes in federal and provincial indigenous policies. Moreover, the initiatives of the National Indian Brotherhood in the 1970s were fundamental in organizing and uniting indigenous groups

from across the world<sup>15</sup> for the First World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held in British Columbia (Sanders 1980; Wilmer 1993).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the National Indian Brotherhood continued to experience difficulties in truly representing all of its community members. The Brotherhood, together with the Metis Native Council, and Dene Nation participated extensively in constitutional negotiations on indigenous rights during the 1980s. In 1982, after a series of drastic revisions of its basic structure, the Brotherhood transitioned into the Assembly of First Nations (Wilmer 1993). The Assembly of First Nations has since represented the views of the various First Nations through their leaders in areas such as aboriginal and treaty rights, economic development, education, language and literacy, health, housing, social development, justice, taxation, land claims, environment, and a whole array of issues that are of common concern which arise from time to time.

### ***Motivational Dynamics: The Issues at Hand***

Canada's indigenous peoples have tended to focus on the following demands: land ownership of traditional territories; greater autonomy and the ability to control local affairs; availability of educational, job, and housing opportunities; preservation of traditional indigenous family structures and way of life; and more recently, their right to self-determination (Kersey 1994; Niezen 2000). In addition to securing land title and

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<sup>15</sup> In the two preparatory meetings prior to the Conference in Canada, representatives from the following countries participated: Australia, Canada, Columbia, Greenland (Denmark), Guyana, New Zealand, Norway (representing the Saami from Norway, Finland and Sweden), and the United States. At the actual Conference in 1975 the following countries were represented: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Guatemala, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sweden, the United States (including Hawaii) and Venezuela. 260 people participated in the Conference, including 52 delegates, 135 observers, 25 members of the press and 54 staff members (Sanders 1980).

political development, the Inuit of northern Canada, for example, have also long struggled with issues related to economic development, wildlife management and conservation, land, resources, and environmental managements, social and cultural provisions and political development (refer to the provisions laid in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement of 1993). The Crees of the James Bay region, on the other hand, have fought for an environmental protection regime, protected hunting and fishing rights, and certain modifications in a mega hydroelectric project to be constructed on their territory (refer to the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1975).

### ***Outcomes***

It was not until the late 1980s when the First Nations peoples were included in taking part in the Constitutional developments of the country. The 1982 Constitution Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, expressly mentions and recognizes “aboriginal rights” (Wiessner 1999).

In 1993, after sixteen years of negotiations with the Canadian government, a historic indigenous land claim settlement – the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement – was signed between the Canadian Prime Minister and Inuit tribal leaders and the Nunavut Act was passed. The Agreement provides the Inuit with extensive control over their lives, especially regarding land and wildlife management. A few years later, in 1999, the “Nunavut” territory – in the Inuit language of Inuktituk meaning “Our Land” – was officially created. The government of Nunavut has since operated as a public government subordinate to the Canadian federal government with powers similar to that of a province but with a predominately Inuit population. Wiessner (1999) refers to the

establishment of the Nunavut territory as the “farthest-ranging Canadian recognition yet of claims to aboriginal self-government.”

In April 2008, the House of Commons in Canada issued an endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, calling on the Parliament and Government to fully implement the standards contained therein. In July 2008, Canada’s Prime Minister offered an apology to the approximately 80,000 former students of Indian residential schools still living, and to their family members and their communities, for the past practice of taking indigenous children from their parents and forcing them to attend state-funded, church-run schools. Along with the apology, Canada is paying millions of dollars in compensation to those affected.

## The Arctic<sup>16</sup>: Focus on Saami

### *Indigenous Peoples at a Glance*

The Saami (also spelled Sami or Sapmi) are the only officially recognized indigenous peoples living within Europe.<sup>17</sup> They are indigenous to northern Fennoscandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Finland) and the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation and have lived in these territories for at least two thousand years. Currently between 64,000 and 100,000 Sami people live in the region. Numerically, the Saami people constitute a small minority (even in their traditional homelands) – less than 1% of the total population in each of the countries of residence (Hieta 2006). The majority of

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<sup>16</sup> The Arctic region encompasses Arctic Canada (the Inuit, the Métis, the Dene), Greenland (the West Greenlanders, the East Greenlanders, the Polar Eskimos), the Nordic Countries (the Saami), Arctic Alaska (the Inuit, Aleut, Athabascan, and Eyak peoples) and the Russian North (40 indigenous peoples).

<sup>17</sup> Refer to Norwegian Constitution, Section 110(a) and Finish Constitution, Section 17(3). The Swedish legislation does not currently acknowledge the Saami indigenous status.

Saami live in Norway (40,000-45,000), followed by Sweden (15,000-25,000), Finland (about 7,000) and Russia (2,000-4,000). The number of people who identify themselves as Saami has grown in the last decade and the trend continues (Toivanen 2003).

The Saami have traditionally made a living from fishing, farming, and reindeer husbandry, the latter adaptation being particularly well suited to utilizing the lichen of the inland tundra. Today, Saami engage in a full range of agriculture, fishing, industry, wilderness industries, professions, and management positions. Some Saami, about 10%, are still involved in domestic reindeer husbandry. Norway (NR1:54-5) recognizes reindeer husbandry as an “important way of life and closely bound up with the Saami culture.”

### ***Leadership, Organization, and Strategies***

Saami national “awakening” started after the Second World War and gained particular momentum in the 1970s. In 1953, Saami from Finland, Norway, and Sweden met to discuss issues of common concern to Saami culture and livelihoods, and in 1956, the Nordic Saami Council was established to represent Saami interests. The Council was based on the realization that the Saami were one people, living in three Nordic countries. The Council was set up as a NGO uniting Saami organizations in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. As the borders to the East opened up, in 1992 the Saami of Russia joined the Council and the name of the organization was changed to the Saami Council. The main goals of the Council have been to promote Saami rights and interests in the countries where the Saami are living; to consolidate the feeling of affinity among the Saami peoples; to attain recognition for the Saami as a nation; and to maintain the economic,

social, and cultural rights of the Saami in the legislation of the four nation states. Over the years, the organization has arranged numerous conferences about the question of Saami rights, published copious conference reports and minutes of meetings, and managed to get Saami matters placed on the Nordic Council's agenda<sup>18</sup> (Minde 2003). The Saami Council is one of the indigenous peoples' organizations which has existed the longest.

In the late 1960, comparisons between Saami and the US Native Americans flourished and thus created an environment suitable to nurture a sense of identity and cultural pride for the Saami. In the early 1970s, books of recognized Native American advocates, such as Vine Deloria and Dee Brown, made a strong impression in both Norway and Sweden (Minde 2003). Inspired by the American Indian Movement, Saami youth began to demand the revitalization of Saami culture and politics (de la Cadena and Starn 2007).

An important turning point in the Saami movement was the Alta-Kautokeino River controversy. In 1979, some 400 Saami, environmentalists, and people dependent on salmon fishing gathered in the village of Mázi in Finmark, the northernmost province of Norway, to protest against the Norwegian authorities and the hydroelectric development project, which at that stage, involved the flooding of Mázi (Toivanen 2003). The same year, a group of young Saami erected a herdsman's tent outside the parliament building in Oslo, Norway, and announced their plan to starve until the Norwegian government promised to cancel its intention to dam the Alta River (also referred to as

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<sup>18</sup> The Nordic Council was formed in 1952 as a forum for cooperation between the Nordic parliaments and governments.

Altaelva) on the mountain plateau of Finnmark – the heartland of Saami people. In their demonstrations, the Saami activists directly confronted their government. The proposed hydro-electric dam on the river was going to put much of the Finnmarksvidda plateau and the reindeer grazing areas under water. The hunger strikers claimed that this project was an infringement of their territorial rights and a threat to their survival as people. Wilmer (1993) notes that between 1979 and 1981, protesters in Oslo, Alta and elsewhere in Norway, engaged in sit-in demonstrations and hunger strikes, forcing a debate in the press, parliaments, and courts. These tactics attracted significant international attention and the Saami demands were subject of enormous and positive publicity. Minde (2003) indicates that in the media, for a limited period, the Saami themselves got the chance to speak on their own behalf for the first time. In addition, as Toivanen (2003) points out, many people who have previously been rather ignorant about their Saami roots became aware about the importance of public expression of one's identity.

While the Saami eventually lost in court<sup>19</sup> on the Alta project, they did manage to get Saami issues onto the national political agenda. Moreover, ever since, the Alta-Kautokeino protests have been cited as one of the “earliest expressions where Saami developed self-understanding as a trans-national people” (Toivanen 2003). The event spawned both a national and transnational awakening, especially among young Saami and Saami artists. The conflict further opened roads for Saami political claims and enhanced Saami involvement in the international indigenous arena (de la Cadena and

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<sup>19</sup> The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature sued the Norwegian State. At the end, the Norwegian court ruled that the development project was legal and in no violation of the Cultural Heritage Act.

Starn 2007). Toivanen (2003) argues that what provided fuel for the Alta protests was the fact that more and more Saami began to receive higher education and could speak for themselves in political arenas.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Minde (2003) describes that, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, an increased number of young Saami people began to study at the universities in Norway, as well as Sweden and Finland. Thus, the new generation of Saami politicians was inspired by ideas of equality and the right of self-determination, such as those set down in declarations of human rights and convention, and those expressed in conflicts in the Third and Fourth Worlds (Minde 2003).

In the wake of the Alta conflict, the Norwegian government agreed to new policies recognizing the Saami. It embarked on a learning and reorganizing process that “ended once and for all the out-dated political domain concerning Saami issues” (Minde 2003: 101). In 1980, the authorities established two committees – the Saami Rights Commission and the Saami Culture Commission – to further study the demands raised by the Saami. The two commissions were to assess issues regarding the constitutional status of the Saami as indigenous peoples in Norway, the establishment of a Saami parliament, and the Saami right to exploit natural resources. As a consequence of the commission work, in 1988, Saami language rights and special rights of indigenous Saami were codified in the Norwegian constitution. Finland and Sweden have similarly done so. In addition, a Saami electoral poll was introduced and the Saami Parliament (elected by and among the Saami) was established.

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<sup>20</sup> Indeed, today majority of the Saami activists are educated and have comprehensive knowledge of their own societies as well as their respective dominant societies. Many Saami are active in the political parties of their countries.



### ***Motivational Dynamics: The Issues at Hand***

In contrast to many other indigenous peoples of the world, the Saami have not have to battle with problems such as hunger, extreme poverty, summary executions, or other direct threats to their physical health. Smith (1999) indicates that Saami protest actions have centered largely on land and water rights, language and cultural rights, human rights, and civil rights. Forrest (2006) adds to these aspirations also the issues of safeguarding reindeer herding as a traditional livelihood and developing apparatuses for political representation and decision-making. Josefsen (2005) argues that seeking power through participation in the national electoral system was a particular aspiration of the Norwegian Saami.

### ***Outcomes***

The Saami have reasserted their identity as an indigenous people and have strengthened their demands for self-determination. Their shared identity is visible in the national symbols enjoyed by all Saami, including the Saami flag and their national day. Today, in each of the Nordic countries the Saami possess their own parliament, composed of and elected by Saami peoples – the Norwegian Saami Parliament was established in 1989, the Swedish one in 1993, and the Finnish one in 1996. Although these are, in effect, representative and consultative assemblies, the Saami have nonetheless achieved a degree of ethno-political self-government (Nuttall 2000). Since 2000, the three parliaments created a common cooperative Nordic forum, the Saami Parliamentary Council. The Saami Council and Russian Saami have observer status in the council. The purpose of the Council is to work on issues affecting the Saami across

national boundaries, for example issues concerning Saami languages, education, research, and industrial development. The goal of the Nordic collaboration is to coordinate the Saami voice in international affairs, particularly in relation to international policy on indigenous peoples.

## The South Pacific: Focus on Australia

### *Indigenous Peoples at a Glance*

As Sanders (1999) points out, there was never any question that Australia and New Zealand had indigenous minorities. Indigenous Australians are distinguished as either Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders. Currently, around two and a half percent (roughly 500,000 people) of Australian citizens identify as indigenous, and this proportion continues to grow (Stidsen 2006).

### *Leadership, Organization, and Strategies*

In Australia Aborigines across all states had a long struggle for recognition as citizens of Australia and for land rights. Australian indigenous political consciousness and activism can be traced back as early as the late 1930s. In 1935 Bill Ferguson, a Trade unionist and Aboriginal activist, petitioned for Aboriginal seats in Parliament and a national department for Aboriginal affairs (Malezer 2005). In 1937 Aboriginal activists – Bill Ferguson, William Cooper, Jack Kinchela, John Patten and Perl Gibbs to name a few of the instrumental leaders – formed the Australian Aborigines League (which later became the Aboriginal Progressive Association), an organization which called for a social and economic equality for Aboriginal peoples (Horner 2004). Shortly after, the

Aboriginal leaders produced and distributed to national libraries a manifesto called “Aborigines Claim Citizen Rights!” This was a proclamation which was quite progressive for its time. The manifesto opposed the lower-caste position of Aboriginal peoples in Australia, accused the white Australian government for deliberately trying to exterminate Aboriginal peoples, and called for a national policy of acceptance and equal status, including full citizen rights and equal opportunity (Horner 2004). Horner (2004) describes that high profile women from feminist clubs were at the time particularly supportive to the aspirations of the Aboriginal Australians.

In January 1938 at the Australian Hall (now the Cyprus-Hellene Club) in Sydney the Aboriginal leaders, led by William Cooper and Bill Ferguson of the Australian Aboriginal League, organized the first Australian indigenous civil rights protest (Malezer 2005). It was referred to as the Day of Mourning and it marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the British First Fleet’s arrival at Sydney Cove. The speeches made at the protest drew the attention of white people to the frightful conditions under which Aboriginal peoples lived and declared that Aboriginal Australians were no longer prepared to stay in the background. Moreover, Aboriginal peoples appealed for new laws on education, care, and a new policy that would raise their status to full citizens, equal within the Australian community (Horner 2004).

The momentum for real change was however somewhat lost as World War II broke. Indigenous Australians had to wait nearly 30 years after that Day of Mourning in order to achieve full citizen rights.

A new organization came into being in the late 1950s – the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship – which, as the name suggested, joined Aboriginal peoples and sympathetic white supports; the two “races” working together. The main aim of this new organization was to promote better understanding between Aboriginal peoples and European Australians. A diverse number of people were soon recruited to the organization – poets, linguists, trade union members, journalists, teachers, musicians. Feminist leaders once again strongly supported the aspirations of the organization. Horner (2004) reveals that during a historic public meeting of the Fellowship in Sydney additional support for Aboriginal rights came from concerned churchmen, trade union members, old-style ‘lefties’ and Labor party members. According to Horner, among the urgent issues linking them with Aboriginal supporters were a rocket range project and the atomic weapons tests on both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal lands.

Up to the late 1960s, Aboriginal leaders maintained their activities on behalf of their peoples; independent journalists brought to light the real, troublesome living and working conditions Aboriginal peoples were faced with; various churchmen, and particularly missionaries, further raised awareness of the hardships indigenous Australians were enduring; trade union workers gave financial and moral support to Aboriginal workers trying to improve their working conditions. A public debate on Aboriginal affairs was held in the federal parliament in 1957 during which Aboriginal leaders and supporters spoke once again for the need to extend civil rights to Aboriginal Australians and for the state to cease its assimilation policies and discriminatory practices towards them. This event led the federal government to place on its agenda the need for

constitutional change to ensure equal rights for Aboriginal Australians. A conference, held that same year, brought together a large number of eminent Aboriginal leaders and non-Aboriginal advocates (among them lawyers, politicians, feminist activists, and journalists) and further streamlined the agenda for the Aboriginal peoples' rights. Among the rights they were seeking were: equal citizenship rights; adequate standard of living for health and wellbeing; equal pay for equal work; free and compulsory education for detribalized Aborigines; and absolute retention of all remaining native reserves, with native communal or individual ownership (Horner 2004). The meeting launched a historic campaign that culminated in the 1967 referendum to established Aboriginal citizenship. The Constitutional changes of 1967 finally led to all indigenous peoples being counted in the census and to the strengthening of their rights to vote, receive equal wages, and own property (Wessendorf 2008). Yet, the struggle over land rights continued after 1967 in the form of "direct action, petition, a tent embassy in 1972, silent protests during the white Australia's celebration of two hundred years of settlement in 1988, challenges both through the courts and state governments" (Smith 1999: 109).

Horner (2004) argues that although there is no doubt that over the years the activism initiative came from Aboriginal peoples themselves, it was only by the working together with their non-Aboriginal friends and supporters that they achieved success back in 1967 when they were granted full citizen rights.

### ***Motivational Dynamics: The Issues at Hand***

Smith (1999) indicates that Aborigines' struggles have long been centered on recognition as citizens of Australia, including the right to be counted in the national

census, and on land rights. Similarly, Malezer (2005) illustrates how Aboriginal protests have highlighted concerns about exclusion and unjust treatment by the state governments of Australia.

### ***Outcomes***

In February 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia Kevin Rudd delivered a historic formal apology to the Australia's indigenous peoples – the so-called Stolen Generations – and their families for the historical injustices inflicted upon them by the policies of past governments (i.e. Australia's former policy of forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities and placing them with white families or institutions had devastating consequences for generations of indigenous Australians). In April 2009, the Australian federal government officially endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is a symbolic step since Australia (along with Canada, New Zealand and the USA), originally voted against the Declaration when it was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007. The Aboriginal academic and leader Mick Dodson (who is also a member of the UNPFII and the 2009 Australian of the Year) praised the government's endorsement and referred to the decision as “another great thing, another special thing” to happen in Australia towards reconciliation. Another indication of the change in the Australian government official position towards indigenous issues was the announcement of the Rudd government that it was open to the idea of reversing the burden of proof requirements for Aboriginal groups pursuing land claims (see *Cultural Survival* 33:1). Les Malezer, native Australian of the Gabi Gabi community, longtime aboriginal rights activist, and Chairperson of the Indigenous

Caucus to the UN, expressed that “though actions by the government will ultimately speak louder than words, the door has clearly been opened for us, as Aboriginal people, to begin negotiations for self-determination” (*Cultural Survival* 33:1).

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I presented briefly the participants, ideology and goals, tactics and structure of indigenous movements in four of the worlds regions. In Chapter VII, I will return to these findings to further analyze them and use them as a comparison to my case study of the indigenous movement in the Russian North.

In the dissertation thus far, I have largely examined the indigenous movement at what political scientist and sociologist Charles Tilly calls the macrohistorical level (Tilly 1984). The analysis now shifts more to the microhistorical level, that is, I will examine and offer my findings in regards to the specificities within the indigenous activism in the case of the Russian North.

## CHAPTER V: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH

### Introduction

While the previous chapters have presented the international scope of indigenous activism, the following two chapters shift the focus towards the indigenous peoples within my chosen area of study – the Russian North. This chapter examines indigenous peoples of the Russian North in a cultural, demographic, ecological, and historical context. It provides essential background information for my discussion of the emergence of the indigenous movement in the next chapter. I address the following topics: legal framework of being “indigenous” in the Russian North, traditional livelihoods, economic situation within the region, history of Soviet and post-Soviet national policy towards the indigenous peoples in Russia, specific rights indigenous peoples of the North are fighting for, and current legal status of indigenous peoples.

### The Study Area

Northern Russia, Siberia and the Far East region, or collectively referred to as the Russian North<sup>1</sup>, extends 6,000km and covers the northernmost territories of Russia. It stretches over Arctic and sub-Arctic territory, from the Finish and Norwegian boundary

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<sup>1</sup> Later in this chapter, I will discuss the term further.



through the Urals and Siberia to the Bering Strait and the Pacific Ocean. It covers vast territories of taiga (coniferous forests overlying formerly glaciated areas and areas of patchy permafrost), tundra (treeless plains of the arctic regions where lichens, mosses, sedges and shrubs dominate), and polar deserts. The Russian North contains enormous reserves of oil, gas, mineral, timber, and hydro-electric power.

Amongst the permafrost land and unique biodiversity life systems, the indigenous peoples of the Russian North have been able to evolve and adapt to the cold and harsh environment. The majority of these peoples lead traditional lifestyles<sup>2</sup> and generally reside in smaller settlements or villages of only a few hundred, in camps of one or several families, or even nomadically (Osherenko 2004). So who are Russia's northern indigenous peoples, what are the traditional subsistence economies they depend upon, and what are some of the major contemporary conditions and challenges they face?

## Definitions of “Indigenous” According to Russian Federal Legislation

In the Russian Federation, as it is at the international level (see discussion in Chapter III), the term “indigenous peoples” raises some controversy among researchers, policy makers, NGOs, governments and indigenous peoples themselves. Russian legislation uses the definition “indigenous” based on the following criteria: 1) living on the ancestrally occupied land (homelands), 2) leading a traditional way of life, and 3)

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<sup>2</sup> By “traditional”, I mean the subsistence livelihoods practiced by indigenous peoples for over centuries. In the Russian North, these traditional activities have centered on activities such as reindeer herding, hunting, trapping, gathering, fishing and small-scale gardening and plant gathering. “Traditional way of life” is a term recently coined also within the national legislation of Russia to mean the following: “a historically formed method of livelihood of the indigenous peoples, based on the historical experiences of their ancestors in the area of nature use, unique social organization, original cultures, preservation of customs and beliefs” (Hariuchi 2001: 56).

self-identification as indigenous. In this sense, the state definition accords with definitional criteria of international law (for example, ILO Convention 169). In addition to these three separate components to the definition of “indigenous” – *where* people must live to qualify for this status, *how* they must live, and the criterion of *self-identification* – there is the added quantitative criterion, i.e. Russian law stipulates a population maximum of 50,000. The designation was created in the 1920s by the Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands, better known as the Committee of the North<sup>3</sup>, and later revisited in the early 1990s (Donahoe 2008; Gray 2005). The Soviet authorities at the time believed that due to their alleged backwardness, these native groups would need special assistance to reach the stage of socialism the rest of the country strived for.

Aleksandr Shapovalov (2005) suggests that the criterion of 50,000 was selected based on a set of factors both political and scientific. According to Shapovalov, some researchers claim that the criterion was chosen based on certain ethnographic studies showing that ethnic groups numbering less than 50,000 cannot self-develop and thus require special support from the state. As Sokolovski (2005) puts it “the underlying rationale was that more numerous people do not need such protection as they are not

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<sup>3</sup> The Committee of the North was set up in 1924 to define and to reserve the territories necessary for the life and cultural development of each ethnic group. The Committee consisted of high-ranking government officials and scholars with the following organizational, planning and research functions: to investigate, develop and implement the measures necessary for economic progress in the region; to study the history, culture and everyday life of the northern indigenous peoples and to collect information about their needs; to investigate measures necessary to guard them against exploitation; and to define the basic principles of an administrative and judicial system in the area (Vakhtin 1992). In the 1920s and 1930s, the Committee became the main governmental organ for the advancement of economic and cultural development programs for peoples of the North and it developed a number of legislative acts for the administration of native peoples. Vakhtin (1992) points out, that in practice, the achievements of the Committee were modest because of insufficient funding and its work was eventually curtailed because of the growing power of totalitarian communism. The Soviet government disbanded the Committee in 1935.

threatened by extinction and are protected by the governments in ‘their own’ titular republics.” Still most scholars tend to assert that within the Russian Federation, “identity politics is a number game” – i.e. the 50,000 population maximum was put into place to limit the number of peoples who could lay claim to government benefits (Donahoe et al 2008).

The term “indigenous peoples” is best translated in Russian as *korennyye narody*. The Russian legislation, however, differentiates two categories of *korennyye narody*: 1) *korennyye narody* whose population size is bigger than 50,000 and 2) *korennyye malochislennyye narody* [“indigenous numerically small peoples”<sup>4</sup>] whose population size is smaller than 50,000. For the purposes of Russian legislation, only the *korennyye malochislennyye narody* [“indigenous numerically small peoples”] are considered “indigenous.” They are eligible for special targeted programs and are entitled to certain rights, material privileges, state support and concessions – for example, free medicine, free transportation, and competition-free admission to educational institutions. Scholars tend to agree that these advantages are relatively modest compared to the rights and privileges enjoyed by indigenous peoples in the other Arctic countries.

Thus, indigenous peoples (*korennyye malochislennyye narody*) are currently defined as:

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<sup>4</sup> Some scholars have chosen the translation “sparse,” “small-in-number,” “small-numbering” or “protected” peoples when referring to the term *korennyye malochislennyye narody*. Others have called them “northern minorities,” “small nations of the North” or even applied the cumbersome phrase “native demographically-small peoples.” Still others, opting for the most grammatically accurate translation, have referred to this group as “less numerous.” For a more thorough discussion on the semantics of the term’s translation, see for example Gray 2005. Also, for more discussion of aspects of translation of the term *korennyye narody*, refer to Dallmann and Goldman 2003, Indigenous – Native – Aboriginal: Confusion and Translation Problems, *Ansipra Bulletin* 9, available at [www.npolar.no/ansipra/english/bulletin/Bulletin09E.rtf](http://www.npolar.no/ansipra/english/bulletin/Bulletin09E.rtf) (last visited December 2008).

“The numerically small indigenous populations of the Russian Federation (hereafter referred to as indigenous peoples) are those residing in the areas of the *traditional settlements* of their forefathers, preserving their *traditional lifestyle*, economy and trades, who *perceive themselves as an independent ethnic entity*, and whose *population* in the Russian Federation *does not exceed 50,000*. The Common Register of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation is approved by the Government of the Russian Federation based on information provided by the authorities of the administrative territories of the Russian Federation where the indigenous populations reside” [emphasis added].

The law further clarifies that:

“... the traditional lifestyle of indigenous peoples is the strategy of survival which has been developed throughout their history, based on the experience of their forefathers in nature management, original social structure, accommodation, original culture, and the preservation of customs and beliefs” (Federal Law No. 82-FZ 1999).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the term “indigenous peoples of Russia” is used as meaning the officially recognized “numerically small indigenous peoples.” Hence, the larger groups such as Altay, Buryat, Karel, Komi, Tyva (or Tuvan), and Sakha (or Yakut)<sup>5</sup>, some of whom are still leading traditional way of life in rural settlements, are not included in my examination of Russia’s indigenous peoples activism.<sup>6</sup> However, this delineation just reflects the political reality in contemporary Russia – i.e. the larger native peoples groups in the territory of Russia would potentially fit into the definition of “indigenous peoples” laid down in international instruments such as the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, yet as of the writing of this dissertation, the Russian government does not want to officially recognize them as such.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Some scholars call these groups the “big-numbered” indigenous peoples.

<sup>6</sup> Henceforth, I use the term “indigenous peoples” to denote the indigenous numerically small peoples only.

<sup>7</sup> According to the 2002 Census there are around 67,239 Altay, 445,175 Buryat, 434,248 Komi, and 443,852 Sakha people in the Russian Federation. Two additional groups that some have argued could potentially be considered “indigenous,” the Bashkir and Tuvanian, collectively number over 1 million according to the 2002 Census. If one were to include these large groups, the number of indigenous peoples in Russia would increase drastically. Dallmann and Goldman (2003) speculate that this may be one of the reasons why Russia has not ratified ILO Convention No.169, i.e. ratification could potentially give a

As Donahoe et al. (2008) suggest, Russia is skeptical to do so because of two main concerns: 1) it would threaten the state's control over large regions with economically critical natural resources, and 2) it could lead to further political upheaval in Russia if the larger native groups were to push for "self-determination" as stipulated in the international instruments.

The Russian state officially recognized the rights of indigenous peoples on its territory by firstly adopting (in 1928) and later revisiting (in 1991 and 2001) the List (or Common Register) of Indigenous Peoples. During most of the Soviet era, 26 ethnic groups had the status of *korennyye malochislennyye narody*. This number shifted over time, as the state occasionally demoted groups and merged them with others, or reversed such decisions and considered them as distinct. Six other indigenous groups applied for this status in the post-Soviet era and in 2000, twelve more were officially listed as indigenous groups. As of 2006, the Government of the Russian Federation officially recognizes forty-five distinct indigenous peoples which belong to several language families residing in various Republics, Regions (*Kray, Oblast*), Autonomous Regions (*Okrug*) and Districts (*Raion*) in the Federation.<sup>8</sup> Forty of these indigenous groups reside

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particularly significant portion of the Russian population the right to demand that the government grants them the rights stipulated in the Convention. According special rights to indigenous groups, who tend to be small in number and geographically isolated, threatens the state to a far lesser degree than according rights to large groups who are potentially capable of secession and independent statehood.

<sup>8</sup> As of March 2008, the Russian Federation is divided into 83 federal subjects (*subyekty*) or regional units/provinces. They include: 21 Republics (established based on territorial and ethnic principles; meant to be home to a specific ethnic minority; normally autonomous with a supposed right to secede; each has its own constitution, president and parliament; it is represented by the federal government in international affairs), 9 *Krays* (territories; established on territorial and administrative principles; similar to oblasts but usually more peripheral and less populated), 46 *Oblasts* (regions; established on territorial and administrative principles; most common, regular administrative unit with a federally appointed governor and locally elected legislature), 2 Federal cities (Moscow and Saint Petersburg; cities function as separate regions), 1 Autonomous Oblast (national region; established based on territorial and ethnic principles), and

in the Northern Russia, Siberia and the Far East; the other five indigenous groups reside in the southern and northeastern regions of Russia. Table 5 provides a complete list of the indigenous peoples groups in the Russian Federation.

At the international and national level, Russia's indigenous peoples may be treated as one group in order to better advocate for their rights in international political organs such as the UNPFII and in national political organs such as the State Duma. Nevertheless, it is vital to keep in mind that these communities can be quite diverse and their experiences cannot be homogenized through a blanket terminology. At the local level, indigenous peoples from the Russian North are defined by their membership in a specific community, for instance Chukchi, Evenk, Itelmen, Koryak, Nenets.

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4 Autonomous *Okrugs*, or “autonomous districts,” (national districts; established based on territorial and ethnic principles; usually with substantial or predominant ethnic minority; more autonomous than oblasts but less so than republics). Even though they have different names, these regional units have the same status according to the Constitution. These subjects of the federation have equal rights in the sense that they have equal representation, but they do differ in the degree of autonomy they enjoy. The federal subjects are divided into *Raiony* and the small communities have their own administration. Each regional province has a Governor who is a member of the Federal Assembly (the Upper Chamber), whereas the members of the State Duma (the Lower Chamber) are elected proportionally according to the number of inhabitants in the regional province. Russia inherited this complex Federal structure from the Soviet Union. It is a direct legacy of Bolshevik nationality policy which had declared that each of the major ethnic groups in the Soviet Union had its own homeland within the Soviet federation (see US Senate Hearing 107-126, 2001). It was considered that providing ethnic groups with some degree of autonomy, mostly over cultural and some administrative matters, would protect their distinct cultures. Reality however has been controversial, since the pressure of the centralized Soviet system had, according to many, an enormous assimilationist impact on these peoples and their cultures. Over the years, the territorial organization has experienced constant transformations, for example until the early 2000 there were not four, but ten Autonomous *Okrugs*. Some argue that in certain respects this territorial reorganization has occurred due to the demographic reality present throughout many ethnically based territories, i.e. the large scale resource development and the intensive settlement (both forced and voluntary) of many parts of the Soviet North for example has led to the dramatic decline in the proportion of the ethnic and indigenous population, thus undermining the rationale for preserving the autonomy of these ethnically based regions (see Wilson 2005). The autonomy of Russia's regional units has also been challenged by a number of intergovernmental struggles over natural resource wealth, other economic and political assets, etc.

**TABLE 5: Officially Recognized Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation.**

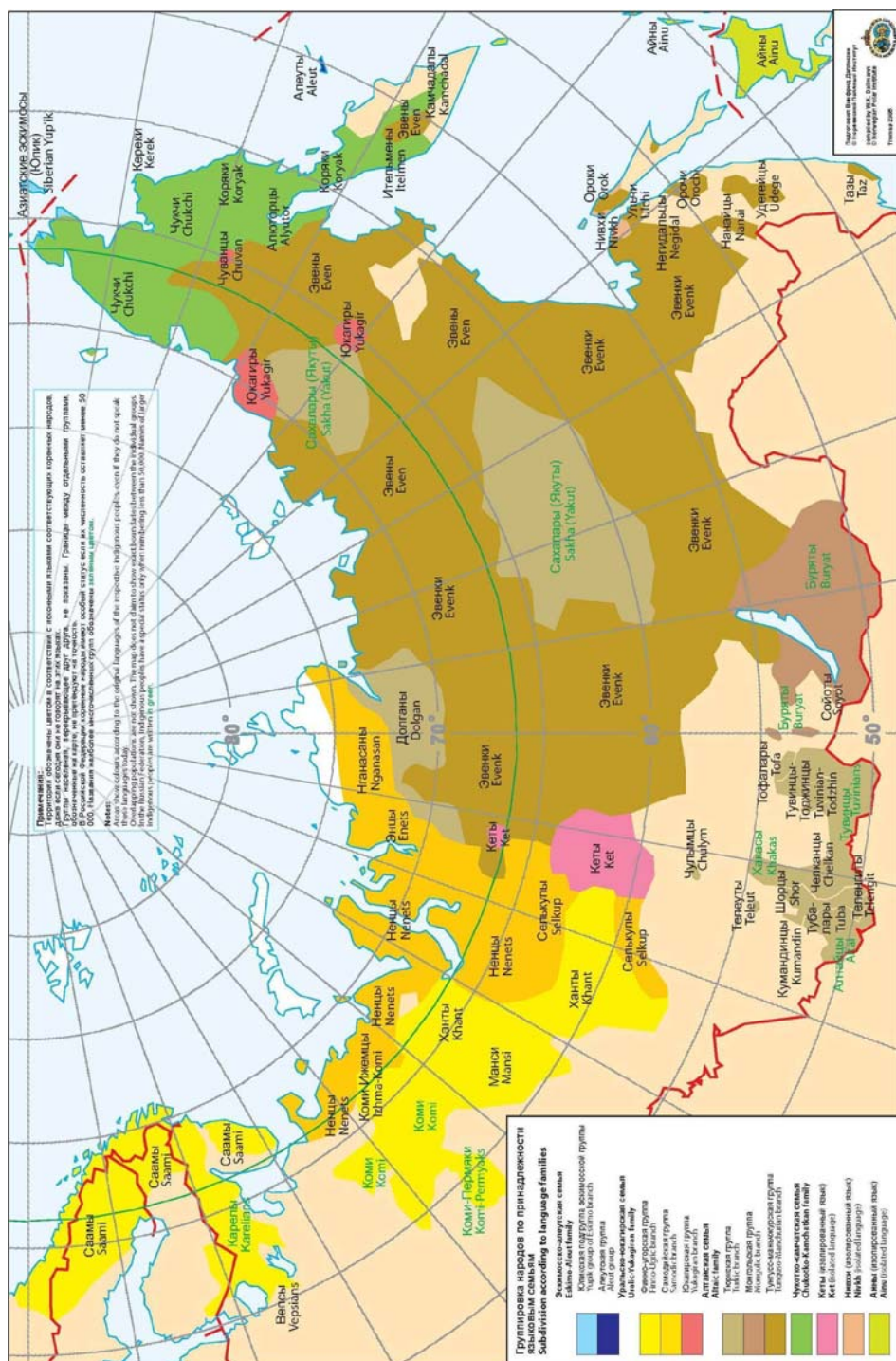
Source: Common List of Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of Russia (*Единый перечень коренных малочисленных народов России*) approved by the Government of Russia on March 24, 2000.

