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New Frontiers in Indigenous Economies: the example of the United States

Introduction: methodological viewpoint

The “Next Big Question” this paper will attempt to answer is whether Indigenous economies can be anything else than capitalistic when they function in the context of mainstream societies and whether capitalism is the answer to economic development. Outsiders, *i.e.* mainstream inhabitants from Western countries (Europeans, Euroamericans...) often fantasize about an alternative that could provide an answer to the excesses of globalized economies, cultures, and lifestyles.

Discourse analysis, in the broad sense, as well as historical data and historiography, case studies and personal field research are used to provide the social and economic backdrop of this paper. The geographic context is the United States, one of the 72 countries where Indigenous peoples are located (IWGIA). The choice of the U.S. is motivated by the fact that 566 Native American Nations attempt a diversity of approaches to economic integration. They represent 5.2 million people of whom 49% identify as Indigenous only and 51% as mixed-ancestry individuals. Poverty is rampant: 27% of Native Americans live in poverty, the highest rate for any minority and nearly double the rate of the nation. Native Americans face ‘human security issues’ at a higher rate than any other group, *i.e.* violence, a low rate of successful prosecution, health issues as well as alcohol/drug problems (Guedel 4-5).

The present paper is about economic frontiers and a word of caution is necessary: few tribes have census information (Conner 163) and statistics about tribal economies are rare or incomplete. Native American nations “do not quantify their economic activity with traditional metrics such as national income or GDP, nor publish detailed statistics regarding their economic performance” (Guedel 55). The researcher has to rely on historic and qualitative data as well as on field work to assess the state of Native America. One reason for focusing on Native American Nations in the U.S. is their leading role for Indigenous nations around the world in matters of sovereignty. It may also be assumed that their economic development foreshadows what will happen elsewhere.

While the public customarily imagines Indians—the term carries no negative connotation in Europe—living in the past amongst the trappings of ancient civilizations, it seems almost sacrilegious to

discuss their place in mainstream economy. Despite poverty and anomia (the loss of the traditional social norm without full replacement by the Western mainstream norm), Indigenous Nations have survived with key elements of their cultures intact.

Since the present text focuses on the Indigenous viewed by the non-Indigenous Westerners, the first part of the analysis is centered on the 'ecological Indians', a frequently used representation to justify their superior worldview and knowledge. Indigenous economies have evolved from an archaic exploitation and craft manufacturing phase to new domains in tourism. This will be the scope of parts 2. The most interesting evolution is about the new ventures that are mimicking mainstream capitalistic ventures, as seen in part 3. They beg to answer a question about the Indigenous. Are they still different from the mainstream? Is their economy different? Do they provide an answer to the search for an alternative?

The present paper is the result of research on Indigenous Nations that spans over two decades and its author has witnessed the evolution of Indigenous Nations, their increasing political clout, the optimization of their economic strategies, and above all, the pride expressed by tribal members who witnessed positive change.

1-The ecological Indians who shares archaic knowledge

The Indigenous have been integrated into the European vision through the benevolent discourse of Rousseauist philosophers and travelers of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Indigenous themselves have complied through a discourse of their own. From the mid-20th century onward, the Indigenous, especially in the Americas, have dutifully played the role of the stewards of nature in which they needed to be seen by the Euroamericans (Krech). The issue is still being debated. Is the Indian essentially an ecologist or is he playing the role in which the white man is pushing him? Krech is ambivalent on the question.

For the Indians of the late 19th or the early 20th centuries, their relation to nature had largely been modified by the disappearance of their land-base and the advent of wage-work. This was foreseen by the early ethnographers who conducted field work among the Southwestern tribes, from the 1880s to the 1930s, with a sense of urgency before the encroaching white civilization would have erased their "authentic" culture. These tribes were specifically targeted by research as they were the least assimilated in the continental United States.

