The Politics of Form and Alternative Autonomies: Indigenous Women, Subsistence Economies and the Gift Paradigm

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PREFACE

Rauna Kuokkanen addresses the interrelated issues of globalization, the securing of collective autonomy by Indigenous peoples, and the importance of individual autonomy for women within aboriginal societies in this paper. In these regards, she argues that the incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the global capitalist market economy has destroyed both the (collective) political and economic autonomy of indigenous societies and the (individual) political and economic autonomy of Indigenous women. In looking to the future, she adds that if Indigenous peoples are to restore and reclaim their sovereignty and/or establish new structures of self-determination and autonomy, they need not only to draw upon the needs and concerns of Indigenous women but also to build upon their historical and contemporary political and economic activities and roles. She notes that Indigenous women in company with peasant women in many developing countries foster a particular relational form of autonomy that must be nurtured and welcomed. What is more, this concept of relational autonomy along with the "gift" paradigm offers an alternative to the exchange and individualizing capitalist market economy. The logic of the gift, she points out, is already practiced in various communities (not limited to Indigenous peoples) in a multitude of forms and represents a form of relational autonomy par excellence. 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. It brings into question many of the current models of autonomy and self-government. The gift concept accomplishes this task by rearticulating the role of the individual in relation to the community not in the individualistic terms of liberal theory but through recognizing the fundamentally social nature of human beings.

Professor Kuokkanen develops this argument by first presenting an indigenous feminist critique of current self-governance models. She then turns to global capitalism and links the issue of viable autonomy with the question of the economy. Here she begins her exploration of alternative economic systems. In the third section of the paper, she discusses Jennifer Nedelsky's notion of relational autonomy built on Indigenous women's perspectives and articulations of sovereignty. In the final section of the paper, she suggests a specific form of relational autonomy based on the gift paradigm as a model of community autonomy and a sustainable economy. She stresses that the gift paradigm is not only relevant to Indigenous peoples and communities but also represents an alternative to the current, dominant market-driven ideology and system that have driven the world's ecosystems and communities to the brink of destruction.

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The Politics of Form and Alternative Autonomies: Indigenous Women, Subsistence Economies and the Gift Paradigm

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Introduction

Many indigenous rights advocates around the world have emphasized over and over again the paramount importance of collective autonomy as a precondition for the long-term survival of Indigenous peoples as distinctive collectivities. Despite the fears and concerns of nation-states, for a great majority of Indigenous people this kind of autonomy — autonomy as a people — does not imply secession or independent statehood but "appropriate forms of association with surrounding states that would safeguard their distinctive identities and special relationships to their territories" (Lâm 2000, 135). Indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination, therefore, is also a struggle to exist as a collective in the future, which implies being able to decide about and have control over that future as a people. In short, there is a difference between struggles for autonomy and separatist movements. Nira Yuval-Davis suggests:

> One needs to differentiate between separatist and autonomous movements, which can have quite different ideologies although not always that different practices. While autonomous movements put the emphasis on grass-roots activism, autonomy and self-sufficiency, as an initial stage from which they can co-operate with others once they feel more empowered and confident, separatist movements construct their boundaries as absolute and accept others, if at all, only if they are ready to convert (that is, assimilate). (Yuval-Davis 1997, 55)

The international discussion of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination takes place within the broader context of contested meanings of the norm of self-determination in international law. This debate, Maívân Clech Lâm notes, boils down to three questions: "*what* is the content of the right to self-determination, *who* holds that right; and *how* is the right to be adjudicated when it conflicts with other rights, including the right of another party to self-determination?" (Lâm 2000, 112) While the first two questions have been widely studied and written about with regard to Indigenous peoples, the third question has received less attention. In the same way, the question of the form of Indigenous peoples' self-government tends to be overlooked in international, national, and local discussions. As Peter Kulchyski (2005, 236) points out in his commentary on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (1996), the issue of forms is the central aspect, not merely one aspect among many, of the struggle for Aboriginal self-governance.

In this paper, I focus on the politics of form of Indigenous peoples' autonomy by incorporating contemplation of the roles, contributions, concerns, and perspectives of Indigenous women. I critique the logic of the global capitalist market economy often embedded in the current self-determination models and structures, and introduce the gift paradigm as an alternative way of conceptualizing Indigenous peoples' autonomy that moves beyond global capitalist and patriarchal paradigms. There are several reasons for such a focus. First, most considerations of indigenous self-determination, autonomy, and models of governance either completely ignore or gloss over the concerns, needs, and criticisms by

Indigenous women and their organizations. There is also a striking gender silence in treaty and Aboriginal rights analysis (Monture 2004). With the exception of contexts and spaces specially created for Indigenous women, one only rarely hears what Indigenous women say, need, want, mean, and demand with regard to envisioning self-determination in their communities. This silence has been long constructed on the dichotomous ideology that views individual women's rights as incompatible and in conflict with Indigenous peoples' collective rights.[1] But as Mohawk legal scholar Patricia A. Monture asks (2004, 43), "how can one talk of self-governing relationships without fundamentally examining the present reality of gender exclusion and omission?"[2]

Second, Indigenous women play a crucial role in envisioning models of autonomy that do not merely replicate patriarchal, hierarchical structures that often reproduce the marginalization and subjugation of sections of society. Indigenous women have mounted timely and legitimate criticisms toward existing self-governance models that must be taken seriously if we want Indigenous peoples' autonomy to succeed beyond words. The realities of multi-layered violence that Indigenous women face within and outside their communities are directly linked to the question of survival of indigenous communities. Indigenous women also play a crucial role in maintaining and cultivating practices, systems, and bodies of knowledge, values, languages, modes of learning — aspects that the recently adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, for instance, seeks to safeguard.

Third, Indigenous women represent the quintessential tension between collective and individual autonomy. Indigenous women are central in struggles for the collective self-determination of their peoples and communities, but as many have pointed out, this achievement cannot happen at the cost of their individual autonomy and agency. Collective autonomy cannot trump the safety of individual Indigenous women in their communities and families. In fact, as I argue in this paper, Indigenous peoples' collective autonomy is not possible without the individual autonomy of Indigenous women.

The main argument of this paper is that the incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the global capitalist market economy destroyed both the (collective) political and economic autonomy of indigenous societies and the (individual) political and economic autonomy of Indigenous women. Moreover, there are similarities in the "enforced dependency" of Indigenous peoples and peasant women, processes that signified the loss of autonomy of both groups. If Indigenous peoples are to restore and reclaim their sovereignty and/or establish new structures of self-determination and autonomy, it is necessary to consider not only the needs and concerns of Indigenous women but also their historical and contemporary political and economic activities and roles. In other words, Indigenous women and their perspectives have to have a prominent role in shaping successful and viable structures of autonomous indigenous societies.

In some ways, this paper builds upon Natalia Loukacheva's paper "On Autonomy and Law" where she examines the concept of autonomy in legal scholarship and offers an overview of autonomy of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, I will not delve into the conceptual or legal problematics of either Indigenous peoples' autonomy or the terms "self-determination" and "autonomy." My approach is informed by indigenous feminism, post-colonial analysis, and feminist political economy. The paper consists of four sections. First, it presents an indigenous feminist critique of current self-governance models. Second, it links the issue of viable autonomy with the question of the economy. Indigenous advocates have urged the international community to explore and support alternative economic models and paradigms developed and practiced by Indigenous peoples in their territories. They have argued that these models are important not only for the survival of Indigenous peoples but also for the survival of life on the planet in general. These economic models and paradigms are based on social and cultural systems and philosophies that reflect different logic and values from global capitalism and evolutionary progress. In considering existing indigenous self-determination structures, however, one has to ask whether Indigenous peoples' autonomy is possible only within the capitalist economy

— the same system and supporting ideology that destroyed Indigenous peoples' social, political, economic, and cultural autonomy and which continues to threaten the existence of indigenous societies today?

Third, the paper develops legal scholar Jennifer Nedelsky's notion of relational autonomy built on Indigenous women's perspectives and articulations of sovereignty. Finally, I suggest a specific form of relational autonomy based on the gift paradigm as a model of community autonomy and sustainable economy. Importantly, the gift paradigm is not only relevant to Indigenous peoples and communities but also represents an alternative to the current, dominant market-driven ideology and system that have driven the world's ecosystems and communities to the brink of destruction.

Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Current Self-government Models

At the core of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the inherent right to self-determination. It maintains that Indigenous peoples are peoples as articulated in international law which guarantees self-determination to all peoples. Since its inception in 1993, the Declaration has been debated and contested at various UN bodies and committees, including a Working Group devoted solely to the Declaration and which meets annually for two weeks. The Declaration contains 45 articles outlining the myriad aspects of indigenous self-determination such as the right to protection against actions taken without free, prior, and informed consent; the right to traditional lands and resources; and the right to establish and control their own educational systems providing education in their own languages.[3] The Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, by a vote of 143 in favour, 4 against and 11 abstensions. The four countries that voted against the Declaration were the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As the joint press release of the Saami Parliaments and the Saami Council states, "[t]he adoption of the Declaration constitutes a historical milestone in the struggle for the recognition of indigenous peoples' human rights and fundamental freedoms, ending centuries of marginalisation and discrimination, and confirming that indigenous peoples are peoples, equal in dignity and rights with all other peoples."[4] Like other indigenous organizations, the Saami Parliaments and the Saami Council place a great hope in the implementation of the Declaration in the Nordic context, especially with regard to the states recognizing the Saami as the traditional owners of their territories and natural resources.

Saami attorney and legal advisor John B. Henriksen outlines four main ways of organizing contemporary indigenous autonomy and self-government in various parts of the globe. These include autonomy through contemporary indigenous political institutions; autonomy based on the concept of an indigenous territory; regional autonomy within the state; and indigenous overseas autonomy. The Saami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, along with the Torres Strait Islander Commission in Australia and the Waitangi Tribunal in Aotearoa/New Zealand are examples of indigenous self-government models constructed and practiced by means of contemporary institutions (Henriksen 2004). The Saami Parliaments are elected bodies (by eligible, registered Saami individuals) representing the Saami people nationally and internationally in issues dealing with them. While they differ slightly from one another in terms of their institutional structures, mandate, and administrative and political scope, they are largely advisory bodies with limited authority and decision-making power even in internal affairs.

For Henriksen, different variations of the reservation systems represent a potential basis for indigenous self-government based on a territorial demarcation. These include the *comarcas* in Panama and the reserves and reservations in Canada and the United States. The *comarca* system in Panama has enabled some degree of self-government for some indigenous communities such as the Kuna of the Comarca San Blas which consists of forty small islands on the Caribbean coast and a section of the mainland. This area, however, does not include all the Kuna communities (Henriksen 2004). The

reservation system can be found also in some other Latin American countries such as Costa Rica.[5] The existing reservation system in North America is a colonial legacy which has relegated most people living on reservations to extreme levels of poverty, unemployment, and social, political, and economic marginalization not found elsewhere in Canada or the United States. These forms of marginalization have also been highly gendered. For example in Canada, the Indian Act of 1876 disenfranchised Native women in ways that were not applied to Native men, and with ramifications that continue to marginalize Native women today.).[6] Reservations do, however, Henriksen suggests, "enjoy a certain degree of self-government" (Henriksen 2004, 11). In the United States, Native title is not recognized in common law, only as a possession right of based occupancy. Moreover, the Congress has a unilateral authority to extinguish signed treaties with Native American Nations.[7] In Canada, the Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes the Aboriginal peoples (Indians, Inuit, and Métis) and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. It also recognizes the inherent right of self-government as an existing Aboriginal right.[8]

The third form of indigenous self-government — regional autonomy within the state — is accorded to a region or territory, not directly to Indigenous peoples. There are three main categories of regional autonomy: within the framework of a federal state (e.g., Nunavut in Canada), entrenched in the national constitution (e.g., Russia and the Philippines) and established by statute (e.g., Región Autónoma Atlántico Norte and Región Autónoma Atlántico Sur in Nicaragua). The fourth form, regional autonomy overseas, can be found in Kalaallit Nunaat/Greenland, where the overwhelming majority of the population is Inuit. A self-governed territory of Denmark, Kalaallit Nunaat has been under the Greenland Home Rule since 1979. The Home Rule Act allows the administration of internal affairs (except the police, judicial system, and defense) and adoption of legislation by the Home Rule Government which consists of the Greenland Parliament, an elected assembly, and the Cabinet serviced by various government departments (Greenland Home Rule 2004).

It is important to bear in mind that self-determination is a much broader concept than self-government. Self-determination ultimately refers to the right and ability to determine and make decisions in all spheres and aspects of life as articulated, for example, in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Existing indigenous self-government agreements and structures are generally limited in their political and economic capacity and only allow for self-administration of certain programs. In some cases, such as the Saami in Finland, self-government agreements only refer to *cultural* autonomy (i.e., rights to language and culture) without addressing indigenous political and economic self-determination.[9]As Henriksen notes,

> The current Finnish legislation does not acknowledge or grant any special land rights to the Saami people in their own Homeland, neither does the legislation acknowledge any exclusive rights for the Saami people to pursue their traditional livelihoods. Most of the land areas (90%) within the demarcated Saami Homeland in Finland are regarded as state property. (Henriksen 2004, 5) [10]

Although "cultural rights" may provide a basis for Indigenous peoples to defend and advance their collective rights (see, for example, Robbins and Stamatopoulou 2004), it can also be argued that separating indigenous self-government from a 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" (Altamirano-Jimenez 2004, 354). This approach reflects the neo-liberal agenda and construction of 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, reflecting the surrender provisions of post-Confederation treaties. Ned'u'ten legal scholar June McCue calls the British Columbia Treaty Commission process the "conquest treaty model" (McCue 1998). For Cree lawyer

Sharon Venne, the Canadian Aboriginal self-government policy represents "an attempt to subvert the sovereign governments of our Indigenous nations." Indigenous people discussing and agreeing to this model are, in her view, "the lost souls of the colonization process" because "[t]hey are giving up their sovereign rights to be part of the colonial state" (Venne 1999, 29).

Moreover, there is a tendency to achieve a self-government agreement "only when the federal government [is] eager to facilitate an economic development project" (Coolican Task Force 1986, 13). This tendency appears to marginalize Aboriginal women in various ways. First, a land claims policy that prioritizes and focuses on large-scale resource development is male-centered because most new jobs are for 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 (Archibald and Crnkovich 1999). 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. By focusing on male activities on the land, it does not take into account the specific responsibilities Aboriginal women have in, for example, gathering and agriculture (Kim Anderson 2000; Monture 2004). It also ignores how Aboriginal people's land relationships are gendered (Monture 2004). In short, as Métis political scientist 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" (Green and Voyageur 1999, 143).

Moreover, many Indigenous women argue that contemporary models of indigenous sovereignty merely replicate masculinist and patriarchal political structures and ideologies (Monture-Angus 1995; Eikjok 2000; Green 2004; Mihesuah 2003; A. Smith 2005; Denetdale 2006). In many cases, Indigenous women remain unequal in their political ability to impact decision-making on issues directly related to their lives and well-being (Green and Voyageur 1999; Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 1998; Napoleon 2005). For example, this is the case in contemporary Saami society. The three Saami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland — elected bodies representing the Saami especially at the national level to their respective state governments — have been male-dominated, and in Sweden and Finland, continue to be so (the percentages of women are 35 and 21 respectively). The Norwegian Saami 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 of 2005, women formed, for the first time, the majority (51 %) of the Norwegian Saami Parliament's 39 elected representatives.[11] Also the newly elected president of the Saami Parliament in Norway is a woman for the first time in the history of all three Saami Parliaments. Although significant, the new female majority in the Norwegian Saami Parliament does not automatically guarantee political practices or procedures that revoke or even challenge the entrenched patriarchal structures, priorities, and political processes. In spite of the prominent roles some Saami women play in local politics, practices of trivializing and discrimination against women continue in contemporary Saami and other local organizations and political processes. For most of the time, these practices are very subtle and difficult to expose as means of discrimination (such as jokes and insinuations), but as feminist scholars have pointed out, they function as powerful mechanisms of control (e.g., Enloe 2004, 5; Plumwood 1993).

Saami female politicians' perspectives and attempts to participate in a political debate is particularly trivialized when the topic is what is considered traditionally belonging to the "male sphere" such as all-terrain vehicle permits (Utsi 2005). Another example of symbolic, more invisible form of violence is the way in which the views of young, female Saami politicians (including the current President of the Saami Parliament in Norway) are not taken seriously (Aslaksen 2007). Norwegian sociologist, feminist, and former politician Berit Ås has developed a theory of the common patriarchal mechanisms of control by which silence make women invisible in a way that women often themselves

start believing in the secondary significance of their views and contributions. The most common mechanisms are ridiculing and trivializing (Ås 2004).

Furthermore, we need to take into account that the Saami political and representative bodies, such as the Saami Parliaments and the Saami Council are in many ways direct copies of their Nordic counterparts, thus often reflecting similar ideologies and biases as institutions in mainstream societies. Although the Saami political bodies have limited decision-making power even with regard to issues affecting the Saami, they exert power internally for example by focusing on issues considered important within the patriarchal political system.

Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Economic Realities of the Global Economy

One of the main reasons for Indigenous peoples worldwide to advocate for and seek greater autonomy is to curtail the disastrous impact of the global economy on their lives, livelihoods, societies, and cultural heritage. Whether it is mining, logging, hydroelectric construction, large-scale export-oriented agribusiness or oil exploration, these development projects are usually accompanied by environmental degradation and sometimes also militarization and violence. These effects endanger the possibilities of practicing traditional livelihoods and of maintaining Indigenous peoples' own social and cultural institutions (see, for example, Gedicks 1993; LaDuke 1999; 2002; Scott 2001; Guissé 2003; Howard 2003; WGIP 2003; Indigenous Peoples and Globalization Program 2003; Blaser, Feit, and McRae 2004; Niezen 2004; Stewart-Harawira 2005; Mander and Tauli-Corpuz n.d.; Washington, Rosier, and Goodall 2006). There are also newer forms of exploitation of Indigenous peoples and their cultures such as the theft and patenting of traditional knowledge and biological and genetic resources through the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and other mechanisms (see, for example, Shiva 1993a; 1997; Posey and Dutfield 1996; Simpson et al. 1997; Battiste and Henderson 2000; Harry and Dukepoo 2000; Harry 2001; C. Smith and Ward 2000; von Lewinski 2004; Mgbeoji 2005).

The challenge, then, for Indigenous peoples' endeavours is how to develop viable models of Indigenous peoples' autonomy in an era of globalization that seeks to eradicate all barriers between economies. 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 is usually only because they want "to create the conditions for investment confidence, and to protect 'third party interests' (that is, non-aboriginal property)" (Green and Voyageur 1999, 146). The governments have no interest in supporting subsistence economies based on alternative values such as sustainability and community well-being.

A ruling of the International Court of Justice from 1975 maintains that Indigenous peoples do not need to pattern themselves after European governmental structures in their strivings toward autonomy (Venne 1998, 46). The existing indigenous self-government structures and economic models, however, are grounded on principles of global capitalism (e.g., resource extraction, establishment of casinos). Green notes:

> 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. (Green 2002, 32)

Global capitalist discourses have inherited legacies 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 instance, one of the remaining traditional livelihoods of the Saami today, reindeer herding, has gradually been made next to impossible by various gestures of colonial encroachment, starting from the establishment of the nation-state borders between the competing kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Russia from the eighteenth century onwards to more recent processes such as hydroelectric development, logging, mining, and tourism. Also, various national and European Union policies put pressure on and limit reindeer herding activities and practices related to it. For example, despite the opposition of Saami reindeer herders, the Finnish government continues logging the old growth forests in reindeer grazing areas in the north and postponing the settlement of the Saami land rights claims. But what will be left of the land and resources, upon which the survival of Saami culture (and thus, the Saami people) is dependent, if the current development continues until enough political will is found 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; it only needs to wait until the conditions for practicing livelihoods or cultures no longer exist. The policy of "death by a thousand cuts" may not be written down but it is extremely effective (see Kuokkanen and Bulmer 2006).

Saami women were already pushed to the margins of reindeer herding several decades ago. Particularly since 1945, government policies have made Saami women invisible in the livelihood in which they had always played a prominent role. In many cases, policies have erased the traditionally held right of ownership of women's own reindeer. In official records, reindeer-owning Saami women have been placed under their husbands. This act has had ramifications ranging from who receives subsidies and grants to the status and recognition of women within a livelihood that is often considered one of the central markers of Saaminess and Saami identity (Sámi Instituhtta 1979; Joks 2001; Sárá 1990-1; 2003).

The creation of enforced dependency and incorporation into the global economy of Indigenous peoples took place particularly through trade. In some instances, Indigenous people entered into trading relationships by autonomous participation but often the entry occurred through coercion in which the stakes were the land and resources of indigenous communities (Porter 1996). Richard White argues that credit and alcohol were the two most forceful influences that undermined economic and political autonomy of many Indigenous peoples in North America: "Credit put the Indians quickly into debt, and furthered the traders' control. When given full reign, the credit-liquor combination could lead to… the institution of market economy, the growth of market relations inside the society…" (White 1983, 318-19). This outcome resulted in material, political, and social conditions where practicing self-determination was very difficult. Replacing subsistence with trade and sharing and giving practices and relations with market exchanges led in many indigenous societies to the collapse of traditional economies, loss of collective and individual autonomy, starvation, poverty, and ecological imbalances (e.g., overhunting due to pressures of trade) (White 1983; Becker 2004, 47).

The process of incorporating indigenous societies into the capitalist economy was (and continues to be) highly gendered and it had many gender-specific consequences. Restructuring indigenous societies from subsistence production into a market economy dependent on trading goods has had far-reaching political and cultural transformations in indigenous societies in general. More specifically, it signified the simultaneous loss of status and an increase in the workload of women (e.g., Buenaventura-Posso and Brown 1980; Leacock 1980; Albers 1983; Klein 1983; Karen Anderson 1991; Dunaway 2000; M'Closkey 2004). Wilma A. Dunaway demonstrates how, in the case of the Cherokee, the subsistence economy of independent villages was replaced by an export production centered on hunting for deerskins and slaves. Prior to this transformation, the community survival depended on women's economic activities. However, the new export activities reshaped communal work practices and introduced a new, gendered division of labour. Hunting and warfare required not only more male labour

time but also increased efforts by women in the form of preparing the meat and skins. Despite women's involvement in the fur trade, trading practices also changed from being a communal affair into a male-dominated activity. With the expansion of the fur trade, also male crafts unrelated to deer hunting or warfare were put aside while Cherokee men increased their consumption of European luxury goods (including alcohol), which in turn increased the debt peonage of the Cherokee villages. Dunaway notes:

> To meet village debt obligations, women increased their allocation of labor to deerskin processing. As a result, their subsistence agricultural cultivation and their craft production became more erratic. Villages that once marketed surpluses now purchased British foodstuffs at exorbitant prices. Women had avoided indebtedness for nonfood household essentials through their craft production and through exchanges in the informal sector. However, that form of household subsidy disappeared, as their commodity production declined. (Dunaway 2000, 200)

Cherokee women's contribution to the deerskin market, however, remained invisible, thus making women "unpaid employees" of the men in their clans. At the same time, women's subsistence and household production were increasingly devalued by Cherokee men. Moreover, the fur trade caused environmental degradation and thereby further aggravated women's working conditions. For example deforestation, a practice taken up by Cherokee men to facilitate deer hunting, made gathering firewood more difficult and also eradicated various plants used for food and medicine. The importation of horses and cattle threatened open corn fields and mulberry trees tended by women. Cherokee women and children were also at increased risk of disease and domestic violence, the latter often linked to male alcohol consumption. Ultimately, integration into the capitalist trading economy eroded Cherokee women's political participation as well as their control over the means of household production. In settling trade debts, Dunaway notes, Cherokee men ceded "more than half of Cherokee ancestral lands to Europeans" (Dunaway 2000, 208).

The Cherokee incorporation into the capitalist market system reflects some general trends of the early colonial period in many indigenous societies characterized by economic dependency and the loss of political and economic autonomy. In the eighteenth century, the gradual encroachment of trade brought political and social chaos to the Choctaw who also resisted trade and commercial exchange, not least because it was largely foreign to the Choctaw logic of gift giving and reciprocation. The increase of trade, with the help of alcohol, destroyed not only the Choctaw social order and their subsistence system but also the ecological balance of the woodlands and the disappearance of the white-tailed deer. Alcohol also increased violence in communities. Richard White maintains: "The market was not "natural" for the Choctaws. It was an alien way of allocating goods, and they resisted it for generations. The pay-off system, their own self-sufficiency, and their military strength made their resistance successful. But when the French vanished and the English employed credit and liquor effectively, the Choctaws' resistance collapsed and they were trapped" (White 1983, 146). In the Plains societies, the shift from a subsistence system to exchange economy in the early nineteenth century changed the Plains relations of production and introduced a more rigid social division of labour. As among the Cherokee, specialization of labour that followed the hide trade increased women's workload while at the same time, decreased their control over goods that carried status with them (e.g., horses, hides). As Alan M. Klein notes, "[t]he overall prosperity concealed an erosion of women's position through her being increasingly circumscribed to a few tasks related to processing and domestic production" (Klein 1983, 156).

In the era of establishing reservations in North America, the federal governments wanted to end this previously established dependency of Native people and to create economic self-reliance. As Anthony Hall notes: "It is ironic how the proposals for generating self-sufficiency among Indian people were based almost invariably on the idea of integrating them more deeply into those systems of market relations that had been instrumental in their earlier loss of autonomy" (Hall 2003, 193). In contemporary

times, the dependency of indigenous communities, however, continues to be enforced, for example, through welfare and other ever-changing federal policies. Discussing Native Americans in the United States, Tressa Berman notes: "Program caps and time limits that reduce the welfare roll without eliminating conditions of poverty undercut the ways American Indians have come to combine household resource strategies with various forays into wage work" (Berman 2004, 136). Moreover, these welfare policies have always had gender-specific effects, "especially where top-down policies operate with little knowledge or regard for kinship or gender relations" (Berman 2004, 140).