<b>Ethnic Group / Ethnonym***</b>	<b>Administrative Units of Residence</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Aleut*	Kamchatka Oblast, Koryak AO	Far North
Aliutor	Koryak AO	Far North; formerly grouped with Koryak
Chelkan	R Altay	Southern Siberia
Chukchi (Luoravettan)*	Chukotka AO, Koryak AO, R Sakha (Yakutia)	Far North
Chulym	Tomsk O, Krasnoyarsk K	Central Siberia
Chuvan (Etel)*	Chukotka AO, Magadan O	Far North
Dolgan*	Taymyr AO, Krasnoyarsk K, R Sakha	Far North
Enets (Yenisei Samoyed)*	Taymyr AO	Far North
Eskimo (Yuit, Yupik, Inuit)*	Chukotka AO	Far North
Evenk (Tungus)*	R Sakha, Evenk AO, Krasnoyarsk K, Khabarovsk K, Amur O, Sakhalin O, R Buryatiya, Irkutsk O, Chita O, Tomsk O, Tyumen O	Central Siberia
Even (Lamut)*	R Sakha, Khabarovsk K, Magadan O, Chukotka AO, Koryak AO, Kamchatka O	Central Siberia
Itelmen*	Koryak AO, Kamchatka Oblast	Far North
Kamchadal	Kamchatka O, Koryak AO	Far North; not recognized 1927- 2000
Kerek	Chukotka AO	Far North; formerly grouped with Koryak
Ket (Yenisey Ostiak)*	Krasnoyarsk K	Central Siberia
Khant (Ostyak, Ugra)*	Khanty-Mansi AO, Yamal-Nenets AO, Tyumen O, Tomsk O, R Komi	Central Siberia
Koryak (Nymylan, Chavchuven)*	Koryak AO, Kamchatka O, Chukotka AO, Magadan O	Far North
Kumanda (Cuman)	Altay Kray, R Altay, Kemerovo O	Southern Siberia
Mansi (Vogul, Ugra)*	Khanty-Mansi AO, Tyumen O, Sverdlovsk O, R Komi	Central Siberia
Nanai (Goldi)*	Khabarovsk K, Primorskiy K, Sakhalin O	Far East
Negidal (Ogilyaks)*	Khabarovsk K	Far East
Nenets (Yurak Samoyed, Nenetsy, Nentse)*	Yamal-Nenets AO, Nenets AO, Arkhangelsk O, Taymyr AO, Khanty-Mansi AO, R Komi	Far North
Nganasan (Tavgi Samoyed, Nganasan)*	Taymyr AO, Krasnoyarsk K	Far North
Nivkh (Gilyak)*	Khabarovsk K, Sakhalin O	Far East
Orochi (Oroches, Orochen)*	Khabarovsk K	Far East
Orok (Uilta, Ujlta)*	Sakhalin O	Far East
Saami (Lopar, Lapp)*	Murmansk O	Far North
Selkup (Ostyak Samoyed)*	Yamal-Nenets AO, Tyumen O, Tomsk O, Krasnoyarsk K	Central Siberia
Shor (Shorians, Kusnet	Kemerovo O, R Khakasiya, R Altay	Southern Siberia

Tatar, Kondom Tatar, Aba)		
Soyot	R Buryatiya	Southern Siberia
Taz	Primorskiy K	Far East
Telengit	R Altay	Southern Siberia
Teleut (Telengetter)	Kemerovo O, R Altay	Central Siberia
Tofalar (Karagas, Tofa)*	Irkutsk O	Southern Siberia
Tubalar (Tuba)	R Altay	Southern Siberia
Tuvinian-Todzhin (Todja, Soyot, Soyon, Uriankhai)	R Tuva	Southern Siberia
Udege (Udihe)*	Primorskiy K, Khabarovsk K	Far East
Ulchi (Manguns)*	Khabarovsk K	Far East
Veps	R Kareliya, Leningrad O	Far North
Yukagir (Odul)*	R Sakha, Magadan O, Chukotka AO	Far North
Abazin (Abaza)**	R Karachaevo-Cherksk	Northern Caucasus
Besermyan**	R Udmurt	East European Plain
Izhorian (Izhora)**	Leningrad O	Northwestern Russia
Nagaybak**	Chelyabinsk O	Urals
Shapsug**	Krasnodar K	Northern Caucasus

Notes: \* Ethnic groups (26 in total) that were recognized in 1926 as “small-numbered indigenous peoples” and had the status during most of the Soviet era. The rest of the ethnic groups applied for this status during 1993 and 2000. The Kerek and Alyutor were earlier grouped with the Koryak, but have more recently achieved their independent status as indigenous peoples. \*\* Ethnic groups (5 in total) that are included in the Common List of Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of Russia but do not reside in the Russian North, Siberia, and Far East region and as such are not included in the present examination of Russia’s indigenous peoples. \*\*\* In brackets are given the alternative ethnonyms (names) applied to the given ethnic group. AO: Autonomous *Okrug*; K: *Kray*; O: *Oblast*; R: Republic.





**FIGURE 3:** Geographic Distribution of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation (subdivided according to language families).

Source: Dallmann, Winfried. 2005. Norwegian Polar Institute. Tromsø, Norway.

Note: Areas show colors according to the original language of the respective indigenous peoples, even if they do not speak these languages today. Overlapping populations are not shown. Map does not claim to show exact boundaries between the individual groups. In the Russian Federation, indigenous peoples have a special status only when numbering less than 50,000.

## Settlement Patterns

At present, the numerically small indigenous peoples of Russia number approximately 280,000.<sup>9</sup> Almost all of them live in the northernmost territories of Russia – namely Northern Russia, Siberia, and the Far East, collectively referred to as the Russian North.

Defining “the North” is a complicated matter. There have been numerous attempts to define, delineate, or conceptualize the North. Riffenburgh (2005: 270), in reviewing the *Practical Dictionary of Siberia and the North*, indicates the following definition of what the “Russian North” constitutes:

*“the territory where the northern Great Russians settled along the rivers of the Arctic Ocean basin. The remoteness of these areas from the main Russian settlement zones as well as the ‘foreign’ ethnic environments, absence of serfdom in most of the area, and greater uniformity of material complexes makes the area different from those of central or southern Russians in dialect, type of dwelling, clothing, and other cultural attributes.”*

Russian scholar, Slavin (1972), classifies the Russian North according to four criteria: 1) location to the north of long-standing settled and economically developed areas of the country and remoteness from large industrial centers; 2) harsh climatic conditions, which make economic and social development difficult as a result of long winters and permafrost over much of the territory; 3) very low population density and a less developed industrial base; and 4) high costs of construction compared with other regions of the country. It should be noted that some scholars refer to the entire area of Russia east of the Ural mountains as “Siberia.” This designation however, is technically

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<sup>9</sup> Compare this to the 1897 figure provided by S.K. Patkanov – he claimed that the overall number of indigenous peoples of Siberia amounted to 822,000 people (that included the Yakut and Buryat) (Diatchkova 2001)

incorrect. For further discussion on the definition of the Russian North, see for example Coates (1994), Hill and Gaddy (2003), and Petrov (2008b).

While the terms “North” and “Northern Russia, Siberia, and the Far East” are used interchangeably in the Russian legislation, their legal and geographical meanings are not exactly the same. In geographic terms, the “North” covers the European part of the northernmost region of Russia. The “North” is smaller in size than “Northern Russia, Siberia, and the Far East.” However, in legislation concerning numerically small indigenous peoples, these terms seem to have an identical legal meaning. In this dissertation, they are used interchangeably.

Figure 3 illustrates the geographic distribution of the indigenous groups in Russia. The territories of indigenous peoples are generally located in very remote areas. The majority of the indigenous peoples (75%) reside in sparsely populated small settlements or villages of only a few hundred, in camps of one or several families, or even nomadically (Osherenko 2001). Most of them live close to their traditional areas of settlement (homelands)<sup>10</sup>, principally rural areas of the Khabarovsk Kray, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area, Nenets Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Primorskiy Kray, Sakhalin Oblast, and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area.

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<sup>10</sup> The term “traditional areas of settlement” (also referred to as “territories of traditional/historical inhabitancy” or “original homelands”) is used for the areas that indigenous peoples used to live in as well as their subsistence areas. Traditional areas of settlement of the indigenous peoples of the North extend over the Arctic and sub-Arctic territory, from the Kola Peninsula in the west to the Bering Strait in the east and south to the Amur River and Sakhalin island. They are located in 25 of the total 83 federal regions of the Russian Federation. The list of indigenous homelands is approved by the Russian Government, and since 1980, this list has been changed and amended four times in 1980, 1987, 1993, and 2000 (Petrov 2008a).

While indigenous northerners occupy a vast territory, about 11 million km<sup>2</sup> or 64% of the Russian Federation, they comprise a mere 2% of the entire population of Russia's North and only 0.16% of Russia's total population<sup>11</sup> (Government of the Russian Federation 2000; Nuttall et al 2005; Petrov 2008a). Moreover, they do not constitute a majority in *any* of the regions of the Russian Federation, including the indigenous autonomous districts (*okrugs*), in which they are titular nations (see Figure 4). The indigenous population exceeds 25% only in Koryak *Okrug* (40.3%) and Chukotka *Okrug* (30.7%) (Petrov 2008a). The majority of the population in the northern regions is Russian<sup>12</sup>, with substantial portion of Yakut, Buryat, Komi, and Karel in the Republics of Sakha-Yakutia, Buruatiya, Komi, and Karelia respectively. Russians typically dominate in larger towns and cities with their economy based on industry. The indigenous peoples, on the other hand, generally constitute majorities in rural, deeply remote and isolated settlements or villages – a condition which significantly undermines indigenous peoples' ability to defend their rights and bargain for more privileges.

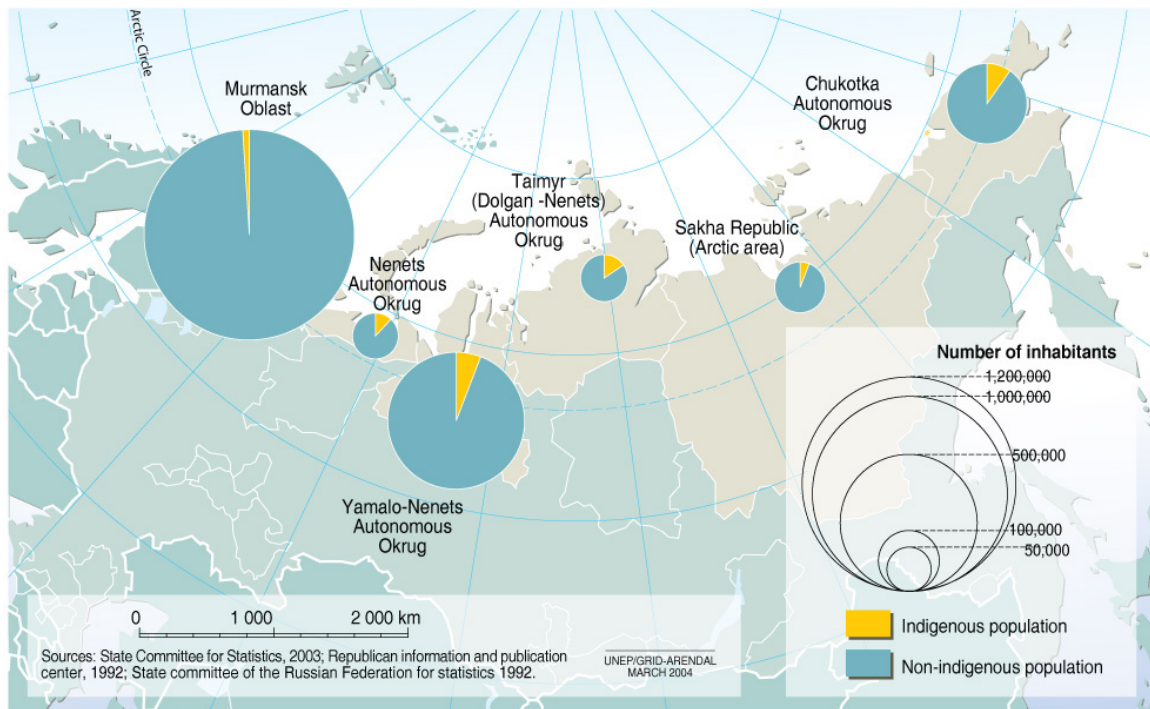
Most numerous of the indigenous groups are the Nenets, who comprise around 41,300 individuals and the Evenk, who number around 35,500 individuals. The least

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<sup>11</sup> As of the 2002 census, total population of the Russian Federation is 145,166,731. Nearly 80% of the total population is ethnically Russian. The majority of the non-Russian nationalities have small populations. Some, like the Tatars and Ukrainians, still number in millions within the borders of the Federation, but there is not necessarily a direct correlation between their population size and their importance to the Kremlin (see US Senate Hearing 107-126, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> At present, the traditional lands of indigenous peoples are inhabited by about 10 million immigrants, representing all nationalities of the former USSR (Kohler 2002). These are people who migrated into the territories for industrial development, primarily to extract and process mineral resources.

numerous are the Enets numbering around 230 and the Taz numbering around 270 (see Table 6).<sup>13</sup>



Cartographer/Designer: Philippe Rekacewicz, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

#### FIGURE 4: Population Distribution in Arctic Russia.

Source: UNEP/GRID-Arendal. 2008. Russia, Arctic Indigenous Population. UNEP/GRIP-Arendal Maps and Graphics Library. Available at: <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/russia-arctic-indigenous-population> (last visited December 2008).

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the different indigenous groups of the Russian North, refer for example to the virtual database created by the Novosibirsk State University available at: <http://www.nsu.ru/ip/map.php>.

**TABLE 6: Census Population Count of the Small-numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.**

Source: All-Russian Census of Population (*Всероссийская перепись населения 2002*) approved by the Council of the Federation on January 16, 2002. Available at: [www.perepis2002.ru](http://www.perepis2002.ru).

Year of Census	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2002
<i>Indigenous Peoples originally added to the Common List of Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples</i>							
Nenets	17,566	24,053	23,007	28,705	29,894	34,665	41,302
Evenk	38,746	29,666	24,151	25,149	27,531	30,163	35,527
Khant	22,306	19,160	19,410	21,138	20,934	22,521	28,678
Even	2,044	9,698	9,121	12,029	12,286	17,199	19,071
Chukchi	12,332	13,835	11,727	13,597	14,000	15,184	15,767
Nanai	5,860	8,526	8,026	10,005	10,516	12,023	12,160
Mansi	5,754	6,315	6,449	7,710	7,563	8,474	11,432
Koryak	7,439	7,354	6,287	7,487	7,879	9,242	8,743
Dolgan	650	3,971	3,932	4,877	5,053	6,945	7,261
Nivkh	4,076	3,902	3,717	4,420	4,397	4,673	5,162
Selkup	1,630	6,441	3,768	4,282	3,565	3,612	4,249
Itelmen	4,217	1,706	1,109	1,301	1,370	2,481	3,180
Ulchi	723	n/d	2,055	2,448	2,552	3,233	2,913
Saami	1,720	1,836	1,792	1,884	1,888	1,890	1,991
Eskimo	1,293	1,309	1,118	1,308	1,510	1,719	1,750
Udege	1,357	1,743	1,444	1,469	1,551	2,011	1,657
Ket	1,428	1,243	1,019	1,182	1,122	1,113	1,494
Yukagir	443	507	442	615	835	1,142	1,509
Chuvan	705	611	n/d	n/d	n/d	1,511	1,087
Tofalar	415	410	586	620	763	731	837
Nganasan	887	738	748	953	867	1,278	834
Orochi	647	n/d	782	1,089	1,198	915	686
Negidal	683	n/d	n/d	537	504	622	567
Aleut	353	335	421	441	546	702	540
Orok	162	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	190	346
Enets	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	209	237
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,549</b>	<b>143,359</b>	<b>131,111</b>	<b>153,246</b>	<b>158,324</b>	<b>184,448</b>	<b>208,980</b>
<i>Indigenous Peoples added to the Common List of the Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples after 1989</i>							
Shor	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	13,975
Veps	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	8,240
Todja	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	4,442
Kumanda	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	3,114
Soyot	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	2,769
Teleut	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	2,650
Telengit	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	2,395
Kamchadal	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	2,293
Tubalar	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	1,596
Chelkan	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	855
Chulym	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	656
Taz	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	276
Alutor	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	12
Kerek*	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	8
<b>Total</b>							<b>43,281</b>
<b>Grand Total (2002)</b>							<b>252,261</b>

Notes: \* According to the 2002 census, there were only 8 people registered as ethnic Kerek in Russia. This means the ethnic group is nearly extinct. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many members of the Kerek ethnic group shifted to Chukchi which further makes the population estimate hard to predict. No other more current data on the number of this ethnic indigenous group exists. RAIPON considers that Russia has already lost this nationality and cites the following other nationalities to be on the verge of extinction: Aleut, Enets, Ket, Negidal, Orochi, Orok, Tofalar, and Yukagir.

A few other relevant indigenous demographic statistical trends revealed in the 2002 census<sup>14</sup>: Indigenous peoples of the Russian North have demonstrated a steady growth over the last decades (refer to Table 6). This trend however can be somewhat misleading; i.e. the dynamics of the indigenous population depends on *both* natural growth and non-demographic factors such as legal changes or shifts in indigenous self-identification by individuals (Petrov 2008a). Scholars, such as Murashko (2008b), demonstrate that although ethnologists have noted a significant population growth, this is mainly related to the post-Soviet government's promise of socio-economic rights for indigenous peoples (federal and regional laws supporting indigenous population, passed in 1990s, provided additional economic incentives for people to reclaim their indigenous status), in contrast with the 1970s when identification as Russian was encouraged among indigenous peoples. Petrov (2008a) points out that historically, the assimilation factor was remarkably strong for almost all northern indigenous groups, reducing the population growth by 70% in 1970-1978 and 12% in 1979-1989. In contrast, Petrov argues, reclaiming indigenous ethnicity and other "non-demographic" factors contributed to indigenous peoples' growth by 5.5% in 1989-2002.

Indigenous fertility in the Russian North has gradually declined in the last few decades (birth rate is down by 69% in comparison with 1995). Furthermore, the region is characterized with high mortality rate (mortality has increased by 35.3% in comparison with 1995), which in turn is associated with an extremely low life expectancy of Russia's

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<sup>14</sup> The 2002 All-Russia Census is the first comprehensive census since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The next census is tentatively planned for 2010. A representative from the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, who has long had experience with indigenous issues in Russia, has informed me during a personal interview that the planned 2010 Census will NOT specifically identify the indigenous peoples of the Russian North, i.e. they will be somehow merged with other ethnic groups.

indigenous peoples. Petrov (2008a) attributes the decline in fertility not only to the purely economic challenges of the post-Soviet transitional period, but also to the “deep changes in the traditional socioeconomic organization and existential conditions of indigenous households” (279). The hardships of the 1990s, explains Petrov, eroded the social infrastructure, medical services, and childcare support.

Indigenous northerners are among the least educated Russian citizens: 41.5% lack high school education compared to 22.4% in the federation. Wessendorf (2005) illustrates that the low level of education and professional training of the indigenous peoples of the North, in part, prevents them to be represented in federal and provincial bodies of state power and administration. In general, indigenous representatives hold positions that have no authority to make decision. Alienated from exercising any authority, they are unable to fully influence their own development.

Difficulties in taking advantage of higher education have kept most indigenous northerners from any real opportunity to participate in the industrial economy (AMAP 1997). Indigenous peoples, especially women, are less economically active and have fewer employment opportunities compared to the non-indigenous populations as a whole. According to the 2002 census, the indigenous employment rate is only 52%.<sup>15</sup> For a thorough review and discussion of the population dynamic and changes in the demographic structure of indigenous peoples in post-Soviet Russia, see for example Petrov (2008a).

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<sup>15</sup> The employment rate accounts for employment in land-based economy (e.g. agriculture, hunting, fishing, forestry, and related industries) and for employment in modern sectors (e.g. administration, security, finance, real estate, business, social services, transport, construction, and communication).



## Indigenous Peoples and the Environment

For centuries, the indigenous peoples of the Russian North have led a nomadic and semi-settled way of life, moving to several different locations throughout the year. Despite the diverse historical, ethnic, and linguistic background, they have quite similar subsistence economies. Their traditional subsistence activities have centered on hunting and trapping (wild deer, elk, snow sheep, polar fox, hare, wolverine, otter, and occasionally brown and polar bears; various birds; as well as marine mammals – whales, walrus and seals), fishing (pink and white salmon, pike, sturgeon, trout, and carp), and reindeer herding (Nuttall et al 2005; Slezkine 1993). These are considered to be the four major subsistence economies. Reindeer herding was, and still is, a major occupation of many indigenous groups. The animals are raised for their highly nutritious meat, for draft, and for human transport. Reindeer husbandry, a practice of the Russian indigenous peoples since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was designated by the Soviet State as a branch of agriculture and is by far the most predominant form of agriculture in the Russian North (Gray and Stammeler 2002). Reindeer herding is characterized with wide-range season migrations around the tundra-northern taiga interface. Fishing ranks essentially first or second in economic activities of the indigenous peoples of the North. Indigenous hunting includes all kind of game, even those falling out of the hunting pool, such as the snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) and rough-legged buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*) – for more information on the economic activities of Russia's indigenous peoples refer for example to UNEP-WCMC 2003. Other traditional activities include gathering of wild plants, and to a certain degree, craft making and traditional art (Nuttall et al 2005). A few indigenous

groups are also involved with cattle breeding. It should be noted however, that traditional economies based on local production, sharing, and barter, are giving way to mixed economies in which money plays a greater role (see for example Caulfield 2000).

The specific activities of the different peoples vary from region to region depending on the climatic zones and the endemic wild animal and plant resources. Indigenous communities such as the Chukchi, Nenets, and Saami have centered around tundra reindeer herding; the Evenk, Dolgan, and forest Nenets – around taiga hunting; the Eskimo and Chukchi coastal communities in Chukotka – around sea mammal hunting; and the Aleut and Itelmen – around fishing. Table 7 presents the distribution of traditional economic activities according to indigenous groups. These traditional subsistence practices “provide the basis for food production and have endured over thousands of years, with cultural adaptations and the ability to utilize resources often associated with or affected by seasonal variation and changing ecological conditions” (Nuttall et al 2005). In today’s modern world, traditional harvesting activities form a significant part of the dietary intake of many indigenous households. But as scholars have indicated, the living resources of the Arctic not only sustain indigenous peoples in an economic sense. They also provide “a fundamental basis for social identity, cultural survival and spiritual life” (Nuttall 2000); an opportunity for the “renewal and in some cases reinforcement of ethnic identities” (Csonka and Schweitzer 2004).

**TABLE 7: Main Traditional Trades of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North.**  
Source: AMAP. 2004. Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North. Chapter 2 of PTS Final Report. Oslo.

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Main Traditional Trade</b>
Aleut	Sea-hunting, fishing, gathering.
Chukchi	Two original types of economies: Reindeer-breeding with large herds (continental nomadic groups) and sea-animal hunting (coastal settled group). Secondary activities: hunting, fishing, gathering. The reindeer-breeders travel across the tundra with deer teams, coastal sea-hunters travel with dog teams.
Chuvan	Fishing, hunting, dog-breeding, picking.
Dolgan	Reindeer-breeding of mixed type. Hunting for wild deer at river crossings and with deer-decoy, fowling. Fishing.
Enets	Hunting, fishing.
Eskimo	Hunting for whale, walrus and other marine mammals. Wild deer hunting, fowling, fishing, berry picking, seaweeds.
Evenk	Hunting, fishing, reindeer-breeding.
Even	Reindeer-breeding, hunting, fishing, gathering.
Itelmen	Fishing, hunting.
Ket	Fishing, hunting.
Khanty	Fishing, hunting, reindeer-breeding.
Kuman	Cattle-breeding, reindeer-breeding, hunting, fishing, gathering, blacksmithing.
Mansi	Hunting, fishing, reindeer-breeding.
Nanai	Hunting, fishing, gathering.
Negidal	Fishing, hunting, gathering.
Nenets	Reindeer-breeding for production and transportation, traveling with sled driven by a team of 3-5 deer. Hunting for wild deer, fur animals, and birds, fishing.
Nganasan	Wild deer hunting at river crossing and with deer-decoy, geese hunting and hunting for other animals and birds. Net fishing, fishing with gaffs, reindeer-breeding mainly for transportation.
Nivkh	Fishing, hunting, dog-breeding, gathering.
Orochi	Fishing, hunting.
Orok	Hunting, fishing, gathering.
Saami	Wild deer hunting, including herding and traps, coastal and sea fishing, reindeer breeding for transportation and partially for production. Semi-nomadic life. Hunting for fur animals. Skin, wood, horn processing. Spinning.
Selkup	Hunting with guns and traps for different animals, birds. Fishing with nets, rods. Reindeer-breeding for transportation. Various crafts: blacksmithing, spinning. They also acquired cattle-breeding and gardening. Currently traditional activities largely destroyed by industry (oil).
Shor	Blacksmithing, hunting, gathering, apiculture.
Teleut	Hunting, horse-breeding, gathering.
Tofalar	Hunting, reindeer-breeding.
Tuvin-Todzhin	Hunting, reindeer-breeding, gathering.
Udege	Hunting, fishing, gathering, antler deer-breeding.
Ulchi	Fishing, hunting, gathering.
Yukaghir	Fishing, hunting, gathering.

Like many other indigenous groups, Russia's northern peoples have very strong ties to their surrounding natural environment and their cultural survival is dependent on intact ecosystems. Piers Vitebsky, who lived among Northern indigenous communities, remarks that the "competence in [reindeer] herding," for example, "depends on intimate knowledge of one's animals and of their interaction with the landscape across which they move; it uses special vocabulary and imagery of reindeer behavior and moods; and requires unceasing teamwork from before dawn till after dark" (Vitebsky 1989). This intimate, mutually beneficial relationship between society and environment is expressed in the Charter of the Indigenous Peoples of Northern Russia, Siberia and the Far East:

*"We, the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation, believe that:*

- *The Air, the Land and Water are blessed,*
- *Nature is the source of life,*
- *Man is but a drop in the whirlpool of life,*
- *The river of time is but a reflection of the past, present, and future and that how our ancestors lived in the past is how we now live and how our offspring will live in the future"* (Charter of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation).<sup>16</sup>

The Charter further illustrates that the spirit of the ancestors has been the driving force for indigenous peoples' survival throughout the centuries. One might assume that the many years of Soviet policies have led the indigenous peoples of the North to forget the culture and their ancestors and drift away from it, but somehow they have managed to preserve their identity.

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<sup>16</sup> Charter of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation adopted at the IV Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East. 2001. Moscow. An English translation of the Charter is available in the official periodical of RAIPON *Indigenous Peoples' World Living Arctic* 6-7. 2001. Full text of the Charter is provided in Appendix F.

## Historical Overview

Russia's current social, cultural, and political situations have been significantly shaped by, and re-constructed through the Russian colonial expansion and the legacy of the Soviet Union with its overwhelming industrial-patrimonial authority and policy of paternalism. The region's historical context has also largely been responsible for the crisis in the development of the indigenous peoples.

The Russian colonization of the North began in the mid-1600s under the Romanovs and continued through the early 1900s. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Russian colonists annexed native lands and demanded *yasak* (fur tribute/tax) to be paid in yearly allotments from all local inhabitants, which further burdened native peoples' subsistence demands and altered the natural populations of fur-bearing animals (Crate 2002; Diatchkova 2001).<sup>17</sup> During that period indigenous peoples, or as they were then called the "northern aliens," were drawn away from subsistence economies on which they had successfully depended towards a market economy over which they had little or no control (see Forsyth 1992; Pika and Grant 1999; Slezkine 1994). Yet, overall, the colonial experience of the Russian North has been "relatively softer" especially if one was to compare it with the initial "genocides" Native Americans had to endure in the United States (see Balzer 1999). The policies of collectivization and forced resettlement (i.e. command organization of labor and the

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<sup>17</sup> Diatchkova (2001) discloses that the Saami were the first peoples to pay levy to the state of Novgorod beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Samoyeds and Tungus were among the ones who were subject to the fur tax in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Itelmens and Koryaks were annexed to Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and soon after came the turn of the Eskimo and Ainu of the Kuril Islands. The Chukchi were incorporated as "not totally dependent on the government" people as stated by the decree of Empress Catherine II dated 1789.

construction of Soviet villages) of the Soviet Union, on the other hand, left an everlasting mark.

In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, efforts of modernization and breakdown of kinship relations were prevalent in the North. Soviet authorities decided that the “primitive” “native tribes of the northern borderlands” had to be transformed to the “modern,” “adult” Soviet culture (Slezkine 1994). Thus, they began a campaign to bring “social enlightenment” to the “backward” peoples of the North. Moreover, the Soviet government wished to unify the diverse ethnic groups of the country into a new superethnos – the Soviet Nation, who would share one common, collective identity. During the early 1920s, the authorities reorganized traditional nomadic and subsistence activities, disrupted local sovereign power systems, disrupted systems of reindeer ownership, imposed state-owned agricultural collectives, and demanded the creation of permanent settlements. The state thus turned the nomadic indigenous populations into sedentary communities – those who has been nomadic became at least semi-nomadic, and those who has been semi-nomadic became sedentary (Mote 1998). In the attempt to centralize indigenous groups, it relocated and consolidated numerous indigenous settlements and instituted a boarding school system. The state also encouraged massive in-migration by ethnic Russians to its northern regions both to develop resources and to assert its sovereignty over its peripheries. All these policies resulted in increased assimilation pressure and great environmental and social damages.

Forced collectivization of land and animals, forced sedentarization, and intensive assimilation (also referred to as the politics of *korenizatsiya*) continued under Stalin’s

regime (1922-1953) (Diatchkova 2002; Mote 1998; Poelzer and Fondahl 1997). In the 1930s, the Soviet government organized indigenous hunters and fishermen into collective farms (*kolkhoz*) and national (or state) farms (*sovkhos*) and gave them production targets every year based on the annual state plan. Stalin's government deported whole peoples from their homelands. Public policies resulted in forced resettlement of inhabitants of small settlements or nomadic camps into larger villages as well as disruption of indigenous land use practices and lifestyle.<sup>18</sup> Mote (1998) notes that by 1937, collectivization among native groups ranged from 70% in Yakutia, to more than 90% in Khakassia and Buryatia. By the early 1950s, many indigenous peoples lost their rights to use their native languages (former Roman alphabets were converted to Cyrillic and all were exposed to Russian language training), religions (shamanism was banned), and political and economic forms. Some indigenous groups even lost their recognition by the Soviet Union as distinct groups. The Soviet-period also negatively impacted the subsistence strategies of many indigenous communities including the breakdown of traditional family/clan interdependence, the loss of valuable indigenous ecological knowledge and the loss of use of vast areas of land (Crate 2002).

After the Second World War, the Soviet Union's interest in the industrial development of the North increased. As a result, the fragile ecology of the tundra and taiga, which provided the survival of indigenous communities for thousands of years, was turned into what Lincoln (1999: 400) refers to "some of the most noxious surroundings

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<sup>18</sup> Pika and Prokhorov (1988) argue that the policy of conversion to a settled way of life had "no basis scientifically" and it "leads to the destruction of traditional economy and also the dissolution of indigenous population, to their disappearance as a unit of original ethnic formation and to the loss of national and cultural distinctiveness."

on earth.” Vast forest areas were cut for timber, oil and gas explorations boomed, railways and pipelines cut off reindeer migration routes, and large areas suffered radioactive contamination due to the atmospheric atomic bomb testing in Novaya Zemlya. All this was undertaken without any regard for environmental protection, preservation of cultural properties, and effective consultation with indigenous peoples. The Soviet system poured significant capital investments and subsidies into the North and maintained artificial pricing that masked real production and living costs in the region. Since the 1960s, the government provided financial incentives to in-migrants (or “newcomers,” particularly Russian and Ukrainian workers and their families) in order to ensure a sufficient supply of labor for the northern industrial projects (Petrov 2008b). The incentives were attractive: the wages were three times higher than in the eastern and central parts of Russia; the family of every worker received a well-equipped apartment; and many families received and were able to afford a car (Rethmann 2001). As a result, the indigenous peoples experienced an enormous influx of southern and western migrants into their land, which led to a shift in the population composition. The subsequent policy of Leonid Brezhnev in the 1960s and early 1970s continued to be characterized with “state bureaucratic paternalism,” forced relocation of native populations into larger, often multi-ethnic settlements, increase in the removal of children from their families in favor of education at boarding schools<sup>19</sup>, and heightened state interference in traditional economic activities. All this was undertaken in an effort to “modernize” indigenous cultures and integrate indigenous societies into the social system of production; in reality,

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed review of the education system introduced by the Soviet regime into the Russian North, see for example Demmert (1987).



these policies led to intensified assimilation and weakening of the traditional-based livelihoods (such as reindeer herding) in the northern communities. Motes (1998) provides the following characterization for the indigenous communities in the twilight of the Soviets rule:

*“Compared to their predecessors in 1953, Siberian minorities in 1985 were more numerous, more modern, more urban, and better fed. They were also less religious, less likely to live in clans, less nomadic, and more likely to speak Russian with some fluency. Increasing numbers had forgotten their native language but not their native culture”* (Mote 1998: 123).

In the years before its collapse (late 1980s and early 1990s), the Soviet Union began to slowly depart from its past position on indigenous peoples. In 1992, the Russian Parliament resolved to improve the living conditions of the peoples of the North, yet as scholars, such as Mote (1998) and Pika and Grant (1999), have indicated Yeltsin’s government failed to follow through with the plan and in fact did little to advance anything new. For example, in 1995, under pressure from the oil and gas lobby, Yeltsin vetoed a federal law previously passed by the Supreme Soviet (the Russian Parliament) – *On the Legal Status of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North*. Another law, *Foundations of the Legal Status of the Numerically Small Peoples of Russia*, was twice adopted by the Duma, but also vetoed by the President. Mote (1998) suggests that Yeltsin’s decisions were largely influenced by proponents of national supremacy, such as reformers Boris Nemtsov and Anatoliy Chubais and nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy – all of them fervently supported the return to the tsarist system of governorship, in which “ethnicity was irrelevant” (Duncan 1995: 18). The two of them, Mote (1998) argues,

consistently advised the President to reduce the number of federal regions and to spend less time and resources responding to demands for indigenous property rights.

The economic recession, which followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of its planned economy, further damaged many indigenous communities and posed to them severe hardships. Without state subsidies (previously during the Soviet Union native regions were subsidized), the local economies collapsed. A massive population drift (predominately Russians and other outside migrants who moved to the North in the mid-1950s and now wanted to return to their respective hometowns) occurred as the system of state subsidies collapsed, food stocks were rarely replenished, unemployment boomed and salary payments were repeatedly delayed. Local industries and public services shut down as technicians, teachers, doctors, accountants, and other qualified workers left the Russian North. Across the Russian North, people witnessed the demise and fracturing of several major northern staple industries, including forestry, mining and fishing (Petrov 2008b). Krupnik and Vakhtin (2002: 14) describe the period as such:

*“As the ‘outsiders’ were fleeing the area and the public infrastructure was shrinking, the ‘locals’ stayed behind and suddenly became more visible. As in any ‘bust economy’ more and more native residents have assumed positions of local leadership and responsibility, once occupied primarily by the newcomers.”*

Many indigenous groups of the Russian North managed to retain and, from the late 1980s early 1990s, revive elements of their longstanding traditional activities and organization. The collapse of the old Soviet values and paradigms triggered a growing interest in ethnic roots, religion, alternative spiritual values, and in new identities (Krupnik and Vakhtin 2002). Diatchkova (2001) argues that the democratization of

Russia since the late 1980s has helped the indigenous northerners appreciate their past. Moreover, Diatchkova claims that people have realized the importance of reviving and preserving indigenous culture, strengthening the unity of ethnic groups, and acquiring sovereignty and property rights on land. Fondahl and Poelzer (2003) similarly argue that the initiation of *glasnost* allowed indigenous leaders to proclaim that the myriad problems facing their peoples stemmed in major part from the lack of control over the land and resources on which their cultures and lives depended.

Since the late 1980s, associations of indigenous peoples were set up throughout the country, thus allowing indigenous peoples to organize politically and reassert their rights. Many indigenous groups have started to actively seek legal recognition of their rights on local, national, and international levels in the last two decades. Moreover, as I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, many indigenous northerners have become active participants in the international movement of indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, scholars have indicated that the most complex and unresolved issues relating to the autonomy and self-determination of the indigenous peoples are to be found in Russia (Slezkine 1994; Vakhtin 1994). The indigenous peoples living in the Russian North still face serious challenges preserving their populations and cultures – i.e. they are experiencing rapid fall of fertility and high mortality and they are faced with dramatic cultural, economic, institutional, and social changes (Murashko 2008b; Petrov 2008a; Ziker 2002). As such, their participation at the decision-making table on national, regional, and global cooperation is critical.

