Becoming Indigenous in Africa

Dorothy L. Hodgson

Abstract: This article traces the history of how and why certain African groups became involved in the transnational indigenous rights movement; how the concept of the indigenous has been imagined, understood, and employed by African activists, donors, advocates, and states; and the opportunities and obstacles it has posed for the ongoing struggles for recognition, resources, and the rights of historically marginalized people like Maasai.

On August 3, 1989, Moringe ole Parkipuny, a long-time Maasai activist and member of the Tanzanian Parliament, was the first African to address the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, Switzerland. After noting that this was a "historic moment," since he and a Hadza man from Tanzania were the "first representatives of any community in Africa that have been able to attend this very important forum," he described in vivid terms the contemporary situation in Africa: "The environment for human rights in Africa is severely polluted by the ramifications of colonialism and neo-colonial social and economic relationships in which we are compelled to pursue our development and our sovereignty in a global system replete with injustices and exploitation." He discussed how most African countries had achieved political independence only relatively recently; the difficulties of overcoming colonial legacies of unequal rights, resources, and access to political power; and the "might of Western economic hegemony." But, he warned, the intense efforts by many African nation-states to build national solidarity through the production of nation-

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al identities "have thrown wide open the floor for prejudices against the fundamental rights and social values of those peoples with cultures that are distinctly different from those of the mainstream national population. Such prejudices have crystallized in many African countries into blatant cultural intolerance, domination and persistent violations of the fundamental rights of minorities." In East Africa, he claimed, two of the most "vulnerable minority peoples" were hunter-gatherers and pastoralists:

> These minorities suffer from common problems which characterize the plight of indigenous peoples throughout the world. The most fundamental rights to maintain our specific cultural identity and the land that constitutes the foundation of our existence as a people are not respected by the state and fellow citizens who belong to the mainstream population. In our societies the land and natural resources are the means of livelihood, the media of cultural and spiritual integrity for the entire community as opposed to individual appropriation.

As a result, "our cultures and way of life are viewed as outmoded, inimical to national pride and a hindrance to progress. What is more, access to education and other basic services are minimal relative to the mainstream of the population of the countries to which we are citizens in common with other people" (Parkipuny 1989).

As Parkipuny claimed, his speech did indeed mark a historic moment in local, national, and international affairs; it was the first public assertion by a Maasai leader that Maasai, and indeed, certain other historically marginalized groups in Africa, were part of the transnational community of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the forum for this pronouncement, the U.N. Working Group, indicated a new willingness of that body to entertain claims that African groups like Maasai shared common histories, grievances, and structural positions within their nation-states with long-recognized "first peoples" from white settler colonies in the Americas, New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere. As such, long-accepted definitions of "indigenous" were being challenged, with pressure to expand their meanings to encompass new categories of similarly disenfranchised peoples.

Over the next twenty years, Maasai, Kung San, Batwa, Amazigh, and other African groups became actively involved in the international indigenous peoples' movement with the support of certain transnational advocacy groups. They also formed regional and continental networks to pressure African states to recognize the presence and rights of indigenous peoples within their borders, to support and coordinate the activities of African nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) within the U.N. process, and more specifically, to promote ratification of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although they quickly achieved international recognition and visibility for their struggles, they encountered deep

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hostility from most African nation-states, which claimed that all of their citizens were indigenous, argued that indigenous rights fomented "tribalism," and challenged any discussion of collective rights or restitution. As I was told (sometimes quite forcefully) every time I presented my research in Tanzania, "we are all indigenous in Africa."

Given the hostility of their nation-states and fellow citizens, how and why did certain historically marginalized people in Africa decide to become "indigenous"? What was the appeal to African activists of linking their agendas and organizations to the transnational network and discourses of "indigenous rights"? What strategies, arguments, and alliances did they employ to articulate and advance their claims? Almost twenty years later, what have been the achievements, challenges, and costs of using the category of indigenous as a platform for localized economic and political action? Finally, how has the involvement of African activists reshaped the practices and politics of the transnational indigenous rights movement?

To address these questions, this article traces the history of the engagement of African groups with the international indigenous peoples' movement; examines how the concept of "indigenous" has been imagined, understood, and employed by African activists, donors, advocates, and states; and looks at the opportunities and obstacles it has posed for the ongoing struggles for recognition, resources, and the rights of historically marginalized peoples like Maasai.[1] This history of African efforts to "become indigenous" is important for several reasons. First, as suggested by the comment "we are all indigenous in Africa," the key struggle for African activists has been to translate their hard-won international recognition as indigenous peoples into national recognition. As described in detail below, not only did this tension shape the dynamics of their participation in the movement, but it also demonstrated the ongoing significance of states in shaping the contours and content of transnational advocacy. Second, this history illustrates some of the inherent ironies and paradoxes of political action in a postcolonial world: of educated Africans defending their rights and resources by relying on colonial stereotypes and international agencies; of the absurdity of demanding justice from the primary perpetrators of injustice, nation-states; and of the challenges of collective organization and action in the wake of such colonial legacies as national boundaries, dominant languages, disparate resources, and uneven infrastructure. Finally, as a response to those who would dismiss these activists as pawns of international donor agendas (e.g., Kuper 2003) or unreflective opportunists (e.g., Igoe 2006), this study provides a more nuanced analysis that explores (rather than infers) the participants' motivations, imaginings, and reflections in order to understand how the dynamics of agency, structure, and power at once enable and limit political agency in a world shaped ever more forcefully by "neoliberal governmentality" (Ferguson & Gupta 2002).[2]

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The Spread of the Indigenous Peoples' Movement in Africa

The involvement of various African groups with the indigenous peoples' movement is the product of the historical convergence of several factors: visionary leaders like Parkipuny who saw the connections and were able to reframe longstanding claims to land rights and cultural self-determination in the language of indigenous rights; shifts in donor agendas from financing huge state-run development programs to supporting the initiatives of "grassroots" organizations (Edwards & Hulme 1992; Hulme & Edwards 1997); the new political possibilities and economic exigencies produced by the neoliberal restructuring of states and economies under pressure from the World Bank, IMF, and other global institutions (Gledhill 2004; Harvey 2005); the seeming failure of prior forms of political struggle to produce effective results; and chance encounters and connections.

Exploring how Parkipuny came to speak before the U.N. Working Group offers insights into these complex articulations. After being forced to attend primary school as part of colonial mandates requiring every Maasai family to send at least one child to school, Parkipuny decided to continue his education at secondary school and eventually the University of Dar es Salaam, against the wishes of his family. As he explained to me, "I already had a sense of how Maasai were being treated. I decided I must go on."[3] After being hired in 1977 by the United States Agency for International Development to work on the Masai Range Project—a huge, twenty-million-dollar effort to increase the productivity and offtake of Maasai livestock (see Hodgson 1999b, 2001)—he was sent to the United States on a study tour to visit "proper ranches":

> I traveled to Washington D.C., Oregon, California, Arizona and more to visit extension schools, ranches, and so forth. But I became fed up, it was too monotonous. So at the airport one day, I met a Navaho from Windrock. We talked some and he invited me to visit. I said "Let's go!" So I stayed with them for two weeks, and then with the Hopi for two weeks. It was my first introduction to the indigenous world. I was struck by the similarities of our problems. I looked at Windrock, the poor state of the roads and reservations, it was just like the cattle trails in Maasailand. *But this was in the United States!*

For Parkipuny, like many African activists, this epiphany was transformative. Seeing the similarities between the contemporary situation and historical struggles of Maasai and those of Native Americans enabled him to think beyond the specifics of Maasai circumstances to a deeper understanding of the exploitative relationships between nation-states and certain kinds of people, relationships that had been produced and exacerbated by colonialism, nation-building, and economic modernization. He quickly realized that the Maasai experience of land alienation, forced settlement, deep dis-

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parities in the provision of social services like education and health, cultural disparagement, and, at times, efforts at forced assimilation first by the colonial and then by the postcolonial state were not unique, but part of a global pattern.[4]

