Indigenous Struggles
and
The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie
by
Jonathan Friedman
Department of Social Anthropology
University of Lund
P.O. Box 114
S-221 00 Lund, Sweden
jonathan.friedman@soc.lu.se

Introduction

Since the mid-Seventies there has been a massive increase in the activities of indigenous morities in the world. Their struggles have become global news, and they have entered numerous global organizations so that they have become an international presence. This, I shall argue, does not mean that they have been globalized and that they are just like everyone else in today's globalizing world. They have been part of many a national scene for many decades. They have been marginalized in their own territories, boxed, packaged and oppressed, sometimes even unto death. But this has changed in many parts of the world, because the indigenous is now part of a larger inversion of Western cosmology in which the traditional other, a modern category, is no longer the starting point of a long and positive evolution of civilization, but a voice of Wisdom, a way of life in tune with nature, a culture in harmony, a gemeinschaft, that we have all but lost. Evolution has become devolution, the fall of civilized man. But there is a social reality to this change as well, since the voices of the Other are the voices of real people struggling for control over their conditions of existence. This struggle is not about culture as such, but about social identity of a particular kind, indigenous identity, which is constituted around cultural and experiential continuities that are only poorly mirrored in Western categories, not least in anthropological categories. Fourth world struggles have been partially - and in some cases very - successful, but they do not operate in a simple structure where the only larger context is the national state. They are also part of a dynamic global system, one that is multiplex and contains a number of related processes. There has been a more general inflation of cultural politics and ethnic conflict in the world, together with substantial increases in class stratification, economic polarization and major shifts in capital accumulation. All of these changes constitute a field of analysis that must, I believe, be our central focus for understanding. We need always to struggle to gain and maintain a perspective on reality, especially in periods, like this one, when it seems to be escaping at such great speed. This is a period of rapid change. It is heralded as the age of information, the age of globalization. Anthropologists have been much taken by the current transformations but have not done much in the way of research on them. This is unfortunate because the changes, or experienced changes, have certainly impacted on the discipline. What is going on? Is culture dead? Is consumption where it's all at (Miller)? Are we entering a new urban civilization in which hybridity is the rule and the indigenous interesting primarily because it can be incorporated into a larger global celebratory machine, like world-music incorporates its various

themes. It is necessary to step back, take it easy, look at the contours of the world we inhabit and investigate seriously the mechanisms that seem to be steering our history. What may appear as chaos, or as "disjuncture," is truly an appearance, the starting point and not the end point, of our attempt to grasp the nature of social reality. I shall be suggesting that there is an order in all of these diverse processes, that they form part of a whole. The argument is as follows: First, the current globalization is not a mere evolutionary change in a steady linear development from smaller to larger systems, from the local to the global. On the contrary, globalization s a phase in global systems marked by the decline of one hegemony and the rise of a new one, a phase accompanied by a process of decentralization of capital accumulation in the larger arena, of increasing disorder and competition, of mass migration as well as ethnification or ethnic fragmentation. I suggest that this cyclical phenomenon may itself have been transformed by the technologically-based speed-up and time-space compression of the world-system which in turn may be transforming the world in the direction of a permanently globalized condition. Second, whether or not the world-system is being restructured in a more lasting way or not, there are a series of social and cultural processes that accompany periods of globalization. There is, in the former center, an increasing fragmentation of identities, the break-up of larger identity units, the emergence of cultural politics among indigenous, regional, immigrant and even national populations. This is not merely a question of the re-emergence of former identity units, but of a general process of indigenization that may produce new and strange combinations. There is simultaneously an increasing class polarization, an impoverishment at the bottom of society and an enrichment at the top. New elites are formed and new upper class identities are forged. The latter are new cosmopolitan identities in which notions of hybridity, the encompassement of the world's cultures within the elite, appears to be a dominant motif -- from media representations to New Age visions. That the two processes, vertical and horizontal, are real forces is illustrated by paradoxical absorption of indigenous movement elites into international circuits, locations where they begin to live very different lives. The discussion focuses on the articulation of these two processes and the way they are related to the dynamics of the world system. [Page 316] Journal of World-Systems Research

