Hunting and gathering peoples in the Twenty-first century live in a vastly different world than that of their parent's and grandparent's generation of the 1960s. It was in that decade that the study of hunting and gathering peoples experienced a renaissance of scholarly interest. Researchers such as James Woodburn, Mervyn Meggitt, Eleanor Leacock, Les Hiatt, June Helm, Nic Peterson, and others found that, even in the 1960s, it was still possible to work with foragers who lived with a degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Collectively researchers were able to build up a detailed and nuanced picture of hunter-gatherer life-ways and world-views, a picture that became part of the anthropological canon (Lee and DeVore 1968; Bicchieri 1972; Ingold, Riches and Woodburn 1988a, 1988b; Kelly 1995).

Four decades later even that degree of autonomy has disappeared, as the world's indigenous peoples have merged rapidly into the underclass of First World, Third World, and post-Socialist social formations. Most of the peoples whose lives were highlighted in 'Man the Hunter' (Lee and DeVore 1968) now find themselves in settled communities, on reserves, or in peri-urban slums. Even those who continue to occupy ancestral land and preserve access to resources, do so as encapsulated minorities within a larger system (Woodburn 1988). The condition of 'encapsulation', whether partial or full, is accompanied by the penetration of market forces into their subsistence and small-scale exchange-based economies. Today all former foragers find their economic order partially to fully enmeshed with the commerce of their surrounding region and beyond.
How have these altered circumstances, shaped by the tidal forces of globalization, affected the foraging peoples? Have they entirely lost the social, political, and spiritual characteristics that made them unique? Or despite the shrinking world they inhabit, of bureaucratic states dominated by market forces, have they managed to maintain some of the characteristics that set them apart?

The papers in this volume attempt to offer answers to these questions, against the baseline of understandings about prior hunting and gathering autonomy, egalitarianism, and sharing. Authors have tried to come to grips with the diversity of current living situations, the spectrum of economic and governance arrangements, and the multiplex ways in which the former foragers have been incorporated into the class structures of surrounding societies. In comprehending this diversity, observers have pinpointed certain large scale social processes that appear at work in case after case, indicating that parallel processes are shaping the lives and futures of foragers and similar peoples in such diverse settings as the Congo, Australia, New Guinea, Malaysia, and Botswana.

'Encapsulation' refers to the processes by which formerly autonomous groups are drawn into the orbit of regional social formations and eventually undergo incorporation into state-level entities. The term refers to processes which are primarily political in nature. Understanding encapsulation requires a prior familiarity with what is meant by the concept of 'autonomy'.

In the realm of the economic, 'commercialization' refers to the replacement in a classic Marxist sense, of 'use value' by 'exchange value', of production for consumption by production for export. For foraging peoples long immersed in an economy based on reciprocity and small-scale exchange, the transition to a monetized economy engenders profound changes, not just in economic, but in many other areas of social life, for example in the transition from bride service to bride price (J. Collier 1988) and in the conduct of ritual and healing (Guenther, this volume and Tonkinson, volume 1). Commodification is another way of characterising the conversion of use values to exchange values. The introduction of buying and selling is not the only major innovation. The complexities of their economic situation are compounded by the addition of such diverse activities and income sources as migrant labour, government welfare payments, royalty payments for mineral rights, the professionalisation of traditional healers, as well as receipts from tourism and craft production (Peterson and Matsuyama 1991; Guenther, Weiner this volume).

In the social sphere, the foraging peoples were formerly — to a degree — masters in their own houses, living in the centre of their world. Some groups like the Pygmies, Nayaka, and Palayan, maintained long-standing trade and other relations with non-foraging peoples. But periodically they would retreat into the forest and there live on their own turf by their own codes of conduct (Turnbull 1965; Bird-David 1994; Gardner 2000). Encapsulation brings about not just political changes but social ones as well. As foraging peoples become incorporated into surrounding social formations their daily interactions inten-
sify and opportunities for escape to the forest decline. Entering usually at the lowest rungs of the social ladder, they experience heightened levels of stigmatization and discrimination, and intensified feelings of 'otherness' and marginality.

