

## The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers

Hunting and gathering was humanity's first and most successful adaptation, occupying at least 90 percent of human history. Until 12,000 years ago, all humans lived this way. Surprisingly in an increasingly urbanized and technological world, dozens of hunting and gathering societies have persisted and thrive world-wide, resilient in the face of change, their ancient ways now combined with the trappings of modernity.

The Encyclopedia is divided into two parts. The first contains case studies, by leading experts, of over fifty hunting and gathering peoples, in seven major world regions. There is a general introduction and an archaeological overview for each region. Part II contains thematic essays on prehistory, social life, gender, music and art, health, religion, and indigenous knowledge. A final section surveys the complex histories of hunter-gatherers' encounters with colonialism and the state, and their ongoing struggles for dignity and human rights as part of the world-wide movement of indigenous peoples.

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*The Cambridge Encyclopedia*  
**of HUNTERS AND  
GATHERERS**

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Edited by RICHARD B. LEE AND RICHARD DALY

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## PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

In the five years since the publication of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, the world has undergone dramatic changes. Of all the world's societies, few could have been more remote from the direct impact of the events of September 11, 2001, than the hunting and gathering peoples. Yet, no less surely, these societies have experienced their own social/cultural and political/economic upheavals. The forces of globalization, environmental degradation, state penetration, and cultural imperialism have continued to affect hunting and gathering societies and force them into closer and closer proximity with surrounding polities and civil societies. Like local cultures everywhere, foragers and former foragers have continued to grapple with new challenges through a complex interplay of resistance, accommodation, and adaptation.

In fact the themes of continuity and change, tradition and transformation, highlighted in the fifty case studies and fourteen essays in this volume remain extremely timely. With correction of typographical errors, this edition contains the entire contents of the original. This brief introduction pinpoints recent developments in the field and directs the reader to current literature.

More and more, the hunting and gathering peoples have appeared on the global stage under the rubric of "Indigenous Peoples," sharing the platform with such disparate (and non-foraging) peoples as the Mayans, the Masai, and the Maori. The United Nations declared the period 1993–2004 the "Decade of Indigenous People," and former foragers made common cause with other marginalized and encapsulated minorities: pastoral nomads, reindeer herders, fishers, and swidden horticulturalists. Collectively these peoples are estimated to number some 250 million, or four percent of the world's population.

Given the political traction afforded by this rubric, the concept of "indigenous" has become highly contested. Scholars have been divided into two camps, roughly corresponding to the labels *revisionist* and *indigenist* we adopted in the introduction to this volume (pp. 11–12). In a widely discussed article Adam Kuper (2003, 2004)

questioned the reality of the term and asserted that *indigenous* is an empty category: poverty and marginality are the defining characteristics of being indigenous, not primordial ethnicity. To label them as "indigenous" is to commit the error of "essentialism," a cardinal sin in post-modern discourse. Going further he asserted that to invoke ethnicity in any political argument is to flirt with reactionary and even proto-fascist political rhetoric.

Ranged on the other side of the debate are those who see the assertion of the rights of people to be *indigenous* as acts of restitution and re-inclusion, completely at odds with the exclusionary politics of right-wing ethnic chauvinism (e.g., Ramos 2003; Kenrick and Lewis 2004a, 2004b; Asch and Samson 2004; Saugestad 2004; Turner 2004). These observers argue the case that "indigenous" histories include elements of political autonomy, linguistic distinctiveness, and long-term land occupation, though in varying degrees from case to case. While acknowledging that the modern nation-state (cf. Benedict Anderson) may be an "imagined community" and that all ethnicities are to a degree fictional, they would argue that there is a world of difference between the reclaiming and restitution of rights by dispossessed San people in South Africa and the assertion of a greater German (or American) national destiny. To conflate the two is to erase critical differences between oppressor and oppressed.

In the current conjuncture, the people themselves, including many represented in this volume, self-identify as "indigenous" by employing a complex amalgam of their articulated histories (backed by scholarly evidence) and an emerging capacity for self-promotion. This may involve a process of *re-invention*, as an indigenous group recasts its identity in terms dictated by the politics and legal discourses of the nation-state. The term *strategic essentialism* has been applied to this political process, and supporters see this as a legitimate "weapon of the weak," a means of redressing genuine grievances in courts of public opinion in a language the wider public can understand.

For the hunting and gathering peoples discussed in this book, the arenas in which these struggles are played out include the politics of identity, traditional environ-

mental knowledge (TEK), land and civil rights, governmentality, and spirituality. Building on themes addressed throughout the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, we offer a very brief sketch of some of the recent work.

