



**Sámi Women, Autonomy, and
Decolonization in the Age of Globalization**
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Act 4: Finnish Sápmi, June 16 - July 9, 2006

Indigenous women as a group have not benefited from economic globalization. They usually bear the brunt of the destruction of indigenous economies, increased outmigration, and other negative effects of corporate globalization. “Development” and resource and other forms of exploitation in the name of progress are not new for indigenous peoples – many have pointed out how globalization is merely the latest euphemism for continued colonialism. In fact, the first anti-globalization activists were indigenous people who fought transnational corporations (TNCs) already back in the 1970s. What is new, however, is the increased pressure and superexploitation on indigenous territories in the name of profit and globalized economy. This has meant a serious undermining of international instruments, constitutional provisions, national laws and policies safeguarding indigenous rights. The most central of these rights, indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination, has been questioned and undermined as national governments bind themselves to new global economic treaties resulting in a potentially dangerous situation “where real and undivided power resides in private economic power alone.”¹ Others, however, suggest the opposite – that weakening the sovereignty of nation-states, economic globalization signifies new opportunities for indigenous peoples’ autonomy.²

In this paper, I examine the relationship between globalization, indigenous women, and autonomy. My main context is Sámi society and women, but I also draw examples from indigenous scholarship elsewhere. I start with a brief discussion of colonialism, postcoloniality, and globalization on the Sámi territory and then move to a critical analysis of current indigenous self-government structures. I argue that there is a need to decolonize and transform these structures if they are to include indigenous women. I also give a brief overview of the myth of strong Sámi women. I conclude with a consideration of models of autonomy that stem from understandings informed by indigenous women’s concerns and circumstances. More specifically, I suggest that certain principles

rooted in indigenous worldviews such as reciprocity and interdependence – what I call the gift paradigm – can assist us in conceptualizing notions rooted in a logic and vision distinct from predominant structures of international capitalism and patriarchal hierarchies.

(Post)Colonial Sápmi

Postcolonial theory and criticism have opened up new possibilities and dimensions for indigenous scholarship. Especially critiques of colonialism, analysis of power relations in society as well as the dismantling and rejection of the Eurocentric (but presented as universal) assumptions and views have advanced the shaping and recognition of indigenous discourses. In the Nordic countries, however, there is a marked shortage of postcolonial analysis of colonialism in Sápmi and research considering the effects of the colonial legacy on Sámi society. The “official” Sámi discourse largely lacks a critical awareness of the more subtle forms of colonization, such as what Spivak calls “epistemic violence;” the imposition and internalization of another worldview and another set of values.

Some scholars have even attempted to deny the colonization in Sápmi. For example, noted Finnish historian Jouko Vahtola is critical of discussing Sápmi as a colony and a target of imperialism. He contends: “There is nothing wrong in the South conquering the North, if it was not considered inappropriate at the time it occurred.”^{3,4} One wonders through whose perspective (and whose interests) he is considering the conquest of Sápmi when he adds that “in the 17th century, the Sámi could not remain isolated as a land of shaman drums, harvesting culture and shoe hay, which is easy to idealize and romanticize today.”⁵

Sámi scholar Veli-Pekka Lehtola has criticized Vahtola’s analysis, but also he argues that “we should not underestimate the Crown policies and the measures of government representatives that often are aimed at the well-being of the Sami.”⁶ Lehtola does not give examples of these measures, but instead warns of research that presents the Sámi as passive victims of colonization. In my view, there are two important points to be made here. First, investigating the colonization of the Sámi and the legacies of colonial processes does not necessarily render Sámi as passive victims. The Sámi, like other colonized peoples around the world, have had and continue to have various mechanisms and ways of resisting and subverting the colonial control and exploitation.⁷ Second, when we discuss the measures of the Crown aiming at the well-being of the Sámi, we have to consider more closely their scope and dimension. Was the Crown truly interested in the

individual or collective well-being of the Sámi or were the measures a cover for other, less benign interests? In other words, what was the ultimate goal of these measures? Could it have been only a stage in the larger process of appropriating Sámi territories, identities, and culture? For example, in the process of converting the Sámi into Christianity, using the Sámi language and the understanding of the Sápmi-based religion were merely a phase serving the objective of eradication of the Sámi worldview and religion.⁸

In short, we the Sámi are very much in need of thinking and rethinking Nordic colonialism, as suggested by this conference and the exhibition. While we do not yet live in the postcolonial, postcolonial analysis offers some useful and applicable tools for our work. When critically employed, particularly postcolonial feminist analyses of patriarchal hegemony can be useful in the process of decolonizing contemporary Sámi society. For me, the importance of “postcolonial” lies in its critical analysis and deconstruction of colonial discourses, practices, and relations of power. Hence, it does not suggest that colonialism belongs to the past.

The Myth of Strong Sámi Women

While there are Sámi women who feel it is artificial to separate women from the rest of their communities, there are others who contest the myths of “strong Sámi matriarchs” often employed to brush aside demands by Sámi women’s organizations and groups. According to Sámi feminist scholar Jorunn Eikjok, notions of powerful Sámi women and traditional Sámi society as matriarchal are myths created by the Sámi ethno-political movement in the 1970s, which needed to distinguish the Sámi people from the surrounding Nordic peoples and cultures.⁹ Until the late 1980s, it was common in the Sámi movement to stress that Sámi women were not as oppressed as Nordic women and that in Sámi society, women were equal with men.¹⁰ Besides a marker of distinctiveness, the notion of strong Sámi women also had to do with a desired ideal of Sámi society rather than the everyday reality of Sámi women. Today, this myth is often used against Sámi women who advocate women’s issues, particularly by Sámi men who have either internalized the myth or who benefit from the patriarchal system that is the reality of contemporary Sámi society.¹¹ A common way to disregard Sámi women’s concerns is to refer to the fact that Sámi women are already “better off” than Sámi men because they are stronger and because the loss of traditional livelihoods has not impacted them as radically as men.¹²

In daily life, Sámi women are often torn between two sets of demands. On the one hand, they are required to uphold cultural values and customs connected with the traditional subsistence economy and on the other, they are required to fulfill the various expectations placed upon contemporary women. Eikjok suggests that this is due to the internalization of patriarchal social relations in Sámi society, while at the same time there is very little social or societal support for Sámi women's efforts. The adoption of the mainstream gender roles and devaluation of the private sphere have diminished the status of Sámi women particularly in the public sphere.¹³

