

# **Indigenous Paradigms and Climate Change: When Worldviews Collide**

**James V. Fenelon**

Sociology Department &

Center for Indigenous Peoples Studies

California State University, San Bernardino

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# Global Crises – Modern World-system

- These crises include :  
(in order of their immediate importance)
- devolution of the environment, climate change
- competitive states during hegemonic decline,
- decreasing new lands for resource extraction,
- increasing inequality both locally and globally,
- lessened involvement of community for socio-political representation

# Calling on the Spirits



# “Statement of Vision Toward the Next 500 Years from the Gathering of United Indigenous People at the Parliament of World Religions, Chicago, 1993”

- “honoring... future generations... continuing survival with our sacred homelands
- “lived in a spiritual way in keeping with sacred laws, principles and values given to us by the Creator. That way of life is predicated on a sense of honor and respect for the Earth, a sacred regard for all our relations, and a continuation of our languages, cultures and traditions... we call for recognition of the past, acknowledgement of the present, and a commitment to support our just demands for dignity, justice and human rights. These rights include: the right to practice our *spiritual traditions* without interference or restrictions, the right to raise our children in *our own cultures*, and the right to *sovereignty and self-determination*.”

# Some unresolved issues

- “the development of under-development”
- “periphery and the third world”
- Size matters
- Native Nations and empires and “systems”
- the “Indian” created, as Indigenous
- Maintain

# Relations to the Land as Resistance

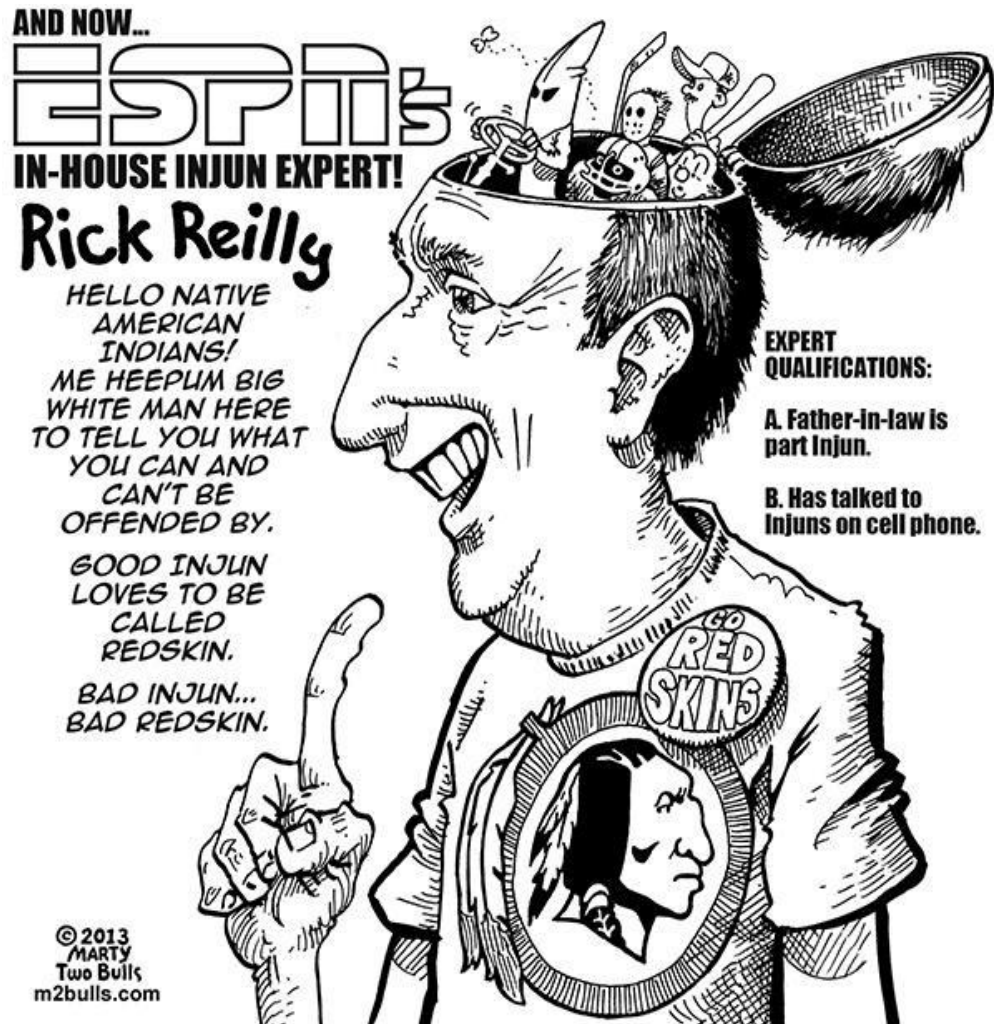
- ENVIRONMENTALISM  
INDIGENOUS HOLISTIC  
RELATIONS TO LAND
- INUIT AND  
AMAZONIAN  
PEOPLE'S AS MINER'S  
CANARY FOR THE  
WORLD