Eventually, in search of a space to advocate for justice, Parkipuny ran for and was elected to serve as a Member of Parliament in Tanzania in 1980. As he explained, "At the time, it was the only door open under the one-party system to voice outcry. There were no civil society organizations at the time. You had to work through the party." During his ten years as an MP, he fought against the continuing alienation of Maasai lands in Parliament, in the courts, and in the press, developing many enemies inside and outside of Parliament. He continued to nurture and develop his transnational connections, including communicating, through a mutual friend, with Jens Dahl, an anthropologist who was a board member (and later director) of the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), a transnational advocacy network of human rights activists and researchers based in Denmark. In 1983 Parkipuny toured Europe and Canada to publicize the plight of Maasai. During his travels he visited the offices of IWGIA in Copenhagen, where he was interviewed for their newsletter. As suggested by the title of the article, "Wildlife Have More Rights than Maasai," Parkipuny described the predicament of Maasai in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, where wildlife conservation policies premised on separating wildlife from humans were undermining Maasai rights to land and endangering their livelihoods. As he argued, "to separate Maasai, their cattle and wildlife would be a disaster both ethically and ecologically" (IWGIA 1983:183). In response, IWGIA commissioned a research report on the situation of Maasai in Ngorongoro by the Swedish anthropologist Kaj Århem (1985a, 1985b). Impressed by Parkipuny's mission and message, Dahl invited Parkipuny to speak at a conference he had organized on indigenous peoples and human rights in Canada and later sponsored (through IWGIA) Parkipuny's participation in the 1989 U.N. Working Group.[5] Although Dahl recognized the possible political repercussions for any African who addressed the U.N. Working Group, he believed that "Parkipuny was the perfect person, since as a Member of Parliament he had much less risk of being arrested when he returned to Tanzania" (interview, 2003, U.N. Permanent Forum, New York City).

IWGIA was instrumental in encouraging certain African groups to link their struggles to the indigenous rights movement, promoting the participation of Africans like Parkipuny at the relevant U.N. meetings and expanding the working definition of "indigenous" to embrace their positions and claims.[6] In 1990 Espen Wæhle, an IWGIA board member, argued in an article in the annual IWGIA *Yearbook* for the applicability of the concept of "indigenous" ("in a structural sense") to certain African groups (Wæhle 1990). Echoing Parkipuny's speech to the U.N. Working Group, he described three key parallels between African political struggles and

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those of recognized indigenous peoples: "(1) the assertion of group rights which parallels ethnic/indigenous assertion of rights elsewhere; (2) the grave situation of human rights in many parts of Africa (also in the sense of collective group rights); and (3) African concerns for self-development and self-determination" (1990:147). With the support of IWGIA, Wæhle then co-organized an international "Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Africa" in Denmark in 1993, which included representatives from select African groups. Most of the papers in the published conference proceedings (Veber et al. 1993) focused on specific peoples with possible claims to indigeneity: "Pastoralists of Eastern Africa," "Bushmen of Southern Africa," "Pygmies of Central Africa," and "The Tuareg Pastoralists of Northwestern Africa."

As the U.N. Year of Indigenous Peoples (1993) was followed by the U.N. Decade for Indigenous Peoples (1995–2004), IWGIA expanded its efforts to promote the involvement of African groups (especially representatives of the four groups listed above) in the international indigenous rights movement. The organization sponsored national, regional, and international workshops to encourage awareness and discussion of the applicability of the concept; publicized the debates and initiatives in their annual *Yearbook* and quarterly periodical, *Indigenous Affairs*; financed the participation of African activists at the annual meetings of the U.N. Working Group, the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and relevant U.N. World Summits; and funded the capacity-building, land rights, and human rights programs of some African NGOs.[7] Many of the activists whom I interviewed attributed their awareness of the indigenous peoples' movement and their involvement with the United Nations to a 1999 conference cosponsored by IWGIA and PINGOs (a network of organizations representing pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Tanzania) in Tanzania and a three-week follow-up training course on indigenous rights and international legal frameworks sponsored by PINGOs and funded by the European Union and Saami Council (from Norway). As conveyed in its annual reports and other publications, IWGIA's logic in promoting the participation of Africans and others in the movement was straightforward; IWGIA was convinced that participation in U.N. meetings offered unique opportunities for indigenous peoples to convey their situation and compel the international community and national governments to fully live up to their obligations to respect and protect human rights in order to secure the cultural and physical survival of indigenous peoples. Other transnational advocacy groups supported the expansion of the indigenous rights movement in Africa through workshops, funding, and publicity as well, although their motivations differed and sometimes conflicted.[8] Most, like IWGIA, genuinely saw themselves as helping indigenous peoples confront and overcome long histories of injustice and dispossession perpetrated by their nation-states, but a few organizations seemed to hijack indigenous struggles for rights and recognition to support their own agendas.

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"Making Place": Africans at the United Nations

During preparations for the Year of Indigenous Peoples (1993), Africa was not even considered as an appropriate site for activities.[9] But after Parkipuny's speech in 1989, increasing numbers of African activists and NGOs began to attend the U.N. Working Group with the support of IWGIA and other organizations, "making place" (Muehlbach 2001) for themselves at the United Nations. Although only one African NGO participated in 1993, by 2002 attendance had increased to more than twenty-six African NGOs and included representatives from Batwa, Amazigh, Tuareg, Dorobo, Ogiek, and Maasai communities. Some NGOs and activists participated steadily over the years, while others came and went. Observers from African states such as Senegal, Nigeria, and South Africa occasionally attended as well.[10]

As Andrea Muehlbach (2001) has detailed, during its first two decades (1982–2002), the U.N. Working Group provided a vibrant forum for indigenous activists from all across the world to meet one another, share ideas and approaches, and meet face to face with representatives of U.N. bodies and international organizations. By the time I attended the U.N. Working Group in 2004, however, some of this enthusiasm and vitality had waned, as had the participation of African delegates. Reasons for the decline included simmering frustrations over the slow pace of revision and approval of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the creation of the U.N. Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues in 2001 as an alternative, more powerfully located structure within the U.N. system; the looming likelihood that the U.N. Working Group was soon to be disbanded now that it had achieved its goals of developing the Declaration and establishing the U.N. Permanent Forum; and resentment over the heavy-handed and sometimes hostile actions and words of the long-presiding chairperson, Manuel Alfonso Martínez, a nonindigenous Cuban anthropologist.[11]

One representative of a transnational advocacy organization who had attended the U.N. Working Group annually since 1993 offered a perspective shared by many activists: "The peak of the Working Group's dynamism and effectiveness was in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But as the participation of Asians and Africans has increased, the participation of North and South Americans has declined. I think the Working Group is very quiet this year. Very few African delegates are present" (interview, 2004, U.N. Working Group, Geneva). She attributed part of the problem to Alfonso Martínez's unrelenting position that Asians and Africans were *not* indigenous and should instead bring their complaints to the newly formed U.N. Working Group on Minorities. Alfonso Martínez repeatedly argued that most, if not all, African groups who claimed to be indigenous should in fact be considered minorities, given their complex histories of migration, murky distinctions between who was indigenous and nonindigenous in Africa, and other differences with more easily recognized indigenous peoples from the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand. He noted two possible exceptions to

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his position—the San in Botswana and Maasai in Kenya (Alfonso Martínez 1999: para 78, 165).[12]

Alternative Paradigms: From "First Peoples" to Self-Identification

As Alfonso Martínez's comments suggest, a key challenge for African groups was to be recognized as indigenous by the United Nations and other international organizations, transnational advocacy groups, fellow indigenous activists, and ultimately their nation-states. The late entry of Africans into the indigenous peoples' movement posed a structural disadvantage, as they had to engage the longstanding practices, discourses, and assumptions of the U.N. Working Group (Saugestad 2001b). As Tania Li (2001:653) has noted, "Those who demand that their rights be acknowledged must fill the places of recognition that others provide, using dominant languages and demanding a voice in bureaucratic and other power-saturated encounters, even as they seek to stretch, reshape, or even invert the meanings implied." For Africans (like the Asian groups Li studied), the first obstacle was the then-dominant definition of "indigenous peoples," which was initially developed as a synonym for "first peoples," that is, autochthonous groups like Native Americans, Aborigines, and Maori who could demonstrate their territorial precedence prior to conquest and settler colonialism. Clearly the situation in most parts of Africa (with the exception of parts of southern Africa) was very different, with few groups able to claim status as "first peoples" who were permanently dislocated and disenfranchised by settler societies.[13]

