Re-constructing the Other in Post-colonial International Relations

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Abstract

Modern political economic discourse has been about othering. We have created binaries civilised/savage, developed/undeveloped as ways to understand our place and that of the multitude of others. European imperialism has successfully carved up and marginalised societies of others in the international system. This has resulted in the creation of global alliances among the marginalised such that exclusion and othering have taken new forms and new discourses.

Utilizing two broad examples this paper explores some of the effects of othering. The first example: the emergence and growth of South-South cooperation whereby the mass of “others” formed strategic alliances to offset the dominance of developed countries. In this sense, to be white/European and developed has become the “other”. The second example: the internationalisation of indigenism. Indigenous peoples around the globe have internationalised their marginalisation to create alliances with each other in defence of their treaty, lands and human rights. The historical othering of Indigenous peoples has created a space for the Indigenous others to redefine their relationships within the state and between states.

There is a reimagining of the marginalised status of developing countries and indigenous peoples and a reconstruction of the other such that the developing self is the core and the developed/settler other is pejorative. These developments and noticeable expansion over the last decade are significant to the study of international relations and international political economy, if we are to shed the Euro-centric biases of the fields.

Introduction

If we think about the core concerns of International relations, that of war and peace among states, the processes and mechanisms of globalisation and the like, it is fundamentally about othering. We understand and interpret our interactions within the global system in terms of our relation to others. If international relations continues to be concerned with relationships among states and other actors, then it should take othering and frames of otherness seriously. International conflicts are always about the self and other, however defined – nation, religion, ethnicity etc. The modern world system is built around framings of the other – the civilised self versus the savage other, the religious/spiritual self versus the pagan/superstitious other, the industrial self versus the undeveloped other. The discourse in international political economy is built around
defining the self against the other. What was left almost silent or at least marginalised historically in the industrial, developed North, is that much of the othering is fundamentally wrapped up in our perceptions and construction of gender, race, ethnicity, culture and notions of racial and cultural superiority and inferiority.

Identity markers then become packaged in an ideological bow, with economic and politically deterministic assumptions and world systems that negotiates the inclusion and exclusion of the other, based on how much they were willing to reflect the values and accept the evangelical agendas of the modernised self. The marginalisation and denigration of whole populations of mostly of non-Europeans in what is now called the third and fourth worlds has been an incredibly successful process of othering.

In the international arena, developed countries maintain the mechanisms and processes of inclusion/exclusion and othering. Imperial and colonial framings of the other and the post colonial criticisms of such framings has had the effect of creating victims or perceived victims of modern world history and the modern world system. This has resulted in the internalisation of a kind of victimhood in the international relations of the underdeveloped/post colonial other, in relation to the industrial/colonising self. The modern global system created marginalisation and exclusion which is experienced at the national level, but which has created global alliances among the marginalised such that exclusion and othering has taken on new forms.

Utilising a Foucaultian view of power, as always being present but based on different rationalities, using different techniques and systems, I accept that we can’t get away from power relationships themselves, however, “emancipation from particular systems of power, or from the effects of the employment of particular techniques of power, is another matter entirely. Limited, and specific, emancipations might well be regarded as desirable in some cases” (Hindess, 1996: 152). Emancipation from Western
power structures is seen as desirable to large sections of the world community. Making use of two broad cases, this paper explores the re-imaging and re-construction of the other in international politics. The first case is the emergence and growth of South-South cooperation. In the post-colonial period, the masses of others formed strategic alliances to offset the dominance of developed countries. In this sense, to be white/European and developed has become the “other”. There is a reimagining of the marginalised status of developing countries and a reconstruction of the other such that the developing self is the core and the developed other is pejorative. As Braveboy-Wagner points out:

One of the major aims of the global south nations has been to challenge the perceived inequality of the international status quo, achieve visibility for their concerns, and reduce their economic and political dependence on the north. To attain these ends, they have had to establish channels for the promotion of alternative norms and strategies (Braveboy-Wagner, 2009: 13).