The rhetoric and policies of indigenous community economic self-reliance in the form of capitalist enterprise continue to the present day without much understanding or consideration of historical processes that led to the disintegration of self-sufficient local economies with high levels of political autonomy. Today, this rhetoric and these policies and activities are usually called "community development." As noted earlier, however, more often than not it is predicated on export-oriented resource extraction and thus increasing the pressure on an already diminished land base. Rarely is there an interest or concentrated effort to investigate the potential and possibilities of subsistence economies, which are, unlike common beliefs, highly complex and sustainable systems already adapted to the ecosystem. As June Nash argues, "[a]nthropological studies are replete with documentation of the ingenuity and adaptability of subsistence-based economies, defined as those in which the producers consume a majority of production and sell only to meet basic needs of food, housing, and health" (Nash 2001a, 26). Referring to various studies, Nash mentions the ability of Somalian agropastoralists to "respond to a high level of uncertainty in their arid environment before the shrinking of pasturelands required an intensification that devastated the soils" and the competence of the Amazonian Kayapo in using "their environment without despoiling the delicate balance of faunal and floral resources" (Nash 2001a, 26).

A subsistence economy, a form of production aimed at sustaining life rather than gaining profit, has been devalued and is considered backward in the context of a market economy. Viewed through modernization and evolution theories, the expansion of capitalist economy into indigenous societies is a measure of progress. As colonial, Western society became synonymous with the "modern," it came to represent "the ultimate cultural destination on the road to economic development" (O'Neill 2004, 5). Indigenous peoples' cultural or economic innovations should not be considered either "modern," "premodern," or "anti-modern" or placed in the rigid modern/traditional dichotomy. Rather, Indigenous peoples present "alternative pathways of economic development that transcend linear analytical categories" (O'Neill 2004, 3).

Drawing on numerous examples around the world, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and Maria Mies suggest that subsistence economies, practiced in various ways in different parts of the world, offer an alternative perspective and critique to the self-destructive growth logic of capital. Many, including some Indigenous people, have internalized the tenet that there are no alternatives for economic globalization. The prevailing neo-liberal ideology dismisses calls for alternative economic and societal structures as being unrealistic, utopian, and naïve. However, as Karl Polanyi has pointed out, what is utopian, if anything, is the "elevation of market relations to pre-eminence over all other kinds of social relations" — an elevation that represents "idiosyncratic preoccupations of particular interests within particular societies, rather than the expression of universal human attributes" (quoted in Hall 2003, 187).

Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen argue that the modern contempt for subsistence is rooted in the high evaluation of wage labour and thus, money. As a result of the idealization of wage-labour as the only meaningful, viable labour relationship, several other forms of work (and thus, other economic forms) have been rendered either invisible or insignificant. This idealization explains why it is possible to say of a housewife with children that "she does not work." In short, the fixation on wage labour has meant that the term "work" applies only to paid labour. Moreover, Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies argue that this fixation is "the very instrument of modern patriarchal ideology." In their view, the concept of wage labour

> is already male-centred in its exclusion, indeed, negation, of female elements. The model of wage labour is industrial male labour, not the work of mothers and women in providing for the immediate needs of everyday life, especially children and old people. It is hardly surprising, then, that equality for women in wage labour (equal pay, equal jobs and equal promotion) means that they must increasingly adopt ways of living that have been shaped by men. (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 172)

In Guatemala, a Mayan movement called *comunidades de población en resistancia* (CPRs, "communities of people in resistance") emerged in the early 1980s to resist the genocidal and "scorched earth" policies of the military regime. As part of their resistance, Mayans involved in CPRs refuse to engage in any paid (migrant) labour. Historically, the Mayans and other Indigenous peoples were forced into slavery and indentured labour by the Spanish plantation owners who had expropriated the communally owned Indigenous peoples' land and resources. Since the signing of the peace accord in 1996, the CPRs have also restored their subsistence economy organized on a cooperative basis. The principles guiding the subsistence cooperatives include reciprocity, sharing, and consensus (Corinna Milborn in Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 165-6).[12]

The destruction of subsistence economies and autonomous indigenous communities go hand-in-hand and date from early days of colonial and capitalist expansion. Contempt toward subsistence, however, is not limited to capitalism. Under socialism as well, it was considered primitive, backward, and non-profitable. The Soviet policy of rendering sedentary nomadic reindeer herders, dating back to the 1930s, was based on an ideology according to which nomadism was incompatible with a socialist society. Nomads were not part of the socialist production and their mobile lifestyle prevented their participation in public life. This policy led to a massive rendering sedentary and rationalization campaign in the 1950s aimed at establishing brigades where the reindeer herds could be counted and meat and hides produced. Only this way, was reindeer herding considered worthwhile and were reindeer herding males "ideal proletarians" not working merely for subsistence, while women were supposed to relinguish the reindeer herding economy and way of life and take up new professions in the wage economy. These policies have been highly detrimental to the Indigenous peoples and their economies in which reindeer herding is considered a "family business" where each family member has her or his specifically assigned activities (Tuisku 2001).

"Traditional" economies characterized by a subsistence perspective continue to be opposed by both political and corporate elites for many reasons, including because they exist outside their reach: "land being used for a subsistence livelihood is off the market" (Bedford and Irving-Stephens 2001, 13). Ivan Illich links the emergence of a systematic and rigorous "war against subsistence" to the development paradigm after World War II (Illich 1982, cited in Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 17). Therefore, the real war of capital, as pointed out by Illich, is not against the unions but against subsistence. Only by destroying the capacity to subsist, are people brought under the complete control and power of capital (in Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 19). A subsistence economy is considered a threat to capital accumulation because it does not comply with the capitalist logic and goals but rather signifies independence, self-sufficiency, and self-reliance (cf. Erika Märke in Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 21).

The destruction of self-sufficiency and political, social, and economic autonomy of Indigenous peoples is comparable to the disintegration of the subsistence economy of female farmers around the globe. Even in Europe, peasant women controlled many areas of production until well into the twentieth century. Modern, industrial agriculture and its underlying values of patriarchy and market economy have changed the position of farming and peasant women from "relative independence to housewifely dependence." By means of government interventions, policies, and other structural changes, "peasant women have increasingly been confined to the four walls of their house, and their work became more and more oriented toward consumption like that of middle-class urban housewives" (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 99).

Subsistence economy has always been largely the domain of women — women's subsistence and other economic activities form(ed) the foundation of community sustenance. Therefore, the war against subsistence also represents a war against women and their economic, political, and social autonomy in society. Today, the autonomy and independence of women farmers especially in the global South is jeopardized, for example, by corporate attempts to commodify women's labour, however cheaply. Interestingly, in continents like Africa, where the great majority of farmers and peasants are still women, corporations have not been very successful in establishing Export Processing Zones that rely on semiskilled and "docile" labour (Gibson 2004).

On the one hand, there is a war against subsistence by the capitalist ideology and production. On the other hand, however, accumulation of capital needs the subsistence sector, as argued by Rosa Luxemburg in the early twentieth century. Largely ignored and opposed at the time, Luxemburg's thesis gains new momentum today when subsistence economies are rapidly disappearing and increasingly made impossible due to environmental degradation and expropriation of "new frontiers" of resources in the few remaining tropical forests (Nash 2001a). Moreover, the connection between the subsistence sector and capitalist economy is characterized by a gender dynamic that has remained largely unrecognized. For example, women farmers have long subsidized male wage labour. In a similar fashion, Indigenous women's household production has subsidized the formal market sector. Kathy M'Closkey shows how, in the early twentieth century, the lives of Diné (Navajo) women weavers were radically altered by the global market (the first wave of free trade) in the form of the commercialization of the Diné textile production. While textile production grew more than 800 percent and the workload tripled, women weavers remained poor. There were several reasons for this outcome, one of them being that Diné women's weaving was not considered work, and thus they could be paid next to nothing. "Without the weavers' productivity, the U.S. government may have needed to step in and subsidize the purchases of Diné wool…. Thus thousands of "dark-skinned housewives" effectively subsidized the trading post system on the reservation system" (M'Closkey 2004, 119-120).[13] Saskia Sassen points out:

> It was the "invisible" work of women producing food and other necessities in the subsistence economy that contributed to extremely low wages on commercial plantations and mines, mostly geared to export markets. Women in the so-called subsistence sector thereby contribute, through their largely unmonetized subsistence production, to the financing of the "modernized" sector. (Sassen 2000, 508)

By dismissing subsistence economies as backward and primitive, it is possible to devalue them and make them invisible while at the same time, to exploit them to subsidize and uphold the process of capital accumulation. Subsistence economies continue to exist in many parts of the world, usually alongside the more formal market economy. Although informal subsistence production in these mixed economies is often largely invisible, it continues to be crucial for the survival and well-being of the community. These forms of production are not, therefore, premodern or precapitalist, despite common perceptions and representations that seek to banish them to "noncontemporaneous space of the past" (Gibson -Graham 1996, 245).

