TO BE OR NOT TO BE AMERICAN
Ingela Sjögren
To be or not to be American
Statehood and Peoplehood in Native American Self-identification during the Self-determination era

Ingela Sjögren
To my daughters Alicia and Carolinne, and my mother Margareta.
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1. Introduction

In October 1992, I joined a group of Crow Indians on a trip to Denver, Colorado, where they were going to protest the celebration of the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of America. Several hundred Native Americans¹ and people of other ethnic origin joined the demonstration.² A central topic that was brought up in the speeches was the fact that Columbus’ “discovery” of America resulted in the genocide of millions of Native Americans. Naturally, mainstream society’s celebration of Columbus Day is a celebration of the United States. Without the “discovery” there would not have been a United States of America. It is therefore easy to interpret the Indian protest as a protest against the creation of the United States. However, this seems not to have been the case.

After speeches and demonstrations in central Denver, a large group of Indians gathered outside the city for an “Indian dance.” With people dressed in typical “Indian garments,” dancing native dances to drumbeats and high pitched “Indian songs,” the whole scenario looked like a celebration of nativeness in opposition to mainstream America. However, at the closing dance, all the dancers formed a line behind a man who was carrying the American flag. He was not dressed in an Indian outfit but in regular jeans and shirt. I wondered why he was chosen to carry the flag and I was told that it was because he was a Vietnam veteran, and he was therefore honored by carrying the flag. I found this very confusing.

Only hours after protesting the celebration of Columbus’ discovery of America and consequently, if only indirectly, the subsequent creation of the American Nation, the Indians celebrated the American Nation by carrying the very symbol of that nation, the American flag. In addition, the person who was chosen to perform this honored task was a person who had fought for the American army, the same army that had defeated several of the American Indian tribes and forced their ancestors to settle on reservations. It was the same army which had, at least partly, been responsible for the genocide that the speakers had referred to in their speeches.

¹ I will use the term Native American, American Indian, Indian, and Native interchangeably throughout this thesis when referring to the native peoples of North America.
² According to former American Indian Movement leader Russell Means, there were as many as 2,500 people at the meeting (Means 1995, p.522).
This situation, which seemed to me to be a contradiction in identification, led me to wonder about how Indians understood their relationship to the United States. Didn’t the Indians themselves see the contradiction in accusing the U.S. of genocide and then waving its flag? Did it mean that the Native Americans identified as being part of the United States, or apart from it, or perhaps both? And if they identified as both, how should these different ways of relating to the U.S. be understood?

In this study, I will attempt to explain these seemingly contradictory ways Native Americans related to the United States in 1992 when the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’ discovery of America actualized the issue of how Indians might identify their relationship to the United States. However, the study will take its point of departure in an earlier period, in the early 1970s when radical, political activism was strong among Native Americans.

One of the main speakers at the 1992 protest meeting in Denver was Russell Means, a well-known former leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM is an Indian rights organization that was founded in the late 1960s and it has been known for its militancy. AIM members were, for instance, main actors in the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) office in Washington D.C. in 1972 and the occupation of the little village of Wounded Knee in South Dakota in 1973. Russell Means was one of the main spokesmen for AIM in the early 1970s when these events took place, and he was making statements that very straightforwardly portrayed Indians as not part of the United States. The most famous statement is perhaps his announcement during the occupation of Wounded Knee that the Oglala Sioux Nation was separate and independent from the United States and they would defend their borders against U.S. intrusion.4

I was not surprised to find Means as a speaker at the protest meeting. To me, he represented a continuity of political activism and protest actions that stretched from the occupations and demonstrations of the early 1970s to the Columbus Day meeting in Denver in 1992. He had protested against the celebration of Thanksgiving near Plymouth Rock in 19705 and now he protested against the celebration of Columbus Day. Being a visible and outspoken representative of the Native American people, he was an important

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1 More information about the American Indian Movement and the occupations will be presented later in this thesis.
3 Means tells in his autobiography that AIM was invited by the Boston area Wampanoags who had originally lived in the area of Plymouth Colony. They had found evidence that Thanksgiving celebrations originated in the celebration of the colonial militia’s murder of Indian people. When the militia returned from killing Indians, the governor of the colony had proclaimed a holiday and feast to celebrate the massacre. In 1970, AIM and the local Indians protested the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the establishment of Plymouth Colony, among other things by disrupting the Thanksgiving dinner and by taking over the replica of the Mayflower ship. (Means 1995, pp.175–178).
force in putting Indian rights issues into the national spotlight during the early 1970s.

The 1960s and 1970s were turbulent times in American society. Civil rights, women’s rights, anti-war, and different ethnic movements fought for changes in American society. AIM and other Indian rights organizations demanded changes also for Native Americans, and as mentioned above, that could mean demands for tribal autonomy. Native American activism was not new in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but during this period it took new expression. This period was characterized by change, both in types of political activism (new methods) and in identification (cultural revitalization and renewed ethnic pride). Indian political activism had gone from “reformative goals and conventional tactics” to “‘transformative goals’ achieved through militant direct action.” Deloria and Lytle write that “the late sixties and early seventies will always be remembered for the great expansion of tribal activities and the new policy of self-determination,” and this period has even been referred to as the “self-determination era.”

The new Indian political movement, the Red Power movement, brought ethnic pride and encouragement of searching for one’s tribal roots and learning about traditional cultural teachings. This was a change from an earlier generation when many Indians had been ashamed of their Indian heritage and tried to hide it. The movement toward what was perceived as a traditional Native way of life was strong, and the teachings of the elders became important. Questions of race, ethnicity, and civil rights took center stage during this time, and the questions of identity and belonging were actualized.

With a history of being colonized and confronted with the discussions of different rights in society, the issue of the Indians’ relationship to the United States was brought to Native American attention. Cobb shows that Native American activists already in the 1950s and 1960 argued for rights using the language of decolonization. Influenced by other social movements in society, the decolonization of countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Native Americans talked about themselves in terms of colonized peoples.

Native American identification in relationship to the United States was no less confusing in the 1960s and 1970s than it was in 1992. Also during this time there were examples of Indians identifying as both belonging to and not belonging to the United States. Russell Means was not the only one making statements that portrayed Indians as something other than Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. Vine Deloria Jr. gives an example from a civil rights hearing that was held in the late 1960s. The Sioux tribal leader speaking at the

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8 Johnson 2006.
9 Nagel 1996, pp.11–12, 135.
10 Cobb 2008.
hearing not only claimed separate tribal nationhood, but even thought that it was possible that his tribe could declare war on the United States. Deloria writes:

One of the whites asked J. Dan Howard, a Standing Rock tribal councilman, if the Sioux still considered themselves a nation. “You bet,” was Dan’s reply, “we could still declare war on you. You might beat us but we’d take a lot of you with us.”

Indians could also very clearly identify as part of the United States. Melvin Thom, co-founder of the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) stated in 1964, “I value American citizenship very highly, and consider it hard earned by our fathers,” and he continued, “I think Indians make their patriotism quite clear with their military record in World War II and the Korean Conflict.”

This study takes its point of departure in the early 1970s when Russell Means and other AIM leaders were occupying center stage in the arena of Native American politics and activism, a period that Nagel defines as the main Red Power movement era. My aim is to find out how Native Americans identified in relationship to the United States and to explain the seemingly contradictory ways of identifying as both part of and not part of the U.S. The focus of the study will be on the early 1970s (1970–1975), but I have also made a smaller study on the year 1992 for comparison purposes.

In 1992, at the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’ discovery of America, the question of how to identify in relationship to the United States was actualized again. But the situation for Native Americans was different in 1992 compared to the early 1970s. Indian activism in the early 1970s was spurred by international decolonization and the general upheaval in U.S. society. Indians in 1992, on the other hand, met in much less revolutionary surroundings and with a federal government that acknowledged a “government-to-government” relationship with Indian tribes. One aim of the study will therefore be to answer the question: “What had remained and what had changed in Indian identification in relationship to the United States between the early 1970s and 1992?”

Some of what Native Americans in the United States experienced as colonized peoples was unique to their specific context: for instance, their extensive treaty making with the colonial nation-state. However, much of the Indian experience was also shared by other indigenous peoples around the world. Such common experiences were, for example, their more or less forced submission to, and their legal-political inclusion into, the colonial

13 Quoted in Rosier 2009, p.236.
nation-state. It also included attempts by the colonial nation-state to assimilate indigenous peoples into the dominant society. Therefore this study is not only relevant for the field of Native American Studies but also for the field of Indigenous Peoples Studies in general.

With this thesis, I hope to contribute to the study of indigenous peoples in two ways. Firstly, in my study of North American Indians, I intend to show how the legal-political relationship between an indigenous people and the colonial nation-state, together with the dominant ideas in a specific historical context, form how that indigenous people identified in relationship to the nation-state. In a wider perspective, this study can help explain the process of how indigenous peoples are integrated into colonial nation-states.

Secondly, by applying the theoretical framework of world views (further explained in Chapter 3) to the issue of indigenous identification, I will explain the contradictory ways Native Americans have identified in relationship to the nation-state. Again, in a wider perspective, the study can contribute to the knowledge of how conceptions of belonging are created and made sense of by indigenous peoples.
2. Indian rights, sovereignty, and nationalism

The ways Indians have understood their relationship to the United States have been greatly impacted by the fact that they were colonized. There are, of course, several ways that a colonized people may relate to the colonizing power. At one end of the spectrum, the colonized people become incorporated as citizens and fully accept and identify with the colonizing power. At the other end of the spectrum, they totally reject any form of integration and demand independence and separation. In between, there are several possible ways that an indigenous people may accept integration, assert different kinds and degrees of limited autonomy and consequently different ways to identify. Scholars have approached the issue of how indigenous peoples have related to their colonial powers in a number of ways, and in this chapter I will discuss some of those approaches.

Indian struggle for rights

One way of approaching the question of indigenous peoples’ identification in relationship to their colonial power is to look at what types of rights they have demanded from the state. Have they argued for civil rights within the state or have they demanded autonomy?

In her study *The Elusive Power of Indigenous Development: Rights, Culture, Strategy*, Karen Engle finds that the manner in which colonial powers conquered and related to indigenous peoples influenced how these native peoples would argue for indigenous rights later on in history. She identifies two different strategies utilized by the colonial powers England and Spain. In Australia, where indigenous peoples were nomads, England justified its conquest by claiming that the colonial land was unoccupied (*terra nullius*). In reality, it meant that the land was not cultivated. According to British law, land that was considered occupied could only be legally acquired by Britain through treaties with the people living there. British law consequently often recognized Indian territorial rights. The result was that indigenous peoples were not considered part of Britain according to British law. Spanish law, on the other land, incorporated natives as subject to the Crown, which meant that natives of Spanish America were expected to accept Spanish sovereignty over them. Where England claimed territory, Spain claimed Indian people and their labor. The fact that England, and later Canada and the United
States, acknowledged treaties with indigenous peoples has led Native Americans in North America to focus on self-determination and land rights, even striving towards independent statehood, while Native Americans of former Spanish colonies have focused on achieving cultural rights, according to Engle.¹⁵

Pan-indigenous international networks were organized in the 1970s, and native rights issues were taken to the United Nations. Dominated by indigenous peoples from former British colonies, including North American natives, the main goal of these organizations was to achieve indigenous self-determination. In the 1970s and 1980s, it often meant self-determination in its most radical form, the achievement of independent statehood.¹⁶

Engle’s description of Native Americans of North America in the 1970s echoes Russell Means’ and J. Dan Howard’s statements referred to previously. Native Americans imagined Indian tribes as independent states, completely separate from or “outside” the United States and Canada. However, Engle also notes that there was change happening over time where self-determination was ascribed another meaning in the international community. Indigenous peoples continued to insist on rights to self-determination, but that no longer included the right to secession. When the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007,¹⁷ there was no room for the possibility of indigenous peoples achieving independent statehood as shown by the wording in Article 46 of the Declaration. Self-determination would not be

    construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.¹⁸

Engle notes that since indigenous peoples accepted this formulation in the Declaration, the opportunity of having independent statehood was probably not as important for them then as it had been in the 1980s and 1990s when earlier drafts of the Declaration were constructed. Already by the early 1990s, however, a shift had occurred in the aspirations of the natives and in what meaning they ascribed to the concept of self-determination. By this time, the focus was on rights within the colonial state.¹⁹

Although Engle does not pose the question of how indigenous peoples identified in relationship to their colonial power, the way they argued for rights shows different ways of identifying. Indians of Latin America generally wanted cultural rights within the colonial state and did not demand inde-

¹⁶ Engle 2010, pp.17, 47, 52.
¹⁷ Engle 2010, p.4.
pendent statehood, indicating that they acknowledged being part of the colo-
nial state. North American natives tended to demand the right to tribal state-
hood and separation from the colonial state, indicating that they identified
“outside” their colonial state. Engle’s study, however, does not shed any
light on North American Indians’ contradictory ways of relating to their
colonial states. What her study reveals is that there was a change between
the 1970s and the early 1990s in the meaning of self-determination, which
indicates that there may have been over time a shift from an “outside” to an
“inside” identification with the United States.

Historian Daniel M. Cobb has also studied how Indians have argued for
rights in his book *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for
Sovereignty*. While Engle focused on native peoples in an international set-
ting during the period from the 1970s to the present, Cobb’s focus is on the
domestic scene of the Indians of the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.

All the events of the time, like the civil rights and anticolonial move-
ments, as well as the ongoing Vietnam War greatly affected U.S. society.
The political upheaval of the time both nationally and internationally result-
ed in the opening up of prevailing norms to challenge. During this period,
“the language of major domestic and foreign debates” was adopted and giv-
en new meaning, according to Cobb. Meanings of words that had long been
taken for granted became “unfixed.” The language used in the international
setting was transferred to a different cultural setting. For instance, the con-
cepts of tribal sovereignty and self-determination were transferred to U.S.
national politics at the end of the 1960s.20

Cobb shows that the Indian rights movement adopted the language of the
foreign debate such as the language of decolonization and anti-colonialism
ideologies of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. One example he gives,
which shows how Indians adopted such an international perspective on their
own affairs, was the suggestion that the United States would adopt the Point
IV program for Indian reservations. The Point IV program was a program
whereby the U.S. provided scientific training and technical assistance to the
poorest countries in the world. The goal was to hinder the spread of com-
munism and at the same time foster goodwill for the United States. In this
context, Indian tribes were compared with poor foreign countries by the Na-
tive Americans themselves.21

Native Americans also organized workshops, and universities held special
summer schools for native youths discussing colonization and the Indian
experience in the 1950s and throughout the 1960s. There, Indians were com-
pared to other colonized peoples. Indian students were given assignments
like “Using examples, relate colonialism to your community.” The work-
shops made young Indians see themselves in a new light. One of the work-

20 Cobb 2008, pp.4-6.
shop students, Frank Dukepoo, stated that he had never thought of Indians as colonized peoples before. Efforts were obviously made to influence Indians to understand themselves as belonging to Indian nations as described in Vine Deloria, Jr.’s statement: “It takes a lot of hard work to raise an entire group to a new conception of themselves. And that is the difference between the nationalists and the militants.” Deloria also advocated the adoption of vocabulary and techniques from Black Americans to achieve the attention of the media. Cobb also relates another of Deloria’s statements of how he worked to reach political goals in the article “Talking the Language of the Larger World: Politics in Cold War (Native) America.” Cobb writes:

“At NCAL,” he told me, “I was looking for some kind of intellectual format of how you would justify overturning termination and at the same time escape this big push for integration that civil rights was doing.” To make this distinction, he situated tribal issues in the context of what he called “an era of resurgent nationalism among dark-skinned people the world over.” He remembered telling tribal leaders, “If we’re gonna say we’re nations and we got sovereignty and our treaties are as valid as other treaties, then we gotta talk the language of the larger world.”

Inspired by contemporary society, Indians in the 1950s and 1960s adopted “the language of nationalism, sovereignty, and self-determination.” The use of a decolonization vocabulary was intentional and strategic to make native people think of themselves as colonized and belonging to sovereign nations. In this process, when the language of the decolonizing states of the world was transferred to the domestic scene of the United States, the transformation of meaning that Cobb talked about, like the meaning of sovereignty and self-determination, was adapted to Native American conditions. This would mean that sovereignty did not necessarily mean secession from the colonial state.

Historian Frederick E. Hoxie also discusses the instrumental way of using language for political ends. He talks about a political language of the Native Americans in his article “Missing the Point: Academic Experts and American Indian Politics.” Through interactions with one another and with the United States over the last two centuries, Native Americans created a new political language and new political strategies that they used to achieve political goals. Hoxie states that the language and the tactics created by Native Americans made it possible for them to survive as distinct cultural groups and create new relationships with the colonizing state. He consequently emphasizes the instrumental use of language in the Indians’ struggle to survive

22 Cobb 2008, p.58, 63–64.  
as distinct cultural groups and to achieve political rights as distinct political entities. 27

Should we then understand the adoption of “the language of nationalism, sovereignty, and self-determination”28 as a strategic means by American Indians to obtain rights, they knowing well that Indian tribes in reality were not sovereign nations? This is how one could interpret Deloria’s statements to Cobb about influencing fellow Native Americans by talking about sovereign nationhood, as well as Hoxie’s references to an instrumental use of sovereignty language. This seems also to be political scientist Frances Widdowson’s point of view in her paper “Inventing Nationhood: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Claims to Self-Determination in the Context of Québec Sovereignty.” She states that “the designation of aboriginal groups as ‘nations,’ in fact, is a fabrication that has been used to oppose Québec nationalism” in Canada and that native peoples have used the language of Québec nationalists to make their own demands on the Canadian state. “These demands are not for national self-determination, but for privileges and increased government funding within Canada,” she states.29

Is the idea of tribal sovereign nationhood all talk then, and nothing to do with native identity? I would assert that the issue is more complicated than that. Strategic manipulation of language may have been the case of certain native political activists; however, by introducing the language of nationhood, sovereignty, and self-determination, they also introduced the ideas attached to these concepts. They showed that it was possible to think of Indian tribes as sovereign nations, something that affected Native American perceptions of themselves. Presently, the idea of tribes as sovereign nations is widely accepted and communicated by both Native Americans and non-native scholars. As Cobb points out, however, there might have been a change in meaning of the concepts when transferred from the international scene of decolonization to the domestic scene of native tribes. I will discuss this issue further.

Nationalism and patriotism

Other scholars have described Native American identification in terms of nationalism and patriotism but not always in relationship to the same nation. Some have described Indian patriotism and nationalism in relationship to the United States, where identification with the United States is presupposed; others have described it in relationship to Indian tribes. Especially in relationship to Indian participation in war, the issue of Indian U.S. patriotism comes up in studies. Historian Peter Iverson, for instance, writes:

The overall response by Indian men and women to the needs of wartime reflected both nationalism and tribalism. World War II let Native Americans demonstrate their love of country.30

Exemplifying native expressions of U.S. nationalism, he describes how a native soldier of World War II wanted his funeral to be carried out in case he would die in battle. His wishes included a soldier going at the front of the funeral procession carrying the American flag.31 Anthropologist William C. Meadows interpreted Indian participation in U.S. wars in a similar fashion. He stated that “the native response to the war was a tremendous outburst of patriotism and national devotion” when he referred to the great number of voluntary enlisted Native Americans during World War I. He used similar words when describing Native American enlistment during World War II.32

Anthropologist Mary Elaine Fleming Mathur meant something different with nationalism, however, in her 1971 Ph.D. thesis: The Iroquois in Time and Space: A Native American Nationalistic Movement. She used the term “nationalism” in reference to the Iroquois Confederacy. She compared the Iroquois movement with that of the Basques, Scots, Welsh, and Canadiens. She even found it ethnocentric to call their movement “nativism” or “tribalism” and restrict the concept of “nationalism” to only “Euroamerican style movements.”33

American Studies scholar and Navajo Indian, Lloyd L. Lee, also speaks of nationalism in the meaning of tribal nationalism in his article “The Future of Navajo Nationalism.” He asks what Navajo nationalism should look like in the 21st century. Should Navajos strive towards self-sufficiency or national independence? Lee defines nationalism as “the devotion to the interest of culture of one’s nation. It also means to have aspirations for national independence in a country under foreign domination.”34 What he himself mostly worries about is the acculturation that has taken place among the Navajos; he wants them to take charge of the educational system and lead it towards Navajo values.35 Although part of his definition of nationalism is independence, he does not promote secession from the United States. His idea of self-determination rather seems to be the preservation of culture and right to govern according to traditional cultural norms. Tribal nationalism apparently did not necessarily mean a goal to separate from the United States.

As Creek/Cherokee scholar Tom Holm shows in his book Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls: Native American Veterans of the Vietnam War, Indian patriotism did not necessarily have to be directed towards the United States.

33 Mathur 1971, p.16.
34 Lee 2007, pp.53–54.
either. In his study, Holm examines why Indians, who served proportionally to a much greater extent than other ethnic groups in the United States, volunteered for military service.\textsuperscript{36} One reason Holm gives is that they served

because they were patriots in the tribal sense of the word. To them, military service was part of an honorable family and/or tribal tradition. They wanted to be warriors – to protect their land and their people.\textsuperscript{37}

Here Holm does not refer to American patriotism at all. On the contrary, his “patriots in the tribal sense of the word” seems to mean something different from American patriotism. Although Holm does not discuss the issue of whether Indians perceived of themselves as part of the United States or not, he gives examples of Native Americans who stated that their enlistment in the military had nothing to do with loyalty to the United States. Holm quotes one Indian who had said:

I went to Vietnam, was wounded twice and won the Silver Star, not because I have any particular loyalty to the United States, but because I have loyalty to my own people, my own tradition. We are pledged by a treaty to provide military assistance to the U.S. in times of war.\textsuperscript{38}

This particular soldier referred to an alliance with the United States as his reason for joining the military rather than it being due to American patriotism. Although Holm gives examples of Native Americans who apparently identified as being “outside” the United States, his study does not really discuss the issue.

What Meadows describes as a “tremendous outburst of patriotism and national devotion” is actually not easily determined as to whether it is directed towards the United States or not. In a statement made by Meadow’s informant, one can see the complexity of the Indian relationship to the United States. He states:

They [white Americans] often ask us “Why would you want to have the American flag out here [in the arena]? Why would you want to serve in the U.S. military after all that happened?” I tell them. We went through all that once. We’re not going to go through it again. We have survived and we’re still here. This is still OUR home. When the war started [World War II] we thought, if someone else was to take over this land, they might treat us worse than the Americans did, if that is possible. We didn’t want to take that chance. So we were willing to fight to protect Our land and Our people first and foremost. I am a member of my tribe and the United States.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Holm 1996, p.18.
\textsuperscript{37} Holm 1996, p.118
\textsuperscript{38} Holm 1996, p.118.
\textsuperscript{39} Quoted in Meadows 1999, pp.399–400.
This informant acknowledges that he is part of the United States; however, his justification for participating in World War II does not seem to be American patriotism but to protect tribal lands. The reason for protecting the United States was rather the risk of being treated worse by another colonial power.

Indians could obviously participate in war for the U.S., both as protectors of their own land and protection of the United States, either as patriots or allies, or for pragmatic reasons. Although these scholars are talking about nationalism and patriotism, they do not problematize Indian relationship to the United States and they do not give an explanation of the seemingly contradictory relationship Indians can have in relating to the United States.

Historian Paul Rosier is one scholar who has tried to deal with Native Americans’ “contradictory” ways of relating to the U.S. He tries to explain the complexity of how Native Americans have related to the United States by introducing the idea of “hybrid patriotism” in his book *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Rosier argues that throughout the 20th century Native Americans have formed an identity that contains elements of being both American and Indian which he calls hybrid patriotism. Within this discourse of hybrid patriotism, Native Americans adopted a patriotic rhetoric and imagined an American nationalism that drew upon Indianness and Indian values, according to Rosier. He uses, for instance, the Cheyennes of the 1960s to illustrate this hybrid patriotism by showing how the “pre-American” historic warrior became intertwined with the modern Indian soldier during the celebration of Memorial Day. The Cheyennes honored both their men who had fought against the U.S. military in the 19th century and those who fought in the U.S. military in the 20th century.40

Rosier also gives other examples of hybrid patriotism both before and after the 1960s. In the 1920s, for example, Pueblo communities tried to stop the Bursum Bill, which threatened their land and water rights41 by applying “the language of hybrid patriotism.” The Pueblo Indians maintained that they had kept their old customs and always lived in harmony with each other and with their “fellow Americans.”42 They obviously were defining themselves as Americans although they had kept their distinctiveness as a people. Rosier also exemplifies hybrid patriotism by showing how “Native Americanism and Americanism acted symbiotically”; he quoted a Muscogee Creek Army Reserve sergeant who had published a statement after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. He had contended that “by supporting the American way of life, I am preserving the Indian way of life.”43

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41 Iverson 1998, p.60.
42 Rosier 2009, p.63.
Although Rosier’s idea of hybrid patriotism may be helpful to understand certain aspects of how Native Americans identified in relationship to the United States, it only has a limited range of explanation. Rosier has focused on the contradictory in Indian identification, but his concept can only explain what relates to patriotism, and it does not explain those situations where Indians were completely disassociating themselves from the United States.

In summary, some scholars have interpreted Indian nationalism and patriotism as relating to the tribe, others as relating to the United States, and further others as relating to both. But what does tribal nationhood actually mean in the context of Native American nationalism and identification? What kind of political entities are tribes and what powers do they have? Different natives and scholars have also meant different things when referring to tribal nations and their powers.

Sovereign nations – states or peoples?

Much has been written about Indian nationhood and tribal sovereignty since the early 1970s. Most of these studies have only indirectly touched upon Indian identification in relationship to the United States, and since few scholars have defined what they mean by concepts like sovereignty and nation, it is often unclear if they actually mean a separatist, total independence when they refer to Indian tribal sovereignty. Actually, in most studies about Native Americans, it seems not to have been the case.

The concept of sovereignty is commonly used in the sense of political independence and supremacy. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, defines sovereignty in terms of supremacy and absolute and independent authority,44 while political scientists Hague and Harrop define sovereignty as “the ultimate source of authority in society. The sovereign is the highest and final decision-maker within a community.”45

Native attorney Kirke Kickingbird and his coauthors define sovereignty in a similar fashion, stating that it is “the Supreme Power from which all specific political powers are derived.”46 These writers also took a legal perspective on the issue, trying to define how Indian tribes legally, in both U.S. and international law, should be considered as sovereign nations. They describe certain powers they associate with the power of sovereign nations. These

44 *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of “Sovereignty”: 1. Supremacy or pre-eminence in respect of excellence or efficacy, 2. Supremacy in respect of power, domination, or rank; supreme dominion, authority, or rule, 3a. The position, rank, or power of a supreme ruler or monarch; royal authority or dominion, 3b. The supreme controlling power in communities not under monarchical government; absolute and independent authority, 4. A territory under the rule of a sovereign, or existing as an independent state.


include making and enforcing their own laws, defining and regulating the use of their territory, determining membership or citizenship, regulating trade within their borders; having the power to impose and collect taxes, appropriate monies, regulate domestic relations, regulate property, establish monetary systems, make war and peace, and form alliances, contracts, and agreements with foreign nations. There are no specific rules to determine how many or which of these powers must be exercised for a people to be a sovereign nation, Kickingbird and his coauthors write. A nation might choose to have another nation exercise some of these powers for it. This does not mean that the nation is giving up its sovereignty. According to international law, a nation is still considered a nation in these circumstances, they write.47

By these definitions, tribal sovereignty would mean that Indian tribes would be politically “outside” the United States since supremacy of the tribe would mean that the federal government would have no say in Indian affairs. The issue of Indians being part of or not part of the United States is usually not discussed in the studies of Indian tribal sovereignty, however. This can be explained by the way many scholars of Native Americans and Native Americans themselves have come to use the concept of sovereignty.

Lawyer and law professor Charles Wilkinson argues in his book Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations that Americans have a different understanding of the concept of sovereignty compared to Europeans. He writes that European or “classical” sovereignty is seen as supreme and absolute and cannot be divided. This idea of sovereignty did not make sense to Americans. “In modern America a sovereign is a government – that is, it has the power to make laws and enforce them,” Wilkinson writes. The American constitutional system is comprised of three branches of sovereignty: the United States (the federal government), the States, and the Indian tribes.48

Since Wilkinson does not define sovereignty as complete supremacy and independence, he uses the concept of sovereignty throughout his book without any discussion of whether Indians identified as part of the United States or not. Consequently, Wilkinson’s study is not about Native Americans’ striving for independence from the United States. Instead it is about how Indians throughout history have managed to survive and continued to exist as a separate ethno-political entity with self-governing powers within the United States.49

Like Wilkinson, Rosier uses sovereignty throughout his book without differentiating between the “inside” and “outside” relation towards the United States. Rosier, for example, does not make a distinction between Indian tribal sovereignty before 1871, when the U.S. was still making treaties with

Indian tribes, and sovereignty in the 20th century when Indian tribes were clearly incorporated into the United States, for example, through citizenship.\(^5\)

Apparently some scholars like Kickingbird et al. use the concept of sovereignty in the more traditional meaning of total autonomy, while for others it seems to have two meanings, both the right to self-government within the United States and total autonomy from the United States. In First Nations? Second Thoughts, political scientist Tom Flanagan states that this double meaning is primarily an American way of understanding sovereignty. Canadians generally understand sovereignty as total autonomy, and Canadian Native people often choose other, less threatening words like self-determination and self-government.\(^5\) Flanagan writes that:

Americans thus accept the application of the term “sovereignty” to Indians because it is understood that such sovereignty is limited. It does not make Indian tribes candidates for sovereignty statehood in the international realm, nor does it confer a position of constitutional entrenchment beyond the reach of democratic processes as expressed in acts of Congress.\(^5\)

U.S. states are also described as sovereign entities while Canadian provinces and territories are not. There is one exception, however: the group of separatist Quebecers who strive for Québec’s secession from Canada. Native peoples’ sovereignty rhetoric is much more threatening to the Canadian state than to the U.S. state; when Native people in Canada talk about tribal sovereignty, they mean something much more far-reaching than what American Indians mean with the same concept, according to Flanagan.\(^5\)

Lenape historian Joanne Barker also discusses the issue of how different meanings have been ascribed to the concept of sovereignty in her article “For Whom Sovereignty Matters.” She adds historical and cultural aspects to the understanding of the concept. Sovereignty matters to all indigenous peoples, she writes, but it is ascribed different meanings to different peoples in different time periods. Consequently the concept of sovereignty has no “fixed meaning” but what it means depends on the historical, political, and cultural context.\(^5\) She writes:

How and when it [the concept of sovereignty] emerges and functions are determined by the “located” political agendas and cultural perspectives of those who rearticulate it into public debate or political document to do a specific work of opposition, invitation, or accommodation. It is no more possible to stabilize what sovereignty means and how it matters to those who invoke it than it is to forget the historical and cultural embeddedness of indigenous

\(^{50}\) Rosier 2009, p.15, 65.
\(^{51}\) Flanagan 2008, pp.64–65
\(^{52}\) Flanagan 2008, p.64.
\(^{54}\) Barker 2005, p.21.
peoples’ multiple and contradictory political perspectives and agendas for empowerment, decolonization, and social justice.55

To be able to understand Indian ways of perceiving the concept of sovereignty, one has to take both historical and cultural aspects into account. What sovereign nationhood will mean to Native Americans will consequently depend on both the cultural specific ways they understand their world, and what kind of ideas and situations they meet in society at a specific time.

How the specific cultural contexts of Native Americans have influenced their way of understanding their political situation and the idea of sovereign nationhood has been discussed by several different scholars. Political scientist Kevin Bruyneel contrasts Native American thinking about nationhood and sovereignty with a “Western” way of thinking in his book *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.– Indigenous Relations*. He challenges the spatial definition of political status, where a tribe cannot be sovereign and at the same time make demands on the U.S.56 He connects this way of viewing political belonging to a Western perception of the world. It is part of the Western discourse to divide the world into bounded entities that can be easily measured against each other.57 Indians have another way of perceiving the world, Bruyneel writes; they have a “nonbinaristic political mapping” of the world that is not based on a dual way of thinking.58 To avoid the Western binary way of thinking about sovereign nationhood, Bruyneel introduces the concept of “the third space of sovereignty,” which he explains by stating that Indian politics “resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries.” He sees the boundaries between the U.S. and Indian tribes as a place where a postcolonial struggle takes place. The United States tries to impose its power and control upon the tribes and integrate them into the American political system. Indian tribes, on the other hand, resist such inclusion into the U.S. political system. Where this resistance takes place is “the third space of sovereignty” and there the struggle occurs “on, across and against the boundaries of American politics.”59

When Bruyneel refers to a “third space of sovereignty,” he is relating to a legal-political status of the Indians and not specifically in relationship to identification. However, this does have implications for identity since he states that Indians do not think in bounded entities but can be both part of and not part of, or rather on the boundaries of the United States. I find Bruyneel’s idea of a “third space of sovereignty” problematic when studying Indian identification. A “third space” may be an adequate metaphor for the

57 Bruyneel 2007, p.7.
58 Bruyneel 2007, p.21.
legal-political context in which the struggle over the degree of tribal political integration into the United States takes place. However, when it comes to identification, people do not identify on the boundary between two ethnic and national groups. Bruyneel makes an important point, however, when asserting that Native Americans do not necessarily understand nationhood and sovereignty the same way as “mainstream” USA does. The Western discourse of nationhood and sovereignty is only one of several possible ways of understanding the world. Sociologist Anthony D. Smith, for example, distinguishes between two different ways of understanding the concept of “nation”: one that he calls the “Western model,” the other he calls the “non-Western” or “ethnic” model. The Western model can be described as “territorial,” focusing on “residence, legal community, citizenship and civic culture.” Eastern Europeans and Asians share the non-Western or ethnic model of defining a nation, according to Smith. In this mode of understanding the concept of “nation,” its primary meaning is a group of people with a common descent, or rather an assumed common descent. The nation can be seen as a fictive “superfamily.” This definition does not emphasize a common territory to the same extent as the Western model.

Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle also make a distinction between Western and Native American ways of perceiving nationhood in their book *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*. In their text, they make a distinction between nationhood and self-government which they describe as “two entirely different positions in the world.” They write:

> Nationhood implies a process of decision making that is free and uninhibited within the community, a community in fact that is almost completely insulated from external factors as it considers its possible options.

> Self-government, on the other hand, implies a recognition by the superior political power that some measure of local decision making is necessary but that this process must be monitored very carefully so that its products are compatible with the goals and policies of the larger political power.

Deloria and Lytle make a distinction between sovereignty and self-government, i.e., in the first case, there is no political government “above” the community in question; in the other case, there is. They argue that Indian tribal governments have many of the powers of nations. With the exceptions of jurisdiction over 14 major crimes, an army, independent currency and postage “and other attributes of the truly independent nations,” Indian tribes
exercise in certain respects “more governing powers than local non-Indian municipalities and in other respects more important powers than the states themselves.” It is not entirely clear if Deloria and Lytle consider tribes to be nations or not. On the one hand they are described as having many of the powers of nations, indicating that they are not actually nations; on the other hand, the authors also specify “truly independent nations” which indicates that there are nations that are not truly independent. From this point of view, tribal nations could be seen as not truly independent nations.

More importantly, though, is Deloria and Lytle’s distinction between the two ways of thinking. They argue that nationhood originally meant something different to Indians compared to Europeans and Americans of European descent. To the traditional Indian it meant peoplehood, and “people” was primarily a religious concept where the tribal members were seen as having a special relationship with a higher power. Territory was important to Indians in the sense that they were put in a certain geographical area by a higher power and they were responsible for taking care of it. Although they would give up the ownership and physical occupation of the land, they would not give up the spiritual possession of the land which would always be part of them. The traditional Indian way of understanding nationhood consequently stemmed from traditional Indian cultural values and world view. However, Indians were also affected by the European understanding of the concept which was connected to another world view. Indians who accepted the Western way of thinking want self-government, while those who see Indian peoples in terms of the traditional way of thinking about nations want to have nationhood, according to Deloria and Lytle. From this distinction, tribal sovereignty would not be an adequate way of describing nationhood, because sovereignty is connected to the idea of a world of states, while tribal nationhood is described as something else.

Deloria has not made this distinction in all his studies, however. In his book *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*, which was published ten years previous to *The Nations Within*, he describes tribes in terms of independent sovereign nations. He devotes one chapter in the book to go through and dismiss all arguments against Indian tribes being separate and independent nations, and he compares Indian nations with small states around the world. One of the arguments he dismisses is that Indian tribes did not have enough land base to qualify as sovereign nations. This was not a viable argument, according to Deloria, since countries like Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were geographically smaller than the Navajo Reservation and they all were recog-

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nized as sovereign nations. Another of the arguments rejecting Indian tribal sovereignty is that U.S. land surrounded Indian land, thereby locking the tribes into the U.S. economic and political system. This was not a viable argument either since more than 20 countries around the world without access to open sea were recognized as independent states. A third argument was that the Indian tribal populations were too small for sovereign status. Deloria replied that the Navajos had the same population as Western Samoa, and its population was larger than that of the nine smallest recognized countries. Neither could economic dependency be used as an argument. If economic strength had been a criterion for sovereign status, most of the development countries would not have been qualified for recognition, Deloria argued. The United States government had been the largest contributor of international aid after World War II and “it is entirely reasonable, therefore” that the United States would continue to give financial assistance to Indian tribes. It would not be a problem if Indian tribes wanted to make agreements with the United States to handle some practical issues. To illustrate how such a relationship could be designed Deloria gives the example of how Liechtenstein, after becoming independent in 1918, negotiated a treaty with Switzerland in 1920. In this treaty they agreed that Switzerland would be responsible for Liechtenstein’s posts and telegraphs, customs, and foreign affairs. Deloria obviously argued that Indian nations could be considered sovereign nations like the smaller nation-states around the world which have been recognized by the international community. In this book, he did not make a distinction between Western and Native American ideas of nationhood, but described Indian tribes in terms of sovereign states.

In accordance with the idea that sovereignty is a Western concept and something foreign to Native American thought, some native scholars have been critical of using the concept at all, and if it is used, they say, it should be ascribed a different meaning compared to the Western perception of the word.

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, who has very much the same view on nationhood and sovereignty as Deloria and Lytle took in *The Nations Within*, writes that Indians understand sovereignty differently from the Western view of a “supreme political authority, independent and unlimited by any other power.” He argues that when it comes to indigenous peoples, sovereignty has to be understood in an internal colonization context. Contemporary indigenous peoples are influenced by two ways of perceiving of the world, both the Western and the Native. Indigenous discourse of sovereignty, then, is created by the interplay and counterplay of these two ways of thinking about political relations. The Western way of thinking, described as the state sovereignty doctrine, is rooted in ideas about domination, while indigenous people’s ideas about political relations are rooted in ideas of freedom, re-

spect, and autonomy, according to Alfred. In this way, he distinguishes between indigenous nationhood and state sovereignty.

Alfred is reluctant to use the concept of sovereignty because it limits the way one thinks about Indian tribal relationship to the United States. He argues that “sovereignty” should not be a political goal for indigenous peoples to strive for. Scholars and indigenous leaders have most commonly accepted sovereignty as the goal of the indigenous political movement, but few of them have questioned why a term that was invented in Europe has become so important for indigenous peoples. Neither is it common to “question the implications of adopting the European notion of power and governance and using it to structure the postcolonial system that are being negotiated and implemented within indigenous communities today.” Most indigenous politicians see politics very much the same as non-indigenous people, as a contest for power, Alfred writes. They regard the discourse of nationhood as a position from which they can bargain for rights within the colonial state. Native Americans have become integrated into the U.S. state’s sovereignty framework by the federal government letting them have a small amount of self-administration and controlling a small portion of the money.

Alfred admits that through the use of the sovereignty paradigm, indigenous peoples have achieved progress in gaining political and legal rights. However, by promoting “aboriginal rights” and “tribal sovereignty” they have had to “abandon autonomy.” By accepting the idea of sovereignty that comes from the Western perception of the world, they have also accepted its meaning and the relationship it implies between Indian tribes and the United States. What Alfred seems to mean is that Indian tribes should not strive for sovereignty because it implies a certain kind of political relations which includes statehood, and in that context Native Americans cannot get anything other than some degree of self-government. Instead they should argue from another discourse, another way of thinking about the world, grounded in a traditional Indian way of thinking about nationhood: the idea of autonomous peoples.

Other scholars have also made a distinction between connecting sovereignty to states and to peoples, and relating these to respectively Western and Native ways of thinking. Tom Holm, J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis distinguish “peoplehood” from the Western way of classifying societies socially and politically in their article “Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies.” In contrast to Alfred, they attach the concept of sovereignty to peoplehood instead of statehood. They argue that the way scholars, like anthropologists, have categorized societies

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70 Alfred 2005, p.33.
71 Alfred 2005, p.45.
(into band, tribe, chiefdom, and state) have greatly impacted the way societies are understood and how people relate to each other. As a result of these categorizations, social scientists have viewed treaties entered into by the United States and Indian tribes as something other than treaties between states. They see sovereignty as something that can only be achieved by states, since in their view only states are sovereign, and anything beneath that is not.74

Instead Holm et al. want to see peoples as the entity for sovereignty, something that the authors consider to be inherent in peoplehood. They use Cherokee anthropologist Robert K. Thomas’s concept of the “Peoplehood Matrix” from the 1980s to define what peoples are. Peoplehood comprises four parts; language, sacred history, religion, and land. These are interwoven and mutually interdependent.75 It is “peoplehood” that is the basis for nationalism, not the organization of the state, and “states or nations might not necessarily be considered peoples,” they write.76 Holm et al. seem to equate peoples with nations, since nationalism is accorded peoples, a position shared, as previously shown, by Deloria and Lytle.

As I have explained, some Native scholars apparently make quite a sharp distinction between a Western view of sovereign nationhood which is attached to statehood, and a Native American view of sovereign nationhood which is attached to peoplehood. Such distinction is not without complications, however. To begin with, the term “nation” can mean “people” also in the western European tradition. As political scientist Tom Flanagan writes, “nation” has come to have a double meaning, one which refers to a “cultural/ancestral or ethnic group” and the other which is applied to a “political/territorial group” that may lack both common culture and ancestry. He does point out that while it is possible to talk about the nation in the cultural/ancestral sense without making political claims, it is likely that “listeners are bound to hear political overtones in what is said.”77

Secondly, one may question if it is even possible to talk about a unified Western and a unified Indian way of thinking. Hoxie takes on the issue of a uniform Indian way of thinking in his article “Thinking Like an Indian: Exploring American Indian Views on American History.” In response to Native historian Donald Fixico’s statement that “thinking like an Indian and putting yourself in that other position, is mandatory for teaching and writing a balanced history of Indian–white relations,” Hoxie asks how one thinks like an Indian and if all Indians really think alike.78 He finds that there is no uniform way that Native Americans have understood history. Instead, he finds that individual Indians are affected by political motivations, their own life expe-

74 Holm et al. 2003, pp.15–16.
75 Holm et al. 2003, p.12.
76 Holm et al. 2003, pp.16–17.
77 Flanagan 2008, pp.69–70.
78 Quoted in Hoxie 2001b, p.1.
riences, and the historical context when interpreting history. Neither can one trace Indian interpreted history back to pre-contact Indian culture. “‘Thinking like an Indian’ turned out not to be something static, but something plural, changing, and unpredictable,” Hoxie writes. 79

Jicarilla Apache/Hispanic philosopher Viola F. Cordova, on the other hand, argues that it is possible to talk about a collective Indian world view and a collective Western world view. She is aware that there are people who will object to this by arguing that “the group called ‘Native American’ represent too diverse a group to subsume under one label” and “‘A Descartes and Kant are not the same.’” However, Cordova argues that the thought pattern of Descartes and Kant have enough similarities that there is no doubt that they both belong to a Western world view. Similarly, Native Americans share thought patterns to such an extent that it is possible to “speak of Native American thought in general.” 80

Discussing Native American views of the world on a detailed level, it is easy to agree with Hoxie’s conclusions that Indian peoples are diverse and think in many different ways. On the other hand, on a more generalized level a distinction between Western and Indian ways of understanding the world may be justified as Cordova does. And as Barre Toelken writes in his article “Seeing with a Native Eye: How Many Sheep Will It Hold?” “one must start somewhere in an attempt to cope with the vast conceptual gulf which lies between Anglos in general and natives in general.” 81 Although one may acknowledge that there are significant differences between Western and “traditional” Indian ways of perceiving the world, it does not mean that there is always a clear divide in thinking between individual Indians and individuals of European descent. Native Americans have been influenced by the Western way of thinking, and that has also been noticed by Native scholars. Although Deloria and Lytle make a distinction between a Western and a Native way of thinking, they also state that American Indians did not only see reality in a “traditional” Native way. Native Americans of the 20th century were not isolated from the Western way of thinking about peoplehood and nationality, and according to Deloria and Lytle, their understanding of these concepts had largely become that of the “Western” way of understanding them. 82

How Native Americans understood sovereignty and nationhood and how they related to the United States has changed throughout history. Interactions with the surrounding “mainstream” society naturally influenced the way Indians thought about themselves, the United States, and how the world was constituted in general. Deloria writes that, previous to 1960, Indians did not

80 Cordova et al. 2007, p.3.
81 Toelken 1976, p.10.
82 Deloria, Jr. & Lytle 1984, p.12.
identify as a minority within the American society, but saw themselves as independent from the United States. The task of tribal leaders was to protect the tribe from outside interference. He explains the change in identification after 1960 by the increasing contacts with the surrounding society. Deloria writes:

> With a great increase in college scholarships, thousands of young Indians headed for college and saw the world pretty much as non-Indians of the same age saw it. As Indians became more familiar with the world outside the reservation, there is no question that they began to see themselves as another minority group within American society. The activism of the 1970s only confirmed this viewpoint and made it a regular part of the Indian perspective, even of the reservation people.83

Not only are Native Americans influenced by Western ways of thinking, contemporary Native identity is to a great extent defined by the relationship to the colonial state, according to Chippewa sociologist Duane Champagne. He writes:

> While native people have identities that predate the formation of nation-states, and many aspects of these pre-state identities continue to persist and make their weight felt in everyday life, native identity is largely defined in relation to colonizing cultures and state governments.84

In summary, as several of the scholars I have mentioned have stated, both “sovereignty” and “nationhood” can be ascribed different meanings. Sovereignty may mean total independence, but it can also refer to the lawmaking power of a government. The meaning of sovereignty is context bound, both culturally and historically. The question is, “What did sovereignty mean to Native Americans in the early 1970s and in 1992?”

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There is also more than one way of understanding nationhood. Several of the Native scholars mentioned made their main distinction between two ways of understanding nationhood, one “Western” originating in Europe and the other Native American. The Western world view imagines a world made up of spatially defined sovereign states inhabited by citizens with certain rights and obligations.85 Here nations become equated with states.86 This

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83 Deloria, Jr. 1992, p.46.
84 Champagne 2005, p.3.
85 The concept of “citizen” is defined as “a legally recognized subject or national of a state or commonwealth, either native or naturalized” in the *Oxford Dictionaries* (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/citizen). In addition to legal aspects, scholars who study citizenship usually add other components in their definition of the concept. Citizenship can also be understood in terms of membership in and identification with the state, as well as a set of social relationships between different individuals or between individuals and the state (Lister 1997, pp.13–15).
86 The Swedish *Nationalencyclopedin* defines a state as a land area with a common government which is formally sovereign in relationship to other states. Internally, the state regulates
view is contrasted with the “traditional Native American” world view where focus lies on peoplehood, which is based on a conception of kinship relations and a spiritual attachment to a homeland. Some native authors do not want to use the word “sovereignty” in relationship to tribes since it has connotations to statehood; however, other scholars use the term but put it in relationship to peoples. Native Americans have been influenced by both ways of thinking about nationhood and about the world.

Can these different ways of understanding the world help explain the confusing and seemingly contradictory ways Indians have related to the United States? In the next chapter, I lay out the theoretical foundation for the construction of world views and identification.
3. World views and discourses

The two different ways of thinking that Cordova, Deloria & Lyttle, Alfred, and others refer to in their work can be described as different world views. In this chapter, I first present the theoretical framework for this thesis relating to world views and discourses. I then elaborate on what characterizes the Native American world view compared to the Western one.

Theoretical framework

A “world view” is the comprehensive ideational framework from which a person imagines how the world is constituted and what place they, themselves, have in this world. These ideas are largely shared by members of a specific society or cultural group. Anthropologist Michael Kearney defines world view in the following manner:

...each society is a particular arrangement of ideas and behavior. The overall cognitive framework of these ideas and behavior is that society’s world view. Another way of stating this is that a world view is the collection of basic assumptions that an individual or society has about reality.87

Other scholars have used different concepts to describe similar ideas. Cultural anthropologists Naomi Quinn and Dorothy Holland talk about “cultural models” when referring to those widely shared, “taken-for-granted models of the world” that greatly influence how a person understands reality.88 Norman Fairclough uses “ideology” when referring to “significations/constructions of reality” which include “the physical world, social relations, [and] social identities”.”89 In this thesis, I use the concept “world view.”

Although I see world view as shared understandings of reality held by a group of people, world views (and cultures) should not be understood as clearly bounded and never-changing entities. I rather imagine world views as “clusters” of shared ideas that are shared to a greater or lesser degree by people within (and outside) the group.

87 Kearney 1984, p.42.
88 Quinn & Holland 1987, p.4.
89 Fairclough 1992, p.87.
Although world views are shared meanings, they are not static but embody both continuity and change. In their book *The Social Construction of Reality*, sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue that there is a dialectical process between society and individuals in creating the perception of reality. Individuals are born into a society where there already exist shared meanings, certain world views, which will influence the way the individual will understand themselves and the world around them. However, individuals are not just passive recipients of ideas. Ideas are internalized by the individual in their own way and therefore form their own interpretation of culture and world view.\(^90\)

Consequently, society forms the individual which, in turn, forms society. This means that the individual never thinks totally independently from his or her cultural context; the conventions of thinking limit the ways a person can think about the world. But at the same time, ideas are not recreated exactly the same way by every person. Individuals in a society may also be influenced by ideas that exist outside their society. This may lead to an internalization of several different, sometimes contradictory, ways of thinking. As linguist James Paul Gee writes:

> Cultural models, [or world views] though they are theories (explanations), need not be complete, fully formed, or consistent. Their partiality and inconsistency are sometimes the result of the fact that one cultural model can incorporate different and conflicting social and cultural values...\(^91\)

The reconstruction of culture and world view is a continuously ongoing process. The historic process is therefore important since what has happened in the past influences the contemporary world view. What world view exists at one point in time is the result of what has happened in the past as well as what happens in the present. Although this is a universal process, peoples like Native Americans, who have encountered very different world views, may have, more than others, “inconsistencies” in their perceptions of the world.

To understand world view is to a great extent to understand how people categorize reality and which criteria they use to group some phenomena together and some phenomena apart.\(^92\) In the course of placing themselves in reality, people make the distinction between “the self” and “the other,” something that is the fundamental structure of world views, according to anthropologist Michael Kearney.\(^93\) This distinction includes identifying as a person, but it also includes different forms of collective identities, as for example, ethnic and national identities.

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90 Berger & Luckmann 1979.
91 Gee 1999, s.70.
92 Kearney 1984, p.78.
93 Kearney 1984, p.62.
The way people classify and thereby perceive the world is expressed in language. Therefore, discourse is closely tied to world view. A discourse, which is the pattern of talking about the world (or part of the world), is consequently dependent on the specific way the person who talks perceives of the world at a specific time. My use of the concept “discourse” consequently follows the basic ideas applied to the concept by other scholars. That is, that our way of talking does not directly reflect the world, our identities and social relations, but are representations of reality. Although, I do not agree with the idea that language helps form reality, I do agree that language forms the individual’s perception of reality.

People need to communicate with each other, and to be able to communicate, there has to be a general agreement on codes, i.e., language. This code is collective and culture-specific. As Gee writes, “the meanings of words are integrally linked to social and cultural groups in ways that transcend individual minds.” Although the meaning of words is widely shared within a community – otherwise, people would not be able to communicate – words may not always be used with exactly the same meaning by all members of a society or in all different contexts. Gee gives several explanations for that. Speakers or writers may relate to more than one cultural model, or world view, since “each of us can have allegiance to competing and conflicting cultural models.” Another explanation is that words have histories. When words are taken from one social setting to another, they “bring with them” meanings that originate in another historical context and in another discourse. The word carries a history with it that influences the interpretation of the word in the present. That is not to say that people do not make their own interpretations of words. Words may change meanings when transferred from one cultural setting to another. When a word is transferred from one group to another and over time, the “original” meaning might be taken up in more or less degree. Gee also explains words’ different and changing meanings as adaptations to use in different contexts.