Parkipuny's eloquent speech to the U.N. Working Group outlined some of the key reasons why Maasai (and certain other African groups) claimed to be "indigenous." The term was adopted by distinct cultural minorities in Africa who argued that they had been historically repressed by majority populations in control of the state apparatus. Few claimed to be "first people" as such. Instead, they argued that they shared a similar structural position vis-à-vis their nation-states as indigenous peoples in the Americas, Australia, and other settler colonies. Because of their cultural distinctiveness, they had experienced a long history of political subjugation, economic marginalization, territorial dispossession, and cultural and linguistic discrimination by colonial and then postcolonial states. These arguments are based on what scholars and advocates have termed a "constructivist," "structural," or "relational" definition of "indigenous," in contrast to more "essential," "substantial," or "positivist" definitions that depend on evidence of territorial precedence.[14]

As Parkipuny's remarks made clear, the main groups that could be considered indigenous were pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, whose "cultural" distinctiveness was in great part produced and predicated on their distinct livelihood strategies (especially their reliance on mobility and access to communal lands), which contrasted and often conflicted with the

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dominant, state-endorsed livelihoods of settled farmers, resulting in their economic, political, and social marginalization as "second-class citizens." Nomadic and seminomadic pastoralists like Maasai had long posed a challenge to colonial and postcolonial state agendas of control, containment, and modernization (see, e.g., Hodgson 2001; Kipuri 2001). The sociopolitical organization of most pastoralist groups, which included a reliance on a cadre of young men as raiders, protectors, and "warriors," enabled them to resist, to some degree, the intrusions into their lives of farmers, game parks, and the state. But hunter-gatherers, who had no such organization, were even more vulnerable to predation, eviction, enslavement, and extermination (see, e.g., Barume 2000; Madsen 2000; Saugestad 2001b; Sylvain 2002). Tensions between these groups and their respective nation-states escalated in the 1990s with state implementation of the neoliberal political and economic "reforms" mandated by international capital, the United States and its allies, and multinational financial institutions like the World Bank to reduce funding for social services, privatize formerly state-controlled functions and industries, establish strict private property regimes, and ensure "free" markets and "free" trade for multinational corporations. Despite historical and contemporary differences in the economic, political, and social positions of most pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Africa, the implementation of these neoliberal politico-economic regimes has affected them similarly by accelerating the alienation of their lands and resources for more "productive" enterprises (such as commercial agriculture, game parks, and mining); carving up their communal territories into bounded, privatized enclaves; intensifying socioeconomic inequalities of access to education, health care, and other social services; and amplifying state campaigns to forcefully restructure their lives and livelihoods through settlement, assimilation, livestock development projects, and more (see Hodgson 2001; Homewood et al. 2009; Lane 1996; Sikar & Hodgson 2006).

The ability of Africans to make these claims to indigeneity, and the willingness of established indigenous groups to include them, was facilitated by an emerging principle of the indigenous peoples' movement, the principle of self-identification. In a 1986 U.N. report, José Martinez Cobo proposed a definition of indigenous peoples that relied on evidence of "historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies" and cultural distinction (Cobo 1986). Cobo emphasized self-identification as central to the definition of indigenous and stressed historical precedence and cultural difference as aspects of indigenous status. In addition, however, Cobo acknowledged the unequal power relations that existed in many states by noting "non-dominance" as another common characteristic of indigenous peoples. The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 adopted in 1989 by the International Labour Organization to replace their earlier 1957 Convention proffered a similar definition.[15] In contrast to the language of integration and assimilation that pervaded the 1957 Convention, the 1989 Convention recognized the "aspirations of [indigenous] peoples to exercise

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control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages, and religions, within the frameworks of the States in which they live" (ILO 1989: preamble). The Convention also stated that "self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of the Convention apply" (ILO 1989: Article 1.2). By the 1990s, during debates over the provisions of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous activists refused to include any specific definition of who qualified as indigenous in the Declaration. Instead, over the vehement objections of many states, they argued that self-identification should be the primary mode for determining who was covered by the Declaration in order to defuse the power of states, the U.N., and other bodies to decide who was or was not indigenous. And, indeed, the final version of the Declaration does not define "indigenous peoples" anywhere in the preamble or articles (United Nations 2007).

Triumphs and Tensions: Africans at the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

By the time of the first meeting of the U.N. Permanent Forum in 2001, the U.N. and most activists from the Americas and elsewhere had accepted the participation of Africans as indigenous peoples. Their acceptance was formally recognized in the structure of the Forum, which had sixteen "expert" members (one nominated by indigenous people and one by the states for each of the U.N. regions, including Africa).[16] The involvement of Africans in the very formulation of the U.N. Permanent Forum produced a much more welcoming and inclusive space in which to voice their concerns than the U.N. Working Group had provided. Not surprisingly, then, the presence of Africans and other activists (and representatives of U.N. agencies, state observers, academics, and others) at the Forum grew steadily. At the six annual meetings that I attended (2003–5, 2007–9), I saw, met, and heard Africans from all over the continent, including San from southern Africa, Maasai from Kenya and Tanzania, Tuareg from West Africa, Amazigh from North Africa, Batwa and other "pygmies" (as they called themselves at the U.N.) from central Africa.[17] Several Africans, especially Maasai from Kenya, quickly became visible leaders of the international indigenous rights movement. Lucy Mulenkei, a Maasai journalist from Kenya, was president of the African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO) and co-chair of the Indigenous Caucus in 2004 and 2005. Hassan Id Balkassm, an Amazigh lawyer from Morocco, founded (and eventually became the director of) the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) in 1997, based on an informal network of African activists who had been attending the U.N. Working Group. He regularly presented statements at the U.N. Permanent Forum and worked to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of other African activists. Mary Simat, a long-time Maasai activist from Kenya,

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was the deputy chairperson of IPACC, then chairperson, and also a regular presenter.[18]

These experienced activists networked with their fellow activists from all over the world, exchanging handshakes, hugs, greetings, news, advice, and business cards. ("So many cards!" said one activist, whom I met in 2003 as he added my own card to the dozens of others stuffed into his wallet.) They eagerly courted representatives of donor agencies and transnational advocacy organizations, publicizing their accomplishments, grievances, recommendations, and requests through colorful brochures and posters, media interviews, and of course, formal statements during the U.N. sessions. Several activists frequently made presentations as part of the "side events" organized by indigenous organizations to highlight particular issues. Some, especially Maasai, wore modified versions of customary dress at most of the sessions in order to be instantly recognized. And they all mentored and guided first-time participants, introducing them to other delegates, helping them formulate and present statements, and teaching them how to navigate the bureaucracy and logistics of the U.N. meeting.

The visibility and acceptance of Africans as indigenous peoples at the U.N. Permanent Forum was marked in other ways as well. When Ole Henrik Magga, a Saami from Norway and a member, was elected to chair the 2004 Forum, he opened the first session by displaying a beaded Maasai *rungu* (carved short stick) to all the delegates. "Since the last Forum," he announced, "I was able to visit East Africa, especially with Maasai. They gave me this beaded rungu. I feel I have the inspiration to guide you through the work we have to do." The next day, six Maasai delegates sang praise songs to their deity Eng'ai on the stage to open the session. Over the years the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples visited several African countries, including Kenya, Botswana, and South Africa, to investigate the situation of indigenous peoples. And in 2006 the U.N. Permanent Forum (which I did not attend) devoted its special thematic session to Africa.