Reclaiming and upholding subsistence economies and values are often led by women around the world. For them, subsistence represents not only personal autonomy and agency and economic self-sufficiency but also a means of resisting the global capitalist economy and its patriarchal, colonial control over women, means of production, and the land. An example of ongoing subsistence activities that have defied disruption can be found in the town of Juchitán, in Oaxaca, Mexico, where women are in charge of economic activity. While agriculture and fishing are male domains, trade, which is considered a craft rather than wage labour, is entirely in women's hands. At the center of the economic activity is not the exchange for profit or competition, but the sustenance of individuals, families, and the community. Surplus is shared at numerous festivals and ceremonies which maintain the social cohesion of the community but also bring prestige to those who give and share their wealth: "The person with the highest esteem is not the one who owns most, but the one who gives most" (Bennholdt-Thomsen 2005). In Juchitán, wage labour is limited but

the town is prosperous compared to many other regions in Mexico. The subsistence-oriented economy also ensures the continuation of reciprocity and social relationships. Combined with matrilocality, these relationships, Bennholdt-Thomsen contends, enable the town "to withstand the neo-liberal intention to gear the agricultural production of Juchitán towards the world market" (Bennholdt-Thomsen 2005; see also Bennholdt-Thomsen 1996).[14]

Indigenous women and their rights, in particular, are most negatively affected by multiple forms of exploitation by the global economy. Indigenous women usually bear the brunt of the destruction of indigenous economies, increased outmigration, and other negative effects of corporate globalization (Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 1998; Vinding 1998; Barrón 1999; Tauli-Corpuz 2001; M'Closkey 2004). These women include Mayan women in Guatemala who work at the maquiladora and are exposed to harassment and abuse (Fosse 2003); Lubicon Cree women in Alberta who are made to witness "the physical, emotional, economic, cultural and spiritual destruction" of their communities by oil exploration and other resource extraction (Martin-Hill 2004; see also Green and Voyageur 1999); Indigenous women in the Philippines whose small-scale home-based handicraft industries are destroyed and who are unable to compete with imported crops (Tauli-Corpuz 2001); Native American women whose only option to get out of the government-sanctioned poverty trap is to join the military.).[15] Displaced from their traditional livelihoods or no longer able to earn a living as small-scale or subsistence farmers due to the structural adjustment program schemes or dumping of cheap agricultural products by transnational agribusiness corporations, Indigenous women worldwide are also faced with various forms of violence as they are forced to migrate to urban areas in search of income (see, for example, Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 1998; Largoza-Maza 1998; Nageer 2004; Tauli-Corpuz 2001).

At the same time, however, it is Indigenous women who, often against all odds, continue their subsistence-based economies while largely embedded in the capitalist global economy. These practices can be an active form of resistance. More often, they are strategies of survival and ingenious ways of erecting "buffers" against the economic instability created by top-down models and policies. For example, Berman shows how Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara women in the Upper Missouri River creatively combine "various sources of subsistence — including commodity food and other welfare programs — to craft an informal network through which they redistribute resources and ensure community cohesion" (Berman 2004, 133). This is very much the case also in Lakota communities such as Pine Ridge and Rosebud where people make a living by combining subsistence activities with microenterprise, odd jobs, barter, household production (e.g., beading, sewing, quilting, cooking for ceremonies) and giveaways. Thus, many contemporary Lakota households consist of "a mix of market and nonmarket activities" (Pickering 2000, 46). Partly out of necessity, households strive toward self-sufficiency. Household production is also considered a way of expressing culture and cultural identity, manifested particularly in ceremonies such as giveaways and feasts where objects and food are distributed to the entire community. While the capitalist market economy has had an impact on giveaway practices (e.g., bank loans, store-bought goods, cash), the ceremony and event itself continue to be deeply rooted in Lakota culture and its intention remains the same. Goods are constantly accumulated, but only to be given away. Women continue to be in the centre of these ceremonial, communal events and the various formations of mixed economy (Pickering 2000).

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 (Enloe 2004, 215). 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 and elsewhere in society (A. Smith 2005). Levels of violence against Indigenous women are alarming around the world and only recently has there been a public outcry calling for more substantial attention and concerted efforts to address the crisis (Amnesty International 2004; 2007; Moses 2007; Haven 2007). 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" (Nash 2001b, 245). 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!" (Gutiérrez and Palomo 2000, 79)

There is often a tension between Indigenous peoples' rights and Indigenous women's equality rights. Indigenous peoples' rights are largely collective rights, or rights of a people (as articulated in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and the Draft Declaration of Indigenous Peoples' Rights). Thus, they differ from individual rights such as general human rights and minority rights (found in the UN documents such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities). While individual human and minority rights apply also to Indigenous people, indigenous advocates have emphasized the utmost importance of group rights for the survival of Indigenous peoples as distinct entities. They have pointed out that individual rights do not adequately protect indigenous cultures, livelihoods, and territories, which are usually practiced, enjoyed, and utilized collectively.

As the Draft Declaration Article 3 states, the most significant of the Indigenous peoples' collective rights is the right to self-determination. For many, this provision stands in sharp contrast to liberalist conceptions of individual(istic) autonomy characterized by a strong emphasis on unique, self-sufficient, separate, independent individuals whose possibilities and freedoms are viewed as limitless. This is not to suggest that the notion of individual is non-existent in indigenous communities. Métis scholar Emma LaRocque asserts that the question of collective versus individual is more complex than generally perceived by many non-Natives and Natives alike. She argues:

> 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 traditions 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! (LaRocque 1997, 87)

Demands for collective rights and self-determination by Indigenous people do not imply there is no respect for individual autonomy in indigenous societies. Traditionally in many societies, individual autonomy, defined as personal agency, a capacity and ability to make informed choices and a possibility to participate in social life, has been highly valued (see, for example, Brody 1988; Ridington 1990; Balto 1997; Kehoe 1997). Therefore, social or cultural practices that infringe the individual autonomy of some groups in society (such as women) also undermine the collective autonomy. If only affairs and issues considered important by largely indigenous male leadership are taken into account in the process of restoring and shaping Indigenous peoples' self-determination, Indigenous women remain subjugated and colonized in their own communities and under the rule of their own people.[16]

If individual self-determination is necessary for a meaningful and viable collective self-determination of Indigenous peoples (Napoleon 2005), there is a need to deconstruct the sharp

opposition between individual and collective autonomy in a way that does not erode or disregard either. This deconstruction has to pay careful attention to gendered structures and processes of gendering in articulations of autonomy so that activities and practices made invisible by capitalist relations and economic ideologies (i.e., activities and practices of women) are given due consideration and recognition. Legal scholar Jennifer Nedelsky's articulation of relational autonomy is particularly helpful in this regard. While recognizing "a real and enduring tension between the individual and the collective," she calls for the reconceptualization of autonomy in a way that moves

> beyond a conception of human beings which sees them exclusively as separate individuals and focuses on the threat of the community. The collective is not simply a potential threat to individuals, but is constitutive of them, and thus is a source of their autonomy as well as a danger to it. (Nedelsky 1989, 21)

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.[17] Nedelsky questions the persisting liberal capitalist association between autonomy and property — a view according to which autonomy signifies individual freedom to possess private property. Instead, for her, "autonomy is a capacity that exists only in the context of social relations that support it and only in conjunction with the internal sense of being autonomous" (Nedelsky 1989, 25). This argument reflects James Tully's articulation of freedom in the context of collective autonomy of Indigenous peoples: "'freedom' is not the property of an independent subject (individuals, peoples, nations) outside of relationships of mutual dependency, but a quality of mutually constitutive dialogical relationships of interdependency among partners" (cited in Napoleon 2005, 41).

The notion of freedom as mutuality and recognition of interdependence goes to the core of indigenous world views, values, and social norms, and is reflected, for instance, in gift philosophies and practices discussed in the last section of this paper. Indigenous philosophies as a source and model of autonomy are perhaps most consciously employed by the Zapatistas, the indigenous movement in Chiapas sometimes referred to as "the first postmodern revolution.").[18] The Zapatista uprising has attracted worldwide interest particularly because of the visionary nature of their struggle — they have had courage to dream a radically alternative future and framework for their autonomy based on indigenous (Mayan) consciousness.).[19] It is particularly Indigenous women who call for an urgent restoration of values of indigenous philosophies "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" (Gutiérrez and Palomo 2000, 76).

June Nash, who has studied autonomy in Chiapas, discusses a conception of autonomy grounded on the notion of pluricultural coexistence. Characterized by egalitarianism, pluricultural coexistence implies that 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. Attempts at 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 supersede dominant, Western categories of autonomy. Nash argues that the notion of pluriethnic autonomy

> 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. (Nash 2001b, 246)

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 (Nash 2001b, 246). Egalitarian behaviour 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" (Nash 2001b, 246).