### Politics of identity

Identity politics is a theme that pervades many of the case studies and essays. The late Susan Kent (2002) edited a collection of papers that assessed the degree of autonomy/subordination of hunting and gathering peoples in the recent past. Contributors tended to support the “indigenist” position. This theme is developed further in the book *At the Risk of Being Heard* (2003) edited by Bart Dean and Jerome Levy. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot (2001) and Marie Battiste (2000) have assembled excellent collections emphasizing the voices of indigenous peoples in the Americas. Ronald Niezen (2003) has written a masterful overview of the politics of indigenism in the late twentieth century, while Kirk Dombrowski (2001, 2002) and Renee Sylvain (2002) present informative case studies that critically assess both the indigenist and the revisionist positions.

### Land, civil, and property rights

In addition to coverage in most of the case studies, issues of rights are central in the essays by Trigger (pp. 473–80) and Hitchcock (pp. 480–6). The fostering of land and civil rights remain central to the agendas of almost all former hunter-gatherers. Alison Brysk’s *From Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America* (2000) and Curtis Cook and Juan Lindau’s *Aboriginal Rights and Self-Government: The Canadian and Mexican Experience in North America* (2000) are recent collections surveying this topic. Schweitzer, Biesele, and Hitchcock (2000) explore these themes in an edited collection based on an earlier CHAGS conference. Thomas Widlok and Tadesse Wolde (2004) have edited a major two-volume edition surveying property rights of peoples on the margins of capitalism, including many case studies of former foragers in Africa, Asia, Alaska, and Australia. These issues are also discussed by Lye (2004) for southeast Asia and Norström (2003) for south Asia.

### Governmentality

How foraging peoples articulate with their nation-states in ways that acknowledge their difference and preserve a semblance of political space is a major theme in the

encyclopedia, covered in all seven regional introductions. One of the editors, Harvey Feit, has followed up on this ongoing discussion in *In the Way of Development: Indigenous Peoples, Life Projects and Globalization* (Blaser, Feit, and McRae eds. 2004), as does Paul Nadasdy’s (2003) *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* and Colin Scott’s (2001) *Aboriginal Autonomy and Development in Northern Quebec and Labrador*. Sidsel Saugestad’s *The Inconvenient Indigenous* (2001) is a valuable study of the San peoples’ relations with the Botswana state. Other recent sources include Hitchcock (2002) and Barnard and Kenrick (2001). Throughout its history, the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) based in Copenhagen has been a most effective advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples in international forums.

### Traditional environmental knowledge (TEK)

A focus of the essay by Catherine Fowler and Nancy Turner (pp. 419–25), TEK continues to be a significant component of two linked processes in the current era of globalization: the search for sustainable development and the scramble for the genetic commons. Hunter-gatherers are part of this process. The environmental knowledge they possess can be used to find ways of establishing viable post-foraging economies; the same knowledge can be a source of useful pharmaceuticals and other products for world markets. In both cases the key questions remain if and how the indigenous people will retain the benefit. An edited volume by Ellen, Parkes, and Bicker (2000) explores these issues, while works by John Grim (2001) and Tim Ingold (2000) make important contributions to, respectively, the underlying ethics and anthropology.

### Spirituality

The spiritual and ethico-religious roots of hunter-gatherer culture and lifeways addressed in several of the essays including Guenther on shamanism and mythology (pp. 426–33), Ingold on sociality (pp. 399–410), Karen Endicott on gender relations (pp. 411–18), and Barac and Morphy on music and art, respectively (pp. 434–48). Basic research on many of these themes continues to appear, including debates on shamanism (Lewis-Williams 2002a, 2002b; Narby 2001), art (Myers 2002; Morphy 1999), and other issues (Ingold 2000; Guenther 1999; Kratz 2002).

While the Cambridge Encyclopedia can be explored for the many ways in which current and former hunter-gatherers articulate with contemporary controversies,

there are other ways to approach this book. It can also be valued as a source of the best available evidence on a vast array of peoples whose way of life once dominated the planet and whose footprints are still visible on most of the world's surfaces. Research on the hunting and gathering peoples, as part of humanity's heritage, continues to provide source material for debates in the cultural, political, and sociological imagination and for reflections on the human condition. The references cited also contain important new research by encyclopedia authors.<sup>1</sup> With these themes in mind, the editors and authors are pleased to welcome a wider readership to the hunter-gatherer world.