Underlying all these processes is a common thread, the process of becoming subaltern; the loss of autonomy and the articulation of formerly independent people with the political, economic and social structures of the dominant. In this new world of alien property relations and power structures an important question raised by the authors is how to rebuild their base of power? How can they be actors on new regional, national and international stages? How can they overcome discrimination to reassert their humanity in a world of powerholders who may regard their plight with condescension, indifference, or hostility?

In this paper I will explore the large-scale social processes affecting foragers and post-foragers today, against the background of the original paradigm. In setting the stage for our inquiry it is essential to trace the prior phase of the study of hunters and gatherers as its emerged in the 1960s and 70s, when pioneering social anthropologists delineated the nature, contours, and internal dynamics of autonomous egalitarian societies.

**Egalitarian Societies: Myth or Reality?**

The study of egalitarian societies has had a long and distinguished history in anthropology, dating back at least to the publication in 1883 of Lewis Henry Morgan’s *Houses and house life of the American aborigines*. However by the 1980s the study of egalitarian societies had declined and even their very existence was in some circles moot. A turning point came in 1982, when in his Malinowski lecture James Woodburn argued for the empirical validity of egalitarian society and restored their study to a place on the anthropological agenda. Bringing to bear the analytical apparatus of classic British social anthropology, Woodburn critically re-examined the principles of egalitarianism, assessed their centrality to hunter-gatherer life, and documented their considerable range of variation.

The empirical basis of the egalitarianism and the sharing ethos of small-scale indigenous societies had been a fixture in the theoretical apparatus of earlier generations of scholars from Morgan to Radcliffe-Brown, Kroeber, Lowie, and Karl Polanyi. But under the impact of global capitalism the very reality of societies based on such alternate principles had been called into question. It was James Woodburn’s examination of the phenomenon that reaffirmed the existence of egalitarian societies and also legitimized it as subject worthy of study.

Twenty years after the Malinowski lecture, the study of egalitarianism and its accompanying property relations are well established in the writings of Pierre Clastres, Fred Myers, Basil Sansom, Laura Rival, Grete Hovelsrud-Broda, Nobuhiro Kishigami and many of the authors represented in the two
volumes of 'Property and Equality.' At the same time the understanding of egalitarian societies based on regimes of common property has undergone, since the 1980s, significant development. And this development is linked closely (though not exclusively) with the study of hunting and gathering societies and their transformations under the impact of modernity.

The image of hunter-gatherers has changed significantly since James Woodburn and I started our work 40 or more years ago. Foraging peoples used to be defined primarily in terms of their subsistence, based on hunting of wild animals, gathering of wild plant foods, and fishing. In contemporary theory, this minimal definition is only the starting point. In defining foragers we recognise that contemporary foragers practise a mixed subsistence: gardening in tropical South America, reindeer herding in northeast Asia, trading in south and southeast Asia and parts of Africa and articulation with the world economy in all contemporary cases. A multi-faceted definition of hunter-gatherers has gone well beyond subsistence to encompass a more nuanced understanding including social organization and world view (Lee and Daly 1999).

Crucial to contemporary understandings is Woodburn's key distinction between immediate-return vs. delayed-return societies. Although both were subsumed under the heading of 'band society', a staple of anthropological theory since the 1930s, there were important differences. In immediate-return societies food was consumed on the spot or soon after, while in delayed-return societies food and other resources might be stored for months or years, with marked effects on social organization and cultural notions of property (Woodburn 1978, 1982).

With this distinction in mind, and despite the epochal changes of the last century, features applicable primarily to immediate-return societies, identified in the decades before and since the 1960s, have held up remarkably well. Most observers represented in these volumes would subscribe to the view that the social and economic life of small-scale hunter-gatherers shared certain core features:

First the band was the basic unit of social organization, small in numbers with 20–50 persons, fairly mobile, flexible in membership, and constituted on a variety of pragmatic and formal principles of post-marital residence, consanguinity, affinity and compatibility.