On Globalization The first appearance that strikes many of us today, is captured by the buzz-word "globalization," which is bandied about in business economics (where it really developed), to cultural studies and even anthropology. Some work on globalization is analytically and theoretically significant, but much more of it consists in simple opinions and reflections on the immediate. Cultural globalization thinking is based on a rather myopic view rooted in intellectual experience of the media, internet and travel. It correctly understands that the world has become smaller (but this is always relative: Braudel made speed of transport a key to his notion of world "systems", a theme also well developed among geographers, not least Harvey (1989), whose concept of "time-space compression" does enough to account for much of what globalization consciousness is all about). Robertson (who was one of the first to engage in these discussions) places globalization at the turn of the 20th century, although he has now pushed this back to the ancient world. He is primarily interested in consciousness of a larger world and the way in which people increasingly identify with a larger global unity, as well as the way the local expresses the global. The establishment of the League of Nations and many of our new global cults are examples of globalization, but so is the Meiji Restoration's importing of European concepts of governance. Cultural form moves and is adopted into increasingly larger places. Of course, this has been going on for quite a long time. Even the conceptual apparatus of globalism is present in the universalism of the Enlightenment or the Ecumenism of the late Mediaeval Church, to say nothing of Alexander the Great. So, the historical demarcation of globalization does not hold water since there is no historical disjuncture involved, or on the contrary, there may be innumerable such breaks. Robertson, at least, explores the ideological structures of globalization, although without any concrete research material to support his interpretations. In anthropology, globalization discourse is even more limited in historical and intellectual scope. It usually refers to a very recent period, the 70's perhaps and is closer to CNN in its intellectual breadth, the latter having been first with much of the jargon. Here it is used, very much following cultural studies arguments, to dislocate and deconstruct common notions of culture. The latter is no longer anchored in territory. Nor is anything else, according to Appadurai (1993). Instead we

are all in movement, not just our migratory selves, but our meanings, our money and our products. And all of these various "scapes" seem to have taken on lives of their own, leading to a chaotic disjuncture. More pedestrian approaches, such as that of Hannerz (1996), make no clear statements, except that the world has suddenly become culturally hybridized because of the various movements of cultural things, including here, subjects. This is indeed a global vision of matter out of place. Mary Douglas should have seen it coming. But, it is also an enjoyable chaos of variable mixtures that has become an identity among certain intellectuals and non-intellectuals, and this is part of the reason why a larger perspective is needed. Globalizing intellectuals are significant actors in the world today, but they are quite different from indigenous movements. Kelly (1995) after citing Appadurai to the effect that, "we need to think ourselves beyond the nation' (1993:411), goes on to make his case against the indigenes: "Across the globe a romance is building for the defense of indigenes, first peoples, natives trammeled by civilization, producing a sentimental politics as closely mixed with motifs of nature and ecology as with historical narratives...In Hawaii, the high water mark of this romance is a new indigenous nationalist movement, still mainly sound and fury, but gaining momentum in the 1990's....This essay is not about these kinds of blood politics. My primary focus here is not the sentimental island breezes of a Pacific romance, however much or little they shake up the local politics of blood, also crucial to rights for diaspora people, and to conditions of political possibility for global transnationalism" (Kelly 1995:346).This is an issue of class or elite position to which I shall return. As an introduction to the issue, it should merely be noted that globalizing cosmopolitan identity appears to be very much intertwined with the discourse of globalization, and that is not a scientific way to go about understanding the global. [Page 317] Journal of World-Systems Research

Let us take a step backward here and ask a few questions. Has the world become globalized so recently? Is everything really different today? Are there no territorial practices or (god help me) "cultures" anymore? In much of the discourse, the answer is normative. There are plenty of nationalists and ethnics and indigenous radicals around, but they have got it all wrong! They haven't caught up with progress! And progress is globalization, the formation of a global village, and the village is really a world city. Oh what fun!....but for whom? There is another side to this, and another approach to the global as well. That approach is not, I would argue, so caught up in the categories that it posits, but maintains an old fashioned distance to them. First, globalization is not new at all, according to those who have actually researched the question. While there is much debate, there is also an emergent argument that the world is no more globalized today than it was at the turn of the century. Harvey (1989), who has done much to analyze the material bases of globalization, puts the information revolution in a continuum that includes a whole series of other technological time-space compressions. Hirst and Thompson (1996) go much further in trying to de-spectacularize the phenomenon. "Submarine telegraphy cables from the 1860's onwards connected inter-continental markets. They made possible day-to-day trading and price-making across thousands of miles, a far greater innovation than the advent of electronic trading today. Chicago and London, Melbourne and Manchester were linked in close to real time. Bond markets also became closely interconnected and large-scale international lending- - both portfolio and direct investment-- grew rapidly during this period. (Hirst 1996:3)Foreign direct investment which was a minor phenomenon relevant to portfolio investment reached 9% of world output in 1913, a proportion that was not surpassed until the early 1990's (Bairoch and Kozul-Wright 1996: 10). Openness to foreign trade was not markedly different in 1993 than in 1913. In the 1890's the British were very taken with all the new world products that were inundating their markets , cars, films, radio and x-rays and light-bulbs (Briggs and Snowman 1996). As in the late 20th Century trade was booming, driven upwards by falling transport costs and by a flood of overseas investment. There was also migration on a vast scale from the Old World to the New. Indeed, in some respects the world economy was more integrated n the late 19th Century than it is today. The most important force in the convergence of the 19th Century economies ... was mass migration mainly to America. In the 1890's, which in fact was not the busiest decade, emigration rates from Ireland, Italy, Spain and Scandinavia were all above 40 per thousand. The flow of people out of Europe, 300,000 people a year in mid-century, reached 1 million a year after 1900. On top