From the very beginning, Mayan women in Chiapas have formed a central constituent "in formulating the indigenous version of a multiethnic society with pluricultural autonomy" (Nash 2001b, 217). 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" (Nash 2001b, 180). This violence originates both from within and outside women's own communities.

Therefore, 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. Cherokee activist and scholar Andrea Smith argues that we cannot separate gender justice from Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, and we cannot decolonize our societies without addressing sexism in those societies. She 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. (A. Smith 2005, 124)

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 (A. Smith 2005). Indigenous women's organizations and groups are also looking for "new reference points with which to construct citizenship as Indigenous women" (Gutiérrez and Palomo 2000, 56). They are calling for an end to violence and to the reproduction of patriarchal, racist, and classist attitudes and behaviour.

Alternative Autonomies: The Gift Paradigm

The classic gift theories (Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Malinowski, Bourdieu, Sahlins and others) tend to view the gift as a mode of exchange imbued with obligations, countergifts, pay-backs, debts, forced reciprocity, and other mandatory acts. These considerations are often grounded on an assumption according to which exchange is the primary structuring principle of society. The exchange framework also characterizes Marcel Mauss's influential essay on the gift (*Essai sur le don, forme archaïque de l'échange*, first published in 1924). His central thesis was that the gift is constituted by three obligations: giving, receiving, and paying back. Existing within distinctive social rules, the gift is both constrained and interested even if it may first appear voluntary and disinterested.

Some feminist philosophers have questioned the conventional view of the gift as a form of exchange. Genevieve Vaughan suggests that there are two concurrent paradigms in contemporary society, those of the gift and exchange (Vaughan 1997). The gift paradigm is characterized by giving in order to sustain and satisfy the needs of others. It is other-oriented whereas exchange, a constrained double gift, is characterized by self-interest: "the receiver is expected to give back to the giver an equivalent of what she has received" (Vaughan 1997, 49). Exchange is the basis of the patriarchal capitalist economy that seeks to maximize the profit by commodification and exploitation of the gifts of nature, women, and other

subordinate groups. Gift giving, in contrast, is other-oriented as one gives in order to satisfy the needs of others. Therefore, it is based on values of care, cooperation, and creation of bonds. Therefore, the gift paradigm offers a viable alternative to the current economic model characterized by values of domination, individualism, and competition (Vaughan 2004, 17).[20]

For Vaughan, the primarily economic paradigms of the gift and exchange are also complementary and they coexist in all societies even though the exchange paradigm, manifested by patriarchal capitalism, has made the gift largely invisible and undervalued in modern Western societies. In other words, the gift paradigm is present everywhere in our lives, but it is made invisible but also inferior and unrealistic compared to exchange (Vaughan 1997). This process parallels the war against subsistence by capitalist market economy and the development paradigm and in fact is part of the same process of making alternative economic models and practices unworthy and less viable.

Vaughan argues that the current capitalist, patriarchal economic system is based on exchange. Although naturalized as the self-evident norm, exchange is built on the exploitation of "free" or unilateral gifts of the land, cultural traditions and knowledge, of care, and of cheap or free labour especially in the "Third World." Moreover, exchange economy creates artificial scarcity. Artificial scarcity is created in many ways, but particularly by wasting the wealth of the world in military spending (in 2004, the global military expenditure broke the limit of $1 trillion) and funneling gifts of many to the few.[21] While the market exchange requires scarcity, for example, to maintain the level of prices, the gift economy requires abundance. Artificially created scarcity thus makes practicing the gift economy difficult if not impossible (Vaughan 2004). As Susan F. Feiner points out: "By exalting scarcity and the impossibility of satisfying all wants, neoclassical economics masters separation" (Feiner 2003, 190). This separation is scarcity. In neoclassical economics, individuals are seen "as separated from all others, so there is no way to secure subsistence except through exchange" (Feiner 2003, 187). However, Feiner is critical of analyses that are too oppositional: "Some have interpreted the radical individualism at the core of *homo economicus* as a denial of social ties. Such a reading goes too far and misses the important point that, even when individuals are seen solely as agents exchanging in markets, such exchanges do constitute relationships" (Feiner 2003, 181). There is, however, a marked difference between exchange relationships and the gift relationships. The former is premised on the denial of interdependence and is achieved by privileging exchange (Feiner 2003, 187). The gift paradigm, on the other hand, is based on the recognition of reciprocal relationships and interdependence of not only human beings, but all living beings.

In contemporary society, the gift has been increasingly commodified and appropriated by consumer capitalism where it often takes a different meaning than in gift practices at the level of local communities where networks of social support are still in place to a lesser or greater extent. The notion of the gift as a commodity is particularly valuable (and profitable) for advertising and marketing. In the market-oriented materialist, capitalist society, the value of the gift is no longer measured by its capacity to establish and maintain social relationships or, in the case of gift giving to the land, the overall balance of the socio-cosmic order, but by its monetary value (see Christiansen-Ruffman 2004). This inflation and transformation of the meaning of gift has become the dominant mode of understanding of the gift in the minds of many people in contemporary modern society. Vaughan points out:

> In our [contemporary modern] society the gift paradigm seems to have many defects, even to be dysfunctional. I submit that its defects are all due to its forced coexistence with the exchange paradigm. For example, one consequence of the coexistence of gift giving and exchange is that the giftgivers do not see that what they are doing is valuable. The exchange paradigm seems to be the "human" way to behave. Getting to the top of the heap appears to be the way to survive and thrive in "reality." Actually we are creating the heap ourselves. Our validation of patriarchal competitive values only operates because we are inside the

> paradigm and therefore cannot see the exchange economy for what it is — an artificial parasite which derives its sustenance from the gift economy. (Vaughan 1998, 36)

As a response to the "New World Order" and resulting ecological and human crises, Vaughan has called for the validation and restoration of gift giving as a basic human principle. Besides part of the current economic model, hierarchy, domination, and violence are also elements of the dominant masculine identity. Vaughan argues that we are all born into the gift economy of mothering — nurturing mothers practice unilateral giving to the needs of their children (Vaughan 1997; see also Feiner 2003). However, and as many feminist scholars have argued, boys have to construct their male identities in opposition to their mothers (e.g., Chodorow 1978; Flax 1990). Boys are thus expected to disassociate themselves from the values and practices of nurturing, care, and gift giving. Like women's domestic labour and child rearing, giving and its values have also been rendered inferior in dominant Western societies (Vaughan 2004).

Feminist economists Nancy Folbre and Heidi Hartmann have also examined the shortcomings of the neoclassical economic theory and the rhetoric of self-interest. They show how, by emphasizing possessive individualism and free exchange between (adult male) individuals, Hobbes and Locke dismissed and ignored other types of relationships in their theories. In this way, they were able to assert the assumption "that men had no obligation to society" (Folbre and Hartmann 1988, 187). As Nancy Hartsock observes, the notion of "lack of obligation" was possible "only if family life, and specifically child rearing, were bracketed and excluded from analysis" (cited in Folbre and Hartmann 1988, 187). However, Hartsock continues, "one could begin to see the outline of a very different kind of community if one took the mother/infant relation rather than market exchange as the prototype of human interaction" (Hartsock 1983, 41-2). Furthermore, as the above examples of the market economy exploiting and being subsidized by various forms of subsistence and household production (mostly carried out by women), it is clear that market exchange is dependent on the gift economy — or as Vaughan puts it, the parasite upon the hidden gift giving (Vaughan 1980). Also Folbre notes: "Markets cannot function effectively outside the framework of families and communities built on values of love, obligation, and reciprocity" (Folbre 2001, vii).

While living in a market-based society makes us think of all bonds in terms of exchange, of debt and repayment, the gift paradigm is present in all of our lives. By foregrounding needs and their satisfaction, we can start seeing the bonds established through gift giving. Vaughan suggests that what is needed is to restore the principle of nurturing as the basis of humanity and to re-establish gift giving as the key social value. In other words, the values of nurturing and care need to be generalized to apply to both men and women (rather than using the gift paradigm to justify the exploitation of women and their domestic labour or subsistence production). Also institutions and general structures of society, often organized around the exchange paradigm and its values, can be reorganized to reflect the principles of gift giving, for example, by eliminating the rewards accompanying dominance and hierarchy (Vaughan 1997).

Indigenous women call for radical forms of autonomy that go beyond capitalism and models of the nation-state. Indigenous women are also often critical of the concept of self-determination, suggesting that indigenous conceptions of sovereignty and autonomy should not be confused with foreign concepts such as self-determination or European notions of sovereignty which consider it in terms of power, authority, and domination (see, for example, Washinawatok 1999). Nash points out:

> 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." (Nash 2001b, 120)

The term *autonomia* with its objective of attaining dignity is relevant to endeavours that seek to "regender" the processes and practices of indigenous self-determination — include Indigenous women both in terms of participation and their concerns and perspectives as well as in terms of transforming the patriarchal political and economic structures and relations of power.