Second, the egalitarian nature of these societies has withstood the scrutiny of critics determined to prove otherwise. As eloquently summarized by Southall at the Halle conference, leadership was less formal and more subject to constraints of popular opinion than was the case in neighbouring village societies governed by headmen and chiefs. The leader of a band could persuade but not command. This important aspect of their way of life allowed for a degree of freedom unheard of in more hierarchical societies, but at the same time, put them at a distinct disadvantage in their encounters with centrally organised 'tribal societies' and colonial authorities, a theme addressed in several of the papers in these volumes, including those by Thomas Gibson, Justin Kenrick, and Jerome Lewis.
Mobility is another characteristic of band societies. People tended to move their settlements frequently, several times a year or more in search of food, and this mobility was an important element of their politics. People in band societies tended to 'vote with their feet,' moving away rather than submitting to the will of an unpopular leader. Mobility was also a means of resolving conflicts that would be more difficult for settled peoples.

A fourth characteristic is the remarkable fact that all band-organized peoples exhibited a pattern of concentration and dispersion. As Marcel Mauss and Henri Beuchat demonstrated for the Eskimo a century ago (1907 [1979]), rather than live in uniformly sized groupings throughout the year, band societies tended to spend part of the year dispersed into small foraging units and another part aggregated into much larger units. The Cree of northern Quebec studied by Harvey Feit and the Innu of Labrador are typical, spending the winter dispersed in small foraging groups of 10-30, while in summer aggregating into groups of up to 200–300 at lake or river fishing sites. Despite Mauss's original assertion that these annual movements obeyed social not ecological imperatives, it seems clear that the concentration-dispersion patterns of hunter-gatherers represents a dialectical interplay of social and ecological factors (Lee 1979: 443–47).

A fifth characteristic common to almost all immediate-return foraging societies (as well as most delayed-return societies; including simple farming and pastoral societies) is a land tenure system based on a common property regime (CPR). These regimes were, until recently, far more common worldwide than regimes based on private property. In traditional CP regimes, while movable property is held by individuals, land is held by a kinship-based collective. As set out in papers in these volumes by Barbara Bodenhorn on the Inupiat, by Mitsuo Ichikawa on the Pygmies and by Strecker and Lydall on the pastoral Hamar, and by others, ownership of resources obey complex rules of access, the details of which will vary from people to people. One common theme though, is that in almost all cases on record, attachment to land and the obligation to share the fruits of the land (and sea) play absolutely central roles in the spiritual and ethical life of the people.

This pinpoints the sixth broad area of commonality. Sharing was the central rule of social interaction among hunters and gatherers (Ingold 1999), what Endicott has termed a 'strict' and 'absolute' obligation (1988: 117). Generalized reciprocity as the dominant form of reciprocity within face-to-face groups is almost universal (Sahlins 1965). Between groups, rules of reciprocal access made it possible for each individual to draw on the resources of several territories. These, combined with an absence of private ownership of land, led many observers from L.H. Morgan forward, to attribute to hunter-gatherers a way of life based on 'primitive communism' (Morgan 1881; Testart 1985; Lee 1988).

The central themes of the moral economy of hunters and gatherers are summed up by Les Hiatt (as quoted in Peterson and Taylor 2001).

Probably everywhere in Aboriginal Australia the highest secular value is generosity. Readiness to share with others is the main measure of a man's
goodness, and hospitality an essential source of his self-esteem. It is likely that this pervasive and highly-developed ethic of generosity emerged as a cultural adaptation to the exigencies of hunting and gathering, and conceivably conferred improved fitness on those who adopted it (Hiatt 1982: 14–15).

These ethical and organisational principles constituted the bedrock of hunter-gatherer lifeways. Laura Rival makes the point that two South American tropical forest peoples might well have a rather similar subsistence mix, but one would have a clearly agricultural orientation while the other a foraging one, based on a study of their social organisation and mobility patterns, as well as their mythology, rituals and interpersonal relations (Rival 1999).