## Current Social and Economic Problems Indigenous Peoples Face

Today, many of the problems throughout the Russian North are similar to the ones that indigenous populations from other parts of the world have faced – discrimination against indigenous peoples, fight for land rights and environmental protection, loss of indigenous cultures, etc. Among the Russia-specific problematic issues is the lack of awareness among indigenous peoples of their rights. Indigenous peoples are not represented in the Russian parliament, they are vulnerable and less organized, they live far from Moscow and lack lobbying resources.

### *1) Devastation of Native Lands*

Scholars have identified that conflicts with indigenous peoples over land and resources, primarily subsurface resources, have arisen on many occasions during the almost 800 years of Russian settlement in the Russian North (Forsyth 1992; Klubnikin et al 2000). Being highly rich in mineral resources and rare elements (diamonds, cobalt, copper, gold, nickel, and platinum), oil and gas resources, coal, and timber the Russian North has become a target of intensive industrial exploration and development and large energy projects like pipelines and hydroelectric dams.<sup>20</sup> Some of the most affected areas

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<sup>20</sup> The Russian North has long played an important role in Russia and the Soviet Union's overall economic development. According to a 1987 report by William Demmert, the Russian North at the time produced the following proportion of the country's total production: diamonds - 100%; gold - 55%; nickel - 65%; tin - 50%; oil - 65%; and gas - 55%. The industrial future of the country was then, and continues to this day to be, closely bound up with northern development. Pika and Grant (1999) report that in 1990 the North produced 176 billion kilowatt-hours of electric energy (16% of Russia's production), 393 tons of oil (76%), 586 billion cubic meters of natural gas (92%), 57 tons of coal (14%), 80 million cubic meters of timber (26%), and 12 million cubic meters of sawn lumber (16%). More recent figures reveal that the North provides over 90% of diamonds, cobalt, platinum, natural gas, and copper; 75% of crude oil, over 60% of gold, and 50% of lumber and fish produced in Russia (Petrov 2008b). Kotlyakov and Agranat (2000) point out that fossil resources in the Russian Arctic account for 70-80% of their total value in this country, and are estimated by the UN at \$30,000,000,000,000. Kotlyakov and Agranat go on to argue that the North is

by the oil and gas industries have been the Khanti-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs, the Kamchatka's North-Western shelf in the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Sakhalin Oblast. Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East have been among those most affected by large hydroelectric dams, gold, and diamond mining (refer to Figure 5). In the past decades, the Russian state policies and Russian companies were the ones who initiated the massive resource exploitation of the Russian North. In recent years, transnational companies have also become important players in the process (Osherenko 2001; Todyshev 2005).<sup>21</sup>

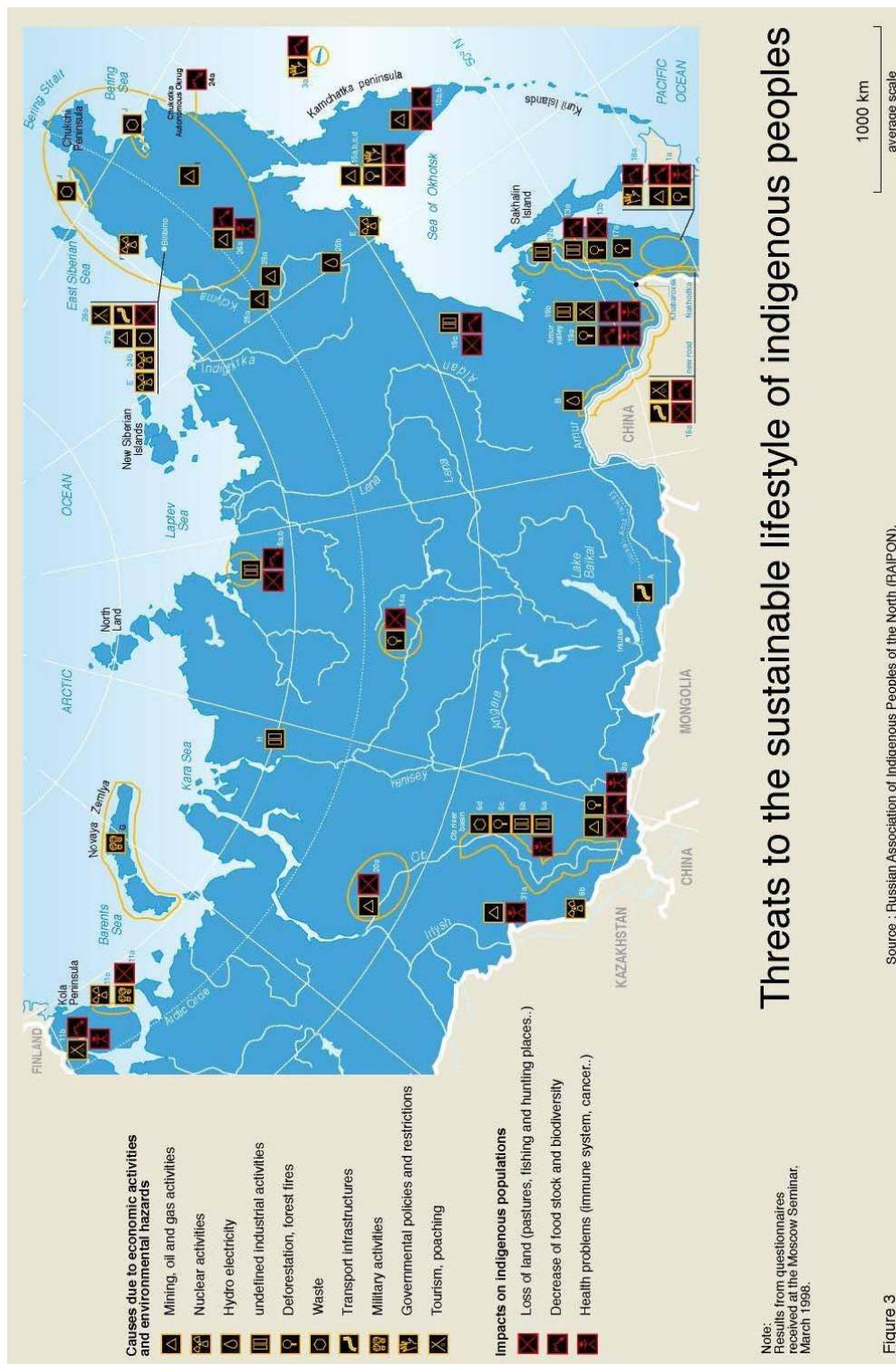
In addition to being attracted to the Russian North because of its richness in natural resources, transnational corporations are often drawn to the region by the absence of effective environmental regulations and lack of federal regulations on the interactions between developers and the indigenous communities. At present, due to the 2006 change in the law on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), extractive industries and other corporations are not obliged to assess the amount of damage to the indigenous peoples' territory and natural environment and to their traditional way of life resulting from their projects. Commercial companies have not taken into account the existence of indigenous peoples' sacred sites on lands they wish to develop (Murashko and Rohr 2009).

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growingly considered as "the largest (if not the last) reserve of mineral resources, territory and natural environment necessary for the further development of mankind." The Russian North is thus of crucial strategic importance for other countries that depend on its resources. For example, Germany's most important supplier of natural gas is Russia, and companies like Ruhrgas and BASF import gas from Siberia through joint ventures and long-term contracts lasting until 2025 (Gray and Stammeler 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Russian companies Gazprom, Lukoil and Rosinvestneft do control most gas and oil investment and planning in the region. Among the foreign companies operating in the Russian North are: Amoco, Bechtel, Exxon, Mobil, and Occidental Petroleum (Balzer 1999). It should be noted that Russia's economy is heavily dependent on oil and natural gas exports. According to IMF and World Bank estimates, the oil and gas sector generated more than 60 percent of Russia's export revenues (64% in 2007), and accounted for 30 percent of all foreign direct investment in the country.

Furthermore, the extractive industries and other corporations are not obliged under federal legislation to seek the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples, prior to operations affecting their territories and livelihoods. Disregarding the principle of FPIC is in direct violation of international customary norms (e.g. the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, and operational policies of international donor organizations, such as the World Bank) requiring consent of indigenous communities prior to the authorization of projects involving their resettlement or relocation. In addition to the fact that commercial companies are not required to conduct any social (ethnological) impact assessments, no binding federal regulations for adequate grievance mechanisms or compensation of damages and losses incurred exist (IWGIA 2009). Hence, industrialization has severely damaged the land – land and rivers that were once used for reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting have been lost to industrial expansion and pollution (AMAP 1997).



## Threats to the sustainable lifestyle of indigenous peoples

**FIGURE 5:** Threats to the Sustainable Lifestyle of Indigenous Peoples.

Source: RAIPON, 1998. Results from questionnaires received at a Moscow Seminar. Available at: <http://www.grida.no/prog/polar/tromsoe2002> (last visited January 2009)

In addition to the threats posed from resource extraction (mineral ores, coal, oil and gas development), Russian indigenous populations also face intensive timber harvesting, commercial fishing, and tourism. Forest resource exploitation (including illegal operations) has resulted in drastic declines in wildlife and fish populations in the traditional territories of many indigenous groups (see Bychkov et al 1992).<sup>22</sup> Shestakov (2004), for example, indicates that logging have often focused on the most valuable species (such as Siberian Pine) and on the broadleaf forests of the Far East (which form the prime habitat of the Amur tiger and Far East Leopard; Shestakov notes that these forests have suffered 30-40% decreases in the late 1990s early 2000s). Mote (1998) reports that by 1992, an estimated 30-50% of the Western Siberian taiga had been affected by the development of hydrocarbons and that in the time period 1992-1993, no fewer than 20 oil spills occurred in Tyumen Oblast (mainly in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug). Intense destruction of forest and tundra threatens the original habitat of the native peoples, together with their livelihoods (AMAP 1997; Forsyth 1992). Moreover, indigenous peoples are being denied rights to fish, hunt, use pastureland, or exercise control over resources upon which they and their ancestors have depended for centuries (Osherenko 2004). All these resource extractive activities seriously undermine the subsistence base for indigenous groups.

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<sup>22</sup> For more information on the situation of the forestry sector in Russia, see for example: Shestakov 2004; Blacikie and Jeanrenaud 1996; and Petrof 1992.



In the 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment<sup>23</sup>, Mark Nuttall summarizes the main negative impacts of industrial development threatening the livelihoods of indigenous peoples in the Russian North as follows:

- “the destruction of reindeer pastures and widespread degradation of ecosystems, especially due to the construction of industrial infrastructures and industrial pollution;
- massive toxic pollution of marine and freshwater environments, affecting the habitats and spawning grounds of fish and causing the destruction of fisheries;
- deforestation due to the timber industry using concentrated methods of clear-cutting, leading to the destruction of the non-timber forest resources of high cultural and economic importance;
- large-scale landscape and soil destruction, erosion (especially thermokarst erosion), and the degradation of tundra and taiga vegetation as a result of air pollution from industrial emissions (especially emissions from the non-ferrous metal industry);
- flooding of valuable subsistence areas due to the construction of hydroelectric power dams; and
- forest fires, partly associated with poaching and partly with increased recreational pressure around the regions of industrial development” (Nuttall 2005).

Forest harvesting operations and economic activities, which fail to take into account the interest of indigenous peoples, often have disastrous impacts upon traditional modes of life – local plants and animals are forced into extinction, spawning grounds in rivers and lakes are being polluted and fish stock are depleted as a result of altered hydrology and flow through river systems (fish form the staple diet for many of the indigenous groups in the Russian North), reindeer pastures are being destroyed.

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<sup>23</sup> The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment is a comprehensive international scientific study, undertaken by the Arctic Council and the International Arctic Science Committee, to evaluate and synthesize knowledge on climate variability, climate change, and increased ultraviolet radiation and their consequences. The aim of the project is to provide useful and reliable information to the governments, organizations, and peoples of the Arctic on policy options to meet such changes.

Due to substantial wealth in natural resources present on their traditional lands, indigenous communities are increasingly feeling the negative impacts from the encroachment of resource development companies into their territories upon which they rely for subsistence. As such, there has been a lot of conflict of interest between indigenous peoples and national and international extractive corporations. The most recent extremely controversial plan is the one implemented by OAO HydroOGK Evenkiiskaya hydroelectric dam on the Lowe Tunguska in the Krasnoyarsk province. The project, as of the writing of this dissertation still strongly supported by the Russian government, will create the world's largest artificial lake and will require mass resettlements. So far, despite their firm opposition, the opinion of the indigenous peoples (largely Evenk peoples) who will be affected by the project has not been taken into consideration. Even more troubling is the fact that the Russian energy policy has planned a number of other projects involving mass resettlements of indigenous peoples until the year 2020 (IWGIA 2009). It should be noted that the construction of dams has long posed threats to the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. Klubnikin et al (2000: 1297) indicate that during the Soviet period "large numbers of people were forcibly relocated, villages were destroyed and flooded, and viable local economies were disrupted, significantly altering traditional values, beliefs, and lifestyles." The authors further state that dams were "a communist article of faith, dubbed 'temples of kilowatts' by the poet Yevtushenko, and embodied power of modernization, as well as the noble and heroic conquest of nature" (2000: 1297).

## *2) Socio-Economic Problems*

An array of social problems – high infant mortality rates, low life expectancy, health degradation, malnutrition, high rate of homicide, suicide and substance abuse problems, extensive un- and underemployment, marginalization, and erosion of linguistic and cultural traditions – further challenge the survival of indigenous peoples in Russia (Poelzer and Fondahl 1997; RAIPON 2001). The average life expectancy of indigenous peoples is 40 to 45 years, which is significantly less (10-20 years lower) than the rest of the Russian population (RAIPON 2007). The average life expectancy for an indigenous man is 42 years and in some places it is even lower than 30 (Murashko 2008b).

Infections diseases, especially tuberculosis, pneumonia, otitis, cardiovascular diseases, parasites, and respiratory diseases are prevalent in indigenous settlements of the North (AMAP 1997). Rates of active tuberculosis for Siberian Eskimos are alarmingly high. The mortality due to this disease is as high as 40 cases per 100 persons in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region and in the Yamal-Nenets Region this index is 87, whereas in Russia this average index is 10 (Fægteborg 2005). The poor physical and psychological health of the indigenous population is one of the main reasons behind the high mortality and extremely low life expectancy. Many of the health problems on the other hand are related to alcoholism – largely due to the fact that there is no control over the influx of alcoholic beverages on the part of the authorities.<sup>24</sup> Local health services are also unable to help since they have many problems of their own, such as staff

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<sup>24</sup> Demographic and anthropological literature suggests that the increased alcohol abuse is related to the inactivity in the native labor force, i.e. the unemployment contributes to the low morale (Ziker 2002). It should be noted, that although alcohol consumption is a problem in many indigenous settlements, it is equally a problem in the wider Russian society (Rethmann 2001).

reductions (Kohler and Wessendorf 2002). The mortality of indigenous peoples caused by suicides in Chukotka on average comprised 83.8 per 100,000, whereas in Russia this index in average is 30 per 100,000. Over 30% of the indigenous population lives in substandard housing or traditional tents, often because housing in rural areas and along migration routes is not available (Xanthaki 2004). Additionally, long-range movement and concentration of persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, and PCBs threaten the human health of the Russian native peoples.

Alongside the health problems, significant shifts have occurred in the unemployment structure, further posing an immense challenge to indigenous Northerners. Pika and Grant (1999) illustrate that the decline of traditional economic activities of the peoples of the North (the decrease in reindeer numbers<sup>25</sup>, furs sold, and fish caught), and the fall in their production and resource base, places many indigenous northerners at a critical disadvantage. The authors argue that the dependence of the indigenous peoples on government help has led to a “decline in the level of social development in northern villages, an increase in the gap between the quality of life for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples alike, an increase in dependence on subsidies from centralized funds, and the weakening of economic and social activity among peoples of the North.” In the years between 1990 and 2000, the actual rate of unemployment in the indigenous

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<sup>25</sup> Grey and Stammeler (2002) point out that throughout the Russian North there are vast differences in reindeer stocks. In Yamal, the herds have been growing steadily for 20 years, from 363,000 head in the 1980 to 520,000 in 2001. In Chukotka, the total deer headcount fell from 540,000 in the 1980 to 80,000 in 2001, representing the worst case scenario in all of Russia. The authors account this difference to the level of Soviet influence in the two regions - Chukotkan reindeer herding was thoroughly incorporated into the Soviet system of central planning and the collapse of this structure meant the collapse of reindeer herding as well; in Yamal, on the other hand, the Soviet influence was less thorough, and as such the practice continued relatively undisturbed after the breakdown of the state system.

settlements of the Russian North was, on average, not less than 40 to 50% of the economically active population (Nuttall et al 2005). Some small villages of autonomous *okrugs*, for example the Koryak Autonomous *Okrug*, face an unemployment rate of 75 to 80%. The average income of northern peoples is two-three times lower than the average Russian and the amount of their pensions equals a quarter of their minimum income.

### *3) Environmental Problems*

In addition to the above-discussed environmental problems associated with the industrial exploitation of the North, distinctive and rather troubling issues to the indigenous communities of the whole Circumpolar North are those of global climate change, both natural and human-induced, and the associated with it increase in UV-B radiation exposure<sup>26</sup> (see specifically the findings of the 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment). These external forces generate a significant stress onto the climate-sensitive Arctic environment and more importantly on the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. In some extreme cases, entire communities might need to be relocated due to climate change and variability. In the last years, seasons in the Arctic have become less consistent and weather events have become less predictable (Krupnik and Jolly 2002). Climate variability thus poses an enormous threat to the subsistence activities of the indigenous communities. It challenges indigenous knowledge and understanding of the environment and it makes prediction, travel safety, and resource access more difficult (Nuttall et al 2005).

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<sup>26</sup> Increased UV-B radiation due to ozone depletion poses serious threats to human health – for example, it increases the risk of skin cancer and sight damage and it suppresses immune responses and thus increases susceptibility to disease. Increased UV-B radiation also has negative impacts on phytoplankton production and plankton biodiversity (ME Assessment 2005).

## Indigenous Peoples' Demands

Over the last two decades, indigenous representatives and peoples of the North have made numerous appeals for the improvement of their lifestyles and the preservation of their environment and cultures. They have addressed their appeals both to Russia's national and regional authorities, as well as reached out to regional and international bodies dealing with indigenous issues. The demands, briefly listed below, tend to be among the most frequently addressed issues.

### *1) Land Rights*

Before the revolution of 1917, most Russian land and subsoil belonged to the state. During the Soviet period, all land was nationalized and turned over to collective farms and indigenous peoples still did not enjoy specific legal rights to land.<sup>27</sup> Fondahl and Poelzer (2003) explain that although many indigenous peoples were involved in territorially extensive activities of reindeer herding and hunting – activities critical to their collective self-identity as well as their economic well-being – they had no legal control over the land bases required to support such activities. Indigenous peoples possessed and used their traditional lands based on the principle of indisputable, gratis use with no time limit (a principle that existed since the Russian Empire introduced the Legislation on Aboriginal Nations in the early nineteenth century) (Semenova 2008). After the fall of the Soviet Union, when the collective farms were transferred back into government ownership, the land became again the property of the state (management

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<sup>27</sup> For account of the evolution of indigenous land rights in the pre-Soviet and Soviet periods, see for example Pika and Grant 1999 and Vakhtin 1994.

authority though increasingly rests with the Okrug as opposed to the federal government). As of the writing of this dissertation, most indigenous communities in the Russian North are left without legal title over the land and resources they depend on for their survival (IWGIA 2009).

Scholars have demonstrated that in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland (in areas within which the indigenous population is concentrated and composes a large majority), northern claims to land and resources have been addressed to some extent in land claim agreements, the creation of largely self-governed regions within nation states (e.g. the North Slope Borough<sup>28</sup> and the Northwest Arctic Borough<sup>29</sup> in Alaska, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement<sup>30</sup> in Canada and the Home Rule<sup>31</sup> systems in the Faroe Islands and Greenland), and other political and economic actions (Huntington and Weller 2005). In the Russian North, by contrast, indigenous claims and rights were first addressed as matters of national policy much more recently (since the early 1990s) and this has been

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<sup>28</sup> The North Slope Borough, covering a territory along the arctic coast of Alaska, is a regional public government incorporated under, and therefore subordinate to, the state of Alaska. The Borough has offered local residents (roughly 70% Alaskan Natives - Inupiat) a chance to help manage their lands and participate in the benefits of the oil boom. The native corporation has made profits through leases to oil companies, and these profits have led to new housing and schools, ownership of radio and television stations, and other investments (Ziker 2002).

<sup>29</sup> A central mission of the administration of the Northwest Arctic Borough is to “promote economic development that is consistent with the traditional culture and values of the people of the region, who are 83% Alaska Native. That promotion occurs through identification of programs and services that will encourage such development, coordination with other agencies and governments within and outside the region, direct administration of grant, loan and marketing programs, and the collection and distribution of employment, education and other demographic data” (see the organization’s official website at [www.nwabor.org](http://www.nwabor.org)).

<sup>30</sup> The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement between Canadian Inuit and the federal government was signed in 1993. The same year the Canadian Parliament passed a bill to divide the Northwest Territories into two new territories, thus creating an Inuit homeland: the Nunavut. The Inuit of Nunavut are to receive a variety of constitutionally protected rights and benefits throughout their settlement area (Bantenberg et al 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Among all the circumpolar North territories, the Home Rule government is considered to have the most extensive powers of self-government over native homelands. It is a “public” rather than a native or ethnic government, as all permanent residents have voting rights regardless of ethnicity. Since the permanent population is 90% Greenlandic (Inuit) the dominant position of the native group is ensured in running the government (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999).

achieved only through the enactment of laws but with no implementation mechanisms. Moreover, when laws for the protection of indigenous lands have been drafted, they have been quickly undermined by subsequent legislations focused on industrial development – e.g. the provisions laid down in the presidential decree *On Urgent Actions to Protect Areas of Residence and of Economic Activity of the Indigenous Peoples of the North* from April 1992 were in essence repudiated by the presidential decree of June 1992 which called for the “urgent development” of new, large natural gas deposits of the Yamal Peninsula, the Barents Sea, and the Sakhalin Island shelf (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999).

Murashko (2008b) and Osherenko (2004) argue that up until now there has been no “serious” or “sustained” discussion of indigenous group rights to ownership of land. Golovnev and Osherenko (1999) note that throughout the numerous drafts on the Law on the Legal Status of the Numerically Small Peoples of the North since the early 1990s, there has been a shift away from protection of indigenous rights toward protection of “traditional activities” (hunting, fishing, reindeer herding, trapping, small-scale gardening and plant gathering, handicrafts) of northern peoples. Russian law thus currently emphasizes rights to use lands for traditional activities and calls for protection of lands and resources where such activities occur. Yet, the law does not anticipate transfer of unrestricted rights to indigenous peoples to use lands and resources as they might choose. Murashko (2008b) states that since 2006, lands traditionally used by indigenous peoples are increasingly being auctioned off as long-term leases to resource extraction companies, and commercial fishing, hunting, and tourist operations.



The current Vice President on legal issues of Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), Mikhail Todyshev, expresses indigenous claims to land as following:

*“Russia’s Aboriginals must have legal recognition of traditional ownership. Land is the foundation of their lifestyle. They must have priority to use this land free of charge to sustain their way of life, to hunt and fish, and to herd their reindeer. It is blasphemous for the state to lease the ancestral habitat back to Aboriginals and to collect exorbitant rents from them. Without legal recognition of traditional land ownership, resource companies are developing mineral and oil and gas reserves without compensating Indigenous peoples. The Russian state must protect its Aboriginals and develop effective mechanisms of consulting with them and compensating them for the industrial harm done to their native lands” (Todyshev 2005).*

## *2) Local Environments*

The environmental protection of their homelands is another major demand of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. RAIPON has repeatedly appealed to the Russian authorities to make the necessary changes, particularly legislative wise, to ensure the protection of territories where traditional economic activities are taking place – e.g. reindeer pasture grounds and fishing grounds for traditional fisheries. For many indigenous communities these traditional economies provide the sole source of livelihood and are the basis of their existence. Numerous examples exist of indigenous protests against the environmental destruction development initiatives (hydropower, railroad, and pipeline projects) and extractive industries (oil, gas, and mining) have had on indigenous peoples’ territories. Moreover, indigenous advocates have also called for the establishment of procedures to compensate indigenous groups and enterprises for damages resulting from annexation and industrial development of their homelands.

### *3) Legal Issues*

The main priority areas for support to indigenous peoples in Russia seem to be: legal rights and advocacy, capacity building and empowerment of indigenous organizations and institutions, and support to the indigenous information centers and their networks (Jepsen 2007). An ongoing effort has been the development of national instruments in accordance to international standards for indigenous rights. Moreover, indigenous peoples have consistently lobbied for the need for implementation of any existing legal mechanisms. They have also demanded to be granted sufficient political power to control their own paths of development (enhancing self-government).

In 1996, indigenous spokesman and peoples put forward a comprehensive list of demands in a letter they addressed to President Boris Yeltsin, Chairperson of the Russian Government Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the chairpersons of both houses of the Parliament.<sup>32</sup> Many of those demands had a legal aspect, for example: the establishment of procedures for negotiation between the Russian government and indigenous representatives; the creation of a fully empowered agency to advance native rights within the executive branch; the establishment of a state fund to support native northern peoples; a home rule system for indigenous peoples of the North; and guaranteed minimum representation of numerically small peoples in federal, regional, and executive bodies. It should be noted that, in the 2000s, legal demands of indigenous peoples of the Russian North seem to have ceased being so comprehensive and enthusiastic as some of the

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<sup>32</sup> Protest statement was titled “Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples of the North in the Russian Federation.” In addition to list of demands expressed in the letter, the document described the grave situation of the indigenous peoples of the North and appealed to the Russian Government to take seriously into consideration the human rights of indigenous peoples. A copy of the statement is provided in Balzer (1999).

earlier appeals were. Instead, they have tended to focus on three major aspects – development of national instruments according to international standards, introduction of regional initiatives, and enhancing the local self-government (Rohr et al. 2008; Semenova 2005).

#### *4) Social Issues*

Most frequently expressed by indigenous peoples of the Russian North social demands have included: the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of indigenous communities (such as ensuring electricity, heat, medical services, jobs), the preservation and revitalization of indigenous culture (such as indigenous languages and arts, traditional ecological knowledge), and the regaining of control over social and economic organization. Indigenous complains have also focused on the lack of financial means for domestic development programs – the currently allocated from the Federal budget funds are not adequate for the survival let alone the development of the indigenous regions. Moreover, no funding is envisaged for cultural, educational activities, traditional subsistence, and health protection (Semenova 2008).

Due to all the identified cultural, environmental, social, political, and legal challenges and to the lack of protection of their rights, some indigenous peoples of the Russian North are close to extinction (refer back to Table 6).

### **Current Legal Status of Russia's Indigenous Peoples**

The Russian Federation recognizes the indigenous peoples as a separate social group that needs special protection by the state. The rights of indigenous peoples are thus

established in the 1993 Constitution.<sup>33</sup> Article 69 of the Constitution safeguards the rights of indigenous peoples “in accordance with the generally accepted principles and standards of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation.” Under Article 72 of the Constitution, the function of protecting these rights belongs to joint federal-regional jurisdictions. To implement these constitutional protections, Russia has passed a number of laws on the status of the indigenous peoples in the past decade. Specific rights include the possibility of being exempt from land and income taxes; a priority right to certain natural resources (this has not occurred in practice); the right to substitute military service for alternative civil service; and the right to collect retirement benefits at an earlier age (Wessendorf 2005).

A number of laws and other normative acts, affecting indigenous peoples directly as well as indirectly, were enacted since the 1990s indicating that northern indigenous rights are moving forward.<sup>34</sup> Among the contemporary Russian legislations that touch on indigenous issues are – the 1992 Presidential Decree *On Urgent Actions to Protect Areas of Residence and of Economic Activity of the Indigenous Peoples of the North*; the 1995 *Law on Wildlife*; the 1996 *Federal Law on National Cultural Autonomy*; the 1996 *Federal Law on the Foundations of State Regulation of Socio-economic Development of*

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<sup>33</sup> The Constitution of the Russian Federation is the highest federal law in Russia and as such Constitutional protection has priority over other legislation adopted either at the federal level or by any of the regional governments within the 83 federal subjects (*subjekty*) of the Russian Federation. The rights of indigenous peoples that are recognized either as a customary international law or by treaties to which the Russian Federation is a party are the supreme law of the land throughout the Russian Federation, i.e. if an international treaty or agreement of the Russian Federation establishes other rules than those expressed in national law, the rules of the international agreement shall be applied (Article 15, Section 4).

<sup>34</sup> Legislative instruments include both federal and regional ones. Federal legislation directly concerning small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North consist mainly of presidential decrees, parliamentary resolution and government instruction. Regional legislation consists primarily of laws (Arakchaa and Sumina 1999).

*the North of the Russian Federation* (where the term *korennye malochislennye narody* was explicitly defined); and the 2001 *Federal Land Code* – to name a few.<sup>35</sup> Among the rights and privileges for the indigenous peoples ascribed in these and other laws are: exemption from land tax if they are engaged in traditional economic activities in places of residence and economic activities of the small-numbered peoples; the option of establishing official territorial or kin-based communities (*obshchinas*) and exemption from income tax if they belong to such community; special priority rights to natural resource use, especially wildlife; the right to demand compensation from mineral extraction by the state and for damage to their traditional places of residence caused by industrial activities; the right to opt for alternative civil service, in place of military service; and the right to start collecting retirement benefits at age 50 for women and 55 for men as opposed to 55 for women and 60 for men in the general population (Donahoe et al. 2008).

There are three special federal legislative acts that deal directly with indigenous peoples and that currently form the legal framework for the development of Russia's entire legislation in this field and that merit more detailed examination:

*1999 Federal Law No. 82-FZ on Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation*

The adoption of this law marks the first step towards Russia's recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. The Law defines the legal status of indigenous peoples and is

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<sup>35</sup> For a more thorough review of the Russian legislation that touches on indigenous peoples, see for example Arakchaa and Sumina 1999; Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Golovnev and Osherenko 1999; Kohler and Wessendorf 2002; Murashko and Rohr 2009; Novikova 2004; Osherenko 2004, 2001; and Pika and Grant 1999.

intended to provide judicial protection for the rights of these peoples and protects the indigenous environment, economy and self-government, traditional cultures, lifestyles, and languages. The law provides certain privileges regarding employment, land tenure and use of natural resources, including the right of indigenous peoples to use land free of charge in areas traditionally inhabited or used by them. Article 14 guarantees the judicial protection of indigenous peoples' rights. Article 4 authorizes public authorities to ensure the development of indigenous peoples, as well as the *right* of regions to protect their ways of life and systems (in using the word "right" rather than "obligation", the federal law leaves an opening for noncompliance on the part of regional authorities if they choose so).<sup>36</sup> Article 6 and 7 establish measures for the protection and promotion of indigenous rights. Article 8 gives extensive rights of participation to indigenous peoples. Scholars have expressed critiques that the law describes self-government only as territorial public self-government, having no links with land rights and rights over resources (Novikova 2002).

*2000 Federal Law No. 104-FZ on General Principles for Organization of Communities [obshchinas]<sup>37</sup> of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North*

The law defines the legal foundations of *obshchinas* and state guarantees of its implementation. According to the law, *obshchinas* are "forms of self-organization of persons belonging to numerically small peoples, united by blood-clan (family, clan) and

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<sup>36</sup> Dallmann (2004) argues that majority of the new legislation on indigenous peoples written since the 1990s contains such "may" clauses, rather than "must" clauses.

<sup>37</sup> There is no English term that adequately captures the full meaning of the term *obshchina*, hence the Russian word is retained here. Pika and Grant (1999) provide the following description of the term: "a group of indigenous persons and families, often related through blood or marriage ties, who have nomadized together, owned property collectively, or enjoyed collective rights to a given territory. Many ethnographers see it as the basic social unit, past or present, for many peoples of the Russian North."

(or) territorial-neighbor indications, created for the goals of defending their age-old surroundings, and the maintenance and development of traditional ways of life, economy, trades and culture.” The *obshchinas* “are organized in order to protect the natural environment, traditional way of life, rights and legally defined interests of the above mentioned indigenous minority peoples.” They may unite a single family, a few families, or a whole village. *Obshchinas* are entitled to receive an allotment of land on which to pursue traditional activities such as reindeer herding, hunting, or fishing. The law accentuates communal land tenure at the family, small group, or at most, village scale (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003). Law does not afford absolute property (land) rights.

While several indigenous activists participated in initial stages of the law drafting, their input became less and less valued in the process. Novikova (2002) points out that when it was finally passed in 2000, the law was drastically changed from the original draft version and it no longer addressed land rights or self-government.

*2001 Federal Law No. 49-FZ on Territories of Traditional Land Use by the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation*

The original intent of this legislation was to establish the regulation on the so-called Territories of Traditional Nature Use (*Territorii traditsionnogo prirodopol'zovaniia* or TTP), a special type of protected area reserved for indigenous peoples’ traditional activities. The TTP were potentially meant to preserve larger territories for the use of numerous *obshchinas* (and other indigenous land-using groups). The law does not afford absolute property (land) rights, i.e. it extends rights on indigenous land tenure by granting indigenous peoples and indigenous *obshchinas*’ land

“for free-of-charge” use, but does not provide any more specific guidelines (see Fondahl and Poelzer 2003). TTP were meant to be administered by indigenous communities, yet, as of the writing of this dissertation, the law has not been put into practice. Despite the dozens of applications filed by indigenous communities from all over Russia, Moscow has not approved a single application for the establishments of such territory (Murashko and Rohr 2002).

Despite the rather extensive legislative activity present in post-Soviet Russia, most of it has been “vague,” “declarative and nonspecific, depending on by-laws and normative acts” for implementation. Enforcement mechanisms are poorly developed. Laws have had a “purely populist character” and “virtually no consequence for native northerners”. They lack clarity, and especially precision, on the issue of land tenure (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Murashko and Rohr 2009; Pika and Grant 1999; Schweitzer and Gray 2000). Both scholars and international bodies agree that the implementation of the Federal Laws at the regional and local level is a main problem, i.e. very few of the laws include any procedures/mechanisms for enforcement (Arakchaa and Sumina 1999; Xanthaki 2004). Moreover, in a joint recent press release, RAIPON and IWGIA argue that “the Russian government seems to have no intention to develop adequate implementation mechanisms” (RAIPON and IWGIA 2009). The indigenous representatives’ comments and amendments expressed during the formulation of the above-mentioned legislation have not been taken fully into account.

In his 2006 report Special Rapporteur Rodolfo Stavenhagen declares that while Russia has recently adopted new laws on the preservation and promotion of the cultural



tights of the small peoples of the Russian North, it has not paid the same attention to the rights of the indigenous peoples to land and natural resources, which are, according to Stavenhagen, the sources of the main problems. Stavenhagen also points out that Russia has laws establishing autonomous regimes for the indigenous peoples, but they have met with resistance from some local and regional Governments, and as a result have not been effectively enforced.

The three principal laws concerning indigenous peoples were recently revised as part of the process of legislation reform in Russia. Beginning in 2001, the start of Vladimir Putin's reign as president, "quietly and without explanation began to eliminate both in laws and in practice any protections for the minorities of the northern third of the country, even while the Kremlin denied in international forums that it was doing so" (Goble 2008). In 2001, the Russian Land Code (*zemelnyi kodeks*) was revised and a critical provision was removed – indigenous peoples no longer have the right to permanent, free-of-charge use of land for traditional economic activities. The revision left only rent or purchase of lands as permissible forms of land tenure (after the breakup of the Soviet Union, land remains the property of the state). Consequently, indigenous communities (*obshchinas*) are legally obliged to rent territories that they have inhabited or used since time immemorial, in order to continue their traditional subsistence activities and livelihoods (IWGIA 2009). Clearly, it is neither economically viable nor financially possible for indigenous peoples to lease extensive traditional lands.