Consequently, there are different systems to categorize reality that are crucial for the way a person understands the world and their own place in this world. Discourse is the way the categorization system is expressed.

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95 Bergström & Boréus 2000, p.221.
96 Jørgensen & Philips write that scholars who apply discourse analysis generally share a goal to investigate and map power relationships in society so that they can criticize these relationships and point out possibilities for social change (2000, p.8). This is not my intention with this study. My intention is to understand the Native American perception of reality; I will not research power relationships.
97 Kearney 1984, p.42.
98 Gee 1999, s.40.
99 Gee 1999, s.66.
100 Gee 1999, s.54.
101 Gee 1999, s.40.
discourse is not exclusive, that is, a person can move between discourses. For example, Indians can talk about Indian tribes in terms of both sovereign states when imagining a world of states, and in terms of peoples when imagining a world of peoples.

Words, then, reveal how people categorize the world. They also reveal how people categorize themselves into “selves” and “others,” in other words, how people identify. Since world view and classification is an ongoing process, identity is also an ongoing process. To understand identity, one has to analyze how people categorize and how they define membership.102 Sociolinguistic Anna de Fina states that “a sense of belonging to social categories,” 103 that is, to classify oneself together with others in a ”self,” or rather a “we,” is central to identity. As already has been pointed out, identities should not be seen as clearly defined, bounded entities. As de Fina states:

people do not possess one identity related to the social categories to which they belong, but rather they present and re-present themselves, choosing within an inventory of more or less compatible identities that intersect and/or contrast with each other in different ways and in accordance with changing social circumstances and interlocutors.104

Consequently, individuals may “pick and choose” between different ways of identifying. This picking and choosing should not be interpreted as something that is necessarily done deliberately and strategically, nor that any kind of identity can be chosen. Rather, it relates to the fact that every individual has a number of identities that they can “put forward” or actualize in different situations and in relationship to different people.

De Fina, who studies narratives of Mexican immigrants in the United States, argues that narratives constitute the “loci” for the construction of specific identities.105 In addition “stories present an arena for the negotiations of stances vis-à-vis shared (or unshared) representations of group identity.”106

All speech acts and texts written about oneself can be seen as narratives, not in the meaning of fictional stories but in the meaning of stories relating messages. In the act of speaking and writing, people reveal how they categorize themselves and others, thereby revealing how they identify. By examining discourse, one may therefore reveal identification. In this study, I examine the discourses revealing Indian identification in relationship to the United States expressed in a specific narrative context: pan-Indian newspapers.

102 de Fine 2007, pp.2–3.
103 de Fina 2007, p.355.
104 de Fina 2007, p.353.
105 de Fina 2007, p.353.
106 de Fina 2007, p.356.
American Indian world view

Peoples’ world views are their taken-for-granted models of the world, i.e., their understanding of how the world is constituted and what place human beings have in this world. Cosmology and religion are basic features of a world view. Other aspects of understanding reality are also part of world views, like kinship systems, patterns of subsistence, political organization, relations between sexes, etc.; cosmology and religion are the aspects I concentrate on in this chapter.

As I have shown previously, there exists a common view among native scholars that there is quite a sharp distinction between a Western world view and a traditionally Indian world view. Shawnee philosopher Thomas M. Norton-Smith writes that many authors state that the fundamental difference between Western and Native American religious thinking is that Western traditions are framed by time, sacred events, and history, while Indian religion is framed by space, sacred places, and nature.107 Norton-Smith argues that this dichotomy is based on a more fundamental distinction: different world-ordering principles. One such distinction can be made between the Western linear ordering principle and the Native American circular ordering principle. Native Americans tend to think in terms of cycles, both in temporal and spatial sense. It can actually be difficult to distinguish the temporal from the spatial, Norton-Smith states. As examples of the circular ordering where time and space are closely connected, he mentions the annual harvest and hunts that take place at a specific time in a specific place.108 He also gives this example:

So, to the Lakota traditionalist the power of the west sends rain, and the north brings the winter wind; the power of the east is where the morning star lives, and the south sends the summer. Each of the spatial directions, then, is also associated with a cyclical seasonal (i.e., temporal) event or occurrence.109

Anthropologist Joseph Epes Brown also describes the distinction between Western and Native perceptions of time. He writes that, in traditional native culture, time is commonly experienced as cyclical rather than lineal and “progressive.” All kinds of life, including human life, are believed to be cyclical periods within larger cycles that form the rhythm of the world. Oral traditions and other stories are not told in terms of past or present, as is done in a lineal way of thinking. Most native languages have no past or future tense: “They speak rather to a perennial reality of the now.”110 Kiowa writer

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N. Scott Momaday gives this description of the Indian perception of time from his own experience:

When my father spoke to me of my grandfather, who died before I was born, he invariably slipped into the present tense. And this is a common thing in my experience of the Indian world. For the Indian there is something like an extended present. Time as motion is an illusion; indeed, time itself is an illusion. In the deepest sense, according to the native perception, there is only the dimension of timelessness, and in that dimension all things happen.111

Norton-Smith also describes another world-ordering principle, relatedness, which distinguishes Native Americans world view from a Western world view. Relatedness between all beings is generally expressed in native stories, a world where all entities, persons, and actions, are interconnected. This connects to the third special feature of the Native American way of thinking: “the expansive perception of persons.” The idea of personhood extends to include “spirit beings” which are part of a web of relationships among different types of beings, including humans. Non-human spirits may embody places, physical forces, cardinal directions, ancestors, animals, plants, and even the Earth. These relationships are sustained by mutual respect.112 Consequently, land is filled with meaning for Native Americans because it is inhabited by a range of different beings. Nature itself becomes part of the interconnectedness in this web of relationships.

According to the Native American world view, certain lands are also closely tied to certain peoples, since each people was created for a specific place. This view not only makes them rightful occupiers of that place but also sees them as belonging to that land. Native land is not only the home of Native Americans but an extension of themselves as peoples, Cordova writes.113 Native scholar and poet Paula Gunn Allen expresses similar views on the Indian relationship to land. She describes this relationship in her essay in The Remembered Earth:

We are the land. To the best of my understanding, that is the fundamental idea embedded in Native American life and culture in the Southwest. More than remembered, the Earth is the mind of the people as we are the mind of the earth. The land is not really the place (separate from ourselves) where we act out the drama of our isolate destinies. It is not a means of survival, a setting for our affairs, a resource on which we draw in order to keep our own act functioning. It is not the ever-present “Other” which supplies us with a sense of “I.” It is rather a part of our being, dynamic, significant, real.114

111 Momaday 1987, p.158.
112 Norton-Smith 2010, pp.58, 137.
Cherokee English and Native American Studies professor Sean Kicummah Teuton comments that Allen’s description about tribal people’s connection to land describes peoples and lands as “interchangeable homogenous components of an organic whole.” Indians and their land are inseparable; their distinction is just an illusion. This mystified way of relating to native homelands cannot be questioned, Teuton writes, because they are part of religious beliefs.\(^\text{115}\)

Teuton himself feels a close relationship with his own ancestral homelands from which his people were forcefully removed in the 19th century. He writes:

> I am a Cherokee Indian from Appalachia, even though I was an adult when I first saw the old Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi. To say I am from a place where as a young person I had never been might confuse some readers, and it might even invite criticism. Many indigenous people, however, understand themselves and their attachment to land through tribal stories about the history of that land, contained in oral tradition.\(^\text{116}\)

Teuton is attached to his ancestral homelands, which he only saw in adult age, through stories connected to the land. Indian relationship to the land is maintained by oral traditions in which the stories recall and interpret important events that took place on the lands. These stories also convey important ethical theory. Sacred sites are important not only because of the events that have taken place there; these places are equally important for guiding moral behavior and sustaining culture, according to Teuton. But he also sees direct connections between peoples and lands where peoples adapt to the specific ecological characters of the land they inhabit. The specific features and rhythms of the land shape peoples over time, he writes. A specific people with specific cultural traditions are created in response to unique topography.\(^\text{117}\) Teuton continues:

> Through this reciprocal relationship with the earth, one knows one’s homeland by recalling some of the countless stories that took place on that land’s specific topographical features: on the peaks, in the hollows, at the banks of streams, within the whirlpools. Indigenous people maintain their social world by pointing to significant places and recalling (often word by word) the legendary and historical events held secure in the tribal imagination.\(^\text{118}\)

These significant features of Indian ways of thinking, the circularity as world-ordering principle, the relatedness as world-ordering principle, the extensive perception of personhood, and the embedded meanings in, and

\(^{115}\) Teuton 2008, p.47.

\(^{116}\) Teuton 2008, pp.43–44.

\(^{117}\) Teuton 2008, p.49.

\(^{118}\) Teuton 2008, p.50.
perception of relatedness with the nature of their ancestral homelands, are important features to understand to be able to understand Indian identification. Perceiving the world from a “traditional Indian” world view perspective will also affect how Native Americans have identified in relationship to the United States, which is the topic of this thesis.
4. Sources, Methods, and Questions

Indian newspapers

As source material for this study I used newspapers published by and about American Indians. James E. Murphy and Sharon M. Murphy, divide the Native press into five categories: (1) national publications, (2) tribal newspapers, (3) intertribal newspapers, (4) regional papers, and 5) magazines and specialized publications. I have focused on (U.S.) national publications, that is, Native newspapers that had a national distribution. My reason is that I wanted to study newspapers that turn to a general Native American audience and not to a specific tribe. I also chose papers that are not specialized in a specific topic but have as a main goal to deliver news of general interest for Indians.

The amount of Native American text production increased during the late 1960s and the 1970s, which may be interpreted as a sign of the increased ethnic pride sociologist Joane Nagel refers to. Indians started their own newspapers, wrote books about their own culture and history, they wrote their own memoirs as well as fictional stories, to an extent that they had never done before. The increase in writing can also be interpreted as a result of the increased political engagement in the 1960s and 1970s. Akwesasne Notes, for instance, was founded in connection with the controversy over Iroquois Indians’ rights to freely cross the border between the United States and Canada. The pan-Indian newspapers were also a tool to spread information in a political struggle for Indian rights. Until the 1960s and 1970s, Indian newspapers had primarily been concerned with local issues but after 1960 more of the newspapers addressed a pan-Indian readership.

If you want to know exactly what was said and done during a specific event, newspapers are perhaps not the most reliable source; however, they do show what discussions were held in a society in a specific period of time. Newspapers, by being a public forum and an arena for discussion, are important sources of the ongoing debate. As such, newspapers are also part of forming identity. By interviews, letters to the editor, and guest writers, they also give voice to many different people.

119 Murphy & Murphy 1981.
120 Nagel 1996, pp. 11–12, 135.
121 Iverson 1998, p. 150.
122 Cornell 1988, p. 139.
There were two national Indian newspapers during the period 1970–1975: *Akwesasne Notes* and *Wassaja*. With the exception of a couple of *Akwesasne Notes* from 1970, which I could not find in the archives, all of these papers are included in this study. 123 *Akwesasne Notes*, which was founded in 1969, was the official newspaper of the Mohawk Nation. It started as a reaction to federal governmental policies and gradually grew into a national newspaper. Murphy and Murphy describe it as a militant, activist newspaper, which was accused of being the mouthpiece of the American Indian Movement. The financial situation was unstable. 124

The July/August 1970 edition of *Akwesasne Notes* was published in 9,500 copies and the number of copies was continuously growing. In June 1973, 56,000 papers were circulated, and the early summer edition of 1975 was printed in 71,000 copies. *Akwesasne Notes* was continuously published until 1992. After a two-year pause, it was given a new start in 1995. That only lasted for two years, and *Akwesasne Notes* was last printed in 1997.

*Akwesasne Notes* largely relied on non-staff writers. Readers were asked to send in news reports to the paper for publishing. Few articles had named authors; the first years *Akwesasne Notes* was published, it was primarily based on clippings from other newspapers. This created somewhat of a methodological problem for my study. From the newspaper clippings I have only used interviews with Natives and direct quotes from Indians appearing in the newspapers. I also used the editorials and letters to the editor.

*Wassaja* was an urban-based newspaper not closely associated with any tribe or group of tribes. Well educated journalists and researchers wrote in the newspaper and worked as editors. It was a professional national newspaper with stable finances. 125 Articles were also published by guest writers. “Indian readers, the tribes, and communities” were, for instance, encouraged to send in news that could be published in *Wassaja*. 126 There were also specific pages where letters from the public were published. Many of the articles do not have a named author. Both men and women worked for *Wassaja*, and in 1974 the staff were 60% men and 40% women. 127 It was founded in 1973 by the American Indian Historical Society of San Francisco, California. The society had started another publication previously, in 1964; it was a monthly publication called *The Indian Historian*. This periodical had started as a reaction to professional research about Indian, and its goal was to por-

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123 *Wassaja* was a 24-page newspaper that was published 8–11 times a year. *Akwesasne Notes* were twice as long, 48 pages, and published 4–9 times a year. In total, I read 60 newspapers, about 2,200 pages in newspaper format, from the period 1970–1975.
125 Murphy & Murphy 1981, p.80.
127 I have drawn this conclusion from the names of the staff which were published in *Wassaja* 1974, vol.2, no.8, p.2. I have regarded the people with the names Jeanette, Patricia, Susan, and Gwendolyn as women and Rupert, Jim, Bill, Joe, Adolph, and Cory as men.
tray a correct interpretation of Indian history.\textsuperscript{128} Wassaja, on the other hand, was focused on news. One of this newspaper’s purposes was to present information about the true situation of the American Indian. Another purpose was to present an alternative to violence for Indians in accomplishing their goals.\textsuperscript{128} Wassaja described its purpose in the following way:

The purpose for which Wassaja was founded, is to put information into the hands of our Indian people. Information that is as accurate as we can get it, as fair as we can write it. Our policy was and is now, to present a clear and true reflection of all aspects of Indian life.\textsuperscript{130}

The first edition run of Wassaja in 1973 was 50,000 copies; however, the second edition ran 80,000, which continued for several years. Initially, the paper was spread through personal contacts. Indian tribes and organizations received the paper for free. It was a problem to get the newspapers into the hands of potential readers. According to the editor, newsstands and stores would refuse to sell Wassaja. Distribution was also stopped by the Internal Revenue Service and postal agencies that stopped delivery for months and regularly “lost” the newspapers that were supposed to be delivered.\textsuperscript{131}

The fact that the two newspapers were different made them good sources for this study since I wanted a variety of Indian views. As Murphy and Murphy stated:

Because the papers and their editors have often differed in approach to news and current issues, they offer a view of varying philosophies among Indian peoples.\textsuperscript{132}

Although there were many differences between the newspapers, there were also similarities. They both addressed a nationwide audience that included both Indians and non-Indians, but with the goal of addressing issues of Native Americans. Their news concerned many different tribes from a variety of geographical areas where they thought there was a void in news reporting. There was no sharp division between the views portrayed in the two newspapers. Although Akwesasne Notes was the more radical one, Wassaja also let AIM leaders Russel Means and Dennis Banks publish in the newspaper.

In 1992, four national Indian newspapers were published. Wassaja no longer in existence; it ceased to exist in 1980.\textsuperscript{133} Instead there were, in addition to Akwesasne Notes, three new (U.S.) national newspapers: the Navajo Times, Indian Country Today, and News From Indian Country. Indian Coun-

try Today changed its name from Lakota Times and became a national newspaper in 1992 and the Navajo Times had also become a national newspaper. I used all four of these newspapers in this study.

The Navajo Times was first published in 1959 and was a tribally funded monthly newsletter of the education committee of the tribal council. Its purpose was to keep Navajo students living off-reservation informed about tribal activities. In 1960, it was changed to newspaper format and published semi-monthly; the year after that, the Navajo Times became tribally governed and started weekly publication. The newspaper became officially independent in 1972; however, it continued to have a close relationship with the tribal council. The tribal government continued to greatly influence what was written in the newspaper. The extent to which the newspaper could freely express itself depended on who was in power at the time. The editor of the Navajo Times, Chester A. MacRorie, was fired in 1967 after Raymond Nakai became tribal chairman. The newspaper reported that MacRorie had been fired “on charges of ‘lies.’” After Peter MacDonald became tribal chairman in 1971, MacRorie returned as editor for the Navajo Times, and in 1982 MacDonald declared that the “Navajo Times is the paper of the Navajo People, all the Navajo people – not just the administration.” However, in 1987, the tribal government once again interfered with the press. The newly elected tribal chairman had the tribal police shut down the paper, which had not supported him. The Navajo Times finally became an independent paper upon decision by the Navajo National Council in 2003.

Both Indian Country Today and News From Indian Country were privately owned and independent from tribal governments. Indian Country Today started off as The Lakota Times on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in 1981. It was a weekly newspaper focusing on local news and events. Part of the newspaper was a section called “Notes from Indian Country”

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134 Personal information by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., Sequoyah Research Center/American Native Press Archives, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
135 I read two of the Akwesasne Notes from 1992: no.3 (mid-winter), and no.4 (fall). Both were 28 pages long. Indian Country Today was published weekly and I read 13 issues, nos.15–27. Each issue was 8 pages long. News From Indian Country was published twice a month; the issues were 27 pages long and I read 8 issues, nos.17–24. The Navajo Times was published weekly and was 8–14 pages long; I read 11 issues: nos. 37, 39–44, 46, 48, 50, 52. I chose to focus on the later part of 1992 in my study, partly depending on availability of sources and partly on the fact that the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of America was celebrated in October. The two available issues of Akwesasne Notes were the mid-winter and fall issues. The Lakota Times became the national newspaper Indian Country Today in the fall of 1992. I therefore chose to focus on the months of September, October, November, and December for all four national Indian newspapers published in 1992. In total, I read 34 newspapers, about 460 pages in newspaper format, from 1992.
137 Murphy & Murphy 1981, p.91.
which concerned Indian affairs on both local and national levels. Tim Giago was editor and founder of the paper. In the 1970s, the Pine Ridge Reservation was deeply divided, and there was still tension between different factions when *Lakota Times* was first published. Giago wrote editorials questioning those people who were involved in violent acts, and this resulted in threats to him and his newspaper. The windows of the building were shot out and the place was firebombed. Giago was also shot at when leaving his office one evening. The harassment was finally stopped when tribal president Joe American Horse at a tribal council meeting stated, “From now on any violent action against the *Lakota Times* will be considered an attack upon the Oglala Sioux Tribe itself.”[141] In 1992, the *Lakota Times* became *Indian Country Today*. This is how the change to a national newspaper was described in the newspaper:

After 12 years of publishing as the *Lakota Times*, we are finally making the changeover that will make us the only national Indian weekly newspaper in the United States. You are now reading the new *Indian Country Today*.

We believe it is fitting and proper that we are starting the next 500 years with a national newspaper to serve all of Indian Country – TODAY!142

Giago emphasized the newspaper’s goal to be a voice for everyone. He made this statement about his paper:

We wanted a paper that was not afraid to report the truth. And above all, we wanted a paper that did not censor any writer, whether in a letter or in a column, that we did not agree with. And in the 18 years I owned the Lakota Times/Indian Country Today, we followed that golden rule.143

In 1998, *Indian Country Today* was sold to the Oneida Nation, which still publishes the paper today.[144]

*News From Indian Country* was founded by Paul DeMain in 1986 and located on the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway reservation. DeMain had first worked for the LCO Journal (Lac Courte Oreilles Journal) which was estab-

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lished in Hayward, Wisconsin, in 1977. It was a community paper focusing on tribal affairs and events and issues concerning the tribe. It also had a section about national Indian news. The paper was owned by the tribe and DeMain was fired twice because he criticized tribal leaders. In 1986, he founded News From Indian Country. It was a financially independent bi-monthly paper. News From Indian Country is still published today and is still owned and edited by Paul DeMain.

Methods

In this thesis, I analyzed the discourses used by Native Americans in their pan-Indian national newspapers to understand how they identified in relationship to the United States. In total, I analyzed 60 newspapers, about 2200 pages, from 1970 to 1975 and 34 newspapers, about 460 pages, from 1992. All relevant parts of these papers were read, including editorials, letters to the editor, and articles—everything from short notices to articles several pages long. If an article was reprinted from a non-Indian newspaper, which was common in the early issues of Akwesasne Notes, I only used direct quotes from Native Americans.

The newspapers as source material provided abundant information about the issue studied. There were many examples in the newspapers of how Indians identified in relationship to the United States, especially in the 1970s. Every newspaper issue gave relevant information for the study, and often there was so much information that several articles on the same page were of interest for the study.

I examined how Native Americans talked about their relationship to the United States, both directly and indirectly, to see if they placed themselves as part of or not part of the United States. This included both their use of concepts as well as their ways of reasoning. When I read the sources and collected information, I noted all statements that somehow "placed" Indians either "inside" or "outside" the United States (and Canada).

Instances of statements that directly placed Native Americans outside the United States were when they talked about “your nation” in reference to the

149 Parts of the newspaper that I might consider irrelevant for the study were, for example, various types of advertisements, calendars of events, announcements of deaths, etc.
United States, or when they proclaimed war against the United States. A statement that directly placed Indians inside the United States was when they claimed U.S. citizenship. Native Americans were indirectly placed outside the United States in the statement “they killed a lot of us” which referred to the killing of Native Americans by U.S. soldiers at Wounded Knee in 1890, and they were indirectly placed inside the United States in statements where Indian tribes were contrasted with foreign nations.

The Indian newspapers that I studied are published within the borders of the United States. However, several examples in the newspapers relate to Indians in Canada, and I chose to include them in my study. This is partly because I studied the discourses in the newspapers and the examples from Canada are part of these discourses. In addition, there generally seems to be close identification with Canadian Indians in the newspapers. Especially in Akwesasne Notes, the Mohawk newspaper, the distinction between Canadian and U.S. Indians seems irrelevant. This may be explained by the fact that the Mohawk reservation crosses the U.S./Canadian border.

In structuring the collected material, I took as point of departure the two world views and different ways of understanding nationhood mentioned by Deloria and Lyttle, Alfred, and others cited previously. Consequently, I have organized my study in accordance with the two categories statehood and peoplehood. This division is analytical and, as I have shown, the two concepts are not completely separate.

Neither should this division be understood as strictly between Western and Indian world views. Although I acknowledge that the idea of a world of states comes from a western European perception, and that “traditional” Indian world views were very different from Europeans’, my intentions are not to figure out exactly which ideas come from which tradition. As I described in Chapter 3, world views and discourses are continuously reconstructed and are often fragmented, inconsistent, and influenced by “outside” world views. It would therefore be quite fruitless to try to classify the material in a “pure” Western and a “pure” Indian world view. That said, I do intend to relate the discourses presented in the newspapers to different ways of perceiving the world.

I chose to organize the study in this manner because I believe it opens up the possibility of uncovering different ways that Native Americans could belong (or not belong) to the USA. These insights may explain the seemingly contradictory ways of identifying in relationship to the U.S. and the formation of identification.

The method I chose to study Native American identification is the study of discourse, that is, the pattern of talking about the world. I thus analyze how Native Americans talked about their relationship to the United States. This discourse could be direct descriptions of this relationship or statements that implicitly put them either inside or outside the United States. I will argue that the way they talked about their relationship to the United States says
something about how they understood their relationship to the United States and therefore also how they identified.

The study uses two perspectives. The first deals with how Indians in the newspapers expressed the discourse of sovereign statehood and how they expressed the discourse of peoplehood. I will first discuss the early 1970s and then 1992.

The discourse of sovereign statehood encompasses statements that refer to different aspects of statehood, U.S. or tribal, and all of its judicial-political functions. It also includes different aspects of being part of the state as “nations within” or as U.S. citizens.

The discourse of peoplehood encompasses statements in which Indians talk about themselves and others, directly or indirectly, in terms of peoples. In these statements, they define what it means to be an Indian, to be a tribal member and to belong to other peoples. It encompasses statements that relate to ethnic and cultural aspects of identification rather than judicial-political. I have primarily focused on statements about themselves and other peoples that say something about an Indian identification in relationship to the United States.

The second perspective looks at Indian identification in relationship to the United States from a different angle. This part focuses on how Native Americans talked about and understood what it means to be American, and how they related to American (or U.S.) symbols. I address questions like these: Were Indians tribal peoples and Americans, or were they not Americans at all? What did being “American” mean and how did it relate to Indians?

In references to newspaper articles or letters, I use the same tribal names as used in the sources. Some tribes have since the 1970s preferred to go only by their native name, also in English. The Oglala Sioux, for example, are now going by the name Oglala Lakotas, and Navajos are calling themselves Diné. Other tribes use different names depending on which language they speak. Crows for instance call themselves Crows when speaking English but Apsáaloke when speaking the Crow language. In this study, I chose to go by the name my sources used although these may differ from one article to another and between the two time periods studied.

Two groups of Native Americans need some extra introduction since they occur so frequently in the material. The first is the Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the Six Nations Confederacy. It was made up of the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras. It is this confederacy that I am referring to under the term “The Iroquois” both as a whole and when referring to individual tribes.

The second group is “the Sioux.” The name Sioux, which is most commonly used in the newspapers, can be somewhat confusing. Seven different related groups belonged to this category; they were separate and independent tribes but had formed a confederation before European contact. They did not all support themselves in the same way and they spoke slightly different
dialects. They are usually divided into three groups that correspond with their different dialects. The easternmost group is called the Santee Sioux. They were semi-sedentary and spoke the Dakota dialect. Further west lived the Yankton and Yanktonai who spoke the Nakota dialect and farthest to the west lived the nomadic Teton Sioux who spoke the Lakota dialect. The Teton Sioux or Lakotas were divided into several bands, Oglala, Sicangu (Brule), Itazipco (San Arc), Sicasapa (Blackfoot), Minnekonjou, Oohenonpa (Two Kettles), and Hunkpapa.

It is the last group of Sioux, the Teton or Lakotas, that appear in the newspapers and especially the Oglala band of Lakotas. This group is referred to in different ways in this thesis. They may be called the Oglala Sioux or the Oglala Lakota. There may also be references to Lakota Sioux when no band of the Teton Sioux is specified.

Research questions

As stated in the Introduction, the aim of this thesis is to find out how Native Americans identified in relationship to the United States and to explain the seemingly contradictory ways of identifying as both part of and not part of the U.S. This aim can be expressed in three questions:

1. How did Indians identify in relationship to the United States in the pan-Indian newspapers of the early 1970s and in 1992?

2. Is it possible to see a pattern of how Indians identified, in one or the other way?

3. How can these different ways of relating to the United States be explained?

150 The Santees comprised four tribes: Mdewakantonwan, Wahpekute, Sisseton, and Wahpeton (Feraca & Howard 1963).
151 Feraca & Howard 1963, pp.81–84.
5. Indian–U.S. relations: a historical outline

In this chapter I present a historical outline of the policies implemented by the United States in relationship to Native Americans, from the assimilation policies of the turn of the century (c.1900) to the self-determination policy starting in the 1970s and continuing today. I also examine the legal-political status of Indians in the United States and show how a number of court cases have dealt with this confusing and contradictory status over time.

U.S. policies: from assimilation to self-determination

Assimilation

After militarily defeating the Native American tribes during the second half of the 19th century, U.S. federal governments used much effort to “Americanize” and incorporate them into mainstream American society. These efforts were expressions of an ideology shared by many Americans at the time. Educators and organized patriots active around the turn of the century looked for ways to form a culture of loyal Americanism shared by all people living within the U.S. borders. To achieve this goal, they pushed for the introduction of patriotic rituals, like the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the flying of the American flag, in every school in the country.152 Native American children were also targeted in these Americanization efforts and were even more deeply affected than children from other ethnic backgrounds. Indian children were removed from their families and sent to boarding schools in an effort to instill American values and patriotism in them. These schools were often located far away from the children’s homes. Government officials believed it was necessary to remove Indian children from their home environment which they saw as harmful and counterproductive for the children’s Americanization. At these boarding schools, Indian children were instructed only in English and were forbidden to speak their own tribal languages. It was believed that by giving the children a common

152 O’Leary 1999, p.150.
language they would create a common bond of citizenship.\textsuperscript{153} Once the students began to master a basic knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, more emphasis was put on lessons of “citizenship” and “civilization” to form the children into Americans.\textsuperscript{154} At the turn of the century (1900), about 50\% of Indian children were enrolled in schools, most of them attending boarding schools far away from home.\textsuperscript{155}

The boarding school system was one part of a larger assimilation project administered by the federal government. The idea of being American was modeled around the image of the white Anglo-Saxon Christian. Accordingly, Native Americans needed to be more like white people, to adopt the so-called “citizen dress” style, convert to Christianity, and support themselves as farmers. All signs of Indian-ness were removed, including Indian names.\textsuperscript{156} Traditional native religious practices like the Sun Dance were outlawed, and local governmental officials, the Indian agents, could throw people in jail for breaking the rules.\textsuperscript{157} Another part of the Americanization policy and a step towards turning Native Americans into farmers, was the passing of the General Allotment Act of 1887.\textsuperscript{158} It forced Indians to give up communally owned tribal land and divide it into individually owned parcels. It gave Indian heads of household 160 acres each while single persons and orphans received 80 acres. When all eligible tribal members had received their parcel, the rest of the land, the so-called surplus land, could be sold to non-Indians.\textsuperscript{159}

These efforts to make Indians into American patriots worked, at least to some extent. Native Americans voluntarily enlisted to go to war for the United States during World War I; although there were discussions among the Indians whether it was right to fight for a country that had treated them so badly, “those who did enlist frequently spoke to the need to prove Indian patriotism and capabilities.”\textsuperscript{160} During the annual conference held by the Society of American Indians (SAI) in 1918, Chauncey Yellow Robe in his speech emphasized how American the Indian people were. At the same time, he also stressed how “un-American” the German immigrants were. Obviously embracing the Americanization policies of the time, Yellow Robe stated, “The American Indian is not lacking in patriotism, he is not a disloyalist – a slacker or a traitor, but is a true patriot.”\textsuperscript{161}

Another step taken towards incorporating Native Americans into U.S. society was the passing of the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924. It followed an

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{153}{Iverson 1998, pp.19–20.}
\footnotetext{154}{Churchill 2004, p.27.}
\footnotetext{155}{Iverson 1998, p.22.}
\footnotetext{156}{Gibson 1980, pp.448–449.}
\footnotetext{157}{Iverson 1998, p.26.}
\footnotetext{158}{Also called the Dawes Act after Senator Henry L. Dawes, who sponsored the act.}
\footnotetext{159}{Iverson 1998, p.31.}
\footnotetext{160}{Iverson 1998, p.51.}
\footnotetext{161}{Hoxie 2001a, pp.127–128.}
\end{footnotes}
earlier act of 1919 that gave citizenship to all Indians who had served in the military during World War I. Indians were made U.S. citizens whether they liked it or not; they did not have a say in the decision. Many Indians welcomed becoming U.S. citizens, however. They had found it insulting to be excluded from becoming full members of American society and had seen it as an important goal to become U.S. citizens. Other Native Americans regarded the issue irrelevant since their identity was primarily with the tribe. By the time of the passing of the Indian Citizenship Act two-thirds of all Indians were already citizens due to the fact that they had taken allotments or served in World War I.

Indian reorganization

In the 1920s, it was evident to those who came in contact with Native Americans that the assimilation policies of the federal government had not been successful. Governmental officials had asserted that education and allotment had brought gradual improvements on Indian life; however Native Americans generally had sub-standard living conditions. In 1926, the Board of Indian Commissioners, which was a government advisory group, asked the Department of the Interior to sponsor a thorough study of Native American life. The study resulted in the Meriam Report, named after the project director Lewis Meriam. The report concluded that “the overwhelming majority of the Indians are poor, even extremely poor.”

New ideas evolved in society during the 1920s where Indian assimilation into mainstream America was no longer a goal. Influential persons within the federal government advocated new means to better Indian life. One of these new policies was what would become the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. The most important person behind IRA was John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945. His goals were to revive Indian culture and self-government. Collier was only one of several leading government officials who promoted greater self-government for the Indians. Nathan Margold, as solicitor of the Department of the Interior, formulated Indian tribal rights, which also became the basis for the creation of the tribal constitutions and by-laws. Not all of Collier’s and his co-workers’

162 Deloria, Jr. & Lytle 1983, p.11.
163 In Canada, the Indian Act of 1876, gave Indians a choice to become Canadian citizens or not. Those Indians who chose not to become Canadian citizens were allowed to live on reserves, but had restricted rights in Canadian society. For instance, they were not allowed to vote. Those who chose to become Canadian citizens lost all Native rights but got all the rights and obligations of every other Canadian citizen (Champagne 2005, pp.11–12.)
164 Iverson 1998, p.64.
166 Taylor 1980, p.17.
original ideas became part of the final draft of IRA. Many federal government representatives were not entirely positive to the idea. Some congressmen worried that if “independent” tribally governed communities were created, Indian assimilation into mainstream USA would be threatened. Others were critical of restoring communal ownership of land, which was part of Collier’s reform. Some accused him of being a communist.\footnote{Olson 1984, p.117.}

Not every Indian was positive to IRA either. The Americanization efforts of the federal government had distanced many Native Americans from traditional beliefs, and Collier’s suggestion to give Indian tribes their own government was seen as “attempting to move the clock back rather than forward.”\footnote{Iverson 1998, pp.78–79.}

Important parts of Collier’s bill survived, however. The allotment policy of Indian lands was officially abandoned, and reservation communities were given important political rights. They were, for instance, granted rights to organize tribal governments, and they could manage local affairs. They could also negotiate contracts, operate their own businesses, and levy taxes.\footnote{Edmunds et al. 2007, pp.380–381.}

It was optional for the tribes to adopt IRA and it had to be approved by the tribe through elections. When a written constitution was ratified by the majority of the tribal members, a tribal council could be elected which was to manage tribal internal affairs.\footnote{Taylor 1980, p.28.} A majority of Indian tribes adopted IRA; 174 tribes and bands approved while 78 voted against it.\footnote{Iverson 1998, p.93.} Although the tribes were to write their own constitutions and by-laws, in reality these were modeled after the American political system, a system foreign to traditional tribal ways of governing. The constitutions, for example, followed the U.S. governmental pattern of dividing executive, legislative, and judicial authority.\footnote{Canby 2009, p.26.}

Collier’s policies were not only directed towards tribal self-governance. He also wanted to better the conditions for Indians in various ways. He ordered the construction of 100 day schools for Indian children so that there would be local community or public schools available and they would not need to go to boarding schools. Collier was also instrumental in the establishment of the Indian Emergency Conservation Work program. It gave work to Indians at their home reservations. Between 1933 and 1942 more than 85,000 Indians were employed constructing roads, storage dams, fences, and wells on their reservations.\footnote{Olsson 1984, pp.109–112.}
Termination

After the end of World War II, federal policies were once again turning towards assimilating Native Americans into mainstream American society. Critics pointed out that IRA and other reforms had done little to improve living conditions on the reservations, and they thought that Indians were better off being integrated into the national economy.175

The most drastic step taken to integrate Indians into U.S. society was the passing of the Concurrent Resolution 108 in Congress which became Public Law 280 in 1953. This meant terminating the special relationship that existed between the government and the Indian tribes and transferring civil and criminal jurisdiction over Indians to the states. In practice it meant that Indians would become ordinary American citizens.176

Advocates of termination argued that Indians needed to be “emancipated” from federal trusteeship and that “America ... should not foster segregation but integration.”177

The termination of federal trusteeship over Indian tribes was to be taken in several steps. Only tribes that were considered ready to manage without federal protection would be terminated. Tribal groups were therefore divided into three groups according to how ready they were for termination. The first group of tribes was considered ready to be terminated right away, the second after a ten-year period of limited protection from the federal government, and the last group was considered to need more than ten years of federal protection. There were four criteria by which the tribes were judged and put into one of the three groups. These were the degree of acculturation of the tribe, the tribal economy, the willingness of the tribe to be terminated, and the willingness of the state in which the tribe resided to take over the responsibilities of the federal government.178

The consequences of termination were disastrous for the tribes involved. Without federal protection and funds, they were forced to sell land to provide local services.179 Termination caused individual allotments to lose trust status and therefore become liable for federal taxation. The same thing happened with tribal corporations. The lack of status as Indian tribes also affected their relationship with other tribes, according to Deloria and Lytle. “The Klamath lost all federal recognition and assistance and were considered to be outcast in the national Indian community,” they write. Due to criticism, the termination policy ended in 1958; however, it was not until 1970 that the policy was formally repudiated.180

177 Iverson 1998, pp.120–121.
179 Iverson 1998, p.130.
ceeded in overturning termination and was restored as a recognized Indian tribe through the Menominee Restoration Act of 1973.\textsuperscript{181} The Klamath Indians finally succeeded in regaining its tribal status in 1986.\textsuperscript{182}

In accordance with the policy to break up the reservations and make ordinary citizens of Indians was the relocation policy that was introduced in the early 1950s. One means to Indian integration with mainstream American society was to relocate them to cities around the United States. During 1951 and 1952, the BIA hired 40 staff to work in the relocation program. Large cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver, and Salt Lake City was chosen for the program. The relocation office was to help Indians with money for travel expenses and for initial settlement in the urban setting. They also secured housing and employment for the relocated Indians and gave general instruction about the cities.\textsuperscript{183} Almost 30,000 Native Americans participated in the relocation program during the years 1952–1959. The number registered in the program was probably only a fraction of the total number of Indians that moved to the cities.\textsuperscript{184}

\section*{Self-determination}

In the 1970s, U.S. policy once again took a turn towards recognition of Indian special status in the United States. Native Americans had become visible in American society, and without doubt, the federal government was influenced by Indian activism. In the period between 1970 and 1990 there was a great increase in court decisions and legislation passed by Congress that involved Native Americans.\textsuperscript{185} Many of these decisions and acts gave Indians important rights to govern their own affairs and rights to maintain their own cultures and traditions.

Through the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, Indians got an opportunity to govern their own affairs to a greater extent. The act stated that the federal government had an obligation to involve Native Americans in the provision of federal services that were provided in Indian communities. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Health and Human Services were to enter into contracts with tribes to have them “plan, conduct, and administer” any program they wanted in their communities. In 1980, 370 tribes had entered into contracts with the federal government, providing services worth $200 million. A section of the act was also devoted to Indian education. It described how Indians could form their own school boards which could enter into contracts with the federal govern-

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\textsuperscript{181} Iverson 1998, p.143.
\textsuperscript{182} Edmunds et al. 2007, p.414.
\textsuperscript{183} LaGrand 2002, pp.48–53.
\textsuperscript{184} LaGrand 2002, p.75.
\textsuperscript{185} Edmunds et al. 2007, p.435.
\end{flushright}
ment to administer education for Indian children. The law even provided special grants to help tribes plan for such contracts. The possibility of Indian tribes to administer their own programs consequently moved power away from the BIA Superintendent and placed this power with the tribal governments instead.186

In 1978, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act, which further promoted Indian control over education. It gave federal financial assistance to tribal colleges and, by 1990, more than 20 tribal colleges existed on reservations. Two other important acts were passed by Congress in 1978: the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act affirmed Indian rights to practice their own religious beliefs and ceremonies. Native Americans were given rights to access sacred sites and they were assured to be able to perform religious ceremonies and use sacred objects. It did not specify which religious practices would be protected; neither did it explain how federal authorities would protect access to sacred sites. These issues were later brought to court to be interpreted.187 The act did have an impact on Indian religious rights where, for instance, an Indian could take peyote legally as part of the Native American Church ceremony, and Indian prisoners were given the right to participate in sweat lodge ceremonies.188

The Indian Child Welfare Act gave Native Americans more influence over the placement of children that could not be taken care of by their biological parents. A large number of Indian children had been placed in non-Indian homes, something that had been encouraged by the Indian office. U.S. officials believed that it was better for Indian children to be raised in white middle-class homes than in poor Indian homes. A study in 1974 indicated that somewhere between 25 and 35 percent of all Indian children were separated from their families at that time, either in foster care, adoptive homes, or government boarding schools. The Indian Child Welfare Act granted the tribes exclusive jurisdiction over child custody cases that involved tribal members. It also gave Indian family members the right in state court proceedings to keep Indian children within the tribe. Tribes were authorized to create child and family service programs on reservations and were given similar power in urban areas.189

Several big steps were obviously taken by the federal government to hand over power to the tribes on issues that concerned them in late 1970s. This support for self-government continued also during subsequent administrations. In his Indian Policy Statement of 1983, President Reagan proclaimed that he supported tribal self-government and compared tribes with states and

186 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.437.
local governments when he said that the administration believed that respons-
sibilities and resources should be restored to the governments that were closest to the people. This was an obvious acknowledgement of tribal self-government; however, self-government to the Reagan administration also meant economic self-reliance. Tribes were to rely less on federal funds and take responsibility for a greater share of their own costs. The Reagan administration made major cuts in the federal budget, including cuts to Native American programs.\textsuperscript{190}

A congressional act that would bring in financial incomes to many tribes and would also confirm Indian self-governance was the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. It allowed some forms of gaming on reservations even if this was illegal in the state in which the reservation was located. The act followed a court decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court in \textit{California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians} in 1987. The Court ruled that California laws did not apply on Indian lands, a decision that opened up the expansion of gaming onto Indian reservations. For some Indian tribes, the opening of gaming enterprises became lucrative businesses and brought large incomes to the tribe in addition to jobs for its members. Some tribes chose to divide the profits among the members in per capita payments, but many others used it to build child care centers, schools, clinics, housing, nursing homes, cultural centers, etc.\textsuperscript{191}

Since the 1970s, the federal government has never gone back to the assimilationist polices but has acknowledged Indian rights to preserve their cultural distinctiveness and govern their own affairs.\textsuperscript{192} In 2000 for instance, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution stating “Indian self-determination policy has endured as the most successful policy of the United States in dealing with Indian tribes,”\textsuperscript{193} and as Pawnee lawyer, Kevin Gover, wrote in 2007:

No serious policymaker proposes that the federal–tribal trust relationship be terminated. Indeed, recent federal efforts reflect a sense among policymakers that the federal responsibility is ongoing, perhaps perpetual.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{190} Castile 2006, pp.52, 60–61.
\textsuperscript{191} Iverson 1998, pp.190,193.
\textsuperscript{192} Castile 2006, pp.91, 95, 111.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Policy of Self-Determination}, S. Res. 277 (June 27, 2000), 106th Cong., 2nd sess, quoted in Castile 2006, p.111.
\textsuperscript{194} Gover 2007, p.201.
Indian legal-political status in the United States

As the indigenous peoples of North America, Indian tribes have had a unique status. They were once independent political entities and in comparison with many other indigenous peoples around the world, Indians had a relatively equal relationship with the colonizing European powers during first contact. This resulted in the making of treaties between Indian tribes and European colonial powers. Treaty making was the common form of political agreements between two sovereign nations in Europe; however, it was uncommon for such treaties to be entered into with indigenous peoples in colonized areas. Only one treaty exists between the British and the Maoris of New Zealand, and a few treaties were negotiated in Mozambique and India. With the Indian tribes of North America, on the other hand, European colonial powers entered into hundreds of treaties. The United States continued this treaty making process by negotiating over 800 treaties, of which about 370 were ratified.195 The early treaties between the United States and Indian tribes show that the United States government acknowledged that Indian tribes were independent nations, foreign to the United States. In Article 1 of the “Treaty with the Six Nations” from 1794 (Treaty of Canandaigua), for example, it was stated that: “Peace and friendship are hereby firmly established, and shall be perpetual, between the United States and the Six Nations.” And Article 4 reads:

The United States having thus described and acknowledged what lands belong to the Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senekas, and engaged never to claim the same, nor to disturb them, or any of the Six Nations, or their Indian friends residing thereon and united with them, in the free use and enjoyment thereof: Now, the Six Nations, and each of them, hereby engage that they will never claim any other lands within the boundaries of the United States; nor ever disturb the people of the United States in the free use and enjoyment thereof.196

Treaties were negotiated between the U.S. and Indian tribes until 1871. Although new treaties were not negotiated after that, old treaties continued to be valid.197 Members of Indian tribes continued to have independent rights in relationship to the United States based on treaty agreements such as hunting and fishing rights outside reservation lands. Even though the end of treaty making indicated that Indian tribes were no longer to be considered independent sovereign nations, past treaties continued to portray them as such.

When U.S. political and military powers increased and these powers of Indian tribes decreased, Indians tribes lost much of their independence in relationship to the U.S. government. Three court cases presided over by Chief Justice John Marshall (sometimes referred to as the Marshall Trilogy) are usually considered to be the turning point, or a first step towards the legal incorporation of Indian tribes into the United States. It was Marshall who in *Cherokee v. Georgia* (1831) defined Indian tribes as “domestic dependent nations.”198 Although Indian nations were considered to be nations with territorial boundaries “within which their authority is exclusive,” as Marshall ruled in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), they were not considered to be foreign anymore.199 With these rulings by Marshall, Indian tribes came to be put in a “middle” position. They were not foreign nations that were fully sovereign; however, they were separate legal-political entities that had the right to self-government.200 This court ruling also gave the federal government the obligation to protect tribal authority within its own boundaries against the states.201 Although the Marshall Trilogy was a step away from recognition of tribal sovereignty, it is also an acknowledgement of Indian legal right to internal self-government and political independence against the states.

The most important action taken to incorporate Indians into American society was the passing of the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924. Every Indian born within the territorial boundaries of the United States was granted full citizenship. At the same time, this act also stated that a U.S. citizenship would not eliminate any tribal or Indian rights of an individual.202 Consequently, special status granted by treaty, congressional decision, etc. would continue to exist after the Indian individual had become a U.S. citizen.

Throughout U.S. legal-political history, courts and the federal government have tried to figure out how to deal with Indian peoples as both sovereign nations and American citizens, and policies have not been consistent over time. As Wilkinson writes:

> ... federal Indian policy has always been the product of the tension between two conflicting forces – separatism and assimilation – and Congress has never made a final choice as to which of the two it will pursue. Thus the laws are not only numerous; they are also conflicting, born of the explicit regimen and implicit tone of the era in which they were enacted.203

Implementing Indian law has become increasingly complicated by the passage of time. Treaties, statutes, and court decisions are applied to situations that bear little resemblance to the context in which they were created. There-

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202 Deloria, Jr. & Lytle 1984, p.3.
203 Wilkinson 1987, p.13
fore, it becomes problematic to interpret how they should be applied in a contemporary situation.

Wilkinson divides federal policy and court decisions into two different categories depending on whether they rest on a line of reasoning connected to separatism or assimilation towards Indians. The first line of reasoning is based on what he calls the Worcester–Crow Dog–Talton line which recognizes some form of Indian self-determination. “Worcester” refers to the Marshall Trilogy case *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), where tribal authority over tribal territory is described as “exclusive.”

“Crow Dog” refers to the case *Ex parte Crow Dog* (1883), where it was decided that federal court had no jurisdiction over the murder of an Indian committed by another Indian since Congress had never asserted federal jurisdiction over such a case. In 1885, however, Congress passed the Major Crimes Act, which gave the federal government criminal jurisdiction over major felonies committed on Indian lands. In *Talton v. Mayes* (1896), the court ruled that Indian tribes did not have to provide Fifth Amendment grand jury proceedings since tribal powers existed before the Constitution and were therefore not affected by the passage of the Fifth Amendment.

The second line of reasoning Wilkinson calls the Kagama–McBratney–Lone Wolf line. In these three cases, *United States v. Kagama* (1886), *McBratney v. United States* (1882) and *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* (1903), the courts “implicitly conceptualized tribes as lost societies without power, as minions of the federal government,” according to Wilkinson.

Subsequent court rulings and federal policies have followed one or the other of these lines of thinking. Even after Indians became U.S. citizens, there have been court rulings in favor of tribal national sovereignty. In the case of *Iron Crow v. Ogallala Sioux Tribe* (1956), for instance, the federal district court judge in South Dakota made the following description of the Oglala in his ruling:

> From time immemorial the members of the Ogallala Sioux tribe have exercised powers of local self-government, regulating domestic problems and conducting foreign affairs including in later years the negotiations of treaties and agreements with the United States.

Both tribal independence and foreignness were acknowledged by this federal judge.

There are examples of both lines of reasoning in court decisions since the 1970s. The Worcester–Crow Dog–Talton line of reasoning is found, for ex-

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205 Deloria, Jr. & Lytle 1983, p.11.
208 Wilkinson 1987, p.28.
ample, in *White Mountain Apache Tribe v. Bracker* (1980), where the Supreme Court ruled that states could not tax non-Indian contractors on reservations that were involved in business with the tribe, and in *Oklahoma Tax Comm’n v. Sac and Fox Nation* (1993) it took the position that states could not tax Indian activities or properties in Indian country. Another example of this line of reasoning was *National Farmers Union Ins. Cos. v. Crow Tribe* (1985) where the Supreme Court decided that reservation-based suits against a non-Indian first had to be determined in tribal court before they could be taken to federal court.209

The Kagama–McBratney–Lone Wolf line of reasoning, on the other hand, can also be found in court decisions since the 1970s. In *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian tribe* (1978), the Supreme Court ruled that tribes did not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians on their reservations. Only an authorizing statute of Congress could give tribes that right since they were dependent nations. In *Montana v. United States* (1981), the court ruled that Indian tribes had no power over non-member activities on non-member fee lands, and in *Cotton Petroleum Corp. v. New Mexico* (1989), the state was allowed to impose taxes on non-Indian oil and gas lessees operating on reservations although the tribe was already taxing them.210

It is not surprising that Native Americans have developed a complicated and confusing relationship to the United States. There are historical circumstances and governmental policies that surely have influenced Indians to identify both as part of the U.S. as well as apart from it. The fact that many Indian tribes have entered into international treaties with the United States, treaties which continue to be legally valid, makes it possible to define Indian tribes as something else than American. On the other hand, Indians have also been targets of extensive assimilation and Americanization policies since the late 19th century.

Consequently Native Americans have, since settlement on reservations, been confronted with two diametrically opposed ideas about their relationship to the United States. On the one hand, they have been confronted with the idea of belonging to sovereign tribal nations which have an international relationship to the U.S. through treaties, a relationship that may have had its origins in an often hostile relationship. On the other hand, they have also been confronted with the idea of being American citizens which carries with it an expectation to adhere to the ideal of patriotism.

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6. The context of the early 1970s

In Chapter 5 I presented policies and ideas affecting Indians in the long historical perspective. This chapter will focus on the specific ideas and events of the early 1970s.