What is remarkable is that despite marked differences in their historical circumstances, foragers seemed to arrive at similar organisational and ideational solutions to the problems of living in groups, a convergence that Tim Ingold, has labelled 'a distinct mode of sociality'.

The nature of this egalitarianism needs further comment. It was not a passive absence of hierarchy, rather the people were observed to hold a fierce adherence to the principles; a conscious limiting of aggressive self-aggrandising tendencies through gossip, ridicule, and the famous levelling devices. One vivid example of this pattern appears in my account 'Eating Christmas in the Kalahari' in which the Ju/'hoansi subjected a visiting anthropologist to relentless criticism when he sought to gain their favour through the slaughtering of a Christmas Ox (Lee 1969; theorized in Lee 1988, 1990). The changing nature of forager egalitarianism is addressed *inter alia*, in the papers by Ichikawa and Ingold (volume 1), and by Gibson and Kenrick (this volume).

It is necessary to note that not all foraging peoples fit into the model presented above. Two areas of divergence need to be noted. First is the important distinction between simple vs. complex hunter-gatherers, drawn in part on Woodburn's immediate-delayed return distinction, but expanded to include an even broader range of cases. Not all hunting and gathering peoples – prehistoric and contemporary – lived in small mobile bands (Price and Brown 1985). Some, like the Indians of the Northwest Coast (Donald 1984, 1997; Mitchell and Donald 1985) and the Calusa of Florida (Marquardt 1988), as well as many prehistoric peoples, lived in large semi-sedentary settlements with chiefs, commoners, and slaves, yet were entirely dependent on wild foods. In social organisation and ethos these societies showed significant divergence from the patterns outlined above, yet in other ways a basic foraging pattern is discernible. For example even the Northwest Coast peoples maintained a concentration-dispersion pattern, breaking down their large permanent plank houses in the summer and re-erecting them in temporary structures at seasonal fishing sites (Boas 1966; Daly 1999). With their simple technology but complex kinship organization and cosmology, the Australian Aborigines are seen by some analysts as exhibiting characteristics that do not fit easily into the immediate or the delayed-return category (see Layton). Other delayed-return systems represented in this volume include the pastoral Hamar or Ethiopia (Lydall, Strecker) and the agricultural Kutubu of New Guinea (Weiner).
Gender is another dimension along which hunting and gathering societies show considerable variation. Women of hunter-gatherer societies do have higher status than women in most of the world’s societies, including industrial and post-industrial modernity. This status is expressed in greater freedom of movement and involvement in decision-making and a lower incidence of domestic violence when compared to women in farming, herding, and agrarian societies (Leacock 1978, 1982; Lee 1982). Nevertheless variation exists: Wife-beating and rape are recorded for societies as disparate as the Eskimo of North Alaska and Aboriginal northern Australia (Friedl 1975; Abler 1992) and are not unknown elsewhere; nowhere can it be said that women and men live in a state of perfect equality. In these volumes gender issues are addressed in the papers by Bodenhorn, Biesele and Sugawara (volume 1) and Keen, Lydall, and Weiner (this volume).

The Great Transformation: When Foragers Meet States and Markets

It is a remarkable accomplishment of the discipline of anthropology that these principles and commonalities along with their variations, have been gleaned from diverse ethnographic case studies of societies on five continents, even as these societies were undergoing rapid change brought about by the imposition of states and markets. Yet since 1982, anthropological attention has turned specifically to what happens when these deeply entrenched and now well-documented principles are impacted by state bureaucracy and the market economy. Do they transform themselves into something entirely different, or do they bend but not break, preserving and adapting, and displaying resilience in the face of seemingly unstoppable pressure? With their focus on encapsulation, commercialization and discrimination the analysts represented in this volume place these questions at the centre of their concerns.

