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# Alternatives

Global, Local, Political

Volume 32 Number 1 Jan.-Mar. 2007

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## **Abstracts**

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# Introduction: Local Reaction to Global Integration— The Political Economy of Development in Indigenous Communities

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Hokulani K. Aikau and James H. Spencer\*

The case studies explored in this volume show how indigenous communities from North America, South America, and Asia have articulated their collective interests within the context of development. This global perspective reveals at least three recurring dilemmas: Who defines the indigenous group and toward what end? How do such groups assert these identities and claims against the nation state, even as they depend on that state for legitimacy? In a fast-globalizing world of placelessness, how and why do they articulate socio-spatial identities? Presenting these cases together offers a constructive platform for better understanding conflicts between globalization and specific localities as well as indigenous reactions to development planning. **KEYWORDS:** indigenous politics, development, planning, globalization, locality.

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# Culture and Cash: How Two New Mexico Pueblos Combined Culture and Development

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Sandra Lee Pinel\*

From 1980 to the present, most American Indian tribes exercising the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975 have invested federal and other funds to develop their governing institutions and economies on the assumption that traditional systems of governance are obstacles to business investment and, therefore, to development. Contrary to this pattern, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico retained theocratic and nonelected forms of governance recognized by Spanish rulers and remained in their ancestral domain. This article considers lessons learned by the Zia Pueblo and Pueblo de Cochiti from 1980 to 2005 in their efforts to make new development support, rather than compete with, customary values and institutions. It argues that these Pueblo Indian tribes demonstrate the importance of traditional governance institutions and tribal members who can strategically engage both indigenous knowledge and outside expertise to plan development that supports cultural integrity. **KEYWORDS:** development, indigenous knowledge, Pueblo Indians, indigenous governance.

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# The “Amazonian Trial of the Century”: Indigenous Identities, Transnational Networks, and Petroleum in Ecuador

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Gabriela Valdivia\*

This examination of the work of three organizations in the northeastern Ecuadoran Amazon, FEINCE, OISE, and FOISE, explores how they engage and produce representations of indigeneity in relation to an on-going lawsuit against Chevron Texaco. Each of these organizations has used distinct network associations and performances based on their particular histories in relation to petroleum in order to mediate cultural, political, and economic possibilities for their constituencies. As these organizations mobilize support for local causes through specific network connections, they produce and articulate distinct meanings of indigeneity, with distinct consequences for the future of their constituencies. I argue that an analysis of how collective indigenous identity, localities, and social networks shape and are shaped by representative organizations can help productively explore the social relations through which knowledge about Ecuadoran Amazon peoples and places is produced. **KEYWORDS:** indigeneity, transnational networks, indigenous organizations, petroleum, Amazon-Ecuador.

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# Claiming Indigenous Community: Political Discourse and Natural Resource Rights in Indonesia

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Suraya Afiff and Celia Lowe\*

In late Suharto-era Indonesia, “indigeneity” became a solution to the problem of political representation in popular natural-resource struggles. Using examples from Sumatra and Sulawesi, we examine how the concept of indigeneity was used as a means to strengthen community rights over and against state and corporate claims. In Sulawesi, scientists studied Togeang Island peoples’ “indigenous knowledge” as a way to affirm residents’ rights to inhabit a new national park. In Sumatra, Sosa people became “customary law” peoples (*masyarakat adat*) as a means to claim rights to oil-palm lands that had been taken over by state and private corporations. In each case, the formation of communities as customary or indigenous was a response to the possibilities and limitations of political discourse in Indonesia, rather than a natural outcome of a certain affiliation between communities and land, place, or tradition. The political nature of this solution becomes apparent in comparing this contemporary strategy with the way claims made during the early Sukarno years in newly independent Indonesia. In 1950s Indonesia, “class” was the rubric that united communities in land struggles. **KEYWORDS:** indigenous knowledge, customary law, class, Indonesia

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# The Political Economy of Market Reform and the Formation of Socio-Spatial Identities in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam

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James H. Spencer\*

This article attempts to place the concept of indigeneity in the context of contemporary conflicts and claims to resources in the face of increasing global integration. Rather than treating indigenous politics as primarily a product of historical and (European) colonial conflict of culture and race/ethnicity, I use the example of recent land conflicts in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam as a starting point toward understanding contemporary debates on indigeneity. Based on fieldwork in 1994, the article describes one community's conflict over resource-use that demonstrates how land law, local rules of access, and the evolution of competing claims to land can create politicized socio-spatial localities overnight. Such communities, though sharing a similar culture, language, and history with the dominant nation, maintain local meanings and rules of access that define a distinct socio-spatial community. This example from Vietnam suggests that contemporary globalization and market integration is creating new indigenous communities that need to be better understood. **KEYWORDS:** Indigenous, Community, Vietnam, Globalization, Customary Law, Property

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# Pathways of “Indigenous Knowledge” in Yunnan, China

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Janet C. Sturgeon\*

Although the word *indigenous* is prohibited in China, *indigenous knowledge* was adopted by a Chinese NGO in Kunming in 1995 to focus on minority farmers’ land uses that protect biodiversity. The author’s research on Akha farmers in southern Yunnan traced Akha land use from 1950 to 2006, assessing the effects of changing political economies, especially the 1980s switch to a neoliberal path, on Akha land management. Akha practices that maintained biodiversity persisted through collectivization (1958–82) and economic reforms (1982–1997), but have almost disappeared since the 1998 state policies reclaiming villagers’ forests and sloping agricultural lands. Aspects of neoliberalism that combined crisis environmentalism with state development plans have removed Akha land uses that protected biodiversity more effectively than socialist collectivism did. Links between indigenous knowledge and biodiversity are called into question as Akha farmers plant monoculture cash crops on remaining lands. **KEYWORDS:** indigenous knowledge, China, NGOs, Akha, shifting cultivation, forests, tea