With the emergence of a fourth world discourse in settler colonies, indigenous peoples around the globe have internationalised their marginalisation to create alliances with each other in defence of their land and human rights. This second case highlights how the historical othering of indigenous peoples in settler colonies have created a space for the indigenous others to redefine their relationships within the nation-state and between states; linking indigenous peoples in developed and developing countries. This is especially significant because International Relations “has been almost completely silent on Indigenous peoples, their diplomacies, and the distinctly non-Western cosmologies that underwrite and enable them” (Beier, 2009: 11).

I make use of the concepts of the third and forth worlds very loosely, while recognising the differences between the states so identified. I use the concept of the third world to refer to connections being made by the formerly colonised peoples of Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. These countries make up the global south,
and as a group are at the bottom of the pyramid in international political economy. Enloe argues:

No individual or social group finds themselves on the ‘margins’ of any web of relationships ... without some other individual or group having accumulated enough power to create the ‘centre’ somewhere else. ... It is harder for those at the alleged centre to hear the hopes, fears and explanations of those on the margins, not because of physical distance ... but because it takes resources and access to be ‘heard’ when and where it matters (Enloe, 1996: 186).

As a group and individually, countries in the global south were silenced through the economic and political imperialism of the North, that is, the developed countries of Europe, North America and Oceania. The fourth world category is meant to describe those societies where colonisation “took the form of outright conquest and the attempt to absorb the people and resources ... into states created as extension of empires populated with a majority of European descendents” (Wilmer, 2009: 193).

This paper is no way attempts to provide a comprehensive account of either South-South cooperative activities or indigenous globalism. The two examples discussed here are intended to highlight that there are consequences as well as opportunities of othering and that those marginalised have agency and relative power to reorder how we see them within the international system. In International Relations discourse, this dialectic is important for a better sense of the global arena. Othering has allowed for the development of what has been called “collective self-reliance,” within the global south and fostering “unity in diversity” among Indigenous peoples. As a result, issue networks have become quite common linking informal social networks, IGOs and NGOs, state actors and individuals. Thanks to the mechanisms of globalisation, transnationalism has become the norm, even as states cling to their national sovereignty.
The “Other” in International Relations

In terms of socialisation and representation in the international system, the other is measured against presumed “universally” accepted norms. The norm is presented as the industrial North, which masks the reality that these populations account for a minority view of the world. “Such representational habits and knowledge systems are prone to isolating themselves in order to maintain their belief in universality” (Constantinou, et al, 2008: 6). Further, Beier argues that the reproduction of these knowledge systems serves to “invalidate” and “repudiate” alternative, non-Western ways of knowing and being (Beier, 2009: 16). The North sees as its right, to interfere in the personal, political, social and economic national life of others, often disregarding the basic tenets of the United Nations Charter, particularly if it affects their economic and resource needs.

Any importance attached to developing countries by the North, is understood insofar as it provides riches to their colonial and post-colonial masters. Their social development was left to chance in many instances. However, in some countries, a basic level of economic development was supported for efficiency and long-term sustainability of resource access. This allows for the persistent reification, devaluing and revaluing of other cultures. The global south and indigenous peoples have been marginalised both spatially and linguistically.

The subaltern cannot effectively communicate his or her life story and predicament. S/he is constantly represented and communicated – even when this is done positively – through dominant structures and forms of communication that are not her own. The words of the subaltern thus become weak, rough, illiterate, inaudible, and always need to be interpreted and put in a form that is effective and persuasive within the dominant regimes of representation and argumentation (Constantinou, et al, 2008: 10).

Resistance to these representations, hierarchies and knowledge systems can be traced alongside the internationalisation of these ideas. However, these movements have not always been organised. In addition, marginalised people have not always had a
receptive venue in which to voice their concerns. This has affected North-South relations and likewise Settler-Indigenous relations.

According to Nassau Adams, the demise of North-South relations occurred in the aftermath of the 1980s debt crisis. He argued that the debt strategy employed by the North, which sought to protect their banks against defaults from developing countries, served to cripple the South and severely slow their economic development. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was unleashed not as a “provider of liquidity (the function that it was originally established to perform)” but as a “bailiff and policeman acting on behalf of the creditors. In this capacity the role of the Fund was to extract the maximum possible debt service payments from debtor countries, with little regard to the effect that this would have on their economies” (Adams, 1993: 154). The accompanying austerity measures imposed on developing countries put their “economies in reverse gear, sending them reeling in a downward spiral towards economic depression” (Adams, 1993: 154).