Richard B. Lee and Richard H. Daly  
 June 2004

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## FOREWORD

BEATRICE MEDICINE

Sihasapa Band Lakota

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As an anthropologist, and perhaps seen in some circles as a residual artifact from a hunting and gathering society – the Lakota of the Great Plains of North America – I am honored to acknowledge the visibility of the cultures presented in this important volume. In my view, this innovative work addresses the best research of the past with an engagement with changes in anthropological theorizing for the present and future. Each of the many chapters delineates the rich ethnographic characteristics of societies in the indigenous world. Surprisingly, the “Past is the Present”: the “ethnographic present” is reflected in the vitality and vibrancy of these societies so often considered as part of a distant past. These seminal papers investigate and demonstrate the continuity, adaptive strategies, and tenacious world-views of hunters and gatherers throughout the planet. The world-wide scope offered by the contributors reflects an academic core of researchers who gathered periodically at the series of Conferences on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS) in Alaska, Australia, Russia, and elsewhere. Some papers have been enriched by discussions at these CHAGS meetings; others are new contributions. Some authors are themselves representatives of these indigenous foraging groups. In all, the CHAGS community of scholars forms a tenacious core who feel that hunting and gathering societies warrant continued anthropological investigation.

In view of the subtle – and not so subtle – disciplinary attacks upon anthropologists who study these groups, it is encouraging that a real dynamism persists. Hunting and gathering societies are often relegated to the distant past and romanticized realms as “has been” or “mere” foragers. Despite their portrayal as disappearing groups pushed to the margins of “civilization” and living in a “culture of poverty,” critical studies have shown the resilience of the adaptive strategies and survival mechanisms constructed by them and this has given new meaning to what we understand by culture contact and social change.

In this light, colonization, imperialism, and post-colonization assume new dimensions. The processes of

collective action which people utilize to resist social forces impinging upon them challenge and deconstruct the notion of “dying societies.” Within the larger framework of anthropological enterprise, these fresh theoretical approaches and innovative methodologies have provided a hopeful portrait for those of us who have been the focus of ethnographic and anthropological research. We hunters and gatherers are still here, based upon core characteristics – albeit in different cultural circumstances.

Some of the studies in this volume are directed to the interplay of power (colonialism, capitalism, technology) and its impact upon powerless enclaves of peoples. Yet, these analyses are not conciliatory to the critiques of post-modernists and other detractors. Rather they are realistic, reflecting the dignity and purposiveness of their subjects. These contributions are based upon sustained fieldwork – the bedrock of the anthropological enterprise – and the evidence for culture contact is grounded in the sub-fields of archaeology, history and oral history, and ethnographic analysis. Recognizing the effects of colonization, ethnocide, and genocide, these authors salute the persistence of the foragers in the face of these threats to their survival, while maintaining an internal dynamic which shapes their lifeways and world-views. The commitments of these writers have not blinded them to new perspectives in anthropology. We see issues such as gender and power relations, as well as new interpretations of expressive elements of culture – language, music, and art – as reflective of the heritage which the descendants of foragers value and elaborate in the present.

The Encyclopedia documents the responses of foragers and post-foragers to indicate that persons in these groups are not victimized puppets. Through continued egalitarianism and spatial mobility, foragers have made necessary adjustments to new social forces.

Cultural values basic to their ethos live on in the transmitted world-view of contemporary peoples. Though sharing might seem anachronistic to the Western world, this is still a valued sentiment. The tie to the land with its sacredness and spiritual connotations is a prime

characteristic, with enduring strength, and in some cases charged connotations. This deep-seated core is hauntingly evoked in many living people today. The Lakotas, for example, believe that *macoche ki le wankan* – “the land is sacred.” A similar attitude appears to permeate most foraging groups. Dispossession seems to intensify this belief, as with the *Paha Sapa* – the Black Hills in South Dakota. Large monetary settlements have not dislodged Lakota claims for the return of sacred lands. The sense of the sacred is still ritualized in the recent revitalization of the sacred Sun Dance – long repressed by the US Government. Native languages and mythologies – such as the Trickster story-cycles – play an important role in a modernized world. Similar examples may be found throughout this volume. They dovetail with ecological concerns and political action. Surfacing in the lives of these “marginalized” people are bodies of indigenous knowledge of astronomical systems, medicinal plants, and healing modalities, as well as detailed knowledge of the land and other “lost universes” of the indigenous world. Many of these issues are politicized and have reached international fora, such as the United Nations and the World Court, in the form of land claims and

charges of genocide. Basic to these actions is the underlying premise of “leaving something for our children and grandchildren.”