The framework laws have undergone numerous revisions since their passage resulting in watering down of state obligations. In 2004, the Russian Government limited

the indigenous rights that had been legislated only four years earlier by introducing a cabinet reform and adopting *Federal Law No.122-FZ On Aboriginal Rights* (for more on the administrative reform and the statutory changes that followed see Todyshev 2005). This new law weakened state protection of indigenous peoples and removed numerous obligations on the part of the federal and regional governments. Previously guaranteed free social services for the indigenous communities were withdrawn (refer to Article 119 and 130). Federal Law 122 amended four key provisions of Federal Law 82 as following: Article 4, the obligation of the state bodies and organs of local self-government to provide the indigenous peoples the right to socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their original places of residence was repealed; Article 13, the possibility of quotas for indigenous peoples' representation in regional legislatures and municipal assemblies was repealed; and several provisions on the entitlement of indigenous peoples to specific social services and health care (including yearly medical checkups free of charge) were eliminated. Federal Law 122 also amended sections of Federal Law 104: Article 7.2, the obligation of the government and local self-government bodies to consult with indigenous communities on issues concerning the interests of these communities was repealed and Article 7.1, the rights of the regions to earmark assistance funds for indigenous communities and to delegate specific self-government functions were abolished (Todyshev 2005).

## Conclusions

Through this chapter, a background has been laid down for the reader to better understand the distinct context in which indigenous activism in the Russian North

emerged. I now will proceed with delineating some of the key players who, despite the extremely complex cultural, environmental, social, political, and legal difficulties present in this geographical region, have managed to raise awareness about indigenous peoples, have put indigenous concerns and interests on the agenda of Russia's national and regional authorities, and have thus spearheaded an indigenous movement within the Russian North.

## CHAPTER VI: INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA: BACKGROUND, ORIGINS, AND EVOLUTION

### Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the origin and evolution of the indigenous movement in the Russian North. In it, I present my findings in regards to the history of actions and activities undertaken largely by internal (domestic) non-state actors – Russian intellectuals, indigenous intelligentsia, and local indigenous associations. I also assess the role of the Russian government and its policy towards indigenous communities. In the last section of the chapter, I present the main external (international) players – the international institutions and organizations – involved into the policy-making concerning Northern indigenous peoples.

The indigenous movement in the Russian North is relatively new and is among the last of such movements worldwide to gain notable international attention. Indigenous peoples of the Russian North began to mobilize politically and assert their rights after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. This is much later than other indigenous groups across the world, with the exception of indigenous groups from Asia and Africa who are also among the latecomers in this international movement. Though their mobilization was achieved through rather “quieter” means than in other regions of the world, (i.e. the indigenous movement has relied heavily on pressure groups using

personal networks at the political level, and less on organizing violent political protests<sup>1</sup>), their struggle for rights is no less transformational.

Despite the growing international interest in the cultures and rights of the world's indigenous peoples, and in comparison to the plethora of scholar research published for example on indigenous movements in Latin America, relatively little is written on the *activism* of Russia's northern indigenous populations (Xanthaki 2004). The articles and books available tend to examine Russia's indigenous groups in the context of locally-based ethnographic or social anthropological explorations (Crate 2006; Forsyth 1992; Freeman 2000; Kerttula 2000; Lee and Daly 1999; Ziker 2002); Arctic natural resource studies, environmental degradation, and health impact reviews (AMAP 2004; Krupnik and Jolly 2002; Nuttall 1998, 2000; Vakhtin 1994); Soviet and post-Soviet historical and economic developments (Fondahl 1995, 1997; Kasten 2000; Pika and Grant 1999; Slezkine 1994; Slezkine and Diment 1993); and legal developments (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Osherenko 2001; Pika and Grant 1999). Academic research has also explored the traditional economies of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and their special relationship to the wild animals that sustain them (Anderson and Nuttall 2004).

Scholarly literature solely examining the indigenous activism in Russia as activism *per se* (particularly literature in English) is recently starting to take shape<sup>2</sup> (e.g.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the activities of indigenous activists in the Russian North at both regional and local level have a peaceful and cooperative character (Stammmler and Wilson 2006). In contrast, throughout many of the Latin American countries, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, the movement for indigenous rights has been shaped vastly by radical action – massive marches, political protests, occupations, and disruptions (Sanders 1980; Smith 1999).

<sup>2</sup> It should be emphasized that the Russian North was not open to western scholars explorations (particularly to American and West European scholars) for a very long time. During the Gorbachev-era of *perestroika*, little was known in the Western world about the life of northern indigenous peoples in Russia.

Gray 2005; Donahoe et al 2008; Fondahl 1997; Poelzer and Fondahl 1997) and there are a number of issues that merit exploration. When scholars have touched on indigenous mobilization, the topic has been analyzed in regards to the local organization and resistance efforts of certain indigenous community, rather than from a more comprehensive, national perspective of the indigenous movement in the Russian North – for example, Schweitzer and Gray (2000) look at the local activist initiatives of the Chukchis and Siberian Yupiks; Golovnev and Osherenko (1999) address the rights aspirations of the Nenets. Moreover, to my knowledge there is yet no research that specifically looks at and analyzes the *actors* behind the indigenous mobilization in the Russian North.

## Political Reorganization – The Shifting Terrain

The indigenous movement in Russia began to form at the end of the 1980s when society in the Soviet Union was at its most politically active level in recent history. As indicated by Poelzer and Fondahl (1997), the movement was fostered by the nexus of the following social, political, and economic processes:

The first among them was the national realization of the vast crises facing indigenous communities in the Russian North. With the advent of *perestroika* (“reconstruction”) and the collapse of censorship in the late 1980s, Soviet social anthropologists, demographers, sociologists, geographers, and ecologists, who had worked in the Russian North and had seen firsthand the conditions there, were at long last in the

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With the fall of the Iron Curtain, more and more opportunities have emerged for western scholars to freely study the area and add new perspectives.

position to publish the results of their research on the social, economic and demographic situation of the Russian indigenous peoples (Murashko 2002). Thus, regional citizens became aware of the acute problems indigenous peoples endured as a result of the settlement and resettlement policies of Imperial Russia and later the Soviet Union. They found out about the mindless exploitation of indigenous territories for their valuable natural resources both during and after the Stalin's years and consequently they began to demand environmental as well as political and economic reforms. Formerly, the whole information with regard to pollution, mining of strategic minerals, environmental disasters, as well as environmentally caused diseases, was kept under tight control and was considered 'classified' (Krupnik and Vakhtin 2002). When the ban on information was finally broken, a political climate began to develop, which in turn triggered actions on the side of the Communist Party of the then USSR. The previous totalitarian order finally gave way to free debate and open criticism of state policy, which in turn accelerated the collapse of the regime (Poelzer 1996). Balzer (1999) argues that the dominant stimuli toward Siberian activism, particularly as it is referred to Khanty Okrug, have been local conditions, combined with the basic knowledge that organizing "from below" no longer led to jail.

This brings us to the second, closely related and simultaneously occurring process – the publicizing of such crisis made possible by Gorbachev's new policies of *glasnost* ("openness") and *perestroika* with their emphasis on democratization, market-oriented society, and the new commitment to universal values and human rights. Gorbachev's reforms generated a new sensitivity to the treatment of national minorities and nationality

issues increasingly moved to the fore. A policy of integration of indigenous peoples into a new ethnic community, “*the Soviet people*,” was proclaimed. In his 1987 speech at Murmansk, the General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev proposed an agenda for international cooperation in the Arctic region and for increased sensitivity towards northern peoples. “Questions bearing on the interests of the indigenous population of the North, the study of its ethnic distinctions and the development of cultural ties between northern peoples, require special attention,” emphasized Gorbachev (Gorbachev 1987).<sup>3</sup> The increase in the accessibility of information led to the growth in public activity and a widening of provincial power. Indigenous peoples across Russia acquired the opportunity to become politically active in a way they never could before. The increased openness further allowed indigenous peoples to begin to communicate with their counterparts in the rest of the world (especially throughout the Circumpolar North) and to share new ideas about indigenous rights within Russia.

Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech also indicates the third critical process leading to for indigenous mobilization – “a new, democratic philosophy of international relation, of world politics [was] breaking through.” Thus, there was a substantial international pressure from state and non-state actors on indigenous peoples as Russia attempted to reintegrate itself into the world community (Poelzer and Fondahl 1997). According to

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<sup>3</sup> The Murmansk speech also dealt with several demilitarization initiatives such as making the Arctic a nuclear-free zone and limiting the military-naval activities in the northern oceans. The speech also gave birth to the idea about the northern shipping route from the Far East to Europe. Gorbachev touched as well on the need for cooperation between resource development, environmental monitoring, and science. Fægteborg (2005) argues that Gorbachev’s speech borrowed heavily on an environmental strategy report for all the Inuit areas, which was being drafted at the time by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference Environmental Commission in Denmark (ICCEC). According to Fægteborg, Gorbachev received a draft of the ICCIEC strategy report and decided to use some of its key points in his Murmansk speech as a way to create some positive publicity for Russia.



Donahoe et al (2008) “the leaders of the newly formed Russian Federation found themselves in the difficult position of wanting to comply with international standards of recognition and treatment of indigenous peoples in order to be accepted as a democratic nation by Western standards while at the same time trying to develop an economic base within a global market system.”

The political “thaw” of the late 1980s resulted in a rush of activism on the part of different social groups, first of all intellectuals (writers, activist-ethnographers, ethnographer-politicians, folklorists), and the formation of informal action groups as the precursors to officially registered NGOs.<sup>4</sup> For the first time Soviet ethnographers were granted new options to present their data to the academic and general public. The Russian ethnographers and the Russian-educated indigenous intelligentsia<sup>5</sup> thus became the spokesmen for northern peoples. They were the first interest group to take up the problems of the survival of Arctic indigenous peoples and the preservation and development of traditional cultures (see Hariuchi 2002; Slezkine 1994).

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<sup>4</sup> Current estimates provide the following statistics for NGOs in Russia: The Center for Development of Democracy and Human Rights has estimated that there are over 400,000 active NGOs in Russia. Around 2,000 of them are exclusively devoted to human rights advocacy and 15,000 of which deal with human rights among other issues. There is still lack of reliable data on the exact number of indigenous and environmental organizations. Indigenous NGOs are estimated to number between 100 and 300, incorporating 1,000-3,000 active members and permanent staff; environmental NGOs are estimated around 800 to 1,000. According to the registration status, the majority of the indigenous NGOs work as grass-root or local organizations, several dozens are regional, while only few of them claim interregional or national status (Semenova 2008).

<sup>5</sup> The term “intelligentsia” is used in Russia to define people working in culture and arts, technical fields and science, as well as people practicing in the Arctic Russia, such as writers, teachers, doctors, social workers, artists and others. Hariuchi (2002) reveals that the creation of an intelligentsia among the Arctic indigenous population was made possible through the educational and cultural policy of the Soviet power. In the 1930s, the idea of creating an indigenous intelligentsia among Arctic peoples was interwoven with the intention to transform the indigenous peoples’ lives into a socialist ideal. Hariuchi further clarifies that the intelligentsia was expected to take over leading positions in various spheres of society and to perform managerial functions in indigenous regions.

### ***The Role of Intellectuals***

The 1988 article by Russian anthropologist Aleksandr Pika and his senior colleague, geographer Boris Prokhorov *The Big Problems of the Small Peoples* published in *Kommunist*<sup>6</sup>, the official journal of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, brought to light adverse statistics on the situation of the indigenous populations in the Russian North. Indeed, the authors painted a drastically different picture contradicting all of the success stories that had been told about the indigenous peoples so far. For a long time, because of the great censorship imposed by the Soviets, Russian scholars and journalists felt a great psychological pressure in regards to what they were allowed to produce. Prokhorov recalls:

*“Most Soviet authors did little but write about the cheerful life of indigenous northerners, about the joyous festivals of the North, their dance ensembles, and the enormous fish catches never before seen by man. Even aboriginal writers contributed to this impression, striving to convey a sense of their disappearing cultures while being obliged to remain silent about the problems that deluged the lives of their communities. There were a few research teams who studied the particular cultural traits of native northerners, but the majority limited their writing to the description of traditional folklore, rituals, clothing, and other forms of material culture. To write about the day-to-day problems of indigenous peoples in academic, let alone more popular journals, was categorically forbidden”* (Boris Prokhorov; cited in Pika and Grant 1999: 170).

In contrast to the previous academic silence and information blockade, Pika and Prokhorov dared to give an unhampered description of the living conditions of the native northerners, their economic conditions, their health problems and life expectancy. The authors tackled the true effects of administrative resettlement, of transitioning nomads to a settled way of life, of educating children at boarding schools and separating them from

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<sup>6</sup> The *Kommunist* was considered at the time the main “theoretical and political journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” (Pika and Grant 1999).

their families, and of the industrial development of the North. All these, the authors concluded, led to the social disorientation of indigenous peoples, a loss of culture and language, the destruction of the surrounding environment and an undermining of their traditional way of life. Even today, the 1988 article of Pika and Prokhorov is considered “the premier chronicle of Siberian indigenous movements after the fall of the Soviet Union” (Pika and Grant 1999).

In their seminal and highly critical essay, Pika and Prokhorov warned that “the nature of the North and its closely integrated indigenous inhabitants have almost reached a dangerous boundary beyond which their further existence and development in harmonious and historical continuity can not be guaranteed.” According to the authors many things could change irreversibly and disappear. The traditional subsistence economies, they argued, were in a state of crisis because of the “unbalanced economy, non-rational methods of trade and deterioration of pastures and natural areas, and the influence of industry.” Most importantly, Pika and Prokhorov urged for real representation of the northern indigenous nationalities – a national-cultural and social institution that would work permanently on the present problems of the indigenous peoples.

A year earlier, in 1987, Pika and Prokhorov also created in Moscow an “informal working group” called *Trevozhnyi Sever* (“Anxious North”). This northern rights agency brought together a small group of Arctic scholars who were troubled by the situation of the indigenous northerners and wanted to draw attention to their problems. Among the group members were also anthropologists Vladimir Lebedev, Elena Oborotova, Igor

Krupnik and Olga Murashko, demographers Dmitry Bogoyavlenskiy and Tatyana Terent'eva, biologists Lyudmila Bogoslovskaya and Irina Pokrovskaya, Leningrad linguist Boris Vakhtin and geographer Konstantin Klovov (Murashko 2008a). These scholars soon emerged as some of the most outspoken Russian activists involved in the indigenous peoples' movement. Thanks to their work, key international documents related to indigenous self-determination were translated and disseminated in Russia. Aleksandr Pika was instrumental in establishing also a Russian chapter of the International Working Group in Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in Moscow of which he later became a coordinator and first chair (I will elaborate more on the collaboration between IWGIA and the indigenous peoples of the Russian North later in this chapter).

Other instrumental indigenous intellectuals and Native political representatives of the late 1980s include: Eremai Aipin (Khanty writer from Northwestern Siberia and a deputy in the State Duma<sup>7</sup>), Vladimir Etylin (Chukotka politician who led the reindeer breeders' union), Evdokiya Gayer<sup>8</sup> (Nanai ethnographer-politician from the Amur River

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<sup>7</sup> The fairly high status and power of indigenous representatives at government levels deserves a brief clarification. It was not unusual during the Soviet time for some indigenous men and women (members of the Communist Party) to assume positions in government and administrative bodies. Rethmann (2004) explains how recent historians have argued that Soviet nationality policies were one important step in creating ... the "affirmative-action empire." The "affirmative-action empire", argues Rethmann, was "the Soviet Union's own unique historic response to a problem that has troubled, and still troubles, many multinational states and federations: how to integrate cultural multiplicity within larger governmental configurations by maintaining, at least in appearance, justice and equality among them? The answer to the question ... lay in the implementation of affirmative action policy in the name of *korenizatsiia*, loosely translates as 'indigenization'" (2004: 262). Thus, a guaranteed institutional basis for the voice of indigenous peoples existed (at least in the eyes of the outsiders) until the fall of the Soviet Union. How these indigenous representatives were chosen and to what degree the central party controlled their actions is a different issue not yet openly discussed within the literature. Rethmann (2004) does point out that during the reign of Yeltsin indigenous peoples, who previously held governmental positions, were replaced by "carefully chosen members" of Yeltsin's party Nash Dom ("Our Home").

<sup>8</sup> Evdokiya Gayer was one of the founders of RAIPON and a member of the first Duma and representative of the UN General Assembly when it passed the resolution on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples in 1993.

Area and a deputy in the USSR Supreme Soviet<sup>9</sup>), Sergei Hariuchi (Nenet from the Yamal-Nenet Autonomous Okrug who was a member of the regional Duma), Yuri Samar<sup>10</sup> (Nanai ethnographer also from the Amur River Area), Vladimir Sangi (Nivkh writer from the Sakhalin oblast), Zoia Sokolova (Russian ethnographer), Chuner Taksami (Nivkh ethnographer from the Lower Amur River Area), and Yuri Vaella (forest Nenet poet and local leader). Their speeches, newspaper and magazine publications echoed the same issues that ethnographers Pika and Prokhorov addressed. The state of the northern environment was among the most widely publicized and politically important topics. Among other things, indigenous intellectuals revealed that between the early 1960s and late 1980s the northern reindeer herds had been depleted by 25 percent; the Amur basin fish resources, by 95 percent; and the total fishable waters (measured in terms of surface area) in the Khanty-Mansi district, by 96 percent (Slezkine 1994). Some additional staggering environmental statistics included: during the years 1976-1977 1.2 million hectares of reindeer pastures had been destroyed in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district; in 1986, 900 tons of oil had been spilled in the Harutei-iaga river; and in 1987, 6

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<sup>9</sup> The Supreme Soviet (or Council) was the highest legislative body of the Soviet Union in the interim of the sessions of the Congress of Soviets. Indigenous peoples of the North were represented by eight members of the Supreme Soviet of the former USSR in 1989, and by twelve in the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in the 1990 assembly. As Kohler (2002) indicates, a worrisome tendency has emerged afterwards – a process initiated from above to force ethnic leaders out of representative governing bodies has been taken place – in the first assembly of the State Duma in 1993, they were only six indigenous representatives; in the second State Duma assembly in 1995, there were only two; and in the State Duma of 1999 there were no indigenous representatives. In the last Duma elections in December 2004, no indigenous person was elected (Wessendorf 2005).

<sup>10</sup> I had the privilege to meet Yuri Samar and hear his testimonial on the initial tide of indigenous activism during an international expert group meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York, in January 2009.

tons of copper, 10 tons of arsenic, and 27 tons of zinc had been dumped into two Amur tributaries.<sup>11</sup>

Indigenous authors all shed light on the problems the small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North faced as a group, criticized the poor conditions of living and called for a change. They also critiqued the insufficient education, the poor medical care, and the general lack of basic infrastructure. Furthermore, they commented sharply on the unrestrained economic and industrial exploitation of natural resources in the Russian North. One such testimony states:

*“I am an Evenk ... In our village we number only about 409 people. Our traditional reindeer-breeding is gradually being curtailed as unprofitable. We have forgotten our language, our traditions, our culture, our arts. There are no natives in the local Executive Committee: outsiders have all the power, but they are not interested in our local problems including ecological ones. A hydro-electric plan is being built on the Adycha river – this means death for nature, as well as for us. Three million cubic meters of timber will go under water, many villages will be pulled down. Where shall we live, what shall we do, where shall we hunt and fish, where shall we get drinking water?... I once had an opportunity to ask A.M. Zoteyev, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation: Why don’t you take into consideration the interest of the native people? He answered without hesitation: “The interests of the State go first, the interests of the people are subordinate” (an Evenk person; cited in Vahktin 1992: 26).<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> For a more complete overview of the critical environmental, economic and demographic statistics from indigenous territories revealed in the publications of the time, see for example Slezkine (1994).

<sup>12</sup> For some of these original indigenous writers accounts refer, for example, to the articles published in the journal *Severnye Prostory* (“North Spaciousness”) particularly in the period between 1988-1991. *Severnye Prostory* was a journal published annually since 1985, and was especially devoted to the history, sustainable development, arts, ethnography, ecotourism and ecology of the peoples of the Russian North, Siberia and Far East. *Severnye Prostory* is full of bitter letters by native people who mourned the destruction of their surrounding environment and protest against their lack of rights and denial of free speech. Throughout the years, despite hard economic conditions, the journal published materials rich in content and at a high professional level. Today, *Severnye Prostory* is one of numerous periodicals devoted to indigenous cultures and to the social and political situation in the Russian North, but its circulation has dropped significantly – from about 90,000 per issue in the 1980s, to 5,000 issues today. Among the indigenous periodicals that sprang out in the late 1980s and through the 1990s were: the *Zhivaya Arktika* information bulletin, the *Slovo Narodov Severa* newspaper, the information bulletin of the Center for Indigenous peoples of the North *L’auravetl’an*.

Vladimir Etylin, who was at the time chairman of the Chukotkan Soviet District and Member of the Soviet Parliament, discussed the legal status of Russia's autonomous regions in the hopes of promoting regional legal and economic rights and issues concerning traditional land use.<sup>13</sup> Traditional land use and the compensation policies of neighboring Alaska and Canada served as models for Northern indigenous intellectuals in discussions about land rights and higher cultural independence in the Soviet setting.<sup>14</sup> According to Gray (1998), much of this indicated "a growing pan-ethnic identity among indigenous Northerners."

At the sitting of the secretariat of the Writers Union of the RSFSR in 1988, Nivkh writer Vladimir Sangi<sup>15</sup>, put forward the idea to create an institution (an association) of northern indigenous peoples. This would become reality two years later when the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North is created. In 1989 and 1990 numerous conferences on indigenous issues took place on the Yamal Peninsula, the Taymyr Peninsula, in the Murmansk region, in the Sakha Republic, in the Autonomous Khanty, Mansi, Nenets and Evenk Districts, and various other regions (Sulyandziga 2005).

A significant part of the indigenous movement at the time was also grounded on cultural revival and the revitalization of traditional indigenous rituals. For the first time since the 1930s, at the dawn of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, indigenous peoples were able to freely perform their traditional rites and ceremonies such as traditional wedding

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<sup>13</sup> See 1991. *Severnnye Prostory* 8(2).

<sup>14</sup> See 1991. *Severnnye Prostory* 8(7).

<sup>15</sup> At the time Sangi was Council Secretary of the Writers Union and a chairman of the Council for the Literatures of the Peoples of the Far North and Far East. He was also member of the Communist Party.

ceremonies, bear and reindeer festivals, ceremonies of purification and offering to a sacred place.

### ***The Role of Local and Regional Indigenous Organizations***

As indigenous peoples joined together to reclaim their culture and rights, regional and ethnic small organizations sprang up. Among the organizations created at the time were: the Salvation of Yugra Association (united all the indigenous peoples of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug), Yamal for the Future Generations (united indigenous peoples of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug who opposed the ecological destruction of the Yamal Peninsula and wished to improve economic and social conditions and increase self-government), Kamchatkan Itlemens' Revival Council (united the Itlemen inhabiting the Koryak Autonomous Okrug and the Kamchatka Oblast), Kola Saami Association (formed to promote and defend Saami interests and to work for a degree of self-determination), and the Society of Tomsk Sel'kups (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999; Slezkine 1994). In Leningrad, the Siberian Cultural Center was founded with the aim of uniting all northern indigenous peoples who live in the city and of supporting their political and cultural actions against the local Russian administration in the North (Vakhtin 1992). Tatiana Gogoleva, president of the Salvation of Yugra Association, described the goals of the organization as such:

*"It was the wish of our intelligentsia to join together to reclaim our culture and our rights.... We were inspired by the activism of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference [now Council], which was begun in Denmark back in 1977. But we in the Soviet Union have had no political experience.... We had to begin somewhere. We are trying to develop ties and create an organization. Our main issues are the culture ... and land, the most important of all. Even now many of our people are living scattered in small communities, as they have traditionally*



*... We have to protect them... Because of the gas and development, people are kicked out of their homes” (Tatiana Gogoleva; cited by Balzer 1999: 150).*

Although there were indigenous associations scattered in the regions of the Russian North, they were not closely linked to one another. Gray (1998) explains that these associations shared many of the same goals, and were aware of each other’s existence, but in her opinion they were not organized into a united movement.

Throughout the late 1980s and the 1990s indigenous groups began to express their outrage at the forced relocation of numerous villages, attempted changes of local administrative boundaries, land grabbing, and the unscrupulous destruction of much of their environment by the energy sector (for accounts on local grass-roots protests in the late 1980s see for example Balzer 1999 and Vakhtin 1994). Oil, oil money, and “newcomers” confronted the indigenous peoples of the North. Many local indigenous protests displayed a strong environmental agenda against oil and gas development and the associated with it transportation infrastructure – rail, pipeline, and road projects – taking place on indigenous homelands. For example, in 1987 indigenous activists together with people from the tundra of the Yamal Peninsula protested in Moscow against the negative environmental effects stemming from the industrial development on their and their reindeer’s territories. Stammeler and Wilson (2006) point out that at the end the government put a temporary moratorium on the full-scale development of Yamal gas and called for environmental and social impact studies. This was celebrated as one of the first big success of the protests. Among the other more widely known protests were the 1990 fight against further rail and road development into the Yamal region and the 1993 roadblock protest on a bridge over the Tromyugan River at Nizhnevartovsk, Eastern

Khanty territory – both projects seriously threatening the ecology of the surrounding areas.

Balzer (1999) expresses that in general public, organized protests were rare, and did not, at the time, aspire to a mass political movement. Balzer further argues that indigenous leaders were acknowledging that their demonstrations could not achieve long-term solutions to indigenous concerns, particularly since demonstrations drew attentions to specific local leaders who were then threatened by non-indigenous regional administrators and sometimes even beaten by local police. Balzer also provides numerous accounts of how the indigenous peoples of the Khanty area were repeatedly intimidated, had their communal lands illegally auctioned and taken, their reindeer pastures destroyed, and their sacred groves desecrated. All this, done in the name of newly intensified, profit-oriented mineral, and energy development in the 1990s and facilitated “through the gaps of a changing legal system rife with poorly enforced laws.” Similarly, Vakhtin (1992) illustrates how natives who tried to oppose the large-scale industrial offensive of the North or to protect their indigenous culture were accused of “nationalistic activities.” Vakhtin explains that the supposed logic behind that accusation was that when an ethnic group opposed the interest of the state, they were thereby committing a “crime” against the state. While the political climate was beginning to change throughout the country in the mid-1980s, change was much slower in the North and many indigenous northerners remained cautious about protesting against policies of the state. Rethmann (2001) illustrates that while there were numerous indigenous voices that protested the destruction of the tundra and the depletion of other natural resources

these protests were insufficient to ensure northern indigenous peoples a place on television screens.

## The Establishment of RAIPON

Indigenous activism culminated in March 1990 when the first Congress of the Minority Peoples of the North (some authors refer to it as the Congress of the Northern Peoples or the Congress of the Peoples of the North) convened at the Kremlin. Members of the native intelligentsia – writers and people working in culture and arts – and particularly the organization “Anxious North” were largely responsible for this event. This national-level Congress represented the first political step toward coalition by indigenous peoples sharing similar Soviet experiences. Delegates and observers representing the then 26 recognized numerically-small indigenous groups of the Russian North were invited to participate in the Congress.

The “Anxious North,” together with the group of indigenous intellectuals listed above, were quite interested in the heated development of ideas of indigenous and native rights that was occurring on a global scale and more importantly in the international policies and instruments on indigenous issues of the time. They were favorable towards the adoption of ILO Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (adopted in June 1989) and were closely following the drafting of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, they considered the distribution of international documents among the indigenous communities of the Russian North to be an important part of their work (Murashko 2008a). This was the first time Russia’s indigenous peoples heard about ILO 169 and it was during this noteworthy

meeting that the text of the Convention was widely distributed.<sup>16</sup> The participants in the Congress realized that, on an international level, the problems of the indigenous peoples had, for many years, been the focus of various intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN and its specialized agencies and departments. They also learned about the ongoing efforts of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

The Congress was supported by President Mikhail Gorbachev, who made an appearance at the opening sessions, and was held with the active support and assistance of the USSR government and the RSFSR Supreme Soviets (Sheeny 1991, Sulyandziga 2005). Other senior political leaders who took part were Anatoly Lukyanov (Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR at the time), Nikolai Ryzhkov (Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR) and Vitaly Vorotnikov (Chairman of the Government of the RSFSR). Mikhail Todyshev, current Vice-President on legal issues of RAIPON, recalls that time:

*“For the first time in many decades, reindeer herders, fishermen, hunters and animal breeders had the opportunity to talk from the Speaker’s Chair, and in the presence of state leaders, of the troubles and problems of survival, and of the need to take urgent action in order to preserve their languages, their culture, their traditional crafts, and also to discuss environmental protection”* (Mikhail Todyshev; cited in Kohler and Wessendorf 2002: 62).

Pavel Sulyandziga, current First Vice-President of RAIPON, recollects that same moment in time:

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<sup>16</sup> As indicated earlier in the dissertation, until very recently ILO Convention No.169 was the only international tool completely devoted to protecting indigenous rights. Although the delegation of the former USSR was present at the adoption of ILO Convention No.169 and participated actively in the development of the Convention, to this day the Russian Parliament has not ratified the document. The indigenous peoples of the North and their associations insist on the need to ratify the Convention; this position is also supported and justified by scientific research (Wessendorf 2005). The UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007. Russia abstained in that voting. See Appendix C for more information on Russia’s official position on the Declaration.

*“I remember quite well how, as a young chairman of a village council at the time, I was invited to take a seat in the presidium of the Congress together with the then leaders of the Soviet Union ... I listened with a trembling heart to the speakers and it seemed to me that at long last many of the problems of our peoples would be resolved. The statement made by Mary Simon (who was then President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference [now Council]) that indigenous peoples should unite since, no matter under what system – communist or capitalist – they lived, they faced the same challenges and the same oppression, still remains embedded in my memory ... An emotional and spiritual upswing in the hearts of our peoples was clearly felt. So much could be said, I suppose, about the difficult and challenging problems the indigenous peoples’ leaders and activists had to overcome. This was a time of great hope.” (Pavel Sulyandziga; cited in Kohler and Wessendorf 2002: 49).*

Oleg Zaporotsky, an Itlemen and the President of the Kamchatkan Itlemens’

Revival Council in the Koryak Autonomous Okrug, provides the following testimonial:

*“I still consider that Congress as a yardstick by which to judge the attention of the top authorities to problems of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East at both the federal level and in the provinces of the Federation. The administration of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug was at the time headed by Sergey Leuschkin. We had a mutual understanding; he was attentive to our problems during that period.” (Oleg Zaporotsky; cited in Kohler and Wessendorf 2002: 104).*

Gray (2005) argues that the fact that the Congress was held inside the Kremlin with the blessing of the Party leadership reflects the “very progressive mood of the Soviet state at that time.” More importantly, Gray upholds that in this respect the Congress was not part of a grassroots movement, but rather a “top-down, state-sanction event.” Gray (1998) asserts that the original indigenous movement in the Russian North was organized from the top-down, and was “institutionalized into a bureaucratic structure before it ever spread to become a large-scale movement in any practical sense, one that involved the wider Native population and accomplished the goals defined in the *glasnost*-era writings of Native intellectuals.”

Similarly, Slezkine (1994) demonstrates that “most northern reformers expected the [Russian] state to contribute significantly to the protection and revival of the aboriginal peoples – partly for financial reasons, partly because the aboriginal peoples were regarded as incapable of defending themselves, and partly because nobody wanted the reservation (or sovereign republics) to preserve the status quo.” Slezkine argues that if the preservation of the indigenous peoples’ culture is expected to be done by someone outside the traditional community – be it the Russian state, the Russian-educated native intelligentsia, or (most likely) a combination of the two, then this contradicts the notion of activism from the bottom up.<sup>17</sup>

The umbrella organization “Association of the Northern Peoples” (in some translations “Association of Peoples of the North”) was born as a result of the First Congress of the Minority Peoples of the North. It was set up as an advisory body to the Gorbachev administration and its goal was bluntly formulated: “To unite all our strengths in order to survive” (Forsyth 1992; Vakhtin 1992). Kohler (2002) explains that the notion of “indigenous” was somehow dropped from the initially proposed name of the organization, but this was corrected at the Second Congress in 1994, which approved the new name of the organization – the “Association of Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the North” (in some translations, the Association of Minority Peoples of the North or the Association of Small Indigenous Peoples of the Soviet North; the English abbreviation being RAIPON, the **R**ussian **A**ssociation of **I**ndigenous **P**eoples of the

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<sup>17</sup> Garcelon (1997) makes a similar argument in regards to the larger democratic movement in Russia taking place at that same time period. According to Garcelon, the *Democratic Russia* movement (also referred to as *DemRossiia*) “was mobilized from above, as an extension of a pro-democracy rebellion launched from within the highest echelons of the Soviet Party-state” (1997: 39). Garcelon shows that the groups most important for the political sociology of Democratic Russia were the Soviet elites and urban professionals.

North). Anderson (2004) on the other hand, makes the argument that for quite some time both the government *and* the northern peoples themselves claimed there were no “aboriginal” or “indigenous” peoples in Russia, only “Siberian nationalities.” It was only after the conditions for these nationalities drastically worsened across Russia with the “successive monetary crisis, the phenomenon of systemic non-payment of pensions and wages, and the collapse in the supply of essential goods and services” when northern nationalities began to call themselves demographically disadvantaged “less-numerous peoples,” which later transformed into the term *korennoi* (“native”), and eventually “indigenous” (Anderson 2004). Taking Anderson’s argument into consideration means that revising the name of the Association was not a “correction” per se, rather an “evolution” in northern peoples own expression of collective selfhood. I would argue that this indicates that the conceptualization and amplification of indigenous status and identity among Siberian peoples was largely prompted from “outside”, i.e. as northern communities became more aware of the meaning of “indigenous peoples” and more importantly the rights “indigenous peoples” are entitled to internationally, they decided that the terminology could be applicable and advantageous to them. By advantageous I mean offering a range of discourses and idioms which once utilized by northern peoples could be helpful in negotiations for keeping out certain types of destructive industrial development off indigenous territories. Northern peoples could thus insist from their government on the creation of national and regional legislation that protects their rights. They could request help from the international community when their rights have been violated and enter into networks and alliances and interact with other communities with

similar socio-economic and cultural predicaments, similar histories of oppression and survival. Indigenous peoples from the North could even qualify for international project funding on the basis of their indigenesness.

At the First Congress Nivkh writer, Vladimir Sangi, was elected to be the first president of the Association. After Sangi (1990-1994), RAIPON was led by Khanty writer Eremai Aipin (1994-1997), followed by Nenets politician and former deputy chair of the Yamal-Nenets Okrug State Duma (Okrug Parliament) Sergei Hariutchi (1997-today).

During the First Congress, delegates spoke of job discrimination against indigenous youth, poor ethnic representation on local political councils, the much lower standard of living of many indigenous communities compared to the non-natives, the rise of tensions among natives and non-natives, and the lack of use of native languages in local media (Mote 1998). Indigenous leaders called for a return to tribal councils and councils of elders and the formation of ethnic district and village councils (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999). A program was outlined which revealed the key areas of concern to national indigenous leaders – right to the use of land, prevention of further environmental degradation of land, and indigenous participation in economic development in the North (Gray 1998). The indigenous leaders demanded that the rights to regulate land and resource use in areas occupied by indigenous peoples be invested in governing bodies made up of representatives of these peoples and called for legislation that would recognize and protect indigenous rights to land (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003).



According to its Charter, the new Association was established as “a political organization uniting the small peoples of the North to take an active part in the development of the economy.” Article 3 of the Charter describes the general goals of the Association as follows:

*“The Association defends the interest of the small peoples and helps them to implement their political, social, economic and cultural rights, preserve their cultural character and maintain their traditional way of life as well as be in control of the preservation of natural resources in the territory they inhabit.”<sup>18</sup>*

After the fall of the Soviet Union, in November 1993 the Association was renamed and registered as public political movement “Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation.” In July 1999, it was registered at the Russian Federation Ministry of Justice as all-Russia public organization. Ever since RAIPON has been the only organization at the federal level, which is set up directly by indigenous peoples’ representatives and is acknowledged by all indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East as the authorized body to represent them. Rethmann (2004: 258) refers to the association as “both the voice and framework through which most indigenous organizing in Russia occurs.” RAIPON has been subsequently recognized by the Russian government and the international community. The organization has received social and consultative status with the ECOSOC and is a permanent participant of the Arctic Council.