The Radical Left and political violence

The early 1970s was, like the 1960s, a time of social and political upheaval. Many different groups were trying to change their societies and the world. The New Left was uniting across national borders to fight oppression. An international protest culture was forming, inspired by writings of Karl Marx and Mao Tse-tung, and by the actions of revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh. Members of the New Left had as a goal to overthrow both Western imperialism led by the United States and the bureaucratic communism of the East.211

Radical groups, both in the United States and outside, were using drastic means to achieve their political goals. From the year 1968 the number of airplane hijackings increased significantly around the world. Several passenger planes were hijacked by pro-Palestinians groups during this time. A group calling themselves Black September were involved in setting fire to a Pan Am jet plane that killed 30 passengers, and they threatened to crash a Lufthansa flight into the center of Athens. The same group also kidnapped and killed Israeli athletes during the Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany in 1972.212 Planes were also hijacked in the United States. Between 1968 and 1972, 159 American airplanes had been successfully hijacked, most of them ordered to fly to Cuba. According to Killen, “hijackings to Cuba became so routine that U.S. airliners began carrying approach plans for the Havana airport.”213

Terrorists groups came not only from the Middle East. The Red Army Faction (RAF) of West Germany committed bombings, kidnappings, and murders. The RAF, which is also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang after two of its leaders, Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, was formed in

There were also terrorist groups in the United States. Varon writes that there were probably dozens, if not hundreds of groups that committed acts of terrorism and destruction in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most of them were small groups of friends that never became known to the public or the police. They committed bombings, arson, and other types of destructive activities against the state, as well as corporate and university property. The New Left movement was divided over the issue of whether to engage in armed struggle or not. In America, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), one of the New Left’s most important organizations, split in 1969 over which path the organization would take. One faction emphasized the importance of organizing the industrial working class by conventional means; the other faction wanted to use armed struggle in changing the society. The latter faction was called the Weathermen.215

In 1969–1970 both the Red Army Faction of West Germany and the Weathermen of the United States (later renamed the Weather Underground) used violence in their attempt to overthrow the governments of their countries. Their actions were modeled after the guerilla warfare in Latin America and they attacked military, corporate, and political targets.216 The Weathermen turned to violence in protest of the Vietnam War and to support black militants in their struggle.217 They were much less deadly than Black September and the Red Army Faction, however. Unlike Black September and the RAF, who used murder as a tactic, they made a conscious decision not to become killers.218

Another American terrorist group that gained fame in the early 1970s was the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). It was a guerilla group that was formed in 1973 and became known for its kidnapping of millionaire heiress Patty Hearst in 1974.219 In 1973, the group declared a revolutionary war on the United States, and their first action was to kill a black Oakland school official named Marcus Foster. The reason for his assassination was that the school would implement a new school policy that the SLA found to be “Orwellianism.” The killing of Foster was strongly criticized among Leftist groups as a senseless act.220

In the United States, the early 1970s marked the end of this radical era, leading Andreas Killen to define the year 1973 as the “true end” of the 1960s.221

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214 Varon 2004, p.11.
216 Varon 2004, p.2.
217 Varon 2004, p.11.
220 Killen 2006, p.263.
221 Killen 2006, p.2.
Ethnic movements in the United States

There were two different ways that ethnic activism related to the United States. One branch of activists struggled for equal rights in American society and the other wanted complete separation from the dominant society. Ethnic activism could also take different forms, from peaceful demonstrations to armed struggle.

Civil rights protests and demonstrations were organized in the 1950s and 1960s in attempts to come to terms with injustices in American society. A boycott against the city bus system was organized in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 after a black woman had been arrested for not giving up her seat to a white man. In Greensboro, North Carolina, the sit-in movement started in 1960 protesting racial segregation of restaurants. Protests and marches continued throughout the 1960s. The goal was to achieve justice and equality by peaceful means. An important part of the civil rights struggle was to assure every citizen the right to vote. The movement wanted blacks and other minorities to be able to participate in the political system and thereby be able to influence their own lives. They did not want to overthrow the political system. The civil rights movement used rallies, marches, and demonstrations in their efforts to influence public policy, and voter registration rallies in the south often became mass protests.

But another type of black activism also developed during the second half of the 1960s, a more radical political movement that came to be called the Black Power movement. Its focus was not on integration with the whites and it did not condemn violence as a means to achieve its goals. The Black Power slogan was created in a speech by Stokely Carmichael in 1966. Between 1965 and 1975, several different Black Power organizations were established in the United States. They often had conflicting ideological perspectives; however, they all had as a goal to gain power and respect so that they could influence their own lives. Parts of the movement’s goals were social, like the creation of “Freedom Schools” and “cultural enrichment programs,” but the goals also included protection of black people. They saw the use of violence as justifiable. Individuals had the right to fight back to preserve personal property and honor.

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was one of the more radical groups within the Black Power movement. It was in many aspects an internationally oriented party. The party saw a common cause for colored peoples and was

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223 Lawson 2003, pp.102, 237.
225 Van Deburg 1992, p.32.
226 Van Deburg 1992, pp.64,28.
228 Clemons & Jones 2001, p.23.
inspired by the successful independence movements of some African states between the 1950s and the 1970s. Ghana’s struggle for independence, led by Kwame Nkrumah, the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, Patrick Lumumba’s struggle for independence in Congo, and the Algerian revolution against France were especially important for the Black Panthers. However, they also interacted with other revolutionaries of the world, like Yassir Arafat and his Al Fatah. The BPP was also inspired by the New Left and its ideology was Marxist-Leninist. The Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro and “Che” Guevara became a revolutionary model that showed how guerrilla warfare could be used successfully. The more radical groups of the Black Power Movement saw their own struggle in the light of the Third World Liberation movement. Black Americans were also colonized and indoctrinated into a foreign value system. Many black people would view the Vietnamese people as dominated by an exploiting colonial government. Like other peoples of “third world” countries, they were oppressed by the West, and the Vietnam War was seen as a war where the Vietnamese tried to free themselves from colonial rule. The war was interpreted in terms of the U.S. waging war on another colored people. By refusing to participate in the war, black people in the United States could gain support from the Vietnamese people in the “war at home,” they reasoned.

There were also Black Power groups in the period 1965–1975 which promoted a separation of blacks into independent territories. Some imagined the creation of a federation of independent black city-states. Especially the “Nation of Islam” and the “Republic of New Africa” were active in arguing for the establishment of sovereign territory for black people. The Nation of Islam would accept that portions of the U.S. would be set aside for the black people, dividing the country into black and white sections. If the U.S. would not supply them with their own land, the Nation of Islam demanded that the federal government would support them in a voluntary resettlement in another country, preferably in Africa.

The goals of independent black statehood were expressed in several different ways. They had their own Islamic flag, collected communal taxes, had their own school system and a paramilitary self-defense corps. They also created their own economic base through independently owned businesses, factories, and farms. These groups found it foolish to strive towards integration into white America; the solution was separation. As the name indicates the Republic of New Africa demanded its own territory in North America.

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They expected the government to give up the southern states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana as partial compensation for the centuries of slavery and injustices that the black people had been victims of. A Declaration of Independence was written creating the Republic of New Africa. Members became citizens and transferred their allegiance to the new Black nation, and it requested opening of negotiations with the U.S. on a nation-to-nation basis.\(^235\)

The Republic of New Africa had a plan B if the United States would not acknowledge the new independent state. They would buy land in those states and form black settlements. When they had gained a territorial base, they would organize voters and through political process take power in one county after the other. Eventually, when they had gained political power in the states, they could break from the U.S. and form the Republic of New Africa. They also had a plan in case the U.S. would be actively hostile against their new state. They would fight a “people’s war” on two fronts, through a formally organized army that would protect the territory from the enemy, and by civilian resistance through guerilla warfare.\(^236\)

A similar pattern of both integrationists and separatists existed in other ethnic groups in the United States at this point in time. These other ethnic groups were greatly influenced by the symbolism, rhetoric, and tactics of Black activism. In the mid-1960s, a movement was founded to organize Mexican farm workers in California. It was the start of the Chicano civil rights movement. The Spanish-speaking community was also facing widespread discrimination and police brutality, and East Los Angeles became the center of increasing Chicano political activism. The Chicanos formed the Brown Berets, a group which was modeled after the Black Panther Party. They demonstrated against police brutality and oppression against Chicanos. Not only did they take ideas and organization from the BPP they also took their symbol, the beret. The BPP wore a black beret as part of their uniform, and the beret became a symbol for militancy and activism across the United States.\(^237\)

Chicano activists also celebrated the pre-European world. The Chicano people were described as a bronze people whose heritage was the Aztecs and their material and cultural achievements in pre-Columbian times. In 1969, the Denver Youth Liberation Conference adopted a declaration named “the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán” (Spiritual Plan of Aztlan). This plan declared that the Chicano people would make efforts to reclaim the lands of their ancestors, creating their own independent nation, Aztlán. “We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. We are a nation,” the declaration stated.\(^238\)

\(^{235}\) Van Deburg 1992, pp.144–146.
\(^{236}\) Van Deburg 1992, p.147.
\(^{238}\) Ogbar 2006, pp.197, 200.
Activist of other ethnic groups in the United States followed similar patterns to the Blacks and Chicanos. The Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) was founded in Berkeley in 1968. It brought together different ethnic groups of Asian origin. Asians also had a long experience of racism in the U.S. They developed close ties with the Red Guard, an Asian-American organization that was modeled after the Black Panthers and named after Mao Tse-tung’s revolutionaries of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The Red Guard often co-sponsored demonstrations with the Black Panthers. It was closely connected with the larger community of the political left and identified as a “Third World People” victim of U.S. “internal colonialism.” The Red Guard was also engaged in community health programs and supporting Asians who resisted military draft. Another Asian American radical leftist group was the I Wor Kuen (IWK), which had originated in New York but had become a national organization the early 1970s. They were named after the group called “Boxers” in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century (c. 1900). Like other ethnic groups, they were connecting the present with history. It was a militant group which created a Vanguard in its ethnic community, and they hoped to be able to mobilize the Asian American community into a class-based revolution which would destroy racial and class oppression.239

Puerto Ricans were also inspired by the Black militancy. Jose “Cha Cha” Jimenez, who was a leader for the Puerto Rican Young Lords street gang in Chicago, became impressed by the Panther’s militant actions and got the idea to start a Puerto Rican revolutionary organization that would liberate Puerto Ricans both on the island and on the U.S. mainland. He initiated a peace treaty with other gangs and argued that they should turn their anger against oppressive capitalist institutions instead of towards each other. By 1969, the Young Lords had joined a pact with the Panthers and a group of white Appalachian youths calling themselves Young Patriots into a “Rainbow Coalition.” Together they held political education classes and sponsored free breakfasts for poor children. They also monitored the police, trying to stop police brutality.240

There were several similarities between the radical political activism of the different ethnic groups mentioned here. They were all inspired by ideology of the political left, which connected them closely to this political movement. They tried to better their own communities and instill pride in their culture and heritage. They also identified with their non-U.S. heritage rather than as Americans, and several of them demanded independent territory.

239 Ogbar 2006, pp.204-207, 209.
American Indian political movements in the 1960s and 1970s

Native American activism had much in common with the activism of other ethnic groups, both in which goals they wanted to achieve and in how they tried to achieve them. At the same time, the Indian situation was unique. Unlike other ethnic groups they had treaties with the U.S., giving them special rights, and unlike Chicanos, Asian Americans and Black Americans they already had a land base that they could call their own.

An important event for pan-Indian activism was the American Indian Chicago Conference which was organized at the University of Chicago in 1961. Almost 500 Indians from 67 different tribes attended the conference. Two of the goals were to promote Indian self-determination, and to increase Indian involvement in the decision-making process of issues that concerned them. Older tribal politicians dominated the conference, and many of the younger Indians felt excluded. Therefore they proceeded with forming their own activist group called the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) which demanded “Red Power.” The NIYC leaders were described by Gibson as “well educated, confident, proud of their Indianness and ‘ethnic uniqueness’ and sensitized to the plight of Indians;...” They often ridiculed those Indians who adjusted to the establishment policy and protocol, and called them names like Uncle Tomahawk or Apple Indians (red on the outside and white on the inside). Inspired by the civil rights movement, NIYC sponsored demonstrations against violations of Indian rights. One of these was the fishing rights controversy in the State of Washington.\(^\text{241}\)

In December 1963, a Washington State court made a ruling against Indian fishing rights in the area. Through different treaty agreements, the Indians in the area had been guaranteed the right to fish in “all usual and accustomed places,” which also included waters that were located off-reservation. This resulted in harassments of Indian fishermen who tried to implement their fishing rights. The conflict over fishing rights between Indians and non-Indians resulted in protests by the natives. They started to arrange “fish-ins,” likely inspired by the black civil rights movement’s lunch counter “sit-ins.”\(^\text{242}\)

Problems were also facing urban Indians of the large cities. After World War II, the federal government introduced a relocation program that provided economic and other practical support for Indians who moved from their reservations to the cities. At the end of the 1960s, about one-third of the In-

\(^\text{241}\) Gibson 1980, p.560.
\(^\text{242}\) Johnson 2006, pp.82–83.
dian population, approximately one million, lived in large cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, Denver, Minneapolis, and Albuquerque.\textsuperscript{243}

A general pattern during the 1960s and 1970s was that Indians more and more moved into the cities. Between the census of 1960 and 1970, the urban Indian population had doubled, from 165,000 to 340,000. In 1970, several American cities had more Indian inhabitants than any Indian reservation, with the exception of the Navajo reservation. Los Angeles and Tulsa, with their Indian populations of 23,900 and 15,200 respectively, had the largest Indian populations. In comparison with Indians living on reservations, urban Indians were far more educated. They also had a much lower unemployment rate and a two-thirds larger average income. Urban Indians were also half as likely to live in poverty, and they had fewer dependent children than reservation Indians. Despite this, many urban Indians also suffered severe economic and social problems, especially those living in small cities and towns near reservations.\textsuperscript{244}

Indian children growing up in cities came in contact with other ethnic groups and with other ways of perceiving the world. Often they became distanced from their tribal culture and world views. Before World War II, Indians had a great distrust for the white man’s educational system; however, those Indians that participated in the war effort came to grow a strong desire for more education. They needed education to be able to compete in the white man’s world.\textsuperscript{245} The increasing interest in education together with increased possibilities to receive financial aid made Indians more educated and more incorporated into mainstream society.\textsuperscript{246}

Many leaders of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and other prominent figures in the Indian movement were people who had grown up more or less detached from their tribal culture and society. Dennis Banks had been sent to a BIA school 400 miles from his Chippewa reservation home at the age of five and spent nine years there. Tribal culture was oppressed and he was punished every time he spoke his native language. In 1953, he had joined the Air Force, serving in Japan and Korea. After he had returned home, he briefly returned to his reservation home before he moved to Minneapolis. There Banks became “another skid row Indian drunk.” and served jail sentences for burglary and forgery before turning his life around and starting on his activist road.\textsuperscript{247}

Clyde Bellecourt, also Chippewa, had a similar background. He had been in and out of boarding schools and reform schools and was trying to support himself as an amateur boxer and burglar. He also ended up in prison.\textsuperscript{248}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[244] Levitan & Johnston 1975, pp.2–3.
\item[245] Nagel 1996, p.118.
\item[246] Deloria, Jr. 1992, p.46.
\item[248] Smith & Warrior, 1996, p.130.
\end{footnotes}
Russel Means, the most outspoken and visible AIM leader, was born at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, but grew up primarily in northern California. He was sent to live with relatives at the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska for a while but returned to his parents after getting in trouble.\(^\text{249}\) He graduated from high school in 1958 and the following years of his life were described by Smith and Warrior:

> By his mid-twenties, he had attended several business schools and colleges where he learned the ins and outs of accounting, worked as a dance instructor, engaged in various street scams, and built an arrest record that included petty theft, common drunkenness, assault with a weapon, and disorderly conduct.\(^\text{250}\)

These were men who primarily had spent their lives in a Western context, detached from their tribal cultures and values. Educated within mainstream United States, they most probably also adopted much of Western world views. It also made them aware of what other groups in the American society were thinking and doing.

The Red Power movement was an important force in changing Indians’ views of themselves from shame to pride of being Indian. Many Indians had been claiming to be Turks, Armenians, or Mexicans, or at least they claimed to have less Indian blood than they actually had, according to Nagel’s interviewees. Nagel found this renewed pride in their Indian heritage to be the explanation for the great increase in Indian population in the United States after World War II and especially in the 1970s. Looking at the number of individuals who reported their race as Indian in the federal census, she found that the American Indian population had grown from 250,000 in 1900 to nearly 2 million in 1990, an increase of almost 700 percent. Such a large increase can only be explained by a change in identification, i.e., individuals who had not been identified as Indians were now identifying as such.\(^\text{251}\)

Not only did these migrant Indians have problems with unemployment, low income jobs, and poor housing in the cities, they were also facing racism. Even within the police department, racism was common. On 28 July 1968, the American Indian Movement (AIM) was founded in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Its objectives were to protest police brutality against Indians living in the city. Only 10 percent of the population in Minneapolis was Native American, but still 70 percent of the county jail inmates belonged to this ethnic group.\(^\text{252}\)

The Red Power movement brought ethnic pride and encouragement of searching for their tribal roots. The movement towards returning to a tradi-

\(^{249}\) Smith & Warrior, 1996, pp.132–133  
\(^{250}\) Smith & Warrior, 1996, p.133.  
\(^{251}\) Nagel 1996, pp.83-84,95,133-134.  
\(^{252}\) Johnson 2006, p.83.
tional native way of life was strong and the teachings of the elders became important. It created a generation gap between those Indians that were young during the early 1970s and their parents. One of Nagel’s interviewees described this generation gap in the following way:

I found myself growing up with two heritages that I knew very little about. [...] I began to directly seek out more about my Native American heritage. I sought it from books, I sought it from other people, and I sought it at the feet of elders, listening to everything they would have to say. By the time I became an adult, my mother... referred to me a few years ago as “my son, the Indian.” [...] What she meant was that she had never been allowed to think that about herself. [...] It was almost like it had skipped a generation. And I was finally allowed to be proud of a heritage that had been a shame or something to be covered up.253

In the cities, Indian groups also came in touch with and were influenced by other groups in American society and their struggle for change. When AIM leader Dennis Banks spent prison time for forgery in the late 1960s, he became aware of different groups’ political struggles. “I began to see that the greatest war was going to go on right here in the United States...,” he stated.254

Other Native American pan-Indian groups than AIM was also founded during this time, like the United Native America (UNA) and Indians of All Tribes (IOAT) who also worked for Indian rights. Indians of All Tribes were an important force when a group of Indians occupied the abandoned prison island Alcatraz in November 1969.255 It was done with reference to the 1868 Sioux Treaty which presumably gave these Indians right to federal land that was not used. They also claimed the land, somewhat provocatively, by “right of discovery.” Nagel saw this occupation as a starting point of the Indian Activist movement, since she defines the main Red Power movement era to be 1969–1978.256

Occupations continued in other locations in the United States. Examples of places that were occupied were several former military bases, CIA listening posts, and national monuments. Over 60 events of occupation took place after Alcatraz.257 Most occupations only lasted for a few days or weeks.258

AIM became an important force in Indian protesting, Members of AIM had visited Alcatraz during the summer of 1970. Later on that year, AIM leaders Dennis Banks, Russel Means, and Clyde Bellecourt organized a protest against the celebration of Thanksgiving Day. As part of the action, the

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255 Johnson 2006, pp.84–85.
256 Nagel 1996, pp.131,164.
protestors took control of *Mayflower II*, a replica of the original ship, in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Thanksgiving Day was also proclaimed by Russel Means and members from 25 different Indian tribes to be a national day of mourning due to Indian loss of land. They also buried Plymouth Rock under several inches of sand. In May 1972, AIM occupied an abandoned naval air station close to Minneapolis, followed by many other sites. Until October 1972, AIM and IOAT led 13 major occupations.259

The next large protest organized by Native Americans was the “Trail of Broken Treaties” march to Washington D.C. and subsequent occupation of the BIA building in the capital. More than 500 Indians participated in the protest that was going on during the months of October and November of 1972. The event was set in motion when one of the leaders at the occupation of Alcatraz, Richard Oakes, was shot and killed. Some started the march at the west coast while the Sioux passed Wounded Knee by the site of the 1890 massacre. When they reached Washington D.C., the housing and food provisions they had been promised were not there. This resulted in an occupation of the BIA building and a presentation of 20 demands of Indian rights.260

The most dramatic event in the history of Native American militancy was the occupation of Wounded Knee in February 1973. The immediate cause of the occupation was the serious internal conflicts that were taking place on the Pine Ridge Reservation on which Wounded Knee was located. Both corruption and physical violence were common on the reservation and residents asked the American Indian Movement for help.261

About 200 Indians participated in the occupation, which lasted for 71 days. The village was surrounded by 300 federal marshals and FBI agents who were armed with war equipment. They had “Vietnam-era armored personnel carriers, M16s, automatic infantry weapons, chemical weapons, steel helmets, gas masks, body armor, illuminating flares, military clothing, and almost unlimited rations,” Johnson writes.262 When the occupation ended in May 1973, two Indians had been killed, and one marshal had been paralyzed.263

Several protests occurred after the occupation of Wounded Knee, and Indian militancy took on additional dimensions. In 1977, the activists presented a resolution to the International Human Rights Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. The Indian activists wanted the United Nations to investigate their charges that the United States had “imposed” on Indians “conditions that suppress or destroy their culture” and urged that the General Assembly

259 Johnson 2006, p.86.
262 Johnson 2006, p.90.
recognized Indian tribes “as nations with territories, governments, and the ability to enter into relations with other states.”

The last big event during the Red Power era took place in July 1978. Several hundreds of Indians marched to Washington D.C., in what they called “The Longest Walk.” It was a protest walk that had begun five months earlier in San Francisco. This walk was to symbolize the forced removals of Indian peoples from their aboriginal lands, but it was also a way to get attention to contemporary problems that faced the American Indians and to strengthen their treaty rights.

Red Power protests declined during the late 1970s and 1980s. This had two causes, according to Nagel. The first reason for the Red Power movement to decline was repression of their leaders and organizations by the federal law enforcement agencies. The federal government had long experience with the civil rights movement and therefore also knew how they would repress them. One AIM leader stated in 1978: “We’ve been so busy in court fighting these indictments we’ve had neither the time nor the money to do much of anything.”

The second reason Nagel gives for the decline of Red Power protests, was the fact that during the 1970s and 1980s, the federal government tried to incorporate the Indian protesters and make them part of the decision-making process in different policies, which corresponded with Indian demands during early 1970s. The fact that Indian leaders were taking part in decision making undermined the Indian’s ability to have an independent critical voice. As an example, Nagel gives the American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC) of 1973, which was created by a Senate resolution. The commission was made up of several famous Indians and non-Indian sympathizers of the Indian cause. For two years they held hearings all over the country, at which many Indian leaders were invited to express their opinions. In 1976 a report was published. Despite the fact that the recommendations were largely ignored, it gave the Indian leaders and activists an institutional forum where they could express their opinions and problems.
7. Political and ethnic movements in
*Akwesasne Notes* and *Wassaja*

The early 1970s was a time of turmoil in American society. People fought for civil rights and equality, and the critique and mistrust against the government were profound in some segments of the population. It was not uncommon that violence was used both by the government against citizens and by citizens against government representatives. This was also a time when Indians were fighting in courts for rights to land and resources, and for political rights and jurisdictions. It was in this context that the newspapers *Akwesasne Notes* and *Wassaja* were founded and published. They were means to inform about Indian issues and to promote Indian rights. In this chapter, to relate Native Americans to the political and ethnic context of the United States during the 1960s and early 1970s, I will describe how they discussed U.S. ethnic and political movements in the newspapers of the time.

Relating to the political left

Both *Wassaja* and *Akwesasne Notes* showed very little interest in other, non-Indian movements in the United States, and what they were struggling to achieve. The movement of the political left, for instance, was not mentioned in the newspapers and these ideas had limited influence on the writing. Reference to class and the use of the typical leftist rhetoric of class oppression and exploitation was rare. That said, one can trace some vocabulary of the political left in a few statements in the newspapers. AIM leader John Trudell, for example, explained that the occupation of the Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation’s plant was due to the company’s “exploitation” of the Navajo people, and *Wassaja* editor Rupert Costo wrote that “No people in this land have suffered the indignities, poverty and depravity on the part of the dominant class than have the Indians” (my emphasis). A speaker at a Bicentennial celebration of the foundation of the United States

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was also quoted to have said that the 200 years of U.S. history marked a "paternalistic capitalist tyranny" against Indian peoples.270

The issues of communism and revolution were not frequently discussed in the newspapers either, although these topics were brought up on a couple of occasions. Wassaja editor Rupert Costo published a letter he had received about what he had written earlier in his column “Speaking Freely.” He named his reply “‘Revolution’ he says.” The writer warned Costo that “somebody is gonna jump up and call you a ‘Commie,’” and he questioned if Wassaja would be willing to publish “truly revolutionary material.” Costo wrote a reply in the same newspaper. He made clear that he did not promote communism: “As to the Communists and Anarchists, I say: We have nothing to gain from you, and a plague on both your houses.” He wasn’t worried that the communist ideology would spread among the Indian peoples since Native Americans were too individualistic to accept the ideology. “[W]e don’t appreciate being told what to do, how to think, and when to act,” he wrote. What the Native peoples needed to do was to combine the old with the best of the new in the present world.271

When Costo was very critical of communist ideology in this article; however, in another text he wrote for Wassaja, he asserted that every person had the right to believe as he or she pleased. A person named John Koster sent a letter to Wassaja to comment on one of Rupert Costo’s articles where he had stated that Pine Ridge Reservation had become “a hotbed for every left wing and right wing group in the nation.” Koster argued that there was no indication that such a thing was happening. He wrote that he knew quite a lot about AIM and about communism and that AIM had done little to help communism and communism to help AIM. Although there were many people that supported AIM in communist nations, most support came from West Germany, according to Koster.272 He continued:

I know many AIM leaders and members. I can think of some valid criticisms of the organization and some unfortunate predilections on the part of several of their leaders, but an overt or covert affection for Marx and Engels is not among them. Knowing Russell Means, I think I can assert that the inspirations of his life are Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, not foreign white radicals.273

Costo’s reply was a clarification of what he had wanted to say with his article and an assertion that every person has the right to believe whatever he or she wanted to believe. He replied:

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272 Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.9, p.14
If there are any Communists among AIM, is this to their discredit? They have a right to believe as they like, just as an individual has the right to argue other beliefs. The Communist Party is legal in this country, and a person has the right to believe as he must. [...] Our article was a clear warning to AIM leadership, and others, not to allow themselves to be exploited by anyone.274

The issue of communism and socialism was also touched upon in a couple of other articles. Akwesasne Notes reported that former weekly newspaper editor named Michael Blair had been investigating the Indian settlement at the Adirondack Park in New York State. He was said to have warned that the Mohawks were planning to undermine the United States government and that he recommended forceful removal if necessary. The newspaper also referred to an interview Blair had given, where he had said that there were links between AIM and the communists. The article in Akwesasne Notes, however, stated that the Adirondack settlement was living according to “The Great Law of Peace” which was a law that had been established a thousand years ago among the Indians. This law was not based on majority rule but on consensus.275

Socialism was also mentioned in a Wassaja article referring to a Penobscot named Charles E. Colcord. He said that “socialism is not the answer.” Indians would be no more protected in a socialist state than in a capitalist one since a socialist United States would also strip-mine the Black Mesa and build pipelines in Alaska in the name of progress. To him it was industrialization that brought death to the Indian way of life, whether it was done in the name of capitalism or socialism.276

Relating to the civil rights movement

Neither does it seem that the civil rights movement and minority struggle interested the Indians much. There was, for instance, little discussion in the newspapers about how the Indian situation related to that of the black people. The blacks and other ethnic groups were rarely mentioned. One exception was Akwesasne Notes’ reprint of parts of a speech that Stokeley Carmichael had presented to the St Paul chapter of AIM. He was talking on behalf of AIM leaders on trial in St Paul, Minnesota. The article started off by addressing an Indian view on the Black movement. It referred to Vine Deloria Jr.’s book We Talk, You Listen, where the author had stated that it was difficult for him to relate to the civil rights movement where the struggle was not for land or where they would not promote a separate black nationhood.277

277 Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.32.
Carmichael was described as addressing the common ground on which all oppressed people could stand, including both blacks and Indians.

Carmichael talked about revolution and he described himself as part of the All-African Peoples’ Revolutionary Party. He also made connections of that revolutionary work with African states and the black people’s kinship with the African Peoples. Carmichael also addressed the issue of nationalism, saying that “nationalism is a prerequisite” for the struggle against imperialism. Part of the nationalistic struggle was struggle for land since, if you have not got any land, you are under the control of those who own it. Everything you need to be able to live comes from the land, he stated. He did acknowledge that the land in America belonged to the Indians and therefore the Indian had to come first when it came to rights of land. Carmichael was also openly anti-capitalist and pro-socialist, and he interpreted the Indian struggle as a struggle to obtain socialism.278

All of us must struggle against capitalism, The red man is struggling against capitalism. Certainly he is! He must! He has been a vicious victim of capitalism. [...] The red man is struggling to build socialism. So is the black man.279

But the Indians were not struggling against capitalism and for building socialism. They did not identify with socialism, nor did they identify with the Black cause. Indians were not struggling for civil and equal rights; they were struggling for land and sovereignty, according to the paper. As AIM leader Russell Means put it in an interview for New Times which was reprinted in Akwesasne Notes:

It burns my ass when the American Indian Movement is compared to any other social movement in this country. The social movements in this country that are non-Indian are after civil rights. We are after sovereign rights...We’re a liberation organization.280

Blacks could be allies but they could also be enemies. AIM leader Carter Camp stated that black people might join the Indian struggle when they understood that it was not an economic struggle that Indians were fighting but a struggle for land. “When they forget about being equal, and don’t even care whether they can get into the 21 Restaurant in New York City, then they will be ready to join the revolution of native peoples,” he stated. He did see a possibility of different groups joining together in the struggle, not in the form of an amalgamation of blacks and Indians but as independent groups in coalition with each other.281 AIM leader Clyde Bellecourt, on the other hand,
also showed that there could be conflicts of interest between Indian and black peoples. As he explained:

...we took direct steps, not only against the white community, but against the black community and the discrimination that was taking place in the anti-poverty programs of the time.282

Although other political and ethnic movements had inspired Indians to struggle for their own rights, it is obvious that it was not considered the same struggle that the Indians were fighting. Indians were not primarily struggling for civil rights but fighting for the right to be a separate people governing their own land and their own lives.

It was common to make statements in the newspapers that directly or indirectly described the world as constituted of sovereign states. By applying the discourse of sovereign statehood, Native Americans talked about themselves as part of this world of sovereign states; however, how they were part of it could be imagined in different ways.\footnote{When I talk about “a world of sovereign states,” I do not mean that this categorization and understanding of the world describes the whole world view of the person. Instead it should be understood as one part of the overall understanding of how the world is constituted.} Jeannette Henry, staff writer for \textit{Was-saja}, made her own analysis of the possible ways Indians could relate to the U.S. which included both secession and acceptance of inclusion in the United States. She wrote in 1975:

Thus, three Great Highways clearly and distinctly open up before the Indian tribes and nations: To fight for and achieve the self-government to which they are entitled (at the very least) as conquered people whose land this was, and who now own the smallest fraction of land.

Second, to take the route of the Oglalas and fight for self-determination, and engage in a struggle (which will surely lead eventually to armed conflict), to regain their original position as independent nations free from conditions of the U.S. Constitution, its laws, its agencies and its courts.

Third, to say “to hell with it,” and retreat into the comforts of vicissitudes of the general society, a final step in assimilation of the American Indian into the pulverized mass of humanity called “the great American dream.”\footnote{\textit{Was-saja} 1975, vol.3, no.10, p.10.}

In this chapter, I discuss how Indians within the discourse of sovereign statehood could present themselves as both part of and not part of – both inside and outside – the United States. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part describes how Native Americans talked about the tribe as a sovereign state, claiming total autonomy and independence from the United States. It also describes different views on what kind of tribal government should be granted sovereignty. The second part presents different ways Indian tribes were portrayed as nations within the United States. With reference to the U.S. political and judicial system, Indians claimed special rights with-
in the USA and the right to be protected by the federal government. The federal government’s role as a conflict solver is also described in this part. The third part describes how Indians talked about themselves in ways that portrayed them as citizens of the United States. This was done either directly through reference to their citizenship and civil rights or indirectly by their inclusion of themselves in federal and state politics.

Tribes as sovereign states

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, some native scholars, like Taiaiake Alfred, were critical of using the term “sovereignty” because of its origin in a “Western” world view, foreign to a “traditional Indian” way of thinking about political leadership and political organization.\textsuperscript{285} It was quite common to write about Indian tribal sovereignty in the pan-Indian newspapers of the early 1970s, however.\textsuperscript{286} The idea of tribal sovereignty and tribal nationhood would frequently be talked about in terms of statehood separate from the United States in these newspapers. Sometimes separate tribal statehood was openly proclaimed, and in other cases it was expressed more implicitly. One could, for instance, read in \textit{Akwesasne Notes} that “If it is realistic for the white man to have a state on the red man’s land, then it should be equally realistic for the red man to have a state on his own land.”\textsuperscript{287} In this statement, the United States was apparently imagined in racial terms, as a white man’s state on Indian land. Since the USA was coded as white it was something that Indians were not part of. Tribal statehood could also be imagined as one of several options giving different degrees of autonomy to the tribe. A Navajo professional was quoted in \textit{Wassaja} saying that “Peter MacDonald, current Navajo tribal chairman, and other tribal council members, are advocates of the creation of either a separate state or some type of common-wealth status for the reservation...”\textsuperscript{288}

When searching for a pattern of how Native Americans identified in relationship to the United States, one finds that there are certain tribes that dominate when it comes to references to an Indian tribal statehood and assertion of total political independence. They are the Iroquois Confederacy and the Oglala Sioux. Why these tribes dominate the news from a separatist perspective may have several different explanations. However, one important explanation is certainly that these groups had entered into treaties with the United States. These treaties became the basis for imagining their own relationship

\textsuperscript{285} Alfred 2005, pp.42–45.
\textsuperscript{287} \textit{Akwesasne Notes} 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.40.
\textsuperscript{288} \textit{Wassaja} 1974, vol.2, no.3, p.17.
to the U.S. as one between states. Since statehood was the basis for the international relationship between nations and the only unit that was acknowledged by the world community to be an entity of sovereignty, it was crucial to define tribes as states. Treaties could be used as proof of separate statehood, and the frequency with which the Indians referred to treaties shows how important they considered them to be.

As Engle points out, North American Indians had treaties which they could refer to when asserting rights to separate statehood, which Latin American Indians did not.²⁸⁹ Although all Native American tribes of the United States did not enter into treaties with European countries or the United States, the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy and the Oglala Sioux did, and they frequently referred to these treaties when asserting separate statehood.

The Iroquois

The historic homeland of the Iroquois Confederacy was located in present day northeastern United States and they came early into contact with European colonizers. Through their confederacy they became an important political power in the colonial wars. First, they were allies and trading with the Netherlands. In 1643, they entered into their first formal treaty with the Dutch and the strength of this alliance was described as an “‘chain’ made of iron.” Through trade with the Dutch they received a large amount of guns which made it possible for them to dominate and defeat other Indian tribes in the region.²⁹⁰ When the Dutch colony was invaded and taken over by the British in 1664, England also inherited the Dutch alliance with the Iroquois Confederacy.²⁹¹ The Iroquois continued the special Covenant Chain of alliances with the English colonies.²⁹²

When the American Revolution broke out in 1775, the Iroquois Confederacy initially tried to remain neutral in the war which they considered to be an internal quarrel of the English.²⁹³ However, eventually they had to take sides and most of them, namely the Mohawks, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, decided to sustain the Covenant Chain and support England.²⁹⁴ When England lost the war, the Iroquois Confederacy split. Large groups of those who had supported the English fled to Canada and settled there, while those who remained were pressured into giving up large portions of land in their former homeland. Only small reservations located in New York and north-

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²⁸⁹ Engle 2010.
²⁹⁰ Edmunds et al. 2007, pp.59,63.
²⁹¹ Gibson 1980, p.158.
western Pennsylvania remained after Iroquois leaders had signed six treaties with the United States between 1784 and 1797.295

The history of the Iroquois Confederacy in general, and especially the historic treaties entered into with the U.S., were frequently referred to when the Iroquois asserted separate statehood. One article in Akwesasne Notes, for instance, very clearly shows how a historic treaty was used to assert Mohawk separate statehood and jurisdiction over traditional homelands. The article reported about a group of Mohawks who had settled on an abandoned girls’ camp in Adirondack Park, New York. The group had established a community council and had planted gardens to be able to support themselves. The area was said to be part of the land which Mohawk leader Joseph Brant had given up to the U.S. government after the Revolutionary War. The newspaper reported that the camp had been the target of drive-by shootings; when the Mohawks returned the fire, it resulted in a nine-year-old girl getting hit while riding in one of the cars. State police demanded that the Mohawks turn over the shooter to the police or turn in their rifles for ballistic tests. The Mohawks refused, referring to the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 that had been entered into between the Six Nations Confederacy, to which the Mohawks belonged, and the United States. The treaty literally regulated the procedures that should be followed if someone of the Six Nations’ citizens injured a United States citizen or vice versa.296 In accordance with this treaty, the Grand Council of the Six Nations Confederacy stated that the Mohawks were supposed to investigate the shootings of its own people while the U.S. would investigate the shootings of its citizens, and they would negotiate the dispute.297 Wassaja reported that information from the hearings that were held in relationship to the shootings would not be released ‘’to citizens of the U.S.’ until the federal government responded to an Indian complaint regarding eleven alleged instances in which whites have shot at members of the settlement.’298 The Mohawks would apparently not fulfill its part of the treaty agreement until the United States had fulfilled its part. The United States was obviously related to in terms of another state with its own citizens

296 Article 7 of the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 reads:
“Lest the firm peace and friendship now established should be interrupted by the misconduct of individuals, the United States and the Six Nations agree, that the injuries done by individuals, on either side, no private revenge or retaliation shall take place; but, instead thereof, complaints shall be made by the party injured, to the other; by the Six Nations or any of them, to the President of the United States, or the Superintendent by him appointed; and by the Superintendent, or other person appointed by the President, to the principal chiefs of the Six Nations, or of the Nation to which the offender belongs; and such prudent measures shall then be pursued, as shall be necessary to preserve or peace and friendship unbroken; until the legislature (or great council) of the United States shall make other equitable provision for the purpose.” (http://www.kahonwes.com/iroquois/nov1794.htm, 2010-03-31)
in these statements, implying that the speakers imagined themselves as Mohawk or Iroquois citizens, an assertion of separate statehood. However, there are also racial aspects mentioned. “The other” was not only talked about as meaning U.S. citizens but also as meaning white people. Once again the United States was described as racially white.

The discourse of sovereign statehood is also apparent in another argument concerning the encampment at the abandoned girls’ camp at Adirondack Park. When the state of New York tried to get the Mohawk settlers off the land by having a court decision determine state ownership, the Mohawks replied that they would not accept such a court decision since it was not good international protocol for the state of a nation to summon another nation into its own court. Diplomatic negotiations and treaty making, or submitting to international mediation were the proper method of handling disputes.299

The Mohawk Nation was obviously imagined as one of the nation-states of the world to which the U.S. legal system did not apply. A U.S. court system could not decide on matters concerning to whom the land belonged since that concerned an international conflict, according to the Mohawks.

The Mohawks relied on a document from 1794 to prove their status as an independent state. They not only portrayed the Iroquois Confederacy and the United States as completely independent and separate nations; at that point in time they were. By applying the conditions of 1794 to the present time, they could argue that the United States should acknowledge Iroquois separate statehood. They also argued that the upholding of the treaty and consequently the continued acknowledgement of Iroquois statehood was shown through the continuous payments made by the United States to the Iroquois. As a proof of the continuing validity of the treaty it was stated in Akwesasne Notest as follow:

The treaty is admitted to be valid by the U.S. – every year it delivers a small amount of cloth to Six Nations people as provided for in the treaty. For years, U.S. officials have been trying to get the Six Nations to accept a sum of money in final payment rather than go through the annual routine, but the Older People kept insisting on the cloth. Now they point to the cloth as proof that the U.S. knows the treaty is valid. At a Grand Council of the Six Nations Confederacy held November 23-24 [1974], this position was firmly backed.300

The continuing payments of cloth to the Iroquois Confederacy by the United States were seen as proof of the treaty’s validity, and a valid treaty, in turn, was seen as proof of the Iroquois Confederacy’s sovereign nationhood.

299 Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.4.
300 Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.4.
The question of independent statehood, and consequently the issue of U.S. citizenship versus citizenship in a sovereign Indian nation, was also brought up in reference to Native Americans passing through international borders. *Akwesasne Notes* wrote about the Mohawks referring to the Jay treaty of 1794 when they asserted the right to freely cross the border between the United States and Canada. The Mohawk territory was located within the borders of both United States and Canada; therefore, by traveling within their own territory Mohawks crossed an international border. This situation caused problems in the late 1960s. Since the Mohawks brought goods back and forth across the international border, Canada started to charge duties. The Mohawks asserted that this was a violation of the Jay Treaty, while Canada claimed that this treaty was between the U.S. and England and of no concern to the Indians. The treaty did grant the Iroquois the right to travel freely across the border, and they were allowed to bring goods back and forth without custom payments. In 1968, the Indians blocked the Cornwall International Bridge to protest against the tolls, and in 1969 the Canadian government withdrew the duty demands. These protests were the inspirations for the Mohawks to start publishing *Akwesasne Notes*.

Border crossing was described several times in the newspapers; in all these examples, Native American tribes were portrayed as independent states. An international border crossing would, of course, confront the individual traveler with the question of what state he or she belonged to and identified with. One *Akwesasne Notes* article described how Mad Bear, a Tuscarora Indian of the Iroquois Confederacy, together with a group of Florida Indians had gone to Cuba to get support for the Indian cause from Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. On his return trip, Mad Bear got into trouble with the U.S. immigration since he had overstayed his travel permit to Cuba. He was interrogated by U.S. immigration officials and when they threatened to take away his citizenship, he replied that they could not take away his Iroquois nationality and refused to answer any questions about the trip. When they finally let him go, two FBI agents followed him to his reservation. Once there the agents were ordered to leave. When they refused to leave, claiming that they could travel anywhere they wanted within U.S. borders, “Mad Bear showed them a treaty signed by George Washington specifying that U.S. territory ended at the Tuscarora border,” – clearly putting Tuscarora land outside the United States.

Another border story described the travels of a Canadian Iroquois Indian. Chief Emerson Hill of Ohsweken, Ontario, was reported to have been stopped by British immigration while returning to Canada after a lecture tour.

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301 *Akwesasne Notes* 1970, vol.2, no.5, p.21
303 Wallace “Mad Bear” Anderson.
in Sweden and Finland. He was stopped since he did not have a Canadian passport but insisted on using a typed travel document that had been drafted by himself and five other chiefs. He was held for two hours in London until he was allowed through. Hill had brought historical documents that supported the claim that Iroquois documents were valid for entry into Great Britain. One of the documents that were included was a 1763 royal proclamation by King George III. Hill argued that his nation had the right to issue its own passports since its treaty-making powers were recognized by the British Crown as early as 1763 and reaffirmed in the Treaty of Ghent in 1814.  

Iroquois Indians had issued their own passports before, a fact also mentioned in Akwesasne Notes. Chief Levi General, also known by his Indian name Deskaheh, had gone to Switzerland in 1926 using an Iroquois passport when he was going to make a presentation before the League of Nations. In 1930, a delegation of chiefs went to England on Iroquois passports to protest to the British government that Canada violated the Treaty of Ghent. By refusing to carry U.S. or Canadian passports, they obviously wanted to show that they saw tribes as sovereign states on the same level as the United States and Canada.  

The idea that Indian tribes were on equal standing with the United States and Canada was not always expressed exclusively in terms of discourse of sovereign statehood, however. The idea of there being both independent peoples and independent states was referred to in the same article, as was the case in the Akwesasne Notes article showing the “Two-Row Wampum Belt” of the Iroquois. The newspaper stated that the belt symbolized “the agreement under which the Iroquois welcomed the white people to their lands,” an agreement that “has been kept by the Iroquois to this date.” Once again, history and treaty making becomes crucial in defining Indian relationship to the colonial state; however, in this case the point of reference was an agreement between two peoples, whites and Iroquois. The “Two-Row Wampum Belt” represented a treaty entered into by the Iroquois Confederacy and the Dutch in 1613. It was a long belt constructed of three lines of white beads

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305 Akwesasne Notes 1970, vol.2, no.5, p.40. In Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.3, p.30 one can also read about a group of Hopis, Mohawks, and Onondagas who had traveled with the passports of their Indian nations.

306 Dictionary of Canadian Biography, www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=8103, 2013-05-06. His last public speech before he died in 1925 was published in Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.5, p.23, which included references to promise of George III that the British would forever protect the Iroquois.


308 There are several other examples in then newspapers where representatives of the Six Nations were relating to the United States and Canada in terms of sovereign nations and foreign to these states. They were also referring to treaties with these colonial powers when asserting these rights. For example, Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.2, p.21, Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.1, p.38, Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.18, Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.4.

309 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.36.
and two lines of purple beads. The meaning of the pattern was explained in *Akwesasne Notes*:

> We will not be like father and son, but like brothers. These two rows will symbolize vessels, traveling down the same river together. One will be for the Indian people, their laws, their customs, and the other for the white people and their laws and customs. We will each travel the river together, but in our own boat. And neither of us will try to steer the others vessel.

Although the treaty had been between the Dutch and the Iroquois, it was described in *Akwesasne Notes* as a treaty between Indians and white people, it therefore continues to be relevant in the present. The whole article that described the “Two-Row Wampum Belt” agreement dealt with the relationship between the Iroquois on the one hand, and the different European nations and later Canada, on the other. The description of the historic relationship between the Iroquois and the Europeans was leading up to the explanation of why the Iroquois were still sovereign nations. For instance, the article stated that the Iroquois were obligated to support the British in the Revolutionary War due to the agreement, and many of the Iroquois had to leave the United States after Britain lost the war. When the British provided the Iroquois with new land to live on in Canada, they were promised it was going to be theirs under the same conditions they had held land before, as a sovereign people, the article stated.

Then the newspapers turned to talk about the relationship between the Iroquois and Canada in terms of independent states. The fact that the Iroquois had fought on the side of their allies, the British, and therefore had lost ancestral homelands and moved to new lands, did not mean that they had given up their sovereignty. The Iroquois stated it this way:

> We challenge the Canadian Government to show proof of Iroquois surrender of our citizenship. [...] No service offered by the Department requires a statement of allegiance to Canada. Further, the government sends foreign aid to under-developed countries, yet does not call the recipients “Canadians.”

Here citizenship, and consequently the discourse of sovereign statehood becomes the frame of reference. This article shows examples of several different arguments that the Indians used to assert national sovereignty and independent statehood. First, the existence of the “Two-Row Wampum Belt” showed that the Iroquois Confederacy had entered into an international treaty and thereby proved that they were sovereign nations. Secondly, the wampum belt showed that there had been a long history of alliance between the

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311 *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.36.
312 *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.36.
313 *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.36.
Iroquois Indians and white peoples, which would include the Canadians. Thirdly, they argued that the present state of economic dependency did not necessarily mean political submission. In short, they argued that the Iroquois Confederacy had always been sovereign and since they entered into the treaty with the English, they were allies with the British/Canadians. This article also talked about both a relationship between states and a relationship between peoples, showing that the discourse of sovereign statehood and discourse of peoplehood could be intertwined.

The Sioux

Several different treaties between Indian tribes and the United States government were also published in a supplement to the regular Wassaja newspaper. One of these treaties was “The Sioux Treaty.” The Sioux Treaty, which is often referred to as the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, was entered into between the United States and the Lakotas or Teton Sioux after years of conflict between the two parties. Among those who signed the treaty was the famous Chief Red Cloud who had led his people in numerous battles with the United States, which had made the U.S. government eager to negotiate a peace treaty with his tribe.

The Sioux Treaty was referred to several times in the newspapers. Akwesasne Notes, for instance, published 15 questions about it. The questions were part of a “Bill of Particulars” that was submitted to the White House Minority Affairs specialist Bradley F. Patterson Jr. in Washington D.C. by Lakota author and lawyer Vine Deloria Jr. The question concerned whether the “the United States of America regard the treaty [... ] as a valid legal document binding the Lakota Nation and the United States in a legal relationship.” If the United States did not find the treaty binding, at what point did it stop to be so, and what was the basis for it not being considered legal and binding any longer? Another question concerned what current status the 1868 treaty had on a more detailed basis. What articles in the treaty did they not consider binding anymore? Which articles did the United States consider that they had fulfilled, and which points did they admit that they had not fulfilled? All these questions were described in direct reference to the treaty which was partly published in the newspaper. Deloria claimed that the

315 The Sioux Treaty of 1868 is a long and detailed treaty but what was especially important for the Lakotas to assert sovereignty was the beginning where the tribe was referred to as “the Sioux Nation” showing their independence from the United States. Transcript of Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. http://www.ourdocuments.gov/print_friendly.php?page=transcript&doc=42&title=Transcript+of+Fort+Laramie+1868.  
Sioux Treaty of 1868 was still valid and tried to make the U.S. government define its position regarding the contemporary validity of the treaty.

This treaty became very important in the assertion of Sioux sovereignty in the 1970s, such as during the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 when Russell Means made references to the 1868 treaty, asserting tribal sovereignty for the Oglala Sioux. He was quoted to have stated that the treaty was “made between it [the Oglala Sioux tribe] as a sovereign and the U.S. as a sovereign. The treaty did not give up sovereignty [...] but affirmed it.”

Oglala Sioux were very visible in the newspapers during the early 1970s due to those spectacular events that took place on or near Sioux reservations. One such event was the previously mentioned occupation of Wounded Knee at the Oglala Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation, an event where the Oglala, supported by AIM, declared war on the United States. It was quite an extreme situation that had lead up to the occupation and the declaration of war against the United States. Living conditions were very difficult at the Pine Ridge Reservation in the early 1970s. There were serious conflicts between different factions on the reservation, where young Oglala activists in cooperation with the traditionalists were opposing the Tribal Chairman, Richard Wilson. There had been numerous complaints about Wilson favoring mixed-bloods in general, and his own friends and family in particular, when it came to hiring people for different job openings. Even more serious was that the Wilson administration’s special police force, called “goons,” was accused of criminal actions such as physical assault and rape.

This situation was the reason why the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization (OSCRO) invited AIM members to the Pine Ridge Reservation. The meeting was also attended by traditional leaders from all the districts of the reservation. At the meeting several Oglala women pleaded with the men to do something about Wilson, and one of the elderly traditional leaders, Fools Crow, finally suggested that they should go to Wounded Knee to make a stand.

Both the federal government and the Wilson administration responded to the occupation of Wounded Knee by building road blocks to isolate the village from the outside world. Supporters of the occupants, however, carried supplies by foot to the Wounded Knee compound and thereby avoided these roadblocks. The federal government also brought armored personnel carriers, and the Indians inside the enclosure started to dig bunkers and trenches for protection. The conflict ended after three months, when the federal government promised to investigate the conditions of the Pine Ridge Reserva-

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tion and to meet with traditional leaders for discussions. By then two Indian protesters had died and one FBI agent was seriously hurt.321

Akwesasne Notes made extensive reports on both what happened at the site and also on statements delivered by Wounded Knee spokesmen. During the siege, the Oglala occupants, with the help of AIM, were reported to have declared the village of Wounded Knee liberated land that now belonged to the Independent Oglala Nation. The Independent Oglala Nation was said to be a sovereign state and consequently something other than the United States. The announcement was made by AIM leader Russell Means, who himself was an Oglala Sioux. Means further stated that the new sovereign nation-state would issue visas to all the residents who were not Oglala. Only newsmen and representatives from the National Council of Churches would have access to the Oglala Nation. The newspaper quoted the occupants’ statement: “We no longer have a perimeter to defend – we have a border,”322 and the conflict was described as war between the nations of the United States and the Oglala Sioux.323 When the U.S. government’s roadblocks temporarily were taken down, Russell Means said, “We won this battle. All of us have to sit down and figure out how we’re going to win the total war.”324 The seriousness of their claim to a sovereign state was further expressed by using the concept “foreign” in relationship to the United States and by claiming that they would regulate who entered the Oglala Nation’s borders. Means proclaimed:

If any foreign agent of any foreign country, especially the United States, tries to enter the village, it will be treated as an act of war and treated accordingly. Spies entering the village will be treated like spies everywhere.325

The rhetoric used by Russell Means was an obvious expression of a discourse of sovereign statehood, where his point of reference was a world of sovereign states to which the Oglala Sioux belonged. The newly proclaimed Oglala Sioux Nation was described as a state with borders and citizens, completely independent from the United States. The new nation’s relationship to the United States was more complicated than these statements would indicate, however. The problems at the Pine Ridge Reservation, which had been an important reason for the Wounded Knee occupation, were not easily solved by the new Oglala Sioux Nation. To get to terms with the situation at the reservation and elected tribal leadership, they requested help from the U.S. federal government. The Wounded Knee siege ended, and the occupants laid down their weapons and left the compound after they were prom-

321 Edmunds et al.2007, p.430.
ised two things by the federal negotiators. First, the Oglala Chiefs and Headmen were to have a meeting with White House officials to discuss the Sioux Treaty; secondly, the federal government would deal with Tribal Chairman Richard Wilson’s alleged atrocities against his own people. Although proclaiming total independence, the new Oglala Sioux Nation did expect or want interference from the federal government to protect them from atrocities committed by the elected tribal leaders. They apparently did not take the idea of tribal sovereign nationhood to its full extent. Sovereignty went from meaning state sovereignty to take the meaning of internal governance, the latter what Flanagan describes as an American way of understanding the concept.