of that, many people moved within Europe. True, there are large migrations today, but not on this scale. (Economist Dec. 20 - Jan 2: 73) [Page 318] Journal of World-Systems Research

This was a period of instability, to be sure, of enormous capital flows, like today. It was also a period of declining British hegemony and increasing British cultural expansion. Britain had no enemies as such, except those that it was helping to create by its own export of capital. On the basis of historical research, Arrighi argues that massive financial expansions have accompanied all the major hegemonic declines in the history of the European world-system. "To borrow an expression from Fernand Braudel (1984: 246) -- the inspirer of the idea of systemic cycles of accumulation -- these periods of intensifying competition, financial expansion and structural instability are nothing but the 'autumn' of a major capitalist development. It is the time when the leader of the preceding expansion of world trade reaps the fruits of its leadership by virtue of its commanding position over world-scale processes of capital accumulation. But it is also the time when that same leader is gradually displaced at the commanding heights of world capitalism by an emerging new leadership" (Arrighi 1997:2)This kind of argument has been central for the kind of historical global systemic analysis that we have engaged since the mid 1970's. If our argument dovetails with Arrighi here, it is due to a certain equifinality of research results and not a mere theoretical similarity. In this model East Asia should be the next center of the world system, but, many are arguing today that what historically appears as a periodical globalization may be becoming a permanent state of affairs (Sassen 1997, Friedman 1996, 1997). As a result of speed up, the cycles of accumulation may have so decreased in periodicity as to make geographical shifts a mere short lived tendency rather than a process that can be fully realized. This should not detract from acknowledging the degree to which East Asia has grown to a dominant economic position. It might even be argued that the current crisis is a result of precisely this regions rapid growth in a period of shrinking real world markets. The purpose of starting with all of this is to set the stage for a perspective. Globalization has occurred previously. It does not necessarily indicate that we are entering a new era in evolutionary terms, and it is certainly structurally compre hensible in terms of what is known about the world system. Globalization is a structural phenomenon in the terms set out here. In economic terms, it refers primarily to the decentralization of capital accumulation. The unification of the world in technological terms is a process that is financed by decentralizing capital investment, not by some autonomous cultural or even technological process. And while it certainly generates a global perspective for those who travel along the upper edges of the system, there are other processes that are equally global in terms of their systematicity, but exceedingly local/national/et nic/indigenous in terms of their constitution. This is the crux of the problem: the current situation is one which is producing both globalized and localized identities: in sociological terms both of these phenomena are local. Globalization is, in fact, a process of local transformation, the packing in of global events, products and frameworks into the local. It is not about de-localizing the local but about changing its content, not least in identity terms. A cosmopolitan is not primarily one who constantly travels the world, but one who identifies with it in opposition to his own locality. That is why so many working class border-crossers in the world are so blatantly innocent of such an identity. They are less interested in celebrating their border crossing than in avoiding precisely the borders which are so deadly dangerous in their lives. The true cosmopolitans are, as always, members of a privileged elite, and they are not so in objectively cultural terms, if such terms make any sense, but in terms of their practices of identity. [Page 319] Journal of World-Systems Research

Fragmentation and Indigeneity In global perspective, there is not that much disagreement today concerning the fact that the world is pervaded by a plethora of indigenous, immigrant, sexual and other cultural political strategies aimed at a kind of cultural liberation from the perceived homogenizing force of the state. In a certain perverted sense this is as true of the new elites as of the regional minorities, but in very different ways. The rise of indigenous movements is part of this larger systemic process, which is not to say that it is a mere product in a mechanical deterministic sense. There are two very different but related aspects to this process. The social process consists in the disintegration of homogenizing processes that were the mainstays of the nation state. This has led to increasing conflicts about particular