Originally, RAIPON united 26 indigenous groups – those ethnic groups that were recognized in 1926 as “small-numbered indigenous peoples” and had the status during most of the Soviet era. Today RAIPON represents all 40 numerically small indigenous

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<sup>18</sup> The Association’s Charter and Program are translated and published in English in IWGIA (1990).

peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East (refer to Chapter IV for a list of the indigenous peoples groups). The Izhma-Komi people (or Izvatas) have also been accepted by RAIPON, but are currently still seeking recognition by the state.

Initially created at Russia's federal level, the association was quick to institute itself at the district and village levels. RAIPON has a central office in Moscow and 34 regional and ethnic branches.<sup>19</sup> The regional branches unite several peoples inhabiting one and the same regional province (*subjekt*) of Russia. The ethnic ones represent only one indigenous group. The regional organizations have the authority to represent Russia's indigenous groups both nationally as well as in the international community.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the regional associations, many professional organizations have joined RAIPON efforts – among them the Union of Indigenous Scientists, the Organization of the Indigenous Youth, and the Union of Sea Mammal Hunters (Kohler 2002).

Fægteborg (2005) argues that during the first few years after RAIPON's establishment, while the structures in the Association were in place, "the policies that the organization wanted to pursue were based upon presuppositions with regards to international questions concerning indigenous peoples." First-President of RAIPON, Pavel Sulyandziga, himself admits:

*"We did not seem to know how to structure the work of our organization, how to work out our strategies and tactics, how to tackle concrete problems effectively. ... we had neither the experience nor the knowledge. At the time, we knew nothing of the indigenous peoples' movement in other countries, nor did we know*

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<sup>19</sup> For a full list of the 34 regional indigenous organizations represented by RAIPON, as well as a list of the other public organizations of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East see the official website of RAIPON: [www.raipon.org](http://www.raipon.org).

<sup>20</sup> King (2000) argues that the Association's organization "follows the *matrioshka* pattern of soviets: native people in each village get together and elect delegate to meet at the raion center. In the raion centers delegates are chosen to represent local interest at the okrug Congress."

*about the activities of the United Nations Organization in this field. We were unaware of the international support given to indigenous peoples struggling for their rights by various NGOs.” (Pavel Sulyandziga; cited in Kohler and Wessendorf 2002: 50).*

The current Vice-President on legal issues of RAIPON, Mikhail Todyshev also shares the same view that the indigenous leaders of the Russian North had to study the experiences from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, USA and Canada, as well as the norms of international law, especially in the field of human rights, prior to actively seeking solutions to the problems of the peoples of the North.

The current First Vice-President of RAIPON, Pavel Sulyandziga, refers to RAIPON as the organization on which the indigenous movement in Russia is based (Sulyanziga 2005). So what have been some of the activities the Association has focused on? A major theme within RAIPON’s lobbying effort is environmental protection, allowing for its constituent indigenous peoples to continue their traditional way of life for their descendants. RAIPON has devoted a great portion of its efforts to the dissemination of information, knowledge, and advice between the center (Moscow) and the regions, and between the regions and the villages where indigenous peoples reside. A principal achievement of the regional work by RAIPON has been the establishment of and support for regional information centers. Among the first such centers are the *Lach* Information Center in Kamchatka and the *Yasavey Manzara* in the Nenets Autonomous Region. These and other regional information centers have collected and processed information, produced regular reports, issued periodical publications, organized mission trips and media visits, and assisted in organizing various public actions and activities (Semenova 2008).

Since its first publication in 2000, each year four issues of RAIPON's journal *Mir Korennykh Narodov-Zhivaya Arktika* ("Indigenous World-Living Arctic") are published and disseminated to over 700 indigenous settlements in the Arctic Russia.<sup>21</sup> According to RAIPON, the journal is the most important channel for communication of regional and national information relevant to indigenous peoples in Russia. It features articles on the activities of the Association, specific ways of life in various indigenous regions and the links between tradition and the contemporary life of indigenous peoples of the North. The publication has been made possible thanks to the consultative support and participation of IWGIA's national group in Moscow. A set of selected articles from the journal are translated into English and published on the websites of RAIPON and the communication network ANSIPRA.<sup>22</sup>

The outreach work of RAIPON does not stop here – throughout the regions, the Association has been organizing information seminars focused thematically on protecting the rights of indigenous peoples affected by industrial development and publishing special textbooks on the use of legislation to protect indigenous rights and the negotiations between indigenous organizations and industrial companies (Murashko 2008a). Additionally, the association has dispensed monetary aid and funding for indigenous projects.

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<sup>21</sup> The journal is actually a successor of the information and analytical bulletin *Zhivaya Arktika* ("Living Arctic") initiated by the IWGIA national group in Moscow and the Socio-Ecological Union in 1995. Its aim of that first publication was to distribute information and to raise awareness and its major subject was the contemporary situation of indigenous peoples and environmental problems (Kohler and Wessendorf 2002).

<sup>22</sup> ANSIPRA (Arctic Network for the Support of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North) is a communication network project, under the umbrella of the Norwegian Polar Institute, linking Russian indigenous peoples' organizations with international institutions and organizations alarmed about the future of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. Main goals of ANSIPRA are the spread of information and the mediation of contacts. For more information on the network project, see [www.npolar.no/ansipra](http://www.npolar.no/ansipra).

Since the inception of the organization, foreign monetary support has been generous (Rethmann 2004). RAIPON has improved its political and executive structure primarily through funding from foreign and international projects (Kohler and Wessendorf 2002). Foreign and international NGOs and funds have played an important role in allowing both RAIPON, as well as local and regional NGOs, to come into being. They have financed projects, allocated grants, covered costs of trips to indigenous rights (environmental and development) conferences and training courses, organized conferences and workshops, etc.

The main project partners have been the governments of Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greenland, Norway, and the USA and respectively their universities and ministries. Among the leading donors were the Canadian International Development Agency, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, the European Commission, the Global Environmental Facility, the McArthur Foundation, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Soros Foundation, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, and the US National Science Foundation.

The activities of RAIPON are not left without critique. Criticism revolves around the failure of RAIPON representatives to address the interests and concerns of local people and to equally distribute project funding across the different regions. Certain indigenous constituencies have received comparably less funding (e.g. Chukotka) and there is a growing awareness that most funding models are not designed by community members, but favor rather standardized strategies to train local communities in a range of political and legal fields (Rethmann 2004).

Around the 1999, the youth of the indigenous peoples of Russia began to actively take part in the indigenous movement (see Peskov 2002). Ever since, the indigenous youth has established close contacts with RAIPON and the regional branches of RAIPON, participated in events organized by the Association, communicated with indigenous youth within the other Arctic nations, and participated in regional and international youth conferences and workshops.

### ***Role of the Government***

Over the last twenty years, indigenous affairs and Northern issues in Russia have been managed by many governmental organizations. Sometimes the single State Committee of the North handled issues of the North, sometimes different ministries assumed that role – for example the Ministry of Nationalities, the Ministry of Regional Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and more recently, the Ministry of Regional Development (Semenova 2008). Between 1989-early 1990s, democracy was one of the political key sites around which the country's hopes and economic aspirations rallied (Rethmann 2004). As such, Party and Soviet officials supported the rapidly emerging social and political movement of the northern indigenous peoples. Moreover, the State Committee on the North provided active financial support to ethnic indigenous associations. The Council of Ministers issued an edict in 1989 for native languages to be resumed in school classes. New programs for instruction in reindeer breeding, hunting and fur farming were introduced. Indigenous newspapers, which were previously closed in the early 1930s, were slowly reappearing (Vakhtin 1992). However, as Russia's transition progressed, democratic issues were quickly

pushed to the side and economic issues (economic reform at an enormous speed) became the dominant concern of the state (Rethmann 2004).

The new “Concept of the State Support to the Economic and Social Development of the Regions of the North”, adopted by the Russian Cabinet in 2000, outlines the priorities of economic development in the North. Among the strategic policy objectives, the Concept contains a mixture of traditional welfare commitments and a desire to improve the indigenous human capital and encourage labor force participation. It further endorses the implementation of employment quotas for indigenous workers under new development projects in the indigenous homelands and calls for supportive traditional economies and socioeconomic organization of the indigenous societies (Petrov 2008b). In the eight years since the Concept was approved, the Russian government has largely failed to act on most of its suggestions (Petrov 2008b).

In an interview I had with one of the representatives from the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNSPFII), my interviewee expressed Russia’s initial interest in indigenous peoples as follows: On the one hand, the government was curious about what is going on in the territories of the indigenous peoples (to this day, this remains a concern of the government). On the other hand, Russia wished to show the international community their willingness to open up to democracy and address indigenous peoples’ issues – like most governments, Russia too was concerned, to some extent, with its international image. According to the representative of the UNSPFII, while this was a strong concern for the Russian

government in the immediate years after the fall of the Soviet Union, it no longer is as important (at least in regards to the government's position on indigenous peoples).

## International Solidarity

*“Without significant development regarding indigenous rights on the international front, and without the pressure from western states, especially those of the circumpolar north, to recognize indigenous rights, it is less likely that aboriginal people in Russia would have made the legal gains to date that they have” (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003: 113).*

Scholars have indicated that worldwide, international pressure to accommodate indigenous interests has increasingly played an important role in the opportunity for indigenous peoples to advance their interests (Poelzer 1996). I have argued, both in my Introductory Chapter and in Chapter IV, that international pressure has played a particularly instrumental role in nation states with “younger” indigenous movements. The Russian North illustrates well this phenomenon. Much of the success of the indigenous activism in Russia is due to international cooperation with movements to the west and east of Russia – the Saami of Fennoscandia, the Alaska Natives, and the Canadian First Nations in North America. They have had a particular impact on local Russian developments since the breakup of the Soviet Union (Schweitzer 2008). Gray (2005) argues that indigenous activism in Russia was greatly assisted through the contact of indigenous peoples in Russia with established indigenous advocacy organizations outside of Russia, among them the Nordic Saami Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Similarly, Rethmann (2000) attributes indigenous northerners' search of support in wider international arenas to the fact that the issues of indigenous status and rights in Russia are highly contested and the



realization of indigenous peoples that they need stronger, transnational alliance to bolster their claims. Heininen (2004: 212) suggests that Arctic cooperation, including new international and regional organizations and fora, “has offered northern peoples and societies useful channels for sharing information and platforms for discussing and planning activities together.”

#### *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)*

IWGIA is an independent international membership organization established in 1968 and based in Copenhagen, Denmark. It supports indigenous peoples’ struggles for human rights, self-determination, the right to territory, control of land and resources, cultural integrity, and the right to development of their own terms. In order to fulfill this mission, IWGIA works in a wide range of areas: documentation and publication, human rights advocacy and lobbying, plus direct support to indigenous organizations’ programs of work.

Collaboration of indigenous leaders from Russia with IWGIA began in the early 1990s. The Moscow scholars of “Anxious North” became members of IWGIA and an IWGIA Moscow local group came into being (Murashko 2008a). Through translations and publications of various materials concerning indigenous peoples, among them the 1992 IWGIA *Yearbook*<sup>23</sup>, Russian indigenous peoples realized that they were not alone in their challenges and aspirations. Over the years, collaboration between IWGIA, IWGIA-Moscow and RAIPON has resulted in publishing and distributing international

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<sup>23</sup> IWGIA’s *Yearbook: The Indigenous World* is an annual publication which contains comprehensive update on the situation of indigenous peoples and their human rights, and provides an overview of the most important developments in international and regional processes over the years. Copies of the Yearbook are distributed to interested parties during each session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

and Russian documents related to indigenous issues. The organizations have also provided financial support for indigenous leaders to attend international and national conferences and the session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Additional collaborative actions have focused on discussing developing indigenous parliamentarianism in Russia, conducting educational seminars, and creating indigenous regional information centers (Murashko 2008a). So far, the State Duma has not supported initiatives on an indigenous parliament (Semenova 2008).

Moreover, IWGIA has been increasingly vocal in addressing the Russian government and demanding its compliance with international customary norm (e.g. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, and policies of international donor organizations). One such example is the extensive lobbying it has executed in light to Russia's recent noncompliance with the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review stipulations.<sup>24</sup>

### *Arctic Council*

The Arctic Council is a high-level, intergovernmental forum comprised of the eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation,

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<sup>24</sup> The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situation in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. As one of the main features of the Council, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed. The 2009 Russian Federation national report to the Human Rights Council UPR has failed to make any mention of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Russian North, thereby ignoring the concluding observation of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which, as recently as September 2008 called on the Russian Government to address several pressing human rights issues, such as land rights, access to adequate food, political rights and involuntary resettlement (RAIPON and IWGIA 2009). For more information, see [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org).

Sweden, and the United States). Formally established in 1996<sup>25</sup>, the Council promotes and encourages cooperation between scientists and indigenous peoples (through the work of the International Arctic Science Committee), among indigenous peoples (through the work of the Arctic Leaders Summit), and within the organizations of local and regional governments in the Circumpolar North (through the work of the Northern Forum). A major feature of the Council is the involvement of indigenous peoples as Permanent Participants<sup>26</sup>, based on “recognition of the special relationship and unique contribution to the Arctic of indigenous peoples and their communities” (Preamble). This status has opened many doors and created a platform for discussing human development and sustainability with the governments of the Arctic countries (Heininen 2004). The indigenous peoples’ organizations and permanent participants of the Arctic Council are: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich’in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, RAIPON, and Saami Council. A number of regional bodies (for example, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States) and international organizations (for example, the Conference of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) have acquired the status of Permanent Observers in the Council. Seven member states of the European Union (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom) are connected to the work of the Arctic Council as observers.

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<sup>25</sup> The Arctic Council replaced the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was signed in 1991 by the eight Arctic states and three northern indigenous peoples organizations.

<sup>26</sup> The category of Permanent Participant is created, according to the Declaration, “to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council.” It is a special status second only to that of states.

The Arctic Council has been instrumental in disseminating information, encouraging education and research on sustainable development, and promoting interest in Arctic related issues. One of the largest projects of the Council is the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR), which was structured from the outset to include the participation of the indigenous peoples, who supported the effort by making available experts, narratives, and writings on sustainable development and its human dimension. This is the first comprehensive scientific assessment of human well-being covering the entire Arctic region.

Another key project of the Council is the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) – a four-year scientific study which evaluated and synthesized knowledge on climate variability and change and increased ultraviolet radiation in the Arctic. The ACIA is the first comprehensive regional assessment of climate impacts. It is a result of the team effort of more than 300 leading Arctic researchers, indigenous representatives, and other experts from fifteen nations. Among the recommended policy actions, the report urges that member states *work closely with* Arctic indigenous communities to help them to adapt to and manage the environment, economic and social impacts of climate change and ultraviolet radiation change. Moreover, the report recommends member states to implement adaptive management strategies for Arctic ecosystems, *making use of local and indigenous knowledge and participation*. The report also stressed the importance of intensifying natural and social science research on impacts and adaptation, including studies to enhance understanding of fundamental processes and sustainability, procedures for *integrating indigenous and local knowledge into scientific studies*, and

*partnerships between indigenous peoples, local communities, and scientists in defending and conducting research and monitoring associated with Arctic climate and ultraviolet radiation changes (AMAP/CAFF/IASC 2005, emphasis added).*

These, and numerous others<sup>27</sup>, studies and programs of the Arctic Council and its working groups can be seen as a success story of fruitful cooperation between northern indigenous peoples and the Arctic scientific community (Heininen 2004). The studies have also been instrumental in steering the discussions on the need for the continued establishment and implementation of environmental impact assessments and environmental policies, and in the elaboration of local programs for sustainable development. Moreover, they have facilitated the further development of a regional indigenous identity and fostered increased circumpolar cooperation between indigenous peoples organizations and sub-national governments.

#### *Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)*

The ICC is a major international NGO representing the indigenous peoples living in Canada, Greenland, Russia (Chukotka), and the United States (Alaska) on matters of international importance and is viewed by some as the most influential indigenous organization on an international level (Schweitzer and Gray 2000). Established in 1977, the principal goals of ICC are to strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region;

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<sup>27</sup> The last few years have seen the appearance of several assessment reports mandated by the Arctic Council, each charged with summarizing the state of some aspect of the circumpolar Arctic, such as: pollution – the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) Assessment Reports, first produced in 1997 with comprehensive updates produced in 2002 and 2009; flora and fauna – the 2001 report of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna(CAFF); reindeer husbandry and hunting (Jensletten and Klovov 2002; Ulvevadet and Klovov 2004); and the discussed here climate and human development assessment reports.

to promote Inuit rights and interest on an international level; to develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and to seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of circumpolar regions. ICC's goals have also included helping to inform the public on such topics as environmental health risks and working to ensure the fulfillment of international agreements.

Throughout the 1990s, ICC-Canada and ICC-Greenland provided financial support to several indigenous organizations (e.g. the Yupik Society based in Provideniia and the Naukan Society based in Lavrentiia) and thus allowed for their continued existence. It also allowed several ecological and heritage projects to be undertaken with foreign support or as part of international programs. Moreover, thanks to the support of ICC, Yupik NGOs and local communities were able to send large groups of participants to the various indigenous conferences, meetings of elders, teachers' training session, festivals, and cultural events (Krupnik and Vakhin 2002). ICC has a project in capacity building for RAIPON and has funded the outfitting of RAIPON's Moscow office with modern communications and computer equipment (Ziker 2002).

#### *Saami Council*

As indicated in Chapter IV, the Saami Council is an indigenous organization representing the rights and interests of the Saami in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia. The Saami Council has been involved in developing communal workshops, capacity building and awareness-raising projects, popular and scientific publications all strengthening the discourse on and aspirations of the indigenous peoples in the Arctic.

Projects in the Russian North, which have been initiated by the Saami Council, have drawn on the experience and competence of the Nordic Saami organizations on tackling environmental and sustainable development issues from an indigenous perspective. For example, EALÁT (a reindeer herders vulnerability network study) examines reindeer pastoralism, a traditional form of livelihood for many of the indigenous communities of the Circumpolar North including those in the Russian North, in the light of climate variability and change. Among other things, a specific objective of the EALÁT-research is to enhance competency in reindeer pastoralist societies in Norway and Russia. The project is an example of an extremely comprehensive region-wide and cross-border collaboration between several leading scientific, research, and indigenous organizations among them the Saami Council, GRID-Arendal, National Environmental Research Institute, Russian Reindeer Herders' Union, and the University of Harvard (USA), Lapland (Finland), Oslo (Norway), Stirling (UK), Tromsø (Norway).

#### *UN Bodies*

Several UN affiliate bodies – for example, the UNPFII in New York, the Secretariat of the UNPFII, the WGIP in Geneva, and UNEP, have provided indigenous-rights advocacy support. Through the launching of diverse projects and the organization of educational workshops, seminars, international and regional conference, these organizations have strengthened the movement of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North as participants in the democratic development of Russia. UN affiliate bodies have been particularly instrumental in developing the capacity of the regional and central

organizations of indigenous peoples of the Russian North in the fields of environmental knowledge, networking, information, institution building, and awareness-raising.

### *International Conservation Organizations*

Among the key environmental organizations that have strong presence in Russia are WWF, International Social Ecological Union, Center of Ecological Policy of Russia, and Greenpeace Russia.

Cooperation with indigenous peoples is a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) priority throughout the world. WWF Russia's main goals have been setting up and supporting the network of protected area, conservation of rare and endangered species, and environmental education of the population. Through its work, WWF Russia has popularized conservation concepts such as environmental impact assessments, public participation in decision-making processes, and compensation for environmental degradation and loss. The organization is developing a closer connection with indigenous peoples in the Russian North and is consulting with them prior to initiating environmental programs on their territories. The organization is training native peoples as inspectors of nature areas where they are setting up reserves, and providing them with snowmobiles, boats, and communication equipment in order to enforce environmental protection. WWF Russia has taken an active part in setting up 30 protected areas in the Russian Arctic with a total area of more than 35 million hectares. The funding for these programs generally comes in the form of charity donations from abroad (particularly European chapters of WWF) and to some degree from the assistance of Russian people.



## Present (2008) Situation

*“The government structure which deals with indigenous peoples issues is very impermanent. It is characterized with constant changes (changing staff, changing structures). Within the Russian Federation government there is no specialized personnel who knows and understands northern indigenous peoples’ issues well”* (Pavel Sulyanziga; statement made at the Seventh Session of the UNPFII 2008).

*“Rural Natives today are struggling to stay alive; they are aware of the advocacy efforts of their supposed “leaders” in the urban centers, but it is difficult for them to find these efforts relevant to their own daily lives. Conversely, it is difficult for urban activists to sufficiently understand the problems of rural Natives”* (Schweitzer and Gray 2000).

Russia has always played a role in international indigenous negotiations fora – high number of government representatives has attended, for example, the recent meetings of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Scholars, such as Rethmann (2004: 268), however argue that the political culture of the Soviet Union has not been abandoned, but rather lives on “in the creation of new political vocabularies and legal language, rethorics of patronage masquerading as kindness, dependencies disguised as guardianship and care through which the specter not of communism but of democratization rises.” Similarly, Rohr et al. (2008: 6) argue: “While in post-Soviet Russia, there is no explicit policy aimed at deliberately discriminating against the indigenous peoples of the North, factual discrimination is according to our findings, rife.” The authors further assert that “in modern Russia, prejudice against indigenous peoples, low esteem of their cultures and most crucially, the idea, that they are incapable of determining their own goals and priorities, are yet to be fully overcome.”

I too will argue that the prejudice and paternalism towards indigenous peoples of the North are still shaping the relationship between the Russian state and its indigenous subjects. The caring expressed by the Russian government towards indigenous peoples of the North, has been more and more *seeming*, even *cunning*, rather than *genuine*.

During the annual sessions of the UNPFII and the expert meetings I attended, I was able to personally observe the strained interactions between indigenous peoples from the Russian North and the Russian government representatives. I noticed the Russian government representatives primarily paying lip service to indigenous peoples.

Indigenous representatives were criticizing the government administration and asking for attention to specific problems while the government representatives often responded by either denying existence of the problems or trying to distract attention away from problems.

Since the early 2000s, the Russian government has reduced drastically its enthusiasm for indigenous affairs and Northern issues and seems less willing to accommodate indigenous claims. As Rethmann (2000), for example expresses, “Russia at large remains indifferent to indigenous demands.” Similarly, King (2000) avows that the initial ambitious plans for legal change and special recognition of indigenous northerners are no longer a priority for the Federal Duma. In many small and remote settlements, the government has retrieved its financial support – it has cut off all sources of subsidy for transport, education, health-care, heating and food leading to misery in those rural areas (Anderson 2004, RAIPON and IWGIA 2009). Petrov (2008b) accounts the state withdrawal to the lack of clear and consistent federal policy for development of

the North, and the fiscal austerity partly due to the overall acute economic crisis present in the country. There is an absence of a comprehensive, clearly articulated state policy for defending the rights and interests of native northern peoples. The legal and policy framework present is “inadequate and contradictory” and it “affords no protection” for indigenous peoples’ land, livelihood and consultation rights (RAIPON and IWGIA 2009). The Ministry for Regional Development, which is in charge of indigenous affairs, has been increasingly uncooperative with indigenous organizations (Murashko and Rohr 2009).

Indigenous activism in the Russian North is a dynamic process, going through phases, some of which are more successful than others. While in the early years of *glasnost* the indigenous movement behind RAIPON was rather strong, internal political troubles and clashes within RAIPON and among the regional associations seem to have weakened the organization. Internal critiques have focused on issues of funding, center-regional relations, and differences in political outlook and culture.<sup>28</sup> Golovnev and Osherenko (1999), for example, argue that since the official leaders of the indigenous movement have often been individuals who were brought up in accordance with the Soviet value system, these leaders have tended to believe that political goals are more important than the preservation and revival of the traditional native culture. Moreover, the authors indicate that indigenous leaders have thus continuously found themselves “shuttling” between two opposing audiences, neither of which is truly ready to embrace

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<sup>28</sup> Smith (1999) argues that internal organizational pressure is typical for many indigenous movements. It is frequently manifested “through struggles over leadership, over what counts as ‘traditional’, and over which interests within the community are being privileged by particular deals and settlements” (Smith 1999: 110).

their reconciling agenda – i.e. to a large extent indigenous leaders have been viewed by their own people as “the leaders-on-behalf-of-the-state” while at the same time the Russian authorities have seen them as “the leaders-on-behalf-of-the-natives” (110).

Similarly, Rethmann (2000) discloses that RAIPON members have been increasingly criticized by indigenous political activists at the grassroots level for what they see “as the formation of an international indigenous elite that spends its time traveling and in meetings and loses touch with the conditions ‘on the ground’ they supposedly fight for.” Rethmann also argues that indigenous politicians are rarely trusted by their own constituencies, partly because of the legacy of the Soviet Union itself, and partly because of “their maneuvering and rhetoric that put governmental aid at their nexus, thus actively asking for protection, making appeals for dependency, albeit by implication” (2004: 264). Moreover, Rethmann points out that political strategies are often contested, and that differences in political background and tactics frequently put indigenous activists at odds with each other. The author also notes that RAIPON has recently publically acknowledged for the first time that more rigorous work and better rapport with indigenous communities in the region are needed.

The indigenous peoples’ movement seems to have lost its initial momentum. As early as 1994, Pika pointed out that the “‘revival of northern peoples’ – constructive social, cultural and political activism” is in fact in decline by comparison with the period 1987-1991 (Pika and Grant 1999). Other observers also share this perspective: Krupnik and Vakhtin (2002), for example, emphasize that the vigor of local grass-root activism, including that of native associations and environmental NGOs, faded in the mid 1990s

and the initial debates about self-government, public control, and local sustainability were less and less audible. Moreover, Krupnik and Vakhtin note that several of the indigenous organizations established in 1989-92 were rapidly losing their membership and any local influence due to the lack of financial resources and established legal status.

## Conclusions

I have now identified the key domestic and international actors responsible for leading the indigenous movement in the Russian North and have delineated some of the specific strategies they have utilized over the years in order to advance indigenous peoples' demands. Moreover, I have provided a brief assessment of the current day (as of the writing of this dissertation 2008 early 2009) state of the movement. In the following chapter, I return to my tentative theoretical model to analyze the degree to which the actors singled out by my research do indeed fall within the categories outlined within the model.

## CHAPTER VII: DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS, AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL

### Introduction

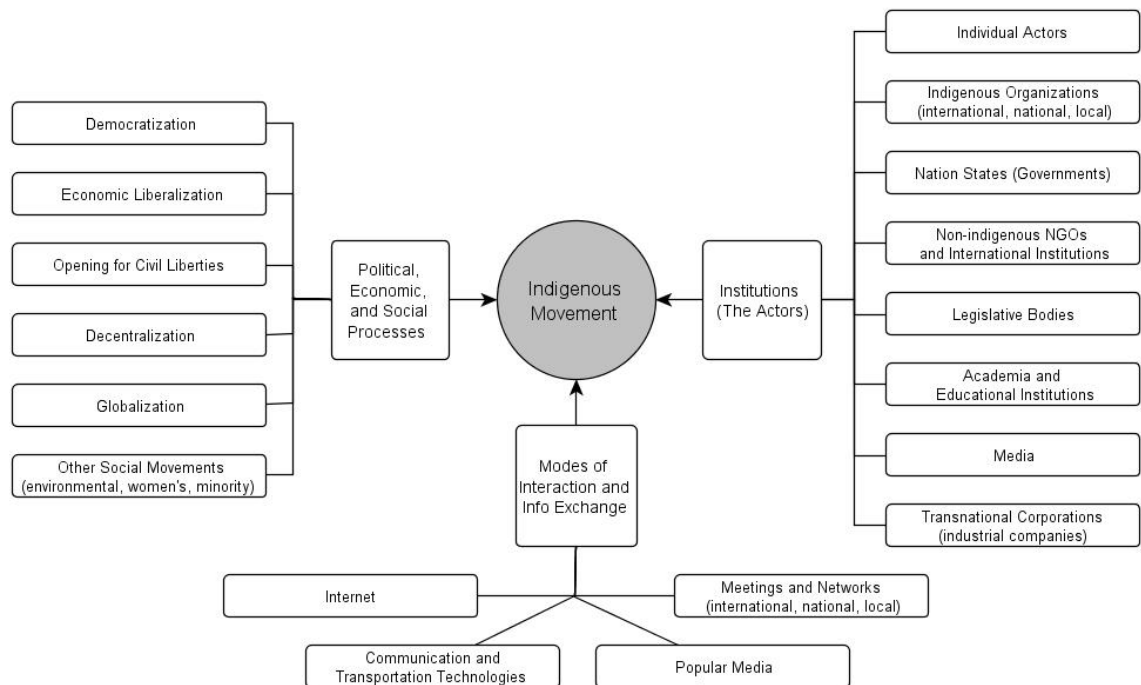
In the opening chapter of this dissertation, I provided a tentative theoretical model for the emergence and development of indigenous rights movements. This model is one of the three original contributions this dissertation makes to the scholarship of indigenous activism. As indicated in Chapter I, the proposed model is constructed and based on my examination of the broader history of indigenous movements, as well as my immersion in the real-world processes of indigenous activism. In this chapter, I return to the model to further analyze it. I wish to elaborate more specifically to what degree my case study of the Russian North fits within the proposed theoretical model.

### My Theoretical Model Revisited

My tentative theoretical model (Figure 6) suggests that there are at least three key structural conditions (or stimuli) which contribute to the origin and development of indigenous movements: 1) political, economic, and social processes, 2) institutions, or social units, i.e. the actors, and 3) modes of interaction and info exchange. The model further suggests that changes in the characteristics of the driving forces in the model (i.e. the type of *institutions* and their degree of involvement, the type of *processes* prevailing

within a country, and the types of *interaction channels* available) will ultimately lead to variations of indigenous activism.

The focus of my research is to facilitate greater understanding of the second structural condition identified in the model – of the key actors behind national indigenous rights movements, the dynamic interplay among these actors, and the strategies used by these actors to mobilize groups and organizations towards safeguarding indigenous peoples’ rights. Hence, as I am analyzing the theoretical model, my particular interest is focused on its right side – the key institutions that through concrete actions shape and spearhead the indigenous movement.



**FIGURE 6:** The Proposed Theoretical Model Revisited.

**TABLE 8:** Summary of Key Actors/Stimuli/Dimensions of Indigenous Activism.

	<b>Russian North</b>	<b>North America (Canada)</b>	<b>South Pacific (Australia)</b>	<b>Arctic (Saami)</b>	<b>Central and South America</b>
<b>Individual Actors</b>	Russian intellectuals (Arctic scholars) and indigenous intelligentsia	outspoken indigenous leaders, who initiated contacts with and united indigenous peoples across the world	outspoken aboriginal leaders		indigenous students, young professionals, literary workers
<b>Indigenous Organizations</b>	<p>one national organization, plus several regional and ethnic small organizations</p> <p>movement relies heavily on pressure groups using personal networks at the political level, less on organizing violent political protests</p> <p>international/Circumpolar cooperation with indigenous movements to the east and west of Russia</p>	<p>organizations with regional and also international scope</p> <p>found it hard to unite all the indigenous groups' interests into one national lobby</p>		<p>strong Nordic and circumpolar cooperation</p> <p>Council uniting the Saami across national borders and representing their interests</p> <p>Saami Parliaments in the Nordic countries</p> <p>closely involved in scientific research</p>	<p>variety of both national and regional organizations</p> <p>violent protests and enormous mobilizing capacity</p> <p>indigenous peoples have their own political parties or have aligned with political parties</p>
<b>Nation States (Governments)</b>	<p>paternalistic and authoritarian government; top-down development</p> <p>has varied its position on the indigenous peoples of the Russian North</p> <p>since 2000s it has reduced its enthusiasm for indigenous affairs and Northern issues and seems less willing to accommodate indigenous demands</p>	<p>initially unreceptive to indigenous demands (especially Inuit's desire for an Inuit-run territory)</p>	<p>in 2009 government committed itself to a framework that fully supports and respects indigenous peoples' rights and creates the opportunity for all Australians to be truly equal</p>	<p>governments have been relatively receptive to indigenous demands</p>	<p>governments respond with a mix of concessions, targeted violence, strategic cooptation, and neglect to indigenous mobilization</p> <p>since 2000s they have been relatively supportive of constitutional and domestic legal system reforms</p>



<b>Non-indigenous NGOs &amp; International Organizations</b>	environmental activism in the early 1990s	grassroots activism by indigenous peoples has been prevailing; hence, non-indigenous	gender activism (white women's groups)	gender activism (indigenous community queens)
	human rights agency made up of Arctic scholars	NGOs and international organizations has not played as crucial of a role in indigenous mobilization	Labor groups	class-based and race-based organizations; neoliberal anti-globalization solidarity
	international human rights organizations heavily responsible for indigenous identity formation, and help in ensuring government's compliance with international human rights standards		land rights and anti-racism struggles often conflated	environmental and human rights advocate organizations helped for international exposure
	international organizations instrumental in disseminating information, encouraging education and research on sustainable development, and promoting interest in Arctic related issues			
<b>Academia &amp; Educational Institutions</b>	writers, activist-ethnographers, ethnographer-politicians, folklorists as spokesmen for indigenous peoples		presence of educational institutions and programs specifically examining Saami indigenous issues	
<b>Others</b>	indigenous youth	sympathetic "white" supporters, churchmen, trade union and Labor party members	support of environmentalists indigenous youth and artists	religious groups support (Catholic Church) wide use of media
		journalists raising awareness on indigenous issues		

Note: Blank areas indicate either that the particular actor does not play an instrumental role in indigenous activism in that region of the world, or that the activities of the actor at stake were not thoroughly examined in this research study.

**TABLE 9:** Predicted Versus Observed Findings.

<b>Predicted</b>	<b>Observed</b>
Studying the institutions involved in indigenous discourses provides insights on how indigenous movements originate and develop.	Yes
Changes in the characteristics of the driving forces in the model lead to slight variations of indigenous activism.	Yes
The key actors involved in indigenous activism discourse in the RN fall within the categories of actors represented in the theoretical model.	Yes
Indigenous mobilization in RN is significantly influenced and framed by the international trends and events on indigenous rights.	Yes*
Indigenous peoples' identity formation, political awakening, and desire for activism in RN is greatly prompted from "outside", i.e. it is not driven as much by grassroots desires and involvement.	Yes*

RN: Russian North

\* Initial prediction is indeed observed, but to an extent. Explanation is provided in the discussion that follows below.

The results of my case study research help test the tentative predictions of the theoretical model. In Table 8, I have summarized some of my key findings in regards to the principal actors behind the indigenous movement in the Russian North, as well as within the four regional groupings discussed in Chapter IV. Table 9 provides a qualitative comparison of my actual findings to the predictions made by the theoretical model and to my initial arguments that I presented in Chapter I<sup>1</sup>.

As indicated in Table 8 and 9, my findings did support the predictions made by the proposed theoretical model and my initial arguments. The one prediction deserving slight elucidation is the question of the drivers of the indigenous movement in the case of the Russian North (identified in Table 9 with asterisks):

<sup>1</sup> This type of qualitative methodology was borrowed from Balint and Mashinya 2008.

In my opening chapter, I presented the argument that the initiatives of various UN bodies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, international human rights, environmental, health, labor and development NGOs, and international indigenous NGOs have helped tremendously in mobilizing indigenous peoples from the Russian North and in constructing and shaping the agendas for further acceptance and accommodation of Russia's indigenous peoples at both national and international level. My findings do support this initial premise of mine – the indigenous peoples' identity formation, political awakening, and desire for activism in Russia has been indeed significantly prompted from “outside.” The true planning and organization of native activism, the evolution from the initial local indigenous protests into a more large-scale national movement, has indeed been influenced and framed by outside, largely international authorities and developments – through international collaborative projects, following well-established discourse and legal instruments on indigenous human rights. Thus, indigenous activism in the Russian North is an example of an externally-driven social movement. However, the extent of involvement of one additional actor – the government – also plays a key role explaining why the advancement of indigenous activism is not a truly bottom-up-driven social phenomenon.