The violence continued on the Pine Ridge Reservation also after Wounded Knee. The federal government did not prosecute Wilson and his “goons” as promised. No indictments were ever brought against them. Instead, violence increased on the Pine Ridge Reservation after Wounded Knee resulting in what Smith and Warrior describe as “a low-level civil war” between AIM and Wilson supporters. It lasted for more than two years. The presence of FBI also continued on the reservation, and in 1975 two FBI agents were shot and killed in a shootout with AIM supporters. This did not make the situation more stable on Pine Ridge. Akwesasne Notes quoted a Lakota press release describing how they experienced the situation at Pine Ridge in 1975:

In the aftermath [of the agents’ death] more than 200 FBI agents, armed with automatic weapons, armored personnel carriers, helicopters and spotter planes, backed with hundreds of vigilante cowboys, BIA law enforcement people, goon squad, invaded and occupied what little land we have left.

The fact that the federal government failed to solve the problems at the Pine Ridge Reservation, and FBI agents “invaded” the reservation apparently made these Oglala Sioux see the federal government as a foreign intruder cooperating with an illegitimate government on the reservation. Both Wassa-ja and Akwesasne Notes wrote about the killings of the FBI agents and about the hearing on their deaths. In the trials that followed, some of the Oglala Sioux once again asserted tribal sovereignty and independence from the United States, and they did so with reference to the Sioux Treaty. When the Grand Jury hearing was held, two of the witnesses that were called refused to testify on grounds that they belonged to a sovereign nation. The two witnesses, Ivis and Angie Long Visitor, both gave the same statement: “I am not

326 Smith & Warrior 1996, p.262.
a citizen of the United States. I am a citizen of the Great Sioux Nation. Your people signed a Treaty with my people in 1868.\footnote{Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.4, p.5. Also quoted in Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.10, p.10. Other Indians were also refusing to testify claiming tribal sovereignty Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7 no.3, p.9.}

The occupation of Wounded Knee also led to arrests and court trials. During the siege, 582 people had been arrested on charges directly related to the occupation.\footnote{Smith & Warrior 1996, p.270} AIM leaders Russell Means and Dennis Banks were tried together and newspapers wrote about their trials. Akwesasne Notes reported that the defense was largely focusing on the Sioux Treaty of 1868 in the trial. The defense called Vine Deloria Jr. as an expert witness, and he challenged U.S. assertion of authority and control over Pine Ridge Reservation since the Sioux signed the treaty. Deloria was quoted to have said that “if you go back in history to the time when the treaty was signed, there is no question that they [U.S. government] did not have control, no question that they didn’t think they were assuming control [over Sioux country].” Other witnesses also testified that there was “no way” that the Sioux that signed the treaty had meant to transfer criminal justice to the United States.\footnote{Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.1, p.30.} Judge Nichols eventually dismissed the charges against Means and Banks, not as confirmation of the validity of the Sioux Treaty but because of government misconduct.\footnote{Smith & Warrior 1996, p.271.}

**Tribes and organizations claiming tribal and Indian sovereignty**

Although many of the assertions of separate statehood came from the Iroquois and Sioux peoples, there were also examples of other Indian tribes directly or indirectly claiming to be a separate state or in the process of creating one. Wassaja reported that 140,000 members of the Navajo Nation were exploring the possibility of setting up a separate state or a commonwealth on their reservation,\footnote{Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.9, p.11.} and the chairman of the West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs stated that “the Indians must establish themselves independently on a separate, equal and sovereign basis.”\footnote{Smith & Warrior 1996, p.271.} Apparently inspired by the U.S. Declaration of Independence, “the First International Indian Treaty Council,” which was hosted by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, presented its own “Declaration of Independence.” It “called upon the Treaty Council” to negotiate with the United States government to establish diplo-
matic relations between the parties,” and consequently their relationship with the federal government would be in terms of sovereign peoples “rather than as U.S. citizens.”

The idea of their own Declaration of course made connotations to the U.S. declaration of independence from Great Britain in the late 1700s. The right to govern themselves according to their own wishes and the right to free themselves from foreign intrusion was implicit in this statement.

In the early 1970s, the United States was also engaged in the Vietnam War; Indians, like other American citizens, were drafted to do military service. The fact that they had to go to war and fight for the American military required Native Americans to position themselves in relationship to the American nation. Several articles described Indians opposing the military draft by rejecting U.S. citizenship and asserting tribal sovereignty. In several instances, the rejection was made with reference to past treaties with the United States. Such treaties had “guaranteed forever that Indians would not be forced to fight any white man’s war.” Michael James McCloud argued that he was “a natural born citizen of the Umatilla Walla Walla Nation” and his tribe had entered into a treaty of peace with the United States government, a treaty that was still valid. McCloud claimed that the Umatilla Walla Walla Nation was not at war with any nation of the world and since he had not severed his citizenship of his tribe, he could not be drafted by the United States to go to war. He questioned how the U.S. government could declare him a citizen of “their nation” without the consent of himself, his family, or the leaders of his tribal nation. He further stated that “you can’t be a citizen of two nations and have a treaty with yourself.”

Other articles also described Indians refusing the draft with reference to treaties with the United States. Dennis John Brown, a Seneca, was reported to have refused the draft with reference to the Pickering Treaty (Treaty of Canandaigua) between the Seneca and the United States. Another Native American tried to avoid draft by claiming that Indians could not be considered citizens of the United States by the 1924 Act and therefore not subject to draft laws since it was against international law to force citizenship on any person. Forced citizenship also violated Indian treaties and sovereignty. Mohawks were said to discourage young members being involved in the American political system and therefore, the paper explained, Mohawks do not vote in elections and many young men did not register for the draft.

There are several other examples in the newspapers where Indians rejected U.S. citizenship, criticized the way in which Indians were made U.S. citi-

zens without giving their consent and asserted their sovereign right to decide if they wanted to participate in the war or not.341

This was not the first time Indians had resisted military draft on grounds that they were not part of the United States. Similar claims had been made during World War II. Both Yakima and Iroquois tribes asserted tribal independence with reference to treaties with the United States government. Yakima referred to their last treaty with the United States which was signed in 1859. The treaty guaranteed tribal sovereignty and even prohibited Yakima to cooperate with, or participate in American armed forces. Draft registration was therefore a violation of the treaty, and several Yakima filed a suit in Federal Court in 1941.342 The Iroquois Confederacy asserted their national independence with reference to three treaties between them and the United States from 1784, 1789, and 1794. In these treaties, the U.S. government had acknowledged that the Iroquois existed as separate nations, neither part of the United States nor Canada.343 Neither Yakima nor Iroquois won their cases. The court ruled that the Citizenship Act of 1924 and the Nationality Act of 1940 were constitutional and they thereby made the Indians citizens of the United States.344

Treaties of the past were obviously very important points of references for Indians in asserting independent nationhood and political sovereignty. However, tribal sovereignty did not necessarily have to be based on historic treaties. The 20-point proposal that was presented by the “Trail of Broken Treaties” caravan in 1972, suggested that the treaty relationship between Indian tribes and the United States would be extended. The first point of the proposal, which was published in whole in Akwesasne Notes, suggested that the U.S. Congress would consider repealing the 1871 Indian Appropriation Act, which had stopped the federal government from entering into treaties with Indian tribes. The second point suggested that Congress establish a treaty commission for the purpose of entering into new treaties with Indian tribes. Apparently they wanted the United States to acknowledge all the contemporary Indian tribes as independent nations. Some examples of other proposals were that the federal government would review treaty commitments and treaty violations and see that all Indian peoples would be governed by treaty relations. They wanted Indian tribes to have jurisdiction within their own reservation borders over non-Indians also. Everyone should be subject to the laws of the sovereign Indian nations, and Indian tribes should therefore have the right to exercise their autonomous governing authority, according to the proposal.345

344 Townsend 2000, p.122.
As I mentioned earlier, in the course of claiming independent statehood, Indians were also seeking recognition by the United Nations as separate nations, independent from the United States. Wassaja reported that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was going to apply for United Nations membership on behalf of all Indians, and during the occupation of Wounded Knee the occupants tried to establish a relationship with the international community. Although this was not accomplished, one could read in Akwesasne Notes that “many foreign nations have offered support to AIM, and several have volunteered assistance.”

The entity to which national sovereignty was ascribed varied in the newspapers and it is not always obvious what type of entity they were referring to. In some cases it was a tribe, like the Mohawks or the Tuscarora. In other cases it was the Iroquois Confederacy, to which the Mohawks and Tuscaroras belonged. However, when the Standing Rock Sioux tribe applied for membership in the U.N. on behalf of all Indians, it is not obvious what entity they wanted to be recognized. Did they mean membership for all different tribal nations or did they mean an application to apply for all Indians as a single nation? Similarly, when AIM was trying to establish a relationship with the international community, which nation or nations were they representing, a specific tribal nation, their individual tribal nations, or a joint Indian nation?

Other examples in the newspapers, however, more clearly referred to Indian rather than tribal sovereignty. During the occupation of Alcatraz, one of the leaders, a Mohawk named Richard Oaks, was quoted to have stated, “They better not try to make this into a park. This is our land – all of it.” It is difficult to see how Oaks could claim Alcatraz as his on the basis of tribal nationality. His traditional Mohawk homeland was in New York, very far from this island outside San Francisco. Instead he, and other Indians, claimed right to the land on a general “Indian” basis.

Another article described three Indians who had been arrested and convicted in connection to the occupation of Alcatraz Island. They had based their defense on questioning U.S. right to the island by asserting that there was no proof that the U.S. government owned the land. Instead they asserted that the land belonged to “the American Indians, since the U.S. can not produce a deed, title, or law giving them ownership.” No tribal distinctions were made in these cases, but all Indians were described as one people having rights to the whole continent.

AIM leader Carter Camp also seems to have imagined all Indians as one nation when he stated that “Indians too are a sovereign people, foreign to the

347 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.4, p.17.
government of the U.S.” during the occupation of Wounded Knee. In his mind, Indians not only had a spiritual kinship making them one people, Indians also comprised the political unit which was sovereign and independent from the United States.

There were other Indians, however, who did not accept separate Indian rights that were not based on tribal rights. This was pointed out in an article discussing urban Indians’ eligibility to Health Service in the cities. Native Americans had to obtain sanctions from the tribe to get health care, and this was a problem since many urban Indians had lost contact with their tribes. Wassaja, however, supported the idea of Indian individuals having to be connected to a tribe since the tribe was the entity on which sovereignty rested. It stated:

The question is one of Tribal Sovereignty. Not “Indian” sovereignty, but Tribal sovereignty. That distinction should be clearly understood, with all its implications.

Sovereignty – for what tribal government?

Native Americans, who believed that sovereignty should be granted to tribal governments, did not necessarily agree upon what kind of tribal government that would be. This was also something that appeared in the newspapers.

Indian tribal government of the early 1970s was generally something completely different from the pre-contact tribal governments. Tribal leadership had gone through an enormous transformation in most tribes, and this transformation was not appreciated by all Indians.

Indian settlement on reservations came to influence their political organization. Deloria and Lytle write that many Indian tribes preserved much of their traditional form of government also after settlement on reservations; however, most western tribes were also experiencing a “government-sponsored transformation of traditional forms into a more workable version of an informal council.” The most influential leaders of the tribes were asked to form a council that Indian agents could call upon when they needed approval from the Indian peoples. In most cases, the political subdivisions reflected those political divisions that had existed before settlement on reservations. Democratic principles were imposed on these councils, however. This meant one person, one vote, something that was foreign to Indian traditional political leadership.

There was little formal recognition of Indian tribal governments until the early 1930s. Previously, the federal government had thoroughly pushed for assimilation of Indians into mainstream American society. There was a conscious effort to erase everything that was considered Indian and to make the Indians into regular Americans. It was shown in Captain Richard Henry Pratt’s famous statement, “kill the Indian in him and save the man,” around the turn of the century (c. 1900). It follows that a traditional political leadership and self-government was not encouraged by the federal government. Much of traditional society was broken down. In many Indian societies, youth were educated in boarding schools, returning home not only alienated from their traditional culture but also knowledgeable in white society. They became “cultural brokers” and helped bridge the gap between the Indian and the white world. A generational gap developed between the older traditional leaders and the young educated people, a gap that was not without complications in many Indian tribes and which sometimes caused factionalism.

In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act, which encouraged Indian tribes to organize into formal tribal governments. Tribal constitutions and by-laws were formed, and democratically elected representative forms of governments were organized. It was optional for the tribes to accept to be organized according to the IRA; however, a majority of the tribes accepted it by majority vote and some of those who rejected it organized similar government structures later on. It was not uncommon that the tribes were seriously split over the issue. Although the situation was more complicated than the “traditionalists” being against the IRA and “progressives” for it, the younger, educated “mixed-blood” Indians tended to be more positive to adopting IRA than the older, non-educated, “full-bloods” within the tribes.

With the IRA, Indian tribes got a “western” form of political organization, which became the official tribal government recognized by the federal government. One can read in the newspapers of the early 1970s that these official tribal governments were not always recognized by all members of the tribes. Some Native Americans thought that the elected tribal government system was forced upon them by the U.S. government and it was a foreign system which did not represent an Indian way of doing things.

There was a conflict between those who wanted traditional chiefs and those who wanted the elected IRA-organized tribal government among the Oglala Sioux at Pine Ridge Reservation. At least some of the Oglala who opposed Tribal Chairman Richard Wilson wanted a traditional government of the tribe, which was expressed by the fact that the government of the new

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357 Taylor 1980, p.50.
The Oglala nation was described as reinstituted. In another Akwesasne Notes the Oglala were described as “trying to ‘go back’ to the freedom and sovereignty they had before they were conquered and robbed.” The U.S. government was also criticized for not recognizing the traditional Oglala Chiefs. Authentic tribal government was seen as connected to Indian tradition and resistance against the U.S. government’s attempts to control Indian lands. The elective form of government, on the other hand, was controlled by the U.S. government and helped “destroy the people’s faith in their own nation,” according to an article in Akwesasne Notes called “A Historical Look at Pine Ridge.”

The two different types of tribal governments did not necessarily correspond with two different ways of identifying in relationship to the United States. Both AIM leader Russell Means and his antagonist, Tribal Chairman Richard Wilson, imagined Oglala as sovereign nations, however, they imagined two very different types of leadership. Means stated that the traditional Oglala wanted to deal with the U.S. government “on the same basis as they did 100 years ago – as equals,” i.e., “in the same way as they did prior to 1868 – ‘as a sovereign nation.’” When he was running for Chairman of the Oglala Sioux Nation, he also declared that he would abolish the BIA and call together the Oglala tribe to discuss what form of government they wanted to have. Means seems to have expected the Oglala to choose another, more “Indian” form of government when he said, “we had a form of government based on 25,000 years of experience, and we can devise an Oglala government again.” He apparently imagined a traditional tribal government as the entity for tribal sovereignty.

Wilson, on the other hand, imagined the IRA-organized government, which he himself represented, as the basis for tribal sovereignty. One could read in Akwesasne Notes that Wilson refused to follow instructions from the federal government on grounds that he represented a sovereign nation. The U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice had instructed Wilson to attend a meeting where Wilson was to present a date for a tribal election. Wilson, however, argued that neither of these departments could instruct a sovereign tribe and its chairman when to hold tribal elections. According to Wassaja editor Rupert Costo, Wilson did not always take this sovereignty stand. Costo criticized Wilson for asserting that he protected Oglala tribal sovereignty as it was stated in the constitution and by-laws of the tribe and as approved by the Secretary of the Interior. If correctly quoted, Wilson would then have accepted that approval from the federal government

was a criterion for a legitimate tribal government. Costo questioned if that in itself would constitute tribal sovereignty. Instead he referred to historic Indian chiefs when defining true sovereignty:

Wilson says the Oglala “chiefs and headmen and traditionalists are dead” [...] I am moved to ask Mr. Wilson, in all sincerity, “Have you considered that the spirit of these dead chiefs may not be dead? Have you considered what these chiefs and traditional leaders stood for, and that this is truly tribal sovereignty?”

There was a long history of political factionalism within the Pine Ridge community that dated back to settlement on the reservation, and even before that. Factionalism was not something unique to Pine Ridge but was common among the Plains tribes. Taylor relates the Superintendent of the Rosebud Agency’s description of politics on the Rosebud Reservation. He described the pre-IRA business council in the following manner:

…each council member formed his own partisan organization and maneuvered constantly for a position of dominance, while periodically the other council members would combine for the purpose to impeaching the chairman. Resolutions passed at one meeting would be repealed or reversed at the next meeting, for no apparent reason.

In pre-reservation times, tribal leaders could discuss important issues until disputes were resolved and consensus reached. If certain groups could not get along, they could simply move away from each other to form new separate groups. The new form of political system, based decisions on majority vote, which made the debates more bitter but did not change the political practice to change one’s vote from one time to the other. After settlement on reservations, it was no longer possible to split up if groups could not get along.

Taylor quotes a letter written to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier by an “Indian correspondent” around the time of the introduction of IRA. The letter commented on the serious factionalism on the Pine Ridge Reservation and stated that there were:

...full bloods versus mixed bloods; progressives versus conservatives; Catholic versus Protestant; Democrat versus Republican; Chiefs versus Council; Sons of chiefs versus Sons of other chiefs.

365 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.3, Wilson’s statement that the Oglala Chiefs were dead was also mentioned in Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.9, p.1.
366 Taylor 1980 p.49.
368 Taylor 1980, p.49.
Such factionalism continued also in the 1970s; an important split was between the traditionalists, including the traditional Chiefs, and the elected Council on the reservation.

The Lakota Chiefs of the 1970s represented continuity from pre-reservation political organization, however in a modified form. The 19th century Lakota political leadership was organized around different societies. These societies could be divided into two categories, warrior societies and civil societies. The most important was Naca Ominicia, which was made up of the most prominent older men in the society. Their prominence came from their skills as warriors, hunters, and shamans. They appointed warrior societies to police the camp and they also appointed the tribal Chiefs. To become a political leader in Sioux society during the 19th century was quite complicated. The candidate had to rely on a combination of good behavior and high family status. Bravery, fortitude, wisdom, and generosity, as well as capabilities in hunting and warfare were important qualities to have for a political career. Family was also of great importance. If a person’s father had a good reputation, it influenced his own reputation while if his father had a bad reputation, it would be difficult to get other people’s support. Chieftainship usually was inherent from father to son. The son had to fulfill the demands for suitability; however, if he did he was usually chosen over a person from another family. A Chief’s power was largely dependent on his ability to convince people to support him. His authority depended largely on his personality. If he was weak and cowardly, he would lose influence in society and his followers would abandon him.369

Settlement on reservation put a stop to the warrior and buffalo hunter life of the Lakota and thereby also important means to achieve prestige and political power. Religious leaders became more important and often took over roles that Chiefs previously held. Many of the Chiefs of the 1970s were a combination of religious and profane leaders, but strictly profane leaders also existed. As in the 19th century, a man could only act as chief if the people accepted him as such. Family was still important in the 1970s. Fools Crow, who was both a religious and profane leader, inherited his chieftainship from his father, and Charles Red Cloud was a grandson to the famous Chief Red Cloud.370

Although Chiefs had no formal power in the tribe, they had great influence over some tribal members – especially among people living in the more conservative countryside, which supported the Chiefs.371 Fools Crow described the split between the Lakotas who supported him and those who didn’t in this manner:

Please notice that it is the traditional Teton Sioux who recognize me. There are many mixed-bloods, such as Dick Wilson, the former tribal chairman of the Pine Ridge Reservation, that does not. They think of me as an enemy. They do not support our traditional culture.372

The relationship between Chiefs and the IRA-organized Tribal Council varied depending on who was in power. If the tribal council was dominated by “mixed-bloods,” it generally ignored the opinions of the Chiefs. If it on the other hand was dominated by “full-bloods,” which was much more uncommon, the Chiefs could be consulted before decisions were made.373

When the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization invited AIM to the meeting leading up to the occupation of Wounded Knee, five traditional chiefs were present. It was Chiefs Fools Crow who gave green light to the takeover of Wounded Knee.374 Smith and Warrior write:

Fools Crow finally addressed the small group. “Go ahead and do it, go to Wounded Knee,” he said, adding that they would be protected there. “You can’t get in the BIA office and the tribal office, so take your brothers from the American Indian Movement and go to Wounded Knee and make your stand there.”375

Critique against elected tribal governments was not always done in reference to support of traditional chiefs. The editor of Wassaja, Rupert Costo, makes a distinction between a tribal government that serves the people and one that serves the BIA. In his editorial of the first published Wassaja newspaper, he writes that “if we were to define the one strategic need for our people, it would have to be self-determination.” When he defined what self-determination was, he stated that it referred to “the active use of Indian leadership, and the direct participation of the people [in decision making]. Indian leadership means decision by recognized Native authority.” This kind of Indian leadership was contrasted with the leaders which were handpicked and “under the thumb” of agency bureaucrats.376 In another editorial he argued that having elected tribal officials would not automatically lead to tribal sovereignty. It still had to be the people who decided on important matters:

Because they are elected chairmen of some of the tribes, does not entitle them to speak for the Indian, to make policy, to propose programs, or to make political alignments. To do these things, they would have to go back to their people, get their approval, and THEN speak for the position and the policy of their people.377

372 Mails, 1979, p.190.
373 Mails, 1979, p.199.
From what can be read in the newspapers, it seems that elected tribal governments generally cultivated a good relationship with the federal government and were critical of the radical Indian movement and its methods. There are several examples in the newspapers where tribal leaders criticized the militant Indian actions and emphasized cooperation with the federal government. Some were worried about how the relationship between tribal and federal governments would be affected by the political stir caused by the militant movement. The Hopi Tribal Council Chairman was quoted to have said: “We had just reached a point of confidence between the BIA and the Indian. And now look.”

Other tribal officials were reported to have taken drastic measures against Indian activists, even their fellow tribesmen. A Pawnee tribal committee was reported to have decided to confront a group of occupants of the BIA building in Washington D.C. upon their return and it was said that the occupants would not be allowed to live on Pawnee land.

Although in some cases there were divisions between an elected tribal government and the militants, not every tribal chairman condemned militant actions. The Chairman of the Kiowa tribe, Jack Anquoe, was reported to have said that he had first been critical towards the American Indian Movement but that his views had become increasingly militant. Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald also defended the militants. He was said to have stated that he supported the 20 demands of the “Trail of Broken Treaties” protesters and he was said to have criticized the members of the National Chairmen’s Association for pitting Indians against Indians. He mockingly referred to these chairmen as taking the position of “Please don’t take my rations. We’re good Indians,” in relationship to the federal government.

Tribes as Nations within

Indian tribes were also talked about and imagined as separate cultural and political entities within the U.S. state, what Deloria and Lytle call “Nations within.” The concept of “nation” could consequently take (at least) two different meanings: the meaning of state, both in references to the United States and Indian tribes, and as self-governing entities within the United States.

There are several examples in the newspapers where Indians referred to the United States as the nation, implicitly including themselves within this nation-state. One could, for instance, read in Wassaja that the young Indians

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382 Deloria, Jr. & Lytle 1984.
at Gallup, New Mexico, deserved nationwide support, and Gallup was des-
cribed as “probably the lowest income, most culturally-deprived city for the
Native American in the southwest, if not in the nation.”383 In another article,
Indian college students in South Dakota demanded that Indian reservations
as well as urban Indian communities were to be declared “national disaster
areas for the immediate release of federal funds.”384 In both these cases the
concept of nation was referring to the U.S. state in which Indians were in-
cluded.

It is not surprising to find the idea of domestic nationhood among Native
Americans. The idea of a completely independent statehood was probably
hard to imagine and seen as unrealistic by many Native Americans, and to
many of them it was not even preferred. Even AIM leaders could relate to
Indian tribes as part of the United States although the same group also de-
cclared war against the United States. While Russell Means talked about be-
ing at war with the U.S. and portraying it as foreign to the Oglala Sioux Na-
tion during the Wounded Knee siege, Dennis Banks portrayed Indians as
domestic to the United States when he stated that:

We have asked for medical personnel, but we haven’t got it. Even in war with
foreign countries, the U.S. would have sent in medical personnel if asked.
But not for Indians.385

The two different meanings of the concept of nation, as state and sub-state
political entity, could be used by the same person even in the same para-
graph. In a written reproduction of a TV interview with the Navajo Tribal
Chairman Peter MacDonald, he gave examples of both meanings of nation.
In his statement, he first referred to the Navajo tribe as a nation and then
continued to say that he traveled across the nation visiting other tribes. In the
latter case, it is obvious that it was the United States he was referring to.386

When imagining Indian tribes as domestic nations, the concept of sover-
eignty obviously also took another meaning than when applied to independ-
ent states. Sovereignty was rather seen as self-government than complete
independence, the kind of sovereignty that Wilkinson refers to.387 This mean-
ing is shown in the statement of Navajo Tribal Chairman, Peter MacDonald.
“The treaty said that we [the Navajos] would have a sovereign status as a
nation,” he stated.388 This could be interpreted that he was claiming complete
independence from the United States and thus equal standing with it. How-

ever, in the same article he also identified as a citizen of the United States. When the reporter asked him the question: “Is he [the Indian] in fact a citizen with all the rights of the citizen, and responsibilities?” he answered:

The Indian is a citizen. We received that citizenship in 1924. The Indians vote in national elections, state elections, county elections. So he is a citizen by every measure used to measure a citizen.389

The fact that MacDonald saw no problem in asserting tribal sovereignty, at the same time claiming to be “by every measure a [U.S.] citizen” indicates that he saw tribal sovereignty as something other than complete independence. It is further supported by his talk about Native nations within the nation of the United States mentioned above.

Vine Delora Jr, applied a similar meaning to sovereignty in an Akwesasne Notes article from 1973. Although he had argued that it was possible for Indian tribes to become independent states in his book Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties... he did not argue for a separation from the United States in Akwesasne Notes. He stated that the federal government needed to recognize that Indian tribes were “sovereign nations as guaranteed in hundreds of treaties,” however, that did not mean total tribal independence. Deloria did see a point in preserving Indian tribal relationship with the BIA. “If the Bureau were just done away with, as some of our white friends want, then Indians would be absolutely without protection,” he argued.390 The primary threat against Indians, as he described it in this article, was not the U.S. state but “white people.” This type of nationhood meant nationhood within the United States, and sovereignty seems to have taken the meaning of governing internal affairs.

This type of sovereign nationhood also seems be what the Pueblo Indians of Santo Domingo and San Filipe Pueblos meant when they stated: “We are a sovereign people whose rights are governed only by the higher sovereign – the United States.” However, they would also state: “We reject any attempt to subordinate our rights to the State of New Mexico.”391 They apparently accepted political subordination to the U.S. federal government but not the state government.

From these examples, we can imagine that a change in the meaning of concepts, which Cobb refers to, has taken place. When the concepts of sovereign nations were transferred from the international context and applied to Native American tribes, it could, as we have seen, retain its “original” meaning as used by Kickingbird et al.; however, it could also get a new meaning which better corresponds with Wilkinson’s definition of sovereignty as “a

government.” The editor apparently identified as part of the United States in the editorial of the *Wassaja*. It read: “We are not trying to reclaim our country, but we do want to redeem our dignity and have equal rights in our own country.” He did not intend to reclaim their country, i.e., take full sovereignty over lands which now were under U.S. jurisdiction. However, he wanted equal rights in what he called “our own country,” seemingly including Indian country within the United States.

**Asserting special rights**

Although many Native Americans apparently acknowledged that Indian tribes were part of the United States and subordinate to the federal government, it did not mean that they accepted assimilation into mainstream society. On the contrary, Native Americans saw themselves having a special standing in society with special rights not shared by other U.S. citizens. In an *Akwesasne Notes* article one could read that “Nothing could be more foolish, in the eyes of most Native American philosophers, than considering all men equal.” When asserting these special rights, they were often referring to legal documents and decisions connected to the U.S. legal system. In addition to treaties, they referred to court decisions and the U.S. Constitution. Consequently they argued from within the U.S. political and legal system.

**Rights through treaties**

When Indian tribes were described as domestic nations, treaties between the United States and Indian tribes were given a different meaning than when tribes were imagined as completely independent states. References to treaties were not made to show disassociation from the United States. The significance of treaties was instead that they confirmed the special relationship Indian tribes had with the United States and the special status and special rights that the treaties provided for Indians.

Scholars David E. Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima compare these reserved rights to federalism, something that is secured for states. Federalism is a system of an “overarching government,” in this case the U.S. federal government, sharing its governmental powers and sovereignty with “subnational or state governments.” States have this right to internal governance by the Constitution and the Tenth Amendment. Indian tribes, on the other hand, are not part of the federation but have their rights defined by international treaties. The relationship of Indian tribes to the federal government may be imagined by some Native Americans as very similar to that of states in that

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394 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.3.
they accepted subordination to the federal government but not to any “subnational” government. However, according to U.S. law, tribal status as a self-governing political entity is much less secure than that of states.

With a legal situation where the rights to self-government for Indian tribes rested on treaties, it is not difficult to understand why these international treaties were applied in a domestic setting. In this new context, treaties had to take on a different meaning. When Indian tribes were seen as domestic nations, U.S. treaties with Indian tribes were described as only similar to treaties with other nations, not the same. Such a distinction between foreign and Indian treaties was shown in the statements: “Indian treaties followed precisely the same course as did treaties with foreign nations” and that treaties between tribes and the U.S. had the “same authority, as treaties with foreign nations.” 396 In these examples, foreign nations were used in contrast with Indian nations, placing Indian tribes as part of the United States. 397

References to treaties were made in assertion of several different rights. In Wassaja, for example, one could read about two White Earth Chippewa Indians who were arrested for harvesting wild rice in public waters without a license. Although the area in question was located off-reservation, Chippewa rights to hunt, gather, and fish on these lands were protected by treaties. The arrest was therefore said to violate several different treaties between the U.S. and the Chippewas. References were also made to the special relationship that existed between the tribe and the federal government. The article stated that Minnesota’s attempt to take jurisdiction over Indian affairs “would deprive us of our unique relationship with the federal government, and it is this relationship that protects our treaty rights.” 398

The Klamath Indian tribe even claimed treaty rights although their status as an Indian tribe had been terminated. Although some Klamath Indians had sold their tribal rights according to the 1954 Klamath Termination Act, this did not mean that they had given up their rights to fish and hunt on lands which was guaranteed by an 1864 treaty, it was claimed in the newspaper. 399 Free medical and health aid, free education, as well as water rights and rights to hunt and fish were provided by the treaties due to Indians having given up large portions of lands to the United States, it was stated in another Wassaja article. 400 Treaties were consequently the foundation for Indian claim of special rights and crucial for their assertion of domestic nationhood.

Rights through court decisions

Native Americans also turned to the federal courts to protect their special rights. Court decisions became almost as important as the actual treaties in asserting special or reserved rights for Indians in the newspapers. Although it could be argued that filing suits in U.S. federal court may only be a pragmatic way of gaining rights, it nevertheless is an acceptance of federal jurisdiction over the matters decided upon. There are many examples of references to court cases in the newspapers. Crows and Cheyennes filed two suits in U.S. District Court to get a judgment which determined who owned water rights. The suit was based on treaties signed by the Crow tribe in 1825, 1851, and 1868, and an Executive order which established the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in 1884.\(^{401}\)

The Klamath Indians, who had asserted treaty rights although terminated, also referred to a Supreme Court case in which they had won against the State of Oregon. The Supreme Court had upheld their rights to hunt and fish in the Winema National Forest and the Klamath Forest National Wildlife Refuge without regard to state fishing and gaming regulations.\(^{402}\) When the U.S. District Judge Edward J. Devitt ruled in favor of the Leach Lake Chippewa Indians, upholding their treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather, against the state of Minnesota, *Akwesasne Notes* stated that “The Indians with the backing of the Federal Government” would have unrestricted hunting and fishing rights.\(^{403}\)

One court case that was of great importance to Native Americans was the Supreme Court decision of *Winters v. United States* in 1908. It involved the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. The reservation had been created in 1888 from a much larger land base which had previously been set aside for the tribes. The reservation boundary was placed in the middle of Milk River; however, rights to use of water were not mentioned. Non-Indian settlers built dams that diverted the flow of the river, which affected Indian availability to water.\(^{404}\)

The Superintendent of the reservation was worried that the Indians would starve without sufficient water and turned to the Justice Department for help. The Department responded immediately and petitioned federal court for an injunction against further diverting water from the Indians. U.S. water laws rested on two different doctrines. The eastern states of the U.S., which had quite a lot of water, adopted the English common law of riparian water rights. It meant that those with title to land along waterways also had right to


a “reasonable use” of the water. All riparian rights along waterways were collective in that no single owner could divert the flow of water, affect the quality of the water, or in any other way hurt other owners. Riparian rights were not lost by non-use of the water. Montana and other fairly dry states rejected the riparian doctrine because an equal share of water would mean that none of the users would get enough water for agricultural or industrial use. They developed a doctrine of prior appropriation. It gave rights to water through a strict hierarchy of chronological order in which users began to use the water source. The amount of water that can be used is decided by an approved “beneficial use” and can be lost if one does not use the water. Since there is a strict hierarchy of water rights, the ones last in line may get little or no water.405

The Supreme Court decided to rule in favor of the Native Americans, making references to both the intentions of the federal government when creating the reservation and to state water laws. The Supreme Court decided that since lands were reserved for farming and pastoral purposes through the creation of the reservation, it also implied that the Native Americans had water rights to be able to farm and raise cattle.406 The state system of “prior appropriation” also put Indian tribes in this hierarchical system of rights to water. The Supreme Court, however, decided that tribal rights were not to be based on the date they started to put water to beneficial use, for example when building irrigation systems, but when the reservation lands were set aside for them by treaty, agreement, statute, or executive order.407

Water rights were, of course, extremely important for Native Americans; the Winters Doctrine was described by Iverson as marking “a fundamental turning point in the national Native struggle to remain on their land.”408 The Winters Doctrine and its references to the doctrine of prior appropriation were referred to several times in the newspapers. Wassaja, for instance, reported that if the court decision of U.S. v. Akin which concerned Southern Ute and Ute Mountain tribe, would be appealed. The water rights of all Indians would be in jeopardy and their “’prior and paramount rights’ to their waters, as decided in the Winters Doctrine case, would be seriously damaged.”409 The Wind River Shoshoni tribe claimed “first, paramount, and immemorial rights to all waters on, passing through, or bordering on the Reservation.”410

408 Iverson 1998, p.41.  
Rights through the U.S. Constitution and federal trust responsibilities

Deloria and Lytle write that the U.S. Congress derives its legal powers over Indian tribes through two different sources, the Commerce Clause of the Constitution and from the “guardianship” or “trust” theory. Both were referred to in the newspapers when Indians tried to assert special status and rights.

The Commerce Clause of the Constitution regulates commerce with Indians. It is the only time that the Constitution mentions Indians. The first act was the Non-Intercourse Act of 1790 which was created to protect Indians against unscrupulous white traders. The act made it a crime to purchase land from Indians without the consent of the federal government. This was used by the Native Americans in the newspapers to argue against State interference. In Akwesasne Notes, one could read that it was the United States Congress that had the exclusive right to trade and manage all affairs with the Indians, and in Wassaja the Hoopa tribe argued that they were not subject to county and state taxes by making references to the U.S. Constitution. Hoopa stated that it was only the federal government that had the right to “regulate the Indian’s business” since according to the U.S. Constitution only “the U.S. Congress has powers to enact statutes regulating trade with Indians.” Reference was also made to the Constitution when the “Committee for New Indian Politics” was defining Indian relationship to the federal government. They stated that their goals were to “reinstate a system of bilateral relationships between Indian tribes and the Federal and state governments.” This did not mean that the tribes were to be independent states, but should rather be interpreted as a way to secure independence from the States. They were quoted to have said:

We seek simply to develop a state of independence for Indian people by July 4, 1976. There is no need to declare independent states or nations to secure this. There is primary need to restore the fundamental relationship between the American government and the Indian people as provided in formulation of the Constitution of the United States.

The U.S. Constitution could also be used to argue against federal involvement in tribal affairs but without referring to tribal sovereignty. The Potawatomi tribal government was reported to have been suspended by BIA because it would not go along with what the BIA dictated, according to the newspaper. A long story described the different twists and turns in the conflict between the Potawatomis and the BIA, where the BIA eventually re-

fused to release tribal funds. BIA officials and Interior officials also stated that the Potawatomis were not organized under a real IRA constitution and therefore the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had legal power over them, according to the newspaper. In 1972, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent a message to the Superintendent where he announced that he was going to suspend the constitution of the Potawatomis and withdraw recognition from the committee. Potawatomi tribal Chairman Jessepe responded:

We believe your attempt to suspend our constitution unilaterally, based upon the false statements without consulting of our people, represent a violation of our rights to due process under the U.S. Constitution.416

The federal government was also ascribed a protector role in some newspaper articles. There were several complaints in the newspapers that the federal government did not live up to its obligations of being a protector of the tribes.417 In Wassaja, one can read about how “the disastrous failure of the United States as trustee of the Indians, has eroded Indian ownership of land, and Indian availability of water” among the Oklahoma Indians.418 And in a “Position Paper” provided by Americans for Indian Opportunity, also published in Wassaja, the U.S. was asked to “reconfirm to us, in unequivocal terms, its obligation to safeguard our interests in our resources.”419 The trust responsibility of the federal government could also be related to treaties and what the Indians had given up through those. As was stated in Wassaja:

We gave up land to the United States government through many treaties. In payment for this land, the United States has obligated itself to perform certain duties. These duties involve the protection of our property and assets, our national resources and our rights. […] The charges are that the United States has failed to perform its duties as a trustee.420

There are several other examples in the newspapers where Indians referred to the federal government or the U.S. as trustee, guardian, or protector.421 The protector role of the federal government was obviously very important for many Native Americans in the early 1970s.

How the idea of the federal government’s trust relationship with Native Americans relates to U.S. law is not entirely clear. Wilkins and Lomawaima have discussed the issue in their book Uneven Ground, American Indian
Sovereignty and Federal Law. They write that legal literature refers to a trust relationship, but scholars do not agree upon where this idea originated and its legal bearing in U.S. law. A majority of scholars and federal policy makers share the idea that the trust relationship is an old legal doctrine concerning the relationship between the U.S. government and the tribes. One interpretation is that when the Europeans discovered America, they took upon themselves to protect Indians tribes from other Christian nations. The discovery brought with it the responsibility to protect the natives. Others connect the trust obligations of the federal government to the court cases of the Marshall Trilogy. Supreme Court Justice Marshall did not explicitly use the word “trust” but he expressed the idea that the United States was obligated to protect the Indians. In *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), he stated that no land could be bought directly from the Indians without the consent of the federal government, indicating a goal to protect Indians from being cheated out of their lands. And in *Cherokee v. Georgia* (1831), the Cherokee Indians were described as “domestic dependent nations.” This relationship between the federal government and the tribes was described as resembling that of “a ward to his guardian.” These wordings have been interpreted as the origin of the doctrine of federal trusteeship. There are some scholars who trace the doctrine to the 1975–77 American Indian Policy Review Commission. They argue that it may not even be a legal principle except in those cases where treaties explicitly state this obligation on the part of the federal government. In their view, a distinction has to be made between the trusteeship expressed in specific treaties and a general trustee extended to all Indians which could be traced back to the American Indian Policy Review Commission in the late 1970s (i.e., after my research period). Deloria and Lytle write that courts have decided that Congress has a “guardianship” function towards the Indians. In the Supreme Court decision from 1886, Justice Samuel F. Miller referred to the idea that Indian tribes were wards of the United States since they were dependent on the government for food, protection, and political rights. Regardless of its origin or legal standing, the idea that the federal government of the United States had obligations to protect Indian tribes was definitely present in the newspapers of the early 1970s. The idea, at least, did not originate in the American Indian Policy Review Commission, but was widely spread among Native Americans earlier.

The special relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government which was created and upheld through treaties, court cases, the Constitution and congressional acts, was carefully guarded by the Native Americans. According to one *Wassaja* article, this special relationship had recently come under massive attack. Indians were looked upon as being the same as other citizens, and Indians were not ordinary citizens. “This is rank injustice and

attacks the very heart of Indian life,” the article stated. It was important that Indian rights would not be mixed with federal rights. *Wassaja* criticized a statement made by the Attorney General of the United States who claimed that the title to Indian reservations, together with the right to their water and fishing, “reside in the United States as federal rights.” The newspaper, however, argued that these rights were not federal but tribal. It also claimed that Indian rights were something totally different from the rights of other American citizens. It was wrong to join the interests of the United States with that of the Indians since “the Indians have a different title; they have a title of perpetuity, a prior title.” Another issue of the same paper also reported that “a tremendous surge of anger swept across Indian country” due to a resolution that was passed at the annual convention of the National Wildlife Federation. The resolution had called for the U.S. government “to give Indians the same rights and privileges as all other citizens, but no more.”

Indian tribes could also claim legal right by referring to a treaty or agreement’s lack of legal standing in the United States. They could claim to be rightful owners of land by challenging a treaty’s validity. One example concerned the Pit River Indians’ ownership of timberland. U.S. Forest Service had sold timber cutting rights in an area which the Pit River Indian tribe claimed. The area was claimed on the basis that although there had been a treaty between the tribe and the United States where the U.S. intended to buy the land from the Pit River Indians, Congress never ratified the treaty. Another example concerned the small band of Canadian Maliseet Indians. They tried to retrieve 12,500 acres of land which they claimed had been illegally taken from them. In 1890, the New Brunswick government had passed an “order-in-council” to purchase the land for 120 immigrant families, however, the Indians had found that the federal governor-in-council never accepted the proposal. The Maliseet Indians consequently based their claim to land on the fact that the treaty was illegal according to Canadian law.

Native Americans used a great variety of different ways to assert rights in the newspapers. The El’em branch of the Pomo tribe, for instance, referred to their religion in their claim to Rattlesnake Island in California; however, it was not related to civil rights but to their historical and ancestral rights to the land. The Pomo Indians had occupied the island in 1970 and they claimed it was an ancestral burial site for the POMOS. The island was also claimed by the Boise Cascade Corporation which saw the Pomo as trespassers. The Coeur d’Alene Indian tribe was also in legal dispute over land with a corporation. They sought a court intervention of the Federal Power Commission.

against the Washington Water Company on grounds that the land had been illegally transferred to the company. They argued that the case was “based upon the rights and occupancy of the sovereign tribe, whether explicitly written into treaties and agreements with the U.S. or not...”430 They claimed rights to land on the basis of first occupancy and not on treaty rights.

Sometimes, Native Americans used several types of argument when arguing for the same cause, and in those cases there are no clear identifications as either part of or not part of the United States. The Shoshones, for instance, described the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Mountain as “a friendship treaty allowing the U.S. to use Indian land for railroads, rights of way, grazing and other development.” This indicates that they saw the treaty as an agreement between two separate nations. However, then they went on to talk about themselves as the “original owners” of that land. They were not trying to get land back from private owners but only from public land, which indicates that it was ownership, not jurisdiction over the land they were after. Finally, they also cited the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and court decisions to show that land title “can be passed to the U.S. only upon compensation to the owners.431 Another example of different ways of arguing for Indian rights was the situation describing the Quechan Indians. A group of Quechans, led by the president of the Quechan Tribal Council, claimed that they had unlawfully lost their lands by genocide. Their right to the land was based on an 1883 reservation agreement between the government and the Quechans; however, the Indians argued that this agreement was completed after representatives from the government agencies had been beating and murdering Quechans to get them to sign. The Department of the Interior was also accused of failing to carry out their trust responsibilities towards the Indians. In addition to their claim that the creation of the reservation was made through illegal means, they also asserted rights to land on religious basis. They claimed that the Andrade land was sacred to them since their ancestors had lived there and they referred to the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the freedom to exercise one’s own religion.432

Native Americans obviously used many different means to assert tribal rights and often it was done by going through the U.S. legal system and by referring to U.S. law. Much of the political struggle of the early 1970s was not to achieve tribal independence but to achieve and preserve tribal rights within the United States. This means that many of the Indians of this time obviously identified as part of the United States.

The federal government and tribal affairs

Intra-tribal disputes

The federal government’s role as protector was not only referred to when Native Americans sought protections against States or corporations; they sometimes also sought protection against their own tribal government. The fact that Indians turned to the federal government and relied on the U.S. judicial system to solve intra-tribal conflict shows that they acknowledged federal jurisdiction over such matters. Federal intervention was, for instance, sought against the San Carlos Apache administration’s management of the tribe. Members of the tribe accused the tribal administration of being involved in embezzlement and they were asking “all Indians” to help them promote a Federal Grand Jury inquiry of the violations of both U.S. and tribal laws. The San Carlos tribal constitution was cited which referred to U.S. law:

...it is provided that the internal affairs of the San Carlos Tribe shall be managed “insofar as such management does not conflict with the laws of the U.S. by a governing body which shall be known as the San Carlos Council.”

Another example came from the Kaw tribe. Sixteen full-blood Kaws were said to have filed a lawsuit in federal court against the Kaw Business Council. Four of the members had been removed by the federal judge in Oklahoma City and a new election was ordered to be held in 60 days. The lawsuit challenged the council as being an illegal governing body since the members lacked sufficient Indian blood and used their position for financial gain.

Native Americans also referred to congressional powers to regulate internal affairs. When Creek Nation Principal Chief Claude Cox appointed council members on the basis of the three counties in which the Creek lived, instead of on the basis of their towns, Chairman of the Full Blood Creek Association Philip Deer protested. He argued that it was illegal for Cox to change the voting procedures and “congress must make any provisions for a tribal government.” The U.S. Constitution was also used to argue against a tribal court decision at Pine Ridge which banned Russell Means from attending meetings and religious events on the reservation. Means argued that it was “a clear violation of the First, Fifth, and all kinds of other amendments to the Constitution of the United States.”

In these cases the federal government and its courts were obviously seen as having rights and powers to intervene in internal tribal affairs. Even AIM leader Russell Means, who had proclaimed Oglala Lakotas an independent state, foreign to the United States, turned around and wanted federal intervention on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Interestingly enough it was the federal government that argued that they could not intervene due to the sovereign status of the tribe.

This was also the case in another example where a group of Hopi traditionalists had filed a suit in federal court against the federally recognized tribal council, charging that the council was acting illegally and had not been formed with the approval of the Hopi people. The 9th U.S. Court of Appeals rejected the petition on the grounds that “Arizona’s Hopi Indian tribe is a quasi-sovereign nation and cannot be sued in U.S. courts.” The tribe could only be sued with its own consent or by the consent of Congress. Akwesasne Notes also reported that the U.S. Attorney refused to intervene, claiming that they could not interfere with internal tribal matters of the tribe.

The most written about situation in which the federal government was expected to interfere in internal tribal affairs, and was criticized for not doing so, was against the tribal government at the Pine Ridge Reservation. The conflict between different groups on the reservation was severe and it became even worse in the years following the Wounded Knee occupation. The situation at Pine Ridge was described as a war between traditionalists and the “progressives,” and the newspapers reported about several suits which had been filed in federal court against Tribal Chairman Richard Wilson. One suit was filed by Oglala Civil Rights Organization et al. in an attempt to stop the harassment and assaults performed by Wilson’s “goon squad.” They requested temporary restraining orders against Wilson, other tribal officials, and goon squad members. Another suit concerned the exclusion of non-tribal members from the reservation. Journalists, lawyers, and even legal workers who had been authorized by the federal court to serve papers to the tribal administration were hindered from entering the reservation. Four Oglala Sioux women were also suing the Wilson administration for being wrongfully terminated from their jobs due to their political beliefs. In all these cases the federal government was obviously seen as proceeding over Indian judicial matters on a level above trial courts.

Russell Means, together with a group of other Oglala Sioux, also filed a civil suit in the Federal District Court of South Dakota to try to overturn the tribal election of 1974. Means had run against Wilson in the tribal election and had lost. Now he and his supporters accused Wilson of vote buying and

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438 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.17.
441 Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.1, p.3.
fraud,442 and turned to federal court to overthrow the tribal election result and force a re-election.

There were even more serious accusations against Wilson’s administration than election fraud, however. Many people were murdered on the reservation and no one seemed to care about it. One could read in Akwesasne Notes:

Last year, there were 23 murders on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In 1975 that figure leaped to a “murder a week.” In March it jumped to two a week. […] In the aftermath of these deaths, no one has been charged with the killings of AIM members. Traditional people have had to flee to Denver and other urban areas for safety.443

The federal government was not only turned to for help to get rid of Wilson and his administration; it was also accused of cooperating with, supporting or at least enabling the Wilson administration. While some of the newspaper articles saw the federal government’s lack of interference as a sign of neglect of their role as a protector, other articles saw it as a sign of cooperation with Wilson. The Department of the Interior was said to have the power to suspend Wilson’s government. “The tribal council can maintain its power only with the support of the U.S. Government,” it was stated in Akwesasne Notes.444 Another issue of the same paper talked about a “conspiracy” of the federal government to keep Wilson in power,445 and another stated that the U.S. supported a corrupt regime.446 It was also pointed out that the federal government asserted that they did not have evidence to do anything to stop the oppression on Pine Ridge, but when two FBI agents were killed, “the reservation was flooded with agents.”447 The federal government could stop killings and harassments if it wanted to, it was stated in the newspaper, and now it demanded that it would:

They [the Oglala people] are demanding that the oppressive tribal council be suspended by the Department of the Interior. It does have the power to do so – and it certainly has the power to refuse to condone vigilante action, to arm goons, to use its police to back dictators.448

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442 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.430.
446 Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.1, p.29.
The federal government’s failure to protect the Indians against their tribal leaders or even supporting a corrupt tribal government was discussed in several other articles in the newspapers.\footnote{Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.6, p.31; Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.2, p.10; Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.2, p.20; Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.8, p.3.}

The situation on the Pine Ridge Reservation was extreme, and it is not difficult to understand that Oglala Lakota tribal members tried all means possible to stop the killings and harassments they were victims of. However, as I have shown, this was not the only example where tribal members turned to the federal government for protection against mismanagement by their own tribal governments, and that shows that they acknowledged federal jurisdiction over such matters. Consequently they placed themselves within the U.S. legal system and were not portraying tribes as separate and independent nation-states.

\textbf{Inter-tribal disputes}

In the case of inter-tribal disputes, the federal government was not referred to as a protector. On the contrary, it was largely blamed for the problems. However, no references were made to tribal sovereignty and the means used to solve the conflicts were often through the U.S. federal court system. This shows an acknowledgement of federal jurisdiction over the matter.