Activists from Africa came from a range of backgrounds and learned about the U.N. meetings in different ways. Many of those from East Africa, like an Ilparakuyo Maasai man from Tanzania whom I interviewed, first heard about the U.N. meetings at the 1999 regional workshop on indigenous rights co-organized by IWGIA:

> I heard on the radio about a conference on indigenous peoples in Africa that was taking place in Arusha, organized by PINGOs. I went, met with several representatives of the U.N., and realized that I could attend the U.N. I applied twice for money to attend the Working Group, but I was unsuccessful. But I attended in 2000, sponsored by the United Nations Fund for Indigenous Peoples. In 2001 I was awarded a five-month fellowship at the U.N. in Geneva to learn about the U.N., the indigenous rights process, etc., and attend the 2001 meeting of the Working Group. I also attended

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> the first Permanent Forum in 2001 in New York. (interview, 2003, U.N. Permanent Forum, New York)

Similar meetings in other regions created awareness about the U.N. process among Africans and sparked their interest in participating. Although a few activists had college degrees and even doctorates (or other post-baccalaureate degrees), most had only completed secondary school. Some had extensive prior careers in development with large international institutions like World Vision or government agencies. Others had little experience in development or human rights but had founded or worked for small local NGOs or community-based organizations. A few of the "favored" had developed long-term support networks with IWGIA or other transnational "partners," which ensured financial support for their regular participation in the U.N. meetings. Others scrambled every year to apply for grants, appeal to friends, and endear themselves to donors.

In our interviews, African activists conveyed a range of reasons for their participation in the indigenous peoples' movement. Some saw it as a political opportunity for voicing their claims. As a prominent Kenyan Maasai activist explained to me in 2007, "If Africans are not present, then we lose out. Indigenous peoples from Asia and the Americas are much more powerful, present and knowledgeable." They described how they had listened to and learned from more experienced activists. Many noted that the U.N. Permanent Forum provided an invaluable opportunity to speak face to face with power, in the form of the World Bank, FAO, and other international agencies. Some believed that their statements had succeeded in changing the policies and practices of some of these agencies. According to another activist, "Through our participation in the U.N., we can pressure U.N. agencies to change. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization. Their policies caused a lot of problems, but now, because of discussions at Permanent Forum, they are recognizing indigenous peoples and working with them" (interview, 2007, U.N. Permanent Forum, New York).

Fundamentally, however, they hoped to leverage their international visibility and support to achieve recognition and protection of their resources and rights by their nation-states. As a representative of Ogiek hunter-gatherers in Kenya told me, "We are marginalized and dismissed, no one cares about us. The dominant ethnic groups take over; they won't even register Ogiek as land owners. 'Oh, you just live in the forest and eat honey, why do you need land?' We are trying to fight for our land rights, development and so forth. Now we want to educate our children, but where are the schools?" Efforts to seek protection from the Kenyan state had failed, so the U.N. was the only alternative: "This is our space, we have no other space" (interview, 2004, U.N. Working Group, Geneva). A Maasai activist from Tanzania explained, "I think the value of indigenous is that everyone can work together to pressure the Tanzanian state without making it an 'ethnic' or 'tribal' issue. But the problem is that everyone has to get along" (interview,

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2004, U.N. Permanent Forum, New York). Of course, as indigenous activists themselves realize, the paradox is that they must demand recognition from the very nation-states that have historically oppressed and disparaged them.

Many activists were frustrated, however, by the failure of most African states to even send observers to the U.N. Permanent Forum. In 2005 the African Caucus sponsored a side event at the Forum to discuss the prospects for and challenges to the region. About forty African activists attended, in addition to donors and academics, but there were no representatives from African states. Everyone present agreed that the key problem they faced as Africans was the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples by African states. As a Batwa activist from the Central African Republic complained, "my... government denies the existence of my group and has driven us out of the forest." Several participants proposed strategies to address the situation, including convening a session of the Permanent Forum in Africa and organizing a regional meeting between indigenous activists and state representatives to discuss the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. Later, over coffee, another activist suggested sending the states direct invitations.[19]

Activists were more hopeful in 2007, when the permanent representative of the Kenyan government to the United Nations was scheduled to present a statement for the first time at the Permanent Forum and invited the Kenyan delegates to a dinner party one evening. "A first!" exclaimed one of the Maasai activists. But the difference between the typed, prepared statement (by a junior functionary, presumably) and the hand-edited statement that the representative read about recent land policy initiatives in Kenya revealed the ongoing resistance of the Kenyan government to formal political recognition of indigenous peoples. All but one of the original references to "indigenous people" in the typed statement had been crossed out and replaced with "Kenyan people" (Muburi-Muita 2007).

The disdain, and more commonly, hostility of most African states toward claims of indigeneity was exacerbated by the inability of indigenous activists from Africa to form viable, powerful regional or continental networks. As an Ogoni activist from Nigeria complained during the 2005 African Caucus side event, "We only meet and network in Geneva or New York. We need to promote more networking among African indigenous peoples' organizations. We are so scattered that we can have no serious impact at the national or regional level." A key obstacle to more effective networking was the complicated cultural politics of inclusion and exclusion within the continent, which had been produced, in part, by legacies of colonial boundaries (political, linguistic, and otherwise); postcolonial disparities in wealth, education, and international mobility; and racialized ideas of belonging. Notably, there was a deep mistrust between activists from North Africa and those from sub-Saharan Africa. Ironically, given their support and reliance on the principle of self-identification, activists from sub-Saharan Africa wondered if their light-skinned, Arabic-speaking northern colleagues were

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even African, much less indigenous, and accused them of paternalism and even racism. Activists from North Africa, in turn, felt frustrated by the challenges of effectively organizing their often (but not always) less educated, less experienced, and less cosmopolitan colleagues.

Hassan Id Balkassm, the Amazigh lawyer from Morocco who has been involved with the U.N. Working Group and then the U.N. Permanent Forum since 1994, has been a lightning rod for such debates. While he was well-known and well-respected by indigenous activists from Latin America, Asia, and other places, many of his own colleagues from sub-Saharan Africa suspected his motives, resented his success, and alleged that IPACC, the organization he founded, treated them in a racist manner as "black" Africans. Many activists from sub-Saharan Africa were also concerned about what they perceived as a racial hierarchy separating IPACC's leaders and members. The Executive Committee of IPACC, which describes itself as "a network of 150 indigenous peoples' organizations in 20 African countries," comprises elected representatives from six African regions and a special representative for indigenous women, one of whom serves as chairperson. The Secretariat is run by a director, who for several years has been Nigel Crawhall, a white Canadian sociolinguist with expertise in African languages who has lived in South Africa for many years. At the 2004 U.N. Permanent Forum, two Kenyan activists complained to me that the Executive Committee was composed of Moroccans and South Africans, while other Africans were just members. "But what do they do? Are they really African? Did you see that woman with Hassan? She was really light-skinned....Who is indigenous there?" Another woman grumbled about a meeting of the African Caucus that she had attended the night before: "It was dominated by people from Francophone Africa; they all spoke French. Nigel translated. Many of the people were from Morocco—do you think Moroccans are really Africans?" Hassan's practice of presenting formal statements in Arabic (even though he is also fluent in French and English) only further upset activists from sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom associate Arabic with historical experiences of Islamic conquest and oppression.[20]

Moreover, few African activists whom I interviewed felt that IPACC had helped their cause. When I asked an Ogiek activist from Kenya in 2004 if his organization was involved with IPACC, he responded:

> No, I don't have much to do with them. They are not really linked with the grassroots. Instead, they try to direct us, to tell us what to do. They should be helping and nurturing us to grow, but they don't. We sat for two hours in the African Caucus yesterday introducing ourselves, etc., but nothing was achieved. I wish there was another pan-African network. And the white people [Swahili: *wazungu*]—it is fine if they are there and want to help, but they are directing things, so that even the Africans involved with them change and become like them.[21]

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In response to their dissatisfaction with IPACC, a number of sub-Saharan activists formed an alternative pan-African organization, the Organization for Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) in 1999.[22] Despite some initial funding, however, OIPA never really established itself financially and sent representatives to the U.N. Working Group in Geneva only two times. One co-founder considered OIPA's biggest success to be its involvement in the 2003 World Parks Congress: "We held a large preparatory meeting and then sent delegates to the conference in Durban. They really influenced the discussions and decisions that were made" (interview, 2005, Tanzania). By 2005, however, when I was trying to find the OIPA office in Tanzania, I discovered that it was closed, the funds were gone, and the secretary, a Kenyan, was nowhere to be found.