As evident from my discussion in Chapter VI, certain mobilization initiatives on behalf of indigenous peoples by private individuals (largely intellectuals) and groups (e.g. Anxious North, the Salvation of Yugra Association, Yamal for the Future Generations, Kamchatkan Itlemens' Revival Council, the Kolla Saami Association, RAIPON and its regional branches) did occur within the Russian North in the early 1990s. However,

native leadership did not precisely emerge from within the indigenous society due to the fact that the Russian government was rather involved in many of the early initiatives and discussions for native rights. For example, the state facilitated the First Congress of the Peoples of the North and regional government administration has been responsible for financing many regional indigenous associations, thus, making indigenous activism not a truly grassroots-driven process. In post-socialist Russia, “civil society” and “mobilization from below” are concepts still subject to debate, thus making the question of the true driving forces of the indigenous movement in the Russian North ever more complex.

The findings presented in Table 8 and 9 further illustrate that examining indigenous movements from the point of view of the involved actors yielded valuable information regarding the origins and advancement of indigenous activism. Moreover, in my opinion, this method offers a potential approach for standardization of future comparative analysis within the subject area. I also found, that the presence or absence of a certain category of an institution and the institution’s level of engagement into the indigenous mobilization discourse inevitably affected the development of the movement within the particular nation state.

I further found, that my proposed theoretical model explains well indigenous activism in the Russian North. The key actors involved represent almost all of the central groups identified within the model. The two categories of actors that were not as instrumental to the indigenous movement origin and development within the Russian North are the “Media” and the “Transnational Corporations”. As such, I have not

examined them thoroughly in this research. It should be noted that Pavel Sulyandziga, current First Vice-President of RAIPON and member of the UNPFII, indicated during the most current (2009) Eight Session of the UNPFII that transnational corporations will play an increasingly important role in regards to the legitimizing and perpetuating of indigenous rights within the Russian North. Sulyandziga pointed out that in the absence of aspects of the legislative framework and of clarity in its implementation, some international companies with Western management have been signing agreements (so called “partnership agreements”) to respect indigenous peoples’ rights, in line with international indigenous human rights standards. In a globalizing world, multinational corporations are increasingly getting aware of the necessity to pay attention to the impacts of their production on indigenous and other local populations. Global financial donors, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Global Environmental Facility, have additionally pushed companies to incorporate in their projects components of indigenous cooperation and involvement. Hence, the role of transnational corporations deserves future monitoring and assessment.

#### *Individual Actors, Academia, and Educational Institutions*

The Russian intellectuals (anthropologists, sociologists, writers) and native intelligentsia were and seem to remain the key spokesmen for Russia’s indigenous peoples. Russian anthropologists were the ones who provided enormous scholarly and material assistance to “revitalizing” the indigenous cultures of the Russian North in the early 1990s (see King 2000). The indigenous peoples’ intelligentsia (including well-known writers, social workers, scholars and politicians, who tend to live in larger cities

and have access to information and to decision-makers on northern indigenous policy, but who were nevertheless brought up in accordance with the Soviet value system) has played an important part in formulating and promoting ideas that can help indigenous peoples. Over the years, indigenous intellectuals have stepped out of their traditional role and have become politically active by vocally asserting their findings and opinions. This process is similar to the way many environmental scientists and practitioners have “injected their findings – and themselves – into policy debates” surrounding the environmental movement (see Kaiser 2000).

Throughout the 2000s, advocates for indigenous rights in Russia (both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars, as well as both Russian and Western) have called for the establishment of more robust legal framework in relation to indigenous rights, particularly to land and natural resources, and to the assessment and long-term monitoring of the social and environmental effects of project-related activities (Stammiller and Wilson 2006). Moreover, they have been working towards the development of legal precedents with regard to the indigenous peoples that are consistent between the federal center and the regions where indigenous peoples live (for example, see Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Murashko 2008a, 2008b; Osherenko 2004, 2001, 1995; Todyshev 2005).

### *Indigenous Organizations*

Since the early 1990s, RAIPON together with its regional branches have become the most important organization to lead and guide the national indigenous peoples' movement and to transform political decisions into practical solutions. Smaller, local indigenous organizations and information centers – e.g. Batani International Fund, the

L'auravetl'an Information and Education Network of Indigenous Peoples (LIENIP), the Law Resource Center, to name a few – have also initiated legal and educational activities, thus, further streamlining indigenous identity and rights aspirations. The long history of paternalistic governmental policies has, however, predisposed a rather passive approach to local indigenous initiatives. For example, Schweitzer and Gray (2000) point out how organization activities have been focused on compiling “problem lists” which contain complaints ranging from insufficient housing to indigenous language loss. Instead of concrete attempts to practically approach the problems through concerted community activism, indigenous organizations have often passed these complaints onto the authorities with the demand to take care of the problems. Consequently, continued future research on the activities of RAIPON could yield valuable information in regards to what direction indigenous activism in the Russian North would take.

### *Nation States*

State governments throughout Central and South America have confronted the challenges of indigenous mobilization in a variety of different ways – responding with a mix of concessions, targeted violence, strategic cooptation, and neglect (see Bowen 2008). Similarly, the Russian government has varied over the years its position towards its indigenous peoples – at times, it seems to have expressed interest in improving the marginal lifestyle of the peoples of the North; yet more often, the rights and concerns of indigenous groups were set aside and priority was given to the economic development whether be that of the North, or of Russia as a whole. The situation has been further complicated by the fact that governmental structures on indigenous affairs have been

constantly reformed and Northern issues have been continuously managed by an array of governmental organizations (e.g. the State Committee on Northern Affairs, Ministry of Nationalities, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Regional Affairs). What has remained the same over the years is that governmental officials have tended to base majority of their decisions in regards to indigenous concerns and demands on paternalistic assumptions and strategies.

#### *Non-indigenous NGOs and International Institutions*

In their quest to bring about change, indigenous peoples throughout the world have engaged in multiple and diverse forms of organizing and collaborations. They have often aligned themselves with gendered activism (e.g. Australia, Guatemala), environmental activism (e.g. Brazil), anti-racist and civil rights activism (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States), church activism (e.g. many of the countries in South America), and labor unions (e.g. Australia). Transnational religious groups have played a prominent role in establishing a number of indigenous rights organizations in Central and South America and so have international indigenous advocacy groups and environmental NGOs. A number of domestic indigenous rights groups in Latin America were established with significant international support (Brysk 1996).

Forming alliances with supportive non-indigenous organizations and particularly international institutions has occurred in the Russian North as well. In fact, the international involvement in the region has been quite prominent if one were to compare it to the degree of involvement of “global players” in the cases of the indigenous activism



in Canada or Australia. For instance, the more recent indigenous protest actions against development companies (notably the case of Sakhalin, see Stammer and Wilson 2006) have depended immensely on the involvement of foreign companies and the attention of the international community. International contacts fostered by the attendance of regional (Circumpolar) and international conferences and participation in professional exchanges have further allowed indigenous representatives to share ideas and find possible solutions to the common problems indigenous peoples across the world share. Thanks to the extensive region-wide and cross-border collaboration facilitated by the work of these international organizations and institutions, Arctic indigenous communities as a whole have become powerful stakeholders in the case of Arctic investigations – e.g. in contaminants pollution, climate change, biodiversity depletion, international relations, governance and joint decision-making (Semenova 2005).

Issues of gender have not yet been addressed within the literature on indigenous activism in the Russian North (exception is Rethmann 2001).

### *Legislative Bodies*

As indicated by Koester (2005), throughout most of the 1990s, virtually all attempts to redress indigenous issues in the Russian North took place through the passing of legislation (fluid as they may be) rather than the courts. In recent years, the legal institute Ekojuris<sup>2</sup> and the environmental assessment center Ecoline<sup>3</sup> have worked

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<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1991 and based in Moscow, Ekojuris claims to be Russia's first public-interest environmental law firm. The institute analyzes and prepares recommendations on environmental laws and regulations, maintains a database of environmental legislation, consults with business and foreign investors on potential violations of environmental and land use laws, and conducts litigation.

diligently to change this pattern (Novikova 2000). RAIPON too has made initial attempts to bring collective indigenous appeals to the courts. As of the writing of this dissertation, Russian courts have not yet started to adequately address indigenous peoples' issues. Moreover, as Koester (2005) expresses, the judicial authority is still not sufficient to enforce legal claims based on rapidly changing laws.

## Avenues for Future Research

While analysis of my theoretical model and the institutions involved in indigenous discourses has produced valuable lessons to learn, it has also revealed several questions which merit further research. The following areas of inquiry could produce results that would support, broaden, or call into question the applicability of the proposed theoretical model:

### *1. Further Perfect and Test the Theoretical Model*

As identified in my introductory chapter, the list of actors identified in my original theoretical model is not exclusive. Other actors might influence how indigenous movements develop. For example, Stern et al (1999) identify that in the case of minority rights movements, the public at large may potentially play an important role within the development of the movement. The authors illustrate that the public might be asked to “accept policies that may require them to make sacrifices (e.g., paying increased taxes or

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<sup>3</sup> Ecoline was established in 1999 in the framework of joint Russian-British project. In 2003, it was registered as an independent non-profit partnership. The center facilitates inter-sectoral dialogue and cooperation for sustainable development at regional and local levels by developing various environmental management tools including environmental assessment (environmental impact assessment and environmental review), environmental and social due diligence, and health, safety, environmental, and community management systems. For more information, see organization's website at: [http://www.ecoline.ru/index\\_en.html](http://www.ecoline.ru/index_en.html).

accepting affirmative action programs to improve conditions for minorities), to change personal behavior (e.g., engaging in more positive interactions with minority group members), and to take low-commitment political actions in their citizen roles (e.g., voting, signing petitions)” (1999: 82). I would similarly argue that the role of the public at large is worth exploring as it relates to the advancement of indigenous peoples’ rights in the Russian North as well as globally.

Hence, perfecting the model and its components is a worthy future research task. The actors that make and shape the indigenous movements need to be studied much more intensively. As Salman and Assies (2007: 258) argue in regards to any social movement, “Insights into the doubts, aspirations, motivations, and even ‘improper’ considerations of these participants will help us to understand the movements as a polyvalent, multilayered phenomenon, and will contribute to our insights in their successes and failures.”

Furthermore, it will be useful if researchers study other national indigenous movements through the lens of this theoretical model. As I have argued in my introductory chapter, the indigenous mobilization discourse is ripe for standardization and the proposed theoretical model could offer one potential approach for a unified conceptualization of future research. Case studies on countries in Asia and Africa might be particularly valuable since, as identified in Chapter IV of this dissertation, currently there are not enough works of scholarly research on the emergence and development of indigenous activism in those two regions of the world. As I have acknowledged earlier, I consider focusing on the actors responsible for leading indigenous movements as a worthy approach when analyzing indigenous mobilization (i.e. exploring the right side of

the model is the main focus of my dissertation). However, studying indigenous activism from the perspective of the other two key structural conditions (stimuli) outlined in the theoretical model – the political, economic, and social process and/or the modes of interaction and information exchange – could be equally advantageous.

## *2. Further Perfect the Theoretical Model with Indigenous Peoples' Input*

Another aspect in improving and broadening the theoretical model is further incorporating indigenous peoples' input into the model. As indicated in Chapter II, I have not been nurtured or trained within the socio-cultural systems of any indigenous group. Hence, no matter how deeply I care about indigenous cultures, no matter how long I immerse myself in the fora where indigenous peoples are constructing discourses, devising strategies, and making alliances, I know that my approach in analyzing indigenous peoples' movements is inevitably limited and can hardly do justice to the topic from an indigenous point of view. To say the least, indigenous spatial imagination (i.e. the way they interpret visual depictions) can vary greatly from the spatial imagination of western-taught scholars (such as myself). As such, the value of the theoretical model becomes obsolete if indigenous peoples are not able to apprehend the proposed visual representation of the model. Consequently, engaging an indigenous perspective into the theoretical model could yield potential ways in which the model can become more user-friendly to indigenous peoples.

### *3. Have the Model be Tested by Indigenous Peoples Themselves*

A final suggestion for further research efforts is testing of the theoretical model by indigenous peoples themselves. By referring to the model, indigenous groups could identify potential categories of institutions (actors) they can attract as allies in their future quests for rights recognition, i.e. indigenous peoples could find new partners to defend their interests.

## CHAPTER VIII: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

In this summation chapter, I wish to revisit the research questions I identified in the beginning of my dissertation and provide a few final remarks. The overarching general umbrella question that guided my research is “Why and how do indigenous peoples’ rights movements arise?” In attempting to answer this general question, I also pose several sub questions which I split into two categories: broad and specific questions.

### My Broad Research Questions Revisited

*Do indigenous rights movements take different trajectories, i.e. are there indeed diverse forms of indigenous mobilization throughout the world?* – Yes, indigenous movements in different areas of the world do take different trajectories. There is a tendency for “mature”, longstanding indigenous movements to be a lot more grassroots driven, while for “younger” movements to be prompted from “outside” actors, networks, and processes. Accordingly, an important factor that affects how indigenous movements develop is the moment in time when indigenous peoples began mobilizing. In turn, this is closely linked to how the democratization process has spread across the world. As issues of democracy, social justice, and civil society gain importance within a national boundary, indigenous communities become more aware of their individual and collective

human rights and begin to demand that these rights are met. Furthermore, indigenous movements have consequently followed the tendency to transform from local struggles focused on certain, rather basic, social, economic, political, and/or environmental concerns into more widely noticeable and uniform political upswells with a well-defined human rights-based agenda. From individual efforts, focused for example on native fishing and hunting rights, indigenous movements often grow into coordinated, much larger political activities.

*What demands do indigenous peoples worldwide pose?* – As the international indigenous movement gained momentum in the late 1970s, indigenous peoples across the world felt the need to harmonize their demands within a common framework. Consensus is certainly hard to reach at times and native groups do find themselves divided and in conflict for a number of reasons (for example, use of natural resources, religious beliefs, political preferences). Nevertheless, indigenous peoples have managed to unify the general rights they seek and to speak with a relatively common voice. The common framework is found along the issue of self-determination, i.e. all indigenous peoples aspire to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. Consensus for mobilizing is further reached in regards to the following broad essential ideas: 1) recognition of indigenous self-government, autonomy, and self-management; 2) recognition and respect of indigenous land rights, territories, and natural resources; 3) right to consultation and meaningful participation; and 4) respect of indigenous cultural heritage rights and culturally appropriate development. While the indigenous movement may certainly be encapsulated within the political frame

of self-determination, it should be noted that it is a much more dynamic and complex phenomenon. As scholars have indicated, the movement incorporates many dimensions, some of which are still unfolding (Smith 1999).

*Do these demands change over time, and if so how?* – Naturally, indigenous demands tend to evolve and build on one another as time progresses and indigenous mobilization and resistance on a national level becomes long-standing and essentially more structured (see Figure 7).

**FIGURE 7:** The Continuum of Indigenous Peoples' Demands.

- Defining who is “indigenous”; realization and/or revitalization of ethnic identity (individual and collective rights); gaining recognition of being “indigenous” by their respective nation states.
- Adopting national and international policies and legal instruments for recognizing and safeguarding indigenous rights; ensuring implementation mechanisms for these policies and instruments.
- Securing land ownership.
- Gaining political and economic autonomy within their respective nation states.
- Engaging themselves in larger, world-wide social and political movements and discourses.
- Establishing indigenous parliaments.

Note: The steps defined here illustrate the *general* progression in the demands posed by indigenous movements across the world. It should be noted that, although there is a general gradation, the exact sequence and manner of achieving these demands could vary depending on the particular historical, political, and cultural context.

At the outset of any national indigenous activism, indigenous peoples primarily demand recognition of their status as “indigenous” and as distinct “peoples” with full rights (both individual and collective). They wish to gain respect for and recognition of



their centuries-old cultures, values, and worldviews. Gradually, indigenous peoples tend to become more aware of custom and common law and attempt to seek from their respective nation states the revision of internal policies and legislations to incorporate recognition of indigenous peoples and to guarantee their collective rights. Once political constitutions have been reformed and the enactment of legal provisions in regards to indigenous issues is accomplished, indigenous activists embark on demanding the establishment of proper mechanisms for true implementation of laws. Subsequently, indigenous peoples wish to reclaim their traditional territories and be granted legal ownership of them. Indigenous land rights are widely regarded as the indispensable precondition for a viable future of any indigenous community. Several indigenous movements have directed their activism efforts on building their own regional political autonomy – examples are the self-governed regions in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Indigenous movements with longer history of political mobilization have ventured to build relations of solidarity based on common demands with other social actors and thus have become part of other social and political movements. For example, indigenous groups throughout Latin America have frequently engaged themselves in the anti-globalization / anti-neoliberal movement and indigenous communities from the Arctic region have become important stakeholders in the circumpolar climate change discourse. Finally, a few indigenous movements, such as those of the Saami in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, have managed to politically structure themselves to an even greater extent and establish their own parliaments.

I found that demographics (i.e. whether indigenous peoples constitute a majority or minority within their nation states) greatly determine and influence the objectives of indigenous struggles. There is a natural tendency for indigenous movements within countries where native peoples represent significant number of the total population to be more outspoken and better organized in their demands.

## My Case Study Specific Research Questions Revisited

***What is the nature of indigenous activism in the post-Soviet Russian North?***

***How did this phenomenon originate?*** – The indigenous movement in the Russian North is relatively new and has been among the last of such movements worldwide to gain notable international attention. Most Russian scholars agree that the movement was prompted to a large degree by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the end of the 1980s (Gray 2005; Poelzer and Fondahl 1997; Semenova 2007). With the consequent social and economic upheavals, a new era of political freedom and cultural revival for Russia's indigenous peoples dawned. This awakening allowed the indigenous communities in the Russian North to revive their identity as indigenous, get in contact with established indigenous advocacy organizations outside of Russia, start sharing new ideas about indigenous rights and self-determination within the country, and gradually become a political force on the Russian scene (Gray 2005). In addition to the changes occurring on a national level, the international discourse on indigenous peoples' human rights has further triggered a need for Russia's compliance with international indigenous rights norms and the adoption of social and environmental policies related to indigenous peoples. Consequently, since the fall of the

Soviet Union, the indigenous communities of the Russian North have made considerable progress in coordinating their actions. It should however be noted, that since indigenous claims and rights have only recently begun to be addressed as matters of national policies, the victories for Russia's indigenous peoples are still rather minimal.

*What type of people were among the major leaders in the indigenous mobilization? What other actors have emerged as promoters for indigenous mobilization?*

– By generating a national burst of concern about the acute problems the indigenous numerically small peoples of the Russian North endured as a result of the settlement and resettlement policies of Imperial Russia and later the Soviet Union, Arctic writers, activist-ethnographers, ethnographer-politicians, and folklorists emerged as the first spokesmen for indigenous communities. These Russian intellectuals, together with the indigenous intelligentsia, were among the key individuals who pushed for indigenous mobilization, representation, and recognition of indigenous human rights. RAIPON, an indigenous umbrella organization born during the *glasnost*-era, united the indigenous peoples of the North in 1990 and has been actively representing them, both nationally as well as in the international community, ever since. Much of the success of the indigenous activism in Russia is due to international cooperation with movements to the west and east of Russia – the Saami of Fennoscandia, the Alaska Natives, and the Canadian First Nations in North America. International and regional (Circumpolar) organizations have been particularly instrumental in advancing indigenous peoples rights and mobilization within the Russian North.

*How does indigenous activism in the Russian North compare to activisms in other regions of the world?* – Among the specificities of the indigenous activism that I found in the case of the Russian North are:

- Russian anthropologists and other intellectuals provided enormous scholarly and material assistance to “revitalizing” indigenous cultures of the North.
- In general, indigenous protests throughout the Russian North have been less violent compared to resistance activities in Latin America, for example.
- Issues of gender (i.e. incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring equal representation and participation of indigenous women and men) have not yet been addressed within the literature on indigenous activism in the Russian North.
- A civil society, separate from the state, emerged largely after the fall of the Soviet Union. In fact, as indicated in Chapter VII, “civil society” is a concept still subject to debate in post-socialist Russia. Hence, the leadership and organization skills of indigenous advocates and peoples are relatively underdeveloped. There is a great need for continued capacity building. Dependency on state support and public services still persists until the present.

Russia’s indigenous communities are increasingly tied to the global economy and thus subject to the impact of global processes. Future research within the field of social sciences and humanities is crucial in understanding how the rapidly changing political context and development of this geographic region, together with larger international policies and processes, will affect the indigenous peoples who live there. In today’s Russian Federation, laws and official regulations are fluid and subject to rapid and

unexpected change. Finally, while the existing federal legislative acts pertaining to indigenous peoples need revision to clarify and elaborate indigenous rights (particularly those relating to land), the larger problem has been the failure to implement them.

## APPENDIX A

### INDIGENOUS ISSUES OVER TIME – INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, INITIATIVES, AND NORMATIVE INSTRUMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In order to understand the significance of the international indigenous rights movement in the present and its development in the future, its origins and evolution ought to be traced and understood. As such, I have created the following rather comprehensive chronology of international indigenous activism as a way to systematically identify the principal social actors and institutions involved in the process and also characterize the global context out of which the international indigenous movement emerged. I believe the provided chronology would also serve the reader well in understanding the changing attitudes and assumptions underlying the treatment of indigenous peoples. Please note that due to the immense nature of the movement, it is almost impossible to cover all events of relevance or importance. I make no such claim to have succeeded, but I do hope there is some clarity.

In arranging the chronology, I have drawn on a number of scholar works, among them: Anaya 2004; Minde 2008; Niezen 2003, 2000; Thornberry 2002; Sanders 1980; von Lewinski 2008; Warren and Jackson 2002; Wilmer 1993; and Xanthaki 2007. *The Message Stick*, the official newsletter of the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, also provided valuable information on important meetings and events.

- 1920s Indigenous leaders from **New Zealand** (T.W. Ratana, a Maori religious and political leader) and representatives of the **Iroquois** Confederacy (Iroquois Chief Haudenosaunee Deskaheh and New York attorney George Decker) attempt to have their cases heard in the League of Nations (the forerunner of the United Nations) in Geneva but their efforts are unsuccessful. The League states that the situation of indigenous peoples is considered to fall within the internal affairs of the states in which they live and hence outside of the League's competency.
- 1921 International Labor Organization (ILO), a specialized agency within the United Nations (at the time the League of Nations), undertakes studies on the situation of indigenous workers.
- 1926 ILO established the Committee of Experts on Native Labor in order to set up standards for the protection of indigenous workers. The Committee is responsible for several forthcoming conventions: the Forced Labor Convention (1930), the Recruiting of Indigenous Workers Convention (1936), the Contracts of Employment (Indigenous Workers) Convention (1939), and the Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention (1939) all calling for the protection of indigenous workers.
- 1940 Nineteen delegations representing Indians and American states meet in Patzcuaro, Mexico, and form the Inter-American Indian Institute. Nineteen of the Indian delegations sign a treaty among themselves agreeing to meet every four years.
- 1944 The **North American** Indian Brotherhood, a pan-Indian group, is established.

- 1945 The **North American** Indian Nation Government is established.
- 1945-8 A series of UN human rights instruments (*UN Charter, UN Declaration of Human Rights, International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*) are adopted thus bringing about a change in the scope of international law for units other than states.
- 1946 **Belgium** raises the issue of indigenous peoples' protection under the decolonization mandate of the League and the United States. UN member states from North and South America object, claiming that Indians have already been assimilation into their respective national populations.
- 1949 UN General Assembly proposes to study indigenous situation. Recommendation is defeated by objections from the United States, resulting in temporary suspension of the UN Sub-Committee on Minorities.
- 1950s North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB) sends a delegation to the United Nations in New York. The delegation is advised to return to Canada and work with the domestic legal and political framework of their country.
- 1953 ILO publishes *Indigenous Peoples: Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries* – study exposes the living conditions of indigenous and tribal populations in all parts of the world. Throughout the 1950s ILO grows to become the first international institution to deal with indigenous issues. In the matter of general instruments on indigenous peoples, the ILO grows to be the first in the field.
- 1956 The Nordic Saami Council is established by representative of the Saami from **Finland, Norway, and Sweden** - regional NGO concerned with the promotion of Saami rights and interests in the four countries where the Saami are living (Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden).
- 1957 ILO *Convention 107 on the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries* is adopted - first convention focused specifically on the rights of indigenous peoples. Focus of the convention is to facilitate a better integration of indigenous persons into the larger social and political order; integration into the labor market through the elimination of discrimination and through improved vocational training. Convention recognizes the special place of tribal and indigenous peoples in society and their need for special protection. Most significantly, it validates indigenous peoples' collective right to their traditional lands. Convention 107 is ratified by twenty-seven countries, fourteen of which are in Latin America, six in Africa and the Middle East, and two in Europe. It is currently binding on eighteen states.
- 1960s The idea that all peoples, and not only certain nation-states have the right to self-determination and, therefore, should be free to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural development, gains more support.
- 1961 The National Indian Council is formed to represent three of the four major groups of indigenous peoples in **Canada**: the Treaty and Status People, the Non-status People, and the Métis people (the Inuit were excluded). From this point on, the First Nations

of Canada have always had a national lobby group to represent them in Ottawa. The stated purpose of the National Indian Council is to promote unity among all Indian people.

Amnesty International is found in London, England by English labor lawyer Peter Benenson.

- 1964 The Fifth Inter-American Indian Congress passes a final resolution calling for the recognition of aboriginal rights.
- 1968 International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is formed - Copenhagen-based leading NGOs concerned with indigenous peoples worldwide. Organization is formed largely due to the increased international concern developed in the 1960s over the situation of Indians in the Amazonian and forest interior of South America. Organization begins to pressure European governments to take action in defense of indigenous peoples against Latin American states. Today IWGIA is an independent international membership organization that supports indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. It holds consultative status with the UN ECOSOC and has observer status with the Arctic Council and with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights.
- The National Indian Council splits into two organizations: the National Indian Brotherhood (representing the Status and Treaty Peoples) and the Native Council of **Canada** (representing the Non-status and Métis Peoples).
- 1969 Survival International is founded - UK-based leading international NGO concerned with indigenous peoples worldwide.
- A report on racial discrimination is submitted to a sub-commission of the UN Commission on Human Rights.
- 1971 The UN Commission on Human Rights for the first time distinguishes the cases of native peoples from those of other minorities and calls for a more extensive study of the discrimination of indigenous peoples. The Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, a subsidiary body of the Commission on Human Rights, commissions Special Rapporteur José Martínez-Cobo of Ecuador to undertake such a study.
- Fists Declaration of Barbados, outlining a program for the "Liberation of Indigenous Peoples," is issued at a meeting of anthropologists concerned about indigenous peoples. The declaration calls for action by governments, religious missions, and anthropologists to reverse the patterns dispossessing indigenous peoples of their land and, therefore, ability to survive as distinct peoples.
- George Manuel, a Shushwap Indian, travels to New Zealand and Australia to meet with other indigenous leaders and activists.
- 1972 George Manuel meets with the International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs (Copenhagen), Survival International, and the Anti-Slavery Society in London and with the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Plans are announced for an international indigenous peoples' conference.
- Cultural Survival is founded by a group of American anthropologists to support projects directed toward ensuring the survival of indigenous peoples. Cultural Survival is a USA-based leading international NGO defending the rights of indigenous peoples around the world. The organization sponsors research, advocacy, and publications,



such as *Cultural Survival Quarterly* and *Cultural Survival Voices*, that examine situations that threaten indigenous groups, make suggestions to solve conflicts, and attempt to gather international support to pressure nation states to observe the rights of the indigenous peoples.

Resolution of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights identifies patterns of discrimination against indigenous peoples and states that special protection for indigenous populations constitutes a sacred commitment of the States.

The UN General Assembly declares the years from 1973-1982 *The Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*. This creates one of the first significant opportunities for the international representation of indigenous peoples. The program for the Decade is structured around a worldwide education campaign and measures to be taken to implement UN instruments promoting the elimination of racial discrimination. Its goals are to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind on grounds of race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin, by eradicating racial prejudice, racism and racial discrimination.

Australian aboriginals protest by establishing an "Aboriginal (tent) Embassy" on the grounds of Parliament in Canberra, **Australia**, drawing international attention.

- 1973 The first conference for the indigenous peoples of the Northern regions, *The Circumpolar Arctic Peoples' Conference*, is hosted by several Greenlandic organizations and is held in Copenhagen. Members of the then Inuit Tapirisat of **Canada** (now known as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami), the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada, and the Saami from northern **Finland**, **Norway** and **Sweden** attend the conference. Neither Alaskan nor Russian Inuit are able to attend the event, and as a consequence the need for Inuit to collectively meet as one indivisible people becomes evident at the meeting.

- 1974 International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) is founded - an organization of indigenous peoples from **North, Central, South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific** working for the sovereignty and self determination of indigenous peoples and the recognition and protection of indigenous rights, treaties, traditional cultures and sacred lands.

National Indian Brotherhood of **Canada** is granted NGO observer status by the UN Economic and Social Council.

The first meeting of American Indian Parliament with representatives from Indians in **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Venezuela** convenes.

- 1975 First World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is held in Port Alberni, British Columbia, Canada - participating in the conference are more than 50 representatives of indigenous peoples in **North, Central and South America, New Zealand, Australia, the Pacific** region, **Greenland** and the Saami (the **Nordic** Saami Council) and 135 observers from nineteen countries. Thanks to the strong support of indigenous peoples from Canada (particularly George Manuel, the head of the National Indian Brotherhood), the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) is established as an international indigenous organization, with George Manuel as its first chairman. WCIP plans to submit a study to the UN. The Council is organized into five regions: North America, South Pacific, Europe and Greenland, Central America, and South America. The creation of the WCIP marks the beginning of indigenous peoples' interaction at a global level. For some years the organization provides an important voice of indigenous and tribal peoples at the international

stage. In its Constituting Charter, the WCIP establishes a World Conference of Indigenous Peoples to be held every three years.

First Indigenous March into the Palace of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

- 1977 Second General Assembly of the WCIP (Second World Conference of Indigenous Peoples) is held in Kiruna, Sweden - creating an awareness of the problems facing many of the world's indigenous peoples.
- As a result of lobbying activities of the IITC, which took part in one of the organizing committees of the UN Decade for Action to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid (1973-1983), the UN decides to sponsor the first *International NGO Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations in the Americas*. The Conference is held by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in the Palace of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland and over 150 indigenous representatives from all over the **Americas** attend the conference. For the first time, indigenous peoples are allowed directly to address the UN. The event assembles representatives from more than fifty international NGOs, spokespeople for sixty indigenous nations and peoples from fifteen countries (primarily the Western Hemisphere). Conference brings out firsthand information on the conditions faced by indigenous populations and contributes to forging a transnational indigenous identity. It also helps establish a pattern of coordination among indigenous peoples from throughout the world in the formulation and communication of their demands. Conference contributes to forging a transnational indigenous identity that subsequently expands to embrace indigenous peoples from other part of the world. The *Declaration of Principles for the Defense of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Western Hemisphere* becomes the product of the Conference.
- The first Inuit Circumpolar Conference is held in Barrow Alaska. Inuit from **Canada, Greenland, and Alaska** discuss their common vision; political resolutions are passed. At the conference the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is formed. Principal goals of ICC are to strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; promote Inuit rights and interest on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of circumpolar regions.
- IITC becomes the first organization of indigenous peoples to be recognized as a NGO with consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). A series of other indigenous organization have over the years been granted such status thus enhancing their access to the various UN bodies.
- The Organization of Central American Indigenous Peoples in **Panama** is established at a regional meeting of indigenous peoples in Panama.
- 1978 The World Conference to Combat Racial Discrimination in Geneva endorses the economic and cultural rights of indigenous peoples and includes this issue in their plan of action. Thirty-three states sign a motion recognizing the territorial, economic, cultural, and linguistic rights of native peoples.
- The Indigenous Peoples Center for Documentation, Research and Information (DoCip) is established in Geneva. DoCip is created at the request of the indigenous delegations participating in the First International NGO Conference in Geneva a year earlier. DoCip plays several roles: it is a documentation and information center, a service organization, and a non-profit organization. Among its objectives are: to disseminate indigenous documentation, organize training courses and a knowledge-sharing

program; to publish a quarterly update on the main international processes on indigenous issues; to organize technical secretariats at the UN during the principal international conference; to support indigenous peoples as they defend their rights, particularly within the framework of international institutions.

The Indian Law Resource Center is established to promote international validation of claims by indigenous peoples.

- 1979 Hunger-striking Saami in Norway protest a hydroelectric project and draw attention to the Saami issues of indigenous rights and identity.
- 1980 The Indian Council of **South America** (CISA) is created at the Congress of Indian Movements of South America in Peru. Organization represents the Mapuche, Aymara, Qhichwa, Tupi Warani, Arawaku, Wajiri and other Indian peoples. The Fourth Russell Tribunal meets in Rotterdam to hear allegations regarding the violation of rights of Indians in the Americas.
- 1981 Third General Assembly of the WCIP (Third World Conference of Indigenous Peoples) is held in Canberra, Australia. WCIP is granted independent consultative status to the UN.
- The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities proposes the creation of a separate work group for indigenous peoples.
- The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations organizes the *International NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Land* in Geneva, Switzerland. Conference establishes the presence of indigenous peoples at the UN more firmly and reveals even more clearly the extent of suffering resulting from the appropriation of indigenous lands by states and transnational corporations.
- UNESCO sponsors a *Conference of Specialists on Ethnocide and Ethodevelopment* in Latin America in San José, Costa Rica. Conference adopts the Declaration of San José, affirming the “inalienable right of Indian groups” to consolidate their cultural identity and to “exercise ... self-determination.” Declaration further proclaims ethnocide an offense against international law.
- The First Congreso de los Movimientos Indios de Sud America meets in Cusco, Peru, creating the Indian Council of **South America** (CISA).
- 1982 Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) is established by a decision of the UN ECOSOC and meets for the first time. The establishment of the WGIP is a result of combined lobbying efforts of indigenous peoples from the United States, support of the UN staff (in particular the Dutch head of the Human rights Centre), and support from Northern European states, particularly Norway. The working group is a subsidiary organ to the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. It is composed of five individuals, one from each of the geopolitical regions of the world, who act in the capacity of independent human rights experts rather than government representatives. The WGIP is the first body in the international arena entrusted to review developments pertaining to the protection and promotion of human rights of indigenous populations and to work towards the development of corresponding international standards for their rights. Scope of the working group’s actively subsequently expands to include a study on treaties between indigenous peoples and states and another on indigenous cultural and intellectual property. Primary concern of the WGIP has been to devise standards to facilitate recognition of

indigenous rights to land and (sea- and fresh-) water, and self-determination. The WGIP is very receptive to NGO participation - any indigenous person or NGO is allowed to participate in all the debates, and in particular the drafting of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, thus bringing indigenous voices directly to the UN. The upcoming annual WGIP sessions provide representatives of indigenous organizations from around the world the opportunity to meet, exchange information, get to know the UN system, and present their various human rights claims and demands to an international audience.

The World Bank develops *Operational Manual Statement 2.34 on Tribal People in Bank-Financed Projects* - a response to problems in the field. Documents recognizes the need to protect indigenous peoples from potentially adverse effects of development projects.

The National Indian Brotherhood makes the transition to becoming the Assembly of First Nations - a national organization representing First Nations citizens in **Canada**.

A Conference on Native Resource Control and the Multinational Challenge is held in Washington, DC. Over one hundred indigenous delegates meet with experts from countries to discuss the impact of development projects on indigenous peoples.

1983 UN General Assembly proposed declaring 1992 the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

World Council of Indigenous Peoples meets in Canberra, Australia, demonstrating solidarity with aboriginal peoples of **Australia**.