For Indigenous women, sovereignty is practiced through everyday practices as well as through ceremonies. It is closely related to the gift paradigm that recognizes human interdependence with the surrounding ecosystems and the importance of reciprocity. Autonomy resembles the gift paradigm also in that it is "other-oriented." This other-orientation stems from an understanding that everybody is equal (including children and non-human entities). In such a society, one cannot order others and therefore, the ethical code of conduct requires a proper perception of others. V. F. Cordova explains: "The autonomous person, in this environment, is one who is aware of the needs of others as well as being aware of what the individual can do for the good of the group" (Cordova 2004, 178). Individual autonomy is thus relational as suggested by Nedelsky. Moreover, it is related to the well-being of the community while not implying that individual autonomy is subsumed or compromised by the needs of the community.

Sovereignty and autonomy are embedded and encoded in individual and collective responsibilities sometimes called the laws ("customary law") that lay the foundation of indigenous societies.[22] In fact, sovereignty is often understood and articulated as responsibilities. Monture-Angus, who points out the discrepancy of perceptions of the concept of sovereignty between the Canadian legal and political system and Aboriginal peoples, defines sovereignty as the right to be responsible. Defined this way, sovereignty is "a question of identity (both individual and collective) more than it is a question of an individualized property right" (Monture-Angus 1998, 36). Monture-Angus offers a Mohawk word *tewatatha:wi* ("we carry ourselves") to better reflect the understanding of sovereignty as collective and individual responsibility. This responsibility starts at an individual level with an understanding of who one is and how to carry oneself accordingly, and expands to the collective level (nations, clans, and families) (Monture-Angus 1998). Further, as Menominee human rights activist Ingrid Washinawatok notes, "these responsibilities are manifest through our ceremonies" (Washinawatok 1999, 23). She explains that in indigenous world views, "[s]acred is not separate from responsibility and daily existence. From the mundane to the momentous, sovereignty is an integral part of the foundation that anchors our culture, society and organizational structures" (Washinawatok 1999, 23). Therefore, she maintains, sovereignty extends beyond the political context and should not be fragmented or redefined into artificial categories.

Venne also discusses the centrality of the values and practices of responsibility and reciprocity in understanding the concept of sovereignty from the perspective of Indigenous peoples of North America. She writes: "When something is taken from the Creation thanks is given. … Under our Cree legal system, the laws direct that we are the caretakers of the lands, resources, forests, waters, all living and non-living beings" (Venne 1999, 27). The same sentiment can be found in the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace that teaches, among other things, the necessity of considering the impact of our actions today on the seven generations ahead and the importance of expressing thanks for what one has been given (Frichner 1999).

In indigenous land-based philosophies, giving is the means by which the social order is renewed and secured. Put another way, the notion of the gift is one of the structuring principles of many Indigenous peoples' philosophies.[23] Gift practices can be very different from one society and culture to another, varying from give-back and give-away ceremonies and rituals to collaborative labour and everyday economic resource distribution practices, to individual expressions of gratitude to the land as a recognition of its abundance. The purpose of giving in all of these societies, however, is shared: to acknowledge and renew the sense of kinship and coexistence with the world. The gift is, therefore, 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).[24] and verbal and physical gestures of gratitude (e.g., the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address).[25] 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 that Indigenous peoples have forged with their environments for centuries are a consequence of 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 an abstraction or idealization but stems from "specific experiences by a specific people living in a particular locale" (IUCN Inter-Commission Task Force on Indigenous Peoples 1997). 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.

It is important to note that 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 socioeconomic conditions and lived practices and as such, gives us a viable strategy and source for social change.

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. 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 implicit critique of patriarchal capitalism, offers us a strategy that foregrounds Indigenous women and their concerns yet it centers upon Indigenous peoples' world views and values.

The gift paradigm provides new ways and strategies to envision Indigenous peoples' autonomy in contemporary settings. I argue that the logic of the gift, already practiced in various communities (not limited to Indigenous peoples) in a multitude of forms, represents a form of relational autonomy par excellence. First, 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 (cf. Godbout 1998, 133). Second, the gift questions hierarchies present in many of the current models of autonomy and self-government. Third, 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.

What is more, indigenous gift philosophies are examples of alternative economic models and paradigms called for by Indigenous scholars and advocates. Indigenous gift-oriented world views 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 of relationships, not as a re-source — something taken for granted).[26]

Feminist theorists have also emphasized the interdependence rather than independence of individuals and argued for a new conception of ethics based on caring and relationships (e.g., Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982). The ethics of care seeks to switch the focus from abstract, generalized relations to concrete, particular relations. Its significance is related to the question of responsibility as a practice and an ability to respond to others rather than a preordained set of moral obligations. As Fiona Robinson contends, "the ethics of care undermines the individualistic moral logic that leads us to believe that rights and obligations are somehow disconnected from the networks of social relations in which actors — from individuals to states — are situated" (Robinson 1999, 32).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued for a more inclusive approach to the contemporary Indigenous peoples' self-determination processes, an approach that includes Indigenous women and their concerns and needs and that is more aware of the gendered processes of colonialism and the loss of autonomy of both indigenous communities and Indigenous women. Historically, the loss of collective autonomy of Indigenous peoples and individual autonomy of Indigenous women went hand in hand. This process was sparked by the capitalist market economy and its accompanying creation of dependency. Therefore, successful, viable Indigenous peoples' models and structures of autonomy require not only a substantial gender analysis and a critique of patriarchal relations of power but also a critique the logic of the global capitalist market economy often embedded in the current self-determination models and structures. As an alternative, the paper considers the gift paradigm based on Indigenous peoples' philosophies but also strongly informed by feminist political economy. I argue that the gift offers a transformative device to conceptualize Indigenous peoples' autonomy in a way that moves beyond global capitalist and patriarchal paradigms. This is not to suggest that trade or the market economy always erode or stand in opposition to subsistence or gift economies. As the many examples of this paper indicate, market and gift economies co-exist and that contemporary indigenous communities are often characterized by a strong mixed economy (formal and informal modes of production). What the theory of the gift economy argues is that while coexisting, the gift and exchange are based on different logics and values and therefore, have different emphases and objectives. We should not, then, conflate a logic followed by a certain set of values and guiding principles with actual individual behaviour.

Further, to consider the gift paradigm especially as it is manifest in indigenous systems of thought is not to propose that only Indigenous people appreciate or practice interdependence or reciprocity. The emphasis on Indigenous peoples' gift practices is to valorize and explain the logic that has largely remained invisible or misunderstood (as is the case with the classic gift theories). The centrality of the notions of interdependence and care in feminist theories of the gift and ethics of care illustrate very clearly that they are values found in every society but are overshadowed, disregarded, and pushed aside by global capitalist and patriarchal ideologies and practices.

The significance of the gift paradigm for Indigenous peoples' endeavours toward greater and viable autonomy is that while it is premised on Indigenous peoples' own philosophies and conceptions of the world, it simultaneously addresses the question of economy, without which political autonomy is hardly possible. It rejects the logic of profit and doing so, it removes the pressure of "development" from the remaining resources largely found in Indigenous peoples' territories. This does not mean that Indigenous people or communities should or could not engage in economic activities outside subsistence production. As long as the global economy is driven by the logic of profit, it is very difficult for indigenous societies to survive without any participation in it.[27] At the same time, however, there is an urgent need to recognize the existence of the paradigm of giving and sharing and start making it more visible, give more value to it, and in that way, enable it in spaces and frameworks previously characterized by exchange and the logic of profit. Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawai'ian) lawyer and indigenous rights activist Mililani Trask suggest that the gift paradigm represents a strategic partnership of Indigenous and other women against the crisis created by economic, corporate globalization which threatens not only the survival of Indigenous peoples but the entire world (Trask 2004).

Indigenous self-determination models that fail to consider the gendered effects of development schemes, the prevalent gender violence in contemporary indigenous communities, traditional and contemporary gender roles, as well as the importance of individual autonomy will ultimately fail to produce political or economic autonomy for Indigenous peoples. To ensure that Indigenous peoples' autonomous structures do not merely replicate existing colonial hierarchies and domination or impose patriarchal notions of "tradition," Indigenous women must lead and be in charge of the movement toward Indigenous peoples' autonomy. It is Indigenous women, after all, on whose knowledge and

activities the survival of indigenous societies has been largely dependent, both in pre-contact and contemporary times.

The logic of gift giving, as articulated both in indigenous world views and philosophies and the feminist gift economy, form the basis of a paradigm shift that simultaneously challenges and offers an alternative to the values and logic of exchange. Rooted in an understanding of relational autonomy, the logic of the gift "recast[s] the human activities of production, distribution, and consumption as relations of sharing rather than as relations of exchange," thus reflecting calls for "a new feminist understanding of economics" (Feiner 2003, 180). A new feminist understanding of economics also foregrounds and recognizes women's, including Indigenous women's contributions, to the economy and therefore, redefines and expands the notion of economic activity to include subsistence and other non-wage production and labour.