The question of authenticity is largely reflected in the debate opposing ethnographers and assimilationist politicians in the late 19th century. While the former sought to present the panorama of a surviving culture (Cushing, Parsons, among others) the latter considered the Indians' participation in "white" culture as a success. The discussion surrounding the authenticity and representation of Indians goes back to the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago when the cultural preservationists clashed with the assimilationists (Rinehart). Incidentally, this is also the period when Indians started to market themselves as authentic and exotic, thus fashioning their place in the contemporary globalized economy. The Meriam Report of 1928, by the Institute for Government Research, points in that direction and notes that tribes who have kept alive their crafts—such as the New Mexican Pueblo—are in a better economic situation (Meriam Report 532).

Meanwhile, attempts to study cultures in the process of transformation were rare and the effects of wage-work on a traditional culture were considered unworthy of anthropological research (Lange).

One has to wait for the 1990s to see academic research taking notice of the way Native American Nations are finding their place in mainstream economy (Johansen). Applying the term 'economy' to describe the subsistence of a tribal nation seemed so incongruous that Ronald Trosper called it "the other discipline" in 1998, meaning a sidekick to history, the established discipline.

The synergy of the 1980s and 1990s proved favorable for the emergence of Indigenous economic initiatives. While the 1970s were a great period for Indian pride, the decades that followed accrued the visibility of Native Americans and their economic clout, first on the international scene with the advent of the UN's Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), and in 1988 with the passing of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, authorizing games of chance on Indian Territory.

While population statistics continuously point to extreme poverty on Indian Reservations, tribal economic endeavors are very visible across the United States, not only in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where the trend for Indian arts and crafts originated over a century ago, but also in the nationwide Indian casinos and tourist destinations. In the face of an increasing globalization of concepts, ideas, and world views, there seems to be an advancing 'frontier' of mainstream ideas, or at least American ideas into Indigenous territory, as if the Turnerian frontier was being replayed, almost in its original sense (Turner).

2-The old economic frontier: Indian crafts and tourism

North American Indians have always participated in the colonial economy although the term is often hidden under the monikers 'way of life' or 'customs' (Trosper 201-206) present as a subtext in every encounter where the Indians interacted with the newcomers in trade or land exchange.

Indians as individual farmers: a doomed project

When the integration—as opposed to the extermination or geographic isolation—of Indians became the policy of the United States, the question of their tribal economy was not yet mentioned. However, it became clear to policymakers and lobbies, such as the group calling themselves Friends of the Indians, that the collective ownership of land was the key element of their cultural difference, hampering their integration into the mainstream as individualistic farmers in family based operations. The ensuing Dawes Act, or General Allotment Act of 1887, aimed at transforming tribal land into individual tracts (Prucha 666-671), broke up tribal hierarchies and ceremonial societies. Despite later safeguards against selling or alienating the land immediately after the allotment process, the implementation of the Dawes Act led to the disappearance of many tribes who had been subjected to the policy. Its abandonment under the Roosevelt Presidency in 1934, with John Collier's Indian New Deal, started a revival of Indian identity (Rusco 49-50).

Indians exhibited and the beginning of tourism

However, in the last decades of the 19th century, while the colonial powers attempted to integrate their colonized peoples in vocational occupations, it became an accepted practice to exhibit the colonized in the World Expositions taking place in the United States and in Europe. The rationale behind these world fairs was, for the exhibitors, to show achievement, scientific knowledge, artistic prowess, and ultimately political and commercial power. The educational exhibit of Indians became a standby from the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 onward. They were shown in settings made to look like their native environment, doing 'typical' activities. It also had a more somber ideological value as implicitly it placed them on a lower rank in the social order.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that the visitors would be gloating over the defeated. In fact, a rift occurred among the organizers. While the position of Indian Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan was to show the progress made towards assimilation with exhibits from the Indian schools, Frederic Putnam, the chief of the department of Ethnology and Archaeology wanted to provide visitors with a view of how Indians lived at the time of contact (Rinehart 405). Concession holders at the fair had great freedom to set up their Indian villages in an educational and entertainment context. Whole families and tribal groups were hired to represent their traditional lifestyle. They spent several months on the reconstructed villages of the fairgrounds and were allowed—even encouraged—to bring traditional craft items to supplement their wages. The staged authenticity of the setting brought in spectators and the real authenticity of the native crafts, added to the experience of the fairgoers. The synergy was profitable for the concessioners as well for the Indians. Enterprising youth also realized the economic potential of their skills such as Pomiuk Kooper of the Eskimo village who used his whip to snatch up coins tossed to him by the visitors (Rinehart 417). While “Native performers became iconic trophies of colonialism in Chicago” (Rinehart 405), they also learned how to function in the monetary economy and in the early touristic economy.