What happens to egalitarian relations of production when foraging subsistence is replaced (in part) by regular food handouts? How does the building of schools, clinics, and other state institutions affect mobility, anchoring the population in space and altering the pattern of concentration and dispersion? How are the ubiquitous Common Property Regimes and patterns of sharing impacted as the communities move from a subsistence based primarily on foraging to one based on a mixed economy of petty-commodity production, government welfare, and small-scale farming and herding? And finally what possibilities exist for linking to the market economy and the bureaucratic state that allow former foragers to avoid total transformation and dissolution of their common property- and sharing-based way of life?
Autonomy and Articulation Problematized

To begin, encapsulation and commercialization cannot be treated as distinct entities. Each represents aspects of the larger process of *articulation*. Thus in unravelling these issues, drawing upon Articulation of Modes of Production theory could be useful (Foster-Carter 1978). Where capitalist relations of production and their accompanying bureaucratic powers penetrate deeply into the daily lives of foraging people, change is more profound and the ability to preserve alternate lifeways severely diminished.

For our purposes I will argue that encapsulation represents the political, and commercialization the economic aspects of a single larger process: the loss of autonomy. The first signals the loss of political autonomy, the second the loss of autonomy on the economic front. But what do we mean by autonomy? If it represents the baseline from which these processes unfold, there has been a remarkable lack of attention paid to the question of what constitutes autonomy (or dependency) of local cultures in an era of global systems.

The dictionary defines autonomy as 'the fact or condition of being autonomous; self government; independence.' Autonomous refers to 'functioning independently without control by others.' (Webster's 1976: 95) ‘Autonomy’ has a wide range of usages and nuances at the group and individual levels in the human sciences in a variety of fields including anthropology, politics, economics, feminism, and psychotherapy.

It is necessary to clear the ground of some misconceptions which have clouded debates about the status of hunter-gatherers. First of all, economic autonomy must not be equated with isolation. It is a given that all societies through history have been involved in economic exchanges and political relations with their neighbours. The first general point to be made then is that trade and exchange should not simply be equated with domination and loss of autonomy. Exchange is a fundamental part of human life and appears in all cultural settings (Mauss 1954; Lévi-Strauss 1949). Further, many gatherer-hunter peoples have successfully carried on exchange relations with farming and market societies for hundreds of years in India, Southeast Asia, East Africa) while still maintaining a foraging mode of production.

What then constitutes autonomy? As an *economic* concept it refers to ideas of economic self-sufficiency, and self-sufficiency in turn hinges, not on the *existence* of trade – since all societies trade – but whether that trade is indispensible for the society's reproduction and survival. To demonstrate autonomy one must be able to demonstrate self-reproduction. Dependency therefore may be defined as the inability of a society to reproduce itself without the agency of another society. At any given moment a society may exhibit greater or lesser ‘autonomy’ in its productive relationships, and it should be possible to make assessments of this degree through empirical investigation.

Commercialisation denotes, not just a loss of economic autonomy, but the subordination of a local economy to a particular form of outside control, to use Sahlins' framework, the replacement of a regime of generalized and balanced reciprocity by one of market-driven negative reciprocity (Sahlins 1965)
Political Autonomy

Political autonomy and its opposite, political subordination, raise interesting problems of their own, hinging, not on a society’s capacity to reproduce itself – it may do that very well – but on the willingness of other (dominating) societies to let it remain autonomous. To put it another way political autonomy is about another society’s ability and desire to impose its will, and the core society’s ability to resist that imposition. Encapsulation thus becomes a process by which a formerly free-standing unit becomes incorporated into the political structures of a larger entity.

In this perspective encapsulation is not an endpoint, but rather a stage in the process of integration, during which the contours of a subordinated entity’s former independence remains visible. Eventually even that hazy outline will disappear as the process of integration continues towards its logical conclusion. Surely almost every region, district and municipality in a modern state must have passed, at some point in its history, through a stage of encapsulation. And each unit must retain however distant, some collective memory of its autonomy as a basis for forging identity.