rights and of the rights of "particular" people, a real conflict between individual vs. collective rights and of the national vs. ethnic. Cultural politics in general is a politics of difference, a transformation of difference into claims on the public sphere, for recognition, for funds, for land. But the differences are themselves differentiated in important and interesting ways, not least in relation to extant structures of identification. Both regional and indigenous identities in nation states make claims based on aboriginality. These are claims on territory as such and they are based on a reversal of a situation that is defined as conquest. Roots here are localized in a particular landscape. There are important ambivalences here. All nationals can also be regionals and many nationals can identify as indigenes. All of this is a question of the practice of a particular kind of identity, an identity of rootedness, of genealogy as it relates to territory. It is in the very structure of the nation state that such identities are prior identities. No nation can logically precede the populations that it unified in its very constitution. This, of course, is a logical and not an empirical structure. There is no guarantee that the nation state did not itself generate regional identities. In fact much of the "Invention of Tradition", tradition, consists in arguing precisely in such terms. Just as colonial governments created regional and state-to-be identities in Africa, so did nation states create regional minorities at home. What is overlooked in this intellectualist tradition is the way in which identities are actually constituted. The latter consist in linking a matrix of local identifications and experiences to a higher order category which then comes to function as a unifying symbol. The logic of territorial identity is segmentary. It moves in terms of increasing encompassment and it depends on a practice of creating of fields of security. It expresses a certain life-orientation, an intentionality, that cannot be waved away by intellectual flourishes. The differential aspect of indigeneity is not a mere social struggle for recognition of difference. It is about the way difference must be construed and incarnated in real lives. There are extreme examples of this process that are expressive of the deep structures of the nation state. It has led the Afrikaners of South Africa to apply for membership in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. One of the most spectacular is the formation referred to as the Washitaw nation. The Washitaw according to Dahl (1997) are a self-identified tribe, inhabiting the Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma area. They are black and are affiliated with the extreme right "Republic of Texas". They claim to be descended from West Africans who moved to America when the continents were still joined, i.e. before the Indians: "We are the aborigines - the dark-skinned, bushy-haired original inhabitants of 'so-called' north and south America (Muu, Afrumuurican)." Bey: 1996:4[Page 320] Journal of World-Systems Research

They have an empress who claims not only land, but also an aristocratic descent for her tribe. Dahl shows that there are early references to Indians from the early 19th Century that indeed describe the Choctaw as somehow different than their neighbors, but it is not clear that they were black. On the other hand, there are Black Indian tribes in Surinam who are descendants of runaway slaves, and it is not unlikely that Blacks may have been adopted into the Indian tribes of the area. What is more important is the fact that there is a local identity that may well be one that resulted from historical relations between Blacks and Indians, but that it has been transformed into tribal identity in which the African is paramount and more indigenous (previous to) than the Indian. The structure of the identity is what is important here and its association with the Republic of Texas is significant. For such groups, the major enemy is the state, representative of the cosmopolitan and anti-popular, oppressor of real people, imperial and positively against the kind of aboriginal difference represented by the Washitaw and similar organizations. Their political aim is control over territory and governmental autonomy. They make their own license plates (as do certain Hawaiian groups) and refuse the entire tax system of the United States. The structure that is constructed here is one whose logic is organized by the very structure of nationhood, a relation between cultural identity and territory opposed to the territorial state which is perceived as usurper and conqueror. This kind of a structure emerges in conditions in which the state is clearly not representative of the people involved. Such conditions are variable, not only in space, but in time as well. The logic linking peoplehood and indigeneity to the constitution of the nation state is the same logic as well as a structure of opposition. Kapferer, in his discussion of Singhalese and Australian forms of nationalism suggests that Australia, as a variant of the modern nation state, is one based on an absolute distinction between nation and state. The people identify themselves as separate and