Two particular conflicts were described in the newspapers which concerned different Indian tribes. Both conflicts were said to have been caused by the U.S. government. The first concerned the conflict between Hupa (Hoopa) and Yurok in Northern California. Both \textit{Wassaja} and \textit{Akwesasne Notes} described the background to the conflict. President Abraham Lincoln had decided in 1864 that there could be only four Indian reservations in California and therefore several tribes had to share the same reservation. Yurok lived to the north of Hupa and to join their two territories with each other and create a single reservation, and an additional land strip was added. It became known as “the Addition.” The two tribes continued to live separately with their own religions and languages as two separate nations. However, in the court decision of \textit{Jesse Short et.al. v. The United States}, it was ruled that Hupa and Yurok was one tribe and had equal share in all resources.\footnote{Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.6, p.33; Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.1, p.4.}

Hupas were not happy about the decision. They were afraid that the Yurok, which had a larger population than the Hupa, would sell land that Hupa not only considered to be only theirs but which were ceremonial and religious lands.\footnote{Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.1, p.4.} The conflict also had economic aspects since the Yurok was seeking a share in Hupa lumber revenues. While the Yurok claimed that the lumber was held in trust for all Indians living on the joint reservation,
Hupa claimed that Yurok had sold their lands and had no claim to any revenues from the reservation lands.\(^452\) The conflict was taken to U.S. Supreme Court in an effort to solve the issue.\(^453\) It was described in *Wassaja* as the fault of the U.S. government since they had forced the two tribes to settle on a joint reservation:

> The entire issue has its beginnings in the confusing and frustrating condition caused by the U.S. Government, which first took Indian land unilaterally, then hustled a mixture of tribes onto one reservation without regard for original occupancy, cultures, or traditions, and further complicated the situation by failing to clarify its decisions, the rights of tribal entities, or even boundaries of the land they were allowed to live on.\(^454\)

The other conflict between two different Indian tribes which was described in the newspapers also involved land. The conflict had been going on for over 40 years and it was blamed on both the U.S. government and white people in the newspapers.\(^455\) The background to the conflict was that in 1934, the federal government had awarded the Navajos 1.8 million acres of Hopi land, land which was attached to the Navajo reservation and causing the Hopi reservation to be completely enclosed. In 1962, the Supreme Court decided that this land was jointly owned by the Hopis and Navajos; however, the Hopis claimed that they were not able to use their half of the land. The conflict continued, and different federal legislations had tried to solve the problem by offering the Hopis payments for the land and by suggesting the removal of all Navajos from half of the area. In 1972, Hopi Tribal Chairman Clarence Hamilton filed a motion in U.S. District Court to have Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald, cited for contempt of Court because he refused the court order to reduce Navajo livestock in the area. The two tribes could not agree on a solution of the problem.\(^456\)

However, there are also examples in the newspapers where Indians involved in the conflict did not want the federal government to solve the problem. Hundreds of Navajo and Hopi traditionalists united to take legal action to stop U.S. negotiations for a settlement of the dispute over the Joint Use Area land. In Public Law 93-531, also known as the Owen Bill of 1974, it was stated that if the federal mediators did not find a solution within a six-months period, the U.S. District Court in Arizona would “partition the land, considering social and economic impact, and access to religious areas.” The traditionalist Indians, however, insisted that the dispute would be handled by “the grassroots people” who were living within the disputed area and they


\(^{456}\) *Wassaja* 1973, vol.1, no.6, p.23.
would utilize traditional practices as a guideline. Several Hopis spoke to a group of 600 Navajos in Tuba City and told them that they wanted to work together with the Navajos. One of the speakers said:

I am over 50 years old and I have never known, up until now, of any wars between the Navajo and Hopi people. The Navajo people around my place, they bring me wool, they bring me mutton, and in return, I trade them corn and other things. We all need each other. [...] It is this white man who wants to get hold of our land. They are the ones causing this conflict that is being fought like they say we shouldn’t do. There is no reason whatsoever why we have to divide this land again because there are so many intermarriages, and I cannot see why we have to draw a line.

References to “white interests” were also made in another issue of *Akwesasne Notes* where traditional religious Hopi leaders were blaming “a white stockman” for causing conflict between the two tribes over the joint area by him having “impounded horses without first informing the owners.” In another issue of the same paper, one could also read that the “the dispute isn’t an Indian dispute – it’s a white man’s dispute.”

Apparently there existed different views on how the joint land issue should be solved. Some wanted it to be solved by help of the federal court system and others wanted to solve it themselves without federal interference. Some even thought that the situation should be left alone.

When Native Americans turned to federal court to make decisions about which tribe was to have what they apparently acknowledged the federal government’s judicial powers, They were accepting federal jurisdiction over these matters and consequently placing themselves as part of the U.S. Those situations where Native Americans stated that tribes should solve their own problems without federal interference are more difficult to interpret in terms of Indian identification in relationship to the United States. It might show disassociation from the United States but not necessarily so. It could be that they acknowledged the rights of federal courts to decide in such matters but not finding it to be the most appropriate in the current situation.

**Tribal jurisdiction**

Native American rights to their own tribal governments were surely the most important special right that Indians had. This special right was discussed in *Wassaja*, which stated that tribal governance included the right to “make

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458 *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.7, no.2, p.33. The closeness between the Navajos and Hopis was also emphasized in another article where a Hopi described Navajos as “my people.”
460 *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.6, p.18.
laws under certain conditions, and to enforce such laws.” Indian government-
tal rights were also described as the “freedom from restraints practiced on
state and federal governments under the U.S. Constitution.”

There are plenty of examples in the newspapers of Indians asserting the
right to govern their own tribal affairs without direct reference to tribal sov-
eignty and separate statehood but rather discussing those rights in terms of
jurisdiction. The assertion of tribal jurisdiction was generally made in rela-
tionship to the states.

Tribal jurisdiction was claimed in relationship to several different issues.
Navajos, for instance, were opposing the state of Arizona issuing of hunting
and fishing licenses on the Navajo reservation. The newspaper argued that
states had no jurisdiction over the federally supervised reservation. New
Mexico was set forward as a good example since it recognized tribal rights
to collect its own license fees.462 Wassaja also reported that Navajos required
permits for non-members to visit the reservation. The permits could be ob-
tained through the Commerce Department; they were not introduced with
reference to tribal sovereignty but due to the damage that was caused to arti-
fact and ruins by non-Indians.463

The tribal government of the Chippewa Indian tribe at the Lac Courte
Oreilles Reservation was reported to have forbidden fishing, hunting, trap-
ping, and gathering of wild rice on the reservation by non-Indians. The tribal
chairman was quoted to have said that this decision should be honored since
“when a person posts his property, he should not have to stand next to it with
a shotgun.”464 Here reference was made to property ownership rather than to
tribal sovereignty, in asserting control over the resources of the land.

The Quinault tribe also took steps to control tribal lands. It decided to im-
pose high fines and jail time upon trespassers on their land. The tribal judge
said that since the government refused to prosecute trespassers on reserva-
tion beaches, the tribe had to take the matters into their own hands and de-
cided to “extend [their] jurisdiction to all persons who set foot on reservation
lands,” not to assert tribal sovereignty but due to the federal government’s
lack of performing its duties. 465

Tribal taxing rights and Indian rights to be exempt from state taxes were
also commonly discussed in the newspapers. The Navajo Indian Nation was
reported to have initiated a study of the possibility of taxation on the reserva-
tion. They passed a resolution that would create a tax commission which
would formulate a comprehensive taxing system for the Navajo tribe. Pro-

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463 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.4, p.16.

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posals were expected to be drafted on property taxes, taxes on salaries and wages, Wassaja reported.466

Two suits were filed in Billings, Montana against the state levying taxes on Indians who worked outside the reservation. They criticized the state from withholding salaries of the Native Americans.467 Indians in Nova Scotia were reported to be optimistic about winning a dispute over taxes with the provincial tax commissioner. They had refused to pay sales tax and provincial taxes. The commissioner had sent them demand notice for the tax and threatened to send the police after them if they did not comply.468 The issue of tax jurisdiction was also discussed in many other articles.469

A suit was also filed in Sioux Falls Federal Court where Diana Kiyuka Stone Heart claimed that the Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff of Lake Andes had committed false imprisonment, humiliation, and assault against her. She was arrested on her own property and claimed that they had no right to arrest her there because they did not have jurisdiction over Indian-owned land.470

The Paiutes were also protesting against the Bureau of Indian Affairs letting Sheriff’s deputy and highway patrol officers exercise police powers on the Walker Indian Reservation. Tribal councilman Walt Voorhees argued that it was the tribal law that governed the reservation, stating that “the big law, the top law, the main law is that nobody can come on the reservation without the approval of the tribal council.”471

The question of Indian jurisdiction could be problematic when they claimed land which was inhabited by non-Indians. Akwesasne Notes reported that a court decision which defined the boundaries of the Fort Berthold Reservation ruled that the Homestead Act of 1910 did not diminish the reservation and thereby restored 360,000 acres of farmland to the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikaras. The newspaper stated that “the ruling had no effect on property rights of landowners – just the political jurisdiction changed.” This meant that several white farmers and residents of New Town and three small communities became residents of the reservation. This worried these non-Indians, and the newspaper reported that “A delegation of businessmen has already gone to Washington to ask Congress to take the land out from the reservation by redefining the Indian boundaries.”472 The court decision resulted in cooperation between the different police forces, Akwesasne Notes described the situation:

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466 Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.4, p.11.
467 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.6, p.11.
Instead of having no law, New Town is currently under double law. Reservation and BIA police have jurisdiction in New Town only for Indians, and New Town police have jurisdiction on the reservation only for whites. […]

In February, tribal and BIA police entered into a temporary cross-deputization program with the New Town police whereby white police can arrest an Indian anywhere on the reservation for breaking tribal laws and hold him in the New Town jail until tribal police pick him up and take him to Mandaree, 32 miles away. It also means tribal and BIA police can arrest a white for violation of state or village laws and hold him for New Town police.473

A similar jurisdictional issue concerning Indian jurisdiction over predominantly non-Indian inhabitants was reported from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian community. An attorney was said to have discovered that the tribe may own land which was part of the city of Scottsdale, Arizona. The disputed area included three mobile home parks, a shopping center, a commercial cemetery, a large condominium apartment building, approximately 1000 single family homes, and a government division plant.474 The Indian struggle to govern their own lands included claiming both the right to decide who could use the land and the right to collect taxes. It is not always obvious how they identified in relationship to the United States but in most cases they did not directly refer to tribal sovereignty. The important thing seems to have been tribal protection against state intrusion, not federal interference. They even turned to federal courts to solve disputes with the states, which shows that they accepted federal involvement in tribal affairs.

Indians as U.S. Citizens

Citizenship and civil rights

By U.S. law, Indians were citizens of the United States; however, direct references to American citizenship were quite uncommon in the newspapers. When references were made to citizenship, it was not always obvious what they meant. One could, for instance, read in Akwesasne Notes that Indians were the “first citizens of the land” and therefore had special rights through treaties.475 The expression “first citizens” was also used in the Wassaja paper.476 What this concept meant is unclear; first citizens of what? It may have meant first inhabitants of the continent, perhaps a synonym to the expression

“First Nations” commonly used in Canada today. Less difficult to interpret are the Indians’ descriptions of themselves as “second class citizens.” When a non-Indian claimed that it was “advocating segregation” to have special laws for Indians allowing them the right to hunt, fish, trap, and take wild rice without state licenses, one could read the following reply in Akwesasne Notes:

In reply, Indians say there have always been two laws in the area – one for Indians, and one for whites. As for citizenship, Indians believe they have always been second-class citizens, hampered by prejudicial attitudes.477

An anonymous writer in Wassaja’s “Voice of the Indian” was also portraying Indians as second-class citizens, writing that “We Indians are looked down on; we have tried to live like white men, giving up our heritage and yet we are still looked down on.”478 Indians were also referred to as “citizens” together with other citizens of the United States.479

When Indians were related to as U.S. citizens, it was usually done indirectly and in comparison with other Americans. Akwesasne Notes, for instance, reported that Oglala Sioux died “of cirrhosis in the liver 3.2 times more often than other citizens.”480 Referring to health studies, both Wassaja and Akwesasne Notes reported that Indians were running a much greater risk of getting diseases like dysentery and tuberculosis and of dying prematurely compared to other Americans.481 Indians were also compared to other Americans in reference to “the national average” and “other minorities.”482

The issue of Indians serving in the military was also discussed in articles where Indians were described as U.S. citizens. A Wassaja article stated that “Indians serve in the Armed Forces under the same laws as any other citizen. In all wars, Indians have served this country with great loyalty and valor.”483 Other than this example, there were few expressions of American patriotism in the newspapers of the early 1970s. Although serving “this country” does not necessarily mean allegiance to the U.S., the part referring to Indians as citizens of the U.S. may point in that direction.

Although Native Americans seldom directly claimed U.S. citizenship in the newspapers they did so indirectly by claiming civil rights. Civil rights violations were discussed numerous times in the newspapers. Some dealt with civil rights investigations made by the federal government, and some were direct demands of civil rights for Indian peoples. Wassaja reported about a public hearing that was held at the Navajo Civic Center by the U.S.

481 Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.9, p.2; Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.28.
Commission on Civil Rights. The hearing was said to be conducted to gather information about “possible or alleged denials of legal protection under the Constitution based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin affecting areas of education, health and welfare services, employment and economic opportunities of Navajo people in the tri-state area.”

_Akwesasne Notes_ also reported that the Devils Lake Sioux Tribe was in the process of organizing a Civil Rights Grievance Commission to improve relations between people on and nearby the reservation. The commission was to be made up of both Indians and non-Indians in equal numbers. The idea was to be able to solve problems by compromise and avoid taking legal action.

Several civil rights suits were described in the newspapers. One lawsuit was directed at the Claremore Indian hospital personnel for malpractice and civil rights violations against Indians after many complaints had been directed towards the hospital by Indian staff members and patients. A lawsuit was also brought to federal court to protect voting rights of American Indians. The background to the case was that a Navajo man, who had been elected Court Supervisor in an Arizona county, was barred from taking his seat in the supervisory board because he was Navajo and did not pay county taxes. The Justice Department claimed in its suit that “the county was apportioned too heavily in favor of non-Indian voters,” which was a violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Prior to the Voting Rights Act being passed by Congress, several U.S. states applied voting regulations that in different ways hindered Native Americans from voting. Like Arizona, the states of Idaho, Maine, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Washington argued that Indians could not vote since their trust lands were not taxed. Arizona also argued that Native Americans residing on reservations did not have voting rights since they were people “under guardianship.” The state of Utah classified Indians residing on reservations as not technically state residents, and several different states used literacy tests that stopped many Indians from being able to vote.

A civil rights hearing was also requested for the investigation of all the deaths of Navajo Indians that had occurred in the town of Farmington, New Mexico. No proper investigations were made and little action was taken to stop the killings and punish the perpetrators. _Akwesasne Notes_ also reported about a lawsuit that was filed in U.S. District Court against the U.S. Government concerning a wrongful death of an Indian in Rosebud BIA jail, in

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488 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.405.
South Dakota. Navajo students and employees were also reported to have filed a lawsuit in federal court against a school for harassment of Indians by white officials. There were several other examples of references to Indian civil rights in the newspapers.

Interestingly enough, civil rights were also brought up in relationship to the post-Wounded Knee trials. The two defense attorneys of the AIM leaders on trial were said to “believe that these trials will constitute a major civil rights case for Indians”; however, they continued to say that “The defense will be based upon the 1868 Sioux treaty which granted them lands, since taken illegally by the government.” The defense argued on the strength of both the treaty rights based on an international relationship with the United States and on the civil rights based on U.S. citizenship. Civil rights were also referred to in the complaints that challenged the legality of the chairman’s election at Pine Ridge Reservation in 1974. The complaint stated that Wilson was denying the Oglala people the right to free election “contrary to their due process and equal protection rights under the Indian Civil Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1871.” Even Russell Means was turning to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department asking them to conduct an investigation of the Pine Ridge tribal chairman election. Means had lost the controversial election with 1530 to 1730 votes. Wilson, however, was arguing that the federal courts did not have jurisdiction over tribal elections, only his own appointed election board. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights did eventually investigate the election and confirmed that the election had not been conducted properly. U.S. District Court Judge Andrew Bogue, however, ruled that the federal government had no jurisdiction over the matter, and by the time his decision was overruled in an Appeals Court, the next election was so close that the suit was useless, *Akwesasne Notes* wrote.

Indian religions rights were also argued in terms of civil rights. Part of civil rights was the right to worship according to your own religion, and the use of eagle feathers was part of Indian religion. During this period of time there was a great controversy over the illegal trade in eagle feathers. The federal government was said to raid Indian homes looking for “family heirlooms, dance costumes and feathers used in sacred ceremonies of Indian tribes.” The confiscations of eagle feathers were interpreted as a deliberate

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491 *Akwesasne Notes* 1971, vol.3, no.6, p.29.
494 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.2, p.16.
attack on Indian culture. Lee Motah, the Comanche Tribal Chairman, was quoted to have said that “The government took our land, everything we have, and now they have come into our ceremonial ways,” and Jerry Wilkinson, the director of the National Indian Youth Council, wrote in Wassaja that the act of the government was not to protect the birds but to persecute the Indians and their religion. The constitutional right of religious freedom was not protected for Indians, it was stated in Wassaja. In an article called “Attack on Indian Religion,” the writer made connections with the right to perform their religious rituals involving the eagle feathers and the service of Indians for their country in war. He clearly identified as being “inside” the United States.

Many of the tribes will soon be observing National Armed Forces Day, along with other people in the United States. This observance is to honor and renew the dedication of our loyalty, and the safeguarding of our country.

The Indian people who had gone out and fought in wars were said to have done this to protect certain freedoms, which included culture identity and economic stability; however, the most important was “the preservation of the basic foundations of the religious life of all people, all races and all nationalities.” The idea of American citizenship was then associated with the right and protections of certain values.

Although many Indians obviously struggled for civil rights, there were others who rejected them. Civil rights could be a problem when applied to an Indian community, if they caused Indians to turn away from their culture. For example, two Santa Clara Pueblo women had sued Pueblo officials on civil rights violations when they were not accepted as Pueblo members. It was explained that they had married outside the Pueblo and the tribal customs said that they thereby joined their husbands’ peoples. Representatives from 14 out of 19 Pueblos in the Southwest were also said to have protested against the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968. It was said that it “limits the powers of the tribal courts, and restricts the operation of tribal sovereignty.” Tribal membership, for instance, could be decided in federal courts instead of by the tribes. The Pueblo Indian tribal government apparently found that civil rights and tribal sovereignty could be mutually exclusive.

As I have shown, references to civil rights could be intertwined with other rights of the Indians. Although the right to fish for the most part was asserted

in terms of treaty rights or special Indian rights, there is also an example where tribal fishing rights were brought up in terms of civil rights. Akwesasne Notes wrote about Indians being arrested for pursuing the right to fish. “What use are civil rights to the Indians here?” the newspaper questioned and went on to state that the Cheyenne people did not give the tribal council the authority to sign leases yet they were legal under American law. “What consolation are civil rights to the people of the Northern Cheyenne Nation?” the paper asked. Even the rejection of U.S. citizenship and separate and independent nationhood could be brought up in relation to civil rights:

...the Onondaga people had maintained the aboriginal government through the ages to the present day, the people do not vote in American elections and press their claim to be citizens of their own Onondaga Nation. When the American government drafts their young men of what use are the civil rights laws?

Indian participation in state and federal politics

The newspapers showed little interest in U.S. politics on any level of society. When defining Indian relationship to the surrounding society, one of the things they had to decide whether they were to get directly involved in U.S. politics, i.e., to vote and to candidate for political office. There were little discussions about that issue in the newspapers. Hardly any references were made to election campaigns or election results to presidential, congressional, state, or other elections. The lack of interest in U.S. politics by Indians was explained by Wassaja editor Rupert Costo when he discussed whether the “Watergate” scandal concerned Indians or not. As he wrote when a hearing on Watergate was held by the House Judiciary Committee, “The American Indian press is the only sector of the entire publication which has, with few exceptions, studiously ignored the matter.” He explained this as demonstrating two things. Firstly, it showed that Indians were not assimilated into the “establishment society,” and secondly, most Indians related to the situation in a way that Costo described as “a plague on both your houses!”

There were, however, a few examples where Native Americans showed interest in national and local elections and expressed the view that it was important for Indians to vote to influence politics. At the annual meeting of the National Tribal Chairmen’s Association, Wendell Chino, chairman of the Mescalero Apaches stated that:

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504 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.3.
505 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.3.
The battle is not on the battlefield of Indian country. It is in the halls of Congress, the Senate chambers, and the White House, and in the state legislative halls. As the Navajos have recently proven, it is also at the voting booth.  

AIM leader Vernon Bellecourt also encouraged other Indians to vote in elections to be able to influence programs that affected them. He stated that the coming year AIM activities would include “voter registration drives,” but also attempts to get AIM members elected to city councils, corporate boards, and school boards.  

The fact that Indian votes could make a difference caused a disagreement over how the lines were drawn for congressional voting districts. The Arizona Legislature had proposed to redraw the district lines but the Indians thought that the change was to a disadvantage for them. The Navajo tribe, for instance, would be divided into three legislative districts and would be separated from other tribes. Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald proposed that they should have an all-Indian district instead. MacDonald’s idea was criticized by mainstream society (for instance, an editorial in the Arizona Republic) for “segregating” Indians from the rest of the population. How electoral districts were drawn affected whatever impact Indian votes would have in an election, so that too became an issue of disagreement between whites and Indians in the state.  

There were also a few examples of Indians asking other Indians to write their congressman or senator in support of their cause. The Payton Apaches, for instance, were reported to “still need people to write their Congressman if they are to have some land to call their own.” Readers were asked to support a specific bill with the Apache amendment. In a letter, Wassaja readers were also asked to support a legislation supporting Little White Salmon Indian settlement at Cooks, Washington in their attempts to establish permanent housing on their ancient Indian home sites. The Klamath Indian Tribe, which was terminated in 1954, introduced the Klamath Indian Education Bill to Congress. Its purpose was to give their children a better education so that they would be able to “take their place in this complex society.” To get support for the bill, they were “asking that all Indian tribes and groups write to their congressmen” supporting the bill.  

Some Indian candidates for political office and some already elected were also mentioned in the newspapers. AIM member Eddie Benton was going to run for Mayor of St Paul, Minneapolis. He was going to fight for the rights of all ethnic groups. Athabascan Indian Mitch Demientieff had announced  

\[507\text{ Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.1, p.27.} \]
\[508\text{ Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.6, p.11.} \]
\[509\text{ Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.17.} \]
\[510\text{ Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.3, p.9.} \]
\[511\text{ Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.6, p.4.} \]
\[512\text{ Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.5, pp.1,20.} \]
\[513\text{ Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.6.} \]
his candidacy for a seat in the State House of Representatives. He ran as a
democrat and promoted “more participation, and education” for the people
of his rural district.\textsuperscript{514} Indians who were appointed to different governmental
offices were also sometimes mentioned in the newspapers. Navajo Daniel
Peaches was appointed to the federal Indian Advisory Council which ad-
vised the U.S. Commission of Education,\textsuperscript{515} and a member of the Three Af-
filiated Tribes of Fort Berthold, Juanita Helphrey, was named executive di-
rector of North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission,\textsuperscript{516} Wassaja reported.
Pueblo Indian Ernesto L. Lovato was appointed to the U.S. Commission on
Civil Rights. Wassaja pointed out that there had never been an Indian represen-
tative on the Commission on Civil Rights since it was established in
1957.\textsuperscript{517} Although Indian representation in U.S. governmental offices was not
a central issue in the newspapers, it was noticed in a positive way.

\textsuperscript{514} Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.6, p.6. Examples of other references made to Indian candidates for
office, Indians already in office or the need for Indians in office: Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.3,
\textsuperscript{515} Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.6, p.4.
\textsuperscript{517} Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.4, p.4. Examples of other references made to Indians appointed to
different positions in governmental offices: Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.2, p.16; Akwesasne Notes
9. Discourse of peoplehood

Native Americans could also identify and relate to others in ways that had nothing to do with sovereignty and statehood. Instead they talked about themselves and others in terms of peoples, i.e. describing reality through the discourse of peoplehood. Often these statements directly or indirectly expressed a relationship to the United States. The first part of this chapter deals with different perspectives on Native American perception of Indian peoplehood. These include conceptions of, and identification with, the “real Indian,” the historic Indian and the Indian warrior. The second part analyses the conceptions of “white people,” both as a race and as a symbol representing certain cultural values. The third part discusses examples of other peoples presented in the newspapers which Native Americans identified as victims of U.S. colonization.

Indian Peoples

A real Indian

Indian peoplehood was expressed both in terms of pan-Indian and tribal identification in the newspapers. A pan-Indian identification was visible in many of the articles. One Akwesasne Notes article, for instance, describes what was claimed to be an ancient prophecy “that there exists a place where Indians of all nations can live together in the ancient ways and support themselves in harmony.” This prophecy apparently claimed that there had been a collective Indian identity since ancient times. Murdered Mohawk activist Richard Oaks was described as “an Indian in the fullest sense of the word. He was for his people all the way.”

What “an Indian in the fullest sense” was could be expressed in various ways in the newspapers. Indians were, for example, described as natural caretakers of the environment, and they were said to have a special relation-

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518 Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.1, p.34. An Ojibway prophecy which stated that all tribes would stand together and “hook arms in brotherhood and unite...” was also described in Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.1, p.11.
519 Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.1, p.34.
ship to the land. Real Indianness was also described as adhering to traditional cultural values. A writer in Akwesasne Notes stated that he had, like many others, assumed a false identity as Indian, but they were only Indian by name. To become real Indians again they had to “recapture the essence of the life-style of our grandfathers,” he claimed.

Indianness could also be associated with struggling for Indian rights. This was the case with a statement written by AIM leader Russell Means in Wassaja during the conflict at Wounded Knee. Means wrote that Indian children needed contemporary martyrs, which was something very different from those Indians native children usually met. Those people Indian children usually met he described as “facsimile white Indian, not a traditional Indian,” and he went on to define traditional Indians as “those who practice our ancient religion, believe in our human values, abide by our laws.” Means does not go into detail how the traditional, “real” Indians would become the martyrs he said that native children needed. However, knowing that the article was published during the Wounded Knee conflict, it is quite likely that the martyrs he was talking about were Indians who died fighting for Indian rights. In this article, Means did not refer to a fight for independence against the United States but rather targeted white people and federal marshals. He wrote:

The white ranchers have made a coalition with the federal marshals. Those white people are the ones who are leasing our land, living off Indian land while our people starve and go on welfare.

Further down in the article, Means goes on to state that “They massacred our people in 1890. They will have to kill us here, where the blood of our people is in Mother Earth.” It is not obvious who “they” are; however, it seems likely that it is the coalition of white ranchers and the federal marshals that he associates with the U.S. soldiers of the 19th century. To Means, real Indianness was apparently closely connected to traditional tribal values; however, he also seems to associate real Indians with fighting for Indian rights, in this case against white ranchers and federal marshals.

Several other articles described Indianness in terms of specific behaviors and ideas about the world. In one Wassaja article, one could read that “Utes like all Indians are natural conservationists” while an Akwesasne Notes article reports that on Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, one could leave the car unlocked with the keys in it without anything being stolen or

521 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.46.
damaged.  Most importantly, these accounts referred to a certain way to act against others. Carter Camp sent a letter to *Akwesasne Notes* while in prison waiting for trial after the Wounded Knee occupation. He described the difference between being Indian and being a white man:

...a person who claims to be an Indian realizes that he’s responsible for his people. Period. It does not matter how much you look like an Indian, or how much Indian blood you have – if you don’t accept your people as your responsibility, you’re a honky. Not all honkies are white.

The chairman of the Full Blood Creek Association, Philip Deer, also stated that Indianness was more than looks and skin color, “I know people who look like Indians but are as white as any white man,” he was quoted to have said. And in a letter to *Akwesasne Notes*, the writer described being a “mixed blood” Indian meant that one’s “Indian heart is imprisoned in a white skin.”

The issue of who was a real Indian was important, regardless of whether one was an AIM supporter or one of their critics. A large group of Indians from South Dakota tried to discredit the American Indian Movement and other Wounded Knee occupants by claiming that they had little or no Indian blood, and there were other examples in the newspapers when degree of white blood or mixed Indian-white ancestry was brought up in relationship to Indianness. Being a “real Indian” was obviously important to many Native Americans, however, who was considered an Indian and by which criteria, apparently varied across individuals and groups.

The issue of who is an Indian was, and has continued to be, both a complicated and sensitive one that encompasses both legal definitions as well as self-identification. There will be different definitions offered depending on whether one talks about tribal membership, U.S. federal law or ethnic identity. Even when it comes to federal law, the definition is not consistent but varies greatly between different laws. Neither do federal definitions of Indianness have to correspond with tribal definitions. Since federally recognized Indian tribes have the right to regulate their own tribal membership, i.e., the formal enrollment on the tribal roll, tribes have different criteria when it comes to recognition of tribal membership. Then there is the cultural aspect of defining who is Indian and who is not, which Means was arguing for above. It defines Indianness according to the person’s knowledge of, and participation in, tribal culture.

Consequently, Indian people have had to relate to several different definitions of Indianness, both cultural and legal. Lakota scholar Hilary Weaver relates an interesting story which very much highlights the complexity and lack of consensus that exist in how Native Americans define Indianness. She relates an incident that took place between a Lakota (Sioux) and a Navajo team during a championship game in an all-Native basketball tournament.\(^{533}\) The Lakota noticed that some of the Navajo players had facial hair, and they found their skin suspiciously dark. This made them suspect that the Navajo players were not Navajos at all but a “bunch of Mexicans.” The Navajos, on the other hand, found the Lakotas to be suspiciously light skinned, and added that most of them had short hair, which made them suspect that the Lakota players were really a “bunch of white guys.” Both teams agreed that Indianness had to be determined and they suggested different ways to determine that:

The Lakota captain suggested that everyone show his tribal enrollment card as proof of identity. The Lakota promptly displayed their “red cards,” but some of the Navajos did not have enrollment cards. The Lakotas were ready to celebrate their victory when the Navajo captain protested that carrying an enrollment card was a product of colonization and not an indicator of true identity. He suggested that the real proof would be a display of indigenous language skills, and each Navajo proceeded to recite his clan affiliations in the traditional way of introducing himself in the Navajo language. Some of the Lakotas were able to speak their language, but others were not. The teams went back and forth proposing standards of proof of identity, but each proposed standard was self-serving and could not be met by the other team.\(^{534}\)

Eventually, the championship game was canceled since the two teams could not agree upon criteria to define Indianness.\(^{535}\) In addition to the legal definition of Indianness made by tribal laws of enrollment, and cultural definition in terms of speaking a native language, there were two peoples that Indians were contrasted with in this story, white people and Mexicans. Both appear in the newspapers from the early 1970s, and as in the case of the story about the basketball tournament, being white or Mexican on the one hand and Indian on the other, were seen as mutually exclusive.

The newspapers’ discussions about Indianness were not only concerned with the amount of Indian blood a person had or if he or she practiced traditional Indian culture. It had to be the right type of Indian blood and the right Indian culture. Mexican Indians did not qualify as real Indians. Two different letters to *Wassaja* illustrate two different views on the issue of whether Mexican Indians should be considered Indians or not. The first letter was from a Mexican Indian who denounced being called “Chicano” “because

\(^{533}\) Weaver does not say what year this event took place.


\(^{535}\) Weaver 2001, p.242.
we’re not. Our ancestors were Indians, not Chicano,” he stated.\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.} He claimed true Indian heritage based on degree of Indian blood when he continued:

> In Mexico there are more Indians there than Canada and U.S.A. put together, if only we can unite the tribes from Mexico, all people of Mexican descent hold 60 to 70 percent Indian blood.\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.}

The second letter strongly objected to any kinship with Mexican Indians. The writer first questioned their Indianness on a cultural basis by stating that “they don’t know their tribe, or speak their language.”\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.} Secondly, he was apparently also afraid that they would assert Indian rights within the United States borders.

> What’s happening is that some Chicanos are sitting on Indian land and claiming it because of the Mexican-American treaty of Guadaloupe-Hidalgo. But they forget that we are the original owners of that land.\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.}

Mexican Indians were defined as Chicanos, which means that they were classified together with other Spanish speakers of Mexican descent in the United States. Indianness was apparently defined in relationship to the United States and tribal ancestry located on lands within U.S. borders. Consequently, the writer seems to have had a collective Indian identity based on U.S. nationality in which Mexican Indians could not be included.\footnote{A similar definition of Indianness in relationship to the U.S. nation-state was made by Kidwell and Velie when they wrote that “Most Chicanos have a substantial amount of Indian blood, more in fact than many Indians, but they have no cultural ties to American Indians, no legal standing as Indians, nor even a desire to be considered Indians.” (Kidwell & Velie 2005, p.10).} If they found that they were Mexican Indians, their tribe was in Mexico and they should not interfere with Indian affairs in the United States, the writer stated.\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.}

> There are, however, also examples in the newspapers where U.S. Indians did identify with all Indians of the American continent, for example, in an international indigenous rights context.\footnote{\textit{Akwesasne Notes} 1973, vol.5, no.1, p.3.} Russell Means also described a common identity based on a common spirituality and a common world view. He stated that:

\footnote{\textit{Wassaja} 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.2.}
The red man of the Western Hemisphere is one people because of our foundation. It is the same spirituality throughout. We are founded on the same concept of Mother Earth and all our relatives.\(^{543}\) When he talked about “all our relatives” he meant all things alive, including “the green things, the winged things of the air, the four-leggeds, the things that crawl and swim.”\(^{544}\) In these statements, Means’ relates to the same ideas as Apache/Hispanic philosopher Viola F. Cordova’s. Native Americans share a common way of understanding the world which is very different from people of European descent, and this world view includes the idea that all beings are related and the earth is our mother.\(^{545}\)

Means contrasted this Indian way of viewing the world with the Western or white man’s way of dividing the world through creating borders. It was “the white man” who split the Indians by dividing up the world:

> You see, the white man has made imaginary lines around the native American and calls them states, calls them reservations, calls them counties. There are no such lines to the traditional Indian. We do not draw imaginary lines. Only the Great Mystery can draw lines. And he draws lines like a desert, a mountain, like timber and grass.\(^{546}\)

Although Native Americans generally seem to have identified as Indians in the newspapers, there were a couple of examples of natives rejecting being called Indians. In a letter to *Akwesasne Notes*, for example, the writer stated that “I am Anishinabe […] I am not an Indian,” emphasizing a tribal identity. He continued to say that “Indian” is nothing that the natives have called themselves, since such a word did not exist in any of the native languages.\(^{547}\) In another letter to the same newspaper, a Navajo asked people not to use the word “Indian” since Native Americans were not from India.\(^{548}\) A rejection of the word “Indian” does not necessarily mean a rejection of a common identity, however. National chairman of the American Indian Movement, John Trudell, contrasted “Indians” with “The People” in the *Akwesasne Notes* article “Before we were ‘Indians’”. When Trudell talked about the “the People,” he probably referred to a translation of Indian tribal names into English. Many Indian tribes referred to themselves as “the People” or some variation of the concept in their tribal languages.\(^{549}\) In the article, “the People” related to a certain way of being which was connected to the historic traditional society. It included to take care of their own and “to respect the ways

\(^{543}\) *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.5.

\(^{544}\) *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.5.

\(^{545}\) Cordova et al.2007, p.67.

\(^{546}\) *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.6, no.5, p.5.

\(^{547}\) *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.5, p.46.

\(^{548}\) *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.45.

\(^{549}\) Edmunds et al. 2007, p.ix. For example Diné (Navajo) and Anishinabe (Ojibway).
of the ancients and our ancestors.” This was part of the religion, the political system, and the social system of “The People” according to Trudell. Then the Europeans came to America and many natives changed from being “The People” to becoming “Indian.” He connected being Indian with Christian values, the use of alcohol, and a lack of spirituality. Native Americans had to make a choice, according to Trudell:

We must understand that we cannot be “The People” while we are drunk. We can be “Indians” and be drunk, but we cannot be “The People.”

The historic Indian in the present

There are several statements in the newspapers which show identification “outside” the United States but where sovereign statehood was not the frame of reference. In most of these cases, the Native Americans were directly or indirectly identifying with a historic tribe or the historic Indian.

Identification with the historic Indian was not only made by relating stories of the past which described how events had unfolded but sometimes the events and experiences of the tribe in history was directly connected to or intertwined with the present. The occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 was such an event that brought associations with the past and where Indians expressed identification as a people that was not part of the United States.

The conflict with the U.S. federal government at Wounded Knee brought associations to the massacre which had happened at the same location in 1890. In 1890, at least 300 unarmed men, women, and children of Chief Big Foot’s band of Minneconjou Sioux, another Lakota group, were killed by the U.S. cavalry after most of them had given up their weapons. This took place right at the end of the wars between the United States and the Lakotas, where the Lakotas had been defeated and they had been forced to settle on reservations. What happened in 1890 became closely associated with what happened there in 1973. When the federal government suggested that the occupiers would turn in their weapons, Russell Means was reported to have replied: “Sounds like the same offer they gave Big Foot.”

In the early 1970s, the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890 was still in memory at the reservation. There were people alive who personally had heard eyewitness accounts from the massacre. The stories of the past and what was happening in the present became intertwined and described in personal narratives. The mother of Buddy Lamont, one of the Indians killed at

552 Iverson 1998, s.13.
the occupation 1973, closely associated the two events with each other when interviewed by Akwesasne Notes:

Mrs. Lamont started to cry. “My great grandparents were killed at the first Wounded Knee,” she said. […] “My mother remembered it. […] She used to tell us about it. ’They killed a lot of us in that one,’” she’d say.

“Buddy told me,” Mrs. Lamont said, “Bury me in Wounded Knee. If I get killed during this thing. I want to be buried there. […]”

“That was the last time I saw him alive. On that hill. My mother always told me about that hill. She was 12 years old. ’There they put the cannon gun and shot so many of us,’ she would say.554

This personal narrative was told in the historical context of the Sioux people, a history where the U.S. soldiers were the enemies. Thereby the United States became “the other” both in history and in the present. However, the relationship to the United States was not described in terms of sovereignty and self-government or Indians defending borders and jurisdictions, it was described in terms of Lakota death and survival as people.

A similar conflation of history and present was also made by Gladys Bissonette, an Oglala woman who testified at the trials of Dennis Banks and Russell Means after the occupation of Wounded Knee. She told the story of what had happened and how she experienced being fired upon during the siege:

All I have in mind as a lay on the floor was how they could paralyze our boys and come down on the women and children. As I remember back on days when they had unarmed our ancestors, killed them and let them freeze to death, there were no mercy for children. There were no mercy for the women. That’s the very first thing that had come to my mind during that fire-fight. I knew this has to be the last.555

Like Mrs. Lamont, Gladys Bissonette did not distinguish between the “they” that were shooting at the Indians in the present and the “they” that had killed her ancestors in the past, and she actually goes between the two events as if she had experienced them both herself. By conflating past and present she came to identify with the historic tribe and the pre-reservation relationship the tribe had to the United States, and thereby she put the Sioux tribe “outside” the United States. Although neither of these women defines who “they” are it is easy to believe that they refer to white Americans.

The way these women conflated past and present can be explained by the Indian way of understanding time. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Native Americans tend to think in cycles. Anthropologist Joseph Epes Brown writes that this way of thinking is reflected in Indian languages which usually have

554 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.4, pp.16-17.
555 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.4, p.8.
no past or future tense. When Indians speak, they are speaking in a “perennial reality of the now.” Kiowa writer, N. Scott Momaday explains that the reason his father slips into present tense when he talks about his dead father is because Native American perception of reality encompasses a “dimension of timelessness,” time as an “illusion.” So whether Indian perception of time is described as cyclical or without motion, both these writers give an explanation to these women’s conflations of the past and present. The past becomes the present. In a sense, then, these women were not only recalling stories that had been told about the past or identified with the historic times and the tribes that had existed then, but they became part of these events and these historic tribes. Consequently, they must also have defined themselves as something else than American.

Indian warriors of past and present

When conflicts between Native Americans and the federal government were described in the newspapers, the images of war and of Indian warriors occurred several times. The image of the Indian warrior also made connotations to the tribal historic past, as did the image of warriors fighting a war against the United States. These wars were not described as tribal sovereign states fighting the United States but rather the Indians who fought these wars were represented as traditional warriors of the historic past.

The warrior image was, for instance, portrayed in the newspaper reports from the 1972 occupation of the BIA headquarters in Washington D.C. The background to the occupation was that a group of Indian activists had organized a march from the west coast to Washington D.C. The plan was to time their arrival so that they would reach the capital in time for the national election which was held in November. It was supposed to be a symbolic protest addressing general Indian issues. When the caravan participants began to arrive in Washington D.C., it became apparent that the person who was in charge of organizing food and lodging for the caravan participants had failed to do his job. It resulted in hundreds of Indians going to the BIA building asking for assistance. It all started off in a calm and orderly manner. “They had lunch in the cafeteria, said hello to friends from back home who worked at the Bureau, and watched documentaries from the BIA film library.” Efforts were made by the Bureau to arrange accommodation and the Indians were promised to stay in the BIA auditorium until housing was found. Five o’clock in the evening, AIM leader Dennis Banks held a press conference where he told the reporters that the caravan participants had accepted lodging that was offered to them, but he was interrupted by screams and sounds

557 Momaday 1987, p.158.
558 Smith & Warrior 1996, pp.139–141.
of broken glass. Police had entered the building in riot gear trying to force the Indians to leave the building. Native Scholars Smith and Warrior described the scene in the following manner:

A fight erupted, and when it ended five minutes later the police were in temporary disarray on the street, and the Indians, some bloodied and all furious, were barricading the entrance with desks, chairs, and file cabinets. They weren’t going anywhere now.

Both newspapers reported on the event and in Akwesasne Notes one could read that when information reached the Indians inside the building that the police would charge the building, the Indians inside were preparing to go to battle. The war situation was further described by “Young men stripped to the waist, painted their chests and wore their armbands and necklaces. Most prepared their weapons.” It was at that point in time that AIM leader Vern Bellecourt stated that “We have now declared war on the United States of America – seek your stations.” He talked about entering into war with the United States; however, the war was framed in indigenous symbolism associated with the historic past and past wars with the United States. Indians were described as warriors, not soldiers.

A similar scene of warriors preparing for battle was also portrayed in Akwesasne Notes when describing the situation at Wounded Knee. A group that called themselves “the Society of New Warriors” were said to have pledged to die rather than surrendering to the federal agents. “It is clear that we are surrounded and will probably be massacred, but if we do, we’ll go down fighting,” one of the members said. One could further read in Akwesasne Notes:

When would the massacre start the Oglalas wondered. Few, if any, of their people had accepted the U.S. offer to leave the village without immediate arrest.

Spiritual leaders daubed red war paint on the faces of the men – acceptance of the war paint meant that the warrior accepted death. They knew they might die soon. […]

No one had any delusions that they would militarily defeat the United States of America. Carter Camp said there was “no way” to whip the U.S., “but we have every intention of selling our lives as dearly as we can.”

Young Indian men in Warrior Societies, painting themselves and preparing to die in battle against the United States are an image that obviously portrays

the United States as “the other.” It also brings thoughts to the Plains Indian warrior of the 19th century and past wars with the United States. The 19th century Plains Indians had different kinds of clubs and sacred societies and among the most important were the Warrior Societies. They had several different purposes which included both protecting the society against outside enemies and keeping order in the camp. These Warrior Societies were also closely connected to the religious realm. They were founded according to spiritual instructions and depending on the instructions they all got their own specific rituals, songs, and regalia. It was also considered crucial for a Plains Indian man to have his own spirit helper for him to become a successful in life. Therefore the majority of the men in these societies went to a secluded area to fast in hope of receiving a vision and a spirit helper. It he was lucky a spirit came and instructed him to create a medicine bundle which he would carry with him as protection.

The religious aspect of being a warrior was also evident in a Wassaja article which stressed the importance of eagle feathers for the warrior. The use of eagle feathers had been banned by the United States which had resulted in the confiscation of Oklahoma Indian’s ceremonial gear. This caused “much heartache and fear among my people,” the writer stated. She then went on to describe the Kiowa Black Leggings Society, a military organization made up of “First Americans (who use feathers),” as she put it. Members of the Kiowa Black Leggings Society were adopted into the society on basis of their bravery and deeds in battles. A worthy member was asked to join and not everyone was admitted. The writer tied members of contemporary Kiowa Black Leggings Society to members of the past by explaining the spiritual connection of the warrior with the animal world showing how feathers were important both in history and in the present to the Kiowas. Explaining the spiritual connection between animals and the warrior she writes that:

Many “early day” members had their symbols, the symbols being their “Brothers,” the animals and birds. This is a distinction which definitely needs to be understood. They used certain parts of the animals or birds (which had NOT been wantonly killed or destroyed) which identified the warrior. If it was a feather, it was from a certain bird, which had characteristics the warrior had adopted as his symbol.

The members of the Kiowa Black Leggings Society were also said to have done “their noble part, along with many others, in preserving the freedom of our country.” In this case, the writer referred to the United States as “our country.” This means that the image of the warrior was not only applied to

566 For more detailed information about vision seeking, spirit helpers, and religious beliefs among Plains Indians of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Irwin 1994.
Native Americans fighting against the United States but also to those who had fought for the United States. Most of time, however, Indian warriors were associated with struggle against the U.S. government.

Warriors and warrior societies were referred to quite a few times in the newspapers. The warrior society was explicitly connected to Indian history, culture, and religion, and “the Warrior” became a symbol of Indianness in the conflicts with the federal government. AIM leader Vern Bellecourt explicitly identified with the historic warrior in one of his statements quoted in Wassaja. He described the AIM as a traditionalist religious movement where they were “trying to form a young warrior society again out of our young people, who are once again identifying with their history, their proud culture, their religion.”

A letter from Kills Straight, an Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge Reservation, also described AIM in terms of warriors. He called them “a new warrior class of this century.”

There were other examples of warrior societies making statements or being mentioned in the newspapers, and there were several other examples of references to a war between Indians and the United States. A proclamation of war with the United States was made in Akwesasne Notes by a group calling themselves “the Dog Soldier Society of Seattle.” They urged all Indians to join them in declaring war on the United States government “and their apple-Indian allies” since “when treaties are broken, a state of war exists.”

Not only were historic warrior societies inspiring Native Americans to create new warrior societies, warrior of the past were also seen as predecessors and inspirations for those who fought for Indian rights in the present. The forefathers of the Indians died trying to protect their land, therefore the present Indians could not allow the governments of the United States to continue its genocide against the Indians, one could read in Akwesasne Notes. AIM leader Carter Camp also emphasized the bravery of the historic Indian leaders, and the only acceptable choice was to follow in their footsteps. He questioned if they really could claim to be descendants of great leaders like Crazy Horse, Geronimo, Chief Joseph, and other prominent Indian leaders of the past, if they ignored the deaths of those who had died in the present struggle.

And the Dog Soldier Society of Seattle called upon past religious and political leaders in their war against the United States:

Call back Wovoka, Smoholla, and the Ghost Dance! Leaders, step forward! The spirits of our religious, war, and political leaders are waiting to live once again in our blood! Patience and words are no longer enough! Revive your

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570 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.5, p.3.
572 Akwesasne Notes 1973, vol.5, no.4, p.5
secret societies and go into battle with words, weapons, and ways of persuasion until we have won a just peace for our people or die with honor!574

In Wassaja one could also read that Indian peoples had been at war with Europeans and their descendants for 481 years, i.e., since Columbus’ discovery of America,575 and according to a quote from Chief Spotted Tail which was published in Akwesasne Notes, war did not come from “our land” but was brought upon the Indians by “the children of the Great Father” who came to rob Indians of their land.576 The same speech was also referred to in Wassaja.577

It is not always obvious what war against the United States meant and what it was supposed to accomplish. For example, in the previous quote, war was to be waged not only with weapons, but also with words. However, the traditional warrior image and the references to weapons indicate that there existed an idea that Indians, as in historic times, once again had to rise up and fight for their freedom against the United States.

References to past wars with the United States did not necessarily encourage or call for Native Americans to go to war against the U.S. in the present. The issue of war against the U.S. was brought up in a letter discussing an Indian cultural center, council house, and a museum that was planned to be built on historical grounds. The center was to be built on the site where Tecumseh had been born. Tecumseh was an Indian leader of Shawnee-Creek descent who, together with his prophet brother, organized an intertribal resistance movement against the colonizing Americans right after the turn of the century (c.1800).578 Native Americans of the early 1970s hoped that the center would create unity among Indian tribes just as Tecumseh tried to do in his attempts to unite the tribes east of the Mississippi to stop the white man’s advancement.579 There was obviously a strong identification with the warrior and what he had accomplished but it did not mean that they would go to war like Tecumseh had done: “While his original purpose is valid today as before, we of the Four Points Intertribal Council know that we of course cannot go on the warpath today.”580

Neither were protests against military service only made on grounds related to separate nationhood and tribal sovereignty. It was also made on cultural and religious bases. A Sioux Indian who had served in the U.S. Air Force criticized the U.S. military for not recognizing Indian customs, beliefs, and religion. Indians were for instance forced to cut their hair. It was on

575 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.4, p.11.
579 Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.4, p.2
these grounds he stated that he would “no longer accept being in the military.” He said he would take this stand not only for Indian people but for other minorities as well.581 Another example given in the newspapers was a Chippewa Indian who tried to be exempted from military service on the basis that the religion of his people would not allow him. He explained his aversion against fighting in Vietnam:

...whatever happens in another land and to another people is not the Indian’s problem, because our Creator did not intend us to fight a war or wars which are not related to our religion or land. Since my religious background does not allow use of force or violence and since I shall not use force ever, I will not use it now to fight in a war.582

This man did not necessarily refuse to go to war because he saw himself as something else than American. He argued that he could not go to war because it was not a war to protect his religion and land; however, it is not obvious what “land” he is referring to. Perhaps it is United States, perhaps it is a tribal reservation; however, it is likely that he does not think in terms of nations or countries at all, but in terms of peoples belonging to ancestral land. It may be possible to make connections to a Native American world view as described by Viola F. Cordova. She states that Native Americans not only acknowledge different peoples’ separate creations, but these creations are tied to certain geographical areas, i.e., “each group views itself as being created for one specific place.” This also means that Native Americans acknowledge that other peoples are created for other areas.583 The location for which the people are created is their “rightful homes,” land to which they belonged.584 This spiritual connection to the land is described by Cordova in the following manner:

The people’s goal is to adapt to the place that they see as, not only a home, but an extension of themselves as people.585

This statement can consequently be interpreted as a way of expressing the rights of other people, such as the Vietnamese, to their own land while Native Americans had the right to their own land, land which they both were put on by a Creator. Whether the Indian lands were within U.S. border or not might not have been relevant, since they did not think in terms of states but in terms of peoples belonging to the land they had been created to live on.

584 Cordova 2007, p.188.
585 Cordova 2007, pp.188–189.
White People

Native American identification could also be expressed through descriptions of other peoples, which were either contrasted with or compared to Indians. One such “people” that was frequently referred to in the newspapers was “white people” or “the white man” as they were also commonly referred to. White is a racial term but Native Americans of the early 1970s certainly perceived of whites as a separate people with their own cultural characteristics. Indian identification was often expressed in relationship to the white man: what white men were, Indians were not, and when they did not portray United States as “the other,” it was frequently white people that were portrayed as such.