Moreover, in *No Beginning, No End: The Sámi Speak Up*,¹⁴ an anthology of front line Sámi artists and cultural workers discussing and analyzing current issues affecting the Sámi people and culture, several contributors address the influence of Christianity on women, suggesting that Christian ideology has introduced a hierarchical understanding of genders, prioritizing men and resulting in a feeling of low self-esteem for many Sámi women.^{15,16} Since the mid-1800s, Laestadianism, an evangelical, revivalist movement inside the Lutheran Church influential in the northern parts of Scandinavia,¹⁷ has had a strong effect in Sámi society. It has introduced certain concepts of female piety and humility in addition to common Christian dualistic notions of women as either good or evil.¹⁸

Moreover, Christianity and Laestadianism in particular, have affected Sámi society for several generations. Contemporary perceptions of and attitudes toward women in Sámi society are, therefore, an entangled combination of influences of various origins and from different periods of time, making it rather difficult to trace back the traditional status and roles of Sámi women (whatever is implied by the always problematic notion of "traditional"). While the Sámi as a people have been colonized by surrounding nation-states, many Sámi women have also been oppressed and susceptible to sexism and male violence within their own communities. Though not a new phenomenon, anecdotes but also official reports about such incidents are only now beginning to surface in Sámi society.

Current Self-Government Models and Indigenous Autonomy

Many indigenous rights advocates around the world have emphasized over and over again the paramount importance of collective autonomy (i.e. autonomy as a people) as a precondition for a long-term survival of indigenous peoples. However, contemporary indigenous self-government agreements are generally limited in their political and economic capacity and only allow for self-administration of

certain programs. In some cases, such as the Sámi in Finland, they only refer to *cultural* autonomy (i.e. rights to language and culture) without addressing indigenous political and economic self-determination.¹⁹ Although “cultural rights” may provide a basis for indigenous peoples to defend and advance their collective rights,²⁰ it can also be argued that separating indigenous self-government from their land base transforms “the identity of Indigenous peoples from peoples to other minority groups that do not have a territorial/homeland attachment.” It also “denies Indigenous communal ownership.”²¹ This reflects the neo-liberal agenda and approach to indigenous rights that seek to reduce and redefine indigenous rights to fit into a new model of market citizenship with a focus on economic development.

Canada’s land claim and self-governance policy and its premises have also been criticized for several reasons. The policy requires the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title, in exchange for the rights included in the new settlement or agreement. Moreover, there is a tendency to achieve an agreement “only when the federal government [is] eager to facilitate an economic development project.”²² This tends to marginalize Aboriginal women in various ways. First, the land claim policy that prioritizes and focuses on large-scale resource development is male-centered because most new jobs are taken by men. It is male-centered also because it neglects the socio-economic and cultural implications that may disproportionately affect women in the form of disruption of family and social relations.²³ Second, Aboriginal women and their concerns are often left out of land claims negotiations. The requisite land use and occupancy study also usually focuses on activities traditionally recognized as male, such as hunting, fishing, and trapping. In other words, as Joyce Green notes, development generally “has not benefited aboriginal women to any significant degree: rather, it has contributed to the erosion of viable community economies and social structures, corroded the environment and marginalized women and children.”²⁴ Moreover, many indigenous women argue that contemporary models of indigenous sovereignty merely replicate masculinist and patriarchal political structures and ideologies.²⁵

Further, in many cases indigenous women remain unequal in their communities in their political ability to impact decision-making on issues directly related to their lives and well-being.²⁶ We can see this also in Sámi society. Despite the fact that there are currently several Sámi women in prominent political positions, a large number of contemporary Sámi women do not consider running for office at local or regional levels such as municipal or Sámi Parliament elections. The

three Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland – elected bodies representing the Sámi especially at the national level to their respective state governments – have been male-dominated, and in the case of Sweden and Finland continue to be so (the percentage of women is 35 and 21 respectively). The Norwegian Sámi Parliament has had special campaigns to recruit more women as candidates and to encourage women to vote in its elections. At its last election in the fall 2005, women formed, for the first time, the majority (51%) of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament's 39 elected representatives. (Before the 2005 elections, the percentage of women representatives was as low as 12). Also the newly elected president of the Sámi Parliament in Norway is a woman for the first time in the history of all three Sámi Parliaments.²⁷

Although significant, the new female majority in the Norwegian Sámi Parliament does not automatically guarantee political practices or procedures that revoke or even challenge the entrenched patriarchal structures, priorities, and political processes. Moreover, there are other powerful Sámi organizations such as the Norwegian Sámi Reindeer Herders' Association, which continue to be strongly male-dominated. With an Executive Board consisting of only 22% women, the organization breaks the Norwegian law that requires minimum of 40% of women representatives on organizations' boards.²⁸

Indigenous Autonomy and Economic Realities of Globalization

How can we develop viable models of autonomy in an era of globalization that seeks to eradicate all barriers, especially economic ones? Even though the emphasis may be on community development and enhancing the well-being of individuals in impoverished communities, the existing indigenous self-government structures and economic models are grounded on principles of global capitalism (e.g. resource extraction, establishment of casinos). Joyce Green argues:

"The world of globalized capitalism drives not only colonial governments, but, increasingly, Aboriginal ones. Some pursue profits and capitalist methods like union-busting. Some seek an accommodation with capitalist development that might benefit indigenous communities, an example being the current agreement between the James Bay and Quebec (arguably environmentally problematic) hydro development. Those who would choose non-capitalist alternatives are at odds with the dominant culture, political ideology and economic structure."²⁹

It is important to recognize how global capitalist discourses have also inherited the role of colonial law that sought to exterminate indigenous peoples by

outlawing their practices and livelihoods that do not conform to the logic and values of Western societies. Today, the same results – making the conditions to practice indigenous cultures and livelihoods impossible – are achieved through the naturalized discourses of profit and development. For example, one of the remaining traditional livelihoods of the Sámi today, reindeer herding, has gradually been made next to impossible by various gestures of colonial encroachment (border closures, hydroelectric development, logging, tourism, mining, state policies). Despite the opposition of Sámi reindeer herders, the Finnish government continues logging the old growth forests in reindeer grazing areas in the north and postponing the settlement of the Sámi land rights. But what is left of the land and resources, which the survival of Sámi culture (and thus, the Sámi people) is dependent on, if the current development continues until we find enough political will to resolve the land rights question? In short, the neo-colonial globalized reality is that the state no longer needs to outlaw indigenous livelihoods or practices, but just wait until the conditions for practicing no longer exist. The policy of “death by thousand cuts” may not be recorded in any government documents, but we all know how effective it is – it can be hard to detect but it works.³⁰

Sámi women have already been pushed to the margins of reindeer herding several decades ago. Particularly since the post-war period, government policies have made Sámi women invisible in the livelihood in which they have always played a central role. In many cases, they have erased the traditionally held right of ownership of women’s own reindeer. In official records, reindeer-owning Sámi women have been placed under their husbands – an act which has had ramifications ranging from allocation of subsidies and grants to the status and recognition of women within the livelihood often considered one of the central markers of Sáminess and Sámi identity.³¹