1984 Fourth General Assembly of the WCIP (Forth World Conference of Indigenous Peoples) is held in Panama. More than three hundred indigenous delegates from twnty-three different countries attend the event. The General Assembly ratifies the Declaration of Principles of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Declaration focuses on non-discrimination, the right of self-determination, political participation, and most importantly, land and resource rights. It further states that "the culture of indigenous peoples is part of mankind's cultural patrimony."

*The Study on the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*, by Special Rapporteur José R. Martínez Cobo is completed - study documents modern discrimination against indigenous peoples and their precarious situation. Study develops an important "working definitions" of "indigenous peoples" and finds that the mechanisms dealing with indigenous peoples in the UN are inadequate. Rapporteur Cobo establishes that existing general human rights standards are not always sufficiently applied to indigenous groups and their members, and furthermore, that these standards are not, in all cases, appropriate and/or sufficient in order to guarantee recognition of specific rights of indigenous communities within the home country of the respective group. The study provides a standard reference for discussion of the subject of indigenous peoples within the UN system. Study also initiates a pattern of further information gathering and evaluative work on the subject by experts working under the sponsorship of international organizations.

Indian representatives from **Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru** present their case to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, marking the first time South American Indians make an appeal directly to an international forum.

1985 WGIP is requested to draft a declaration on indigenous peoples for adoption by the UN General Assembly.

Following a recommendation of the WGIP, the UN General Assembly establishes a Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations in order to facilitate the attendance of indigenous delegations at the annual sessions of the WGIP in Geneva.

- 1987 Fifth World Conference of Indigenous Peoples is held in Lima, Peru. Consultative status is given to eight indigenous organizations, including one governmental body of an Indian tribe – the Grand Council of the Cree. Others are the South American Indian Council, the National Aboriginal and Islander Legal Services Secretariat, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Indian Law Resource Center, the Four Directions Council, the National Indian Youth Council, and the Indigenous World Association.
- 1988 WGIP chair produces the first complete draft of the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, which substantially reflects proposals submitted by indigenous peoples' representatives (including traditional leaders, representatives from indigenous women's groups, youth organizations, and communities worldwide, as well as indigenous activists and lawyers). Discussions of the declaration proceed at subsequent sessions of the WGIP.  
The Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities abandons the term "indigenous populations" in favor of "indigenous peoples."
- 1989 Seminar on Effects of Racism and Racial Discrimination on the Social and Economic Relations between Indigenous Peoples and the State takes place.  
*ILO Convention 107* is closed for ratification and is revised and adopted as *Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*. The new convention recognizes the self-determination of indigenous peoples. Compared to Convention 107, the 169 Convention represents a fundamental change in approach to indigenous issues in being based on recognition and respect for cultural diversity rather than on the previous approach of integration or assimilation - this change reflects in part the greater indigenous participation in international affairs in the intervening years. Prominent features of the Convention are the recognition of indigenous consultation and participation in matters that affect indigenous peoples, the recognition of indigenous institutions, special measures and wide land rights. Convention 169 further lays down a broad set of governmental responsibilities and indigenous rights, i.e. national governments should allow indigenous peoples to participate in the making of decisions that affect them, that they should set their own development priorities, and that they should be given back lands that they traditionally occupied. At the time, Convention can be seen as a manifestation of the movement toward responsiveness to indigenous peoples' demands through international law.  
The European Parliament, in its resolution *On the Position of the World's Indians*, expresses its concerns over the conditions faced by indigenous peoples and calls on governments to secure indigenous land rights and enter consultations with indigenous groups to develop specific measures to protect their rights.  
Chief Ted Moses, of the Grand Council of the Crees in **Canada**, is the first indigenous person elected to office at a UN meeting to discuss the effects of racial discrimination on the social and economic situation of indigenous peoples. Since then increasing numbers of indigenous persons hold office at meetings related to indigenous matters.

- The General Assembly of the Organization of **American States** (OAS) initiated work on a regional draft declaration in regards to indigenous peoples for the Member States of the OAS.
- Biannual Inuit Circumpolar Conference meets in Greenland.
- The “Darwin Declaration” – World Council of Churches convenes a Global Consultation in Darwin, Australia. 125 indigenous representatives from fourteen nations attend the event and declare a state of emergency in regard to the survival and status of indigenous peoples worldwide. The declaration makes special reference to the aboriginal people of Australia but also makes ten specific “urgent calls for regional action.”
- 1990 Sixth World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is held in Tromsø, Norway. The **Russian** Association of Indigenous Peoples is formed.
- 1991 The World Bank revises its 1982 Operational Manual Statement on indigenous peoples and adopts *Operational Directive 4.20 on Indigenous Peoples*. Directive outlines the Bank’s definition of and interest in “indigenous peoples.” The Directive is designed to a) ensure that indigenous peoples benefit from development projects and b) avoid or mitigate potentially adverse effects on indigenous peoples caused by bank-assisted activities. It also addresses economic issues (technical assistance and investment project mechanisms) concerning indigenous peoples. Policy directive helps align Bank’s policy with the emerging international thinking on indigenous issues and also helps reshape attitudes within the Bank towards greater programmatic action concerning indigenous peoples affected by bank-funded projects.
- 1992 WCIP declares the year as The World Year of Dignity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The *Charter of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests* is adopted in Penang, Malaysia. It sets forth principles, goals and demands by the indigenous and tribal peoples formulating the Charter. Among these is an explicit reference to intellectual property.
- Indigenous organizations throughout Latin America sponsor continent-wide demonstrations rejecting the celebration of the “discovery of America” commemorating instead “five hundred years of popular and indigenous resistance.”
- The *World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development* is held in Kari-Oca village, Brazil in anticipation of the UN-sponsored Earth Summit. The Kari-Oca conference produces a multifaceted declaration, the *Kari-Oca Declaration*, on development strategies, culture, science, and intellectual property, and on indigenous rights generally. Indigenous peoples also adopt the *Indigenous Peoples’ Earth Charter*, which elaborates on the principles of the Kari-Oca Declaration. Charter devotes an entire chapter to the issues of culture, science and intellectual property and calls for the respect, recognition and protection of indigenous cultural heritage.
- UN Conference on Environment and Development* (The Earth Summit) is held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and devotes considerable attention to indigenous issues. Resolutions adopted at the Conference include provisions on indigenous peoples and their communities. The resulting conference documents, *The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* and the more detailed environmental program and policy statement known as *Agenda 21*, reiterate precepts of indigenous peoples’ rights and seek to incorporate them within the larger agenda of global

environmentalism and sustainable development. Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN system, governments, and major groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment. Agenda 21 recognizes that indigenous peoples have a vital role to play in environmental management and development because of their traditional knowledge and practices. The *Convention on Biological Diversity*, conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality, and particularly *Article 8(j)* of the Convention, recognizes the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities on biological resources. Convention urges nation states to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to Rigoberta Menchu Tum, an indigenous Mayan woman from **Guatemala** who led the struggle for indigenous rights in that country. Tum is the first indigenous person ever to receive the prize.

The study *Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples: Study on Treaties, Agreements and Other Constructive Arrangements Between States and Indigenous Populations*, by Special Rapporteur Miguel Alfonso Martinez, is completed.

1993 The UN General Assembly proclaims the year as the *International Year for the World's Indigenous People* thus signaling the heightened international concern over indigenous peoples. Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu Tum is appointed as an Ambassador for the International Year.

WGIP completes the final revision of the *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and submits it to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which approves it a year later.

UN *World Conference on Human Rights* is held in Vienna, Switzerland. Hundreds of indigenous peoples attend the event. The conference recognizes the responsibility of all UN member States to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and lays the groundwork for the planning of a special forum for indigenous peoples within the UN system. The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action repeats and emphasize that all peoples have the right to self-determination, and in Article 20 urges action on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Declaration further recommends that a forum for indigenous issues should be established within the framework of the first UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004).

Seventh World Conference on Indigenous peoples is held in Guatemala City.

European Parliament adopts resolution *On Measures Required Internationally to Provide Effective Protection for Indigenous Peoples*, which holds that indigenous peoples have the "right to determine their own destiny by choosing their institutions, their political status and that of their territory."

European Union launches the *Program of Support for the Indigenous Peoples of Central America* to contribute to bettering the situation of, and to defending the rights, values and collective identity of the indigenous peoples of Central America.

The study on *Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples: Study on the Protection of the Cultural and Intellectual Property of Indigenous People*, by Special Rapporteur Irene Daes, is completed.

First International Conference on the Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples takes place in New Zealand. A significant outcome of the

conference is the *Mataata Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Declaration addresses indigenous intellectual property in the field of biological diversity and customary environmental management and of cultural objects and includes recommendations to indigenous peoples, states, national and international agencies and the UN.

- 1994 UN General Assembly launches the *First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People* (1995-2004), with its theme "Indigenous People, Partnership in Action," to increase the UN commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. Main objective is the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such area as human rights, the environment, education, health, housing, employment and development. Decade is intended also as a springboard for promotion of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples, and pursuit of the issues of indigenous peoples and development.
- A Voluntary Fund to support small-scale projects during the First International Decade of the Worlds' Indigenous Peoples is created.
- 1995 The UN Commission on Human Rights consisting of state members establishes the UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration (Commission Drafting Group) with the sole purpose to elaborate a revised Draft. More than 200 indigenous organizations participate in the Working Group.
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an autonomous organ of the OAS, adopts the draft American declaration for the Member States of the OAS (i.e. it is restricted to the regional level). After consultation with governments, indigenous and intergovernmental organizations and experts, this draft declaration is passed by the Human Rights Commission in a revised form as the *Proposed American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The proposal is currently under review by the Member States of the OAS and by indigenous groups. The draft Declaration covers a wide range of matters affecting the daily lives of the hemisphere's native indigenous peoples: family, spirituality, work, culture, health, the environment, and systems of knowledge, language and communication, to name a few.
- 1996 The **Arctic** Council is established as a high-level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.
- The Commission on Human Rights decides to include a separate item on its agenda entitled "indigenous issues."
- The Working Group on Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa is established.
- 1997 Three resolutions, Resolution 30, 31, and 32, on indigenous questions (establishment of permanent forum, drafting of a declaration, and launching of an international decade on indigenous peoples) are passed by the Commission on Human Rights, thus giving indigenous issues a much higher profile.
- Second Indigenous March into the Palace of Nations takes place.



WGIP requests a study on *Indigenous peoples' Relationship with Natural Resources, Energy and Mining Companies*.

- 1998 *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples* is celebrated for the first time during the WGIP meetings.  
WGIP working paper on the *Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples* is finished.  
European Commission, the executive organ of the European Union, releases a *Working Document on Support for Indigenous Peoples in the Development Co-operation of the Community and Member States*. Document promotes a series of development programs for the benefit of indigenous peoples which are to be based upon their full participation and informed consent, with the objective of establishing conditions by which these peoples are able to maintain control over their own economic, social, and cultural development.  
First Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples is organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization.  
The Asian Development Bank (ADB) formulates its *Policy on Indigenous Peoples*.
- 1999 WGIP study on *Treaties, Agreements, and other Constructive Arrangements between States and Indigenous Peoples* is completed.
- 2000 The UN Commission on Human Rights proposes the establishment of a separate forum for indigenous peoples. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) passes the proposition and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is established as an advisory subsidiary body to the UN ECOSOC. This body is mandated to advise ECOSOC on questions of human rights, environment, economic and social development, education, culture, health and information and to raise awareness of indigenous issues. The Permanent Forum is established at the highest level within the UN (it is a permanent body of the ECOSOC) as a forum where indigenous peoples, representative of states, and the UN could discuss issues and problems related to indigenous peoples. It is the foremost body for dialogue between indigenous peoples, UN agencies and States. The Permanent Forum is the first mechanism within the UN system specifically concerned with indigenous peoples.  
A Special Rapporteur is appointed by the Commission on Human Rights to monitor the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. Rapporteur's mandate is complimentary to those of the WGIP and the UNPFII and aims at: gathering, requesting, receiving, and exchanging information from all relevant sources (including Governments, indigenous peoples themselves, and their communities and organizations) on violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples; formulating recommendations and proposals on appropriate measures and activities to prevent and remedy such violations; and working in close cooperation with other experts of the UN Commission on Human Rights and of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The Rapporteur is explicitly invited to incorporate a gender perspective in carrying out the mandate and to pay special attention to violations of the rights of indigenous children. The Special Rapporteur becomes the second mechanism within the UN system specifically concerned with indigenous peoples.  
WGIP study on *Indigenous Peoples and their Relationship to Land* is completed.

- 2001 WGIP requests a working paper on *Standard-setting Activities* and another one on *Biotechnology in Relation to Indigenous Peoples*.  
 Erica-Irene Daes, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the WGIP, is invited to prepare a study on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources as well as a paper on the achievements of the WGIP.  
 WGIP requests a working paper on *Indigenous Peoples' Right to Development and Globalization*.  
 UNESCO's *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* is adopted.  
 UN Development Program (UNDP) adopts *Policy of Engagement* with indigenous peoples with the view that ensuring the engagement of indigenous peoples and their organizations is critical in preventing conflict, enhancing democratic governance, reducing poverty and sustainably managing the environment.
- 2002 UNPFII meets for the first time at the UN Headquarters in New York.  
 WGIP requests a working paper on the relationship between the UNPFII, the WGIP and the Special Rapporteur; and to draft guidelines relating to transnational companies.  
 WGIP requests a working paper on the commentaries to the *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.  
 A Voluntary Fund for Indigenous and Local Communities is established by the Convention of Biological Diversity.
- 2003 Second Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is indigenous children and youth.  
 A Voluntary Fund is established by the UN to support the Permanent Forum.
- 2004 Several indigenous representatives, frustrated at the slow progress of the Draft Declaration in the Human Rights Commission, stage a hunger strike at the UN Palace of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.  
 Third Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is indigenous women.  
 The Asian Development Bank Policy is incorporated into the ADB *Operations Manual* to ensure that indigenous peoples benefit from ADB's development activities. The manual has specific provisions and detailed processes to address, avoid or remedy possible adverse impacts on indigenous peoples.
- 2005 UN General Assembly launches *Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples* (2005-2015) to further strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development. Theme of the decade is "Partnership for Action and Dignity." A fund to support small-scale projects during the Decade is launched alongside.  
 The World Bank endorses a revised policy on indigenous peoples, *Operational Policy/Bank Procedures 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples*, which replaces the earlier *Operational Directive 4.20*. Revised policy retains the original requirements of prior policies, in that Bank-financed projects should be designed not only to avoid adverse impacts on indigenous peoples, but also provide culturally appropriate benefits. Policy also affords project-affected indigenous peoples a stronger voice through a process of free, prior and informed consultation.

- The Asian Development Bank revises its Operational Manual, *Operations Manual Bank Policy related to Indigenous Peoples (OM F3/BP)*.
- Fourth Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is the millennium development goals and indigenous peoples with a focus on Goal 1: to eradicate poverty and extreme hunger, and Goal 2: to achieve universal primary education.
- 2006 Fifth Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is re-defining the millennium development goals.
- At its inaugural session, the new Human Rights Council (successor of the Geneva-based Commission on Human Rights) adopts the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Declaration provides an international standard of reference for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. It addresses both individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, language and others. Although the Declaration is not legally binding upon states, i.e. unlike a convention, there is no requirement for states to report to the UN their progress in implementing its provisions, it is hoped that it may generate political pressure on states to comply with its terms. After all, the Declaration represents the dynamic development of international legal norms on the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide and reflects the commitment of states to move in directions that recognize indigenous peoples.
- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approves its *Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples (OP-765) Strategy for Indigenous Development*, culminating a two year process of consultations with government agencies, representatives of indigenous organizations and other interested parties, as well as internal preparation and approval within the IDB itself. *Operational Guidelines (CP-3246-1)* to facilitate the implementation of the Policy are also approved.
- 2007 The Human Rights Council agrees to establish a new Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples based in Geneva (thus replacing the WGIP) - a subsidiary expert mechanism of the Human Rights Council established to assist the Council in providing thematic studies and offering research-based advice pertaining to the rights of indigenous peoples. The Expert Mechanism becomes the third mechanism within the UN system specifically concerned with indigenous peoples. The Expert Mechanism consists of five independent experts. Like the Permanent Forum it holds annual sessions which are open to all kinds of observers.
- Sixth Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is territories, lands and natural resources.
- The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is adopted by the General Assembly after 143 states vote in favor, 11 abstain and four (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, known as CANZUS states) vote against. The Declaration becomes the most comprehensive statement of the rights of indigenous peoples ever developed. It is intended to serve “as a standard of achievement to be pursued in a standard of achievement to be pursued in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect” between states and indigenous peoples, providing “the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” The Declaration is not a legally binding instrument but is in some respect declaratory of customary international law.

- 2008 UN Development Group (UNDG) develops the *UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues* with the purpose to assist the UN system and UN Country Teams to mainstream and integrate indigenous peoples' issues in processes for operational activities and programs at the country level. Guidelines are drafted by a group on UN organizations and specialized agencies under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.
- The 2008 Environmental and Social Policy* of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development enters into force. Policy contains specific requirements for projects funded by the bank, relating to environmental and social issues, including indigenous peoples. These requirements include the principle of free, prior and informed consent and the need to recognize and respect customary laws.
- Seventh Session of the UNPFII takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Special theme is climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges.
- The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples holds its first session in Geneva.

**APPENDIX B**  
**KEY DOCUMENTS OUTLINING THE FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE**  
**UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF “INDIGENOUS PEOPLES”**

**Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries**  
**(ILO Convention No. 169), 1989. 28 ILM 1382 (in force 5 September 1991).**  
(emphasis added)

A key aspect to indigenous identity in international law is status as a colonized nation, and historical occupation of a territory prior to its colonization by outside groups.

Article 1(1): “This Convention applies to:

- a) Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions *distinguish* them from other sectors of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- b) Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as *indigenous* on account of their *descent from* the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the *time of conquest or colonization* or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.”

Article 1(2): “*Self-identification* as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply.”

**Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations (The José R. Martínez-Cobo Study, Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities).**  
**1986/7. UN Doc E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7. (emphasis added)**

“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a *historical continuity* with *pre-invasion and pre-colonial* societies that developed on their territories, *consider themselves distinct* from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present *non-dominant sectors* of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their *ancestral territories*, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own *cultural patterns*, social institutions and legal systems.

The historical continuity may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present, of one or more of the following factors:

- a) Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them;
- b) Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands;

- c) Culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, life-style, etc);
- d) Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language);
- e) Residence in certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world;
- f) Other relevant factors.

On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous populations through *self-identification* as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group).

This preserves for these communities the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference.”

**Working Paper on the Concept of Indigenous Peoples prepared by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 1996. UN Doc E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1996/2. (emphasis added)**

Document presents a comprehensive review of the literature and the practice on international institutions that inform the meaning of the term “indigenous”.

The UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations defines indigenous peoples as:

“the disadvantaged descendants of those peoples that *inhabited a territory prior* to the formation of a state. The term indigenous may be defined as a characteristic relating the identity of a particular people to a particular area and distinguishing them culturally from other people or peoples. When, for example, immigrants from Europe settled in the Americas and Oceania, or when new states were created after colonialism was abolished in Africa and Asia, certain peoples became marginalized and discriminated against, because their language, their religion, their culture and their whole way of life were different and perceived by the dominant society as being inferior. Insisting on their right to self-determination is indigenous peoples’ way of overcoming these obstacles.”

Document further identifies four principles to be taken into account in any possible definition of indigenous peoples:

- a) “*Priority in time*, with respect to the occupation and use of a specific territory
- b) The voluntary perpetuation of *cultural distinctiveness*, which may include the aspects of language, social organization, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions
- c) *Self-identification*, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity
- d) An experience of *subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination*, whether or not these conditions persist.”

Note: To this day ILO Convention No.169 is the only specialized international treaty on indigenous rights. Convention No.169 passed in 1989 and has been open for ratification since 1990. As of the writing of this dissertation the Convention has been ratified by 20 nation states – the majority of them are Latin American or Caribbean: Argentina (ratified in 2000), Bolivia (1991), Brazil (2002), Chile (2008), Colombia (1991), Costa Rica (1993), Denmark (1996), Dominica (2002), Ecuador (1998), Fiji (1998), Guatemala (1996), Honduras (1995), Mexico (1990), Nepal (2007), Netherlands (1998), Norway (1990), Paraguay (1993), Peru (1994), Spain (2007), and Venezuela (2002). No African or Asian state has adopted it. The ILO 169 Convention provides the only definition of “indigenous peoples” that is legally binding for its signatories.

## APPENDIX C

### MAJOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

Scholars have indicated that indigenous rights legislation (such as the newly adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention No.169) builds on and expands rights already granted through an array of existing international human rights legislation. The international human rights instruments listed below have addressed explicitly or can be viewed as touching implicitly on the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination and right to land and natural resources, as well as other basic human rights. Although majority of these human rights instruments were not originally constructed with indigenous needs in mind and do not address their specific problems, their innovative interpretation by the United Nations monitoring bodies has covered several gaps and has accommodated indigenous peoples. Accordingly, this larger body of human rights law as a whole has started to be interpreted and applied where relevant to indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples, like any other peoples, are thus increasingly considered to be entitled to the human rights protections contained in the national law of their countries of residence.

The following list has been compiled after reviewing the actual texts of the existing international human rights legal instruments<sup>1</sup> and examining scholar publications such as: Stamatopoulou 2007; Stavenhagen 2002; Thornberry 2002; von Lewinski 2008; and Xanthaki 2007. The majority of these international legal instruments were also outlined as particularly relevant to indigenous peoples' issues by Bartolomé Clavero, Chair of Legal History and Professor of Rights at the University of Seville, Spain, in a lecture entitled *Why are Only Indigenous Peoples Internationally Entitled to a Specific Right to their Own Cultures?* Professor Clavero used these legal instruments as examples to the ways in which international human rights standards and practice have attempted to integrate culture and cultural rights<sup>2</sup> into themselves.

The international human rights legal instruments have tended to take the form of *treaties* (also referred to as *agreements*, *conventions*, *covenants*, *protocols*, or *statutes*), which have legally binding effect on the States that ratify or accede to them. All countries that have ratified any of the human rights treaties are required to adopt the legislation necessary to implement them. There is a supervisory committee (also known as treaty body or committee of experts) for each of these treaties that monitors the way in

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<sup>1</sup> The full texts of these legal instruments, as well as information on the status of their ratification, may be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/>.

<sup>2</sup> Stamatopoulou (2007) illustrates that there are five human rights which are understood as “cultural rights” under international law. They include: 1. Right to education; 2. Right to participate in cultural life; 3. Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications; 4. Right to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which the person is the author [generally referred to as intellectual property rights]; and 5. Freedom for scientific research and creative activity.



which the State Parties are fulfilling, in this case, their human rights obligations as states in the relevant treaty.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that some of the most important human rights instruments are declarations – *declarations*, together with *guidelines*, *principles*, *recommendations*, and *standard rules* are all not legally binding instruments. While a declaration does not have any legal power to enforce compliance, it relies on the moral weight it carries and provides practical guidance to States in their conduct. The value of such instruments rests on their recognition and acceptance by a large number of States and, even without binding effect, they may be seen as declaratory of broadly accepted goals and principles within the international community.

The subsequent legal instruments have been arranged chronologically according to the date they have been adopted. In addition to listing them, I have provided some basic information about the instruments, including reference to the articles most relevant to indigenous peoples, and in some cases examples of relevant comments and observations made by the monitoring bodies of the treaties.

- **Charter of the United Nations (adopted in 1945; emphasis added)**

Charter does not attempt to list or categorize potential holders of rights.

Article 1(3): One of the central purposes of the United Nations is to “achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for *human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion*.”

Article 55: “With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote: a) higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development; b) solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and c) universal respect for, and observance of, *human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion*.”

Article 73: “Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end: a) to ensure, with due *respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses*; b) to develop self-

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<sup>3</sup> General comments, concluding observations and recommendations emanating from these committees can be found at: <http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/>.

*government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement.”*

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**

The declaration is the first international document that states that all human beings are “equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1).

Article 2: “*Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.*”

Article 17 (1): “Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.”

Article 17 (2): “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”

- **International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)**

Article 2: prohibits “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, *a national, ethnic, racial or religious group*, as such: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group; e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

- **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)**

Article 1: prohibits “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

Article 5: “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in enjoyment of the following rights: ... (d)(v) the right to own property alone or in association with others.”

General Recommendation 23 on the rights of indigenous peoples: “The Committee calls in particular upon States parties to:

- a. recognize and respect *indigenous distinct culture, history, language and way of life* as an enrichment of the State's cultural identity and to promote its preservation;

- b. ensure that members of *indigenous* peoples are *free and equal in dignity* and rights and *free from any discrimination*, in particular that based on *indigenous* origin or identity;
- c. provide *indigenous* peoples with conditions allowing for a *sustainable economic and social development* compatible with their cultural characteristics;
- d. ensure that members of *indigenous* peoples have *equal rights in respect of effective participation in public life*, and that no decisions directly relating to their rights and interests are taken without their *informed consent*;
- e. ensure that *indigenous* communities can exercise their rights to *practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs*, to preserve and to *practice their languages*.”

Furthermore under General Recommendation 23 States parties should also “recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples to *own, develop, control and use their communal lands, territories and resources* and, where they have been deprived of their lands and territories traditionally owned or otherwise inhabited or used without their free and informed consent, to take steps to return those lands and territories. Only when this is for factual reasons not possible, the *right to restitution* should be substituted by the right to just, *fair and prompt compensation*. Such compensation should as far as possible take the form of lands and territories.”

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)**

Covenant outlines the basic civil and political rights of individuals. There are also provisions for collective rights (self-determination) and minority rights (Article 27). It does not include a specific article on indigenous rights.

Article 1(1): “*All peoples have the right of self-determination*. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

Article 1(2): “All peoples may ... freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.” [Interpretation: Indigenous peoples, like other peoples living on their corresponding territories, must have access to the use of their natural resources].

Article 1(3): “The State Parties to the present Covenant ... shall *promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right*, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.”

Article 26: “guarantees to *all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination* on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Article 27: provides that “in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, *persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language*.” [The Human Rights Committee has decided that

indigenous peoples are covered by this article, even though they may not necessarily be a true “minority” of a population.]

General Comment 23 on the right of minorities (Article 27): “Culture manifests itself in many forms, including a particular way of life associated with the use of land and resources, especially in the case of indigenous peoples. That right may include such traditional activities as fishing and hunting and the right to live in reserves protected by the law.”

- **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966)**

Covenant describes the basic economic, social, and cultural rights of individuals. It also has provisions for collective rights.

Article 1(1): “*All peoples have the right of self-determination*. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

Article 2(2): “The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised *without discrimination of any kind* as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

General Comments 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 identify specific normative implications for indigenous peoples of several of the rights affirmed in the Covenant - the rights to adequate housing, including legal protection against forced evictions; to adequate food; to education without discrimination; to the highest attainable standard of health; to water; and to benefit from scientific, literary or artistic production.

- **Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)**

General Comment 24 on women and health (Article 12): “... special attention should be given to the health needs and rights of women belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women, refugee and internally displaced women, the girl child and older women, women in prostitution, *indigenous* women and women with physical or mental disabilities.”

- **ILO Convention No.169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)**

Convention is the first international convention to address the specific needs for indigenous peoples’ human rights. The main theme of the Convention find expression in its preamble, which recognizes “the aspirations of [indigenous] peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions, within the framework of the State in which they live.” Convention also outlines the responsibilities of governments in promoting and protecting the human rights of indigenous peoples. It includes provisions on indigenous cultural integrity

(Article 5) and on non-discrimination in areas of social welfare (Article 3 and 4). Furthermore, importance is attached to the issue of land and resource rights (Article 13-19).

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**

Article 2: “States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to *each child* within their jurisdiction *without discrimination of any kind*, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.”

Article 17(d): State Parties shall “encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the *linguistic needs* of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is *indigenous*.”

Article 29: State Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to “b) the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; c) the development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her *own cultural identity, language and values*.”

Article 30: “In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is *indigenous* shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her *own culture*, to profess and practice his or her *own religion*, or to use his or her *own language*.” [Article addresses specifically persons of indigenous origin.]

- **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)**

Declaration deals with all minorities, which includes many of the world’s indigenous peoples. It only concerns individual rights, although collective rights might be derived from those individual rights. The Declaration deals both with states’ obligations towards minorities as well as the rights of minority people.

Article 1: “States shall protect the existence and the *national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity* of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.”

Article 2: Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have the right to (1) enjoy *their own culture*, to profess and practice their *own religion*, and to use their *own language*, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination; (2) participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life; (3) participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation; (4) establish and maintain their own associations; (5) establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group and with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.”

Article 3 (1): “Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights, including those set forth in the present Declaration, *individually as well as in community with other members of their group*, without any discrimination.”

Article 4(2): “States shall take measures to create favorable conditions to ensure persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.”

Article 4(3): States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their *mother tongue* or to have instruction in their mother tongue. (4) States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of *education*, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory.”

- **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)**

After ILO Convention No. 169, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the second document that addresses specifically the need for distinct protection of indigenous peoples in international law. Without a doubt, the present Declaration contains the most far-reaching standards for the protection of indigenous peoples.

Article 1: “Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of *all human rights and fundamental freedoms* as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law.”

The forty-six articles of the Declaration address the following areas: 1) rights to self-determination, participation in the life of the State, nationality and freedom from discrimination; 2) threats to the survival of indigenous peoples as distinct peoples; 3) the spiritual, linguistic and cultural identity of indigenous peoples; 4) education, information and labor rights; 5) participatory rights, development and other economic and social rights; 6) land and resource rights; 7) the exercise of self-determination, indigenous institutions; and 8) the effective implementation of the Declaration and general concluding provisions. Many of the rights set out in the Declaration are collective in nature. Collective rights are balanced by reference to the rights of individuals, such as the right of individuals to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and specific provisions for women, children and persons with disabilities.

Note: As of 2008, the Russian Federation has ratified all of the above human rights instruments except the ILO Convention No.169. When the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was passed in 2007, the Russian Federation abstained in the voting. Ilya Rogachev, the Russian representative present at the voting, noted that his country and delegation supported the rights of indigenous peoples and the development of international standards, but he felt that the declaration was unbalanced and its elements

not carefully weighted. Particularly he could not agree with the provisions governing the rights of indigenous peoples to land and natural resources and the procedures for compensation and redress. More recently, Oleg Malguinov, Director of the Department for Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, made the following official statement regarding Russia's position on the UN Declaration: "Russia has supported the idea of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from the beginning, and has actively participated in the drafting of the document to give a more balanced character, taking into account the interests of both: states and indigenous peoples. The vast majority of the Declaration's articles are reflected in the legislation of Russia. In our country there was created and is continued to be improved the system of laws and regulations to protect the rights of indigenous people. Unfortunately, in the process of drafting the Declaration many important procedural rules have been violated; the concerns of all interested States, and especially of those in which territories a large number of indigenous peoples of the world live, were not taken into account. For this reason, this document has not become this balanced and credible international instrument, many United Nations Member States were hoped to get, and it did not receive the consensus."<sup>4</sup>

Some additional important international policy documents for the international indigenous movement are:

- **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 (1992)**

These two documents are connected to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In them the special relationship between indigenous peoples and their lands is acknowledged. Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration notes the vital role of indigenous peoples and their communities in environmental management and development "because of their traditional knowledge and practices;" accordingly "States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests" and "enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development." Chapter 26 of Agenda 21 focuses on the need for recognition and strengthening the role of indigenous peoples and their communities. Chapter 26.4 states that in order to fully make use of that knowledge, some indigenous peoples might need greater control over their land, self-management of their resources and participation in development decisions affecting them. Chapter 26 further recognizes that indigenous land should be protected from activities that are environmentally unsound or that the people concerned consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate.

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<sup>4</sup> This succinct statement was made in February 2009 in reply to a letter presented by Andrei Krivoschapkin, Deputy Chairman of the State Assembly of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and President of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Yakutia and Vice-President of RAIPON who demanded elaboration on the Russian Federation's position regarding the UN Declaration. Statement available at: [www.indigenousportal.com](http://www.indigenousportal.com) (last accessed February 2009).

- **Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)**

Convention acknowledges the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities on biological resources, and the contribution that traditional knowledge can make to both the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity, two fundamental objectives of the Convention.

Article 8(j): calls nation states to “respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application *with the approval and involvement* of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.”

- **Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (1993)**

Article 1 (20): The World Conference on Human Rights recognizes the inherent dignity and the unique contribution of indigenous people to the development and plurality of society and strongly reaffirms the commitment of the international community to their economic, social and cultural well-being and their enjoyment of the fruits of sustainable development. States should ensure the *full and free participation of indigenous people in all aspects of society*, in particular in matters of concern to them. Considering the importance of the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people, and the contribution of such promotion and protection to the political and social stability of the States in which such people live, States should, in accordance with international law, take concerted positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination, and recognize the value and diversity of their distinct identities, cultures and social organization.



## **APPENDIX D**

### **PARTICIPANTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

The following list is a reference for some of the actors and organizations engaged in international indigenous peoples' discourses. This list demonstrates the diversity in governmental and non-governmental bodies, specialized agencies, and indigenous organizations and groups involved in furthering indigenous rights and issues.

The information is taken from the actual attendance roster of the Seventh Session of the UNPFII, which I attended (UN Doc E/C.19/2008/INF/2). Participants are arranged in an alphabetic order and divided into nine categories: members of the Permanent Forum, state members of the UN represented by observers, non-member states represented by observers, UN bodies and specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organization, indigenous peoples' organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, NGOs in consultative status with the ECOSOC, indigenous peoples' organizations, academic institutions, and bodies represented by indigenous parliamentarians.

#### **Members of the Permanent Forum**

Simeone Adewale (Nigeria); Lars Anders-Baer (Sweden); Hassan Id Balkassm (Morocco); Elisa Canqui (Bolivia); Bartolomé Clavero (Spain); Carlos Mamani Condori (Bolivia); Mick Dodson (Australia); Tonya Gonella Frichner (United States of America); Palmanach Hasteh (Islamic Republic of Iran); Margaret Lokawua (Uganda); Liliane Muzangi Mbella (Congo); Andrey A. Nikiforov (Russian Federation); Xiaomei Qin (China); Carsten Smith (Norway); Pavel Sulyandziga (Russian Federation); Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines).

#### **States Members of the United Nations Represented by Observers**

Andorra; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belgium; Belize; Botswana; Brunei Darussalam; Burkina Faso; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Cuba; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Denmark; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; Fiji; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Hungary; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Indonesia; Ireland; Japan; Kenya; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; Malawi; Mexico; Monaco; Morocco; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Nigeria; Norway; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Seychelles; Slovenia; South Africa; Sudan; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Tunisia; Turkey; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Viet Nam.

#### **Non-member States Represented by Observers**

Holy See.

## **United Nations Bodies and Specialized Agencies and Other Intergovernmental Organizations**

Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; European Commission on behalf of the European Community; European Commission on behalf of the European Union; European Parliament; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Inter-American Development Bank; International Fund for Agricultural Development; International Labor Organization; International Organization for Migration; International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; International Telecommunication Union; International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Environment Program; United Nations Human Settlements Program; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Population Fund; World Food Program; World Intellectual Property Organization.

## **Indigenous Peoples' Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council**

American Indian Law Alliance; Assembly of First Nations – National Indian Brotherhood; Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation; Centre d'accompagnement des autochtones pygmées et minoritaires vulnérables; Comisión Jurídica para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Originarios Andinos; Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action; Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee; Indigenous Peoples Survival Foundation; Indigenous World Association; International Indian Treaty Council; International Native Tradition Interchange, Inc.; International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development; Inuit Circumpolar Council; Madre, Inc.; Lauravetlan Information and Education Network of Indigenous People; Native American Rights Fund; Native Women's Association of Canada; New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council; Partnership For Indigenous Peoples Environment; Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association of Canada; Saami Council; Tebtebba Foundation – Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education; Yachay Wasi.