The debt strategy of overkill Nassau claims was to teach the developing countries a lesson, to put them in their place, to so frighten and weaken them and make them so obviously dependent on the favours and subject to the dictates of the industrial North, that it would be a long, long time before they would ever again have the effrontery to attempt to confront the North with demands for a restructuring of the international economic order (Adams, 1993: 170).

Moreover, Adams argued that the trauma of debt servicing left developing countries “drained and exhausted, bereft of any will to confront and to challenge” (Adams, 1993: 170). But they continued to challenge, activists, if not governments began to organise even more fiercely. Resource rich developing countries continued to seek out new partnerships with each other, beyond competing for favour from the North. The shake-up (although not demise) of North-South relations encouraged further South-South cooperation.
Settler – Indigenous relations, based as it is in the near extinction of one for the economic benefit of the other, has always been unpleasant and confrontational. In the 19th century Indigenous people sought recourse in the international arena for the protection of their treaty rights as well as their human rights. “Indigenous representatives traveled to Britain to present their grievances to King George, but were denied an audience with the king and told that their concerns fell within the ‘domestic jurisdiction’ of the settler states” (Wilmer, 2009: 187). Settlement states have been reluctant to negotiate with indigenous peoples who insist on being treated as equal sovereigns at the table. Indigenous peoples have refused to substitute their various ways of knowing and that has put them at odds with European representation ideations. An indigenous Salvadorian “captured the way in which language was used to devalue and deny indigenous culture: ‘They call our art ... handicraft; our language ... dialect; our religion ... superstition, and our culture ... tradition ... We are here to challenge this ... to transform historical power ... to establish our own autonomy’” (Gabriel, 1994: 5).

Activists in the global south and indigenous activists are actively engaged, formally and informally, directly and indirectly, in de-centring and disturbing the imposed hegemony of the North. “They call for ‘discursive reciprocity,’ that is, for non-Western versions of historical experience and ‘ways of knowing’ to be respected on equal footing with Western versions of history and knowledge systems” (Wilmer, 2009: 195).

South –South Relations: Competition, Cooperation, Collaboration

As already mentioned, the international system and the organisations that facilitate the international political economy are hierarchical structures dominated by the North, with the participation of the South as unequal partners. “In this respect, then, certain forms of multilateralism have been employed by the global south as a strategy to counter
the adverse effects of hierarchy, hegemony, inequality, and exclusion” (Braveboy-Wagner, 2009: 7).

During the colonial period Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean were established as primary export economies. They exported their goods to Europe and North America and in turn imported manufactured goods. This is still largely the case, however a few of these former colonies, by the 1970s had industrialised and are now exporting manufactured goods to developed countries. This Seidman argues, “marked a shift in global possibilities” (Seidman, 1993: 176). As Aguilar point out:

The fragmentation of the previous political system provoked a dispersion of power towards regions containing emerging economies. These emerging economies have two new and important features in the global system. On the one hand they have significant reserves of strategic resources, especially energy and food. On the other hand, they show high economic growth rates, new investment partnerships, large growing domestic markets, greater fiscal and macroeconomic stability, lower debt burden and social programs (Aguilar, 2010).

There are wide differentiations among developing countries, not only in terms of size but also in terms of power and economic influence. India, Brazil and South Africa for instance, are big powers on the world stage. Brazil’s economy is listed as 10th in the world (2006-2007). These countries are also economic competitors and therefore do not always agree on policy proposals in international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or the UN. As regional leaders, what they do matters to other developing countries. Similarly, the position of China is important. China is classified as a developing economy, but it is a world power, now the 3rd largest economy in the world and is the only developing country with veto power in the UN Security Council. However “China shares with the third world many traits, including relative economic underdevelopment and the experience of imperialism. For these reasons, China has long played a highly supportive leadership role in the third world” (Braveboy-Wagner, 2009: 2).
In addition, countries in the developing world received formal political independence at different times. While the bulk of the post-colonial literatures focuses on the period after the Second World War, decolonisation started long before that in the Americas.