# Survival writ large

- “Environmental catastrophe is far more serious: The externality that is being ignored is the fate of the species... For the first time in human history, humans are facing the significant prospect of severe calamity as a result of their actions – actions that are battering our prospects of decent survival.”  
(Chomsky, 2013)

**Racial Team Names** are forms of discourse control – dominant groups define, distort and destroy minority subordinated peoples – that help to maintain supremacist positions historically situated.





# Primitive

- “...the richest and most powerful country in history, which enjoys incomparable advantages, is leading the effort to intensify the likely disaster. Leading the effort to preserve conditions in which our immediate descendants might have a decent life are the so-called “primitive” societies: First Nations, tribal, indigenous, aboriginal.”

# 500 yrs Indigene in Chilean History

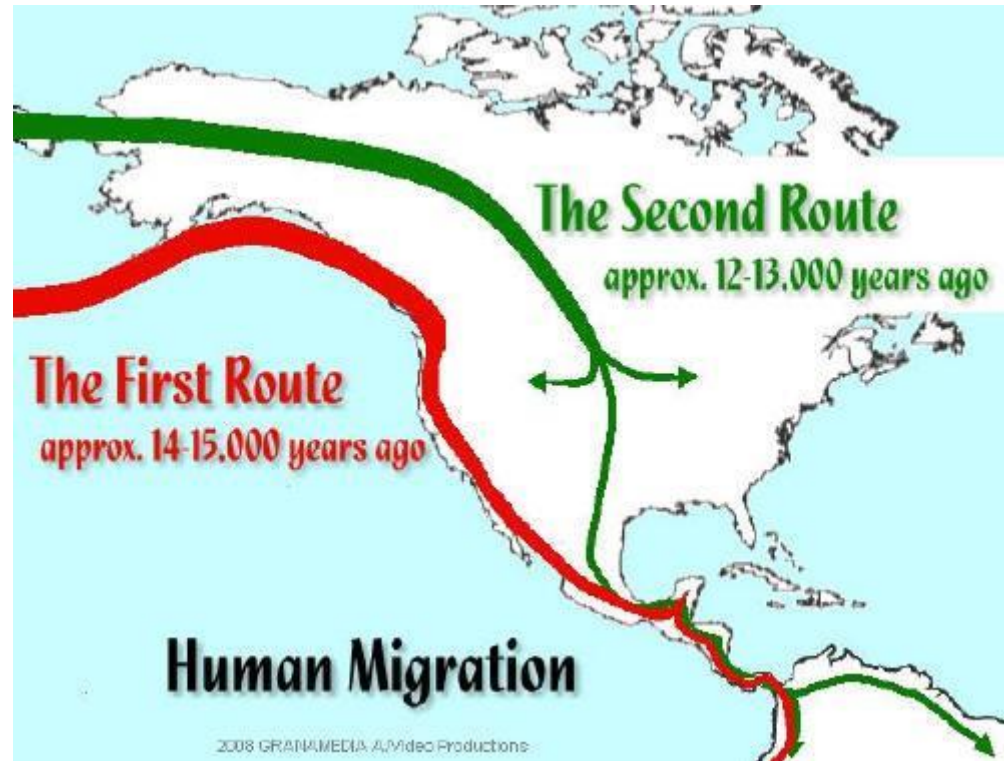
***colonization, conquest, resistance***

# Directions

- “The countries with large and influential indigenous populations are well in the lead in seeking to preserve the planet. The countries that have driven indigenous populations to extinction or extreme marginalization are racing toward destruction...”