subordinate to the state, which is perceived as a foreign body. Australia is exemplary in that it is the history of a country that was not just a colony, but a penal colony, peopled by the powerless and clearly not associated in an organic way with statehood, not any more than prisoners can be said to own the prison that they inhabit. Australia is pervaded by an ambivalence that is quite complex. The core of the country, the nation, is alienated from the state which it has tried to capture. Its relation to both territory and empire places it in a fragile position. If its primary identity is established in relation to its main country of origin as a penal colony, it is also, by definition, an immigrant country. It is alienated not only from the state, but even from Nature, associated with the savage and uncontrollable outback that can only be conquered but not adapted to or understood (Lattas 1997). Caught between and opposed to the state, the Aborigines, and new immigrants, this is a potentially volatile structure of identification that produces both primitivist and anti-primitivist ideologies. It may help account for a State organized multiculturalism whose policy expressed in Creative Australia is aimed at recreating a new national identity based on a notion of combined differences which are not weighted in any clear way, thus alienating both a significant core of Australians and the Aborigines as well. It might also help account for the particular racism directed against Aborigines and which places immigrants and Aborigines in the same category of threat-to-the-nation (Blainey 1995). The other extreme is represented by "homogeneous" countries like Germany and even more so the Scandinavian countries, where peoplehood, nature and the state are fused, and in which the modern state can be said to have been captured by the people, at least until quite recently. Now of course this is a historical process as well. In Sweden, the patriarchal structure was not imbued with a strong notion of representativity until the working class movements transformed its patriarchal organization into an anti-state of sorts.[1] Where the early patriarchal structure was one in which the ruling class attempted to own the people, its capture inverted this relation. This is of course more complicated, since the state itself is essentially a representative governmental body and not a class. The real conflict relates to the control of the state as a political instrument. The social democratic state, the "peoples home" became a power in itself, just as Clastre's anti-chief. The latter is the transparent instrument of peoplehood, but also an instrument of violent control and leveling. The Swedish state reorganized much of social and economic life in striving to create the 'good society' in the name of the people. This representativity was maintained until recently at the same time as state functions were defined actively as extensions of the will of the people. As Clastres and others also have pointed out, such a structure accords an enormous potential for the transformation of the state into an autonomous and self-directed organism. The practice of homogeneity in Sweden was successful largely because it resonated with local identities. The ruling class was in important respects, and excepting here the nobility, an outgrowth of the "people". Indigeneity is only fragmenting when it is a separate identity within the state (as with the Saami). The indigenous as a general form of intentionality is about rooting. In certain conditions it produces alternative identities against the state, in other conditions it can produce extreme nationalism within the state. This accounts for the strange fact that the ideology of the New European Right is so similar to that of some indigenous movements. As a strategy it is more general than indigenous movements as such. Self-directedness is what makes such movements distinct. There is no logical way that national states and indigenous movements can co-exist without a change within the larger structure of the state itself, or by concluding compromises that simply accentuate the ambivalence in the situation. The articulation of indigeneity and the world system produces a whole set of new contradictions that are becoming salient in the current situation. [Page 321] Journal of World-Systems Research

Figure 1: Continuum of identities
This simplified continuum is a continuum of positions in the global system as well as a continuum of logical variation. It is not a static or general typology but refers to an organization of identification that can itself change over time. The globalized identities of today are those that have stressed the superiority of hybridity and then of multiculturalism which, from their point of view, is an encompassing of difference, that depends on "being above it all". But such positions are only possible with reference to the nation state itself. They are those who define themselves as going beyond the nation state and who declare that the latter is a dying or dead institution and even blame it for the major ills of the world,

usually summed up in the word, "essentialism". But this is merely one position in a spectrum of possibilities that I cannot explore here. At the other end of the spectrum is indigeneity itself. The relation between national elites and the nationalist position is highly ambivalent insofar as it is ideologically egalitarian at the same time that it is hierarchical in practice. [Page 322]

I suggested that the major operator in this continuum is the dynamics of class formation in the global system. Globalizers are those who identify with the top of the system while localizers tend to identify with the bottom. There is more to this, however, than mere identity politics. Global process and the unification of fragments under capitalism: The new classes In a recent and very important thesis, Elizabeth Mary Rata has described what she refers to as the emergence of tribal capitalism in New Zealand. Her hypothesis is that a new class has emerged, a post industrial class, whose wealth and power are based in the new sectors of economic development, the media, Internet and other software sectors, and the professions surrounding these sectors This class is the bearer of a new ideology, one that, must at first oppose itself to old capitalist elites. This class occupies an ambivalent position, a combination of particular elite status and a universalistic ideology of equality used in the struggle against the old hegemonic class. This leads to the emergence out of a guilt complex typical for this class position of a bi-cultural ideology for New Zealand. The idea that "we" are all both White and Maori, "we" are special, is notable insofar as it captures the notion of hybridity that is common in other elite ideologies, ie. Australia, Canada and now increasingly among a certain similar cultural elite in the United States (not least academics). This is the global-orientation that I described above in relation to the establishment of globalization as an ideology. She traces the way in which this class ideology articulated with the strengthening of Maori identity via the establishment of a separate cultural project, language schools a national cultural revival and then land rights and access to capital on established tribal lands. This is a movement from cultural identity to tribal property. The Waitangi Amendment Act established the tribes as corporate political and economic entities and the later Maori Fisheries Commission became the means of transfer of property rights and funds for the establishment of fishing enterprises. The effects of juridification were increasing potential conflicts within the tribes as people struggled to define their genealogical rights to means of production. The issue of exclusion vs. inclusion with respect to such rights is an expression of the tendency to class division among the Maori, a theme which appears throughout the rest of the thesis. It is interesting to compare the Maori to peoples such as the Sami in which access to Reindeer and herding territories is a basis of privilege that severely divides the population, although the colonial history is somewhat different in these two cases. The combination of tribal organization and capital accumulation and transfers is important in understanding the way a local movement can become reorganized into the global system. The class structure that seems to be emergent is one in which those who control capital within the tribes introduce wage labor among lower ranked kin tending turning them into a subordinate class if these relations are reproduced. The second class division emerges between those with and without access to tribal property, more than half of the Maori who still inhabit urban ghettos. Rata makes use of Marxism and especially Regulation Theory to develop her thesis that there is a new form of accumulation emerging here, the "tribal capitalist mode". There is a third process which Rata touches on as well, the formation of a Maori middle class based on the control over specialized knowledge in the matrix linking the new National cultural class, referred to above, the cultural apparatuses of the state and the reconstruction of Maori society. These are intellectuals who played and continue to play key roles in the Maori movement, but also function as consultants to both tribes and government, as mediators and teachers. It is, of course, to be expected that intelligentsia should emerge within such movements and that they should become increasingly established as the movements become institutionalized. They, are, after all, the focal points for political unity and often political action as well, pivots in the competition for funding and rights. It would be a sign of incomprehension, not untypical of anthropologists, to critique such developments on the grounds that they deviate from the anthropologist's conception of traditional culture. Even the class aspect of this development is quite logical in terms of the process of integration itself. On the other hand, such