Without access to and control over land, it is particularly difficult to live according to governance and economic models other than the dominant capitalist one. If governments are interested in settling land claims at all, it usually is only because they want “to create the conditions for investment confidence, and to protect ‘third party interests’ (that is, non-aboriginal property.)”³² In other words, “the commitment of the colonial state to contemporary justice for indigenous peoples is linked to its interest in corporate activity, not in justice per se.”³³ The governments have no interest in supporting subsistence economies based on alternative values such as sustainability and community well-being. Traditional economies characterized by subsistence perspective are opposed by both political and corporate elites exactly because they exist outside their reach: “land being used for a subsistence livelihood is off the market.”³⁴

Relational Autonomy and Indigenous Women

In considerations and struggles for indigenous autonomy, women's concerns and priorities are often put on the back burner to be addressed "later." Indigenous women demanding attention to their political or socio-economic marginalization and to different forms of violence in their own communities are sometimes made to feel as though they are being unreasonable. "Later," however, "is a patriarchal time zone" usually resulting in women losing political and other opportunities and setting them back potentially for years.³⁵ Considering existing sexism and patriarchal relations of power in most indigenous societies today, "later" may also mean that indigenous women will not survive due to the violence they experience in their communities.³⁶

It is therefore crucial to consider models and visions of autonomy that stem from understandings informed by indigenous women's concerns and circumstances. Structures of autonomy that do not address women's inequality from the very beginning are likely to merely "reproduce inequality by cultivating conditions for superordinate and subordinate positions."³⁷ As Margarita Gutiérrez and Nellys Palomo contend, "there will be no autonomy for any of the peoples if women, half of those people continue to be subjugated and without their own autonomy!"³⁸

Legal scholar Jennifer Nedelsky contends that there is a need for a conception of autonomy from a feminist perspective. In her view, the dominant conception informed by liberal individualism is inconsistent with and inadequate to feminist theory and methodology. The basic value of autonomy, however, remains central to feminism. She proposes a form of relational autonomy that recognizes the constitutive nature of social context in conceptualizing individual self-determination. While Nedelsky is interested in articulating individual autonomy as "a capacity that exists only in the context of social relations,"³⁹ I suggest that there is also a need to conceptualize notions of *collective* relational autonomy rooted in a logic and vision distinct from predominant structures of international capitalism and patriarchal hierarchies. Although Nedelsky suggests that there is a dichotomy between autonomy and collectivity,⁴⁰ I do think it is possible to envision relational forms of collective autonomy rooted in notions of interdependence and social relations, examples of which can be found in indigenous philosophies.

In a global scale and on the level of nation-states, Latin American countries have recently emerged as the vanguard in challenging global capitalism. They have

been successful in challenging the dominant neo-liberal policies because their opposition is rooted in an alternative economic model. This model is characterized by regional integration and principles of complementarity (instead of competition), solidarity (instead of domination), cooperation (instead of exploitation), and respect for sovereignty (instead of corporate rule).⁴¹ It is also in Latin America where indigenous peoples have been on the leading edge of forging new paradigms of autonomy and refusing to accept the dictums of the New World Order.

International fascination with the indigenous movement in Chiapas and the Zapatistas as “the first postmodern revolution” can be at least partly explained by the visionary nature of the Zapatista uprising. They have had courage to dream a radically alternative future based on indigenous (Mayan) consciousness.⁴² We should not, however, idealize the Zapatista movement the way it has been done by people nostalgic for revolution, but who ignore the material conditions and the structural positions of people within broader relations of power. This is not to deny the uniqueness of the Zapatistas – what they are envisioning and realizing in their very lives is, in many ways, novel and different from many other indigenous social movements and formulations of autonomy. One of the many scholars who have studied autonomy in Chiapas is June Nash. She maintains that:

*“If we translate the term *autonomia* in English as self-governing, we leave out of consideration the generative basis of culture encompassed in the indigenous understanding of autonomy. In their expanded definition, they reach for terms such as ‘attaining dignity.’”⁴³*

What also makes this conception of autonomy extraordinary is that it is grounded in the notion of *pluricultural co-existence*. Autonomy of different groups is asserted by each group defining their space in their own way while allowing and accepting other groups to do the same in their own way. Endeavors of reclaiming pluriethnic autonomy seek to define models of governance in terms that are more related to indigenous peoples’ own cultural, social and political practices than those imposed by the national government. In this way, these models exceed dominant Western categories of autonomy. Characterized by egalitarianism, pluriethnic autonomy is a concept that:

“...goes far beyond that implied by ‘equality’ in Western democracies; it refers to societies without classes that demonstrated full sexual symmetry, where individual autonomy prevailed, and the exercises of authority over others, even that of adults over children, was discouraged.”⁴⁴

Nash suggests that this understanding of autonomy, which recognizes “the differentiation by sex and age and the necessity of giving space for its existence, was denied in Western philosophy” where the emphasis is on the principle of sameness rather than difference.⁴⁵ Egalitarian behavior of indigenous peoples was considered barbaric and an indication of their need for civilization by missionaries and colonizers for whom the notion of autonomy for all, including every family member, was an alien concept. “It is autonomy in this radical sense,” Nash contends, “that the indigenous movements of the hemisphere are espousing.”⁴⁶

From the very beginning, Mayan women in Chiapas have been a central constituent “in formulating the indigenous version of a multiethnic society with pluricultural autonomy.”⁴⁷ In these formulations, indigenous women’s voices and views have often contradicted those of men. Women have called attention to the lack of harmony in gender and power relations within their communities and introduced critical perspectives particularly to those traditional customs that degrade, oppress, or marginalize them. As a result, while women’s groups represent one of the most revolutionary changes in Chiapas, they are not always met with open arms. Activist women are often “subject to threats and physical violence that ... differ from those accorded to men’s political organizations.”⁴⁸ This violence originates from both within and without women’s own communities.