The monetary economy

The advent of the monetary economy has long been outside the scope as anthropologists preferred to study unmodified societies deemed more worthy of academic interest. Timid attempts were made in the mid-20th century to analyze the changes induced by the monetary economy. For societies, especially in the Southwest, that have retained traditional elements centuries after contact, through the domination of Spain, Mexico, and the United States, the monetary economy has introduced changes far beyond the scope of what is traditionally called the economic domain.

In the Pueblo of Cochiti, located between the cities of Albuquerque and Santa Fe along the Rio Grande, the land base has remained the same since initial European contact, a mix of irrigated land and pasture, excluding probably the hunting territory located further away (Lange 674). Moreover, the tribe has remained on their historic land, a positive factor when compared to those who suffered removal and land loss. Charles Lange has studied Cochiti in the 1940s and early 1950s and has observed the traditional landownership patterns as well as the advent of the monetary economy with cash from stock raising, farming, wage work or the sale of crafts. Cash has seeped into every transaction, replacing barter. The presence of cash meant that individuals employed outside the pueblo, and living outside the pueblo, could not be summoned for collective work on the ditches, and could ignore the dictates of their religious hierarchy. In addition, no punitive action could be taken against them (Lange 678-680). Although Cochiti has a close-knit social organization, the evolution brought about by the monetary economy made individuals less dependent on the traditional rules and rituals.

Crafts

The sale of crafts is the most basic economic activity allowing Indigenous peoples to interact as an identifiable cultural group with mainstream society. While wage work, *per se*, is more individualistic and generally unrelated to the culture of origin of the worker, crafts have a strong link with the maker's past culture. Baskets, metalwork, and weaving once played a role in the subsistence economy. Materials and designs, despite their inevitable evolution, hark back to pre-industrial times. The market has played a role in the manufacture of crafts since the late 19th century. Passengers traveling on the transcontinental railroad bought trinkets at the stops. They had to be portable, or at

least usable in their home environments. The tastes of the buyers were known to shopkeepers and traders and they gradually seeped into the local fashion.

While the buyers wanted (and still want) to see the archaic pre-industrial quality of the object they buy, their manufacture and sale were already part of the demand and supply interaction of mainstream economy. Small scale and family-based manufacturing, without hired help and hardly any capital, cannot be called capitalistic. However, the imbalance of the activity where poor and largely uneducated makers of crafts are opposed to wealthy leisure travelers and buyers, places the production of crafts into the field of colonial activities, and cannot yet be called a new frontier in economic advances.

Nevertheless, with an increase in tourism, especially to the Southwest of the United States in the first decades of the 20th century, tribal economy was about to change. The “Indian Detourists”—*i.e.* the customers of the Indian Detours side trips from the Southwestern train stations, would frequently stop at Pueblos to be shown the wares of local craftspeople. The hotels built by the Fred Harvey Company started to include curio shops and had resident craftspeople working and living onsite. (Marshall 109-111).

The Meriam Report of 1928, with its bleak vision of the “Indian Problem” has a positive vision of the craft industry of the Pueblo, who “sell pottery at good prices, directly to tourists” (Meriam Report 532). For the first time a government sponsored report urges the authorities to promote Indian crafts, as well as arts, with instruction in weaving, pottery making, drawing and painting Indian designs. The report concludes that there is a need for high quality work and the involvement of qualified teachers (Meriam Report 648). The production of crafts is observable in most tribes, or Native American Nations, but also elsewhere in the world, as the first stage of economic involvement with the non-Indigenous society surrounding them.