divisions are bound to be sources of potential conflict within the emerging larger political community. [Page 323] Journal of World-Systems Research

But there is more to this development that has everything to do with the state of global capitalism today. This is related to the extreme decentralization of capital accumulation and the spectacular shift from real investment to fictitious accumulation. Sassen estimates that there are at least 75 trillion dollars in financial circulation. Since the 80's, financial assets have grown 2.5 times faster than the gross domestic product of the richest nations, and it is continuing to grow logarithmically in this period of real overproduction, as evidenced by the Asian crisis. Much of this money is transferred in the form of pork barrels to firms dealing with all kinds of non-productive activity, not least among the so-called consultancies and NGO's that have developed explosively in the past decade. There are of course many NGO's that are engaged in productive activities or in genuinely effective activities related to the survival of indigenous peoples, but there is no hindrance to massive development of carpetbaggers and treasure hunters. One of these is the recent history of an organization calling itself UHAELE, which came to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs with an offer to help them organize the approaching Hawaiian sovereignty for a sizable fee. A contract was almost consummated but was suddenly exposed in the media and the whole affair was called off in a throttle of scandalous accusations concerning who had signed the agreement with the firm. The same organization had some earlier dealings in Vanuatu where, after signing a lease for an offshore island, proceeded to advertise the place as a tax haven for people of superior intelligence and sold shares in the island that was soon to be declared the independent country of Aurora. Nevels and his family were to be the royalty of this constitutional monarchy. "It is intended to create an independent country called AURORA, with minimal government, maximum personal freedom and a laissez-faire economy...It is intended that the population of Aurora will be very cosmopolitan: admission as first citizens will be based upon needed skills, professions and talents and belief in the political and economic principles upon which the country is founded. Men and women of numerous races, of varied religions, will be invited to apply. (Nevels n.d. 1)Needless to say, the independence never materialized. Vanuatu stopped it with military threats. Nevels disappeared and his investors lost their money. Nevels is a lawyer and when Uhaele surfaced, its home base was Reno, Nevada (of course). The group entered into elaborate negotiations with OHA which was scheduled to receive several hundred million dollars as reparations from the federal government and other funds from the State government. These entailed ultimately that Uhaele would by and large control the administration of OHA's economy in exchange for 20% of the net proceeds. Now as Uhaele had no capital, no employees, no equipment, to say the least, this was clearly a gold mine for them, their talent in exchange for a piece of the action. "Uhaele was a letterhead and a telephone" (Ke Kia'i 1991: 8)The world is replete with firms like this, on the hunt after the masses of financial wealth that is circulating into "good causes", whether at the national or international level. In all of this there is always a tendency to class formation, however little this may be manifested. It has certainly led to the formation of global elite representatives of various groups who are immediately implicated in a field of tension, between their very rooted places of origin and the inordinate power of global funds to incorporate them into the global cocktail circuit. The United Nations and a host of other mega-organizations have been gathering places for the formation of global identities, places, as well, for the destruction of local accountability. The vitality of certain indigenous movements is measurable by the degree to which indigenous peoples manage to capture or replace their representatives in such situations. But this is truly a field of contradictory forces. The process of fragmentation via a indigenization is subject to processes of social verticalization that is related to the institutions and funds that circulate in this period of globalization of capital. [Page 324] Journal of World-Systems Research