Survival of indigenous societies is dependent on models and structures of autonomy which do not shy away from addressing questions of patriarchy and gendered, sexual violence within those societies. We cannot separate gender justice from indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination, and we cannot decolonize our societies without addressing sexism in those societies. Cherokee activist and scholar Andrea Smith maintains that:

*“It has been through sexual violence and through the imposition of European relationships on Native communities that Europeans were able to colonize Native peoples in the first place. If we maintain these patriarchal gender systems in place, we are then unable to decolonize and fully assert our sovereignty.”*⁴⁹

For Smith and many other indigenous women scholars and activists, there is a pressing need for alternative models of the nation that are not based on domination, violence, or coercion (the nation-state model), but instead on interdependence and mutual reciprocity. Indigenous women’s organizations

and groups are also looking for “new reference points with which to construct citizenship as indigenous women.”⁵⁰ They are calling for an end to violence and the reproduction of patriarchal, racist, and classist attitudes and behavior. Therefore, what is needed according to many women, is an urgent restoration of values “such as reciprocity (giving and receiving), solidarity (mutual support), and the holistic (integral) nature” of indigenous thought – values which indigenous peoples not only in Chiapas but around the globe are rapidly and systematically losing “in the shadow of the economic, social and cultural policies of the federal government and globalization.”⁵¹

Alternative Autonomies: the Gift Paradigm

Many, including some indigenous people, have internalized the tenet that there are no alternatives to economic globalization. The cynicism of the prevailing neo-liberal ideology according to which global capitalism is inevitable dismisses calls for alternative economic and societal structures as unrealistic, utopian, and naïve. However, as Karl Polanyi has pointed out, “the ‘utopian’ elevation of market relations to pre-eminence over all other kinds of social relations represented idiosyncratic preoccupations of particular interests within particular societies, rather than the expression of universal human attributes.”⁵² An alternative world is not only possible (and necessary), but it in fact already exists. What has made most people blind to alternative economic forms is the obsession with the question of which is the better of the two dominant ideologies and economic models, socialism or capitalism.

Existing alternatives include various gift and subsistence economies which can be found around the world.⁵³ Subsistence economy is defined as production that:

“...includes all work that is expended in the creation, re-creation and maintenance of immediate life and which has no other purpose. Subsistence production therefore stands in contrast to commodity and surplus value production. For subsistence production the aim is ‘life,’ for commodity production it is ‘money,’ which ‘produces’ ever more money, or the accumulation of capital.”⁵⁴

Subsistence production has been devalued and considered backward in the context of modern economy. The systematic and rigorous “war” against subsistence emerged simultaneously with the paradigm of development after the Second World War.^{55,56} Subsistence economies continue to exist, however, in many parts of the world, usually alongside with the more formal market economy.

Although the informal subsistence production in these mixed economies is often largely invisible, it is crucial for the survival and well-being of the community.⁵⁷

Gift economies of “archaic” societies have long been the focus of anthropological and other studies, which define the gift as a means of establishing and maintaining social relations between groups and collectivities. From the perspective of feminist gift economy theory and practice, however, the gift paradigm represents a radical challenge to the dominant neo-liberal market ideology. Whereas mainstream studies consider the gift as a form of exchange, Genevieve Vaughan argues that the gift and exchange are two distinct, logically contradictory paradigms. These primarily economic paradigms are also complementary even though the exchange paradigm, manifested by patriarchal capitalism, has made the gift largely invisible and undervalued in Western societies. For Vaughan, the exchange paradigm is based on patriarchal, capitalist values of self-interest, competition, domination, individualism as well as appropriation and exploitation of the gifts of the “Other.”⁵⁸ Gift giving, on the other hand, is based on values of sharing and creation of bonds.

The present neo-liberal market economy is rooted in exchange but also in exploiting many veiled gifts such as women’s free domestic labor. Vaughan argues that profit itself is a “gift” from the employee to the corporation.⁵⁹ Exchange, often defined as giving in order to receive, is ego-oriented. The purpose of the transaction is the satisfaction of one’s own needs. Exchange also creates artificial scarcity by appropriation of “the gifts of poor countries by wealthy countries, the gifts of nature, the past and the future by the few for their profit in the present.”^{60,61} In the gift paradigm, the purpose of the gift is to look after the needs of others. These two paradigms constitute different logics with different values and objectives. The gift paradigm questions and challenges the values of exchange, such as accumulation and self-interest by emphasizing the satisfaction of the needs of others.⁶²

I propose that the gift paradigm also provides new ways and strategies to envision indigenous peoples’ autonomy in contemporary settings. I suggest this particularly because of three main reasons: (1) the gift is based on a different logic that perceives the world as being inhabited by autonomous, but interrelated powers and entities that cannot be subjugated,⁶³ (2) the gift questions hierarchies present in many of the current models of autonomy and self-government, and (3) the gift rearticulates the role of the individual in relation to the community or society, not in individualistic terms of liberal theory, but in a way that recognizes the social nature of human beings without reducing individuals into an internally homogeneous mass.⁶⁴

Many indigenous rights advocates have called for the need to explore and support alternative economic models and paradigms practiced by indigenous peoples. Indigenous gift philosophies are an example of such alternatives. It is necessary, however, to consider the gift in a light critical of reductionist, colonial, and patriarchal biases of previous analyses, particularly in the field of anthropology. Many classic gift analyses often focus solely on the past and “archaic societies” or do not foreground indigenous realities and premises, which differ from the contemporary gift practices of dominant society.

Indigenous gift-oriented worldviews provide alternative visions and strategies to that of neo-liberalism and global consumerism by focusing on values and principles of reciprocity as well as on actively recognizing the gifts of the land (i.e. land as a source or relationship, not as a re-source – something taken for granted). Okanagan writer and educator Jeannette Armstrong suggests that giving is the only way of being human and that our survival is dependent on giving.⁶⁵

In indigenous land-based philosophies, the gift is the means by which the social order is renewed and secured. Gift practices are often very different from one society and culture to another. They can vary from give-back ceremonies and rituals to individual expressions of gratitude to the land as recognition of its abundance. The purpose of giving, however, is usually very similar in these societies: to acknowledge and renew the sense of kinship and co-existence with the world. In other words, the gift is the manifestation of reciprocity with one’s ecosystem, reflecting the bond of dependence and respect toward the natural world. From this bond, certain responsibilities emerge. These responsibilities are observed through different ceremonies (e.g. giving to *sieidis*, the potlatch) and verbal and physical gestures of gratitude (e.g. the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address). In this system, one does not give primarily in order to receive but to ensure the balance of the world on which the well-being of the entire social order is contingent. Gifts are given to thank the guardians of the land that sustain human beings, but they are also given for a continued goodwill of the universe.

The relationships indigenous peoples have forged with their environments for centuries are a consequence of the living off the land and their dependence on its abundance. They are a result of an understanding that the well-being of land is also the well-being of human beings. The link between indigenous peoples and their land is not abstraction or idealization, but stems from “specific

experiences by a specific people living in a particular locale.”⁶⁶ It has also become clear how the economic, social, and cultural systems and philosophies developed by indigenous peoples in their territories remain central in ensuring sustainability and cultural and biological diversity.