Crafts to arts

The first major evolution of the crafts sector came when buyers started to aim for higher quality. The interest in fine crafts was promoted by white teachers in Indian day-schools, catering to children who lived at home with their families and who came from culturally active tribes. These teachers, obviously interested in the artistic potential of their pupils, asked them specifically to draw and paint the designs of their tribe (Austin 360-366). Meanwhile, in the early 1920s, the Santa Fe Indian Market came to being as a forum where Indians could exhibit their crafts. While the originators and first judges were white “Anglos,” the purpose of the market was to promote fine Indian crafts through Blue Ribbons awarded for best of show in each category.

The evolution from craft to art came gradually. The guidelines of today’s Santa Fe Indian market show some uneasiness about it as they regulate designs and materials and navigate between « culturally acceptable materials » and those that are not (SWAIA).

While, at first glance, it may seem easy to distinguish between them, the regulations are complex. Precious metal clay, an industrial product invented in the 1990s in Japan, by the Mitsubishi Corporation, allowing precious metal to be worked like putty and sintered with a torch, or in an oven, is “allowed with disclosure” while die-struck components are not (SWIA, Jewelry standards, Summary, 2016). The rationale behind the difference lays in the fact that precious metal clay is shaped by hand while the die-struck component is machine made. The hand-made versus machine-

made controversy is ongoing since the 1930s Maisel's affair pinning Navajo silversmiths against the Maisel's jewelry shop in Albuquerque where metalwork was produced in assembly-line fashion (Bsumek 175-183).

Today, the two types of production—crafts and arts—are sold next to one another, not only in Santa Fe where the crafts are still offered under the portal of the Palace of the Governors, and the arts in the surrounding galleries, but also in most tourist venues where the cheap curio shop and the upscale art gallery both offer Indian-made objects, often in the same style, but at a different price.

At the edge of the “old economic frontier”: the question of what is Indian

The “old economic frontier,” and its minimalistic ventures of Indians into mainstream economy with an activity in the field of crafts, has unexpected repercussions in the global economy. Popular designs perceived as traditionally “Indian,” often found in petroglyphs or on pottery, have become so popular that they are being used by non-Indian designers (Janke, Case Study 6). The copyright laws do not apply, because of the age of the designs, the anonymity of the original creator, and the various interpretations of the motives—*i.e.* diverging in proportions and/or color. The Indigenous demand recognition of their ancient creations and protection as a group, as opposed to the individual creation of an identified artist (Brown 2003, 3). The reasoning is that the standards of the (Western) the patent legislation will never protect Indigenous designs, unless they are recent creations by an identified artist.

To make matters worse, Indigenous peoples are using commercially attractive designs “belonging” to another group. The Zapotec Indians of Mexico, who have a weaving tradition, were drawn to the Santa Fe arts and crafts market in the 1980s, selling quality hand-made products with Navajo designs. To protect their own Indigenous groups, the U.S. administration replied that the label “Indian-made” had to refer to federally recognized tribes in the United States (Bsumek 208-210). In the escalation of the controversy it appeared that Indians, whether called Nations, or tribes, had entered the globalized economic scene and there was nothing “primitive” or archaic about their situation.

When trying to protect a design, they were in fact in the same position as a ‘superbrand’ such as Nike or Coca Cola. Any attempt by a competitor to use a logo reminiscent of those brands results in a lawsuit despite the fact that the trademark protection covers only a specific design in color and proportions. The figure of Kokopelli, the hunchbacked flute-player, a word-famous example found in pre-historic Southwestern petroglyphs, has been appropriated by numerous companies in their logo or as a design on objects or clothing. Who can claim original ownership of the design? The Southwestern Pueblos whose geographic origin lies in the area where the petroglyphs have been discovered? Or other Indigenous peoples living in the area? Moreover, variable designs are difficult to protect as shown by the numerous variants of Kokopelli, with or without horns, with or without a giant penis, Kokopelli as a human or in animal form. For the Indigenous, such as the Snuneymuxw of British Columbia, it is a style that requires protection rather than a specific design (Brown 2003, 82-84).