## **Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council**

African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters; Anglican Consultative Council; Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia; Association of World Citizens; Baha'i International Community; Centre for International Environmental Law; Centre for Organization Research and Education; Centre de documentation, de recherche et d'information des peuples autochtones; Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches; Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd; Cultural Survival; Dominican Leadership Conference; English International Association of Lund; Ethiopian World Federation; Friends of the Earth; Global Youth Action Network; The Grail; The Hunger Project; Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union; International Association of the Sisters of the Presentation; International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation; International Council of Museums; International Council of Women;

International Federation of Social Workers; International League for Human Rights; International Women's Writing Guild; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs; Minority Rights Group; Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples; Oxfam America; Oxfam International; Rainforest Foundation; Salesian Missions, Inc.; Salvation Army; Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur; Society for Threatened Peoples; Solar Cookers International; Southern Diaspora Research and Development Centre, Inc.; Summer Institute of Linguistics; Transnational Radical Party; Tribal Link Foundation, Inc.; Union Internationale des Avocats – International Union of Lawyers; United Church of Christ, United States of America; United Nations Association of the United States of America; VIVAT International; Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources; Youth with a Mission.

## **Indigenous Peoples' Organizations**

Abagusii Indigenous Peoples Organization; Abima Garo Youth Association; Aboriginal Leadership Institute; Agence Kanak de Développement; Ainu Association of Hokkaido; Ainu Resource Centre; Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara – Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago; Amazon Alliance; Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation; Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network; Asociación Tradicional Indígena Wayúu, “Mareywayuuguama” de la zona del Cerro de la Teta; Asociación de Trabajadores Agrícolas Autónomos de Chimborazo; Asociación Indígena Cañar Ayllu; Asociación Mujeres Quechua Ayluu Azangaro Puno Peru; Asociación Nacional Indígena Salvadoreña; Asociación Regional de Pueblos Indígenas de la Selva Central; Asociación de Indígenas Evangélicos del Cañar; Assemblée des Arméniens d'Arménie Occidentale; Association Culturelle Asidd; Association Culturelle Sabiba; Association des Femmes Peules Autochtones du Tchad; Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists; Association pour le Développement Global des Batwa du Rwanda; Association Tamaynut; Association Tidawt Niger; Autonomia Eraiki; Balochistan Peoples Party; Bangladesh Indigenous Jumma Buddhist Monk's Association; Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum; Bangladeshi Chittagong Hill Tracts — American Buddhist Association; Bangsa Adat Alifuru; Borneo Resources Institute; Boro People's Forum for Peace and Rights; Boro Women's Justice Forum and Indigenous Women's Forum of North-East; Brazilian Indigenous Institute for Intellectual Property; Cabildo Wayúu Nöüna de Campamento; Cape Cultural Heritage Development Council; Casa Nativa Tampa Allqo; Centro Cultural Salasaka Manda; Centro de Educación en Derechos Humanos Ngobe-bugle; Centro Educativo Social Integral de Desarrollo Etnico Indígena; Chin Human Rights Organization; Choctaw International Foundation; Chotanagpur Rising Association; Comité de Développement du Quartier Hanoukopé; Comité de Solidaridad Trique en el Area Metropolitana; Comité Intertribal Memoria e Ciencia Indígena; Comité Promejoras Centro Salasaca; Communauté des Autochtones rwandais; Comunidad Campesina de Tauria; Comunidad Integradora del Saber Andino Fundación Educativa; Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador; Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia; Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas Indígenas y Negras; Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia; Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia; Confederation of Aboriginal People of Québec; Conseil National de Concertation des Jeunes Autochtones de la République Démocratique du Congo; Conseil National pour les droits du peuple autochtone de Kanaki; Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangélicas del Ecuador; Consejo General de Tainos Borincanos; Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu; Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Comunidad Indígena Pueblo Capelo; Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas del Ecuador; Consejo de Todas Las Tierras; Cooperativa Tarypak; Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia

Brasileira; Coordinación de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazonica; Coordinadora Indígena Campesina Agroforestales Peru; Cordillera Peoples Alliance; Cowichan Tribes/Hulqumimum Mustimuhw; Defensoria de los Pueblos Indígenas del Ecuador en América; Dewan Adat Papua; Elders Council of the Khakass People; Ermine Skin; Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa; Federation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia; Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations; Femmes Autochtones du Quebec Inc.; First Citizens Civil Rights Society; First Nations Summit; First Nations Women Lawyers' Network; Flying Eagle Woman Fund; Fondation G  n  reuse D  veloppement; Forum for Indigenous Studies; Foundation for Indigenous Americans of Anasasi Heritage; Foundation for Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea; Fundaci  n de Desarrollo Social "Dr. Manuel Naula Sagnay"; Fundaci  n Mushuk Kawsay; Fundaci  n para la Promoci  n del Conocimiento Ind  gena; Fundaci  n Reino Maya Asociaci  n Civil; Fundaci  n Social Ind  gena Sinchi Sacha; Fundaci  n Social Luz C  smica Fraternalista Taina; Fundaci  n Wayuunaiki; Global Indigenous; Grassy Narrows Women's Group; Guatemala Peace and Development Network; Gwich'in Tribal Council; Habitat Pro Association; Herri Topa; Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group Society; Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples North-East Zone; Indigenous Environmental Network; Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade; Indigenous Peoples Diagnostic Services; Indigenous Peoples of the North Kamchatka; Indigenous Policy Journal; Indigenous Women's Network; Instituto del Bien Com  n; International Indigenous Women's Forum – Foro Internacional de Mujeres Ind  genas; Jeunes Agronomes Actifs pour le D  veloppement Int  gral; Jumchab Metta Foundation; Ka Lahui Hawai'i; Kalumaran – Alliance of Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao; Kanaka Mo Vanua Melanesia; Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation; Khomani San Community Property Association; Kichesipirini Algonquin First Nation; Kus-Kura; La Red Xicana Ind  gena; Lao Human Rights Council; Law Informational Centre Indigenous Peoples of the North Tomsk Regions "Kogolika"; Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples; Lipan Apache Women, El Calaboz; L'Internationale Touar  gue; Longest Walk 2; Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization; Makarik Nihua; Makita Kushunchik; Manxinerine Yoptowaka; Micmac Native Friendship Centre; Monland Restoration Council; Morongo Band of Mission Indians; Mount Arafat Embassy Clan Yamassee Native Americans; Movement for the Protection of Forest and Land Rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts; Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People; Movimiento Ind  gena Tawantinsuyo; Mundari Literary Council; Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights; Nainyoie Community Development Organization; Nama First Indigenous Peoples Forum in Namibia; National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization; National Aboriginal Health Organization; National Association of Friendship Centres; National Council of Urban Indian Health; National Indigenous Higher Education Network (Australia); National Indigenous Youth Movement of Australia; National Native Title Council; National Network of Indigenous Women; Native American Church of North America of the Cowlitz Indians and of the Four Directions Lodge; Native Nations Law and Policy Centre; Negev Coexistence Forum for Indigenous Populations; Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities; Nepal Human Rights Forum for Indigenous Nationalities; NGO Forum on Cambodia; Niginan Housing Ventures; Nihyaw – Cree; North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance; Nuyagi Keetoowah Society; Ogiek Peoples Development Programme; Onondaga Nation; Organizaci  n Aymara Quechua Taypi Ceqe; Organizaci  n de la Nacionalidad Huaorani del Amazonia Ecuatoriana; Organizaci  n de la Nacionalidad Z  para del Ecuador; Organizaci  n Nacional Ind  gena de Colombia; Organization of Indigenous People in Suriname; Pacific Peoples' Partnership; Parakuio Pastoralists Indigenous Community Development Organization; Partners

of Community Organizations (Pacos Trust); Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia; Pewa Nepal; Philippine Indigenous Peoples Rights Monitor; Presencia Taina Inc.; Promotion and Advancement of Justice, Harmony and Rights of Adivasi; Rapanui Parliament; Red Earth Studio Consulting/Productions; Regional Public Organization of Nogay People in Dagestan Republic “Birlik”; Retrieve Foundation; Rodovaya Obshina (Community) “Albaga”; Rourkela Social Service Society; Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development; She Clan of the Yamasse Native American Muurs; Shubenacadie Band Council; Simba Maasai Outreach Organisation; Sneha, Inc.; Society for Informed, Conscious and Responsible Existence; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Centre; Standing Committee of the Dana Declaration for Mobile Peoples and Conservation; Stichting Tamaynut The Netherlands/The European Amazigh Women Foundation; Suoma Sámi Nuorat – Finnish Sámi Youth Organization; Taungya; Tawalt Cultural Foundation; Teemasane Community Development Trust; The Amazon Alliance for Indigenous and Traditional Peoples of the Amazon Basin; The Eagle Clan Arawaks; The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests; The Koani Foundation; The Montagnard Foundation, Inc.; The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples; Tierra y Libertad Café; Tin Hinan Mali; Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada; Tsintsabis San Gemeens Kap; Unión de Organizaciones Indígenas de Saquisili; Unión Nacional de Comunidades Aimaras; Unissons-nous pour la Promotion de la Batwa; United Confederation of Taino People; United Tribal Nations; Urban Aboriginal Strategy National Caucus; Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpschoofden in Suriname; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated; Warã Instituto Indígena Brasileira; Washitaw Nation of Muurs; Wayuumsunurat; West Papua Interest Association; Winnemem Wintu Tribe; Women Environmental Conservation Project; World Hmong People’s Congress; Yalga-binbi Institute for Community Development; Yamasi People; Yurta Mira; Zo Reunification Organisation.

## **Academic Institutions**

Carleton University; Centre for Sami Studies, University of Tromsø, Norway; Centre for Sami Research; Centre for Society, Technology and Development, McGill University; Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica; Department of Applied Indigenous Studies, Northern Arizona University; Department of Sociology, University of Essex; DePaul University; Faculty of Law, McGill University; Faculty of Law, Victoria University of Wellington; Fairleigh Dickinson University; George Mason University; Grupo de Estudios Africanos, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Grupo de Estudios Antropológicos; Hamilton College; Harvard Graduate School of Design; Hokkaido University Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies; Indigenous Law Centre, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales; Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Programme, Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona; Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe, Universidad de Deusto; Kamakakuokalani Centre for Hawaiian Studies, University of Hawaii; Menzies School of Health Research; Muhlenberg College; Native American Studies Department, University of California at Davis; National Centre for Scientific Research, France; Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy (University of Arizona); Northwest Indian Applied Research Institute, Evergreen State College; Oberlin College; Programa Universitario México Nación Multicultural; Rutgers University; Sami University College/Samisk Hogskole; Santa Fe Indian School Summer Policy Academy; Stonehill College; The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Kennedy School; Tilburg University; University of Aberdeen, Department of Anthropology; University of Kentucky; University of Leicester; University of Manitoba, Department of Community Health Sciences;

University of Minnesota, Department of Political Science; University of New Mexico School of Law; University of Technology, Sydney; University of Tuebingen, Institute for Political Science; University of Tulsa; Wesleyan University; Yale University.

**Bodies Represented by Indigenous Parliamentarians**

Cámara de Diputados de México; Congreso de la República del Perú; Greenland Parliament; Parlamento Amazónico; Parlamento Indígena de América; Saami Parliamentary Council; Saami Parliament in Finland.

## APPENDIX E

### EVENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF INDIGENOUS ISSUES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The subsequent chronology of events follows the style of the international events, initiatives, and normative instruments of significance to indigenous peoples presented in Appendix A. This one illustrates specifically what has occurred within the sphere of indigenous activism in the Russian North.

The key scholar sources that helped me in organizing this chronology include: Balzer 1999; Fægteborg 2005; Gray 2005; Koester 2005; Kohler and Wessendorf 2002; Murashko and Sulyandziga 2008; Petrov 2008b; Rethmann 2000; and Wessendorf 2005. *The Message Stick*, the official newsletter of the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, also provided valuable information on important meetings and events.

- 1987    Murmansk speech by Mikhail Gorbachev - proposes an agenda for international cooperation in the Arctic region and heightens sensitivity to northern peoples.
  
- 1988    An article called *The Big Problems of the Small Peoples* is published in the official journal of the Soviet Union's Communist Party. Article exposes adverse statistics on the situation of the indigenous peoples in the Russian North.  
*Gaskomsever (Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Rossiiskoi Federatsii po Voprosam Razvitiia Severa* - "The State Committee of the Russian Federation on Questions of the Development of the North") is created. *Gaskomsever* can be seen as yet another in a series of agencies commissioned to oversee, among other things, the social and economic development of the Peoples of the North.
  
- 1989    An expert meeting on minority problems achieves agreement on the necessity of severe changes in the Soviet minority policy. Experts pronounce that the best way to secure the future of the Northern minorities would be the establishment of ethnic territories with self-determination, the cessation of the former policy of forced relocation, and the replacement of large-scale development programs by locally adjusted small-scale projects.
  
- 1990    First Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is held in Kremlin, Moscow. Congress is attended by Mikhail Gorbachev and other prominent state and party leaders. Goal of the Congress is the empowerment of indigenous Siberians to have a greater voice in the distribution of resources, power, and authority in their own territories, and to monitor government programs ostensibly designed to improve their lives. Congress calls for a return of historic lands and the creation of traditional tribal councils. Indigenous leaders voice their concerns about the effects of political domination, give emphasis to the social dignity of indigenous peoples, and argue for respect for their traditions, beliefs, and cultural identities and institutions. RAIPON (at the time referred to as Association of the Small-Numbered (Minority) Peoples of the North) is established as an umbrella non-governmental organization at

the Congress. RAIPON becomes the official representation of the Northern indigenous peoples towards Russian authority and government.

President Boris Yeltsin declares in a speech in Tatarstan that all of the various territorial formations within Russia should “take as much sovereignty as they can handle.”

Yeltsin repeats this statement in several other speeches throughout 1990. In response to Yeltsin speech Republics, *Krays* and *Oblasti* all over Russia begin to declare their essential sovereignty and equal status with all other Russian territorial divisions in relation to the central federal power in Moscow. Several indigenous regions, Chukotka, the Khanti-Mansi, Yamalo-Nenets and Koriak Autonomous *Okrugi*, join this first wave of declarations of independence by declaring sovereignty from their parent *Oblasti*. Activists among the Nivkhi and Nanai, who were never granted their own territorial unit during the Soviet period, attempt to create autonomous units for their people for the first time.

- 1991 The RSFSR Soviet of Ministers approves *Gaskomsever's* plan “On the State Program of Development of the Economy and Culture of the Lesser-Numbered Peoples of the North, 1991-1995.” Program is quite comprehensive, promising attention to development of the social sphere; the agro-industrial complex; communications, transport and housing; protection of the environment; and support for scientific research on the Lesser-Numbered Peoples of the North. *Gaskomsever* is subsumed under the Ministry of Nationalities.

The first Arctic Leaders’ Summit takes place in Hørsholm, Denmark. Meeting is hosted by the pan-Eskimo organization Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC). The Arctic Leaders’ Summit becomes a forum where present and future matters of common concerns are discussed by the indigenous inhabitants of the eight Arctic nations – USA (Alaska), Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. The Arctic Leaders’ Summit process is different from other Arctic fora, because the indigenous peoples solely set the agenda themselves. At this first meeting, common environmental problems such as pollution, exploitation of living and non-living resources, the right to subsistence hunting and sustainable development are tabled and discussed.

- 1992 President Yeltsin issues a special Decree [“On Urgent Measures for the Protection of Peoples of Residence and Economic Activity of the Lesser-Numbered Peoples of the North”] calling for attention to the legal rights of Native peoples. This leads to clauses being added to several new laws (on matters such as land, wildlife, and education) mentioning the special rights of indigenous peoples.

A Conference with both scientific and practical goals is held in Salekhard. Conference is organized by the Committee on Nationalities of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Association “Yamal to Descendants!” in order to work out a strategy for the socio-economic development of the indigenous peoples’ areas under the new economic conditions of the 1992-2000 period. The issues discussed include regulation concerning the legal protection of Arctic peoples, traditional forms of agriculture, development projects for indigenous schools and Arctic peoples’ health care.

- 1993 The State Duma ratifies Article 69, Chapter 4, of the Russian Constitution which guarantees the rights of the numerically small peoples in accordance with the



generally recognized principles and norms of international law, and the international treaties of the Russian Federation. Another clause added to the 1993 Russian Constitution is Article 72.1, which states: “Under the joint authority of the Russian Federation and the Subjects of the Federation fall: ... m) The defense of the primordial dwelling places and the traditional way of life of the lesser-numbered ethnic communities.”

The Khabarovsk government hosts the First International Congress on Indigenous Peoples.

The *Nuuk Declaration on Environment and Development in the Arctic* is signed by the eight Arctic nations (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the USA). Article 7 of the Declaration recognizes the “special role of the indigenous peoples in environment and management and development in the Arctic, and of the significance of their knowledge and traditional practices” and it promotes indigenous peoples’ “effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development in the Arctic.”

A group of people (mostly teachers from the village school) in the Itelmen village of Kovran, on the Kamchatka Peninsula, writes a letter of grievance to the United Nations coinciding with the UN International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. Letter portrays their situation as that of a peoples, one among many, whose life-ways are slipping away in a radically changing world.

- 1994 Twenty-eight people, representing various indigenous peoples of Russia, give their view on the effectiveness of Russian implementation of the Program for the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, XIIth Session of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Second Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is held.

- 1995 International institution building programs, initiated by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) Canada, help to develop RAIPON into a significant political tool spearheading the indigenous peoples’ struggle for survival.

The second Arctic Leaders’ Summit takes place in Tromsø, Norway. Meeting is hosted by the third large indigenous organization in the Arctic, the Saami Council. The indigenous leaders concentrate on four main issues: international issues, business development and foreseen opportunities, the Russian Arctic, and environmental concerns.

- 1996 The Arctic Council is established. Main goal of the Council is the international coordination of development in the Arctic, with the pronounced participation of the indigenous populations inhabiting that region.

The directors and leaders of various social and public interest groups representing indigenous peoples of the North (RAIPON including) send a protest statement to President Boris Yeltsin, the Chairperson of the Federal Council and State Duma, Victor Chernomyrdin, and other government authorities. Document is entitled “Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples of the North in the Russian Federation.” The document describes the atrocious situation of indigenous people of the North, and appeals to the Russian Government to take the human rights of indigenous peoples seriously. The statement is an important comprehensive document of protest, which outlines specific grievances and concrete proposals in regards to the situation

of the indigenous peoples of the North. Among the issues raised are: title rights to traditional territories; participation in licensing for developing hydrocarbon and mineral deposits; compensation of the indigenous peoples for damage to their land as a result of industrial development; and introduction of quotas for indigenous representation in federal and regional authorities.

A new program titled “The Federal Special-Purpose Program on Economic and Social Development of the Native Lesser-Numbered Peoples of the North until the Year 2000” is approved by a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation. It is even more comprehensive than the 1991-1995 Program. However, the plan is created before any money is ever budgeted for its implementation. The government resolution merely endorses the program, and urges the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Finance to make provision for the allocation of funds for the realization of the program.

*Gaskomsever* is re-established as a separate entity.

- 1997 Third Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is held.
- 1998 RAIPON, together with other Arctic indigenous peoples’ organizations (the Saami Council, ICC, and Aleut International Association), becomes a permanent participant at the Arctic Council.  
 UNEP’s cooperation with RAIPON begins at a seminar arranged by UNEP and a joint Danish-Greenlandic project. Nearly 30 indigenous leaders from the Russian Arctic meet for the first time at the seminar to discuss common environmental problems affecting traditional life-style.
- 1999 RAIPON is awarded the UNEP “GLOBAL-500” in recognition for its constructive work in environmental protection in the Russian North.  
*Federal Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation* is adopted – establishes a wide range of rights for indigenous peoples.  
 RAIPON begins publishing the journal *The World of Indigenous Peoples – Living Arctic*.  
 The third Arctic Leaders’ Summit takes place in Moscow, Russia. The meeting is hosted by RAIPON and co-organized by the Aleut International Association. Theme of the Summit is “The Health of Arctic Indigenous Peoples,” which has become one of the most challenging problems facing the Arctic population, with special focus on the state of health services in the Russian North. The impact of environmental changes on peoples’ health is also examined. Summit is attended by representatives of the World Health Organization, the UN Environmental Program, the Arctic Council, the L’auravetl’an Information Center for Russia’s Indigenous peoples, the Youth Union of Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, government bodies of the Arctic region’s countries, environmental and human rights organizations.
- 2000 *Federal Law on General Principles of Organization of Ancestor Communities for the Indigenous Peoples of North, Siberia, and the Far East* is adopted.  
 RAIPON’s journal *Indigenous World - Living Arctic* (“*Mir Korennykh Narodov - Zhivaya Arktika*”) is first published.  
 The First International Youth Conference on *The Indigenous Peoples and the Environment of the Russian North* takes place in the town of Tomsk. The participants

represent youth organizations of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East. Main aim of the Conference is to attract the attention of the young generation to the major environmental problems in the territories of traditional use of natural resources of the Russian North. The Conference also has the goal to present industry, local authorities and the press to the results of the reports of the Arctic Council and to adopt a resolution on future actions.

- 2001 *Federal Law on the Territories of Traditional Land-use of Indigenous Peoples of North, Siberia, and the Far East* is adopted.  
RAIPON is granted a special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.  
Fourth Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is held in Moscow. 350 delegates from 29 regions, as well as 700 guests from the North, Siberia and Far East attend the Congress. The mostly worrying problems, such as preservation of territories for traditional uses of nature, development of traditional crafts, and compensation for damage done to the traditional way of life by mining companies, are widely discussed. During the Congress the necessity to create a Ministry for the Development of Northern Territories is expressed. RAIPON President urges that until such an institution is established, there will be no strict supervision over the implementation of socioeconomic programs for the development of indigenous peoples or an established mechanism for the movement of funds.  
Gaskomsever is abolished and its functions are transferred to the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. As a result, the governmental agency with an exclusive focus on the North and indigenous issues is effectively lost.
- 2002 The Second International Youth Conference *Indigenous Peoples of Russia's North: Their Present and Future* convenes in Moscow. Conference is organized by RAIPON in cooperation with TGK Consult (Denmark) and with financial support of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. More than 80 young activists from various Russian regions and 22 guests from abroad (Canada, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland) attend the Conference.  
The Council on the Arctic and Extreme North is founded, chaired by the Russian Prime Minister. The first meeting of the Council takes place in Salekhard, capital of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Region. Policies towards indigenous peoples are one of the principle issues on the agenda. The Council adopts several decisions, among them: the inclusion of indigenous representatives in the working groups on legislation reform under the Kozak Commission, and the granting of the status of plenipotentiary representative body to RAIPON as an organization of all indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation.
- 2004 The Batani International Development Fund for Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is established. The main goals of the organizations: to establish cooperation between communities, industrial companies and authorities and to help indigenous communities prepare and carry out social and economic development projects.

- 2005 Fifth Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is held. Congress discusses the results of the International Decade of World's Indigenous People (1995-2004), which is declared by the UN in 1993 for the solution of legal, economic, social and environmental problems faced by indigenous peoples. RAIPON conducts a roundtable on "Indigenous Peoples and the UN System." About 350 delegates from 29 administrative regions of Russia representing all indigenous communities of the North, Siberia and Far East, participants from Russian Government, Russian Parliament, UN agencies and international organizations are represented at the Congress.
- Indigenous peoples of Sakhalin protest against the oil industry and demand the implementation of a so-called "ethnological impact assessment" (evaluating the impact of any activities on lands traditionally used by indigenous peoples for their traditional way of life and culture) in addition to the environmental impact assessment.
- The fourth Arctic Leaders' Summit takes place in Montreal and Hay River. The meeting is hosted by the Arctic Athabaskan Council.
- 2006 Expert Group Meeting: *The State of World's Indigenous Peoples* is held in Salekhard - preparation of the publication entitled *The State of World's Indigenous Peoples*.
- 2007 International Workshop on *Perspectives of Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Industrial Companies* is held in Salekhard, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. Workshop is co-organized by the Administration of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, RAIPON and the Secretariat of the UNPFII, with support from the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation.
- International Expert Group Meeting on *Indigenous Peoples and Protection of the Environment* is held in Khabarovsk. Conference focuses on the environmental situation in Khabarovsk Krai and cooperation with bilateral or multilateral organizations on issues related to indigenous peoples of the region and on the application of the UN standards in general and the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in particular, to the Russian Federation.
- Committee of Nationalities Affairs of the Russian State Duma undertake intensive work to develop a draft federal law *On the Protection of the Environment, Traditional Way of Life, and Traditional Natural Resource Use of Numerically Small Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Federation*, which would make ethnological impact assessments a reality and would secure lands of traditional tenancy and traditional natural resources use for indigenous peoples' communal enterprises (*obshchinas*). Federal government, however, rejects the first draft of the law.
- 2008 International Conference: *UN System and Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East: Fifteen Years of Cooperation: Lessons and Outcomes* held in Khabarovsk. Members of the Dolgan, Nenets, En, Nganasan, and Evenk in the former Taymyr autonomous district organize a public protest against the way in which Moscow has violated their rights in its desire to develop natural resources. Demonstrators, led by their shamans, handed over an appeal to the Russian president and the speaker of the Federal Assembly detailing their complaints about the way that they have been treated since they agreed in a referendum for their district to be merged into the Krasnoyarsk Kray.

**APPENDIX F**  
**CHARTER OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE NORTH, SIBERIA AND**  
**FAR EAST OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

We, the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation,

**BELIEVE THAT:**

The Air, the Land and Water are blessed,

Nature is the source of life,

Man is but a drop in the whirlpool of life,

The river of time is but a reflection of the past, present, and future and that how our ancestors lived in the past is how we now live and how our offspring will live in the future;

**KNOW THAT:**

Man is a part of nature and bears responsibility for protecting the diversity of the environment;

Our home is the tundra, the taiga, the steppe and the mountains bequeathed to us by our ancestors, these are great, powerful, harsh, kind and generous manifestations but defenseless in the face of technical progress;

Use of knowledge can bring not only perfection and happiness but can cause pain and inflict injury;

Thoughtless work of human hands is capable of polluting and poisoning the air, the land, and the water, of destroying the living and of killing both large and small;

Economic growth, expanding wealth and assets for the few do not always improve life and prosperity for the majority;

Social, economic, and environmental policies of those now in power:

- do not eliminate need and injustice,
- do not protect the health of man and so the tree of life, of our kinfolk and our fellow countrymen, is rapidly withering away,
- do not renew the disrupted natural processes that forms our historical development,
- do not return the land of our ancestors, the lands of our traditional use;

Our way of life, based on time-honored experience of communal, social organization, has been created from the original cultures and beliefs of our ancestors and is the one, true way of maintaining life and sustainable development;

No one, neither society nor civilization, will ever solve our problems and only we, and the good will of the government, are capable of accomplishing this task;

DESIRE THAT:

our unique cultures, our ancestral homelands and way of life be protected by the government;  
our legal rights be observed and that we can participate, as equal partners, in the planning strategies for the sustainable development of the North of our country;  
our experience, knowledge, interests and traditional approaches to the use of the environment be accounted for when decisions are made on how the lands of our ancestors shall be used.

Everything that we believe, everything that we know and all that we desire must serve as the basis for advancing our traditional way of life.

We speak of development and not simply of “preservation” or “government protection,” emphasizing our desire to take part ourselves in the process of sustainably developing the North, our government and the world in general, using and improving on the accumulated wisdom of our ancestors.

Only in harmony with nature will humanity find a way out of its current crisis. We, the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation, know this path!

Note: Charter was adopted at the IV Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East, Moscow, April 2001.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **METHODOLOGY SUPPLEMENT**

#### **List of initial general questions or prompts used to start discussions with participants/interviewees:**

1. Please describe your involvement with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)?
2. Please give a brief narrative history of the events and conditions that contributed to the emergence of indigenous activism in Russia?
3. Please give a brief narrative history of how RAIPON emerged and who have been the major players within the organization?
4. Please describe the specific kinds of rights Russia's indigenous peoples seek recognition of?
5. From your perspective, are some indigenous groups, in certain regions/okrugs/oblasts of the country, doing better than others and why might that be the case? Are any of the indigenous groups given particular/special attention by RAIPON and why?
6. From your perspective, what has been the uniqueness (if any) in the problems and priorities raised by indigenous peoples of the Russian North?
7. Please describe how RAIPON is negotiating between the concerns of the indigenous peoples and the agenda of the Russian Federation?
8. Please describe how the Russian state is responding to the indigenous peoples' activism – with cooperation, hostility, indifference?
9. Does RAIPON receive any funding from the state? Who else provides funding? How hard is it to secure needed funds?
10. From your perspective, what have been the achievements and challenges in addressing the needs of Russia's indigenous peoples?

The questions listed above were adjusted (expanded or totally omitted) depending on whom I was speaking to and their level of expertise. There were no pre-established categories for responding.

During the course of my dissertation research, I conducted formal interviews with twelve individuals. The majority of the interviewees were representatives from the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) – including personnel at high level official positions (such as President and several Vice Presidents), technical staff members, and indigenous representatives. The rest of the interviewees included representatives from the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, indigenous representatives, experts in academia, political activists and a government official.

The following interviews were conducted in New York City during 2006-2009. I have chosen to list here without names, rather a brief description of, the interviewee. All interviews were conducted in English.

Interview # 1: RAIPON official; one of the seven Vice Presidents of the organization

Interview # 2: RAIPON official; one of the seven Vice Presidents of the organization

Interview # 3: RAIPON official; member of the UNPFII

Interview # 4: RAIPON official; coordinator of an international project

Interview # 5: RAIPON staff member

Interview # 6: an indigenous representative from the Russian North

Interview # 7: representative from the Secretariat of the UNPFII

Interview # 8: representative from the Russian Government

Interview # 9: an academic from the Phoenix International School of Law

Interview # 10: an academic from Oberlin College, Department of Anthropology

Interview # 11: an indigenous representative from Norway

Interview # 12: an indigenous representative from Taiwan



## **APPENDIX H**

### **GLOSSARY OF SPECIAL TERMS**

The following list presents terms that are commonly used when speaking about indigenous peoples' rights. Included in the glossary are also some legal terms that may assist the reader in understanding the legalities of the United Nation system and international law associated with indigenous peoples' issues.

<b>Accession</b>	The act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force.
<b>Collective</b>	Denoting a number of persons or things considered as one group or whole.
<b>Consultative Status</b>	In reference to ECOSOC, non-governmental organizations can apply for consultative status in order to be able to collaborate officially with the UN. NGOs recognized as having consultative status can send observer to the public meetings of ECOSOC and its subsidiary organs, give its opinion in writing on issues related to the work of the Council and, or prior request, present oral interventions at meetings of the Council or its subsidiary organs. Three types of consultative status with ECOSOC exist: general category (granted to organizations involved in most of the Council's activities), special category (granted to organizations with particular competence in concrete areas of the Council's activity), and roster category (granted to organizations that may occasionally make contributions to the work of the Council, its subsidiary organs or other organs of the UN).
<b>Convention</b>	Usually multilateral treaties with a broad number of parties by international parties or states.
<b>Covenant</b>	A usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement. It is similar to a treaty.
<b>Declaration</b>	A declaration is a statement of intent or aspiration, but can also be considered a generic treaty or agreement of minor importance.
<b>DoCip</b>	A Swiss non-profit documentation and information center that specifically supports and documents indigenous issues.
<b>Enter into force</b>	When it enters into force, a treaty is legally binding on all parties that have ratified the treaty. A treaty usually goes into effect when a certain number of member states have ratified it.

<b>Human Rights</b>	Basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. Examples of rights and freedoms which are often thought of as human rights include civil and political rights, such as the right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, and equality before the law; and social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to participate in culture, the right to work, and the right to education.
<b>Intergovernmental Organization</b>	An organization comprised primarily of sovereign states (referred to as member states), or of other intergovernmental organization. Intergovernmental organization are often called international organizations, although that term may also include international non-governmental organization. Common types of intergovernmental organizations include: worldwide and global organizations (e.g. the UN and its specialized agencies, WTO, IMF); regional organizations (e.g. European Union, Organization of American States); economic (finance) organizations (e.g. WTO, IMF); and cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, or historical organizations (e.g. Commonwealth of Nations).
<b>League of Nations</b>	The first international body founded at the end of World War One and created to prevent war. Based out of Geneva, Switzerland, the League of Nations was created in 1919. The United Nations replaced the League of Nations at the end of the Second World War.
<b>Member States</b>	Sovereign states (countries) that are members of the United Nations General Assembly.
<b>Multilateral Development Bank</b>	An institution, created by a group of countries, that provides financing and professional advising for the purpose of development. MDBs have large memberships including both developed donor countries and developing borrower countries. Among the main MDBs are: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and World Bank.
<b>Operational Directive</b>	A document which contain a mixture of policies, procedures, and guidance on how a certain institution deals with specific topics.
<b>Rapporteur</b>	An expert appointed by a deliberative body to investigate an issue or a situation, and report back to that body.
<b>Ratification</b>	‘Ratification’ defines the international act whereby a state indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. In the case of bilateral treaties, ratification is usually accomplished by exchanging the requisite instruments, while in the case of multilateral treaties the usual procedure is for the depositary to collect the ratifications of all states, keeping all parties informed of the

situation. The institution of ratification grants states the necessary time-frame to seek the required approval for the treaty on the domestic level and to enact the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to that treaty. See also accession, succession and signatory (UNHABITAT, 2002c).

<b>Secretariat</b>	The organizational body of the United Nations, with the Secretary General at its head. This organization is assisted by a staff of international civil servants worldwide. It provides studies, information, and facilities needed by UN bodies for their meetings. It also carries tasks as directed by the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council, and other UN bodies.
<b>Self-determination</b>	The right of a cohesive national group (peoples) living in a territory to choose for themselves a form of political and legal organization for that territory.
<b>Signatory</b>	A 'Signatory' to a treaty which has yet to be ratified or acceded to has not yet consented to be bound by the treaty. However, it is a means of authentication and expresses the willingness of the signatory state to continue the treaty-making process. The signature qualifies the signatory state to proceed to ratification, acceptance or approval. It also creates an obligation to refrain, in good faith, from acts that would defeat the object and the purpose of the treaty. See also accession, succession and ratification (UN-HABITAT, 2002c.).
<b>Special Rapporteur</b>	A title given to individuals working on behalf of the United Nations who bear a specific mandate from the former UN Commission on Human Rights to investigate, monitor and recommend solutions to human rights problems.
<b>Traditional Ecological Knowledge</b>	Indigenous peoples' knowledge of the way their environment works. This knowledge, which is passed down from generation to generation, is being recognized as playing an important role in environmental protection.
<b>Treaty</b>	A contract in writing between two or more political authorities (as states or sovereigns) formerly signed by representatives duly authorized and usually ratified by the lawmaking authority of the state.
<b>UN Specialized Agencies</b>	Autonomous organizations of the UN that work with the UN and each other through the coordinating machinery of the ECOSOC. Examples include: FAO, IFAD, ILO, IMF, UNESCO, WHO, WIPO, World Bank.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Irina L. Stoyanova was born and raised in Bulgaria. While attending the Second English Language School in her home country, she was a finalist in a national merit based competition and was awarded a scholarship for a one-year high school exchange program in the United States. The program was jointly administered by the Open Society Institute-Bulgaria and the Rotary Club-New York. As a result, Stoyanova graduated from Valley Central High School, Montgomery, New York in 1998. She went on to receive her Bachelor of Arts from Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri in 2003, where she majored in Environmental Studies, International Studies, and German Cultural Studies. Prior to graduating from Westminster College, Stoyanova studied for a semester at Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany. She continued on to graduate school and earned her Master of Science in Environmental Science and Policy from George Mason University in 2006. During her time at George Mason, Stoyanova assisted for three years Dr. Peter J. Balint in his research in the areas of community-based conservation in rural areas of developing countries, integrated ecosystem management, public participation in policy decision-making, and photovoltaic technology applications. She also taught undergraduate and graduate courses at the Environmental Science and Policy Department and the Public and International Affairs Department. While in graduate school, Stoyanova conducted an internship with The Nature Conservancy where she promoted the initial steps of developing official policies and guidelines for The Conservancy's work with indigenous peoples in protected areas. Stoyanova has an extensive experience in academic environmental and social science research, with emphasis on indigenous peoples' knowledge and human rights, cultural ecology, and international environmental policymaking.