These systems and philosophies can also assist us in envisioning autonomy for indigenous peoples based on values of interdependence and reciprocity rather than hierarchies and various forms of violence and coercion. Indigenous peoples do not need to pattern themselves after Western models in their endeavors toward autonomy. The ruling of the International Court of Justice from 1975 states that “Indigenous governments do not have to emulate European governmental structures to have sovereignty over their territory.”⁶⁷ When considering indigenous peoples’ practices and philosophies for alternative frameworks, however, it is necessary to remain watchful for employing them to merely re-inscribe domination or patriarchal structures in the name of “indigenous traditions.” The gift paradigm, in its critique of patriarchal capitalism, offers us a strategy that foregrounds indigenous women and their concerns, yet it centers upon indigenous peoples’ worldviews and values.

It is important to emphasize that to discuss these relationships as part of indigenous worldviews is not romanticization. Discussing and drawing upon the gift paradigm for new strategies to both critique and re-imagine globalization is not a nostalgic call for a return to a “golden” past. Instead, the gift paradigm offers a new conceptual framework as well as principles and values that can be further elaborated to address contemporary concerns such as indigenous peoples’ autonomy. Although the gift is a concept with a distinct vision, values, and principles, it is not merely an abstraction or theory. It is rooted in specific socio-economic conditions and lived practices and as such gives us a viable strategy and source for social change.

Notes

1. El Hadji Guissé, *Working Paper on Globalization and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Populations*, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 2003.

2. Juan Houghton & Beverly Bell, *Latin American indigenous movements in the context of globalization*, Silver City, NM: Americas Program, 2004.

3. Jouko Vahtola, “Lapin valtaus historiallisessa katsannossa,” in *Faravid* 15, 1991, p. 336.

4. My English translation if not indicated otherwise.

5. Vahtola, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

6. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, "Nimettömän kansan historiasta. Saamelaisten historiantutkimuksen näkymiä," in *Historia Fenno-Ugrica* 1(1-2), 1996, p. 16.

7. See e.g. Harald Gaski, *Nu gárvvis girdilit. Sámi girjjávuorra oahppogirji*, Kárá^ajohka: Davvi Girji, 1991; Rauna Kuokkanen, *Etnostreassas sápmela^avuorra ormmasis huksemii. Sápmela^avuorra govven dálá sápmela^a girjjála^avuorras*, The Sami Language Program, Oulu University, "Pro gradu" (MA thesis on Sami literature), 1997.

8. Helge Salvesen, "Sámi Ædnan: Four States – One Nation? Nordic Minority Policy and the History of the Sámi," in Sven Tägil (ed.), *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, London: Hurst & Co, 1995.

9. In a similar fashion, scholar of religion (and the first Sámi woman to receive a Ph.D. in 1975) Louise Bäckman contends that the notion of Sámi matriarchy is at best speculative. See Louise Bäckman, "Female – Divine and Human: A Study of the Position of the Woman in Religion and Society in Northern Eurasia," in Åke Hultkrantz and Ørnulv Vorren (eds.), *The Hunters*, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1982, pp. 143-162.

10. There are still some Sámi women who maintain that view. Sámi poet Rauni Magga Lukkari, for instance, comments that, "I do not feel downtrodden like my sisters in the western world" (Rauni Magga Lukkari, "Where Did the Laughter Go?," in Elina Helander & Kaarina Kailo (eds.), *No Beginning, No End. The Sámi Speak Up*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute/Nordic Sámi Institute, 1998, p. 109. In her view, Sámi women are not oppressed as one of the ways for women to exercise power is through making traditional Sámi clothing.

11. Jorunn Eikjok, "Indigenous Women in the North. The Struggle for Rights and Feminism," in *Indigenous Affairs* no. 3, July–August–September 2000, pp. 38-41.

12. As Lillian Ackerman notes, this is not necessarily so, although it is a common explanation with regards to indigenous societies. Discussing in the context of the Colville Reservation in Washington State, she points out that there is as little continuity in women's traditional roles as there is in men's. Childbearing and -rearing are roles that continue to be female-dominated, but everything else has changed: "Office employment is as different from gathering and preserving wild foods as lumbering is from hunting." Ackerman suggests that women's ability to better adjust "may result from their being accustomed to sustained rather than strenuous intermittent work" (see also Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1986; Lillian A. Ackerman, "Gender equality in a contemporary Indian community," in Lisa Frink, Rita S. Shepard & Gregory A. Reinhardt (eds.), *Many Faces of Gender: Roles and Relationships through Time in Indigenous Northern Communities*, Boulder/Calgary: University Press of Colorado/University of Calgary Press, 2002, p. 30).

13. Jorunn Eikjok, "Sámi almmái- ja nissonrolla rievdamin," in *Diehtogiisá* 1, 1988, pp. 10-12; see also Kirsti Paltto, *Guovtteoaiivvat nisu*, Ohcejohka: Gielas, 1989; Jorunn Eikjok, "Indigenous Women's Situation. Similarities and differences, common struggle for our future," International Conference and VI General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, Tromsø, 1990.

14. Elina Helander & Kaarina Kailo (eds.), *No Beginning, No End. The Sámi Speak Up*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute/Nordic Sámi Institute, 1998.

15. Inga Juuso, "Yoiking Acts as Medicine for Me," in Elina Helander & Kaarina Kailo (eds.), *No Beginning, No End. The Sámi Speak Up*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute/Nordic Sámi Institute, 1998, pp. 132-146; Lukkari, *op. cit.*; Kirsti Paltto, "One Cannot Leave One's Soul by a Tree Trunk," in Elina Helander & Kaarina Kailo (eds.), *No Beginning, No End. The Sámi Speak Up*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute/Nordic Sámi Institute, 1998.

16. This is the case of many other indigenous societies as well. Dawn Martin-Hill observes that the adoption of Christian practices into indigenous traditions is common in the North American indigenous communities. According to her, it has resulted in "the exclusion of women from ceremonies and to exalting female servitude as 'traditional'." (Dawn Martin-Hill, "She No Speaks and other colonial

constructs of 'the traditional woman',” in Kim Anderson & Bonita Lawrence (eds.), *Strong women stories. Native vision and community survival*, Toronto: Sumach Press, pp. 106-120.

17. The movement was named after its founder, Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861), who was of South Sámi ancestry and who travelled across Sápmi preaching and delivering his healing sermons, which partly drew upon Sámi culture and oral traditions. A central characteristic of the Laestadian faith is the confession of sins followed by absolution “in the name and blood of Jesus.” Laestadianism requires an abstinence from alcohol and disapproval of contraception.