Anthropologist Keith Basso also found such identification in relationship to white people in his study of the Western Apaches in the 1960s and 1970s. He found that Apache identity to a great extent was formed in contrast to “the White man,” however; the image of the “White man” was continuously changing depending on how their image of what an Apache was changed. Basso argued that an idea of a dichotomy between “Indians” and “Whites” exists in all Indian cultures. The concept of “the White man” “serves as a conspicuous vehicle for conceptions that define and characterize what ‘the Indian’ is not,” he stated.586

“The White man” was also contrasted with the Indian in Akwesasne Notes and Wassaja. For example, when the “the Red Man’s culture and that of the White Man,” were compared with each other in Akwesasne Notes, the white man’s culture – “his manner of living, government, religion, education and other institutions,” were described as based on possessions, something that Indian culture was not.587

White people were also portrayed as threatening to Indians by AIM leader Russell Means. During the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, it was not only the U.S that was portrayed as the enemy; “white people” were also described that way. Means blamed white people for going into coalition with federal marshals in the conflict. It was white people who lived off Indian lands while the Indians were starving, and it was white people who killed Indians. White people were still a threat to Native Americans in 1973, according to Means, and he wrote that “they massacred our people in 1890. They will have to kill us here where the blood of our people is in Mother Earth.”588

Land was described as very important to Indian identity, and Indians were described as having a completely different relationship to land compared to white people. Wassaja cited an Indian woman who said that she would not take “blood money” for her land and that she was tired of living and thinking

586 Basso 1985, p.5.
like a white woman.589 There was no explanation in the newspaper of what she meant with “living and thinking like a white woman.” Perhaps she, like the writer quoted previously, referred to white people’s (or the western European) tendency to see land as possessions and contrasted that to the more spiritual relationship to the land of Indians that Cordova and Deloria & Lytle described.590

The difference between white people’s and Native Americans’ ways of perceiving of the world were also described in an Akwesasne Notes which related how some Native Americans were influenced by white man’s way of thinking. These Indians were described in the following manner:

> And so they carry back the way the white man looks at the world, those traditions he has but doesn’t know about. They will say that the land belongs not to the people, or not to the buffalo or not to the women, not to the Creator, but that the earth belongs to the white man, as he is organized in the United States Government or the Canadian Government.591

White man’s destruction of the land together with their destruction of Indian peoples was also addressed in a letter to the Wassaja newspaper. Before the white man came to America, there were Indian tribes and clean mountains, now there was nothing but litter, the writer claimed. He also stated that “the white man did the Indians dirty, and treat the Indians like dogs.” 592 Indian life before the coming of the White Man was also described in idyllic terms in an Akwesasne Notes article:

> The Indian lived on land and with nature. Our ancestors who lived this way were strong and healthy. They did not encounter any diseases and every Indian was strong and healthy. The white man has ruined all these good things for our people.593

White people were also blamed for other grievances. In Wassaja one could read that white policemen made sure that Indians were put in jail as soon as they were able to buy a drink. Natives did have problems with alcohol and drug abuse, the writer admitted, but these problems were not caused by Indians but by white people. “Who brought these things to us? And who is responsible for their continued existence?” the writer asked.594

The most serious offense white people committed against Indians were murder. There were many descriptions of white people killing Native Amer-

icans in *Akwesasne Notes*, both policemen and others, and a lot of time they got away with light sentences or no punishment at all.\textsuperscript{595} After Wesley Bad Heart Bull was killed in South Dakota, AIM leader Dennis Banks stated that the killing of Indian people by white people had become “unbelievably common,”\textsuperscript{596} and after Mohawk activist Richard Oakes was killed by the manager of a YMCA summer camp in 1972, activist Hank Adams commented that “The pasttime of killing Indians has not been surrendered from the self-esteem of ‘pioneer spirit’ of White America in the 1970s.”\textsuperscript{597}

In the small town of Farmington, New Mexico, nine Native men were killed in a short period of time.\textsuperscript{598} This led the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to send personnel to the town to discuss the situation. In reference to all these killings one of the Navajos present at the meeting stated that “the killings reflected the white man’s inhumanity and contempt for all mankind – no Navajo would so callously disregard the value of human life.”\textsuperscript{599}

White people could also be described as generally unpleasant. During the occupation of the BIA in Washington D.C., Oklahoma Kiowa Ralph Ware gave the following unflattering description of white people when addressing hundreds of occupiers in the BIA auditorium:

> These white people are so foxy and so smart with words. They’re liars, really. They use candy and money. They steal too. And if you’re with them long enough, they smell bad.\textsuperscript{600}

Several quotes from *historic* Indians were also used in the newspapers to address white people’s injustices towards Indian people. Red Jacket’s speech to white invaders was published in *Wassaja*; it described how Indians helped the white people when they were few and needed help and protection by giving them land to live on. When the white people’s numbers grew, it was the Indians who needed to be helped and protected. “When you first came here, you clung around our knee and called us Father; We took you by the hand and called you Brothers,” he said.\textsuperscript{601} This statement shows a feeling of betrayal by the white man. It portrays a view that the Indians were there to help white people when they needed it, but when the Indians became week and needed help, white people abandoned them. The great numbers of white people were also the topic in Sitting Bull’s speech to his own people that was printed in *Wassaja*. He said:

\textsuperscript{595} For example *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.2; *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.2, p.7; *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.7, no.4, p.28.
\textsuperscript{596} *Akwesasne Notes* 1973, vol.5, no.2, p.5.
\textsuperscript{597} *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.6, p.7.
\textsuperscript{598} *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.2, p.20.
\textsuperscript{599} *Akwesasne Notes* 1975, vol.7, no.4, p.28.
\textsuperscript{600} *Akwesasne Notes* 1973, vol.5, no.1, p.8.
\textsuperscript{601} *Wassaja* 1973, vol.1, no.3, p.5.
My people, we have now to deal with another race. They were small and feeble when our fathers first met them. But now they are great and overbearing. […] That nation is like a spring freshet that overruns its banks and destroys all who are in its path.602

The image is graphic, with a dominant people flooding the continent drowning the Indian peoples in its way. It is obvious that it was the white people that Sitting Bull was supposed to have referred to. He was also quoted in Akwesasne Notes where he refuted the White man’s accusations against him:

What treaty that the whites have kept has the Red Man broken? No one. What treaty that the white man ever made with us have they kept? No one. […] What white man can say I ever stole his land or a penny of his money? Yet, they say I am a thief. What white woman, however lovely, was ever captive or insulted by me? Yet they say I am a bad Indian. What white man has ever seen me drunk? Who has ever come to me hungry and went away unfed? Who has ever seen me beat my wives or abuse my children? What law have I broken? Is it wrong for me to love my own? Is it wicked for me because my skin is red? Because I am a Sioux? Because I was born where my father lived? Because I would die for my people and my country?603

Sometimes the United States and white people could be joined together. For instance, AIM leader Clyde Bellecourt described the U.S. as “a nation of greedy and deceitful white men” in connection to the occupation of the BIA building in Washington D.C. in 1972.604 The same paper also described the BIA occupation as an Indian war with white people. When the Native Americans prepared for armed confrontation with the police, Akwesasne Notes stated that “Indians once again prepared to do battle with the white man,”605 “Self-determination” was described as only giving Native Americans rights to “make certain decisions within the system which the white man created” and giving “white oriented Indians the right to lease the Indian lands.” in another Akwesasne Notes article.606 White people were apparently closely associated with the United States and the U.S. government in these statements.

Sometimes the connection between the white man and the U.S. were unclear. One can, for instance, read that “Since 1492, the Indian warrior has been in constant combat with the whiteman for the survival of his race” in one Akwesasne Notes article.607 Here Indians are at war with white people but not the U.S.; however, in the same article it is also stated that “the Indian warrior directs his attacks at the U.S. Government, the BIA and the U.S.

military forces” while “the whiteman directs his attack at Indian women and children…” It is likely that the U.S. government is associated with white people; however, the relationship is not clearly stated. In most cases, there are no explicit correlation between white people and the United States in the newspapers.

White people were generally described as more or less unpleasant, and one could assume that this would mean the entire white race. Who was a white man was not entirely determined by racial criteria, however, at least not according to the editors of Akwesasne Notes. This becomes obvious when reading the answer to a letter sent in by a woman calling herself a “white woman” and expressing her concern that the newspaper “continually berates the White Man and the white race.” She asked the newspaper to stop printing letters that referred to skin color. The newspaper editors answered her that “white man” did not necessarily mean the white race.

Generally, when Indian people speak of “the white man” they speak of a certain kind of society, and the members of that society. People of the white race may or may not be White Men.

Although this definition of “White men” did not completely correspond with the white race, the racial aspect of the person was without doubt very important in the definition. The editors admitted that “the presence of the poison of prejudice within us. It is a poison that might go away were it not replenished daily.” It was prejudice against people of the white race that they were referring to in this statement. The idea of “white” as a way of thinking and acting is also present in an article that was reprinted from Native Nevadan where the writer stated that:

Indian power is judging a man by the color of his heart, and not by the color of his skin; the old ones knew this to be true. Indian is not a color. […] A Pomo Indian, an elder, once said to me: “A whiteman with the heart of an Indian is worth more to me than an Indian whose heart is like a whiteman.”

John Trudell, national Chairman of AIM, blamed white people for Indian problems, but he did not want to blame every individual white person. At an AIM meeting he stated that:

Our enemy is not the United States. Our enemy is not the individual white man. Our enemy is the collective white man. Our enemy is the American
And he continued to describe what this collective white race had caused:

It was white people who created Capitalism. It was white people who created Communism. It was white people who created mission schools. It was white people who created jails. It was white people who robbed our land and it was white people who sat back in the corner and allowed their government to do it. [...] It was white people who sent us guns – guns that get us killed.

This conception of the “white man” or “white people” can be interpreted as a way of coping with the atrocities that Indians had to live through during history and at the same time identify with the same state that performed them. If the white man was responsible for Indian suffering it opened up the possibility for Indians to identify with the United States despite its problematic Indian policies in the past.

The Vietnamese and other colonized peoples

Another people frequently referred to in the newspapers are the Vietnamese. During the early 1970s, when the United States was still involved in the Vietnam War, newspaper reports frequently compared the experiences of the Vietnamese people to those of Indians. The Vietnam War was described as a colonial war similar to that which had been waged against Indian peoples 100 years earlier.

Akwesasne Notes, for instance, quoted the statement of a Chippewa Indian who argued that: “The Indians of today see that the Vietnamese people will become the ‘Indians’ of tomorrow if the U.S. succeeds in dominating the governments of Southeast Asia.” Another writer expressed surprise that non-Indians were shocked by the massacres in Vietnam and the secrecy of the U.S. government; “these are not new to our people,” he wrote.

The Vietnam War was also described as an extension of U.S. colonization policies of the 19th century. During the 1800s the idea that the United States enjoyed a mandate from God to spread across the entire continent was widely held among the American people. This idea of a “Manifest Destiny” was used to justify U.S. expansions. In Akwesasne Notes the Vietnam War was described as a colonial expansion based on the same idea.

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612 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.3, p.10.
613 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.3, p.10.
615 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.18. Comparisons of massacres of Vietnamese peoples and of Indian people were also made in Akwesasne Notes 1971, vol.3, no.3, p.43.
616 McKay et al. 2012, p.825.
It had to come sooner or later. First it was the native people of North American pushed aside as Manifest Destiny moved westward. The Bureau of Indian Affairs moved with it to retain the grip on people and land. Manifest Destiny moved into Vietnam in the last decade and now BIA officials are training Saigon officials about how to manage native peoples of Asia.617

The U.S. government apparently not only became a colonizer of the Vietnamese people but also helped the Vietnamese government to “manage” its own native people the same way the American state did Indians. One Akwesasne Notes article stated that “officials talk privately of plans to create reservations” for the Vietnamese people, and this bore “all sorts of implications, such as taking their children away to boarding schools, [and the] management of their affairs,” as Indians had experienced.618

The Vietnamese and Indians were also compared as peoples. The Indian Vietnam veteran in Akwesasne Notes seems to have felt kinship with the Vietnamese people; he stated, “I got to know the Vietnamese people and I learned they were just like us.”619

This feeling of being similar to the Vietnamese has been described by several Indian Vietnam veterans. Many Indians had physical characteristics similar to those of the Vietnamese, and they could also identify with certain Vietnamese cultural practices. Blackfoot Vietnam veteran Woody Kipp writes in his autobiography that he, like many Indians in Vietnam, was surprised at how much Indians looked like the Vietnamese, recording that the Vietnamese also wondered how Indians could look so much like them. “You same same Viet Cong,” they stated.620 Native American Vietnam veteran Ron C. Wood also noticed similarities in the lifeways of the Navajo and those of the Vietnamese. He described them in the following way in his autobiography:

The Vietnamese people that we met in the country in our area of operation were either farmers or vendors. They were honest, hard working, reserved country people and I thought they were very similar to rural Navajos in aspects of their lifestyle and mannerism. They would spread a table cloth on the floor and sit around the food to eat which was a traditional Navajo custom. They cared for their land and livestock in a manner similar to Navajos. The major difference was they grew rice with abundant water while Navajos grew corn with precious little water.621

In his research about Native American veterans of the Vietnam War, Tom Holm also recorded such stories. One of his native interviewees was bothered that he and other American soldiers had killed Vietnamese and had

621 Wood 2001, pp.73–74.
taken land that did not belong to them. “Just like what the whites did to us,” he stated. He had also been involved in the relocation of Vietnamese people to new areas, and he associated this with the Indian experience. “Just like when they moved us to the rez [reservation],” Holm described another instance when a Viet Cong prisoner had pointed to the skin, hair, and eyes of an Indian soldier and said “same, same” — meaning that he and the Native American were alike. At first the Indian soldier had hated the Vietnamese, but later he realized that the man was right.622

Parallel ideas were reported in the Indian newspapers. The U.S. government was said to have used similar methods to fight both Indians and Vietnamese in an Akwesasne Notes article. In both cases they used destruction of the earth to make their enemies surrender, and they undertook mass relocations of civilians, removing them from their lands.623 The Wounded Knee siege and the subsequent conflicts at the Pine Ridge Reservation were likewise associated with the Vietnam War. “If you understand Vietnam, you can understand Pine Ridge,” the Akwesasne Notes article stated.624

It was not only the actual war that exhibited associations with Indian wars; the airlifting of Vietnamese children and their adoption by American parents also paralleled the Indians’ losing their children. Alexis W. Wolf, an Omaha-Ponca Indian, stated that she was very sympathetic with the Vietnamese orphans and that she wished there was something she could do to help them. However, adopting them away to American families was not a good idea, she asserted. Instead, they should grow up in Vietnamese families. She compared them with Indians:

Indian families make much better parents, because the child is given the advantage to relate and identify with the Indian type family. I am confident that no decent Indian father and mother would want their child to grow up as an “apple.”625

The Akwesasne Notes article titled “Another Native People Lose Their Children: The scandal behind U.S. ‘orphan airlift’” also commented on the issue. It stated that for some Native Americans the initiative constituted a “flashback into their own history,” pointing out the irony that the United States first brought in war equipment and then carried out human victims. Indian children had also been adopted away after struggle against the United States, the article pointed out.626

Native Americans had a long experience of losing their children to white American society. In the late 19th and the early 20th century, Indian children

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were sent to boarding schools far from their home communities to be educated in “the white man’s way” so that they could assimilate into mainstream American society. Even in the early 1970s, Indian children were adopted away and placed in foster care among white American families in large numbers. U.S. officials believed it was better for Indian children to grow up in a white middle-class home rather than in a poor Indian home. Protest against this practice by Native Americans finally resulted in the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, which gave the tribes jurisdiction over the placement of Indian children who could not live with their parents.627

The Vietnam War was not only interesting for Indians in terms of examples and comparisons of U.S. colonialism; it was also interesting in the way it affected the American Indians in the present. An article that Wassaja reprinted from Hunting Arrow, the newsletter of the Stanford University Indian Student Organization, raised this question: What issues are Indian issues? The writer stated that he had not considered the Vietnam War any concern of Indians, but during a conference he attended about Indian education, one of the participants had argued that Indians should not be concerned only with their own issues: the Vietnamese people were still being bombed by the U.S. military, and the Indian people should try to stop the killing. Some time later, the writer realized that the Vietnam War truly was an Indian issue in this regard. Of all the groups in the United States, the Indian people had proportionally lost the most lives in the Vietnam War. He also brought up World War II, when Japanese Americans were taken to internment camps. The same person who ran these camps later became commissioner of Indian affairs, and “the concepts and ideas used in the persecution of the Japanese were later used on Indian people.”628

Indians were directly affected by the Vietnam War in other ways. Vietnamese children were brought to the United States, and Vietnamese refugees fled to America from the Northern Vietnamese forces. These refugees were not welcomed with open arms by everyone. Indian people knew from experiences what generous immigration policies would lead to and the image of the Vietnamese people could therefore change from colonized to colonizers. In his Wassaja column “Speaking Freely,” Rupert Costo wrote:

We Native peoples welcomed the European newcomers with a full heart and an open hand these many hundreds of years ago. I wish we had not done this. We should have closed the immigration gates…”629

It was not the “unfortunate poor” that would come to the United States, Costo claimed, but “the great and wealthy, the profiteers, the big and little thieves of Vietnam.” He had seen what happened when the Cubans came to

America. There were nearly one million Cubans at the time, and most of them lived in Florida. They were said to have “shoved aside all others,” and Costa feared that the Vietnamese would do the same. He warned that:

Both these peoples, as well as others of the same stripe, are bound to unite with the burgeoning fascist Nazi elements of this country. They have been defeated in their own country. We will have to defeat them here.630

An Akwesasne Notes article pointed out that when the French had taken Vietnamese collaborators back to France with them after their troops withdrew from Vietnam in the 1950s, these Vietnamese “assassins came to play an important part in the violent unofficial repression of those who supported Algerian independence.”631 Thus, the Vietnam War obviously led Indians to make associations with their own colonization in more than one way. The Vietnamese people were most commonly seen as another victim of U.S. colonization and as a group one Indians identified with in the newspapers. However, when they were allowed to enter the United States in greater numbers, they could also be regarded as a threat and as colonizers themselves.

The identification of the Vietnam War with colonialism and the history of the Indian experience also motivated Indian activists to create ties with the Vietnamese people. At the same time, they would use this international relationship to gain recognition in the international community. Indian activist Hank Adams stated that he planned a trip to Hanoi, in North Vietnam. He was going because he wanted to “help end the war and the killing of Indo-chinese people.” He also made a lengthy statement indicating that he supported all oppressed peoples and their liberation.632

Other colonized peoples mentioned in the newspapers were also used in comparisons with Indian peoples, showing the Indian identification as a group colonized by the United States. Puerto Ricans constitute one example: the colonization of Puerto Rico by the United States and its people’s struggle for independence featured in the 1970s newspaper reports. The Puerto Rican people were described as coming from “a native North American stock,”633 and one could even read that

the people known today as Puerto Ricans are “Indians” too, native peoples who were colonized – many of whom are now struggling to return their land to a free national state.634

Akwesasne Notes reported that in 1898 the United States invaded Puerto Rico with armed forces and placed it under military occupation, dissolving

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634 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.4, p.28.
its Parliament and establishing U.S. rule. In 1917 a congressional law imposed citizenship upon the Puerto Rican people and deprived them of Puerto Rican nationality. Puerto Rico was put on the agenda of the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations in 1972, which was described as raising new hopes among North American Native nations. Akwesasne Notes also reported that Puerto Ricans had burned their U.S. military draft cards, an act described as reflecting “a part of a wider issue” by the paper, which quoted the president of the Puerto Rican “Federacion Universitarios Pro Independencia (F.U.P.I.).” When he talked about the young men who were indicted because of their refusal to participate in the draft, he pointed out that the Puerto Rican youth had been taken to U.S. federal court, not to Puerto Rican courts:

So they [the Puerto Rican youth] know where the suppression of the people comes from. Militarism here is the force trying to maintain the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

“The Declaration of Continued Independence of the First International Indian Treaty Council at Standing Rock Sioux Indian Country” also mentioned the Puerto Rican people. It stated that

We hereby ally ourselves with the colonized Puerto Rican People in their struggle for Independence from the same United States of America.

Another, final example is that of the Micronesian people; in this case, too, newspapers pointed out similarities between the Micronesian people’s experience and the Indian experience. “The same U.S. Department which manages North American native peoples also “manages” peoples and lands” of Micronesia, one could read in Akwesasne Notes. Micronesians were also described as facing the same issues Indians did: “aboriginal title, traditional culture and government, common tribal ownership of land and resources, and development consistent with the desires of the native people.”

635 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.4, p.28.
10. Patterns of identification in the 1970s

When summarizing how Native Americans identified in relation to the United States in the newspapers of the early 1970s, certain views stand out as characteristic. Whether issues and events were discussed from a discourse of sovereign statehood or a discourse of peoplehood, many of the statements portrayed Indians as “outside,” not part of the United States. There was also a relatively strong emphasis on tribal sovereignty in the sense of separate statehood. In several examples, Indian tribes were both directly and indirectly referred to or described as separate states. Statehood could be asserted through references to international protocol between states or to tribes’ issuing their own passports. Certain tribes were more frequently associated with statehood than others – namely, the Iroquois Confederacy and the Lakota Sioux. The Indian rights organization called the American Indian Movement (AIM) was also especially tied to statements of tribal sovereignty, but the newspapers attest that additional Indian tribes and organizations also asserted tribal sovereign statehood. Most frequently, those who claimed tribal sovereignty referred to treaties between Indian tribes and the United States as proof of Indian independence.

Sovereignty claims can be tied to an international discourse of colonial independence. Native Americans identified with other colonized peoples of the world. The strong sovereignty claims were also matched by the few articles that described Indians as U.S. citizens or referred to civil rights. Very little interest in federal, state, and local elections appeared among Native Americans in the newspapers. The politics of greater America was apparently not something that concerned them. Indians were certainly aware that they were affected by decisions these governments made, and some encouraged fellow Indians to vote, but generally it seems that these elections were not considered an Indian issue.

There was also very little interest in other groups within the United States that struggled for rights, including those active in the civil rights movement, non-Indian ethnic movements, and political movements. These were not considered Indian struggles because Native Americans did not seek equal rights. They had their own agenda to achieve special rights for Indians as the original inhabitants of the continent.
Although the newspapers showed little interest in the election of federal officials, the federal government was described as important owing to its role as a protector of tribes. The special relationship between tribes and the federal government, the role of trustee, was referred to several times. The federal government was described as a protector against state intrusions on Indian jurisdiction. The federal government could also play a protective role when internal problems arose with tribal governments—for example, violations of civil rights, voting fraud, and so on. But federal involvement was not always seen in a positive light in the newspapers. The federal government was accused of supporting or at least enabling the corrupt Oglala Sioux tribal Chairman Richard Wilson. It was also said to cause conflicts between Indian tribes. Past decisions to divide Indian lands into reservations had led to current intertribal conflicts. Some Native Americans thought that if the tribes were allowed to operate without federal involvement the problems could be resolved.

The 1970s were characterized by many court battles involving Indian rights and jurisdiction versus those of the states. This was a time when the extent of tribal jurisdiction was thoroughly tested in the courts. Tribal self-governance was not taken for granted in the 1970s, when termination of the Indian tribes was still a fresh in the memory. Many rights that would grant Indians greater power over their own communities emerged from the struggle that took place in the early 1970s, including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.

An idea that appeared in the newspapers and that dissociated Native Americans from the United States was the image of Indians as colonized peoples. This was especially apparent in the descriptions of other peoples as colonized; those peoples were then compared to Indians. The United States was described as a conqueror that had colonized not only Indians but also other peoples around the world. Native Americans did not identify with the domestic struggle concerning the rights of other ethnic groups, but they did identify with groups that had been colonized by the United States, as discussed in the preceding chapter. In this regard, the Vietnam War was interpreted in colonial terms. Comparisons were made of how the U.S. government had treated the Vietnamese and the Indians—for example, taking their land, controlling them, taking their children, and so forth. But Indians identified with other colonized peoples only as long as they remained in their own lands. When they entered the United States, the colonized became the colonizer, and Native American support for and identification with them dissipated.

Indian peoplehood, as portrayed in the newspapers, was greatly associated in the early 1970s with the historic Indian. The traditional warrior image appeared several times, sometimes in direct reference to the warriors of the past, sometimes in the form of warrior societies in the present modeled after
historic ones. When these warriors were described as protecting “their land,” they meant Indian land. These warriors had gone to war to protect it against the United States.

But it was not only the United States that was portrayed as the enemy in the newspapers. Another enemy was “the white man.” Sometimes depicted in close association with the United States (for example, the U.S. was described as a white man’s state), the white man at other times appeared separate from the nation. The conception of the white man was, of course, greatly related to race; however, it was also an image of the “other.” Whiteness and Indianness were contrasted, and the Indian way was the good way. To be white was to engage in a specific way of thinking about and acting in the world, and this meant that ideologically, an Indian could be white and white people could be Indian if they thought and acted in the “Indian way.” White people were portrayed very negatively in the newspapers in terms of both how they acted and who they were. They were greedy, they smelled, and they were responsible for Indian grievances.

Indian activism was not new in the early 1970s, but it took new forms during that period. It was visible and loud, and it moved into the streets. The spirit of the time, which encompassed revolutionary change, peoples’ rights to freedom, and cultural revival, often triggered identification outside the United States, whether in the form of tribal sovereignty or in the form of identification with the historic Indian.
11. The context of the early 1990s

In the early 1980s, the political allegiance of the American people had taken a turn to the right. The election of Ronald Reagan as president began a twelve-year long Republican governance of the United States (1981–1993), until Democrat Bill Clinton took over. The economic crisis of the 1970s, with its rising oil prices and increasing unemployment, led people who had traditionally supported a Democratic government to vote for Reagan. This new group of supporters came primarily from the working class. Many objected to what they saw as the Democrats’ handouts to people who did not work.\(^{640}\)

Reagan believed that a freer market economy and less government involvement would resolve the U.S. financial crisis. This approach entailed lower taxes and cutbacks in social programs. But under this policy, the economic gap between rich and poor increased dramatically; in fact, “[n]ot since the 1920s had America seen such economic inequality.” And as inequality increased, so did social problems. Violent crime, especially homicide, spiraled upward. Homelessness and the number of school dropouts also increased, as did the number of child-abuse cases and other crimes.\(^ {641}\)

The right-wing political turn also paralleled increased support for fundamentalist Christian groups in the United States. These Christians thought that the Bible, “God’s law,” should be the basis for American law and society, and they blamed the hardship that the United States faced on the spiritual condition of America. Reagan enjoyed support from this group.\(^ {642}\)

But American society was split. Although support for fundamentalist Christian views had increased, many Americans saw these ideas as threatening basic freedoms, and the group “People for the American Way” was founded to protect civil liberties and preserve the separation between church and state in the United States.\(^ {643}\)

Tension also emerged between ethnic groups in American society. Large numbers of new immigrants had arrived in the United States since the 1970s, mostly from Latin America and Asia. In New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, racial tensions motivated African Americans to boycott Korean

\(^ {641}\) Norton et al. 2012, pp.893, 896, 904.
\(^ {642}\) Norton et al. 2012, pp.890, 902.
\(^ {643}\) Norton et al. 2012, p. 902.
grocery stores, and violent conflicts broke out in Los Angeles schools between blacks and newly arrived Mexicans.\textsuperscript{644}

The most violent example of ethnic conflict was the Los Angeles riot of 1992. Its direct cause was the acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers who had been charged with beating a black motorist named Rodney King. King had failed to stop when chased by the police at a speed exceeding 100 miles per hour.\textsuperscript{645} Within minutes of the verdict’s announcement, the protests started, and the same night the south-central district of Los Angeles was in flames.\textsuperscript{646} Although the riot has been represented as a political protest of blacks against white police officers’ brutal treatment of a black man, the situation was more complicated than that. It was primarily retail establishments that were attacked, and Koreans shopkeepers were specifically targeted. Over half the arrests made in connection to the riot were of Hispanics, not blacks.\textsuperscript{647}

At the end of the 1980s, international tension was decreasing in the wake of the Soviet Union’s dissolution and the disintegration of the eastern European communist bloc. In 1989, the Berlin wall was torn down, and in 1990, the two German states were united. The Soviet Union ceased to exist in 1991.\textsuperscript{648} This meant the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the communist threat that had so greatly worried the United States. Although a war with the Soviet Union and its allies had been avoided, the United States did not avoid going to war in the early 1990s after Iraq invaded Kuwait. Threatened by the Iraqi control of Kuwaiti oil resources and petroleum supply, the United States intervened. Operation Desert Storm began in January 1991, first with air strikes on Baghdad and later through the deployment of land troops, forcing the Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait. The war ended in March 1991. While 40,000 Iraqi soldiers had died, only 240 allied troops (among them 148 Americans) were killed.\textsuperscript{649}

The war in Kuwait did not provoke the same storm of protests the Vietnam War had done in the 1970s. Political scientist John Mueller has explained that this was because the short war brought few American casualties. Popular opinion about both the Korean War and the Vietnam War had followed the same pattern: support for both conflicts was high in the beginning but then declined as casualty rates rose. In the Korean War, U.S. casualty rates rose quickly, causing support for the war to drop equally quickly. In Vietnam, the casualties rose gradually, and support for the war eroded slow-

\textsuperscript{644} Norton et al. 2012, p.906.
\textsuperscript{645} Norton et al. 2012, p.920.
\textsuperscript{646} Abu-Lughod 2007, pp.230–231.
\textsuperscript{647} Morrison & Lowry 1994, p.19, 38.
\textsuperscript{648} Norton et al. 2012, p.908.
\textsuperscript{649} Norton et al. 2012, p.912.
ly. The Gulf War, which lasted less than two months and led to few casualties, did not meet any widespread unpopularity.\textsuperscript{650}

In all, the year 1990 marked a turning point both in domestic politics and on the international scene for the United States. In 1992, the federal government changed from a long-time Republican government to a Democratic one. Globally, the communist empire of the Soviet Union and its allies fell apart, ushering in a new world order in which only one superpower, the United States, now existed.

Native Americans in the early 1990s

Intensely militant Indian activism ended in late 1970s. “The Longest Walk” of 1978, which started in San Francisco and ended in Washington D.C., marked the end of this era. The walk was described by participants themselves as a spiritual mission to win the sympathy of non-Indians.\textsuperscript{651} Indian activism changed in character, and although some Indians wanted to continue the work of the Indian radicals of the 1970s, they neither found the same support nor gained the level of attention that the 1970s activists had. Smith and Warrior describe the actions of the Indian radicals of the 1990s as “timid, predictable, and barely noticed” compared to the activism of the 1970s:

Hardy militants carry picket signs at Super Bowl and World Series, and petition the White House for executive clemency for Leonard Peltier, and the era when Indians seized attention of the world is so distant as to seem more legend than history.\textsuperscript{652}

The Indian activism of the 1970s had brought changes in the relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government. Since then, Native Americans had gained from the federal government greater influence over their own affairs and greater respect for their cultural distinctiveness. This was shown in both law making and in several court cases. In 1975, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act. By entering into contracts with federal departments, tribes could take responsibility for and control such programs as housing, health care, education, and law enforcement on reservations. Thus, power in Indian communities was gradually transferred from the BIA to tribal councils. The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, which provided federal assistance to tribal colleges, gave Native Americans increased control also over the higher education of its members. The American Indian Child Wel-

\textsuperscript{650} Mueller 1993, pp.205–210.
\textsuperscript{651} Edmunds et al. 2007, p.434–435.
\textsuperscript{652} Smith & Warrior 1996, p.279.
fare Act, passed the same year, granted tribes exclusive jurisdiction in the custody of Indian children.  

Tribal control over natural resources within tribal jurisdictions was also enhanced by Congress through the Indian Mineral Development Act of 1982 and the Indian Forest Management Act of 1990. In addition, “[t]he Clean Air Act and the Clear Water Act were amended to allow tribal governments to participate in the system of cooperative federalism for environmental protection...” Tribes were given TAS status – that is, they were treated as states: “TAS status allowed tribes to accept the federal delegation of authority to set and enforce clean water and air standards.”

A decision that had a profound effect on the financial situation of many tribes was the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988, which allowed Native American tribes to manage gaming operations on reservation lands. Certain games were allowed only if negotiated through a compact with the state in which the reservation was located. Such agreements included issues of infrastructure and law enforcement. In 1991, some 130 Indian tribes had bingo operations.

As early as the beginning of the 1980s, the relationship between tribes and the federal government had changed in favor of the Native Americans; the U.S. government and “tribal councils and their leaders were now partners in policymaking.” Although Indians tribes had not achieved sovereignty, they had much greater influence over their own affairs in the early 1990s than they did in the early 1970s. A government-to-government relationship with tribes was acknowledged by the federal government, but it spoke of tribal self-governance rather than self-determination.

When the tribal governments gained more control over their internal administration and social services, they also acquired the power to hire personnel. Tribe members were hired as teachers, administrators, social workers, housing officials, and law-enforcement officers, providing jobs. The tribal government became the main employer on many reservations. This role also entailed great power over tribe members, power that could lead to political disputes between groups within native communities regarding the limited number of jobs.

Congress also acknowledged Indian cultural rights. Indian activists since the 1970s and 1980s had criticized archaeology and archaeological museum collections, raising the question of who owned the cultural property of Native Americans. Archaeologists, museum representatives, and Native Americans had engaged in heated debates until the passage of the Native American

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654 Helton & Robertson 2007, p.45.
656 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.439.
657 Helton & Robertson 2007, p.44.
658 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.448.
Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990. It expanded Indian rights that had been granted in the 1979 Archaeological Resources and Protection Act. Now Native Americans were to be consulted before excavations on federally owned lands began, and the act granted them the property rights to grave goods and the right to repatriate human remains found in excavated areas. Indian rights to cultural property were also the goal of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, which regulated the authenticity of Native American art and extended tribal control in the certification of Native art.

Several court decisions had likewise favored Native American interests since the 1970s. U.S. courts were taking seriously treaties with Indians tribes and in most cases considered tribal rights sympathetically. District Court Judge George Boldt, for example, decided that the Native American groups of Washington State were entitled to half the salmon harvest in state waters in 1974, and the federal court reaffirmed tribal claims to water rights in several court cases during the 1970s and 1980s.

Not every court ruling was positive for the Indians, however. *Montana v. United States* (1981) ruled that Native Americans did not have authority over land owned by non-Indians within reservation boundaries, and *Duro v. Reina* (1990), limited tribal jurisdiction over Indians from other tribes.

Although many rights had been gained by Native Americans in the early 1990s, political activism still existed; instead of demonstrating in the streets, however, the struggle was taking place within the system. Native Americans lobbied Congress to influence laws in favor of Indian interests, and Indian lawyers examined treaties and explored the meaning of treaty rights. Indians also increasingly turned to an international setting to gain influence over their own affairs. This activity expanded in the 1970s and continued to increase during the 1980s and 1990s. Native Americans participated as non-state entities in international institutions. Issues like self-determination, land and resource rights, and the preservation of cultural integrity were discussed in such contexts.

Moreover, Native Americans had become more integrated into mainstream American society by the early 1990s than they had been in the 1970s, both physically and culturally. In the 1990 census, a little more than half of the Indian population was living in urban areas. The number of people who spoke a Native language as their first tongue or who even spoke it at all had markedly declined. As Native Americans became increasingly comfortable in both tribal and mainstream society, however, their goals and ways of re-

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659 Castile 2006, p.106.
660 Castile 2006, p.106.
662 Helton & Robertson 2007, p.47.
663 Edmunds et al. 2007, p.452.
664 Helton & Robertson 2007, p.48.
lating to the surrounding society were also influenced. As Fixico describes it:

[t]he 1980s and 1990s saw a new generation of sophisticated Indian leaders make changes to both tribal and Indian politics. They developed new techniques and responded to new issues and concerns under a new federal Indian policy called “Indian self-determination.” College-educated, urbane, and articulate, tribal leaders and directors of Indian organizations have bicultural backgrounds and operate in both the tribal and mainstream worlds.666

College education also meant greater influence over the education system. Indian scholars were increasingly employed in the liberal arts departments and in education departments in colleges and universities, and they participated in developing Indian Studies programs.667

The living standard was higher for many Native Americans in 1992 compared to that of the early 1970s. Through education and professional jobs, they entered the American middle class. At the same time, many Indians remained poor in the early 1990s. Job opportunities, especially professional ones, were scarce on Indian reservations, leading many Indians to rely on welfare checks. Serious health problems still existed. Diabetes, especially, has become widespread among Native peoples, and alcoholism was also a problem on many reservations, causing early death from cirrhosis of the liver and in car accidents caused by drunk driving. Many positive changes had taken place by 1992 for Native Americans, but problems still persisted.

666 Fixico 2007, pp.11–12.
12. Discourse of sovereign statehood in the 1990s

Compared to the early 1970s, the newspapers from 1992 had few examples of Native Americans portraying tribes as independent states. Often, these accounts were ambivalent about the tribes’ relation to the United States. Statements that portrayed tribes as sovereign states were mixed with statements that located Indian tribes inside the United States. Several statements referred to a government-to-government relationship with the United States (and Canada), declarations that could be interpreted as expressions of sovereignty. These statements generally seem to have referred to different governments within the United States, however. In most cases these texts seem to have implied a domestic relationship whereby Indian tribes had a relationship to the federal government similar to that of states. It was surely this meaning that the American presidents had in mind when they acknowledged a government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes. The few examples of Native Americans obviously identifying as independent from the United States, along with the more numerous examples of an ambivalent or unclear position in the matter, led me to present these approaches together in the first part of this chapter.

As in the early 1970s, certain Indian tribes stand out when it comes to claiming sovereign statehood or demonstrating an ambivalent relationship to the United States. These were the Iroquois Confederacy and the Lakota (Sioux), the Western Shoshone, the Navajo, and the Ojibway Tribes. The first part of this chapter also discusses Indians in a Canadian context, Indian speakers at the United Nations, and the meaning of sovereign nationhood as presented in the newspapers. The second part of the chapter analyzes the various ways Indian tribes were presented in newspaper accounts as domestic nations or “nations within,” and the third part demonstrates how Indians were presented as U.S. citizens.
Tribal sovereignty and a government-to-government relationship with the United States

The Iroquois

As in the early 1970s, members of the Iroquois Confederacy gave examples of claiming complete independence and separate statehood. *Akwesasne Notes* described the Iroquois assertion of independence from the Canadian state. The leader of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, Ovide Mercredi, had expressed the desire that Indians be accepted as equal partners in the Canadian state. The Iroquois, however, did not want to be part of Canada; they had their own constitution, the Kaianerekowa, or Great Law of Peace. “We are not part of the Canadian federation. We have our own laws, constitution and government, which we will abide by,” they stated. The Iroquois characterized their relationship with Canada as one between equals and referred to a long historic alliance between the two parties. They referred to the same treaty that was mentioned in *Akwesasne Notes* in 1972 but used slightly different wording:

When we made our first agreement with the British Crown, in 1664, our relationship was symbolized by the Two-Row Wampum, a belt with two parallel dark lines on a white field of peace. The two lines signified the Iroquois canoe and the British sailing ship, which would travel down the river of life side by side. Neither would interfere in the course of internal affairs of the other. The three rows of white wampum between the two lines stand for peace, respect and friendship, concepts that keep the two peoples close together as well as at a respectful distance.

This statement establishes that the Iroquois Confederacy was not seen as part of Canada; neither did it seek to become part of it. However, this did not mean that the Iroquois were opposed to continuing an alliance with Canada. Such a political alliance was seen by the Iroquois as a continuation of their alliance with Great Britain, and they even suggested extensive cooperation with Canada. One proposal was that the Iroquois Confederacy be granted a permanent representative in the Canadian government who had the authority to speak in legislative matters but did not have decision-making powers. This would also work in reverse: Canadian representatives would participate in the Iroquois Confederacy’s meetings, being permitted to speak but not to vote. “In that way, we would respect each other’s right to self-government.

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670 *Akwesasne Notes* 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.36.
without compromising our own.” Consequently, not only had the Canadian
government no right to interfere in Iroquois political matters, but members
of the Iroquois tribes had no right to interfere in Canadian political matters
either. The separatist stance taken by the Iroquois in the early 1970s re-

Tribe members of the Iroquois Confederacy did not always relate to
the dominant nation-state in an obviously separatist way, however. News From
Indian Country reported that an Oneida speaker at a National Congress of
American Indians (NCAI) convention had called for a government-to-
government relationship with the United States. He asserted that he was a
citizen of the Oneida Nation who wanted “the whole bureaucratic mess to
get out of their way and let ‘Nations be Nations.’” His mention of being a
“citizen” of the Oneida Nation and of letting “Nations be Nations” indicates
an identification apart from the United States. But in emphasizing eliminat-
ing the “bureaucratic mess” rather than tribal sovereignty and in talking
about a government-to-government relationship with the federal U.S. admin-
istration, he likely meant that he wanted more internal self-determination for
the Oneida Nation.

The Lakota Sioux

Another group that had asserted independent statehood in the early 1970s
and continued to do so in 1992 was the Lakotas, or the Sioux. Akwesasne
Notes reported that a council of elders from the Lakota Indian tribes had
declared the groups independent from the United States at a press confer-
ence. This “declaration of independence” came after a four-day conference
at which elders from the various reservations in South Dakota agreed that it
was time for the Lakotas to achieve political sovereignty. The new govern-
ment was to be traditional in nature and would have a relationship with the
United States “on a nation-to-nation” basis only. As had been done so many
times in the 1970s, the leaders also referred to the Fort Laramie Treaty of
1868 between the United States and the Sioux tribes. The Lakotas stated that
the treaty was still binding for both parties. The article also presented the
consequences of the declaration:

The Lakota Declaration of Independence will eliminate all jurisdictional
claims currently enforced by state, federal and Bureau of Indian Affairs au-
thorities. All American law and borders will be rejected within the new na-
tional boundaries. The traditional spiritual path of the White Buffalo Calf
Pipe will prevail, but all other belief systems will be tolerated in the new na-

672 Akwesasne Notes 1992, vol.23, no.3, p.14. The Iroquois Confederacy’s statement was also
673 News from Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.11.
Current citizens of the United States would be welcomed as foreign nationals or as new Lakota citizens, if qualified. Lakota passports would be instituted in order to administer the new national boundaries.675

The new Lakota Nation was to be established by peaceful means, and it was believed that the official representatives, the tribal chairmen of the Cheyenne River Sioux and the Pine Ridge Sioux, Bourland and Salaway, would support the new nation. Neither of these men had heard about the meeting, however, and they argued that it “fell outside of organized tribal politics.” Akwesasne Notes also contended that a sovereignty movement had been growing in “national Native American tribal politics” lately, and the Lakotas’ declaration of independence was the first action taken to reach that goal.676

The Lakota declaration demonstrates an obvious identification outside the United States. Talk of new national boundaries, citizenship, and Lakota passports shows that these groups were imagining the Lakota Nation in terms of a separate state. As had also occurred in the early 1970s, a traditionalist group now argued for establishing Native government separate from the official tribal council acknowledged by the federal government.

The Western Shoshone

The Western Shoshone composed a third Native American group that claimed tribal independent statehood. This view was expressed in relation to a conflict between the Western Shoshone and the federal government concerning the latter’s attempts to stop Western Shoshone livestock from grazing on government lands beyond reservation boundaries. Federal agents from the Bureau of Land Management had seized livestock from the tribe’s members because they had no federal grazing permits and their livestock overgrazed the public lands. The Western Shoshone, however, asserted that as a sovereign nation they did not need federal permits to let their livestock graze on ancestral Western Shoshone homelands; their sovereignty made them subject only to their own laws. Chief Raymond Yowell was reported to have referred to the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, which had allowed settlers to pass through Shoshone territory but had not ceded title of the land to the United States.677 Yowell also mentioned an “armed invasion” of the Western Shoshone Nation by the U.S. government that had violated the human and civil rights of the Shoshone.678 Another article described the Western Shoshone response as a declaration of independence from the United States. Chief Yowell stated:

The Western Shoshone Nation hereby declares to the United States and to all nations of the world that it is a sovereign nation. All relations between the Western Shoshone Nation and any other nation of the world will be conducted on a level of accepted international protocol. This notice will be followed with a formal Charter of External sovereignty [...] Let the United States take due notice of this fact and deal with the Western Shoshone Nation on a nation-to-nation basis.679

The rhetoric of this example certainly presents the Western Shoshone as perceiving themselves separate from the United States; at the same time, however, the statement contends that the Western Shoshone’s civil rights had been violated, a stance that defines them as a part of the United States. The Western Shoshone thus did not always describe their relationship to the United States in ways that were obviously and exclusively separatist.

Another example of the Western Shoshone’s unclear identification vis-à-vis the United States was presented in another issue of News From Indian Country. The newspaper reported that two Western Shoshone women were planning a European speaking tour; they intended to leave their American passports at home and would instead “present their Western Shoshone nation passports as the official document which verifies their identity [as] women of a nation within a nation.”680 Being a nation within a nation obviously puts the writer within the U.S. domestic framework; however, having distinct passports indicates a vision of tribal sovereign statehood. The article also described Indian tribes in terms of sovereign nations, comparing Indian nations with other nations of the world. The United States sends troops all over the world to protect the sovereignty of smaller nations. “So how is that any different than what America has done to Native Nations that it raped, plundered and stole land from?” the writer asks.681 The speaker here obviously identified herself as something other than American, but after that she suddenly became part of a we that refers to Americans: “We have a hard time fessing up our dark and sordid history because it was wrong, and it will never be right until we correct the injustices of our past.”682 The writer moved in and out of identification with the United States, oscillating between the image of tribal statehood and tribes as domestic nations.

The Navajos

No statements in the 1992 newspapers clearly defined the Navajo Tribe as a sovereign state; however, I encountered examples of wording in the newspapers that could be interpreted as bearing such implications. Navajo President Peterson Zah and Vice President Marshall Plummer reported in “The Presi-

dent’s State of the Nation Message” that the Nevada Board of Regents had formally approved the proposal of the Navajo government to waive out-of-state tuition for Navajo students. The board included all Native Americans in the decision in order to avoid the question of discrimination. The proposal read as follows:

We proposed that the waivers be granted not based on the race of a Student, but based on the fact they are members of a sovereign Indian nation. In the same way that waivers are granted to foreign exchange students [...] a government-to-government agreement would address the discrimination question.683

An out-of-state tuition waiver with reference to tribal sovereignty could imply that Native Americans saw their tribes as separate and independent from the United States. However, although they compared themselves with foreign exchange students who were already granted tuition waivers, they did not place Native Americans in the foreign category. In addition, the leaders talked about a government-to-government relationship with the state of Nevada, indicating a domestic relationship to the United States. Indians were apparently not seen as residents of the state, but they were seen as part of the United States.

President Zah and Vice President Plummer also discussed a government-to-government relationship with the federal government concerning another issue. They stated, “Our goal is to increase the housing allocated to Indian reservations by establishing a government-to-government relationship with HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development].” They had devoted months of hard work to lobbying Congress for increased funding for highway constructions, and the Navajo vice president had joined a coalition with other tribal leaders to meet with the U.S. secretary of HUD.684 They seem to have been interested in increased influence over tribal affairs and in obtaining more funds rather than political independence.

Even when the Navajo Nation applied to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) for funds, those involved did not seem to consider the Navajo Nation a state independent from the United States. OPIC is an organization that encourages investments and financial development by providing loans in foreign countries. Not surprisingly, Congress had not accepted the Navajo proposal that Indian reservations be included in such lending. Zah and Plummer contended that “we must first educate Congress about our needs and how OPIC can help Indian Country.”685 No discussions indicated that the Navajo Nation was foreign to the United States or cited any other reason why Navajos should receive funds earmarked for overseas loans.

The Navajo leaders also discussed native sovereignty, stating that “it is an exercise of sovereignty for a people to determine by what name they are called”; they also mentioned the “citizens of the Navajo Nation,” indicating that tribes are independent nations, separate from the United States. However, Zah and Plummer clearly identified with the United States when referring to the contributions Navajo code talkers made during the Second World War. They stated that these Navajos had finally been recognized for their contributions by an exhibition in Pentagon. Their identification with the United States is obvious in the following statement:

As patriots and heroes, the Navajo Code talkers illustrate not only the spirit of the Navajo people, but the spirit of America in which diverse cultures and languages can unite and fight for the greater good.

These examples from the statements of the Navajo Nation’s president and vice president are prime examples of Native Americans talking about tribal sovereignty and seeking the privileges given foreigners, even though they would still identify themselves as in some way part of the United States.

The Ojibways

The Ojibway editor of News From Indian Country, Paul DeMain, also described the Indian relationship to the United States in ambivalent terms. He oscillated between depicting tribes as both part of and apart from the United States. On one hand, DeMain wanted Indian tribes to be accepted by the surrounding society. He argued that the problem of Native Americans has been and continues to be that “a nation of people […] Euro-descendants and other melting pot adherents,” continue to give Indians nations “a second class status.” DeMain also wanted to create “a meaningful foundation for full tribal participation in the Federal and Congressional policy-making process.” These statements indicate that DeMain identified the Ojibway Tribe as part of the United States. On the other hand, however, he also thought that perhaps in the next 500 years Indian tribes would “regain in totality what has been lost,” indicating that he sought complete sovereignty. He stated, moreover, that perhaps (at least in the future) tribes would once again be the sovereign nations they had “heard spoken [of] by our grandfathers,” and that someday they would have a seat in the United Nations “with other world governments.” DeMain argued for greater influence and participation in the current U.S. federal government, but at the same time he apparently also fostered a vision of complete independence.

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688 Also called Chippewa and Anishinaabe.
689 *News From Indian Country* 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.11.
Indians in the Canadian context

The leader of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada during the 1990s, Ovide Mercredi, discussed the Indian relationship to the Canadian nation-state. The Canadian context differs from that of the U.S. in that the northern nation is home to a large French-speaking minority that claims rights to its own culture and language, as well as a specific territory, Quebec. In 1990, support for Quebec’s sovereignty and independence rose dramatically, owing to English-speaking society’s rejection of recognizing Quebec as a “distinct society.” In a 1985 poll, 15 percent of the Quebecers asked supported independence. By 1990, that number had risen to 46 percent. An all-party committee was appointed by the National Assembly of Quebec in 1991 to discuss the issue of Quebec’s relationship with Canada, raising the prospect of secession. In 1992, Quebec and other districts of Canada voted on what is known as the Charlottetown Accord, whereby not only French-speaking Quebecers but also the aboriginal peoples of Canada were to be recognized as distinct societies with the right to self-govern. In the October 1992 election, Quebec and most other districts rejected the accord.690

When Mercredi addressed a Quebec audience, he pointed out similarities in interests and experiences between them and his own people. No other Canadian people could understand the Indian situation better than the Quebec people, he stated. Indians should also have the right to self-govern. If the province of Quebec should be granted self-determination, so also should Indians. “We’re the other group in this country that can lay claim to the right to self-determination under international law,” he contended. But he did not want to create a separate nation-state for the Indians or their tribes; the recognition of Indians’ inherent right to self-government did not mean that the Indian people would have their own military organization or their own criminal code, nor did it mean that they would reject federal or provincial law. He wanted Indians to take equal part in the life and government of the federation, along with other peoples of Canada. “For the life of men, I don’t understand why my people have been excluded from shaping the country in a fundamental way,” he stated. Mercredi wanted Indians to be accepted “on the basis that we are individuals sharing land, sharing a country, living in the same nation-state.” Although they were the original occupants of the land, they had repeatedly been rejected.691

Mercredi obviously identified as part of the Canadian nation-state, and he wanted native peoples to be able to participate on an equal footing in the federation’s governance. At the same time, he called for the internal self-government of Indian tribes, apparently seeing these tribes as self-governing entities within the nation-state of Canada. However, Mercredi also mentioned the rights of Indian as distinct peoples. He stated that they had strug-

gled not to be rejected by other peoples within Canada simply because they were Indians. Mercredi wanted all the peoples of Canada to unite while preserving the distinctiveness of each. The right to be different should be respected, he argued.\textsuperscript{692}

Both cultural rights and self-government were important to Mercredi. He said he was both proud and jealous of the Quebecers, who had their own government and a provincial legislature with which to make laws. They also enjoyed protected language rights, and language is the basis of culture, something that Indian peoples did not have.\textsuperscript{693}

Not all of Mercredi’s statements placed Indian tribes within the Canadian state as clearly as those just mentioned did. When he addressed the United Nations, he not only asked the Canadian government to recognize the “inherent right of our people to self-government,” but he also referred to a nation-to-nation relationship with Canada:

\begin{quote}
On a nation-to-nation basis we entered into treaties with a nation state called Canada. We entered into treaties with good intentions and goodwill as a way of sharing our land and resources, and as a way of ensuring the integrity of our societies and the economic security of our People.\textsuperscript{694}
\end{quote}

Although Mercredi talks about treaties between Indian tribes and Canada as separate nations, his focus remained on sharing the land and on ensuring security for his people, indicating that he may still have identified as part of Canada.

Indian speakers at the United Nations

Since the 1970s Native Americans had increasingly turned to the international community in their struggle to obtain native rights. In 1982, indigenous peoples were given an official role within the U.N. by the United Nations Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,\textsuperscript{695} establishing the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP). One goal of the working group was to draft a U.N. declaration of indigenous rights. Early drafts of the declaration argued for a strong form of self-determination whereby it would be possible for indigenous peoples to achieve independent statehood if they so desired. Engle explained this approach as a reflection of the fact that North American Indians dominated the working group in those early years. In the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a rough correlation between arguments for self-

\textsuperscript{692} Akwesasne Notes 1992, vol.23, no.3, p.7. Mercredi’s speech was also referred to in Akwesasne Notes 1992, vol.23, no.4, p.18.
\textsuperscript{694} Navajo Times 1992, vol.32, no.52, p.12.
\textsuperscript{695} A subgroup of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
determination among native peoples of North America and arguments for cultural rights among native peoples of South America. The general position of the working group shifted more toward promoting cultural rights than promoting sovereignty after its meeting in 1988. Only a small and extreme minority of indigenous groups demanded independence at that point. The demand for self-determination remained important, but its manifestation was now seen rather in terms of self-governance within the state. Human rights documents also became the bases for indigenous peoples’ claims to self-determination, and the human right to culture was also defended.

The struggle for indigenous rights in an international setting was reflected in the newspapers through reports about Indians participating in meetings and speaking at the United Nations. The question of full sovereignty was addressed by some Native Americans, but human rights and even civil rights were also mentioned.