Another interesting aspect of the problem is the question of whether political autonomy is imposed or asserted. In the former case the economic autonomy of a subject group may serve the interests of a dominant group. Therefore the subordinates are encouraged to pursue their habitual round of activities at their own pace while providing goods or services – often at equitable terms – to the dominant group. In the latter case the autonomous group asserts its claims to autonomy through its own strength and political will and these claims are not contested by their neighbours. In practice these two forms may be difficult to distinguish, and the interpretation of which form is present will rely heavily on subjective judgements both by the peoples involved and particularly by the observers. Thus the Ituri Forest Mbuti Pygmies observed by Turnbull (1965) appeared to be entirely subservient to their black neighbours while they were in their villages, but quite autonomous when they were on their own in the forest (see paper by Justin Kenrick for a critique of Turnbull’s views).

Crossing the Permeable Barrier: Transformations of Property

During the Kalahari debate of the 1990s it was commonplace to attribute dependent status to any and all hunter-gatherers throughout their history. But the burden of evidence from studies of Kalahari foragers and elsewhere indicate that such a fate is not inevitable. Foraging peoples as disparate as Michael Asch’s Dene trappers in subarctic Canada and Basil Sansom’s Aboriginal fringe-dwellers near Darwin, Australia appear to be able to erect barriers to the penetration of capitalist relations of production. Here and elsewhere values in the capitalist world of cash and commodities cross a
permeable barrier to become converted into values congruent with the 'traditional economy' of sharing.

Several of the papers in these volumes make outstanding contributions to the understanding of this process. Two examples: Barbara Bodenhorn (volume 1) has done a masterful analysis of Alaskan Inupiat whaling captains who contribute much of their own capital to the mounting of a bowhead whaling expedition but who, through the strict rules of sharing, must give away most of the proceeds, consisting of many tons of whale meat. And Axel Koehler's study (this volume) of the Baka Pygmies of the Congo (Brazzaville) documents that the Baka did not have the market thrust upon them; they entered voluntarily and some Baka became wealthy through the ivory trade. The Baka proved to be skilled traders and in their dealings with their Bantu neighbours, debits and credits flow in both directions. But they did not abandon the moral economy of sharing. Baka now sell part of the hunted meat from kills in the local market, but only on the strict condition that at least half of each kill be shared out through Baka traditional kin networks.

Among the Ju/'hoansi, men returning from the Witwatersrand Gold Mines would come home dressed head-to-toe in western clothing purchased with mine wages. After a few days back home their entire wardrobe would have been dispersed item-by-item to family and friends through the 'cashless' hxaro exchange network. Women participating in the new home-brew economy would charge even close relatives the going rate in cash for a cup of home brew made from store bought sugar and yeast, but at the end of the day they would share their gathered nuts and berries with their former 'customers' (Lee 1979).

In Michael Asch's northern Dene and across the Canadian subarctic, the acquisition of electric freezers has made it possible not only to preserve and store moose, deer, rabbit, and other country-food more effectively, but also to participate in feasting and food distribution on a greatly expanded scale. And Basil Sansom has shown how the Wallaby Cross fringe-dwellers made sharp distinctions between whitefella economics and blackfella practices, preserving deeply meaningful patterns of sharing at least to a degree in a situation of poverty and deprivation (Sansom 1980; see also David Trigger 1996).

Obviously there are more desirable fates than that of being a fringe-dweller on the outskirts of Darwin or a Ju/'hoan shebeen patron spending hard-earned pennies on home-brew. These examples nevertheless show the strength and persistence of sharing practices even with the incorporation into the cash and welfare economy.

Summing up the findings of a generation of observers of Australian Aborigines Nicolas Peterson and John Taylor (2001) note that the moral economy of sharing persists even in areas that have experienced centuries of colonial rule:

Some indigenous Australians in the settled part of the country have, collectively, been in contact with a capitalist economy for as long as 200 years, yet it is evident that even in these areas a distinctive egalitarian moral economy still exists. Sharing is still prevalent and it is widely understood to be an
important factor in the reproduction of the poor material circumstances of the Aboriginal population which are substantially below that of the population at large. The observation made by Diane Barwick thirty-six years ago, writing of Aboriginal people in Victoria, that, ‘Families accumulating property will be called flash [mimetically ostentatious], and will be placed in a humiliating position if they ever find themselves in need’ (1965: 18), and the comment of Jeremy Beckett that ‘Aboriginal people in western NSW find it very difficult to contract out of the system [of sharing]’ (1958: 187) remain true today. Writing of contemporary practice in western NSW, Gaynor Mac-Donald (pers. com.) comments that people there have maintained a distinctive system of sharing despite not having lived independently by hunting and gathering for at least a century.