Verticalization, fragmentation and the social transformation of the global system Verticalization, or class polarization, is a vector of the global system, and it effects all the forms of fragmentation that represent the other major vector in the system. Ethnification and class formation are the paired processes that characterize this simultaneous development. The transformation of the nation state into a modern form of the Absolutist state is an expression of the same process. The increase in clientelism in European

States, and between the states and regions, and the Union, is part of the disintegration of the homogeneous nation state. The notion of a Europe based on regions rather than states is part of this and would transfer power to Brussels while undermining the relation between states and their subregions. Thus, the notion pushed by some of the cultural globalists, that we have somehow moved beyond the obsolete nation state and are entering a new world of the post-national, is a misconstrual of a more complex situation. While it is true that global capital exercises increasing power over national conditions of reproduction, this does not spell the end of the nation state as such, but its transformation, from a homogeneous entity in which common goals link the "people" and their state, to a separation of the state from the nation. The state itself, according to ongoing research is becoming increasingly oriented to international capital flows, to the regulation of such flows as they relate to conditions of maintenance of territorial economic units. The recent Asian crisis has made this resoundingly evident. George Soros apparently lost over 100 million dollars in Asia, and he has, more generally, clamored for increasing international controls over financial flows. "Although I have made a fortune in the financial markets, I now fear that untrammeled intensification of laissez-faire capitalism and the spread of market values to all areas of life is endangering our open and democratic society. The main enemy of the open society, I believe, is no longer the communist but the capitalist threat.... Too much competition and too little cooperation can cause intolerable inequities and instability.... The doctrine of laissez-faire capitalism holds that the common good is best served by the uninhibited pursuit of self-interest. Unless it is tempered by the recognition of a common interest that ought to take precedence over particular interests, our present system... is liable to break down. (Soros 1997: 45, 48)This expresses a desire, at present being implemented by many states, for a stronger regulation of the conditions of equilibrium in the world market. Work by Sassen indicates that Nation State functions are increasingly shifting from national to international issues. This is what might be called a lift-off of the State. In Europe it is related in its turn to the emerging relation between nation states and the European Union. European governmental organs are not tied to constituencies as are national organs. They have experienced problems of corruption, in uncontrolled use of power, in inordinately high remunerations for their members, but this is also reflected in the many credit card crises at the national level: there is a general accountability crisis in the nation state which is expressed in declining respect for politicians who are considered increasingly to be a class with their own interests. Politicians, on the other hand, have in various ways, expressed their distaste for ordinary people whom they often accuse for being red-necked and nationalist. That this can occur in a country like Sweden is ample evidence of the forces involved. Carl Bildt, European Bosnia negotiator and leader of the Conservative party, has written that a European government is the ultimate solution for the continent, and that it could well take on a form reminiscent of the Hapsburg Empire. Similar statements have come from social democrats and others. Sweden, which is officially multicultural, has, in a government bill, stated categorically that Sweden no longer has a common history since there are so many different immigrant groups present on Swedish soil (where does that put the United States or Canada?). The bill goes on to formulate a new structure for the state that moves clearly in the direction of a plural society, based on the association of different cultural groups. There are tendencies in the media elite and in the state to classify any opposition to this planned transformation as racism. The overall impact of the transformation of the global system is one that places the state in a new kind of vortex of global forces, one where it becomes a focal point for an association of different groups rather than the representative of what one comedian has called "that special interest group, the people". This structural tendency is one in which the political class and the other cultural elite class factions identify increasingly with the global, in which, as has been said of the American situation, "They have more in common with their counterparts in Brussels or Hong Kong than with the masses of Americans not yet plugged into the network of global communications." (Lasch 1995: 35)[Page 325] Journal of World-Systems Research

Now the state, transformed in this way, becomes the focal point of certain tributions of favors, funds and positions to an increasingly fragmented nation state. The clientelism to which I referred above is very much the product of this transformation. Regional, immigrant and indigenous minorities all become subject to this changing field of forces. The field tends to create new elites that move within the global