The Navajo Times reported that more than 200 indigenous delegates from all over the world had gathered at the United Nations to discuss issues concerning indigenous peoples. Many different issues were discussed, among them the question of sovereignty. A Navajo delegation among the indigenous peoples present argued for several rights. These Navajos sought justice for the human and civil rights violations of the U.S. Congress, which had forced Navajo families to relocate. However, the delegates also seem to have argued for tribal sovereignty. One of the Navajo leaders had stated, “We will not allow U.S. jurisdiction to be imposed on us,” implying that the United States had no jurisdiction over the Navajo Nation. Other representatives of Native nations were also said to seek “true representation in the United Nations”; as it was, indigenous peoples did not have voting power in the United Nations. Oren Lyons of the Onondaga Nation said this:

> It is not right that we have no official voice to speak for ourselves. Instead we are represented by our oppressors, those conquering nations that took our land and resources.

Chris Peters, who was the director of the Seventh Generation Fund, agreed with Lyons that indigenous peoples needed greater power within the United

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702 The Seventh Generation Fund is an Indian organization that was founded in 1977. Its mission is to promote “cultural revitalization, leadership development, tribal sovereignty and culturally appropriate economic development strategies.” Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, Inc. www.7genfund.org/our-mission.
Nations. “We want the U.N. to make significant changes that would make indigenous peoples equal partners in 1993.”

When Indian peoples defined indigenous peoples as equal partners in the United Nations and when they sought recognition by that body, they asserted full tribal sovereignty and consequently identified themselves as outside the United States. At the same time, however, other Native Americans at the same meeting asked to have their civil rights upheld – that is, their rights as U.S. citizens – thus apparently identifying themselves as part of the United States.

The meaning of sovereign nationhood

As I have shown, the concept nation bore different meanings for Indians during the early 1970s. It could refer to a nation-state, and it could refer to a self-governing entity within the United States or Canada. The same was true in 1992. In the case of the Sioux declaration of independence, separate nationhood obviously envisioned tribes as independent nation-states, and this is the way one should understand the association between the Sioux and the United States: as a nation-to-nation relationship. On the other hand, when the use of Western Shoshone passports was described as a way of demonstrating identification with a “nation within a nation,” tribal nationhood entailed something other than independent nation-statehood.

As in the early 1970s, tribal nationhood could involve both sovereign and domestic nationhood, and as in the 1970s, the concept of nationhood could also take on very different meanings. It could be extended to the rest of nature, something Ojibway Waasameqwanaquat Equay did in his description of historic times:

There was the winged nation, the fish nation, the nation of the four-legged and finally the nation of the two legged. All of these nations lived in harmony with Mother Earth.

The concept of sovereignty could also have two meanings – namely, complete independence and self-government within the United States. Few pieces in the 1992 newspapers portrayed tribes as independent states and therefore demanded complete political sovereignty; however, the concept was nonetheless commonly used in the press. When the Western Shoshone Nation declared to the “United States and to all nations of the world that it is a sovereign nation,” and when it proclaimed “External Sovereignty,” the

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Western Shoshone used *sovereignty* in its sense of complete independence. The same was true in the reference to the Lakota declaration of independence as the first step in “a growing sovereignty movement.” Often, however, the term *sovereignty* was used in a domestic context, in which tribes were described as “sovereign nations within a nation,” and in other similar ways. George Wahquahboshkuk, chairman of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribe, stated that Indian Country was exercising tribal sovereignty in new ways. Native peoples tried to gain representation in the U.S. federal government by introducing a resolution in Congress that would give Indian tribes two representatives in the House. Although the resolution did not pass, it indicated a change of attitude among Native Americans, Wahquahboshkuk stated. He also wanted the BIA abolished and tribal affairs transferred to the State Department. He obviously interpreted *tribal sovereignty* not as complete independence but as something more like the self-determination that U.S. states have in relationship to the federal government. In the *Navajo Times a sovereign nation* was defined as a nation “with the inherent authority to oversee internal affairs.”

It is not always clear which meaning was ascribed to the concept of sovereignty. For example, Gregg Bourland, chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux, associated the name change from Custer Battlefield to Little Bighorn Battlefield with sovereignty, and the United South and Eastern Tribes Gaming Association’s attempt to protect Indian gaming rights under federal law was seen as a way to unify so as to “preserve sovereignty.” The Pine Ridge Commodity Program was reported to have been moved by contract from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Oglala Nation; the director of the program said this was a step toward tribal sovereignty. Kiowa tribal Chairman J. T. Goombi also addressed the meaning of the word *sovereignty* in one of the articles, and he asked non-Indians to “respect our definition and support our right to control our destinies.” He did not explain that definition, however.

Although it is not always possible to know the precise meaning Native Americans in the newspaper accounts ascribed to the concept of sovereignty, the term was apparently commonly used to denote self-government. The frequency of the word’s use does not at all correlate with the frequency with

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which tribes were portrayed as separate nation-states. In 1992, no fewer than 61 articles used sovereign, while 11 articles used self-government or self-governance, and 11 used self-determination. Sometimes a single article used a combination of the three. Most of the articles referring to tribal governance used sovereignty, while the vast majority of articles placed Indian tribes within the United States (or Canada), indicating that sovereignty in most cases bore the meaning of self-governance in the newspapers of 1992.

Tribes as domestic nations

The issues of jurisdiction and legal rights

Tribes frequently went to federal court in attempts to enforce their rights to govern their own affairs and to enforce federal law when state governments violated tribal rights. Jurisdictional disputes were almost exclusively described as existing between Indian tribes and the states, not between tribes and the federal government. Several of the conflicts between tribes and states in the early 1970s were still ongoing even in 1992; one was the controversy about whether the states had the right to levy taxes on Indian lands. Minnesota Chippewa tribal President Darrel “Chip” Wadena, for instance, stated that his tribal government was ready to seek a hearing in federal court if Minnesota counties tried to tax reservation lands. His worries stemmed from a court case in Washington State that allowed taxation on Indian reservation lands. One of the Minnesota counties was located entirely inside the White Earth Indian Reservation, and it wanted to collect taxes from the tribal casino to pay for services provided by the county. The Chippewas, however, stated that they preferred to pay for those services rather than be taxed by the counties. They wanted to be categorized as self-governing entities, not as subjects of the state.

The Sac and Fox tribe of Oklahoma likewise objected to the state’s levying taxes on their lands. News From Indian Country reported that the Supreme Court would decide whether the Sac and Fox Indians, who worked and kept cars on tribal lands, had to pay Oklahoma income tax and motor vehicle tax. A federal district court had ruled, and the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals had upheld the decision, that the state could tax non-tribe members who lived and worked on tribal land but could not tax tribe members. The petition that the tribe filed in the Supreme Court objected even to this ruling, arguing that no one working on tribal lands should be taxed by the state. The Sac and Fox tribe also argued that the Constitution gives the federal gov-

ernment sole authority over tribal matters, granting none to the state government.719 Federal jurisdiction over the tribe was apparently acknowledged, but state jurisdiction was not.

Another issue that had caused disagreements with the states in the 1970s and continued to do so in 1992 was Indian hunting and fishing rights. One such conflict centered on whether Indian tribes had the right to issue hunting licenses on land outside reservation boundaries. _News From Indian Country_ reported that Minnesota officials intended to arrest Fond du Lac Chippewa tribe members if they hunted off reservation with tribally issued licenses. The Minnesota Natural Resource Commissioner argued that Fond du Lac members must abide by state law, which permitted shorter hunting seasons than tribal law did. Fond du Lac officials, on the other hand, intended to go to court to enforce their rights under the Treaty of 1854, which allowed them to hunt, fish, and gather outside reservation boundaries on ceded territory.720

The Treaty of 1854 was used as an argument also in a court case involving a Chippewa man who had been arrested for gathering leeches beyond his reservation. According to state officials, he had violated Minnesota state law, but the Chippewa argued that his people had never given up their hunting and fishing rights in this area.721 Hunting and fishing rights could also be asserted with reference to aboriginal rights; the Western Shoshone had sued Nevada in 1986, “alleging that the state’s wildlife regulations interfered with Shoshone aboriginal rights to hunt and fish.”722 References to treaty rights clearly remained an important means of asserting special rights for Indians within the United States.

Although the legality of treaties was usually leveraged to obtain rights, Native Americans could also use a treaty’s lack of legality vis-à-vis federal law to gain advantages for themselves. The Catawbas argued that the Treaty of Nations Ford of 1840, where they had given up ancestral lands to the State of South Carolina, was not valid because it had never been ratified, as federal law requires.723 The Catawbas’ reasoning for not acknowledging the land cession to the State of South Carolina was based on a legal technicality: the federal government had not made the agreement law. That they themselves, as a sovereign political entity, had entered into the treaty was not enough.

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Miami Indians used federal law as an argument to gain federal recognition as an Indian tribe. As mentioned earlier, special status was granted only to tribes recognized by the federal government. Federal recognition of Indian tribes was crucial for the possibility of self-determination, and it was also important for financial reasons; tribes that had not been recognized therefore tried to use federal law to gain federal recognition. News From Indian Country reported that an 1897 administrative order had caused Miami Indians to lose federal recognition, and a suit was filed to have this administrative order overturned on the grounds that the U.S. attorney had signed it without the approval of Congress. In this action the attorney had acted illegally according to U.S. federal law, the tribe argued.\textsuperscript{724}

An important issue discussed in 1992 that had not arisen in the early 1970s is the Native American right to establish gambling operations. In 1988, Congress had passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which gave Native American tribes certain rights in gambling operations. The act divided gambling into three classes, each of which involved different restrictions. Casino-style gambling (slot machines, roulette, and cards games like blackjack) needed to be approved by the state in which the Indian lands were located. A tribe-state compact had to be negotiated before the tribe could open up such a business; however, the act also stated that states should negotiate in good faith and otherwise, the tribe could sue in federal court. The federal government could “order the state and tribe to conclude a compact.”\textsuperscript{725}

Several articles describe the problems some of the tribes faced in negotiating such compacts and report that the tribes sued in federal court. A lawsuit was filed in U.S. district court to force the State of Kansas to enter into a gaming compact with the Prairie Band of Potawatomi, which wanted to open a Las Vegas–style gambling facility on its reservation. A gaming compact had been agreed upon by the tribe and Kansas Governor Joan Finney; however, the Kansas Supreme Court later nullified it.\textsuperscript{726} The Prairie Band of Potawatomi consequently turned to the federal court system to enforce federal law against the State of Kansas and to allow it to establish gambling operations on Indian lands. The Kickapoo Nation was also reported to have filed a lawsuit against the State of Kansas for not negotiating a gaming compact. Kickapoo tribal Chairman Steven Cadue was quoted in the newspaper as stating, “It is hypocrisy when the state public policy permits gambling and then denies the same constitutional rights to Indian tribes.”\textsuperscript{727} In both of these cases, the federal judicial system was expected to protect the tribal right to operate gambling facilities.

\textsuperscript{724} News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.18, p.8.
\textsuperscript{725} Canby 2009, pp.337–341.
\textsuperscript{726} News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.2.
The federal government was also asked to arbitrate disputes that did not directly involve Indian special rights or jurisdiction. Senecas, described as landlords of the city of Salamanca, asked the federal government to help them collect rent from the city. The city, built on Seneca land, was billed $750,000 yearly. In 1992, the city was four months late with the payment, and Seneca President Calvin John sent a letter announcing a monthly interest charge of 2 percent on the unpaid debt. Eventually, the Supreme Court ruled that the city had broken the law by withholding the rent. The Senecas also asked the federal government to evict homeowners and businesses that had not signed the lease.\footnote{News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.17, p.1.}

Despite the fact that states were generally portrayed in 1992 newspaper reports as problematic for Indian tribes, the press coverage also includes a few examples of cooperation between tribes and states. \textit{Indian Country Today} described the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe and the State of South Dakota’s collaboration to increase game fish in the northeastern South Dakota lakes. The harvest would be evenly split by the tribe and the state. The article also stated that South Dakota had in previous years been using tribally controlled water as rearing ponds for fish without permission from the BIA or the tribe, but the two entities had now reached an agreement.\footnote{Indian Country Today 1992, vol.12, no.15, p.B8.}

Cooperation also occurred between the Iowa tribe and the State of Kansas’s Department of Wildlife and Parks to manage wildlife and control poaching on the Iowa Reservation in northern Kansas. Chairman of the Iowa Leon Campbell said that poaching on reservation lands constituted a serious problem but that owing to tribal jurisdiction over these lands, game wardens of the State of Kansas could not intervene. The cooperative initiative assigned the tribe responsibility for managing fish, wildlife, and hunting on the reservation and set in place regulations and statutes similar to those of the State of Kansas. For its part, the state would assist in training tribal game wardens. Chairman Campbell stated, “It is this attitude and understanding of tribal sovereignty that has made it possible to negotiate with the state.” As a result, both Indian and non-Indians hunting on the reservation needed hunting licenses (tribe members obtained their licenses free of charge), and “game wardens or conservation officers will be cross-deputized by the state,” the newspaper reported.\footnote{Indian Country Today 1992, vol.12, no.25, p.A7.}

\footnote{Indian Country Today 1992, vol.12, no.20, p.A7.}

\footnote{News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.17, p.1.}


\footnote{Indian Country Today 1992, vol.12, no.25, p.A7.}
A special relationship with the federal government

The special relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government was frequently referred to in the 1970s, but it was not as commonly mentioned in 1992. Although there were few references to the federal government as a trustee in the newspapers, the protector role did appear. One could, for instance, read in Indian Country Today that “the federal government, legally charged with the duty of trustee, has failed to act to protect Indian water resources.” Ed Thomas, National Council of the American Indian (NCAI) Juneau area vice president, also stated that the United States had not fulfilled its trust responsibilities to protect tribal rights but was, instead, more interested in protecting the sovereignty of other nations. One could read in Indian Country Today:

“The United States is recognized as the guardian and champion of human rights throughout the world,” he [Thomas] said, noting U.S. intervention in Kuwait, economic sanctions against South Africa and support for Israel.

Our homeland is very dear to us and it’s hard to understand why the U.S. will, on one hand, fight to the death for the land of the Kuwaiti people and on the other hand strongly oppose the restoration of small portions of land to the Indian people.

The United States plays a double role in this statement as both the protector of other people but not of Indians, and as the offender that usurped Indian lands and did not return them. Thomas did not directly accuse the United States of having stolen Indian lands, however, but focused on the U.S. reluctance to return lands to Indian peoples and its failure to protect them.

This relationship between Native Americans and the federal government was considered unique, and it was not something Indians willingly shared with other ethnic groups. This became obvious when they were confronted with a proposal that other peoples would be allowed to compete with Native Americans for the economic-development funding distributed by the Administration for Native Americans. These other peoples included Native Hawaiians, American Samoans, Native Chamorros, Native Palauans, and certain residents of Northern Mariana Island. The National Congress of the American Indian (NCAI) had objected to this proposal, one objection “questioning the legal status of Pacific Islanders as compared to the trust relationship existing between Indian tribes and the federal government.” Senator Inouye, chairman of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, was said to have argued that Native peoples of trust territories and “the Native American Pacific Islanders do have a trust relationship with the United States government.”

NCAI argued that these peoples did not enjoy the same relationship that Indians had with the federal government, with support from Cherokee attorney Dean Suagee, from Washington D.C.

“The trust responsibility the U.S. government has toward Indian tribes has evolved over the years through treaties, court decisions, case law, and acts of Congress,” he said, “whereas the Pacific Island are ‘trust territories.’”

“There are similarities and differences, but the major difference is that trust territories have the recognized right under international law to become independent countries,” Mr Suagee said. “This is similar to Puerto Rico’s situation.”

Interestingly enough, the newspaper presented an explanation of Indian peoples’ unique relationship with the United States based on the idea that they were not recognized by international law as independent countries. No wish to achieve independent statehood was expressed in this article.

Intra-tribal and inter-tribal disputes

Indian tribes were still turning to the federal government to resolve intra- and intertribal disputes in 1992. The main cause of intra-tribal conflict discussed in the newspapers involved the issue of tribal enrollment. In order to benefit from the special relationship between tribes and the federal government, an individual had to be enrolled in one of the tribes acknowledged by the federal government. Enrollment laws consequently had a profound impact on individual Indian lives, and it is not surprising that this became a source of internal conflict that needed to be addressed in federal court.

As shown in News From Indian Country, federal courts were allowed to determine whether it was possible to change the criteria for enrollment of the Osage tribe members and whether these members had a right to vote in tribal elections. The federal judge had ruled that the 1881 Osage constitution was still valid; this constitution could therefore be used to overrule the Allotment Act of 1906, which had limited Osage membership to those who were registered on the ownership role at that time. Descendants of those listed on the rolls were not considered Osage. One such Osage descendant had challenged these regulations for enrollment. There were only 68 federally recognized Osage members alive at that time, and all of them were 85 years old or more. But the idea of changing the enrollment rules was not embraced by all Osages. Robert Adkinson, a member of the tribal council, had said that the council members wanted to extend the right to vote to the rest of the tribe in every matter except questions concerning mineral rights. U.S. District Judge James O. Ellison, who presided over the case, ordered each side to appoint

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two representatives. These four would choose a fifth member, and decisions would be made by majority vote.735

Members of Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against both federal and tribal agencies regarding the amendment of the tribal constitution to change enrollment laws. Their protest asserted that the enforcement of the new law violated “the voting rights act and the U.S. Constitution.” The amendment had been approved in an election by a wide margin; however, the protesters stated that the procedures for voting were not conducted properly. For instance, the polling places were located 20 miles from communities where traditionalist tribe members lived. The tribal government had referred the protesters to the BIA, which demanded 200 signatures of those opposing the election; these were not delivered. Instead, the group hired an attorney and filed a lawsuit.736

Enrollment was also the issue when Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa Chairman Gaiaashkibos turned to federal court to stop a change in the enrollment laws of that tribe. An election concerning regulations of tribe enrollment had approved an amendment to the Chippewa constitution that eliminated the requirement that enrolled members have at least one-quarter Lac Courte Oreilles blood; instead, enrollment would be based on descent. Chairman Gaiaashkibos, however, raised several objections about how the voting had been conducted. He argued that information about the election had not reached the voters and that absentee voting had been accepted, in violation of the Chippewa constitution. The assistant secretary of the Department of the Interior had looked into the question, the paper reported, and found that persons who were not eligible to vote had been allowed to participate in the election (people who lived off-reservation and were not least half-blood Chippewas). For that reason, the U.S. Department of the Interior nullified the election.737

A serious internal conflict among the Senecas involving tribal enrollment also ended up in federal court. The Seneca tribal council was sued by five members who had been found guilty of treason and expelled from the tribe. They were accused of spreading false rumors about the council, and they had been ordered to leave the reservation. Having been expelled, they were removed from their tribal rolls and lost all their rights as Senecas. Council clerk Darwin Hill stated, “Make no mistake – they are no longer citizens here. They’re to be treated as non-Indians. Their names have been removed from our rolls.” The banished people sought help from the federal government, but the Seneca council was reported to have sent a letter to President Bush seeking federal assistance evicting the former members. At the same

735 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.18, p.5.
737 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, pp.9, 25. Another example of tribes turning to the federal government to solve internal conflicts: News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.3.
time, there also existed reluctance among the banished people to turn to the federal government. One of them said, “This is really an internal matter that should in no way involve the white man. But we have no other recourse.”

The Navajo Tribe accepted that the federal court would arbitrate its conflict with the Hopis over reservation boundaries, a matter discussed also in the newspapers from the early 1970s. The Navajo Times reported that the Bennet Freeze, which banned any public or private developments in the disputed area, would be lifted after 26 years. The decision partitioned 60,518 acres of land to the Hopis, a very small portion of the 3.5 million acres they had claimed. The newspaper also reported an earlier ruling that only 152,843 acres of the land was jointly used by the Navajos and Hopis and that “the Navajos had demonstrated a superior claim to all of the rest.” The agreement would end the lawsuit filed by about 100 Navajo families living on Hopi-partitioned land. The families argued that their religious connection to the land made the forced movement a violation of their constitutionally guaranteed rights to religious freedom.

Indians as U.S. citizens

Citizenship and civil rights under the Constitution

Indian inclusion as citizens of the United States was shown both directly and indirectly in the texts. The most common situation in which Indian rights were described with reference to their citizenship status is when Native Americans asserted the right to practice traditional religions. Several references cited the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which includes freedom of religion. One such reference appeared in an article about two American Indians who had been called “heathens” by town officials. They were forced to take down a ceremonial lodge they had built after a fire truck was sent to douse the fire that was used to heat rocks. These men reportedly filed a suit in U.S. district court claiming that their “First Amendment rights to religious freedom were violated.”

The topic of Native Americans being denied their First Amendment rights appeared several times in the newspapers. One article, for example, stated that the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act was supposed to protect native religion, but that the 1988 Lyng Decision denied Indian rights to native religious sites. The report also asserted that the 1990 Smith ruling

741 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.4.
denied First Amendment rights to the Native American Church practitioners by disallowing the sacramental use of peyote.742

The Lyng and Smith decisions that the newspapers referred to were two recent court cases affecting religious rights for Indians who practiced traditional religions. Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protection Association ruled that the U.S. Forest Service was allowed to build a logging road through an isolated part of the Six Rivers National Forest in northern California, despite Indian protests. Native Americans in the area objected to the road because it cut through an area that they used for traditional Native religious rituals. In the Smith decision, the Supreme Court ruled that Oregon State had the right to deny Alfred Smith, a Klamath Indian, unemployment benefits after he was fired because he had used peyote in a Native American Church meeting. According to Oregon law, unemployment benefits could be denied workers who had been dismissed for “misconduct.” Smith argued that he used peyote as part of his free exercise of religion, while the court classified peyote as “a drug.”743

These court cases were brought up to highlight the violation of Native American First Amendment rights in other articles as well. Gaiaashkibos, Chairman of the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe of Wisconsin, stated in reference to the Lyng decision that “Indians are now asking the United States Congress to restore our First Amendment rights.”744 He also criticized the Smith decision, explaining that the ancestors of Native Americans had used the peyote plant for sacred ceremonies for thousands of years. It was not drug abuse, and prohibiting their peyote use was akin to banning Christians’ use of sacramental wine.745

These were not the only cases in which Indian religious rights were threatened. News From Indian Country reported that another religious site, in Kutenai Falls, Montana, was threatened with destruction. Salish Kutenai and Flathead Indians went to this area “to receive instructions from the Creator” and on their vision quests.746 In contrast to those of non-Indian American citizens, neither the religious rights nor the civil rights of Native Americans were protected:

While all of America and its many nationalities that have come to call the “land of the free and brave” home, continue to practice their religious beliefs brought with them from across five thousand plus miles of ocean travel the

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743 Edmunds et al. 2007, pp.443–444.
native religious practitioners are again being told that their beliefs and worship ways have no place in American democracy [...] 

While the average American who is not of Native Indian ancestry enjoys the right to worship as they desire, the average American Indian who follows traditional religious practices is not. Not even the First and Fourteenth Amendments are assurance enough that Indian religious practices are protected.747

Religious rights were predominantly asserted in a legal context as rights of Indians as citizens of the United States. Legal rights could, however, be combined with other justifications of rights in the newspapers. In one Indian Country Today article, First Amendment rights were complemented with the cultural importance of Native American religion. Religion was described as “the underpinning of Indian culture itself” that affected the cultural survival of Indians.748 The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) discussed the violation of Indian human rights when the U.S. Supreme Court decision denied First Amendment protection to practitioners of Indian religions.749

Violation of citizens’ civil rights could also be asserted without direct reference to the U.S. Constitution. News From Indian Country, for example, described two Indians who were arrested in Wisconsin for having an American flag with an Indian image on it. A federal civil rights suit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the two men. The arrest had been made to enforce a Wisconsin statute prohibiting the defacement of the American flag; however, the suit contended that the statute conflicted with a Supreme Court ruling. Both men were said to have decided to pursue the civil suit “because they felt strongly that their rights had been violated by the action of the police officers.”750 U.S. constitutional rights to freedoms were also acknowledged for other groups in the United States by Native Americans. The Denver Indian Center’s board, for instance, had said that it would remain neutral in the controversy about the Columbus Day Parade because “freedom of expression is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.”751

As it was in the early 1970s, the term citizen in 1992 was sometimes used in ways that did not make clear the meaning the writer ascribed to it. Darlene Tester, a Sisseton/Wahpeton Sioux and guest editor for Indian Country Today, wrote with reference to sports teams’ using “nicknames” associated with Indians that disregard was probably the worst kind of discrimination and that Indians were always classified as the ethnic “others.” “Our people have always been, and are still today, overlooked, considered to be some-

thing other than ‘true’ citizens of this country.”752 Native Americans were described as “North American citizens” in an Akwesasne Notes article about the Canadian government’s demand that senior Mohawks repay pensions. The Canadian government argued that these Mohawks were not legal residents on the Canadian side of the Akwesasne reservation but lived on the U.S. side and therefore had no right to Canadian funds. The Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Mike Michell, argued:

My position is very clear. First, we are North American citizens, and as such many of our people as far back as the 1930s and 40s sought employment in the U.S. for their livelihood. This does not mean that they gave up their residency on the Canadian side of Akwesasne, or for that fact, their property.753

Native American U.S. citizenship was also indirectly alluded to in comparisons of Indians against national averages. One could read in the Navajo Times that the death rate from motor vehicle crashes was three times higher among American Indians and Alaska Natives than it was among all other races in the United States. Among the Navajos alone, the number was even higher. Navajo deaths in motor vehicle accidents were five times the national rate. The newspaper reported that the Navajo Nation and the Indian Health Service had initiated collaborations to convince the Navajo people to wear seat belts.754

Indian people also had an infant death rate that was two or three times the national average. It was likened to those in third-world countries by Navajo Nation President Peterson Zah. Various diseases and the suicide rate were also higher among Indians.755 Another newspaper article discussed the issue of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) among Indian children in a U.S. national context. The newspaper reported on a study demonstrating that infant deaths in Wisconsin tribes were twice as high as infant deaths among the rest of the state’s population. That so many Indian children died compared to children of other ethnic origins was explained by environmental factors. Poverty and malnutrition composed one; the use of alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes also affected the infants’ health.756 It was estimated that Northern Plains Indians had a SIDS rate that was four or five times the national average.757

The Navajo Times compared the high unemployment rate within the Navajo Nation with those of “other states and communities outside the Navajo Nation,”758 and News From Indian Country quoted statistics from the Indian
Health Service showing that the Indian mortality rate was much higher than
that of the general U.S. population.759

Indian participation in state and federal politics

As attested by newspaper accounts, Native Americans showed a much great-
er interest in state and federal political elections in 1992 than they had in the
early 1970s. Several examples report Native Americans stating the impor-
tance of voting in U.S. elections. Indian Country Today announced the
deadline for voter registration for the national election, as well as for the
Cheyenne Eagle Butte election. The tribal election date of the Cheyenne
Eagle Butte Tribe was even changed to correspond with the national elec-
tion.760 In other newspaper issues, tribe members were urged to make the
effort to vote. The candidate for chair of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, Lor-
raine Rousseau, for instance, encouraged her tribe members to vote both for
the U.S. president and for the tribal chairperson. “Both elections are equally
important!!!” she wrote.761 Georgia George, chair of the Suquamish tribe and
co-chair of the Washington State chapter of Native Americans for Clinton-
Gore, stated that tribe members had become more interested in U.S. politics.
She explained this new interest in U.S. politics in the following way:

Indian people don’t sit on horses anymore and watch the sun set […] That
time of Indian defeat is over. The world has modernized and unless you are
part of it, you will be left behind by it.762

Being part of the presidential election and consequently part of the United
States was interpreted as being part of the modern world.

Indian Country Today not only encouraged people to vote in the elec-
tions, but it also suggested whom they should vote for: candidates who “have
proved helpful on Indian issues in past terms” were listed in the paper.763 The
same paper also published an article titled “Where state candidates stand on
issues,” in which two candidates to the U.S. Senate were interviewed about
their opinions on several issues concerning Indian peoples. South Dakota’s
sitting Democratic Senator Tom Daschle was described as “a vocal advocate
for many general and tribal-specific Indian issues.” His voting record was
said to show that he supported tribal self-determination on issues concerning

no.24, p.A2.
health, education, and economic development; however, his support for tribal sovereignty was not as clear. When questioned about who had civil and criminal jurisdiction over Indians and non-Indians on reservations, he said that the issue needed to be further clarified by Congress. Neither was he forthright about which position he would take in the dispute between the State of Dakota and the Cheyenne River Sioux regarding who was to regulate non-Indian hunting and fishing on “taken” lands within reservation boundaries. The candidate who ran against Daschle was the Republican Charlene Haar, who was described as less knowledgeable about Indian issues. However, she had said that she supported a government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes and that she would hire Native American staff if she were elected to office. She also subscribed to Indian Country Today.

The newspapers also wrote about tribal leaders who supported various candidates. News From Indian Country reported that 21 tribal leaders had banded together to support Arizona’s Republican Senator John McCain for re-election. Nora Garcia, who was chair of the Fort Mohave Apaches and president of the Intertribal Council of Arizona, said that this was the first time tribal leaders had come together to support a political candidate. The reason given for this support was that McCain was the only candidate Garcia knew of who had visited the Indian tribes to see the problems Indians were dealing with.

Senator McCain was not the only politician who motivated Indian leaders to engage in political elections outside tribal government. News From Indian Country reported that tribal leaders were supporting the Clinton-Gore Democrat ticket in the presidential election. The volunteer organization called Native Americans for Clinton-Gore was formed, and its members campaigned for Democrats across the country. The organization was to be led by two Native Americans who had been involved in political office outside the tribe, General Larry Echohawk and Colorado Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell (the latter was also a candidate for the Senate). News From Indian Country reported the results of the presidential election, Bill Clinton’s victory over George Bush with 43 percent to 37 percent of the vote. The newspaper also reported that Ben Nighthorse Campbell was elected to the U.S. Senate.

It was primarily the question of who would most benefit Native American interests that determined whom tribe leaders would support or recommend that others vote for – not overarching ideology. Navajo Nation President Zah called upon the new U.S. president, Bill Clinton, to reciprocate the support Native Nations had given him in the presidential election. He stated that 76

768 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.22, p.3.
percent of the eligible voters of the Navajo Nation had cast ballots, and of them 75 percent had voted for Clinton. Zah further suggested that Clinton appoint a Native American as a Supreme Court Justice and establish an Indian office in the White House. Tribal governments should have the same status as state and foreign governments.  

Not only had Native American interest in the election of state and federal officials grown since the 1970s, but Indians were also increasingly running for office themselves. The newspapers proudly presented Indian candidates for various political positions. News From Indian Country published a biography of Ada Deer, who “could be the first Native woman in Congress.” The newspaper reported that she was the first member of the Menominee Tribe to graduate from the University of Wisconsin and the first female leader of the tribe. If elected, she would become the first American Indian woman to serve in the U.S. House. Deer emphasized that her candidacy reached beyond race and gender; first and foremost, she had the qualities needed for the job.

News From Indian Country reported that Northern Cheyenne Ben Nighthorse Campbell had defeated his opponents, winning 55 percent of the votes, thereby becoming the first American Indian in more than half a century elected to the Senate. This had not happened since the early 1900s, when Carl Curtis, an Indian of Kaw-Osage descent, had enjoyed a long and distinguished political career. He served in the House of Representatives (1893–1907), in the Senate (1907–1913 and 1915–1929), and as vice president under Herbert Hoover. Campbell was quoted as having said about this Indian politician, “I went over and looked at him, at his statue. I realized I had big shoes to fill. I’ve sort of inherited a national constituency.”

Additional Indian candidates appeared in the Navajo Times. Albert Hale, a Navajo, had run as a Democratic candidate to Congress in Arizona’s District 6. Described as the first Navajo in ten years to run for federal office, he had lost the election, but the newspaper pointed out that his support extended beyond the Indian community. Only 22 percent of his district’s population was Indian, but he had received 27 percent of the votes. Navajo candidates running for other offices were likewise listed in the newspapers, as were the election results. In addition to federal political involvement, Navajos also

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769 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.23, p.11. In Indian Country Today 1992, vol.12, no.23, p. A2 it was also said that the Indian population was asking for support after helping Clinton and Gore win the national election.
771 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.3.
engaged in county politics. When the *Navajo Times* reported that “for the first time in more than 12 years, McKinley County will have a commission that is dominated by non-Indians,” one explanation for this loss of Navajo power was proffered by Navajo Nation Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom: too many Navajo candidates had run, splitting the vote.775 The *Navajo Times* also reported that Dwayne Billsie, a Navajo police sergeant, lost in a Democratic primary to the sheriff of Apache County.776

Many tribe members voted in the presidential election, according to the newspapers. Despite severe weather and icy roads, tribe members from all the reservations of Montana turned out to vote. Approximately 22,000 of about 30,000 Indians eligible to vote were reported to have done so. The Blackfeet had a 55 percent turnout; among the Crows, about 65 percent voted, and in the various Fort Belknap Indian districts, between 82 percent and 87 percent of eligible tribe members voted. The total proportion of Indian voters was estimated at about 75 percent of those eligible. This great turnout made a difference in U.S. politics, according to the newspaper. The Indian vote, along with the town of Missoula, had put a Democrat in office in the state, and Clinton’s victory in Montana by 10,000 votes was also attributed to the Indian vote.777

The day before the election Montana Indian nations ran ads in the *Great Falls Tribune, Billings Gazette*, and the *Missoulian* that read, “Don’t be one of the Indians no one hears. The Indian vote could be the decisive vote in the 1992 elections. As the first Americans, the needs and concerns of the Indian people must be heard. Election day is tomorrow […] make them listen with your vote.”778

Similarly, *News From Indian Country* reported that the Indians of Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, New Mexico, and the Navajo reservation voted in their largest numbers in the general election.779

Several reasons were given for why Native Americans should vote in these elections. One presented in the *Navajo Times* was that many of the issues decided on the state and federal levels would affect Indians, and the Navajo vote could even determine the outcome of some elections. Navajo officials wanted as many Navajos as possible to vote in order to demonstrate Navajo political strength. They hoped that this would lead to more and better opportunities for the tribe when it came to state and federal spending.780

Navajo President Zah explained another reason why it was so important for Indians to vote in state and federal elections, arguing that despite opposi-

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tion from the most powerful nations of the world, the Indian tribes had miraculously persisted into the present. As historic Indians had protected their people in the past, now modern Indians should use voting as a means to fight to “protect their families, land and freedom.” He also drew on historical analogies to the importance of voting:

By voting, we can show that despite the genocide, disease and oppression that Columbus has come to symbolize, the American Indians, Native Americans, Diné, Hopi, Apache, Ute – whatever name we are known by – have managed a miracle of survival.

When our ancestors faced the larger, better equipped armies of the Europeans, they did not despair that they were outnumbered or had obsolete weapons. They stood their ground and fought to protect their families, land and freedom.

The most powerful nations in the world had tried to wipe out the Indian peoples but had failed. New challenges now faced Indian nations, and in modern days Native Americans should use their voting powers. The challenge was to exercise their rights to citizenship and participate in the political system. It is interesting that Zah chose to mention European and not U.S. forces as the enemies Navajos had to fight in the past.

Obviously, a notion had emerged of Indian tribes as included in the overall U.S. political system, and tribal government was sometimes seen as intertwined with state and federal governments. Several tribe leaders had gathered for a statewide campaign encouraging Indians to register to vote in the general election. Mescalero Apache President Wendell Chino said that registering Indians to vote in state elections was an important way of protecting tribal sovereignty. Another leader said, “It is time to dig deep into the political system and build a long-term foundation for support for Indian issues.” He apparently saw tribal governance as one of several levels of political governance in the United States.

784 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.18, p.4.
13. Discourse of peoplehood in 1992

“The People”

Traditional cultural values
As in the early 1970s, so also in 1992 Native Americans referred to themselves as “the People” in newspapers accounts. Navajos, for example, explained that this was a translation of their name for themselves in the Navajo language.785 The name Navajo had been “bestowed on ‘The People’” by the Spaniards and insinuated that they were criminals, according to the newspapers.786 The concept was also used in an article celebrating the survival of the Indian people during the 500 years since Columbus’ “discovery” of America. One article focused on Indian cultural survival – that is, the survival of the traditional religious and cultural ways of the People.

In strength, the People return to dance in a circle … as the heartbeat of the People sounds loudly all over the land. Inner strength is reflected in calm, serene eyes … the People’s dancing, reflection of the heart of spirits within. […]

The People knew the way, before 500 years ago … true to their beliefs, they tried other People’s ways. Found them destructive, disrespectful, creating blame and shame… the People return to values and beliefs of before 500 years ago. […]

They once again walk with their hearts in the lead … to fulfill the prophecies spoken of before 500 years ago. Their hearts strong, remembering the ways of life, once again today … the keepers of this land return to share their gifts, for the sake of all peoples on this land.787

The message was that Native Americans should stick to the cultural values of pre-contact years, the knowledge they possessed before Columbus arrived in America. Other beliefs were destructive. But it was not only for the sake of Indians that their cultures should be preserved. Indians had a special preservative role vis-à-vis all the peoples of the United States: they were “keepers of this land,” and they would protect it “for the sake of all peoples on this land.”788

786 Navajo Times 1992, vol.32, no.46, p.3.
This Native American role as protectors of the land was also described by Navajo Nation President Peterson Zah, who stated that American Indians were the first environmentalists, something that the rest of America should learn from. Navajo beliefs required living in harmony with and having respect for plants and wildlife. Navajo songs and ceremonies were described as having “their basis in Mother Earth.”

Returning to a traditional Indian way of life was also the topic of a letter to the editor printed in Indian Country Today. The writer was critical of what he saw as the white man’s way of living, and he argued that Indians who were eager to introduce casinos on their reservations had “become just like our white brothers in Las Vegas and Reno.” What Native Americans should do is return to their traditional values, according to the writer. He illustrated his point with a quote attributed to Sitting Bull: “If you have lost something, go back; if you look hard enough for it, you shall find it.” The writer wanted to go back to tribalism, a form of government whereby “the entire tribe agrees to do something and then goes out and does it.” It is not like “the white man’s system,” where two sides are pitted against each other, creating “enemies where friends once lived,” he argued.

The difficulty of retaining Native American culture was addressed in another article, in which Indians who had retained their traditional culture were described as facing greater difficulty adjusting to the educational system of mainstream society. They had been brought up and taught to be cooperative, not competitive, but the education system’s organization made it difficult for Indians to hold on to their culture while participating in that system. They were “forced to assimilate into the dominant culture,” the writer stated. Teachers of Indian students, therefore, needed to learn which methods of teaching suited Indians best. Tribes had to get involved so as to ensure that Indian students received an adequate education.

Akwesasne Notes reported on Akwesasne Freedom School, an educational institution for Mohawk children in which the Mohawk language was taught. Taking control of children’s education meant giving the children access to their heritage. The writer stated that to her the word freedom in Akwesasne Freedom School meant “the freedom that comes from taking responsibility for educating our own children.” Knowing their native language would give children access to the teachings of the elders without having to rely on others for translations.

Comparisons between the Indian way and the white man’s way of perceiving the world further highlighted Indian traditional values. One editorial to Indian Country Today about the celebration of Thanksgiving compared

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the white way and the Indian way of understanding the holiday. Native Americans celebrated Thanksgiving by giving thanks to the Great Spirit (*Wakan Tanka*, in Lakota) for everything good in life. “The true meaning of that first Thanksgiving Day has been lost in myth and in the white man’s history books,” the editor wrote. White people glamorized their own past, but the truth was that Native Americans had taught the newcomers how to survive in surroundings that they considered hostile. There were considerable differences between how Indians and whites perceived the land:

The Indian looked upon the land as his mother. The white man considered the land to be hostile and dangerous. The Indian looked upon it as a land where all living things were of nations. There was the winged nation, the fish nation, the nation of the four legged and finally the nation of the two-legged. All of these nations lived in harmony with Mother Earth. They were all a part of the circle. Each needed the other to survive. The Indians also looked upon the rocks, the water, the trees, the sky, the clouds, the sun and the seasons of the year as vital parts of the circle of nations. All, including fire, could be friends, but the Indian also understood that all could also be the enemy.793

Traditional Indian ways of understanding nationhood were also discussed in an article that addressed the role of indigenous peoples in the United Nations. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) was founded in 1991, and *Akwesasne Notes* commented on its statements about the relationship it would pursue with the United Nations. The writer thought the organization’s establishment had been a good idea but was critical that the UNPO had adopted a Western view of how the world was constituted. “As it is presently constituted UNPO implicitly accepts the definition of ‘nation,’ ‘government’ and ‘state’ invented and propagated by Western civilization,” the writer contended. According to Western perceptions, the world was divided into nation-states that were defined as countries. But within nearly every country there existed one or more “non-free ‘nations’” that had been “annexed by the ‘host’ country.” The writer thought that indigenous peoples should not adapt to this Western European approach. Instead,

> our goal is the deconstruction and replacement of governmental systems, not adapting (reading: selling out) to those systems. You don’t beat the enemy by joining him.794

The writer did not explicitly describe how he envisioned the cooperation between world communities if the Western organization of a world of states were to be abolished. It is likely, however, that the different nations he talked about were cultural groups with a common sense of identity – that is, different peoples.

Belonging to ancestral homelands

Native Americans’ view of themselves as people placed on the North American continent by the Creator that consequently had a special relationship to the land appeared several times in the newspapers. In a letter to the editor, Uja Tapa Machunazhi of the Committee to Abolish Columbus Day in Lincoln, Nebraska, gave this argument against the celebrations:

The Native Americans did not discover America because their true origin began here in America. Their Creator gave birth to their tribes and humanity in the New World for thousands of years before all other races of mankind. 795

Columbus did not discover America but was discovered by the Indians, and America was not discovered by Indians because they were put there by the Creator. 796 The view that Indians had been placed on their lands by the Creator was also described in reference to the Navajos. The writer stated that the Navajos had told stories about emerging from beneath the earth long before Columbus and the Spanish arrived in America. 797

While anthropologists and Navajo elders disagree, one thing is certain about Dinétah: It is there where Navajo culture began. The stories are told on hundreds of rock carvings and etchings in Largo, Carizzo and Blanco canyons in northwestern New Mexico. …

“It is where we came from. It is the birthplace of Dinétah,” said Ben Silversmith, a Navajo medicine man. “It is a holy, sacred area.” 798

The disagreement the writer referred to is the conception of anthropologists that Navajos originally lived in western Canada with other Athabascan-speaking peoples and had migrated to the American Southwest. 799

The Navajo Times raised the question of the right to land based on original inhabitants in one of the newspapers, which can be traced to the idea of people’s belonging to the land. This concept was applied to the Hopi-Navajo land dispute, which had also been discussed in the newspapers of the 1970s. As already mentioned, a federal court decision had granted the Navajos the disputed area. The newspaper acknowledged that it was an area that Hopis were the first to live on, “land their Creator endowed to them to protect.” 800

Hopi tribal Chairman Vernon Masayesva objected to the court’s interpretation of the concept of use when it argued that the Hopis did not use the land. This argument reflected a “white man’s perspective, not an Indian’s. Not even a Navajo’s,” he stated. From a Hopi perspective, he was making

797 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.17.
798 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.17.
use of the land. “We take care of the land through religion,” he said. “We do all these pilgrimages as a way of taking care of the land, as the Hopis say, keeping the land alive.” Hopi rights to the land were consequently described in religious terms. The Creator had placed Hopis there, and it was both their right and their duty to care for the land. This was not acknowledged by the federal court; it was stated in the newspaper report. In 1988, a Supreme Court decision concluded that religious rights could not be used as arguments for property rights to land. Rights to land were consequently contested in terms of who had been first on the land, who had been put there by the Creator. Although the newspaper belonged to the winning party of the disputed area, the Navajo Tribe, the writer still seems to have acknowledged the Hopis’ special rights to the area, apparently arguing from a peoplehood perspective.

News from Indian Country published a quote from Nez Perce Chief Joseph that likewise demonstrates the close relationship of Native Americans with the land:

The earth and myself are of one mind. The measure of the land and the measure of our bodies is the same…. Understanding me fully with reference to my affection for the land. I never said the land was mine to do with it as I chose. The one who has a right to dispose of it is the Ones who created it.

The Indian warrior

The image of the historic Indian warrior, painted and prepared for battle, did not appear in the 1992 newspapers. In the 1970s, this warrior image had largely been associated with the historic struggle against the United States, but by the early 1990s it was seldom presented at all, and when it was, it was either associated with veterans of 20th century wars or used figuratively. One could, for instance, read about the ceremony marking the change in name of Custer Battlefield to Little Bighorn Battlefield:

The most renowned of all American Indian war veterans began to receive their official due yesterday. Not the men who served their country in 20th century warfare. And not the illustrious warriors of the 19th century. These are the oft-forgotten Lakota and Northern Cheyenne who fell at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. Ever since then, they’ve been remembered more for their victims – Custer and his men – than for winning the day in fair combat against an aggressor government.

Continuity from the historic Indian warriors to the 20th-century soldier was also evident in an article written by a Native American military veteran of 30

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years in *News From Indian Country*. He stated that it was important to instill “a sense of pride and admiration” for Native American war veterans of the 20th century. Although it was important to know “past history, and the chiefs and warriors who fought the Spaniards and the White Man” trying to protect “their homes and the Indian way of life,” it was equally important to know the “great warriors of the twentieth century who have fought and died […] still shedding their blood to protect our country.”

Soldiers of the 20th century were described as “special warriors” in the *Navajo Times*, which printed a photograph showing a wall with names of fallen soldiers; in front of the wall was an American flag. The text beneath the picture stated, “people across the Nation paid tribute to all military veterans and ‘Special Warriors.” Another *Navajo Times* article referred to special warriors when it described a visit by one of “the legendary Navajo Code Talkers” to an exhibit in Washington D.C. The exhibit, which was to be a permanent one in the Pentagon, commemorated and honored the Navajo code talkers who served during World War II. A special ceremony was held in which these special warriors were commemorated, “along with all of the Pentagon’s many other honorary displays of the nation’s war heroes from throughout American history.” This clearly attests identification with the United States and its soldiers. Indian warriors of 1992 fought not against but for the United States.

The warrior image could also be used more figuratively. Cornel Pewewardy described himself as a full-blood American Indian who was a warrior – “a warrior in education.” He explained his role in the following way:

A warrior’s role is greater than merely protecting and providing for the well being of the nation. It involves looking after the welfare of the people seven generations from now. It means we need to recognize threats to future generations and act accordingly.

**Columbus and other white men**

In the early 1970s, either the United States or the “white man” was referred to as the cause of Indian problems and suffering. In 1992, the white man was not referred to as often in the newspapers and was not talked about as negatively as during the early 1970s, although some texts still described the white man as the enemy. Chiefs and warriors of the past were said to have fought the white man and the Spaniards in one article, and another article stated

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that thousands of Indians had been killed by the whites in historic times. White people also attacked Native Americans in the present. “White teenagers” of Farmington were said to be “looking for a drunk [Indian] to roll, to beat, to rob and sometimes to kill.”

The most gruesome story about white people’s atrocities against Indians was told in order to argue that Native Americans should have an official holiday in the United States. In a letter to the editor of *News from Indian Country*, the writer argued for the introduction of a holiday celebrating Native Americans’ contributions to the United States. He was responding to a letter in the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner*, which in turn had been a response to the suggestion of an Athabascan Native that a national holiday like Martin Luther King Jr. Day be established to recognize contributions made by Native Americans to “this country.” One woman wrote in the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* that “no Native Americans have contributed anything worth having a national holiday named after them.” The writer in *News from Indian Country* did not agree. To illustrate Indian contributions, he described “two Indians whose lives are the ultimate symbol of the relationship between Natives and Non-natives.” He related that in 1846, a group of settlers known as the Donner Party had been stranded in the Sierra Nevada during a snowstorm. Four members of the party had gone ahead to seek help, and one of them returned with two Indians to assist the others. But these Indians were “chased down, shot, and eaten by one Mr. Foster of the Donner Party.” Historians have not “bothered to document the names of the ‘two Indians,’” he wrote.

I propose that the fourth Friday of November be declared a National Holiday to honor these two men. It seems appropriate. Not only would it give us a four day weekend in November […] but coming the day after Thanksgiving seems particularly just. Thanksgiving celebrates the survival of the first immigrants with thanks to the “savages” that fed them and taught them to survive. Thanksgiving recognizes that Indians fed white people. The Friday after would recognize that the white people then ate the Indians.

One may wonder why the writer would choose this very gruesome story to illustrate Indian accomplishments in the United States. The event may represent the sacrifices Indians made throughout the history of the United States, but perhaps most of all it was told to highlight the atrocities that had been committed by white people against Indians.

White people were not always described as harming Indians but were sometimes referred to in more value-neutral ways. Native Americans were said to have fed white people during the first Thanksgiving meal, and they

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811 *News From Indian Country* 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.10.
had taught them how to survive when they first came to America.\textsuperscript{813} Whites were criticized for sampling Indian culture,\textsuperscript{814} and some Indian writers complained that the white man approached Indians to be taught how to pray.\textsuperscript{815}

There were several examples in the newspapers in which neither the U.S. nor white people were blamed for Indian grievances. Instead, Columbus was personally blamed. Because the year 1992 marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in America, countless celebrations of the event took place all over the United States. As I have shown in chapter 1, many Native Americans were critical of these celebrations. Such critique was also present in the newspapers and was often directed at Columbus himself.

In a letter to the editor, one representative of the Committee to Abolish Columbus Day in Lincoln, Nebraska, expressed anger about the celebration of Columbus Day in the United States. The deeds of Columbus were compared to Hitler’s killings of Jews during the Second World War. The writer found it hypocritical that

\begin{quote}
the greatest nation on earth seeks to bestow honor upon a man on October 12th who wrought mass destruction upon the native inhabitants of the New World with disease, genocide and plunder. Columbus has only one legacy and that is the evil and injustice heaped upon the First Americans in the New World.\textsuperscript{816}
\end{quote}

Despite the description of genocide and destruction, neither the white man nor the United States is blamed. The United States is referred to as “the greatest nation on earth,” and the Indians are the “First Americans.” However, the United States is also described as a “white nation.” In his plea to abolish Columbus Day, the writer stated:

\begin{quote}
The First Americans, in a common struggle with all other people of colour, must force this white nation to see the injustice and error of their ways, in extending recognition to Columbus the mass murderer and kidnapper. We must be strong, united and prosperous in this resolve, so help us God.\textsuperscript{817}
\end{quote}

Columbus as a person was also discussed in a \textit{Navajo Times} article that questioned the celebration of the 500th anniversary of his arrival in North America. Instead of presenting “the narrow, whitewashed version” of the event, the author suggested that this and other significant historical events be viewed from many different, multicultural perspectives. Why should Columbus be treated as a hero? “He brought disease, the lust for gold and colonial concepts of imperialism with him. When he left, he took the riches of

\textsuperscript{814} \textit{News From Indian Country} 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.4.
Mother Earth and the lives of Native people who were captured to be sold as slaves," one could read in *Navajo Times*. This writer went on to say that the United States had spent $85 million on Columbus Day celebrations “throughout this nation” and that this is what happens when lies are perpetuated. Once again, neither “white people” nor the United States is blamed for Indian suffering in history; instead it is Columbus and the Spaniards who are at fault. The United States here is a nation to which Indians belong, and what is needed is to tell the truth about these events and not celebrate them.

The Colorado chapter of the American Indian Movement (AIM) also criticized Columbus personally in its written statement protesting the Columbus Day celebrations. They argued that Columbus should not be celebrated because he “was personally responsible for the enslavement and murder of indigenous peoples,” and he had set the stage for later atrocities committed against Indians. The group did not blame the white man for all the Indians’ suffering, however, a theme common in the 1970s. It called instead for unity in America, suggesting that Columbus Day become a holiday that is “much more inclusive and more accurately reflective of the cultural and racial richness of the Americas.” Indians here were included in America, and America was seen as a unity.

The white man did not completely escape critique, however. Columbus was a white man, and Columbus Day was described as a white man’s holiday. The white man was connected, further, to greed and to the destruction of the world. Greed was part of the Western European value system that Columbus had transported to America and that had continued to harm Indians ever since. Columbus arrived in America “for reasons of greed and power” and “the ultimate power over other people’s souls” – goals described as “still the underlying values of the United States today.” It was the white man who destroyed the earth, and he would not listen to the warnings of Indians.