This is also the case of the Zia Sun symbol, and the name Zia, a New Mexican Pueblo with 600 inhabitants. The Zia Sun symbol—a circle with four groups of rays set a right angle, in red on yellow—adorns the state flag of New Mexico since 1925. It had been loosely adapted from the design on a 19th century Zia jar. The Zia's discontent had been on the rise in the last two decades of the 20th century. They resented the unauthorized appropriation of their symbol by the state, as well as

commercial companies, and started to take legal steps towards the protection of their sacred symbol. However, they stopped short of litigation when the unpopularity of the move became apparent (Berthier-Foglar 2010 408-419).

To prevent conflictual situations, the Trademark Office now tends to refuse the registration of brand logos or names related to Indigenous nations, despite the fact that their use does not infringe the present trademark laws (Brown 2006, 32). While this is a positive development in favor of cultural protection, it is also—and more disturbingly—what the highly recognizable superbrands are doing, creating a no-go zone around their logo with the effect that other companies will be reluctant to use any related visual or lexical signifier.

Another step towards branding is the proposal by Navajo silversmith Ray Tracey to protect the label “Navajo made” in the same way “Perrier or Levi’s jeans are protected.” (Bsumek, 216). His specific mention of commercial world brands may have the purpose of associating his artistic and commercial production with international brands of high standing. Unintentionally, though, he places his art in the domain of capitalistic corporations.

Another step towards the inclusion of Indigenous peoples into international corporations is the movement to protect Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). The realization that there is such traditional knowledge that could be of interest to international corporations, came about in the 1980s when pharmaceutical companies engaged in research programs to discover previously unknown plants in the Amazon forest—unknown at least to mainstream biologists—as well as their use by indigenous healers. The property rights for TEK can be only group rights, and they are often the tangible property of a subgroup within a tribe, such as a ceremonial society, or certain medicine men. Moreover, TEK may be shared between several groups. Ownership is difficult to ascertain as is the wish to sell TEK (Brown 2006, 29). Even if a pharmaceutical company finances R&D among Indigenous peoples in the Amazon forest, ascertaining property rights and benefits sharing will be difficult to do (Rose, Janna 15-16).

As the Indigenous interact with the mainstream, whether it is the sale of crafts or arts and beyond, they inevitably conform to the dictates of the market and ultimately to the capitalist economy. This hypothesis is at the core of the present paper. However, the fact that they attempt to preserve their cultural specificity as a group is an ‘anomalous’ event that needs further investigation. The indigenous economy that is considered here is related to the group, whether called tribe, or nation; Native Americans who live and work outside the reservation, or the territory of their Native Nation, and who are business owners, are outside the scope of the present paper as they have effectively joined the mainstream through the individuality of their endeavor and the absence of tribal guidelines to follow. Artists who are strongly embedded in their tribal identity, but whose activity is independent and unrelated to the tribal government of their Nation, represent a grey zone on the edge of the “old economy.” They wish to protect the cultural identity of their group the same way a brand is protected, which in itself is significant of the new frontier in Indigenous economies, but their activity is not a capitalist endeavor per se as it does not necessitate a great amount of capital to begin with.

3-Indigenous ventures and capitalistic attitudes

The third part of the analysis concerns the ‘anomalous’ event—anomalous in the context of capitalism—of group identity as a factor in economic endeavors.

Transition from crafts to arts as a result of group pride

The transition from crafts to art is contemporary to the rise of group pride and the sovereignty movement. The early signs of the evolution came about in the 1920s when the New Mexican Pueblos stood up for their rights to the land in the face of the risk of dispossession wrought by the Bursum Bill that would have empowered white squatters on Indian land. Santa Fe poet Alice Corbin Henderson started to collect watercolors of Pueblo dances made by Indians and the School of American Research began to buy representations of ceremonies (Austin 360-366).

During the same decade, in an effort to promote quality Indian crafts, the first Indian market was organized in Santa Fe to provide a juried outlet for Indigenous Art. Crafts were becoming art, and the cultural revival experienced by the Southwestern tribes was on its way.