# Bering Strait Theory, Pt. 5: The Theory Comes Crashing Down



- “Localized ecological systems are known to shift abruptly and irreversibly from one state to another when they are forced across critical thresholds... the global ecosystem as a whole can react in the same way and is approaching a planetary-scale critical transition as a result of human influence. The plausibility of a planetary-scale ‘tipping point’... It is also necessary to address root causes of how humans are forcing biological changes.” (Barnosky et al, 2012)

Communities (Zapatista) attempt to incorporate indigenous values and social practices, while respecting women, and including everyone for decisions.

Governance submits to autonomous communities in this way.

Buildings and signs at Oventik, Chiapas.

# paradigms

- Vine Deloria Jr., noted that it was the necessary adaptations indigenous tribes of North America made to live in a specific place, inter-dependent with non-human persons (such as the Bison Nation) and ecological cycles and systems, that generated intense cultural meaning, identity, and life-ways (ontology)—



# traditionalism

- , the essential difference between a traditional culture and a modern culture is that traditional cultures that maintain their integrity, are not fundamentally alienated from ecological cycles and systems and the larger web of life, and therefore are not alienated from their physical and spiritual life. (Jacques and Jacques, 2012)

# Buen Vivir: Today's tomorrow

## Indigenous Paradigms of Good Life

- aymara concept of *suma qamaña*,
- guaraní ideas of harmonious living (*ñandereko*),
- indigenous concept, *sumak kawsay* of kichwa,
- (now enshrined in the Ecuador Constitution)
- *shiir waras*, of the shuar of Ecuador,
- *küme mongen*, of the mapuches of Chile
  
- *mitakuye oyasin* of the Dakota / Lakota ?

# cultural recoding

- The Guarani were forced to assimilate into wage labor on the fields that replaced their forests, while they succumbed to disease without access to their traditional medicines, and their village and even family life were “recoded” and “reterritorialized” for industrial capitalist means of production and cramped quarters in near-by urban centers.
- The Guarani are among the many cultural groups that have been fragmented and assimilated through alienation from their traditional lands, use values, and means of life. (Jacques and Jacques, 2012)

# movements

- A great transnational peasant movement has grown alongside a transnational indigenous movement – the central demands of these movements is to protect their means of production—their land base, a rich genetic variety of flora and fauna for symbiotic subsistence (for biodiversity and cultural subsistence), and self-determination. .. The overlapping movements are large, transnational, and are working to disrupt the meta-narratives of growth and economies of scale that homogenize their ways of life, and therefore threaten their cultural existence. (Jacques and Jacques, 2012)

# Oaxaca, Chiapas, Michoacan



- **In February 2012, elements of the Mexican army enter the autonomous community of Cheran in Michoacan, despite not having permission. (Photo: Heriberto Paredes)**

# Breeding Ground for Indigenous Movements

- The "reforms" recently approved in Mexico, which include the privatization of education and petroleum resources, as well as drastic changes to Mexico's financial sector, will have a direct impact on more than [80 million Mexicans](#), especially considering that 40 percent of spending in the public sector is financed using income from Mexican Petroleum (PEMEX). These reforms create a potential breeding ground for the intensification of new social movements in the country. Although usually pacifist in nature, historically such movements have been labeled as insurgent.