What accounts for the extraordinary persistence of sharing among former hunter-gatherers? An interesting divergence of views has sprung up. While some see this as a survival of a strongly-held and still meaningful ethos from the hunting and gathering past, another school of thought, represented in this volume by Thomas Gibson, sees the presence of the moral economy as itself a product of encapsulation, a set of values erected specifically in dialectical opposition to a surrounding milieu of hard-edged, competitive, dog-eat-dog ethics. A similar argument has been put-forward by Carmel Schire (1984). Against this position is Hiatt’s argument that such sharing confers long-term evolutionary advantage, long antedating the present conjuncture. Also relevant is the question of how to explain the presence of the moral economy of sharing equally in encapsulated and non-encapsulated environments. Given the enormous emotional and spiritual power of its presence, it is hard to believe that the moral economy of sharing is a recent invention, existing solely as a defence mechanism against an encroaching dog-eat-dog world.

**Discrimination and Marginality**

It is fortunate that former hunter-gatherers bring with them such a strong ethic into their encounters with more powerful societies. They need all the strength they can muster in countering the attitudes of superiority held by the large majority of their neighbours. Richard Grinker summed up these attitudes in his important paper ‘Images of denigration’ (1990), documenting the attitudes of Lese farmers towards the Efe Pygmies whose lives they have come to dominate. In Botswana the San, or as they are known locally, the Basarwa, occupy the lowest rungs of the social ladder, whether they live on rural cattle-posts or in peri-urban slums. Observers have been shocked by the depth of the racism expressed by the dominant Tswana towards their Basarwa servants, an attitude tempered, however, by paternalism and occasionally benevolence. Hitchcock has documented the harsh treatment, including beatings and torture, of Basarwa hunters suspected of game law infractions (2002). Similar patterns are reported for the Twa of Rwanda who
suffered grievously at the hands of the Hutu militias during the massacres of 1994 (Lewis, this volume).

As Justin Kenrick notes, farming people look down on the Pygmies, who for their part are willing to ‘put on poverty’, that is to conform to the image expected of them, in order to get favours from their more powerful neighbours. They liken this behaviour to the dissimulation required in hunting. In the forest however they can reassert their autonomy and humanity. This attitude is reflected as well among the Namibian Ju‘hoansi, where peoples of the interior carried on a mutually lucrative trade with riverine Bantu-speaking farmers, exchanging desert products like furs and ostrich eggshell beadwork for ironware, ceramics, and tobacco. When asked whether they addressed their trading partners as equals or as ‘Masters’ one experienced Ju‘hoan trader replied, ‘I would call him anything he wants, as long as he gave me good value for my furs’!

Kenrick, citing Woodburn (1997), sums up the forms of discrimination experienced by Central African hunter-gatherers as involving negative stereotyping, a denial of their rights, and segregation. Despite the flexibility of ethnicity in many parts of Africa, hunter-gatherers seem to be particularly stigmatised by farmers and herders, epitomised in the extreme by the example of the BaTwa of Rwanda. Despite being numerically small and politically unthreatening, the BaTwa, in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, suffered a disproportionately high rate of loss at the hands of ethnic cleansers (Lewis and Knight 1995: 93).

Their stigmatised status is often used as a justification for the denial of rights. Although this denial of rights is widely contested by Forest Peoples themselves and their allies, their subordinate status makes them squatters in their own territories. Denied rights to the land they hunt and gather over and ‘are freely, even casually, dispossessed of the land by agricultural and pastoral people’ (Woodburn 1997: 350). It must be added however that these acts of discrimination mirror precisely the acts of dispossession and even genocide, so freely practiced by Europeans colonialists on five continents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And elsewhere in the current post-foraging world there are many examples of indigenous peoples and their allies challenging discrimination successfully in the courts, the media, and in political arenas (Dean and Levi 2003; Lee 2003).

