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The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity (review)

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is a function of power relations that vary across institutional domains. In this vein, most interesting to me was the authors' analyses of elite governance in Miami. Specifically, white leaders have engaged (albeit reluctantly after waiting for Latinos to adopt "mainstream" values and culture) in a process of "reverse acculturation," heralding Miami as the capital of Latin America and learning Spanish and adopting Latino culture in response to the growing numbers and power of Latino elites. Similarly, African Americans continue to have influence over Haitian children in the sphere of education. Specifically, Haitian adolescents have undergone "segmentary" assimilation, that is, assimilation to a particular segment of American culture — namely, that of inner-city poor African American youth — by virtue of being a numerical minority and exerting little influence in the same schools attended in poor areas of the city. Finally, across a range of industries, the racial/ethnic composition of managers and supervisors by workplace structures socioeconomic rewards, in part, on the basis of language usage and cultural propinquity.

In sum, as the authors point out, Miami is a harbinger of interethnic relations in other parts of the U.S. Accordingly, the dynamics of assimilation should be increasingly complex in a growing number of geographic areas. This book is important in helping to identify the formula for the increasingly complex patterns of assimilation and, hopefully, spurring research to test its adequacy in various geographic locales.

The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity.

By Ronald Niezen. University of California Press, 2003. 272 pp. Cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$18.95.

Reviewer: KERI IYALL SMITH, *Stonehill College*

Twenty years of study and thinking culminate in this work by Niezen. Using community-based research from Canada and Africa, this work introduces and explores the emergence of indigenism, the international movement of indigenous peoples.

With chapter 1, indigenous forms of resistance are distinguished from ethnic groups on the basis of their unique political status. The reader is also introduced to the concept of indigenism, which is defined as "the international movement that aspires to promote and protect the rights of the world's 'first peoples.'" Niezen's anthropological roots guide him in this process, but he breaks the mold by studying the world as a microcosm. Here, the discussion of *indigenous* fleshes out the idea of *indigenous* and the empirical expression of *indigenous* as a global phenomenon.

The next chapter explores the international response to indigenous peoples' assertions of sovereignty at two time points: the beginning and end of the

twentieth century. This includes three cases: an appeal to the League of Nations from 1922 to 1924 for a hearing investigating a dispute with Canada over tribal self-government; initiatives by the International Labour Organization from 1921 to 1989; and the role of indigenous peoples in the United Nations since its inception. This overview of the indigenous experience in international governing organizations over time allows the reader to better understand the emergence of indigenism.

Chapter 3 examines diversity and commonalities across indigenous peoples. Niezen identifies two axes of difference: a North–South line and in the African/Asian controversy. Indigenous peoples of the North are advantaged by the liberal democratic states and their assimilation-oriented educations that allow them to understand international governing systems while the indigenous peoples from the South struggle to survive in oppressive political systems. Indigenous peoples in Africa and Asia face challenges to politicizing their status as indigenous because the state is liberated from its colonizer. Using the cases of the Crees in Canada and the Tuareg of North Africa, chapter 3 illustrates the shared experiences of marginalization, oppression, and the special rights that indigenous peoples claim. Niezen identifies assimilative education, the loss of subsistence, and state abrogation of treaties as foundations for the formation of a common global indigenous identity.

The goal of chapter 4 is to explore the overlap between the issue of cultural relativism versus ethical universalism and the issue of collective versus universal rights. The author seeks to explain how this overlap presents a challenge to cultural preservation and self-determination for indigenous peoples. This chapter tackles a complex overlap that might be easier to comprehend if it were presented in two separate chapters. There is so much going on that it was difficult to follow the flow of ideas. Although Niezen's statement that there is a "pervasiveness of sovereignty as a point of contestation between indigenous peoples and the states" is believable, it is difficult to judge or verify that his work reveals this to be the case.

Chapter 5 explores how assertions of self-determination influence indigenous–state and indigenous–international governing organization relations. The indigenous expression of self-determination is in opposition to the homogenizing tendency of states. Here Niezen presents empirical examples of the Grand Council of the Crees at the United Nations and disputes within international governing community over the application of the term *peoples* to indigenous groups. While the goal of self-determination unites indigenous peoples' lobbying efforts in international forums such as human rights meetings and processes, self-determination can take on multiple forms, varying from organization to organization.

With the next chapter, Niezen investigates the political implications of indigenous peoples' assertions of self-determination. The state cannot be the

source of justice for self-determination claims on behalf of indigenous peoples because of its interest in the outcome. Even international governing organizations are biased toward the state, as they generally represent the interests of a population of states. Discussions of secession and civil society among indigenous peoples examine the use of symbols of statehood.

The book ends with a brief chapter that names the key projects of indigenism: affirming local claims of difference, using the language and symbols of states in claims of self-determination, and embracing the universal concept of human rights to protect and develop identity.

With *The Origins of Indigenism* Niezen considers the ways that indigenous peoples are fitting themselves into existing structures at the state and international levels. In the process, he reveals the paradoxes between indigenous goals and the structure of the state system. Further empirical study will benefit from the ideas in this theoretical work. World systems theorists and researchers would be interested in Niezen's study of the world microcosm and indigenism. This book would make an excellent contribution to graduate seminars on culture, postcolonial studies, globalization, or social movements.

Contemporary Asian American Communities: Intersections and Divergences. Edited by Linda Trinh Vo and Rick Bonus. Temple University Press, 2002. 254 pp. Cloth, \$69.50; paper, \$22.95.

Reviewer: JIMY SANDERS, *University of South Carolina*

The collection edited by Linda Trinh Vo and Rick Bonus is a multidisciplinary account of various ways in which Asian American communities have evolved over the past few decades. Both spatial and behavioral dimensions of "the community" are considered. Relationships involving the fluid nature of ethnic identity and the intergenerational dynamics of community development receive attention. How intragroup variation in social class impinges on these relationships also receives attention. A number of chapters consider how diverse special interests on the one hand, and common interests on the other hand, influence the emergence and institutionalization of political activism within the Asian American community. A few chapters consider nontraditional means through which culture is expressed.

The multidisciplinary character of this volume results in a stimulating variety of inquiries into the ethnic community. Some of these inquiries are more successful than others, but the strength of the collection rests on its diversity of approaches and foci. Shortcomings are that the chapters often suffer from data limitations and few if any original ideas are examined. In that way, the limitations of this volume are similar to the limitations of most edited