18. Such perceptions of women are evident, for example, in some of the works of Sámi writers, including Eino Guttorm, a male writer who has been criticized for his dualistic, simplistic descriptions of Sámi women (see e.g. Eino Guttorm, “Everybody is Worth a Song,” in Helander & Kailo, *op. cit.*). In her collection of short stories *Guovtteoaiivat nisu* (“Two-Headed Woman”), Kirsti Palto analyzes common images and representations of Sámi women in a society strongly influenced by Christianity (see Ulla Poikajärvi, *Árbevirolas nissongovva. Review of Guovtteoaiivat nisu*, Gába, 3/4, 1996, p. 20).

19. Chapter 1, Section 1 of the Finnish Sámi Parliament Act of 1995 accords to the Sámi people limited autonomy with regard to their language and culture.

20. See e.g. Bruce Robbins & Elsa Stamatopoulou, “Reflections on culture and cultural rights,” in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103 (2/3), 2004, pp. 419-434.

21. Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez, “Gender equality in a contemporary Indian community,” in Lisa Frink, Rita S. Shepard & Gregory A. Reinhardt (eds.), *Many Faces of Gender: Roles and Relationships through Time in Indigenous Northern Communities*, Boulder/Calgary: University Press of Colorado/University of Calgary Press, 2002, p. 354.

22. Murray Coolican, *Living treaties, lasting agreements. Report of the task force to review comprehensive claims policy*, Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1986, p. 13.

23. Linda Archibald and Mary Crnkovich, *If gender mattered: A case study of Inuit women, land claims and the Voisey's Bay nickel project*, Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 1999.

24. Joyce Green & Cora Voyageur, “Globalization and Development at the Bottom,” in M. Porter & E. Judd (eds.), *Feminists Doing Development. A Practical Critique*, London: Zed Books, 1999, p. 143.

25. Patricia Monture-Angus, *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*, Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood, 1995; Jorunn Eikjok, “Indigenous Women in the North. The Struggle for Rights and Feminism” in *Indigenous Affairs* no. 3, 2000, pp. 38-41; Devon A. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American women: decolonization, empowerment, activism*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003; Joyce Green, “Cultural and Ethnic Fundamentalism. Identity, Liberation and Oppression,” in Carol Schick, JoAnn Jaffe & Alisa M. Watkinson (eds.), *Contesting Fundamentalisms*, Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood, 2004, pp. 19-34; Andrea Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change” in *Feminist Studies* no. 31 (1), 2005, pp. 116-132; Jennifer Nez Denetdale, “Chairmen, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition,” in *Wicazo Sa Review* 21 (1), 2006.

26. Green & Voyageur, *op. cit.*

27. There is an interesting tendency in Sámi politics to elect young women with limited experience to some of the most high-ranking positions of Sámi organizations and political power. Most of the new female Sámi Parliament representatives in Norway are relatively young, including the new president and the Minister of Fisheries in the government of Norway, while the more experienced and senior female Sámi politicians are cast aside. One could ask whether this represents the beginning of a new and different dynamics in Sámi politics or whether it is an old boys' network strategy to fend off charges of inequality while maintaining control over the political agenda and decision-making through “training” and “advising” the junior female leadership.

28. Josef Isak Utsi, *NBR stivrras ii gávdno dásseárvu*, Min Aigi, 2005, pp. 4-5.

29. Joyce Green, *Decolonizing in the Era of Globalization*, Canadian Dimension 3, 2002, p. 32.

30. See Rauna Kuokkanen & Marja K. Bulmer, "Suttesája – from a Sacred Sami Site and Natural Spring to a Water Bottling Plant? The Effects of Globalization in Northern Europe," in Sylvia Washington, Paul Rosier & Heather Goodall (eds.), *Echoes from the Poisoned Well: Global Memories of Environmental Injustice*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006, pp. 209-224.
31. Sámi Instituhtta, "Boazosámi æmidiid bargodilálasvuodat. Flyttsamekvinnens arbeidssituasjon. Poronhoitossaamelaisnaisten työtilanteesta," in *Diedut* 4, 1979; Máret Sárá, "Reindeer herding women are oppressed," *Sáráhkká. Newsletter of Sámi Women's Association*, 1990-1; Solveig Joks, *Boazosámi nissonolbmot – guovddá?is báike- ja siidadoalus, muhto vajáduvvon almmola??at*, Guovdageaidnu: Sámi Instituhtta, 2001; Máret Sárá, "Mann og kvinne like viktig. FN kvinnekonvensjon inn i Reindrifstloven," in *Reindrifstnytt/Boazodoallo-oddasat*, 2, 2003, pp. 52-55.
32. Green & Voyageur, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
33. Green & Voyageur, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
34. David Bedford & Danielle Irving-Stephens, *The tragedy of progress: Marxism, modernity and the aboriginal question*, Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood, 2001, p. 13.
35. Cynthia Enloe, *The curious feminist. Searching for women in a new age of empire*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 215.
36. Smith, *op. cit.*
37. June C. Nash, *Mayan visions: The quest for autonomy in an age of globalization*, New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 245.
38. Margarita Gutiérrez & Nellys Palomo, "A woman's eye view of autonomy," in Aracely Burguete Cal y Mayor, *Indigenous autonomy in Mexico*, Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2000, p. 79.
39. Jennifer Nedelsky, "Reconceiving autonomy: Sources, thoughts and possibilities," in *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 1 (7), 1989, p. 25.
40. Nedelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
41. Deborah James, "Summit of the Americas, Argentina: Tomb of the FTAA," www.CommonDreams.org and Solveig Joks (2001), *Boazosámi nissonolbmot – guovddá?is báike- ja siidadoalus, muhto vajáduvvon almmola??at*, Guovdageaidnu: Sámi Instituhtta, 2005.
42. For Zapatista women and the "Revolutionary Women's Laws," see Marisa Belausteguigoitia, "Zapatista Women: Place-based Struggles and the Search for Autonomy," in W. Harcourt & A. Escobar (eds.), *Women and the politics of place*, Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, pp. 190-205.
43. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
44. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
48. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
49. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
50. Gutiérrez & Palomo, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
51. Gutiérrez & Palomo, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

52. Quoted in Anthony Hall, *The American empire and the fourth world*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, p. 187.

53. Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, "Women traders as promoters of a subsistence perspective: The case of Juchitán (Oaxaca), Mexico," in Parvin Ghorayshi (ed.), *Women at work in the Third World*, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, pp. 167-79, 1996; Maria Mies & Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, *The subsistence perspective: beyond the globalized economy*, London & New York/Victoria, Australia: Zed Books/Spinifex Press, 1999; Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, *Globalization and Its Impacts on Indigenous Women: The Philippine Experience*, Penang (Malaysia): Third World Network, 2001.

54. Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

55. Ivan Illich, 1982, quoted in Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

56. Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies also point out how development is predicated on colonialism, and colonization in turn on violence. This violence, that is not gender-neutral, is "still necessary to uphold a system of dominance oriented towards capital accumulation.", p. 30.

57. See Nash, "Global integration and subsistence insecurity," in *American Anthropologist* 96 (2), 1994, pp. 1-31; Kayo Ohmagari & Fikret Berkes, "Transmission of indigenous knowledge and bush skills among the Western James Bay Cree women of Subarctic Canada," in *Human Ecology* 25 (2), pp.197-222; Michael Joseph Francisconi, *Working Paper on Globalization and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Populations*, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1998; Tauli-Corpuz, "Globalization and Its Impact on Indigenous Women: The Philippine Case," in Diana Vinding (ed.), *Indigenous women: The right to a voice*, Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1998, pp. 196-122; Colin H. Scott, "On autonomy and development," in Colin H. Scott (ed.), *Aboriginal autonomy and development in Northern Quebec and Labrador*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001, pp. 3-20; Tressa Berman, *Circle of Goods: Women, work and welfare in a reservation community*, New York: State University of New York Press 2003; see David Arnold, "Work and culture in Southeastern Alaska: Tlingits and the salmon fisheries," in Colleen M. O'Neill & Brian C. Hosmer (eds.), *Native pathways: American Indian culture and economic development in the twentieth century*, Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2004, pp. 156-183; Colleen M. O'Neill, "Rethinking modernity and the discourse of development in American Indian history, an introduction," in Colleen M. O'Neill & Brian C. Hosmer, *op. cit.*, pp.1-26; Kathleen Ann Pickering & David Mushinski, "Locating the cultural context of credit: Institutional alternatives on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation," in Cynthia Werner & Duran Bell (eds.), *Values and valuables. From the sacred to the symbolic*, Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 185-208.

58. Genevieve Vaughan, *For-Giving. A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, Austin: Plain View Press & Anomaly Press, 1997.

59. Genevieve Vaughan, "A U.S. feminist's response to September 11th: calling for a gift-economy," in *Canadian Woman Studies* 22 (2), 2002/2003, pp. 112-116.

60. Genevieve Vaughan, *36 Steps Toward a Gift Economy*, Austin: Center for the Study of the Gift Economy, 2002, p. 2.

61. As an example, the World Bank's structural adjustment policies create artificial scarcity by forcing national governments to reduce support to their domestic crops and instead import food grains. In 1992, for instance, India produced enough wheat but the government failed to procure it due to a distorted structural adjustment policy that decreed the removal of food subsidies and the liberalization of farm imports. As a result, food subsidies that earlier provided inexpensive food for public distribution have not been removed but merely redistributed to transnational corporations (Vandana Shiva, "GATT, Agriculture and Third World Women," in Maria Mies & Vandana Shiva (eds.), *Ecofeminism*, London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993, p. 233.)

62. Vaughan, *op. cit.*

63. Jacques T. Godbout with Alain Caillé, *The World of the Gift*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, p. 133.

64. Emma LaRocque asserts that the question of collective vs. individual is more complex than generally perceived by many non-Natives and Natives alike. She argues that, "The issue of 'individual' versus 'collective' rights is a perfect example of Natives resorting to a cultural framework when boxed in by western liberal democratic tradition that are associated with individualism. Perhaps unavoidably, Native leaders have had to overemphasize collective rights to make the point that such rights are even culturally feasible. However, the fact that native cultures were egalitarian in organization does not mean Native peoples acted on some instinct akin to a buffalo herd with no regard for the well-being of individuals!" Emma LaRocque, "Re-examining Culturally Appropriate Models in Criminal Justice Applications," in Michael Asch (ed.), *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equity and Respect for Difference*, Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 75-96. Also Robin Ridington notes: "Although northern Native people respect individual autonomy, their individualism is not anarchic or antisocial; rather it is based on a deeply rooted understanding that each person must be responsible to all sentient beings of the world in which he or she lives." Robin Ridington, "Documenting the Normal, Perverting the real. Contrasting Images of Native Indian Experience" in Robin Ridington (ed.), *Little Bit Know Something*, Vancouver, B.C./Iowa: Douglas & McIntyre/University of Iowa Press, 1990, p. 241.

65. Jeannette Armstrong, *Whole Family Systems in Living Community on the Land and Sustainable Living*, International Conference on the Gift Economy, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2004.

66. IUCN, *Indigenous peoples and sustainability: Cases and actions, Inter-Commission Task Force on Indigenous Peoples*, Utrecht: International Books, 1997.

67. Sharon Helen Venne, *Our elders understand our rights: evolving international law regarding indigenous peoples*, Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1998, p. 46.

5. Vahtola, op. cit., p. 336.

6. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, "Nimettömän kansan historiasta. Saamelaisten historiantutkimuksen näkymiä," in *Historia Fenno-Ugrica* 1(1-2), 1996, p. 16.

7. See e.g. Harald Gaski, *Nu gárvvís girdilit. Sámi girjjálvuotta oahppogirji, Káršjohka: Davvi Girji*, 1991; Rauna Kuokkanen, *Etnostreassas sápmelšvuođa ommasis huksemii. Sápmelšvuođa govven dálá sápmelš girjjálšvuođas*, The Sami Language Program, Oulu University, "Pro gradu" (MA thesis on Sami literature), 1997.

8. Helge Salvesen, "Sámi Ædnan: Four States – One Nation? Nordic Minority Policy and the History of the Sámi," in Sven Tägil (ed.), *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, London: Hurst & Co, 1995.

9. In a similar fashion, scholar of religion (and the first Sámi woman to receive a Ph.D. in 1975) Louise Bäckman contends that the notion of Sámi matriarchy is at best speculative. See Louise Bäckman, "Female – Divine and Human: A Study of the Position of the Woman in Religion and Society in Northern Eurasia," in Åke Hulkrantz and Ørnulf Vorren (eds.), *The Hunters*, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1982, pp. 143-162.

10. There are still some Sámi women who maintain that view. Sámi poet Rauni Magga Lukkari, for instance, comments that, "I do not feel downtrodden like my sisters in the western world" (Rauni Magga Lukkari, "Where Did the Laughter Go?," in Elina Helander & Kaarina Kailo (eds.), *No Beginning, No End. The Sámi Speak Up*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute/Nordic Sámi Institute, 1998, p. 109. In her view, Sámi women are not oppressed as one of the ways for women to exercise power is through making traditional Sámi clothing.

11. Jorunn Eikjok, "Indigenous Women in the North. The Struggle for Rights and Feminism," in *Indigenous Affairs* no. 3, July–August–September 2000, pp. 38-41.