Another factor underlying the tensions between North Africans and sub-Saharan activists was a difference in priorities. The primary goal of most sub-Saharan African groups was to protect their remaining lands and resources, since issues of cultural and linguistic rights were moot if they had no land. "Our main issue is to protect our communal lands and ensure the continuation of migration routes for pastoralists," explained a prominent Kenyan Maasai activist in 2007. "That is the baseline." In contrast, North Africans like Amazigh already had recognized rights to their territories, so they were able to focus their political efforts on the recognition and protection of their linguistic and cultural rights. At the 2004 U.N. Working Group, for example, Hassan Id Balkassm presented a statement in Arabic on behalf of IPACC and TAMUT (an Amazigh NGO in Morocco) in which he discussed the failure of North African states to recognize the cultural rights of indigenous peoples. In a subsequent presentation he claimed that many of the wars and conflicts in Africa were the result of the nonrecognition by states of the cultural and linguistic identities of indigenous people. Only at the end of the statement did he mention the need to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to their natural resources.

The legacy of colonial linguistic and spatial politics further complicated efforts to create a viable pan-African network, whether as a formal organization like IPACC or OIPA, or just in the African Caucus that routinely meets during the U.N. meetings. While formal U.N. sessions provide simultaneous translation in French, English, and Arabic, among other languages, translation services for meetings of the African Caucus have to be provided by individuals (like Nigel), a far more cumbersome process.[23] Moreover, the postcolonial reality of air travel routes makes it far easier (although expensive) for activists throughout Africa to fly directly to a meeting place in Europe than in Africa.

For these and other reasons, it has also been difficult for African activists to form viable regional and national networks among themselves. In 2007, when I asked a Maasai member of a network of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Kenya whether they worked with pastoralists in northern Kenya like Samburu and Turkana, he replied: "We try, but it is difficult.

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They face very different issues in northern Kenya, especially the ongoing conflicts among pastoralists. So any time we have a meeting, one group blames the other, who blames the other and so on. But in southern Kenya, the problem is one of land and resources." Similarly, an Ogiek activist told me in 2004 that while there was some networking among Kenyan groups, it was not very far along: "I could be in one corner and someone else in the other, both groups having similar problems. But we don't know about each other."[24]

Even coordination among members of one ethnic group divided by colonial borders into different states has been a challenge, as illustrated by the case of Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania. When I asked a Maasai activist from Tanzania in 2003 if the different Maasai delegations worked together at the U.N., he replied:

> Yes, slowly, slowly. For example, we tried to put together a joint statement on the alienation of land by national parks and protected areas, but we didn't have time to write it. We realize that we need to work together as Maasai. But we were divided by colonists—not just in terms of the colonial border [between Kenya and Tanzania], but they took advantage of us after our wars. It is hard to work with nomadic communities, but we are trying.

When I asked the same question to a Maasai from Kenya later that day, he said, "Just this morning we were discussing the need to cooperate, to work together to present our issues. But we really haven't done so yet." Maasai from Kenya have been very active in the U.N. meetings, attending in large groups, presenting statements, obtaining leadership positions, organizing and speaking at side events, and publicizing their grievances and demands. In contrast, since Parkipuny spoke at the 1989 U.N. Working Group, only a few Maasai from Tanzania have participated. Several Kenyan Maasai whom I interviewed felt that they were far more politically organized than the Tanzanians: "The Kenyans are far ahead of the Tanzanian Maasai, in part because they faced the dilemmas of individual property so much sooner. I am always telling Tanzanians that they can learn from us, that we are a model" (interview, 2007, U.N. Permanent Forum, New York). The Kenyans generally have tried to work with the Tanzanians, although their help has sometimes been perceived as paternalistic and even condescending. Although one Maasai from Tanzania acknowledged that the Kenyans were better organized and better funded, she was resentful when a prominent Maasai man from Kenya hijacked her time slot in 2004 to speak on behalf of "all Maasai women." The recent decision by several Maasai organizations in Tanzania to disengage from the international indigenous rights movement in order to focus their advocacy activities on more effective engagements with the state has further divided them from their Kenyan counterparts (see Hodgson 2008).

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Debating Indigeneity at Home: The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

In 1999 several African activists, with the support of IWGIA, decided that, in addition to "making place" at the U.N., they would pursue an alternative, complementary strategy to promote the recognition and rights of indigenous peoples by African states through mechanisms provided by the newly formed African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.[25] In 1999 delegates to the "Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa" (sponsored by IWGIA) adopted the "Arusha Resolutions," a list of declarations, resolutions, and recommendations to recognize and promote the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa. The resolutions included requests to the African Commission to include an agenda item on the rights of indigenous peoples in all of its sessions and to establish a working group "to consider all aspects of the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa and to promote consideration of the matter by African states" (Arusha Resolutions 1999). Barney Pityana, a commissioner from South Africa, participated in the Arusha conference and raised the issue of indigenous peoples at two subsequent meetings of the African Commission. His overtures were initially rejected by the other commissioners, who felt that the term "indigenous peoples" did not apply to Africa. In 2000, under pressure from NGOs and human rights organizations, the commissioners finally agreed to include the situation of indigenous peoples as a separate agenda item in their deliberations. Although still suspicious about the relevance of the concept, the African Commission adopted the "Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa," which provided for the establishment of a Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities (African Commission 2000).

The initial mandate of the AC Working Group was to examine the concept of indigenous populations in Africa; to study the implications of the African Charter on Human Rights for the well-being of indigenous populations, especially with regard to several articles of the African Charter; and to consider appropriate recommendations for the monitoring and protection of the rights of indigenous populations (African Commission 2000). The AC Working Group was also tasked with seeking donor support for its work. IWGIA immediately offered financial support, and Marianne Jensen, an IWGIA employee specializing in Africa, served as an "independent expert" member of the AC Working Group.[26]

After three years of meetings, research, and consultations with human rights experts and representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations, the AC Working Group presented a final report to the African Commission in 2003 that endorsed the applicability of the concept of indigenous peoples to Africa; reviewed the human rights situation of certain indigenous peoples on the continent (primarily hunter-gatherers and pastoralists) in

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relation to the principles of the African Charter; and recommended specific measures to review and address the needs of indigenous peoples in Africa, including the appointment of a special rapporteur on indigenous issues by the African Commission, the establishment of a forum for regular meetings of "indigenous participants, experts and other human rights activists" during sessions of the African Commission, the permanent inclusion of "the rights of indigenous populations in Africa" as an agenda item in all ordinary sessions of the African Commission, and an extension of its own mandate (African Commission 2005). The African Commission adopted the report, endorsed the recommendations, and renewed and expanded the mandate of the AC Working Group to research, study, raise awareness, and make recommendations about the human rights situations of indigenous populations and communities in Africa (African Commission 2003).