sphere, ranked lower than the real big-shots, since they are clients to the real sources of power and money. They may have global spheres of their own, like the W.C.I.P and they sometimes mingle with higher ranked elites, but they are primarily local clients in the global mesh of neo-feudal dependencies. Indigeneity is not about concrete indigenous groups as such. It is about a process of identification in the contemporary global arena that is a powerful expression of the transformation of the global system. The process of ethnic fragmentation that it entails is certainly a global phenomenon, located specifically in the declining imperial centers and in the declining peripheral zones of those centers. Fragmentation is particularly salient in the downwardly mobile segments of the system. It is not a mere cultural issue, but a deeply troubling social issue as well. The identities that result are not merely ethnic, but may be territorial as well, and they are critical aspects of the new turf wars in the cities and the ethnic wars in both Europe, and in Africa. In the same way, cosmopolitanization produces a particular set of identifications that include hybridity; the global gathering of world cultures and traditional "holisms" into the higher identity of the cosmopolitan. This encompassment is part of a social distantiation, a vertical differentiation based on cultural distinctiveness. It expresses culturally the vertical polarization in the larger system. That such processes can appropriate the elites of indigenizing populations is evidence of the contradictory forces at work in the world system today. The rise of indigenous movements was part of a general process of transformation in the world system, one in which the weakening of the Western nation state took the form of the rise of cultural politics. This was, as suggested, at the start, part of a common decline in hegemony which was also expressed in a rapid increase in economic globalization. Whether this is a temporary or permanent change cannot be determined here because the general periodicity of accumulation has increased, because globalization has become more rapid, cheaper and increasingly institutionalized. It has, in any case, produced major transformations of class relations; the emergence of a new cosmopolitan elite or congeries of elites that have been sucked into the globalization process and who are the producers of globalizing representations of the world, understandings that challenge the very existence of the nation state and proclaim a new post-national era at the same time as fragmentation and cultural conflict are more pervasive than ever at lower levels of the system. The articulation of verticalizing and fragmenting process produces the paradox of class division at all levels, including movements that begin in urban ghettos. It is important to take these contradictions into account when trying to understand the trajectory of indigeneity in today's world. [Page 326] Journal of World-Systems Research

Figure 2: Cosmopolitanization and indigenization in the contemporary global system   [Page 327] Journal of World-Systems Research

Notes
1. It should be noted, however, that the patriarchal state was strongly oriented to the "people" and to the formation of a national unity of an organic type based very much on the responsibility of the national elites toward the people. [Page 328] Journal of World-Systems Research

References
Appadurai, A. 1993. "Patriotism and its Futures" Public Culture. 5,3: 411-29.
Arrighi, G. 1997. "Globalization, state sovereignty, and the 'endless' accumulation of capital" ms
Bairoch, Paul and R. Kozul-Wright. 1996. "Globalization Myths: Some Historical Reflections on Integration, Industrialization and Growth in the World Economy." UNCTAD Discussion Paper # 113
Bey, Umaralli Shabazz. 1996. "We are the Washitaw: Columbia via USA." The Washitaw Nation. Unpublished brochure.
Blainey, G. 1995. "The new racism." The Australian. 8 April.
Braudel, Fernand. 1984. The Perspective of the World. New York: Harper and Row.
Briggs, A. and Snowman, D. 1996. Fins de Siecle: How Centuries End, 1400-2000. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Dahl, G. 1997. "God Save our country: radical localism in the American heartland." Unpublished manuscript.

Economist. 1997. "The century the earth stood still". 71-73, Vol. 346.

Friedman, J.1998a "The hybridization of roots and the abhorrence of the bush" in M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds) Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World. London: Sage.

_____ 1998b "Class formation, hybridity and ethnification in declining global hegemonies" in K. Olds, P. Dickin, P. Kelly, L. Kong, and H. Yeung (eds) Globalisation and the Asia Pacific. London: Routledge.

Hannerz, Ulf 1996 Transnational connections : culture, people, places London Routledge

Harvey, David 1989 The Condition of Postmodernity. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Hirst, P.1996. "Global Market and the Possibilities of Governance." Paper presented at the Conference on Globalization and the New Inequality, University of Utrecht, November 20-22.

Hirst, P. and Thompson, G. 1996. Globalization in Question. Cambridge: Polity Ke Kia'i. 1991. "The odd couple: Uhaele and OHA" in Ke Kia'i, The Guardian. Volume 2, 9.

Kelly, J. 1995. "Diaspora and World War, Blood and Nation in Fiji and Hawai'i" Public Culture 7 475-497.

Lasch, C. 1995. The Revolt of the Elites. New York: Norton.

Nevels, L.N.N.d. The Aurora Corporation.

Rata, E.M. 1997. "Global Capitalism and the revival of ethnic traditionalism in New Zealand: The emergence of Tribal-Capitalism." Ph.D. thesis, University of Auckland.

Robertson, R. 1992. "Globalization" in Featherstone, Lasch and Robertson (eds), Global Modernities, London: Sage.

Sassen, S. 1997. "Territory and territoriality in the global economy." MS.

Soros, George. 1997. "The Capitalist Threat." The Atlantic Monthly, 279, 2, 45-58.

[Page 329] Journal of World-Systems Research

Back to contents page
v. 9/16/1999