In the native communities from the Arctic to the Amazon, in every continent, hunters and gatherers are emerging in the anthropological literature as dynamic and self-determining groups. Positive actions include land claims, revitalized rituals, the use of traditional healing modalities such as the sweat lodge to deal with such contemporary issues as substance abuse, and the reexamination of “parenting skills” for the effective transmission of culture in dual social systems.

In the wider world, the adaptability and persistence of foragers seem somehow validated by scores of urban sophisticates fleeing a spiritually jaded industrialized society and seeking solace in hunting and gathering societies. One result is that the Lakota are now attempting to control external participants in the Sun Dance.

Far from being culturally impoverished, marginalized people on the fringes of the Western world, hunters and gatherers seem poised effectively to enter the next millennium.



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*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers* had its genesis in the fertile mind of Richard Balkin in March 1994. He approached Richard Lee, and Lee agreed on condition that Richard Daly could be convinced to sign on to the project as the development editor. In a memorable week at the Chateau de Lesvaux in Burgundy, Lee and Daly finalized the general outline of the work. Between mid-1995 and 1996, the three Richards worked to assemble a list of authors, which eventually totaled eighty-nine experts from six continents, in the field of hunter-gatherer studies. The first vote of thanks must go to the eight regional editors who labored on many fronts to bring authors and editors together and to bring the volume to completion. David Anderson, Nurit Bird-David, Kirk Endicott, Harvey Feit, Robert Hitchcock, Nicolas Peterson, Laura Rival, and Victor Shnirelman, representing six nationalities, were themselves a mini-United Nations. The kudos also extend to Jessica Kuper, our editor at Cambridge, for midwifing this large and at times ungainly experiment in international anthropological cooperation, and to the production staff, particularly our copy-editor Frances Brown for the work she has done to bring consistency and continuity to this lengthy and multifaceted text.

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- ROBERT L. KELLY (Mikea) is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wyoming, and has studied hunting and gathering societies for twenty-five years from archaeological and ethnographic data. He is the author of *The foraging spectrum* (1995).
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- HOWARD MORPHY (special essay on art) is Professor of Anthropology at University College, London. Currently on leave at the Australian National University on a five-year research fellowship, he has long-standing interests in Aboriginal art and material culture.
- BRIAN MORRIS (Hill Pandaram) teaches anthropology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He has conducted research in South Asia and Africa, and has written on the anthropology of religion.
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- FRED MYERS (Pintupi) is Professor of Anthropology at New York University. He is the author of *Pintupi country*, *Pintupi self* (1986) and is currently writing a book about the circulation of Aboriginal Australian art.
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- ANDREW B. SMITH (special essay on world archaeology of hunter-gatherers) is Associate Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town. His research interests include the origins of pastoralism in Africa, and the relations between herding and foraging societies.
- MICHAEL A. SMITH (Australian archaeology) is Senior Curator, People and Environment, at the National Museum of Australia. His interests are Pleistocene archaeology, Quaternary environments, and human ecology in deserts.
- SHIRLEEN SMITH (Dene) is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Alberta, studying the oral history of Dene treaties, governance, and anthropology of NaDene.
- ENCHENG SONG (Dulong) is Professor of Ethnology at Yunnan Minority Nationalities College, China. His main research areas are contemporary cultures of the Dulong, Miao, and Li ethnic groups in southwestern China.
- WIVECA STEGEBORN (Wanniyala-aetto) is completing her doctorate in Anthropology and is an active campaigner on behalf of the Wanniyala-aetto of Sri Lanka and other indigenous peoples of South Asia.
- KAZUYOSHI SUGAWARA (/Gui-/Gana), of Kyoto University, African Studies Program, has conducted extensive research among the San peoples of Botswana.
- TOM G. SVENSSON (Ainu) is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oslo. He has published considerably on northern indigenous peoples (ethnopolitics, legal anthropology, and aesthetics) after fieldwork among the Saami, Netsilik, and Ainu.
- JIRO TANAKA (/Gui-/Gana) is a Professor of Anthropology and former director of the Kyoto University, African Studies Program. He has had three decades of research experience with African hunter-gatherers, particularly the /Gui-/Gana of Botswana.
- ROBERT TONKINSON (Ngarrindjeri) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia. He has done fieldwork with desert Aborigines in Western Australia and with Melanesians in Vanuatu.
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- HERNÁN J. VIDAL (Yamana) was a doctoral candidate at the City University of New York. He had conducted

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