Latin American nations obtained their independence at least 125 years before the African and Asian states, and as a group, the Latin American nations enjoy a higher per capita income than the African and Asian LDCs. Nevertheless, the Latin Americans also have been subjected to a dependency relationship at least as long as the Asians and Africans (Rosenbaum and Tyler, 1975: 245).

In 1975, Rosenbaum and Tyler observed that the “sense of unity” shared by less developed countries (LDCs) in dealing with the economic dominance of the North, had “not been sufficient to stimulate a great deal of commitment to cooperative economic policies” (Rosenbaum and Tyler, 1975: 246). The tides have turned on this as South-South cooperation is on the rise especially in terms of trade and economic investment. Social interactions have also increased in terms of tourism, educational exchanges and transnational NGOs.

Globally and regionally, South-South organisations emerged in the 1960s to provide a voice and act as a collective counterweight to Western interests. There are two broad global south organisations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77. The Group of 77 formed in 1964, “provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues … and promote South-South cooperation for development” (www.g77.org). G77 has had mixed success in their economic lobbying, but the expansion of the group from the original 77 to 131 members is an indication that it remains relevant to the aspirations of the South. Likewise, the end of the Cold War and the break up of the Soviet Bloc did not translate to the discontinuation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) “which was established primarily to foster third
world identity and solidarity through the articulation of common views and aspirations” (Braveboy-Wagner, 2009: 13) within the context of Cold War politics. The movement is still vibrant, with Fiji applying to and recently being accepted, as it’s newest member in January 2011.

Beyond these two global organisations, there is a growing list of regional and subregional arrangements to promote development and foster South-South cooperation. In Africa, the African Union, the 2002 successor to the Organisation of African Unity, adopted a New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which among other things is to promote peace and consolidate democracy within the regime as well as promote “sound economic management and people-centred development” (UN Secretary General, 2003: 6). In Asia, we see the development of micro-regional cooperation:

- to develop contiguous territories of two or more developing countries. This allows participating countries to reap the economic benefits of cooperation while sidestepping political issues that might obstruct efforts of broader scope. An example is the Tumen River Area Development, which covers an economically depressed area along the borders of China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation (UN Secretary General, 2003: 7).

In Latin America, the five member Andean Community is recognised as being “one of the most advanced of all South-South cooperation efforts … with its joint parliament, common foreign policy, Council of Ministers and Court of Justice” (UN Secretary General, 2003: 7). They also have agreements on intellectual property rights, human rights and peace and security charters. There are also provisions for the free movement of people within the region. In the Caribbean, Cuba has forged a closer relationship with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM has been working towards enhanced regional integration and their South and Central American neighbours have also pledged closer relations over the last decade.
**Africa Subregional groups**
The African Union  
Southern African Development Community  
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)  
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

**Asian Subregional groups:**
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)  
South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC)  
The Bangkok Agreement

**Latin America and the Caribbean subregional groups:**
Latin American Integration Association (LAIA/ALIDA), the 1980 successor to the Latin America Free Trade Association  
The Andean Community  
The Southern Cone Common Market (MERCUSOR)  
The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

In addition to forming regional organisation, developing countries, especially larger countries like India, China and Brazil are providing technical assistance as well as supporting a variety of development programs and investment projects in other developing countries. China has reduced or cancelled debt from some of the least developed countries in Africa. It established a South-South Cooperation Demonstration Base in Fuzhou in the 2000s. Brazil consults with its neighbours in the region before planning its development outreach programs and budget. Notably, Brazil’s foreign policy entails the promotion of regional integration, multilateralism and South-South cooperation (John de Sousa, 2008). Cuba has provided medical expertise to many developing countries both within and outside of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Cuba’s medical diplomacy in the South is particularly interesting because of its relatively small size to say nothing of the additional stresses on the economy due to the US embargo. Cuba has been a long time contributor to South-South international development. Cuba has trained African (as well as Latin American and Caribbean)
doctors in Cuba and has been providing health programmes in the South for more than 40 years. “Cuba’s international contribution to the capacity building of health workers is on a scale exceeding that of all members of the G8 group of leading advanced countries combined” (Blunden, 2008: 2). The Cuban model is an example of social medicine rather than high tech diagnostics, one that many financially strapped developing countries appreciate. As Blunden points out, “the Cuban approach is based on a holistic concept of health, as a product not just of individual bio-physiology but of the whole social and economic environment. Health ... includes adequate housing, nutrition, sanitation and education. The emphasis is on prevention rather than cure” (Blunden, 2008: 3).