By the 1970s, the cultural revival of numerous tribes in the United States was in full swing. Taos Pueblo became the first U.S. tribe to be granted land—their sacred Blue Lake—instead of the usual monetary compensation (Berthier-Foglar 399), and in the 1980s many tribes remembering that the Supreme Court had called them “domestic dependent Nations” in 1831 used the term “Nation” in their official name. It is significant that Pueblo Historian Joe Sando published “Pueblo Indian” in 1976 and an updated version of the same text appeared under the title “Pueblo Nations” in 1989 (Berthier-Foglar 344). Meanwhile the Santa Fe Indian School underwent a profound transformation, from vocational day school to the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA), housed on a university-style campus with high-tech teaching facilities for all art forms.

Tourism in the age of Native pride

Tourism has played a role in Indian country since the beginning of the practice of traveling for leisure in the 1880s. In the early times, Indians worked as guides or cooks, in subservient roles, representing savage exoticism for their employers. Their participation in the economy was still marked by colonial rules defining the domination of conquered peoples and the role they were expected to play. For historian Chantal Norrgard, the era of “Tourist Colonialism” lasted up to WW2 for tribes such as the Ojibwe. However, the Ojibwe women realized that they could profit from the primitivist fashion by working with bark and embroidering glass beads (Norrgard 108-115). The same phenomenon is attested in the Santa Fe area during the heydays of the Indian Detours when the organizers planned stops at the houses of craftspeople. The dominant power was colonial but the colonized soon learned to take advantage of the market forces.

When reservation tourism started in the 1960s and tribes entered the tourist market as regular players with full rights to manage their resources, their resorts did not fundamentally differ from similar operations by mainstream companies. In 1963, The Mescalero Apache of Southern New Mexico purchased the Sierra Blanca ski area because funds were available to help tribes move towards self-sufficiency. They renamed it Ski Apache in 1984 at a time when the Indian name carried more commercial weight (Maue). Other ventures reflect the same trend and were “Indian” in name and visual inspiration: the Southern Ute, located near Mesa Verde National Park, built their Sky Ute Lodge and Sky Ute Downs (horse racing) facilities. The Warm Springs Nation in Oregon built their Kah-Nee-Tà resort (Brown, Rita-Jean 364-366).

The Indian casinos

After the 1987 *Cabazon v. California* federal litigation, half of the U.S. tribes entered the casino business and some experienced a triple digit growth from the 1990s until 2006 when it leveled off (Guedel 11). In 2013, tribal casinos took in \$28 billion, according to the National Indian Gaming Commission (Blum). The gaming revenue thus gave the tribes/Nations clout to wield influence outside their territory at the state and federal level.

The influx of capital also changed the way tribes/Nations functioned. It enabled them to use their own revenue in ways they saw fit: building infrastructure, financing their own governmental services, or providing scholarships to their youth. The most unusual uses—unusual when compared to mainstream capitalistic ventures—are to be found in the per capita payments (aka *per caps*) that some tribes use to redistribute a portion of the income to their members, and the financing of culture revival events for their own people.

The economy of a few successful casino tribes located close to large cities or main Interstate highways should not overshadow the fact that on the whole Native American Nations remain poor, health and personal safety statistics are extremely unfavorable (Guedel 3-6). Of interest in this paper about the new frontiers in Indigenous economies are the differences between mainstream capitalism and Indigenous capitalism. At times the closeness between both is so unnerving that activists are tempted to “Just say no” to various attempts to promote economic assimilation (Johson).

The main structural difference between a capitalistic mainstream company and an Indigenous one comes from the fact that Indigenous capitalism is generally a collective endeavor. Most tribes or Nations, in the U.S. discourage private capitalism. Individual artists, even when they are successful, are not considered by the tribes as capitalistic enterprises because they function with a single creator and are not large employers. Tribal enterprises are generally managed by the tribal governments. The confusion between the administrations of the company and the government is often seen in their location, next to one another, often in buildings constructed in the same style. Moreover, signage in the parking lots of tribal casinos often indicate reserved spaces for members of the tribal government.