African activists were thrilled that the African Commission adopted the report; they hoped it would serve as a potentially powerful tool for them to lobby for political recognition by their reluctant nation-states. But they also recognized the report's limitations, especially the compromises made to obtain state support. Notably, the report (like the name of the AC Working Group) did not recognize indigenous "peoples," but indigenous "populations and communities." As reflected in debates about the title and wording of the Declaration, and the names of the U.N. Working Group and the U.N. Permanent Forum, many states argued that the term "peoples" was a legal concept akin to "states" in international law and treaties, which had been granted the right to self-determination. For African governments (and others) fearful of ethno-nationalism, endorsing the existence of indigenous "peoples" in their borders would therefore be tantamount to supporting their right to secede from their existing states and form new states.[27] The repeated response of African activists to the states, to me, and to anyone who asked was that they were seeking more inclusion in their nation-states, not less. Moreover, by "self-determination" they did not mean political secession, but the right to debate, decide, and control their own political representation, economic futures, social organization, and cultural practices and beliefs without outside intervention, in the face of a long history of state efforts to force them to assimilate, change, or deny their heritage. As a Batwa activist told Andrea Muehlbach:

> Self-determination, I think, is about letting the people do what they want by themselves. That is what I understand by self-determination. Sometimes projects are imposed on indigenous peoples, projects which are not good for them, and governors tell them they must agree. So, that is an imposition, and indigenous groups misunderstand this and maybe some projects can't succeed. So I think that self-determination is to let indigenous peoples make their decisions. That is what I learn by self-determination.... The second way to explain the concept of self-determination to the Batwa is that they are human beings...and that they can do things without other

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> people. It is us to say, "We want it this way." It is within our right, our human right to say no. To say yes. And not to be pushed around. We are equal. (Bambanze Vital, quoted in Muehlebach 2003:259)

As Muehlbach argues, the concept of self-determination described by Vital and other "neophyte" activists is strikingly similar to that advocated by many professional indigenous activists and human rights lawyers, who insist "that the concept must be understood broadly as a fundamental human right that guarantees a peoples' right to make decisions about its present and future freely and without outside interference" (Muehlbach 2003:260).

African States, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Recognition

So what have been the consequences for African groups (and for the transnational indigenous rights movement) of their almost twenty years of involvement in the indigenous peoples' movement? IPACC recently noted some concrete achievements in improving the relationship between African indigenous peoples and some African states:

> Cameroon, Gabon and Congo Republic have all entered into dialogue with the World Bank and indigenous peoples about the appropriate protection of rights. Burundi has changed its constitution to guarantee that Batwa have political representation. South Africa has created an interdepartmental working group to negotiate with Khoe and San communities as well as vocally supported the U.N. Declaration. Congo Republic is adopting legislation to protect the cultural integrity of indigenous people in the rainforest. Morocco unbanned the Amazigh language after 40 years of suppression. Algeria recognises the distinct cultural identity of Amazigh people. Mali and Niger signed peace accords with Tuareg of the Central Sahara without jeopardizing their national territorial integrity. Mauritania has expressed concern over the last hunters of the Sahara, the Nemadi peoples. (IPACC 2006)

But these achievements have been accompanied by continuing struggles between some states and self-identified indigenous peoples within their borders over land alienation and evictions (e.g., San in Botswana, Hadza and Maasai in Tanzania); the imposition of state-endorsed "development" projects (including dams, ranches, oil pipelines, resettlement) financed by multilateral aid organizations without the "free, prior and informed consent" (another key principle propounded by indigenous peoples) of affected peoples; and continuing acts of violence, repression, and subjugation (e.g., in Congo and Botswana). Moreover, in states like Tanzania that have embraced neoliberal "reforms," the accelerated, state-supported influx of international investment in industries like tourism, hunting, and commercial agriculture has eroded the economic resources and ignored the political rights of Maasai, Hadza, and others in more dispersed but cumulatively significant ways.

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As a result of these ongoing conflicts, some activists and organizations have voiced frustration with the glacially slow, seemingly ineffective processes and procedures of the United Nations. As a Maasai activist from Kenya wondered at the 2005 U.N. Permanent Forum, "There are all these words and papers, but what really happens on the ground?" Another Maasai activist echoed her comments, "We don't need a bunch of words and documents; we need resources." "These statements are so generic, they all begin to sound the same," complained another activist. Some donors shared their concern, working to help activists build bridges between the U.N. Permanent Forum and activities in their local communities. As one donor explained, "I try to tell the indigenous activists that nothing will happen just by making a nice statement. They need to link it with local pressure and action" (interview, 2004, U.N. Working Group, Geneva). Many of the African activists I spoke with shared the concern of other indigenous activists that while the U.N. Permanent Forum was one of the few international sites where they could voice their grievances, it lacked the institutional structures to implement, evaluate, and monitor its own recommendations.

In response to these frustrations and the enduring hostility of most African states to their claims of indigeneity and collective rights, some organizations, like the pastoralist groups in Tanzania that I have studied, have distanced themselves from the indigenous movement and withdrawn from active involvement in the U.N. meetings and other international fora to restructure their political discourses and practices in order to try to lobby more effectively and engage state-level institutions and actors (see Hodgson 2008). Other activists and organizations have maintained their participation at the U.N. Permanent Forum despite questions about their motivations and accusations that they are just "jet-setting indigenous" (as one donor complained to me). But as an Ogiek activist told me in 2004, "I don't do this to get rich, but to help my people. Look at me—I'm not fat. I can't get fat when I am concerned about other people. I don't care about my body, only my life." Some donors and researchers tried to encourage pastoralists from East Africa to participate in an alternative international network of "mobile peoples," but the Kenyan and Tanzanian Maasai that I asked about this network just laughed: "We are not interested. What comes next after 'mobile peoples'?"

The significance of the participation of African groups in the indigenous peoples' movement became starkly clear in late 2006 when several African states launched a last-minute attack to delay (if not prevent) approval of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In June 2006, after almost twenty years of negotiation, the Declaration was finally adopted by the U.N. Human Rights Council by a vote of thirty votes in favor (including three African states—South Africa, Cameroon, and Zambia), two against (Canada, Russian Federation), and twelve abstentions (including six African states—Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia) (United Nations HRC Resolution 2006/2). Given this strong support by the

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U.N. Council, most activists expected an easy approval by the U.N. General Assembly at its next meeting in November 2006, the final step in the process. Much to everyone's surprise, given the marked lack of involvement of African states in the many years of deliberations over the Declaration, a group of African states, led by Namibia, suddenly voiced opposition, claiming that the Declaration conflicted with provisions in the constitutions of many African states. In early November 2006 they circulated a "Draft Aide Memoire" that detailed their concerns, including the absence of a definition of indigenous peoples; the fear that the recognition of the principle of self-determination for indigenous peoples could lead to secession and thus was a threat to the "political unity and territorial integrity of any country"; and other specific articles that they claimed conflicted with or undermined the legal, political, and economic rights and sovereignty of states (African Group 2006). Namibia then proposed that adoption of the Declaration be deferred for a year in order for these concerns to be addressed and for amendments to be prepared on behalf of the "Group of African States."[28] (Although some African states did support the Declaration, they agreed on the need to seek consensus among themselves rather than split their votes.)

The General Assembly approved Namibia's proposal, sparking a year of intense debate and lobbying among indigenous activists, supportive and nonsupportive African states, advocacy organizations, and other states over the future of the Declaration. Some indigenous activists from the Americas voiced regret that they had ever recognized Africans as indigenous peoples. African activists, in turn, were angered and deeply embarrassed by the unanticipated actions of their states. After the African Union issued a Decision in January 2007 that supported the Aide Memoire and asked the African states to seek a "united position," several African human rights experts launched a formidable, coordinated response to the African states with the support of some advocacy organizations, especially IWGIA.[29] Among other initiatives, they wrote a detailed response to the Aide Memoire that summarized the findings of the AC Working Group report endorsed by the African Commission; refuted the objections of the states with specific examples of cases in which the rights and resources of indigenous peoples were already recognized and affirmed by African states; and argued that the Declaration reaffirmed rather than challenged rights "that are already recognised by virtually all African constitutions and the African Charter" (African Group of Experts 2007).[30] Moreover, they stressed that no indigenous communities in Africa were claiming statehood or threatening secession:

> On the contrary, these peoples or communities are claiming aspects of the right to self-determination that do not threaten national boundaries, including the right to full participation in national life, the right to local self-government, the right to be consulted and to participate in the making of certain laws and programmes, the right of recognition and appreciation of

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> their traditional structures along with the freedom to enjoy and promote their cultures. (African Group of Experts 2007:6)