Developing countries need holistic solutions that are appropriate, low cost and sustainable. South-South cooperation, networking and exchange are seen as most beneficial in this regard.

There are potentially no issue areas that aren’t being addressed by South-South cooperative arrangements either in principle or in practice. Even in the area of refugee resettlement, the South has stepped up. Despite the poverty experienced in these countries – Benin, Burkina-Faso, Brazil and Chile, as of 2002 offered refugees from other developing countries permanent resettlement in their countries. New ways of thinking and new way of operating are clearly emerging in the South. The India-Brazil- South Africa (IBSA) Initiative was created in 2003 as a body for South-South Cooperation. The Tripartite forum not only deals with development issues of the 3 countries, it concerns itself with social development in less developed countries as well. The IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund) was launched in 2004 and serves as the development arm of IBSA. Administered by the UNDP, the fund is a dedicated trust by these three governments for South-South cooperation, they decide on the projects and UNDP coordinates the implementation, free of charge.
Because South-South cooperation is good news for the global south, it is easy to get carried away and forget the seedy side of the economic game. The activities and success of OPEC during the 1970s, threatened the international economy, including those of non-oil producing developing countries. “The LDCs have been conditioned to believe that economic imperialism is something practiced exclusively by the industrialised nations” (Rosenbaum and Tyler, 1975: 251). This was an intriguing new development and non-oil producing developing countries who were negatively affected by OPEC actions did not publically complain about the negative effects of those actions. However, the economic activism of India and China in particular, has created tensions within some developing countries who are rightly voicing their concerns about neo-colonialism through land and resource grabs and foreign direct investments. China’s engagement with Africa of course is not new, it goes back centuries, but the circumstances now are very different as Chinese commercial interests and resource needs dominate the relationship.

Where does the future lie for South-South relations? Trade and economic interests dominate current relations, with not many alliances based on political ideology. The psychological connection among developing countries against Euro-dominance was enough to drive South-South engagements, but will it sustain them? Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez, as part of his anti-imperialism rhetoric has used South-South events to articulate his call for an international socialism among developing countries. Whatever the ism employed, there is some agreement that South-South relations need to move beyond economic relations to “broader collective action and mobilization based on new forms of social and political organization” (Aguilar, 2010). It is only through ideological restructuring that the Euro-logic of the international system can be disrupted.
Indigenous Globalism: beyond the politics of embarrassment

Whereas the global south confronts the North as equal partners, at least in the framework of decolonised statehood; indigenous peoples are still politically colonised. “They are nations without states in a world wholly carved up by and among states” (Wilmer, 2009: 193). For our purposes here, the working definition of Indigenous people are the “descendants of the original inhabitants of a geographical region prior to colonization who have maintained some or all of their linguistic, cultural and organizational characteristics. In addition, self-identification is a fundamental criterion to determine who is considered indigenous” (Deruytterre, 1997: 2).

During the 1960s and 1970s it was argued “that the division between international and domestic politics was breaking down and that, as a consequence, not only were the boundaries separating states dissolving, but also, that international politics was becoming domesticated in the process” (Little, 1996: 66). While international politics become domesticated, domestic politics were being coming internationalised, this was fed by post war interdependence and transnationalism. Pluralists in International Relations argued that the era of treating IR as strictly between governments had passed. “Instead, it had to be accepted that world politics involved transactions among a kaleidoscopic range of actors” (Little, 1996: 75). The globalisation of indigenous peoples proved this point as they took to the international fora as communities, as informal networks, as NGOs and as treaty bands.