The neotribes

Criticism for the tribal variety of capitalism is centered on the fact that it is based on the tribe, an entity that functions in a paradigm that can be far removed from the tenets of western democratic societies. In the United States, tribes can choose their way of operating and while some have adopted an election system based on universal suffrage, such as the Navajo and the Cherokee, others—mainly among the Pueblo—have retained a traditionalist approach to governance where clan and gender play a role that is unacceptable by mainstream standards. In the Pueblo of Acoma (NM), the Antelope Clan is in a position of power, in tribal governance as well as land use. In Taos Pueblo (NM), only males who speak Northern Tiwa, the traditional language of the pueblo, can participate in the tribal council meetings.

Moreover, the rationale behind tribal governance may take into account religious factors related to the tribe’s creation story. Religious factors justify the predominance of one group over another. Elisabeth Rata, a specialist of Maori *iwi* (tribes) in New Zealand, considers the birth-ascribed inequality of clans and tribal hierarchies incompatible with democracy (Rata 2013). She considers that the revival of tribal identities has created neotribes with a neotraditionalist ideology. While this

is not a threat *per se*, the fact that the neotribes function as capitalistic corporations is considered disturbing by scholars who are critical of capitalism to begin with (Rose, Samuel 233).

Criticism by activists, whether Native American or not, is leveled at every aspect of capitalism: the fact that the earth itself is considered a natural resource to be exploited (Champagne 312), that the relationship between individuals and material/cultural resources is different in a capitalistic society and a tribe (Rose, Samuel 221), and that the tenets of capitalism, and more particularly the maximization of profits, are incompatible with traditional tribal life (Berthier-Foglar 386-388). Moreover, the governance of a commercial enterprise, whether shared with a private corporation or not, necessitates the presence of business-savvy tribal members and sees the emergence of a neotribal elite with class-based undertones (Rose, Samuel 221).

The primitivist view of the tribe as a last refuge against globalization

At a time when segments of the western population, in European countries, as well as in North America, are critical of a globalized economy ruled by world corporations, the Indigenous peoples are part of the last remaining bulwark against the ongoing globalization. Globalization is being demonized by various social movements: the 'Occupy' movement, the anti-tourist movement in European cities, the anti-eviction movement in San Francisco, the protests against Über, GAFA, and Airbnb, as well as the UK election that led to the Brexit are all examples of a general mistrust of those who consider themselves at the losing end of the economy. 'The local' is seen as an answer against 'the global' and as a way to take back lost power.

The Indigenous have long been perceived as peoples with knowledge to share. The trend is at least a century old. When New York socialite Mabel Dodge Luhan moved to Taos New Mexico in 1917 while the world was in turmoil, she knew she had found an answer to the ailments of society. Antonio Luhan, a prominent member of Taos Pueblo, who became her mentor, her lover and later her husband, told her that the white man would die smothered under his material possessions while the Indians would rise "bare-limbed and free, heads up bound with green leaves, sheaves of corn and wheat across their shoulders" (Luhan 197). Mabel's lyricism rather improbably extended to tribal living viewed as real freedom ("the only way to go free is to live as a group, and to be part and parcel of a living tribal organism" (Luhan 110).

The primitivist vision of salvation in tribal living has been revived in the 1960s and the infatuation with hippie communes. It survives in the 21st century, in a more gentrified form, with a strong market for indigenous-inspired healing practices, a major component in wellness tourism (Eli 49), as well as various new age practices (Albanese 155) often performed by individuals decried as "plastic medicine men" by Native American activists. Tribal tourism is on the rise and while it has existed in the U.S. since the Indian Detours days of the 1920s, it has spread worldwide to more remote areas (MacIntosh and Ryan). Worldwide consciousness of culturally sensitive tourism has led Indigenous Peoples to demand that their private sphere be off-limits to tourists while accepting to share selected elements of their culture (Eli 22).