12. As Lillian Ackerman notes, this is not necessarily so, although it is a common explanation with regards to indigenous societies. Discussing in the context of the Colville Reservation in Washington State, she points out that there is as little continuity in women's traditional roles as there is in men's. Childbearing and -rearing are roles that continue to be female-dominated, but everything else has changed: "Office employment is as different from gathering and preserving wild foods as lumbering is from hunting." Ackerman suggests that women's ability to better adjust "may result from their being accustomed to sustained rather than strenuous intermittent work" (see also Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1986; Lillian A. Ackerman, "Gender equality in a contemporary Indian community," in Lisa Frink, Rita S. Shepard & Gregory A. Reinhardt (eds.), *Many Faces of Gender: Roles and Relationships through Time in Indigenous Northern Communities*, Boulder/Calgary: University Press of Colorado/University of Calgary Press, 2002, p. 30).

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constructs of 'the traditional woman',” in Kim Anderson & Bonita Lawrence (eds.), *Strong women stories. Native vision and community survival*, Toronto: Sumach Press, pp. 106-120.

17. The movement was named after its founder, Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861), who was of South Sámi ancestry and who travelled across Sápmi preaching and delivering his healing sermons, which partly drew upon Sámi culture and oral traditions. A central characteristic of the Laestadian faith is the confession of sins followed by absolution “in the name and blood of Jesus.” Laestadianism requires an abstinence from alcohol and disapproval of contraception.

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27. There is an interesting tendency in Sámi politics to elect young women with limited experience to some of the most high-ranking positions of Sámi organizations and political power. Most of the new female Sámi Parliament representatives in Norway are relatively young, including the new president and the Minister of Fisheries in the government of Norway, while the more experienced and senior female Sámi politicians are cast aside. One could ask whether this represents the beginning of a new and different dynamics in Sámi politics or whether it is an old boys' network strategy to fend off charges of inequality while maintaining control over the political agenda and decision-making through “training” and “advising” the junior female leadership.

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55. Ivan Illich, 1982, quoted in Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

56. Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies also point out how development is predicated on colonialism, and colonization in turn on violence. This violence, that is not gender-neutral, is "still necessary to uphold a system of dominance oriented towards capital accumulation.", p. 30.

57. See Nash, "Global integration and subsistence insecurity," in *American Anthropologist* 96 (2), 1994, pp. 1-31; Kayo Ohmagari & Fikret Berkes, "Transmission of indigenous knowledge and bush skills among the Western James Bay Cree women of Subarctic Canada," in *Human Ecology* 25 (2), pp.197-222; Michael Joseph Francisconi, *Working Paper on Globalization and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Populations*, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1998; Tauli-Corpuz, "Globalization and Its Impact on Indigenous Women: The Philippine Case," in Diana Vinding (ed.), *Indigenous women: The right to a voice*, Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1998, pp. 196-122; Colin H. Scott, "On autonomy and development," in Colin H. Scott (ed.), *Aboriginal autonomy and development in Northern Quebec and Labrador*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001, pp. 3-20; Tressa Berman, *Circle of Goods: Women, work and welfare in a reservation community*, New York: State University of New York Press 2003; see David Arnold, "Work and culture in Southeastern Alaska: Tlingits and the salmon fisheries," in Colleen M. O'Neill & Brian C. Hosmer (eds.), *Native pathways: American Indian culture and economic development in the twentieth century*, Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2004, pp. 156-183; Colleen M. O'Neill, "Rethinking modernity and the discourse of development in American Indian history, an introduction," in Colleen M. O'Neill & Brian C. Hosmer, *op. cit.*, pp.1-26; Kathleen Ann Pickering & David Mushinski, "Locating the cultural context of credit: Institutional alternatives on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation," in Cynthia Werner & Duran Bell (eds.), *Values and valuables. From the sacred to the symbolic*, Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 185-208.

58. Genevieve Vaughan, *For-Giving. A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, Austin: Plain View Press & Anomaly Press, 1997.

59. Genevieve Vaughan, "A U.S. feminist's response to September 11th: calling for a gift-economy," in *Canadian Woman Studies* 22 (2), 2002/2003, pp. 112-116.

60. Genevieve Vaughan, *36 Steps Toward a Gift Economy*, Austin: Center for the Study of the Gift Economy, 2002, p. 2.

61. As an example, the World Bank's structural adjustment policies create artificial scarcity by forcing national governments to reduce support to their domestic crops and instead import food grains. In 1992, for instance, India produced enough wheat but the government failed to procure it due to a distorted structural adjustment policy that decreed the removal of food subsidies and the liberalization of farm imports. As a result, food subsidies that earlier provided inexpensive food for public distribution have not been removed but merely redistributed to transnational corporations (Vandana Shiva, "GATT, Agriculture and Third World Women," in Maria Mies & Vandana Shiva (eds.), *Ecofeminism*, London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993, p. 233.)

62. Vaughan, *op. cit.*

63. Jacques T. Godbout with Alain Caillé, *The World of the Gift*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, p. 133.

64. Emma LaRocque asserts that the question of collective vs. individual is more complex than generally perceived by many non-Natives and Natives alike. She argues that, "The issue of 'individual' versus 'collective' rights is a perfect example of Natives resorting to a cultural framework when boxed in by western liberal democratic tradition that are associated with individualism. Perhaps unavoidably, Native leaders have had to overemphasize collective rights to make the point that such rights are even culturally feasible. However, the fact that native cultures were egalitarian in organization does not mean Native peoples acted on some instinct akin to a buffalo herd with no regard for the well-being of individuals!" Emma LaRocque, "Re-examining Culturally Appropriate Models in Criminal Justice Applications," in Michael Asch (ed.), *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equity and Respect for Difference*, Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 75-96. Also Robin Ridington notes: "Although northern Native people respect individual autonomy, their individualism is not anarchic or antisocial; rather it is based on a deeply rooted understanding that each person must be responsible to all sentient beings of the world in which he or she lives." Robin Ridington, "Documenting the Normal, Perverting the real. Contrasting Images of Native Indian Experience" in Robin Ridington (ed.), *Little Bit Know Something*, Vancouver, B.C./Iowa: Douglas & McIntyre/University of Iowa Press, 1990, p. 241.

65. Jeannette Armstrong, *Whole Family Systems in Living Community on the Land and Sustainable Living*, International Conference on the Gift Economy, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2004.

66. IUCN, *Indigenous peoples and sustainability: Cases and actions*, Inter-Commission Task Force on Indigenous Peoples, Utrecht: International Books, 1997.

67. Sharon Helen Venne, *Our elders understand our rights: evolving international law regarding indigenous peoples*, Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1998, p. 46.