# Communal Lands: Theater of Operations for the Counterinsurgency

- A



- **Juchitán Oaxaca: Zapotec Indians show solidarity with resistance to building one of the largest wind farms in Latin America, despite death threats from paramilitary groups paid by companies and protected by the government. (Photo: Santiago Navarro F.)**

# Push for privatization

- In 2006, a team of geographers from the University of Kansas carried out a series of mapping projects of communal lands in southern Mexico's [Northern Sierra Mountains](#). Coordinated by Peter Herlihy and Geoffrey B. [Demarest](#), a US lieutenant colonel, the objective was to achieve strategic military and geopolitical goals of particular interest for the United States. The objective was to incorporate indigenous territories into the transnational **corporate model of private property**, either by force or through agreements. Demarest's essential argument is that **peace cannot exist without private property**



# communities

- Champagne (2005:4) differentiates indigenous claims toward “government, land ownership... resource management and community organization and identity” and calls for a “multinational” state structure that respects Indigenous People’s rights and societies. Champagne finds that “most Native nations are striving to gain greater responsibility over their communities through strategies of economic development, renegotiating relations between tribal and federal governments, and reintroducing Native history and culture into reservation institutions, education, and government.” (Champagne and Goldberg, 2005)

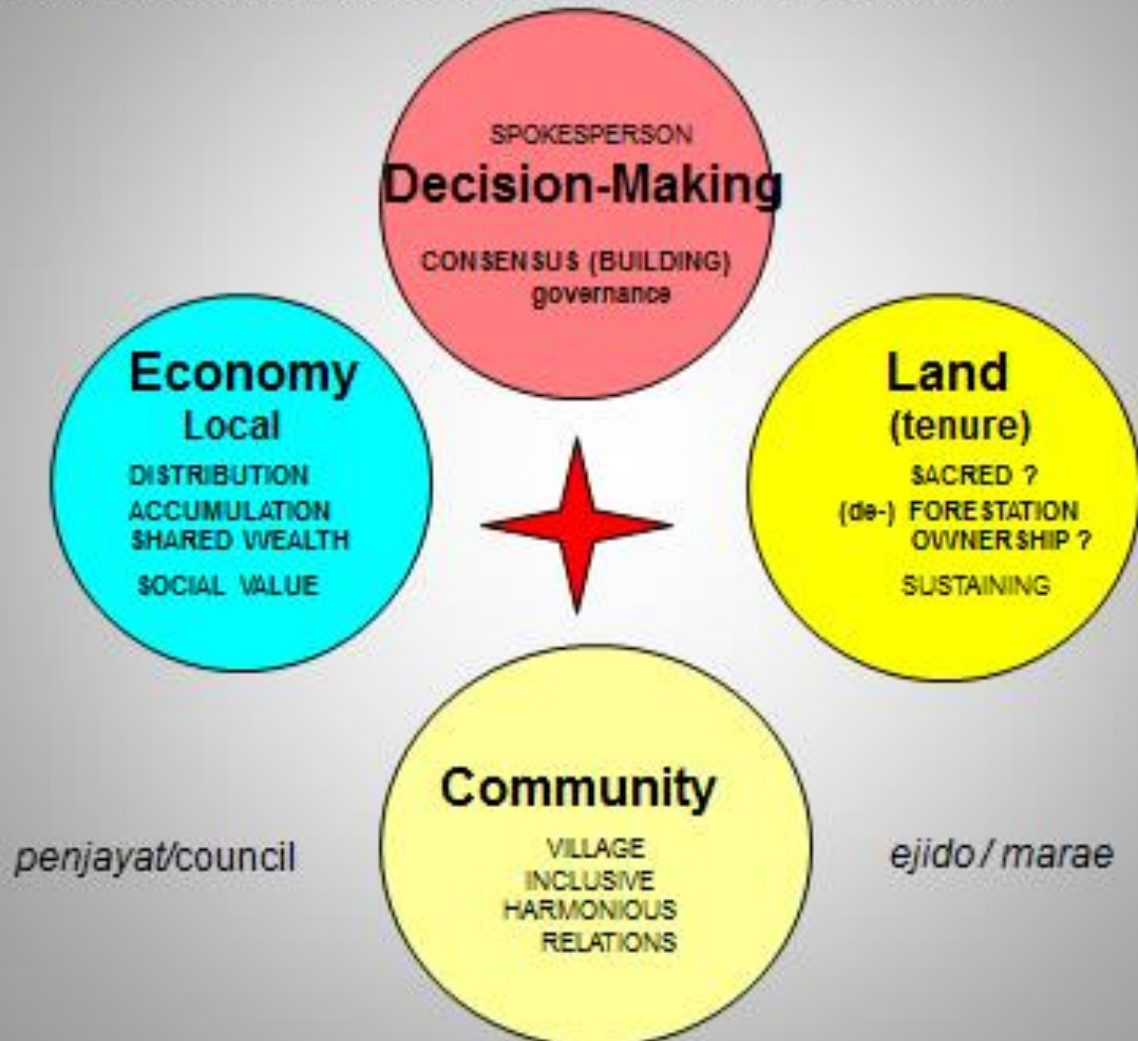
# Indigenous ideologies

- Felipe Quispe Huanca (Aymara) Head of the Indian Movement Pachacuti, that initiated protests in Bolivia:
- “We believe in the reconstruction of the Kollasuyu, our own ancestral laws. our own philosophy... We have... our political heritage (that) can be successful in removing and destroying neoliberalism, capitalism and imperialism.”
- “It is community-based socialism... That is what the brothers of our communities hold as model... In the Aymara and Quechua areas, primarily in La Paz, we have been working since 1984 on fostering awareness of community-based ideologies.”

# Indigenous Peoples and Globalization

FIGURE 2.2:

4 MODES OF INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE & REVITALIZATION



# Indigeneity

- “Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those who have a continuous historical connection with pre-colonial societies that preceded the invasion... that have the determination to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral lands and their ethnic identity...”  