Use of income by neotribes

It seems that Indigenous peoples have tested new frontiers in economic endeavors: from tradition-inspired arts and crafts to ethnic tourism, Indigenous healing and their own variant of collective capitalism. Despite the often violent criticism by activists, it is to be noted that the tribes' use of income generated by capitalistic ventures is destined for the common good. While the accumulation

of wealth is not the main objective of tribal economic ventures (Champagne 320), tribal enterprises still seek to maximize profits.

However, redistribution, and egalitarianism continue to prevail among many tribes (Champagne 320). A few tribes/Nations with positive governance have even eliminated poverty, increased infrastructure spending and the well-being of their tribal members. The Washington State Jamestown S’Klallam, a small tribe located on the Olympics Peninsula, with a casino resort, has been called “an Indian economic miracle” (Guedel 66-68, 83). Capital influx from casinos or other tribal enterprises not only provides jobs but it enables community-wide financing of traditional cultural events viewed as the survival of older ways and consistent with earlier social patterns (Guedel 70).

Casino income has enabled tribes/Nations to use their funds creatively. It has certainly been a factor in the enhancement of tribal sovereignty (Moellman 69); it has given them the power to be heard on the state and national level, to finance their infrastructure and has enabled them to diversify their businesses (Champagne 322-323). The income is used to foster group cohesion through cultural preservation and revival: cultural/ceremonial events are organized for tribal members, language immersion classes are financed to bring together children and families, and the tribal story is being told and reaffirmed (Norrgard 126).

What is set in motion is a force counteracting the melting pot at a time when the mere idea of losing one’s original identity is not as appealing as it once was. Group pride and identification—the local versus the global—has gained in importance, and all the more so for Indigenous groups who fear losing their specificity. The “collective capitalism” of the Native American nations is therefore part of their survival strategy.

On the other hand, the extra income has encouraged social experiments—which are also new frontiers that mainstream societies are discussing—such as the *per caps*, which have proven to be a disincentive pushing tribal members out of the workforce when conditions are not optimal, *i.e.* the distance from the workplace or the type of work offered (Blum). While *per caps* can be as low as a few hundred dollars a year, they have reached amounts of over \$100,000. In Minnesota casino tribes, when members reach adulthood, they receive 18 years of per capita payments in a lump sum, and the risks are high that they spend the money on cars, or worse, on drugs (Blum). The negative side of *per caps* can be seen in the tendency to banish or disenroll tribal members to reduce the number of individuals who profit from the redistribution (Rose, Samuel 219).

Conclusion

Looking back at the 19th century when Native America could have disappeared in the United States due to the early effects of cultural and economic globalization, we see several frontiers that the Indians have crossed and survived successfully. The land-loss effect could have annihilated the tribes and its devastating effects are still felt today. However, the late 20th century has witnessed a movement of gaining back the land, through purchase or negotiation, starting with the 1971 return to Taos Pueblo, of the Blue Lake annexed in 1906 by a National Forest. The tribes survived their marginal integration into the economy as manufacturers of traditional handmade items and some of their members emerged as Indigenous artists while the crafts makers saw their wares legally protected by the Indian made label and enhanced by the primitivist ideology linking the “ecological Indian” to ancient knowledge lost by the industrial society. During the “craft period” Indigenous

peoples survived on the margins of the capitalist system in an economy that still functioned with traditional tribal trappings.

In 1928, the Meriam Report asked the rhetorical question: "Can the Indian be educated?" and answered unequivocally "The Indian is essentially capable of education" (Meriam Report 351-352). While the question and the answer seem ludicrous today, they point to the next economic frontier, the gradual integration of Native Nations into mainstream economy, but on their own terms, and obviously with a level of business savviness showing that they know to navigate both worlds.

The Native American integration into the new economy of tourist resorts and casinos points to a frontier that will be even trickier to manage, one that has not yet been explored by the mainstream. We are thus able to answer the "Big Question" of the introduction. When Native Americans function in close relation with mainstream economy, they cannot avoid entering the capitalist system. However, the indigenous "collective capitalism" certainly represents an interesting pathway in the affirmation of Indigenous specificity and needs to be watched closely, all the more so since Native critics have voiced their doubts as to the "Indianness" of the process and its results.

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