Post-Foragers and the Future

The foregoing has revealed a complex picture of alternate pathways and outcomes as hunter-gatherers travel the road from being, even to a degree, masters in their own houses, to the contemporary conditions of encapsulation. We have seen how encapsulation is a process not an end point, and how – in spite of pressures from the outside – former foragers and peoples like them do manage to adhere to a set of values that emphasizes sharing and egalitarianism.
These values do not prevent outsiders from taking advantage of them or engaging in sharp dealing. Perhaps even more serious than the reported cases of outright aggression against foragers, are the longer-term and more insidious injuries of class. Although not addressed directly by the papers in these volumes, the social and physical harm done by alcohol abuse is probably a greater threat to the well-being of twenty-first-century foragers than the beatings of game wardens. Unfortunately, the successful Baka pygmy entrepreneurs described by Koehler (this volume) are the exception rather than the rule for African post-foragers. And the over-consumption of alcohol and other substances is well-documented for aboriginal peoples in Canada, Australia, Siberia, and elsewhere.

Despite incorporation at the lowest rung of the social ladder, foraging people do bring certain strengths to their encounters with the wider world. Against this ongoing discrimination there are some powerful countervailing forces. In his contribution to this volume Justin Kenrick enjoins his fellow anthropologists to follow the example of James Woodburn and combine their anthropology with political work on behalf of indigenous peoples. It is clear that many if not most of the authors have already made this commitment. The politics of engagement are part of a larger trend. As foraging peoples enter wider arenas they are the beneficiaries of a rising tide of positive awareness in the global public consciousness of the concept of the ‘Indigenous’. It is under the banner of ‘Indigenous Peoples’ that the diverse peoples represented in these volumes will make their futures and find their niches.

Whatever uneasiness anthropologists may have about the term, what it implies and who it applies to, the fact remains that politically and socially, nationally and internationally, the concept of indigenous has become a powerful tool. After centuries of negative stereotyping, images of denigration that still persist in pockets, being recognised as indigenous has become an avenue for entitlement, enfranchisement, and empowerment. I would argue that the very existence of these two volumes on ‘Property and Equality’ attests to the power that the significance of these peoples exerts on at least one segment of the global intelligentsia.

If indeed a breakthrough has occurred, it has been achieved by the dint of efforts by countless individuals and collectivities of indigenous peoples around the world, providing for formerly oppressed peoples, a ‘seat at the table’ in negotiations with governments over land rights, compensation packages, and acknowledgement of past wrongs. Increasingly indigenous groups are setting their own agendas in ways that discomfit elites and make them squirm in the glare of unfavourable publicity, what Niezen has labelled ‘the politics of embarrassment’. Land invasions, roadblocks, and guerrilla theatre send messages that official spin-doctors find difficult to counter. Continuing media and human rights scrutiny makes the costs of state suppression unacceptably high. In this process sympathetic outsiders have an ongoing role to play. Media workers, human rights activists, and like-minded anthropologists thus play the important role of bearing witness.
This volume offers a rich harvest of ideas about the how former foragers have maintained some of their social integrity and have adhered to their deeply-held codes of sharing and egalitarianism. It is still an open question whether the diverse peoples covered here will find ways to recover from the wounds suffered by the process of encapsulation and domination. Yet in paper after paper there were signs for some optimism. The papers also suggest that anthropologists have something to offer to indigenous groups, not just as observers, but as allies and advocates in finding ways of finding their futures in a commodified world.

If governments claiming legitimacy are going to pay more than lip-service to democracy and human rights, they will have to acknowledge indigenous claims. Right of prior occupation is a powerful judicial principle that lies at the heart of capitalist land tenure. The primary story presented here is how indigenous people are connected to the land; how indigenous people are living in cultures that are profoundly non-capitalist, and how their on-going existence bears witness that even in this hard-bitten age of real-politik and globalisation, other ways of being, other ways of living in the world are possible.

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