(Jose Martiniez Cobo, 1987)

# Civilized violence & private property

- The larger problem for the Indians was the struggle against breaking up the communal lands. The Liberals made private property sacred ... the communal ownership of land in Indian communities became an obstacle to be removed. (Bonfil, 1996:100)
- “To civilize” is meant to pacify them, domesticate them, end *their violence*. (using dominant group violence) (Bonfil, 1996:105)

# Lakota Indigenous Relationships

- *Hau Mitakuyepi !* – Greetings to Relatives
- “*tiwaye*” – the family (ti-pi, household)
- “*tiyospaye*” – extended relatives (community)
- *Unci Maka, Tunkashila* – Grandmother, father
- *Oyate (wanbli, pte)* – Nation, belonging...  
(*unma oyate* – those people outside, other)
- *Ikce Wicasa* – Common (red) man (human)
- *Omidakuye oyasin* – we are all related (global)

Traditional cultural practices are being restored, revitalized (SunDances, as community ceremony, are at “places” – struggles over traditional/treaty lands).



Spiritual (*wakinyan*) landings (to the left),  
Bear Butte sacred lands dispute (above),  
near treaty Black Hills in South Dakota.

Traditional Mayan cross (note the 4 directions colors) set up by community leaders (including a Zapatista commandante) from highland areas, meeting with Indigenous Perspectives faculty and staff in *San Cristobol*, Chiapas, November, 2003



# Community and “Mother Earth”

- Dakota in Minnesota and North Dakota, U.S.
- Warli in northwestern Maharashtra, India
- Tzotzil in southern Chiapas, Mexico
- Maori in Aotearoa, New Zealand
- Mapuche in southern Chile
- Maasai in Kenya, Africa
- Sami in Scandinavia
- Phillipines

# Indigenous maintain spiritual ways

- Dakota men & women praying in Sun Dance

# Warli resistance meeting in forest lands

Community leaders in *Yavesia*, are protecting the forests, and retelling cultural histories, for the next generation.

# Community representations

- **MAORI – *HAKA*  
*AND MARAE*  
REVITALIZATION**

# Revitalization of Culture

- Pehuenche signs of local leadership, and restoration of a traditional “Ruka” used for ceremonial life







# plurinationality

- A Kichwa woman active in resisting mining contracts in the Intag Valley in Ecuador when asked about recent CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) activity, an organization that has for over two decades successfully pushed for the formal constitutional recognition of indigenous collective rights and the plurinationality of the Ecuadorian state – Casas

# Community foundation

- CONAIE was only as powerful as its base organizations and communities. Without their support, the CONAIE has no foundation to stand on.