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NOTES

1. A good example of this in Canada is the debate on Aboriginal rights of the Constitution Act versus the rights of Aboriginal women under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (see, for example, Moss 1990; Krosenbrink-Gelissen 1991; Nahanee 1993; Green 2000; 2001; 2003).
2. Monture notes how she herself has been complicit in omitting gender analysis and how she recently came to realize this, in discussion with others, while on a speaking tour for her most recent book.
3. The Declaration is available on the website of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html
4. The joint press release can be found in English, Saami and Finnish at http://www.saamicouncil.net.
5. For an account of the somewhat peculiar history of the establishment of reservations in Costa Rica, see Karen Stocker (2005). Historically, Costa Rica claimed that there were no Indigenous peoples within its territory; that they had become extinct four centuries ago during the colonial period. However, in 1977 this official rhetoric was radically changed by a process that led to the creation of twenty-three indigenous reservations. One of these reservations was in Guanacaste, the northernmost province of the country, which is considered Choroteca territory in its entirety. Only a small area, however, was designated as the Choroteca reservation, resulting in a complex situation where the inhabitants became the prime targets of place-based racism while Choroteca living outside the demarcated area, but who share the same cultural heritage, were exempted from the stigmatized Indian identity in a country that seeks to represent itself through whiteness (Stocker 2005).
6. These include the loss of "Indian Status" if a Native woman married a non-Native man (this section of the Act was amended in 1985 but it still negatively affects the offspring of such couples), the loss of matrimonial property rights (expected to be amended in 2007), and the exclusion from leadership due to the male orientation of tribal councils established under the Indian Act (see, for example, Green 2001; Gehl 2000; Moss 1990; Bourassa, McNabb and Hampton 2005; Silman 1987; Voyageur 1996; Lawrence 2004; Nahanee 1993).
7. This is one of the main concerns of the UN Human Rights Committee with regard to the United States' Native policies. In its recent report, the Committee denounces the United States for its systematic negation and annihilation of Indigenous peoples' rights (Thomas 2006).
8. For a comparative analysis of the United States' and Canada's reserve/reservation systems see, for example, (St. Germain 2005).
9. Chapter 1, Section 1, of the Finnish Saami Parliament Act of 1995 accords to the Saami people limited autonomy with regard to their language and culture.

10. The Saami Homeland refers to a geographical and legal demarcation recognized in the Finnish Constitution and the Saami Act of 1995. It covers approximately 35,000 square kilometers and consists of the northernmost municipalities in Finland.

11. Before the 2005 elections, the percentage of women representatives was as low as twelve. Similar attempts at establishing gender parity in public governance models can be found, for example, in Nunavut, where it was debated for almost a decade before the efforts were overturned (see, for example, Minor 2002).

12. June Nash also argues that "the marginalized subsistence and survival activities both in developed economies and in the new frontiers of capitalist penetration have become a central arena for the development of consciousness and action based on the right to live in the present crisis of capitalism" (Nash 2001a, 23).

13. Moreover, the value of weaving seemed to depend on the price of wool. At the time, the global wool market was volatile and Diné wool sold for 50-70 percent less than other wool produced in the United States. High duties protected wool growers who produced mainly class I and II quality wool for clothing. Diné wool came from *churros* and was classified as carpet grade (class III). After the 1850s, the power looms transformed carpet manufacturing and there was not enough carpet grade wool produced domestically. M'Closkey writes: "Diné growers produced less than 5 percent of the more than 100 million pounds necessary to service the carpet industry annually. By 1890 the well-organized and powerful carpet manufacturers had successfully lobbied Congress to allow Class III wools into the country duty-free or with a small *ad valorem*. …Over a four-year period, nearly half a billion pounds of carpet-quality wool was imported into the United States. Is it a coincidence that the Navajo blanket was transformed into a rug during that decade? After 1898 the tariff was reinstated, exempting Class III wools valued at less than 13 cents per pound" (M'Closkey 2004, 119).

14. Since Mexico joined the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the global capitalist economy has increasingly made inroads to the Juchitán society and matriarchal structures are being undermined (Bennholdt-Thomsen 2006).

15. This is most tragically demonstrated in the story of the Hopi woman, Private Lori Piestewa who was the first American servicewoman killed in the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003 (see Flannery and Reid 2003; Gonzales 2004; Kuokkanen forthcoming).

16. For example, a brochure titled "Sovereign Women Strengthen Sovereign Nations" by Sacred Circle, the US-based National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women explains the relationship between the sovereignty of Native women and the sovereignty of Native nations. It also maintains that, "Framing the issue of violence against Native women as an issue of sovereignty has proven to be an effective strategy for educating tribal-elected and traditional leadership about the inherent rights of Native women" (Sacred Circle n.d.).

17. Nedelsky further contends that there is a need for a conception of autonomy from a feminist perspective. In her view, the dominant conception of autonomy informed by liberal individualism is inconsistent with and inadequate to feminist theory and methodology.

18. One has to remain wary, however, of idealizing the Zapatista movement the way it has been done by many nostalgic for revolution but who ignore the material conditions and the structural positions of people within broader relations of power. It may also be at odds with alternative conceptions of transformation and autonomy. As Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies succinctly put it, "the old concept of revolution, that is, the mostly sudden, violent overthrow of state power and of social relations, does not fit our understanding of subsistence orientation" (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 22).

19. For more on Zapatista women and the "Revolutionary Women's Laws," see (Belausteguigoitia 2005).

20. For an extensive analysis of the gift economy as a practice of other-orientation based on the principle and values of mothering, see (Vaughan 1997; 2002; 2004). The gift economy and paradigm is further elaborated by the International Feminist Network for the Gift Economy established in 2001 and consisting of feminist scholars, Indigenous women, and social justice activists.

21. 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 (Shiva 1993b, 233).

22. The term "customary law" has been critiqued by many scholars (e.g., Schouls 2003; Cunneen and Schwartz 2005; Woodman n.d.; Napoleon 2006). Val Napoleon argues that, "From the perspective of positivist theory, custom is simple law for simple societies. In contrast, centralized legal systems comprise a highly evolved, multi-tiered complexity — and are therefore superior." Instead of examining the various practices of indigenous customary law, she calls for an

investigation of "the intellectual or reasoning processes that are necessary for the collaborative analysis and practice of law, management of conflict, and governance generally" (Napoleon 2006, 7).

23. For a more detailed discussion of the gift philosophy and the logic of the gift in the context of indigenous communities, see (Kuokkanen 2006).

24. The potlatch is one of the most extensively studied indigenous gift institutions of all time (see, for example, M. Anderson and Halpin 2000; Boas 1895; Clutesi 1969; Drucker and Heizer 1967; Jonaitis 1991). For Saami *sieidi* giving practices, see (Kuokkanen 2006).

25. See, for example, Kanatiiosh 2000).

26. It is necessary, however, to consider the gift in a critical light of reductionist, colonial, and patriarchal biases of previous analyses particularly in the field of anthropology. Many classic gift analyses focus solely on the past and "archaic societies" or do not foreground indigenous realities and premises which differ from contemporary gift practices of dominant society (for critiques of classic gift theories, see Kuokkanen 2004; 2005; 2006; Kailo 2006).

27. There are several examples of how Indigenous people's participation in the market economy may contribute to the concurrently existing gift paradigm or even enable some autonomy from the market (e.g., Rosier 2001; Arnold 2004).

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Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition

The Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition was created in January 1998 following the designation of globalization and the human condition as a strategic area of research by the Senate of McMaster University. Subsequently, it was approved as an official research center by the University Planning Committee. The Institute brings together a group of approximately 30 scholars from both the social sciences and humanities. Its mandate includes the following responsibilities:

- a facilitator of research and interdisciplinary discussion with the view to building an intellectual community focused on globalization issues.
- a centre for dialogue between the university and the community on globalization issues
- a promoter and administrator of new graduate programming

In January 2002, the Institute also became the host for a Major Collaborative Research Initiatives Project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada where a group of over 40 researchers from across Canada and abroad are examining the relationships between globalization and autonomy.

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Objectives:

- To foster dialogue and awareness of research among scholars at McMaster and elsewhere whose work focuses upon globalization, its impact on economic, social, political and cultural relations, and the response of individuals, groups and societies to these impacts. Given the complexity of the globalization phenomenon and the diverse reactions to it, it is helpful to focus upon these issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.
- To assist scholars at McMaster and elsewhere to clarify and refine their research on globalization in preparation for eventual publication.

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The Politics of Form and Alternative Autonomies: Indigenous Women, Subsistence Economies and the Gift Paradigm

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