The establishment of the nation-state and the presumption of political sovereignty “rests on the obligation of its subjects to obey, so that the holder of such power appears to have both the capacity and the right to call on their obedience” (Hindess, 1996: 138). Indigenous peoples challenge this obedience because the very foundation of the state, erected out of colonialism, exploitation and invasion is seen as illegitimate. Indigenous
peoples worldwide have been demanding their rights to self-determination, their right to social, political and economic participation, their territorial rights and environmental stewardship rights at home and over the last 4 decades have increasingly internationalised those demands. Indigenous activists and organisations began to network and link up with their counterparts in other countries. These networks have made use of their people power as well as new technologies and formats available to them including film making, the internet and new media. The networking and collaboration has also allowed indigenous people to scale “up their skill-set and tactical repertoire in the process” (Lackenbauer and Cooper, 2007: 100).

Indigenous internationalism, although not always “visible” in mainstream international politics, was a natural progression in addressing issues generated from European conquest and imperialism. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, “long before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, for example, sophisticated diplomacies and vibrant systems of trade relations linked the continents’ many peoples in a distinctly non-Western but wholly functioning inter-national system” (Beier, 2007: 123). European colonialism “obscured and profoundly damaged” those systems and “in so doing, not only has much of the diversity of human experience of encountering and engaging the other been lost or rendered archaic, but a distinct set of human traditions for practicing what scholars call ‘international relations’ has been cast aside” (De Costa, 2009: 61).

Indigenous movements collaborate and learn from each other and from other social justice movements. The indigenous movements in Australia for example, learned from the pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey in the 1930s and the US civil rights movement in the 1960s. Nation-states have not been receptive to indigenous claims and this has made their internationalism necessary in shaming individual countries on the international stage to highlight their national grievances.
The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), which was established in July 2000, held its first session in 2002, putting Indigenous issues at a level of attention offered before only to nation-states. This is significant because the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly territorial rights and self-determination have always been presented by nation-states as a threat to individual state sovereignty. “Interstate diplomacies make the sovereignty of sovereignty presentable by presenting its social alternatives as either prepolitical, subpolitical, or antipolitical” (Franke, 2009: 50). However, indigenous movements very rarely, demand cession or full independence from their state. Indigenism does not constitute ethno-nationalist aspirations (Niezen, 2003), but nation-states, particularly settler states, have consistently viewed indigenous demands as a destabilising threat to state sovereignty.

It is no surprise then, that the four developed settler states – Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, voted against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted in September 2007. Although it is not legally binding, is an important customary law so it is significant that they were the only countries to vote against it (11 countries abstained). The governments of the four settler states have since reconsidered their positions, after facing public pressure at home and abroad. The adoption of the Declaration recognises Indigenous peoples “as right-bearing collectives unlike other groups, such as refugees, minorities, women and children who are thought to have only individual rights within the framework of the state” (Escarcega, 2010: 3).

Indigenous place at the international table and the adoption of the declaration has been a long time coming. In the 1920s Indigenous leaders unsuccessful tried to get their grievances heard at the League of Nations. They were pushed back to the state level; the League did not have the mechanism to handle their claims. As Niezen has pointed out, with the creation of the United Nation, a more favourable international environment
emerged. The UN structure ushered in self-determination and human rights instruments including a Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Covenants on social, cultural, economic and political rights. These circumstances created an environment in which indigenous peoples could press for their recognition and self-determination. In the 1950s, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with its limited mandate; was the first inter-governmental organisation to address indigenous issues.

Networking and coordination among indigenous organisations became “normalised” after the 1977 International NGO Conference on Discrimination in the Americas. A few years later, in 1982, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) was established at the UN. The working group and now the Permanent Forum, brings together a multitude of indigenous NGOs from all over the world. Furthermore, “transnational networks are also built into indigenous organisations themselves” (Morgan, 2007: 277). One such transitional indigenous organisation is the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, founded in 1992, as a voice for indigenous peoples affected by deforestation. The Alliance has clear objectives that are transnational in their advocacy.

The objectives of the Alliance are to:
• Promote full recognition of the rights and territories of indigenous and tribal peoples;
• Promote the development of indigenous and tribal peoples and their participation in decision and policy making;
• Establish effective networks between indigenous peoples at regional and international levels;
• Exchange information and experiences to empower Alliance members to advocate for the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, enabling them to impact upon processes falling within the complex UN system, and the policies and decision-making of development agencies and multi-lateral development banks;
• Promote worldwide solidarity between indigenous and tribal peoples (International Alliance, 1992).