# governmental

- September 2008, Ecuador passed a constitution that granted rights to living things and their environment. According to the document ratified by the Constituent Assembly, “nature has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution (*Article 71*).”

# Living life Indigenous ideologies

- adoption and use in several sections of the constitution of the Kichwa indigenous concept and project of *sumak kawsay*, or “living well” for all natural systems.
- *Sumak Kawsay*, has critique of traditional development strategies focused on growth and exploitation of resources rather than seeking to live and co-exist within dynamic systems of interdependence and relations. This practice and concept integrates peoples and communities with *Pachamama* (Mother Earth). Pacha in Quechua means more than just “earth”. In modern usage it could be translated to “spacetime,” world, universe. In Andean mythology Pachamama was a goddess of fertility.

*(Quechua) Pacha-oqariy –  
Pachamama*



# laws of “Mother Earth”

- Bolivia on April 22, 2011, passed, “The Law of Mother Earth” (*Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra*) duties of Bolivian plurinational state and citizens towards “Mother Earth,” defined as “the living dynamic system comprised of indivisible community of all living systems and all living beings that are interrelated, interdependent, and complementary, and that share a common destiny. According to the cosmovisions of the first indigenous and peasant nations and pueblos, Mother Earth is considered sacred” - Casas

# Rights and rites and \$ power

- states and governments that contain, dominate and control Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples, do not confer all these rights upon the Indigenous, so that like the Palestinians (and certainly the Bedouin), they've no representation to speak of.
- The once over-arching principle of human organization and global (social org) has to be our common destiny on what some IP call "mother earth" – environment and climate – not *Oikonome* of maximizing "profits" and centralizing power (socio-political) in large states.

# Neo-liberal disruption

- 1 – Major earth environmental accords are unlikely to produce results in time, especially as they all answer to capitalist, industrialist (include large agri-business) states and economic forces such as corporations. Significant change must acknowledge the indigenous peoples in their region, and find ways not to disrupt their lives when producing “neo-liberal” policies of “development.”



# Challenges to the State

- 2 – States should not be challenged, esp when a declining hegemon, potential for war is increased, interactive effects over all the other components thus becoming stronger, so that places where levels of sovereignty are already recognized (U.S. and Canada, New Zealand, others in Indian, etc.) can continue to gain more ground over these matters, while those without recognition should focus more on cultural sovereignty.

Brazilian natives from different ethnic groups protest in front of the Planalto palace, the official workplace of Brazil's Presidency in Brasilia on May 27, 2014



# Protesters in traditional headdress squared off against Brazilian police mounted on horses



# Indigenous demonstrators joined those (youth) protesting for social change



Demonstrators held spears and bows and arrows, in traditional battle gear



# Community sovereignty

- 3 – Communities must decide on their own food and resources policies, and their own environment, along with distribution strategies. What some analysts are calling “food sovereignty” is really an interactive, holistic set of relationships of food, land, and a lot I don’t fully understand. Indigenous people increasingly call this Cultural Sovereignty

# Adevasi

- **GOND – *GHOTUL***  
**RE-CONSTRUCTION**

# Decision-making & leadership

- 4 – Leadership with decision-making needs to be responsive to communities, and not centralized power sources and political parties which corrupt representatives no longer directly linked to home groups. Rights of collective human groups, whether community, village, or tribe, needs to be understood in the context of the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (United Nations, 2007.)





*Libertad,  
Democracia,  
Justicia, Paz*

– (values)  
following  
Lakota colors  
– 4 directions  
(photos taken at  
Oventik,  
Chiapas) \*inter-  
indigenous  
connections\*

# worldview

- more of the world is to embrace and understand concepts like “mother earth” and spiritual-social-biological relationships with land, air, sea and all life which walks, flies, swims or crawls upon it. Rather than view these as “primitive” we need to see they are holistic approaches better suited to the powerful and potentially lethal changes we will see as a result of climate change, wars and rumors of wars, and global warming.
- Thank you, Pilamaya, Mitakuye Oyasin