Then, with the support of IWGIA, six African experts visited New York in April 2007 to meet with representatives from nineteen African embassies to discuss the Declaration. IWGIA also collaborated with the U.N. Permanent Forum to organize a roundtable at the 2007 meeting with the participation of seventeen African Permanent Missions and twenty-five non-African Permanent Missions. Indeed, the 2007 U.N. Permanent Forum was a frenzy of activity as African activists and others condemned the actions of the African states, lobbied state representatives both formally and informally, and debated how to proceed. After discussion at its May 2007 meeting, the African Commission issued an "Advisory Opinion" in support of the Declaration that was discussed at the African Union Summit in July 2007 (African Commission 2007). Other organizations like IPACC also launched a series of press releases and public statements, sponsored visits between African indigenous activists and representatives of African states, and lobbied the African Commission and reluctant African states to support the Declaration.[31]

Finally, as a result of all of these efforts, a compromise was negotiated, and an amended version of the Declaration (reflecting all of Namibia's suggested revisions) was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on September 7, 2007, by a vote of 144 states in favor (including almost every African state except three that voted against it and twelve that were "absent" for the vote), four votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States), and eleven abstentions (including Burundi, Kenya, and Nigeria) (United Nations 2007).[32] The victory was a stunning one for indigenous activists, especially African activists. While African activists successfully mobilized most of their states to approve the Declaration, long-time activists from the powerful settler colonies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States witnessed defeat, despite decades of lobbying and negotiations. (Although the Declaration is a nonbinding agreement for states, it does establish a shared international framework of minimum standards for the recognition, rights, and resources of indigenous peoples.)

Conclusion

What the Declaration means for the future political struggles of African peoples is unclear. Will the approval of the Declaration and the African Commission's endorsement of the AC Working Group report encourage further African involvement in the indigenous peoples' movement? Or will the frustrations of activists over the slow pace and byzantine processes of the U.N. and the acceleration of state-led neoliberal economic and political reforms encourage activists to reposition themselves to make a new political space to seek redress for their grievances? Whatever the future holds, it is

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clear that the involvement of Africa in the indigenous peoples' movement has reshaped international and national politics in several important ways.

First, by broadening the concept of indigenous to include African (and Asian) claims, the indigenous movement became at once more inclusive and more potentially more contentious, as some influential states fought for a narrower, clearer definition of "indigenous" in order to limit the scope of the Declaration. The embrace of the principle of "self-identification" by indigenous activists from across the globe facilitated the recognition of Africans and Asians as indigenous peoples by international institutions like IWGIA and the United Nations. Moreover, the creation of the U.N. Permanent Forum and the eventual demise of the U.N. Working Group enabled Africans to institutionalize their presence and ignore the hostility of certain powerful nonindigenous participants like Alfonso Martínez. But their very success in establishing international recognition produced backlash at the national level, as some African states, wary of the validity and potential divisiveness of the claims and desperate to protect their already fragile sovereignty, challenged these new relational and structural definitions of "indigenous" with recourse to older, more essentialist definitions predicated on the historical experiences of "first peoples" in Australia, the Americas, and elsewhere. Yet remarkably, despite initial misgivings, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights eventually endorsed the applicability of the concept of "indigenous peoples" to certain African groups, a testament in itself to the concerted struggles of African activists working with key allies like IWGIA.

Second, the experiences of African activists and the history of their involvement with the indigenous rights movement suggest that, like other "activists beyond borders" (Keck & Sikkink 1998), they are neither pawns nor dupes, but human beings struggling to create and take advantage of available political spaces to forward their political and economic agendas. Their capacity for political action has been shaped not only by the legacies of colonial policies and practices, but also, more recently, by the formidable alliance of capital with African states in the pursuit of privatization, productivity, and profit through the implementation of neoliberal political, economic, and social policies. Despite the tremendous potential for political paralysis in the face of such obstacles, these African activists have creatively positioned themselves to take advantage of the opportunities for political agency and collective action provided by the indigenous rights movement.

Whatever future political course African activists decide to pursue, they have learned tremendously from their participation in the indigenous movement in terms of effective ways to engage their states and donors, how to form and maintain viable (if fragile) coalitions and networks that transcend ethnic and national concerns and commitments, and the possibilities for being different kinds of citizens within their states. Like Parkipuny, many have been able to see and learn from the larger patterns of structural similarities between their situation and that of aborigines, Native Ameri-

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cans, and other indigenous peoples, especially about the range of possible relationships between indigenous peoples and nation-states. Adopting the term "indigenous," as Ronald Niezen (2003) argues, itself marks a transcending of the narrow concerns of "ethnicity" at the same time that it is predicated on those same ethnic concerns. Despite the ongoing challenges of overcoming the hostility of states and citizens to their claims of indigeneity, involvement with the international indigenous peoples' movement has helped some groups, like Maasai, to transform themselves from "subjects" to "citizens" within their nation-states, as they now draw on their rights as "citizens" to demand justice and change.

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Notes

1. The complicated gender, generational, and class politics of the organizations involved in the indigenous rights movement and their relationship to the communities and collectivities they claim to represent are analyzed elsewhere and therefore are beyond the scope of this article. See, e.g., Hodgson (2002b, 2005); Igoe (2004, 2006); Saugestad (2001a, 2001b); Sylvain (2002).
2. This article is based on more than twenty years of ethnohistorical research on the cultural politics of development among Maasai, including a recent year (2005–6) of intensive fieldwork with several Maasai and pastoralist nongovernmental organizations. I have also conducted participant observation and interviews with Maasai and other African activists at the annual meetings of the U.N. Permanent Forum in Indigenous Issues (2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009) and the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations (2004); interviewed representatives from donor agencies, transnational advocacy groups, and the Tanzanian government; conducted extended life history interviews with key Maasai activists; and interviewed members and reviewed the documents and activities of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Caucus and Indigenous Caucus at the U.N., the three main continental indigenous coalitions (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, Organization of Indigenous People of Africa, African Indigenous Women's Organization), and an array of other African indigenous rights organizations. All translations in the article from Maa, Swahili, and French are my own. Given political sensitivity about the movement in Africa, I do not directly attribute interview excerpts, except for well-known political and institutional figures. For a discussion of some of the ethical and political dilemmas entailed in this research, see Hodgson (1999a). Please see the appendix for a list of the key organizations and documents referred to in the text.
3. Parkipuny's life is explored more fully in Hodgson (2008).These excerpts and all others are based on interviews I conducted with him in 2005 and 2006 in Tanzania.
4. In Hodgson (2001) I describe the cultural politics of colonial and postcolonial efforts to "develop" Maasai.
5. One other Tanzanian accompanied him—Richard Baalow (a Haadzabe activist)—but he did not present a formal statement.
6. IWGIA was founded in 1968 as a network of human rights activists and researchers concerned about the affairs of indigenous peoples, prompted in part by a sudden awareness of the genocide of Amazonian Indians. Although the group published a brief report on Eritrea in 1971 (Knutsson 1971), it was mainly involved with activists from the Americas and later the Artic, Oceania, and Asia. According to one former board member, IWGIA consciously positions itself as a "political organization," not a "development organization," despite pressures from its donors (primarily the European Union and Danish International Development Agency [DANIDA]). For more information about IWGIA, see their Web site: www.iwgia.org.
7. The workshops included: "Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa" (Arusha, 1999) and "Conference to Facilitate Active Participation in the United Nations Permanent Forum on the Indigenous Peoples in Eastern Africa" (Nairobi, 2004).

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The first African organization supported by IWGIA was the San organization, First Peoples of the Kalahari (FPK), in Botswana in 1993. IWGIA began working with four Kenyan organizations in 1999–2000, and by 2006 it was funding seven projects in Kenya and one in Tanzania. At the time, a land rights project with a Batwa NGO in Burundi was planned, as well as a renew of temporarily suspended support for FPK (IWGIA 2006).