Working within an international movement allows a certain level of protection against subversive state activities to destabilise local indigenous organisations. For
instance, the short-lived Red Power/American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1970s in the United States. The US government, through the FBI,

used many abusive tactics including wiretaps of phone conversations, falsifying and withholding key documents during court trials of AIM leaders, placing informants and infiltrators within the movement, as well as murdering those involved and/or families. These activities eliminated the key leaders of the movement – thus, the organisation and leadership necessary for the national-level actions so key to the movement were essentially cut off (Wilkes, 2006: 520).

In 1992, to mark the quincentenary of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, the 500 Years of Resistance Campaign was celebrated in various fashion in Latin America. The campaign was intended to:

Promote collective and widespread reflection about what was done by Europe to our continent and the consequences to our peoples. The official history of the conquest has always been presented from the point of view of the colonisers who try to turn the conquerors into heroes. This view leads us to view ourselves as the slave master did and consequently is meant to prevent us from understanding ourselves or other peoples (Operative Secretary as quoted in Gabriel, 1994: 3-4).

Having representation from all over the Americas involved in this resistance campaign ensured that the complexities and the nuances of the colonial experience in the region were recognised, including the inclusion of black history and black resistance. This is important to note because normally “Aboriginal activism against settler domination takes place without people of color as allies” (Lawrence and Dua, 2005: 122).

Campaign pamphlets were designed to reclaim the history of the indigenous peoples of the region, retelling the “official” version of the historical encounter. For example: “‘It was an encounter between two worlds’, which became ‘It was an imposition’, and ‘We brought civilisation and Christianity’, which became ‘they brought a military, political, cultural and religious invasion by sword and cross’” (Gabriel, 1994: 4).

The resistance campaign and the history reclamation process was about more than a retelling of a story, it was about having a right, a language and a voice in which to resist the “official” versions of conquest. The process of reclamation was also “used to
highlight and promote cultural traditions dating back over 500 years as well as to celebrate forgotten or neglected forms of resistance” (Gabriel, 1994: 5). The campaign, the encounters, the historical re-readings was a “political device to educate and advance unity between indigenous peoples” (Gabriel, 1994: 5).

**Conclusion**

The reality, as Susan Strange has pointed out, is that “on many issues most states have lost control over some of the functions of authority and are either sharing them with other states or with some other (non-state) authorities” (Strange, 1996: 42). The emerging relationships at the global level requires that states share authority not only with economic (non-state) actors such as multinational corporations, but also indigenous peoples, who they will be increasingly pressed upon to recognise at the national level. There is no getting around it anymore. “Aboriginal peoples [are] willing and able to locate their activities in a complex two-level game with a heightened international and domestic face visible across a wide spectrum of institutional sites and issues-areas” (Lackenbauer and Cooper, 2007: 104).

At the international level, South-South cooperation and global indigenism has demonstrated that one, “globalization does not require laissez-faire policies, and social neglect is not invariably embedded in the process” (Mandle, 2003: 6). And two, it has shown that being othered within systems that dismiss and devalue your existence can serve as motivations for alliance that cut across a variety of differentiations – geography, class, gender, ideology, wealth etc.

While it is true that South-South and Settler-Indigenous relations are predicated on the dominance of the North, it does not mean that this will always be the case. As alliances and networks become stronger, the rationality of the international system will be
subverted. We are already starting to see some cracks in the hegemonic armour. This does not mean it will be easy as those who currently hold the powers have rigged the system in their favour and have no intention of relenting. However, they will have to learn to share the spotlight with the multitude of others who are now too emboldened to go silently to their corners. Braveboy-Wagner put it best when she writes:

In the final analysis, global south nations [and by extension indigenous peoples] have constructed an identity or a set of regional identities out of their common experiences, and that identity fosters cooperation and persists because of the persistence of hierarchy in the international system. Until that hierarchy changes, and until the international system and the states and other units that comprise that system become more inclusive, global south connectivity will be reflected in a growing number of south-south activities and institutions (216).
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