8. These organizations included the International Institute for Environment and Development, Survival International, Minority Rights International, and Cultural Survival International, and their agendas ranged from ecological sustainability to cultural preservation to ensuring the right of indigenous peoples to control their own "development."
9. According to the U.N. literature, events for the 1993 Year of Indigenous Peoples were planned "in all the areas where indigenous people live[:]...Latin American countries, North America, Australia, Nordic countries, and Asian and Pacific countries" (United Nations E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/39 p.2, cited in Pritchard 1998:43).
10. In addition, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (from South Africa) attended the U.N. Working Group as a "national liberation movement" for a few years beginning in 1984 and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), from what became Namibia, also attended as a national liberation movement in 1987. Observers from African states who participated in the U.N. Working Group, in order of their first year of participation, included: Senegal (1987–2, 2004), Nigeria (1994–97, 2004–6), South Africa (1995–2000, 2002, 2004–5), Ethiopia (1996), Kenya (1996–98, 2005), Libya (1996, 1999), Mauritius (1997–2002, 2004–6), Mauritania (2000), Democratic Republic of Congo (2001, 2004), Morocco (2001–2, 2005), Angola (2006), Cameroon (2006), Lesotho (2006). The data on attendance was compiled from a list of organizations and member states in attendance appended to the final reports for each session of the U.N. Working Group.
11. The U.N. Working Group was eventually dissolved in December 2007 and replaced by an "Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," after ratification of the Declaration (HRC Resolution 6/36, December 14, 2007). The Expert Mechanism has a more direct reporting relationship to the Human Rights Council (which replaced the notoriously mismanaged U.N. Commission on Human Rights in 2006).
12. Alfonso Martínez developed his critique of what he called the "indigenous *problematique* in the African and Asian contexts" in his occasional progress reports on the treaty study (e.g., Alfonso Martínez 1992, 1995), culminating in the clear statement in his final report that "in post-colonial Africa and Asia autochthonous groups/minorities/ethnic groups/peoples who seek to exercise rights presumed to be or actually infringed by the existing autochthonous authorities in the States in which they live cannot, in the view of the Special Rapporteur, claim for themselves, unilaterally and exclusively, the 'indigenous' status in the United Nations context" (Alfonso Martínez 1999: para 88).
13. Studies that examine the complex politics and struggles of the indigenous movement in Asia include Brosius (1997a, 1997b, 1999), Kingsbury (1998), Li (2000, 2001). For Africa, they include Barume (2000), Cameron (2001, 2004), Cultural Survival (2002, 2006), Hodgson (2002b, 2008), Igoe (2004, 2006), Saugestad (2001a, 2001b), Sylvain (2002), and Veber et al. (1993).

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14. For a discussion of these debates and use of these terms, see Berge (1993), Hodgson (2002a), Kingsbury (1998), Murumbi (1994), Saugestad (2001a, 2001b), Veber et al. (1993), and Wæhle (1990).
15. For a detailed discussion of the similarities, differences, and implications of these and other proposed definitions of indigenous peoples, see Hodgson (2002a).
16. The members nominated by government are elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) based on the five regional groupings of states commonly used by the U.N. (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and other states). The members nominated by indigenous organizations are appointed by the president of ECOSOC and represent seven regions "determined to give broad representation to the world's indigenous peoples" (Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, the Artic, Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, North America, and the Pacific), with one additional rotating seat among the first three groups. The U.N. Working Group "expert" members always included a representative from Africa, as well as the other U.N. regions, but they were members of the U.N. Commission for Human Rights who were considered experts on human rights, not representatives of or experts on indigenous peoples.
17. In the interests of securing Euro-American political recognition of and support for their agendas, African organizations and activists, like indigenous peoples elsewhere, often had to use names like "pygmies" that were personally and politically inaccurate, contentious, and distasteful. I do not have the space to further explore this complicated politics of naming and self-naming in this article.
18. For more about Mary Simat's life, see Gittelman (2008).
19. When a representative from the Kenyan High Commission attended the 2005 U.N. Permanent Forum, everyone was intrigued, until, when asked, he identified himself as "just a low-level staff member" to one activist.
20. Several activists told me that the first time Hassan ran for a seat as an "expert" member of the U.N. Permanent Forum, the East African delegates insisted on electing Ayitegan Kouevi, a Togolese lawyer and member of IPACC who was a full-time resident of France because they did not want a "Berber from Morocco" as their representative. They quickly regretted their decision, wondering, because of Kouevi's residence in France, whether he was indigenous, much less African.
21. Several activists voiced similar complaints about the African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO), a pan-African network of indigenous women's organizations. When I asked a Maasai woman activist why she did not attend a meeting about indigenous women organized by AIWO in Nairobi, she replied that she did not really consider AIWO relevant: "They are really above us, and haven't done very much."
22. IPACC alleged that despite OIPA's claims to represent all indigenous peoples in Africa, it was merely a regional organization representing East Africans (Cameron 2004).
23. As a result of the language difficulties, many Francophone Africans have begun to align with a recently formed Francophone Indigenous Peoples Caucus.
24. For an account of the difficulties of forming and sustaining a viable network of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Tanzania, see Hodgson (2002b).

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25. The African Commission was established in 1987 after the ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, which has since been replaced by the African Union) on October 21, 1986. The Charter was adopted by the OAU after significant pressure from civil society organizations, media, and religious institutions for African states to acknowledge, promote, and protect human rights in Africa. The mandate of the African Commission is to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa and to interpret the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The commission, composed of eleven elected commissioners, meets twice a year to review and discuss the human rights situation, state reports, allegations of human rights abuses, and reports by Special Rapporteurs and working groups. In addition, it has established a Documentation Centre, organized seminars and conferences on human rights, carried out "fact-finding" missions to specific countries, and published several human rights documents. For more information about the African Commission, see their Web site (www.achpr.org) and an IWGIA Web site dedicated to their activities (www.iwgia.org/sw249.asp).
26. The other members of the first AC Working Group were two commissioners of the African Commission, N. Barney Pityana and Andrew Chigovera, and three "indigenous experts," Naomi Kipuri (a Maasai anthropologist from Kenya), Mohammed Khattali (Mali), and Zephyrin Kalimba (Rwanda). A third commissioner, Kamel Rezag-Bara, had to withdraw after he was elected chair of the African Commission.
27. For a thoughtful analysis of the debates over "peoples" and the "self" in "self-determination" in the indigenous rights movement, see Muehlbach (2003).
28. United Nations A/C.3/61/L.57/Rev.1. Some organizations, like IPACC, accused Namibia of just acting as a proxy for the objections of the United States (IPACC 2006).
29. "Decision on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Doc. Assembly/AU/9 (VIII) Add.6)." African Union Document Assembly/AU/Dec.141 (VIII) (www.iwgia.org).
30. The seventeen signers of the response included Hassan Id Balkassm, Joseph ole Simel (a prominent Maasai activist from Kenya), Naomi Kipuri (a Maasai activist from Kenya who serves as an expert member of the WGIPC), and Benedict ole Nangoro (a Maasai from Tanzania who heads a well-known pastoralist development organization).
31. See, e.g., IPACC (2006) and the IPACC Web site (www.ipacc.org.za) more generally.
32. The African states that voted in favor were: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Appendix – List of Key Organizations and Documents Cited

African Caucus (informal caucus of African delegates that meets regularly at the U.N.)

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ratified by the African Union in

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1987, established the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, among other measures)
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (established in 1987 by the African Union)
African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO)
African Union (established in 1999 by leaders of African states to replace the Organization of African Unity and to pursue unity and coordinated policies among African states)
Arusha Resolutions (adopted in 1999 by delegates to the Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa)
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 2007)
Indigenous Caucus (informal caucus of indigenous peoples that meets regularly at the U.N.)
Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)
International Labor Organization (ILO)
International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
Organization for Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA)
The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 (adopted by ILO in 1989 to replace earlier 1957 Convention)
U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (since 2001 meets annually in New York)
U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations (met regularly from 1982–2007)
Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities (AC Working Group, established by and reports to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights)

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