Native Americans, in contrast, had met Columbus and the Pilgrims who landed in North America with generosity. Today, the white man would still take from the Indians, but nowadays he seeks their spiritual knowledge, and Indians remain generous toward white people, teaching them how to pray. White people turned to Indians:

Because the values systems of greed and power are empty, they not only spiritually destroy the person seeking greed and power, but also destroy what is

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being exploited and controlled. Put this on a larger scale the size of a continent, and you destroy the whole world.824

But there were also wishes for reconciliation. Columbus Day was seen by some Indians as a time for reconciliation with the whites and with one another.825 Akwesasne Notes asked for a proclamation of reconciliation from President Bush:

A year of National reconciliation, proclaimed by President Bush, would go far to right the balance of justice which was upset 300 years ago in the Western Hemisphere by the advent of European explorers, trappers, missionaries and colonists.826

Reconciliation was also the goal of a ceremony held at the Science Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota. Sage and sweetgrass were burned, and prayers were said “for the Great Spirit to […] wipe away hate and bring their people together.” A Wiping of Tears Ceremony was also to be held by a Dakota medicine man on Prairie Island. It was said that “whites hope to begin repenting the harm their race has caused native peoples, and Indians hope to begin forgiving whites for the pain and injustice of the 500 years since Columbus arrived in the Americas.” But it was not only reconciliation between Native Americans and whites that had to be accomplished. Reconciliation was also needed between Indian tribes that had been historic enemies. Ponca Indian Bill Pensoneau stated that before he could forgive whites, “he had to purge his anger toward the Dakota tribe for driving the Ponca from Minnesota 350 years ago.”827

“We’ve been fighting the Sioux for hundreds of years,” said Pensoneau….

“People might say I’m crazy for being angry over something that happened 350 years ago. But it’s real.” 828

Although the newspapers usually portray a common Indian identity, this statement shows that historic inter-tribal enmities can be as traumatic as that between Indians and white people.

825 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.22.
827 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.22.
828 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.21, p.22.
14. Patterns of identification in 1992

In this chapter I will summarize Indian identification in relationship to the United States as expressed in the newspapers from 1992. In contrast to the 1970s, very little emphasis was placed on tribal sovereignty and secession in 1992. There was a greater focus on a government-to-government relationship between the federal and tribal administrations, a movement from distance to inclusion in the United States. This relationship had been firmly acknowledged by U.S. presidents since the 1970s and was confirmed in the newspapers of 1992. President Reagan cut federal funding to Indian tribes, but he did not question their right to self-govern. Although it was quite common to talk about tribal sovereignty in 1992 as well, the meaning ascribed to the concept was in most cases self-governance within the United States, not total independence or secession.

The relative stability in the relationship between Indian tribes and the states was expressed in the few references to the federal government as a protector. The protector role was apparently not as badly needed any more. Conflicts with states over jurisdiction continued in court, but examples also arose of cooperation between states and the tribes, showing that states acknowledged tribes as legitimate governments. Tribal self-government within the United States was widely acknowledged in 1992.

When it came to tribal internal conflicts, the federal government’s conflict-solver role continued, but now the federal government was not accused of causing any problems. Neither was the federal government described as the cause of inter-tribal disputes. The strong “otherness” of the federal government in the newspapers of the 1970s did not appear in the newspapers of 1992.

While references to citizenship and demands for civil rights were very limited in the 1970s, these became more prominent in 1992. Civil rights for Indians were addressed by references to the U.S. Constitution, especially religious rights. There was still little interest in the rights of other groups in the United States; Indian special rights were in focus, and Native Americans did not want to share these rights with other peoples.

A considerable change that had taken place since the 1970s was Native Americans’ much greater interest in the federal, state, and local elections taking place in wider U.S. society. Information about non-Indian candidates and election results was presented in the newspapers. Indian participation in elections was described as important, and Native Americans were proud of
Native candidates who ran for office. Although the federal government had become more “our government” by 1992, Indians were still focusing on issues directly concerning them and not on ideology.

Indian peoplehood was strongly associated with “otherness” in relation to the United States in the 1970s. This was not the case in 1992. There were no references to the United States as a colonizer or to Indians as colonized peoples. Neither were there any examples of battle against the United States. Whereas the image of the warrior was seen battling against the United States in the 1970s, the warrior of the early 1990s was connected both historically and symbolically to the soldier fighting for the United States.

In 1992 Indian peoplehood was associated with the right to Indian culture, the right to be different within the context of the U.S. nation-state. The idea of several peoples joining together was also apparent in the quest for reconciliation between peoples. Although the dichotomy between white and Indian ways of thinking was present also in the newspapers of 1992, Indians were not nearly as critical of whites as they had been in the 1970s. White people had committed atrocities against Indians in the past and present, but these were more often described as committed by Europeans or by Columbus personally. The United States was seldom described as the perpetrator, and if it was, the transgressions were predominantly seen as the legacy of a European way of thinking. Focus was instead on reconciliation between peoples, reconciliation between Indians and white people, but also between different Indian peoples who had been enemies in the past. A unified United States was the goal in which all its different peoples unite but still preserve their own unique cultures. Perhaps this view was also a reaction to the inter-ethnic tension in American society during this time, although this was not directly mentioned in the newspapers.

The changed relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes – tribes were now deciding matters that the BIA had handled in the past – apparently triggered identification with the United States. Both acknowledgement of Native American self-governance and the increased integration of Native Americans into wider American society led to this stronger identification. Self-governance, cultural rights, and reconciliation between peoples were the goals, rather than complete independence.
15. American identification

So far I have studied Indian identification by examining the discourse of sovereign statehood (i.e., how they talked about themselves and others with a world of states as a reference point) and by the discourse of peoplehood (i.e., how they talked about themselves and others with a world of peoples as a reference point). In this chapter I will look at Native American identification from a different angle, taking the concepts of America and being American as the points of departure. The term America can have different meanings. In this chapter I will examine the meanings Native Americans have ascribed to the concepts of America and American. I will also study how they identified with and in other ways related to these concepts and to the symbols associated with the United States and with being American.

American identification in the 1970s

The meaning of America and American

One would perhaps expect that in cases where Native Americans considered tribal nations part of the United States, they would also consider themselves Americans and, similarly, that when they considered tribes to be independent nations, they would not identify as Americans. Such a simple division is not possible, however, because the concept American can take on very different meanings. It is likely that Indians who saw tribes as nations within the American state also identified as Americans; however, Indians who saw tribal nations as completely independent from the United States could identify both as American and as non-American. When they did identify as American, doing so implied something other than belonging to the United States. Being American could also relate to both citizens of the U.S. state and to an American people. This means that American could be used to refer both to something other than Indian but also to something that is Native.

The view that the United States is something different from America was presented several times in the newspapers. This stance could be shown by

829 America and American are confusing concepts because they refer to both the double continent of North and South America and to their inhabitants, as well as to the nation of the United States and its citizens. This obscure terminology opens the way for multiple interpretations.
contrasting the two concepts, as in the *Akwesasne Notes* article arguing that the United States was responsible for paving the fields and poisoning the drinking waters. The article ended with the statement, “Exit America. Enter the United States.” Apparently, the author closely associated the contemporary time of paved fields and poisoned drinking waters with the United States. During the time before all this occurred, when the land was governed by the Indians, the land was seen as America.

A similar view is shown in the quote of Luther Standing Bear, an Oglala Sioux who wrote books about his people and culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Standing Bear had stated that “the white man does not understand the Indian for the reason that he does not understand America.” To him, America apparently was not the same as the United States. It thus becomes obvious in his explanation why the white man did not understand the Indian or America: it was because he was too disconnected from the physical environment. “He is too far removed from its formative processes. The roots of the tree of his life have not yet grasped the rock and soil.” This also led Standing Bear to say that “the man from Europe is still a foreigner and an alien.”

What Standing Bear likely meant is that white people lack what Teuton described as the interconnectedness with the land that had shaped Indian peoples over time. America was not white peoples’ ancestral homeland. The European-descended white people not only lacked an understanding of nature; they had no spiritual connection to the natural world as the Indians did. In this perspective, America is understood as the land, but a land filled with spiritual meaning.

America was apparently also equated with Indian values and ideas for Jack D. Forbes, a Native professor at the University of California, Davis. In an article about Americanism, he wrote that some people of European descent had become Americanized – that is, “nativized”; others refused to become nativized but instead continued to associate with the overseas European nationalist and colonist culture. So what is Americanism? Forbes answered his own question: “It can be nothing other than the ideals and basic characteristics of those societies which have been evolving in America for at least 40,000 years.”

Similar to Standing Bear’s views of America, Forbes’s idea of Americanism entailed a certain way of thinking about the universe and a certain ways of living, the Indian way.

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831 Luther Standing Bear was probably born in 1868, and he died in 1939 (Hoxie 2001a, p.15).
833 Teuton 2008, p.49.
835 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.37.
We can perhaps speak of “European-American,” “Afro-American” and “Asian-American” cultures, but when we use the term American without any hyphen or qualifiers, it must, in all logic, apply to the native people of this land. Clearly, the white people of the United States have no right to use the term to refer to themselves, both because they are latecomers, and also because the peoples of the rest of the continent are at least equally “American.”

Although Americanism had its base in “Indianism,” this did not mean that it could not be influenced by other ways of thinking. African, Asian, and European ways of thinking could become a part of “the American way,” but these had to harmonize with or complement the basic values of Americanism, according to Forbes. The European way of thinking does not fit very well with Americanism since it teaches that all “living creatures are at war with each other, are competitors and enemies. Even humans are rivals of each other, and all humans are supposed to struggle ‘against’ nature. Non-humans are mere ‘servants’ of man, not brothers and sisters,” he wrote.

Forbes, however, objected to the use of America for the continent in another article. “What gave some European map-maker, who never even saw this land, the right to name it after a second-rate Italian sea-captain known as Amerigo Vespucci?” he asked. Forbes suggested that the land instead should be called Anishinabe-waki, which means “Indian country” in the language of the Algonkian speaking peoples. The term America was used to refer to the continent by other writers in the newspapers. One article, for instance, talked about the “the people of the Americas,” apparently referring to all the peoples inhabiting the geographical space of North and South America.

Indians could also be critical of whites identifying themselves as Americans and trying to include Indians with them in this category. This becomes apparent in the reply to a letter published in the Niagara Falls Gazette that was reprinted in Akwesasne Notes. The writer commented on disagreements in the United States about who really owned “this land of ours.” Everyone, irrespective of color, has made American great—the greatest country in the world, the writer asserted, and then continued:

I am nothing if not a “dyed-in-the-wool” American. I love my country, in spite of all its past and present mistakes. And this should be true of all of us. We’re in this together, just as were our ancestors of whatever race or nationality, and we should concentrate on the process which has been made over the past 300 years, and not rake up the past to pollute the present.
The reply in Akwesasne Notes was given the headline “Don’t Include Indians.” The writer used the expression “‘dyed in the wool’ so-called American” twice and continued: “do not again attempt to include us Indians in your blundering effort to exonerate yourself and your kind for polluting and destroying our Indian land. It is our land, legally and morally, and not yours!” The fact that the writer of the reply used the term so-called American indicates that for him, American meant “Indian,” and he did not want to be part of what the writer of the original letter meant by the word American.

A Wassaja editorial from 1973 was also critical of placing Indians and non-Indians together in an American we. This writer, however, distanced himself from the term American. He criticized other newspapers for writing “factory produced editorials” that asked Indians to “speak to us as fellow-Americans.” This made the writer ask,

Just when are we to be considered as “fellow-Americans,” in 1492, when the first European invasion took place? Or 1882? Or perhaps 1890? At the time of the Wounded Knee massacre? Most of us are mere two generations removed from Wounded Knee, 1890. We are within the same generation as the Kinzua Dam.

In this statement the editor did not identify as American but thought of Americans as synonymous with the European invaders and with those who committed various acts of cruelty toward Indians. Instead, he identified with the Indians of the past who had been the targets of these acts. He did not consistently associate America with the Europeans and white Americans, however. A few paragraphs before the statement just quoted, he wrote about American Indians and American tribes, perhaps with the geographic location or the physical land in mind.

Americans seems also to have referred to white people in the Akwesasne Notes editorial that stated it was a shame that “Indian/American relations had been allowed to get into such a shape” that the destruction of the BIA building in Washington D.C. during the Indian occupation could even be considered. In this statement, Indians are obviously not considered American. And the writer who commented on how ridiculous it was that “Americans call the moon when the corn ripens ‘July’ after a Roman emperor” seems also to have meant white people by the term.

The concept American could include different races. The use of first Americans and original Americans for Indians implies that there were others.

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groups that were also Americans. It implies a sense of we with other groups. Indian America was also used in reference to Indians all over the United States, as, for example, in an article about the shooting and killing of Mohawk activist Richard Oaks. Native Americans were apparently also included with other Americans in a statement made by an Indian actress who did not get parts because the producers wanted “American-looking” girls. She wondered: “Who could be more American-looking than an Indian?”

Expressions like white America and non-Indian America also appeared. Assiniboine-Sioux activist Hank Adams accused white America of having conducted a “sea of violence” against Native Americans throughout history. He also associated what he called the “pastime of killing Indians” with the “pioneer spirit’ of White America.” Sometimes it appears that the same person used America and American to mean several different things. The writer of the Akwesasne Notes article obviously used the term America to refer to non-Indians when he wrote this:

We ask you, America, “Why?” We ask you why you have broken every treaty, why do you hate your neighbor, why do you take everything and everyone you see? why do you kill – all that is around you? Why do you try to change the universal order? Know you not of the sacred circle? Why have you turned away from your God? You have broken every treaty – have you also broken your Covenant with your God?

America apparently represents white people in this statement; however, earlier in the same article the author used the expression white America, indicating that some Americans were not white. A similar double meaning for America as both Indian and something other than Indian occurred in another article that contended that the United States had a goal “to bring Indians to a civilized state.” To be able to do this, they had to educate the Indians “to American values.” Here American stands for white America and for something other than Indian. However, in the next sentence the writer stated that the United States thought that Indians “must adopt white American lifestyles, and must be integrated into white American concepts of industry,” indicating here again that some Americans were not white. One may assume that they also conceived of an Indian America.

In some statements it is not obvious what America and the idea of being American meant to the Indians. Wassaja editor Rupert Costco, for example,

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850 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.6, p.7.
seems to have included Indians in an all-American patriotism when he wrote in his column “Speaking Freely” that “most of us consider ourselves to be patriotic Americans,’ and how could that be otherwise, remembering that we are the only original Americans!”\textsuperscript{854} Costo’s meaning is not obvious. American patriotism is usually tied to the United States, but Costo also wrote about “original Americans,” referring to Americans who existed before the United States did. This raises the question of which America he devotes his patriotism to; it does not seem to be the United States. Later in the text, he indicated that Indian Americans continued to exist as sovereign nations “despite the efforts of the United States and the various states to deprive us of our rights and privileges as nations.”\textsuperscript{855}

Neither is it clear what Kiowa novelist N. Scott Momaday meant when he wrote, “We Americans need now more than ever before […] to imagine who and what we are with respect to the earth and sky.”\textsuperscript{856} Did he mean all Americans or only Indians? The many different meanings ascribed to America and American makes it far from obvious what Indians meant in the newspaper accounts when stating, “We are proud to be Americans.”\textsuperscript{857}

In summary, one may conclude that Indians sometimes identify as Americans and sometimes do not. This identification can to some extent be connected to being part of the United States. When Indians identify as citizens of the United States, they also identify as Americans. Similarly, Indians who have dissociated themselves from the United States may also dissociate from an American identity. However, some Indians have identified as Americans while at the same time considering themselves apart from the United States. They see America as something other than the United States. Further, the many different meanings of the terms allow the same person to use the words America and American differently, even within a single statement.

Relating to the United States and its symbols

Connected to the issue of what the words America and American mean is the issue of how Indians should relate to what America stands for. How did Indians relate to different U.S. symbols in the newspaper accounts? Were U.S. symbols interpreted as strictly “U.S.-ian,” or could they be interpreted in a context separate from the United States?

\textsuperscript{854} Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.4, p.2.
\textsuperscript{855} Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.4, p.2.
\textsuperscript{856} Wassaja 1973, vol.1, no.2, p.4.
American patriotic symbols

Living in the United States, Native Americans cannot avoid contact with U.S. patriotic symbols, and this means that they must decide how to relate to them. Even the most radical Indians claiming tribal independent nationhood must decide how to relate to such symbols as the American flag and the national anthem. Both were mentioned in the newspapers, and the Native American relationship to the American flag seems to have been especially complicated. The question of accepting or rejecting the American flag was a sensitive issue. Many citizens of the United States have had a very emotional relationship to its national flag, to which they pledge their allegiance.858

Apparently, some Indians writing in the newspapers rejected the flag and what it stands for, while others had a more ambivalent relationship to it. In a letter to Akwesasne Notes, a Native woman wrote about her problematic relationship to the United States and how she did not identify with the U.S. by relating to the American flag and to the U.S. national anthem. She described herself as educated in the “white man’s school system” for twelve years and remembered only “white propaganda.” In school she was pressured to recite the Pledge of Allegiance every morning, but it was nothing she identified with. “Surely their ‘liberty and justice for all’ is an unreached goal,” she remarked. She knew what she called “their” national anthem, and she referred to its lyrics when she stated that “too many of their ‘bombs’ land everyday on our brothers and the graves of our fathers.” She therefore decided to write her own Pledge of Allegiance. “I wish to pledge my allegiance to my people, a people and government of honor,” she wrote.

I pledge my allegiance to the Longhouse
Of the Iroquois People
And to the League of the Six Nations
One People united before the Great Spirit
Ruled by the Great Law of Peace.859

This woman openly rejected the American flag, the national anthem, and the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance, promising her allegiance solely to the Iroquois Confederacy. Such complete rejection of American patriotic symbols was not very common in the newspapers, however. Other examples recount that the president of the Navajo Liberation Front, John Redhouse, rejected the flag by calling it a piece of cloth that meant nothing to him.860 Mrs. Jumping Bull, an Oglala Sioux woman, was said to have wanted to return the American flag and the Purple Heart awarded her son, who was killed during World

858 The U.S. Pledge of Allegiance reads as follows: “I Pledge Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All.” Home of Heroes. www.homeofheroes.com/hallofheroes/1st_floor/flag/1bfc_pledge.html. 2013-08-01.
859 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.44.
War II, to President Ford and Senator McGovern.861 It was at the Jumping Bull compound on the Pine Ridge Reservation that the shootout had taken place that killed two FBI agents and one Native American.862 The picture of a family member and a friend of his, both killed while performing military service, had been shot to pieces. The newspapers stated that “their pictures reminded Mrs. Jumping Bull […] of her giving to the government which was not respected.”863

It was not always obvious whether rejection of the American flag also entailed rejection of the United States. Wassaja, for instance, reported that the Indian students of Tuba City High School felt that they were discriminated against, and therefore “they objected to reciting the pledge of allegiance, and requested permission to fly the Navajo national flag at half mast on days of mourning instead of the U.S. and Arizona flags.”864 The rejection of the American and Arizona flags could be interpreted as an assertion of separate tribal statehood, but because the reason for this rejection was said to be discrimination against the Indians, the meaning is not entirely clear. It might have represented a protest against dominant society’s not allowing Indians to be a part of it. The Navajos’ rejection of the flag seems to relate to their rights as citizens more than it is a reference to tribal sovereignty.

Several times Native Americans did not entirely reject the American flag. The newspapers reported examples of Indians using both the flag and the national anthem to criticize the United States but doing so without rejecting these symbols or the country outright. Even American Indian Movement (AIM) leaders seem to have had an ambivalent relationship to the flag. During a rally held in Tulsa on the one-year anniversary of the occupation of Wounded Knee, they asked city officials to fly the U.S. flag upside-down to signal a nation in distress. The city officials refused and posted U.S. marshals to guard the Civic Center flagpole so that it would be impossible for AIM to fly the flag there, Akwesasne Notes reported. The organization, however, flew the U.S. flag upside-down on another flagpole beneath its own AIM flag.865 That the group decided to fly the U.S. flag at all signals that its members somehow identified with this symbol and what it stands for, the United States of America. Peter Matthiessen explains how the idea of flying the American flag upside-down emerged in his book In the Spirit of Crazy Horse. During a meeting supporting Chippewa fishing rights at Cass Lake, Minnesota, the American flag flown upside-down was formally adopted as an AIM symbol; Dennis Banks told Matthiessen that an Indian who had served in the navy had suggested it. This use of the flag motivated a great deal of protests from both whites and Indians. Banks told Matthiessen:

862 Matthiessen 1991, pp.147–156.
865 Akwesasne Notes 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.21.
White people protested, of course, and a lot of our Indian people protested, too; a lot of the guys there had been in the military, and in some way they were still Americans, and it made ‘em uneasy to see that flag flown upside-down. We had to explain that this was the international distress signal for people in trouble, and no one could deny Indians were in bad trouble and needed help.866

The standard phrase used to describe flying the flag upside-down is that it “signaled a nation in distress.” This signal is officially recognized by U.S. officials.867 Wassaja, for instance, showed a picture of a woman protester at Wounded Knee holding the flag upside down. She was quoted as having said, “The Native American is in a state of frustration, anger, anxiety for the future of our people. There is no more cause worthy of the distress signal that ours.”868 The same expression was also used by an Indian at the occupation of the BIA building in Washington D.C. “This is the nation code for a distress signal.”869 The same article described Indians wrapping themselves in upside-down American flags, and the paper reported on a flag hung upside-down at half-staff beside a large tipi.870 Indians also wore the American flag upside-down when they gathered to protest the killing of the Oglala Sioux Raymond Yellow Thunder in Gordon, Nebraska, and the action upset non-Indians. Akwesasne Notes reported:

Many of the Indians wore full-sized American flags upside down over their shoulders. “It is a symbol of distress,” said Means. “The American Indian nation is in distress, and this is the best way to show it.”

Gordon city clerk, Gerald Swick, was outraged at what he found when he arrived on the second day of protest at the small suite of city offices located in the same building as the auditorium where the Indians gathered all night. Several Indians were sleeping on the flags they earlier wore around their shoulders.

“I’ve never seen anything like this,” said Swick. “When I saw those Indians sleeping on the flag, I almost became ill.”871

Wearing or flying the flag upside-down was always described as a sign of distress in the newspapers, but no further explanations were given of what this meant to the Indians. Banks’ explanation to Matthiessen suggests that many of the Indians flying or wearing the flag upside-down were identifying with the United States. However, doing so may also have meant something

else to at least some of the Indians, perhaps implying an Indian America connected to pre-European times. This might be what Russell Means meant by stating that “the American Indian nation” was in distress; the American flag in this case apparently became a symbol for an American Indian nation. This is perhaps an example of what Rosier calls hybrid patriotism. The American nation and an American Indian nation have been conflated in Means’ mind; however, it is far from obvious what the American flag represented to Russell Means.

The flag was obviously an important symbol for Native Americans, but this question remains: What did the flag really represent? The newspapers give no conclusive answer to this question. Knowing the extensive patriotic rituals that have been part of American society, like the Pledge of Allegiance, and knowing how important, even sacred, the symbol of the American flag has been to Americans, it is definitely possible that Means was talking about a United States in distress. It must have been very difficult, even for the most radical Indian activist, to completely reject the American flag, even after having proclaimed tribal sovereignty.

Smith and Warrior also show that the American flag played an important role for another Wounded Knee participant. They describe the funeral of Buddy Lamont, the Oglala Sioux who was killed during the Wounded Knee siege. Given that he was a participant in the occupation and member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, which frequently figured in the newspapers claiming tribal independence, one would expect that Buddy Lamont’s funeral would lack American patriotic symbols. This was not the case. Smith and Warrior’s description of the funeral is an excellent example of the contradictions of Indian identification in relation to the United States.

Buddy Lamont lay in the coffin in the Church of God, wrapped in the contradictions of his life. He was dressed in his army uniform from Vietnam, wearing moccasins and beadwork. His hand held a pipe. Two flags covered his coffin, from each of the nations in whose service he had fought. One was the American flag. The second was the Wounded Knee flag. It read “Wounded Knee, 1890–1973,” with colors of red, yellow, black and white, representing the four races and the four directions.872

The founding of the United States

Native Americans connected pre-contact Indian America with post-contact United States in several different ways. One way this was done was by describing how Indians had contributed to the creation of the United States. Vine Deloria, Jr., for example, asserted that Native Americans had provided the foundation for the United States.

872 Smith & Warrior 1996, p.262.
He began by saying that the symbolism of what was America did not correspond with an Indian perception of America. Young brown-eyed and brown-skinned Indian children learn that George Washington, a blue-eyed white man, is the “Father of Our Country.” Deloria obviously saw a problem with the racial difference between the Indian children and the white “father”; however, he did not argue against this image. Instead, he demonstrated that Indian people also had contributed to establishing the United States as a nation. The American Revolution did not simply happen; Indian peoples lay the groundwork for its success.

Someone had to prepare the way for them. Someone had to help them get rid of the French. If George Washington is the father of this country because he defeated the English, then logic impels one to conclude that the men of the Iroquois are the grandfathers of this country.873

The point Deloria apparently wanted to make was that the English could not have defeated the French without help from Indian tribes like the Iroquois Confederacy and the Delawares. If it had not been for a Delaware chief, the English would not have been able to negotiate a peace treaty with the Indian allies of the French, Deloria contended. He also pointed out that “George [Washington], prior to 1776, was a foreigner in America. He was an Englishman by birth and allegiance.” Deloria stated that the Iroquois had laid the philosophical foundation for the “new country of America” in that the U.S. government was constituted and functioned in ways similar to the League of the Iroquois in 1789. Consequently, America was also of Indian ancestry. Deloria wrote: “Thus little brown-eyed, brown-skinned ones, don’t worry. One way or another Americans have an Iroquois Indian in their ancestry.” 874

_America_ apparently bears several different meanings in this text. On one hand, it seems to refer to the United States – for example, in Deloria’s reference to George Washington as the father and the Iroquois as the grandfathers of “this country.” However, the United States is also described as the “New Country of America,” implying the existence of an Old Country of America. Here America is not coterminous with the United States. America seems to have changed its meaning from “Indian” to “U.S.” over time in Deloria’s mind. When he stated that George Washington was a foreigner to America prior to 1776, he apparently meant that before the revolution and the creation of the United States, America was Indian.

It was not only Deloria who referred to Iroquois contributions to the foundation of the United States. _Akwesasne Notes_ published a text that recited what was written on the Six Nations Museum monument. It described not only the way the Iroquois Confederacy had protected the English colonies but also the Native Americans’ showing settlers how to create a union; “so

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[they] helped prepare the American and Canadian people for nationhood." The idea of freedom that was, and is, so strongly emphasized in American society was said to have come from the Indians. Native Americans were depicted as having helped the “white man [who] sought his freedom on these shores.” Indians believed in individual freedom, and the writer found it strange that “upon this sprawling continent we so proudly call the birth place of freedom,” there was no “great memorial to that first citizen of liberty.”

Another *Akwesasne Notes* article similarly claimed that Indians themselves were denied the freedom that they had provided to the immigrant Europeans. A representative of the Iroquois Confederacy said this:

> We are a free people. The very dust of our ancestors is steeped in our tradition. This is the greatest gift we gave to you, the concept of freedom. You did not have this. Now that you have taken it and built a constitution and country around it, you deny freedom to us […] be honest, be fair, honor the commitments made by the founding fathers of your country […] Reaffirm and respect the treaties entered into between our two peoples.

These ideas seem to relate to what Donald Grinde Jr. argued in *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*, which was published in 1992. He writes that it is common knowledge among many American Indian groups that the Iroquois Confederacy “served as a democratic blueprint” for the development of the American governmental system. This has been denied by academics, especially historians, Grinde writes, although both documentary and oral traditions “clearly indicate” that this is the case. For instance, Benjamin Franklin met with both colonial and Iroquois delegates to construct a plan for the new union, and Franklin acknowledged that the plans were similar to the idea behind the Iroquois Confederacy. Grinde also finds references to Indian government in the statements of John Adams, another of the United States’ founding fathers. Adams thought that contemporary leaders should look to Indian governments, whose legislative branch was so democratic that “real sovereignty resided in the body of the people.” Grinde draws this conclusion:

> Since Adams discussed the advantages of American Indian governments in his *Defense of Constitutions* on the eve of the Constitutional Convention, it is clear that Iroquois political theory played a role in the debate and framing of the Constitution, since his *Defense of Constitutions* was used and quoted extensively at the Constitutional Convention.

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875 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.5.
876 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.1, p.5.
878 Grinde, Jr. 1992, p.228.
879 Grinde, Jr. 1992, p.244.
880 Grinde, Jr. 1992, p.263.
Although the newspapers did not make the connection as clearly as Grinde’s book does between the U.S. political system and that of the Iroquois, it is obvious that there existed an understanding of the Iroquois model as a foundation for democracy in the United States.

Indians were said to have contributed in still other ways to the foundation of the United States. Native Americans had helped the white settlers survive in America by showing them which foods to eat and which plants could be used for medicine. And of course, Indians had provided the land upon which all Americans lived. “America is Indian country,” one Wassaja editorial stated, and “every person that lives in America owes him respect.”

Although Indians were described as having contributed to the creation of the United States, they did not necessarily have to identify with it. This was shown in an Akwesasne Notes article that described Indians protesting the celebration of Thanksgiving at Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts. This article emphasized that the “forefathers of the United States” would not have survived without the food provided by the Indians in 1621. Consequently, there would not have been a United States at all without the help of the Indians. However, the Indians’ dissociation from the United States was shown by calling the contemporary white people celebrating at Plymouth Rock “Pilgrims,” and the New England tribes were said to have designated Thanksgiving Day a Day of Mourning.

That Indians had helped European settlers to survive could even be described as the downfall of the Indian nations. In Wassaja, one reads that the Iroquois had assisted the founders of the United States and that this had resulted in their own loss of independent nationhood.

Have we, the first holders of this prosperous region, no longer a share in your history? Glad were your fathers to sit upon the threshold of the Long House, rich did they then hold themselves in getting the mere sweepings from its door. Had our forefathers spurned you from it when the French were thundering at the opposite end to get a passage through and drive you into the sea, whatever has been the fate of other Indians, the Iroquois might still have been a nation.

Historical events obviously caused Native Americans to feel betrayed by the United States. Indians had helped the first colonists to survive, and they had provided the most important foundation of what became the United States: the ideology of freedom and democracy. In return, Native Americans were oppressed and lost their land and political independence. Native Americans could obviously both identify with and dissociate from a United States that they felt they had helped to create.

As I have mentioned, former presidents of the United States were also discussed in the newspapers. Deloria described President George Washington as a founding father of a United States that Indians were part of and had participated in creating. However, in other newspaper texts, Washington was described in a very different way. A letter to Akwesasne Notes portrayed Washington as a land-hungry murderer. Said to have been a great surveyor as a young man, Washington traveled deep into Indian country. But in 1763, the King of England presented a proclamation in which he set aside all the land west of the Appalachian Mountains for the Indians. Washington ignored the proclamation and secretly hired a surveyor to locate valuable land within Indian-owned territory, the letter stated. Washington gave orders for “America’s first search and destroy mission” which had as a goal “the specific mission of burning and plundering Indian villages.”

To make a point about the kind of person Washington was, the writer also quoted a speech by a Seneca chief who addressed Washington in 1790:

Father: When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you the Town Destroyer; and to this day, when your name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks. Our counsellors and warriors are men, and cannot be afraid, but their hearts are grieved with the fears of our women and children, and desire that it may be buried so deep as to be heard no more.

So far the letter criticized Washington as a person; however, he was also apparently associated with his public role as president of the United States, a role that led the writer to dissociate from that nation. The letter criticized non-Indians and what it called “the white nation” for celebrating President George Washington. Washington was not a president Indians acknowledged, and he was not part of their history. Instead, he was someone who had committed terrible crimes against Indian people. There are no signs of any Indian identification with the United States in this statement:

We are American Indians. Today is the birthday of George Washington, the first president of your country. While your people celebrate his birth, our people live under conditions necessitated by his policies. Washington, the burner of villages, the murderer of Indian women and children, is the type of man you teach your children to admire. Washington, the master of underhanded robberies and trickery, is the man for whom the white nation sets aside a special holiday.

Former presidents of the United States certainly could create obstacles for Indian identification in relation to the United States. Could one identify as

887 Akwesasne Notes 1972, vol.4, no.1, p.18; emphasis mine.
American when that country’s founding fathers had committed atrocities against Indians? *Akwesasne Notes* reported that the Nez Perce Indians had renamed a dance that they had held in honor of George Washington for several years. Apparently, they had been celebrating the president as one of the founding fathers of the United States. They renamed the dance, the newspaper reported, because they learned what the president had done to the Indians. The president of the tribal dance committee explained, “It has come to our attention there is no reason to celebrate the first president’s birthday. He once offered a bounty on the head of Indians.”

In this case, the dance was apparently taken completely out of the context of celebrating the United States and was renamed the E-Peh-Tes War Dance Championship. This occurrence indicates that the president’s actions were closely associated with the United States. In other cases, however, U.S. presidents were criticized as persons without any direct references to the United States. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, was described as prejudiced against Indian peoples. Two statements from Roosevelt, written in 1885 and 1886, were printed in *Akwesasne Notes*. Roosevelt was reported to have stated that he would not go so far as to say that “the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every ten are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the tenth.” He also described Indians as “reckless, revengeful, fiendishly cruel, they rob and murder, not the cowboys who can take care of themselves, but the defenseless, lone settlers on the plains.” Roosevelt not only showed an intense dislike for Indians, but he found the ideal of starving Native Americans into submission an excellent solution to the “Indian problem.” He was said to have described the overhunting to near extinction of buffalo, that crucial food resource for the Plains Indians, as “the only way of solving the Indian question.”

Thomas Jefferson was also mentioned as a president who had committed atrocities against Indians. One reads in *Akwesasne Notes* that the first issue Thomas Jefferson dealt with when he became president was how to justify war against peaceful Indians. He was said to have sent the worst of his people into Indian country in order to provoke conflict and to justify killing Native Americans and claiming their territory because of Indian aggression.

Not surprisingly, it was difficult for modern-day Indians to identify with historic presidents once they learned about their transgressions against Indian peoples. This raises the question of whether the founding fathers’ actions also affected Native American identification with and allegiance to the United States. Apparently, at least some Indians simply removed the presidents

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891 *Akwesasne Notes* 1974, vol.6, no.3, p.7.
from the national context and criticized them as individuals, not as representatives of the United States.

**Celebrations of the United States**

The issue of Indian relationship to the United States was also manifest in discussions about the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain was not until 1976; however, discussions about the issue and apparently some celebrations had already started in 1975. The newspapers showed that these celebrations triggered different reactions and different ways of identifying vis-à-vis the United States among Indians. *Wassaja* conducted a survey among tribal leaders to investigate their thoughts about the bicentennial celebrations. Some of them responded, “We have nothing to celebrate, [for] we lost our land, and it should be noted in any observance of the Bicentennial.” Others answered, “We should use the Bicentennial to bring the Indian situation before the public.”


The negative statements focused on what Indians had lost by being incorporated into the United States. Edward C. Johnson, a Paiute tribal historian, commented, “I don’t know what the Indian have to celebrate in the Bicentennial except maybe that he’s alive today.” In a letter to *Akwesasne Notes* a Native woman wrote that the celebrations “will only bring grim reminders of the once large, proud sovereign nations that have passed into non-existence,” and in a letter to *Wassaja*, one Native man suggested that Indians should have their own celebrations of the “glorious victory” of the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876, scheduling them to coincide with Fourth of July festivities in order to mark the centennial of Indian troops’ defeating enemy soldiers intruding upon their lands. An Oklahoma student similarly suggested that a celebration should be held on the site of Custer’s last stand: “We are being called upon to celebrate the creation of this country – which signified the end of sovereignty and freedom for our people,” he had stated.


Celebrating the centennial of the Battle of the Little Bighorn instead of the bicentennial of the United States was an obvious expression of dissociation from the United States. The battle was a great military victory over the United States for the coalition of western Sioux bands and the Northern Cheyennes. The battle is famous for completely destroying Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his division of the Seventh Cavalry, 215 men strong.

897 Edmunds 2007, p.303–304.
When Indians were asked to participate in the celebration of the bicentennial by joining a wagon train crossing the United States, this upset many Indians, for some associated historic wagon trains with physical and cultural genocide. *Wassaja* recorded the reactions of some Indians:

> It is an insult to the American Indian, to whom the wagon trains symbolize the illegal entry of the settlers who took the Indian land, the adventurer who committed genocide, the destruction of Indian lives and Indian cultures.  

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Similar ideas were expressed when Portland Urban Indian Program was invited to participate in the wagon train that would travel through Oregon. Charles Johnson, the director of the program, replied that they declined the invitation because it “was like the Germans inviting the Jews to celebrate Hitler’s rise to power.” AIM stated that the “bicentennial should be considered as a period of mourning by American Indians,”900 and a *Wassaja* writer declared the following:

> Go ahead Whiteman! Celebrate your American Heritage with Your Bicentennial Birth Party of Your Nation. Why should we celebrate our Dependency, on your Independence Day anniversary?900

Not all statements concerning the bicentennial celebration were associated with colonialism and destruction of Indian tribes, however. Ronnie Lupe, chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, noted that “It’s not our bicentennial celebration […] We have always been here.”901 Still other Indians held celebrations of their own. The National Indian Activities Association sponsored a celebration in Seattle. Activities were said to include an Indian parade, canoe racing, an archery contest, bone games, Lacrosse games, cross-country racing, dancing, a buffalo-and-salmon bake, and regional soft ball tournaments. Indians from several different states were reported to be participating.902

Clydia Nahwooksy, a Cherokee Indian working for the Smithsonian Institution, argued that the festivities should not be celebrations of either the past or the present. She was quoted as having stated that “no American can truly celebrate, in speeches or fireworks, the events of Sand Creek, Washita, or Wounded Knee.” Neither could they celebrate the present since “who can celebrate the unemployment, the bad health, and the poor housing which characterize the lives of so many American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut peo-

ple[?]” Nahwooksy wanted the bicentennial to be a time of increased “ethnic self-awareness and correction of inequalities.”

Although most statements about the U.S. bicentennial showed a degree of rejection of the celebrations, some Native Americans identified with the United States and wanted to celebrate the anniversary as Americans. Tribal councilman Walter Treadwell of the Poospatuck Reservation on Long Island, New York, fully identified as an American. He stated, “I’m an American, this is my country, and I think the Revolution is as important to me as any other American.”

Serving in the U.S. military

As mentioned earlier, Indians were confronted with the issue of whether Native Americans should go to war for the United States in the early 1970s. Closely connected to that question was that of how they identified in relation to the United States. As I have shown, some Indians rejected military service by asserting independent tribal statehood while others rejected it for religious reasons. There were, however, many Native Americans who willingly accepted military service for the United States.

In his study of Indian Vietnam veterans, Holm asks what motivated Native Americans to join the military during the Vietnam War. “Is Indian service simply an attempt to legitimate themselves as Americans?” Further, “had they been ‘Americanized’ to the point that they accepted military service as a responsibility of citizenship?” Holm has contended that the reasons behind Indian willingness to serve in the military were complicated. He found that in contrast to other minority groups in the United States, Native Americans did not enlist in order to gain acceptance from the dominant American society. Instead, military service was commonly seen as part of a family or a tribal practice, a continuation of the warrior traditions of many Indian tribes. Becoming a warrior would garner respect among the tribes. A warrior would have done what generations of young men before him had done in times of conflict; being a warrior was a part of the male gender role. Warriors could participate in traditional ceremonies connected to warfare that affirmed their tribal identity. As much as 75 percent of those who volunteered or submitted to conscription referred to family or tribal traditions as their reason for enlisting. Holm concluded:

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904 Akwesasne Notes 1975, vol.7, no.3, p.36.
907 Holm 1996, pp.23, 119
Indian Vietnam Veterans did not enter military service to prove themselves “good Americans,” gain a degree of economic status, or become accepted by whites. Rather, according to the veterans themselves, they enlisted or accepted induction because they were patriots in the tribal sense of the word. To them, military service was part of an honorable family and/or tribal tradition. They wanted to become warriors – to protect their land and their people. And, in the tribal tradition of reciprocity, they wanted to gain respect from other Native Americans.\textsuperscript{909}

There was not much discussion about why Native Americans should go to war for the United States in the newspapers, and in agreement with Holm’s findings, neither did anyone assert that it was a duty for Native Americans to participate. This does not mean that Indian veterans could not identify with the United States and believe that they had fought for the whole country while serving in the U.S. military. In fact, this was the case of the Navajo who wrote an article in Wassaja in 1975. He believed that the Navajo soldiers who had served both in World War II and in Vietnam had done so to protect the whole of the United States, not only the Navajo people. He was disappointed that the federal government did not recognize the sacrifices that the Navajos had made. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
We Navajos fought for our country. We helped win the war against Japan. Our Navajo Code Talkers were a critical part of that war, and the war would have lasted much longer if not for them. Now our sons have also fought for our country. And how are we treated? On my reservation, 70 percent of the veterans are unemployed.\textsuperscript{910}
\end{quote}

Similarly, another Native American stated that he had been in “the United States Military Service, serving my country,” but he wondered how he could be expected to be patriotic when he was treated as he was.\textsuperscript{911} He also referred to the whole country, the United States, when he spoke of “serving my country.”

Whether Native Americans served in the military for patriotic reasons, for economic reasons, or to carry on family and tribal traditions, they risked finding themselves in a complicated relationship to the military owing to the history between the U.S. military and Indian tribes. This was especially true for individuals from tribes that had fought against the United States in the past. Akwesasne Notes reported that a group of Indian soldiers stationed abroad had refused to participate in a Fourth of July parade in Germany. When the United States Army held celebrations, the tanks displayed little flags in memory of “the Sixth Infantry’s historic battle during the Indian Wars.” One of the Indian soldiers said,

\textsuperscript{909} Holm 1996, p.118.
\textsuperscript{910} Wassaja 1975, vol.3, no.10, p.10.
\textsuperscript{911} Wassaja 1974, vol.2, no.8, p.3.
We told our officers that this showed a lack of sympathy for the Indian and that many of our brothers were depressed by them [the flags] because some of the people massacred were their relatives.912

Such a seemingly contradictory situation – a person serving in the U.S. military whose ancestors had been victims of it – did not necessarily lead to resentment toward the United States, even when history and the present were linked. *Akwesasne Notes* gave an example of an interesting intertwining of past and present by Enos Poor Bear, a former leader at the Pine Ridge Reservation and a veteran described as “a loyal American who still suffers from wounds he got in World War II.” Poor Bear’s 21-year-old son had participated in the occupation of Wounded Knee and had been injured by federal marshals. That upset Poor Bear, who pointed out that his son had been a paratrooper in Vietnam and had received a Purple Heart “fighting for his country.”913 He was obviously proud that his son had been honored for fighting for the U.S. military in Vietnam. But he went on to talk about the historic Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, at which Sioux were killed by the U.S. army, and related these soldiers’ congressional medals to his son’s being shot at Wounded Knee.

In 1890, the Bluecoats shot down our people here and they gave 18 of the soldiers the Congressional Medal of Honor for shooting mostly children and women, some of them pregnant – if they soldiers got medals, then my boy ought to get a Medal of Honor, too, for getting shot here.914

The reasoning behind this statement is far from obvious. Was Poor Bear implying that his son was a soldier who had been wounded in battle and therefore deserved a medal? If so, whom was he fighting, and who should give him the medal of honor? The answer in both cases seems to be the United States. The question then becomes what being a “loyal American” and “fighting for his country” meant to Poor Bear. Was his country the United States or an Indian America? From his statements in *Akwesasne Notes*, no conclusive answer can be drawn; however, it seems that the two concepts were sometimes fused and sometimes separate for Poor Bear.

When it comes to his comparison of the “Bluecoats” of the 19th century and his son’s receiving a medal of honor, Poor Bear seems to have questioned what honor involved in the U.S. military. If the military could honor soldiers who had killed women and children, it should also honor Poor Bear’s son, who had fought for his people. Atrocities committed by the U.S. military in the past did not necessarily bring rejection in the present. Apparently, there was no contradiction in the mind of Poor Bear in being proud of

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his son as a U.S. soldier and at the same time referring to atrocities perpetrated by the U.S. military against Indians.

Some Indians, however, rejected the U.S. military when they felt that there was no justice for them in the U.S. judicial system. The Shenandoah family, Onondagas of the Iroquois Confederacy, would not allow one of their members to be buried in a military funeral despite the fact that he had served in the military and had been awarded a “post on Kennedy’s honor guard.” He had been killed by police while watching a film being recorded on the streets of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The family explained their refusal of a military funeral saying, “We thought not after he was shot by a uniformed man.” It is not clear whether, in the family’s minds, the U.S. military and the police represented a United States that the Onondagas were not part of or whether members of the Shenandoah family thought that their civil rights had been violated, leading them to understand the military as a symbol of the United States.

American identification in 1992

The meaning of America and American

As demonstrated earlier, America and American bore many different meanings in the early 1970s. America could represent the land or continent of North America or the United States. To be American could represent a we that referred to the first or “real” Americans, in contrast to the European invaders. It could indicate Native Americans along with other Americans, but it could also represent an “other,” the white oppressors of the Indian peoples. This was also true for the newspapers in 1992. America was referred to as “these lands” by Quinault Nation President Joe De La Cruz in a quote published in Indian Country Today. The history of these lands, of America, went back much further than the 500 years since non-Indians had settled on the continent. The last 500 years were recent history for Indian peoples, who had lived there for tens of thousands of years: “Chronologically, the United States is Lilliputian on the graph of American Indian history.” The United States here is part of America but is not equated with it. De La Cruz also wanted Indian nations and the federal government to cooperate to make the next 500 years show that “our paths” are not “mutually exclusive.” Most Indians believed that there were “good people in America,” he stated. America could also refer to the whole continent, as in the statement

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that “throughout the Americas” Indian peoples were on the bottom socioeconomically.917

However, the 1992 papers also contain examples in which America is defined as the “other,” closely associated with the United States and its non-Indian population. Oren Lyons, for example, categorized Americans with the Spanish and the English as those who had fought Indian peoples since the arrival of Columbus. Since that time, Indians had fought to retain their lands and to retain their religion and other customs and traditions.918 One article stated that “America doesn’t really understand the legal relationship [that Indians have] with the U.S.,”919 and another article stated that “all of America and its many nationalities […] continue to practice their religious beliefs brought with them across five thousand plus miles of ocean travel.”920 Both statements refer to a white America that Indians are not part of. This was also the case when America was asked to admit that it had enslaved innocent people and started an action of genocide against the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere that was the greatest holocaust in the history of this planet.921

In this statement, America has been separated from the Western Hemisphere, instead taking on the meaning of a white United States. Further, America was criticized for entering the Gulf War at President George H. W. Bush’s motivation “to protect the sovereignty of a smaller, weaker nation because it was ‘the right thing to do.’” Attacking smaller, weaker nations was exactly what America had done to the Indian peoples. Native nations had been “raped, plundered and stole land from,” one could read in News From Indian Country.922 Once again America took on the meaning of a United States that Indians are not part of.

There were also newspaper accounts in which America referred to a United States that Indians identified with. For example, “Tribes must be free to practice their religion like all Americans.”923 When they identified as part of America, Native Americans often differentiated between different kinds of Americans. The concept of an Indian America was used to refer to different Indian tribes throughout what is today the United States.924 Another article that described the 1862 war between the Dakotas and the settlers of Minnesota likewise specified different types of Americans: “In those years Yankee and immigrant Americans fought Native Americans.” The article went on to

918 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.23, p.22.
924 News from Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.11.
state that since then, Indians had participated in all the wars of the United States and had served “with honor alongside other Americans.”  

The idea that there are several different kinds of Americans and that Native Americans constitute one group of them was shared by Indian Country Today editor Tim Giago. He discussed what the concept of America meant in relationship to Indian religious rights. Native American religious rights had been limited through the two U.S. Supreme Court decisions that allowed the destruction of Indian sacred sites. Giago connected these decisions to the way that dominant society defined America – namely, as “a Christian nation.”

White America has never tried to understand the religions of others, particularly that of the indigenous peoples. To admit that the “red Indians” of America had religious beliefs, or even souls, would be to admit they were human and, therefore, not deserving of the genocide inflicted upon them in order to clear the land of them.

Giago obviously included Indians in America. He further stated that the destruction of Indian sacred sites was allowed because the Supreme Court Justices did not understand Indian religion. “After all, they are white or black, middle class Americans with little or no knowledge of Indian people and their religion.” However, all Americans should be worried, Giago wrote, because their own religion might be next in line for attack.

The expression first Americans was also used in the 1992 papers. One article stated:

American Indians have had the right to vote only since 1924, when they became the last minority – in spite of being the first Americans – to receive citizenship.

Here two meanings of American have been placed together. One refers to the first inhabitants of the continent of America, and the other refers to citizens of the United States; one does not relate to sovereign statehood, while the other does. Two ways of thinking about America and Indian belonging apparently existed at the same time in the mind of the writer.

Relating to the United States and its symbols

As they had been in the early 1970s, Native Americans were given credit also in later accounts for having contributed to the creation of the United States. In 1992, this was done in relation to the celebration of Columbus Day. As shown above, the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' “discovery” of America was not generally promoted. In this case, however, the celebration was interpreted in terms of acknowledging Indian contributions to the present United States.

For our children, we celebrate our contributions to this land. We tell them to remember our people, the Oneidas of the Great League of Iroquois.

Remember that democracy was our way of government. The Iroquois knew strength came from one voice that spoke for a union of nations. Our way lives on as the roots of the United States Constitution.929

The Oneidas had assisted in this creation in other ways as well, by supporting knowledge, protection, and culture. They helped the newcomers to live in “this land” by giving them food, medicine, and knowledge about how to survive. They had “fought valiantly to protect their homelands in every conflict of the United States since the Revolutionary War,” and during the Revolutionary War Oneida chiefs had fed George Washington’s army when its soldiers were starving.930 This land here seems to refer to the geographical area of the continent that had always been Indian country, but when used this country in the present, the writer apparently meant the United States.

Today we ask the citizens of this country to look with us to the future, to celebrate our survival, and together, we seek to sustain all people. We hope to continue sharing our culture, traditions, and spirituality as native people of the Great Turtle Island for a better tomorrow.931

The writer described continuity from the pre-European land of America to the country of the United States of America, asserting that Indians had always been a part of the land. Indians had contributed to the survival of American peoples in history and hoped to continue sharing Indian culture and traditions so that the earth could be a better place.

The Iroquois Confederacy’s role in “the molding of the United States Constitution and early U.S. revolutionary leaders’ concepts of government” was also mentioned in reference to a film about the French and Indian War,932 and the editor of the newspaper, Paul DeMain, stated the importance

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932 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no. 24, p.3.
of Indian nations to the foundation of the United States and Canada. “This country, and others like Canada, have literally been built on the backs of American Indians, their resources, political philosophy and now, in many cases, even our spiritual beliefs.”

The United States was criticized in some accounts for its failure to recognize Indian contributions to the country. The tribal chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Gregg Bourland, stated that he believed renaming Custer Battlefield as Little Bighorn Battlefield marked the beginning of a new age. He wrote that he hoped it would mark “an area of acceptance and recognition of the true sovereignty” of Indian peoples, and he continued:

For too long has this country held in disregard a recognition of the original inhabitants of this land. Native Americans have given much in the development of this country and have received very little in return for our investment. And to add insult to injury, the “Old Custer Battlefield” was a prime example of “Old World Thinking.”

Bourland’s statement is a good example of the very complicated and confusing ways Native Americans may relate to the United States, identifying as both part of and apart from the United States. When he expressed a hope for the “true sovereignty” of Indian tribes, Bourland seems to have wished for secession from the United States; however, his reference to the lack of recognition of Indian contributions to “this country” seems to locate Indians within the United States.

It is interesting that Bourland brought up the failure to recognize Indian accomplishments in relation to the Battle of Little Bighorn, an event in which Indian tribes clearly were not part of the United States but fought against and defeated the U.S. military. Two meanings of America seem to have merged for Bourland. Being original inhabitants of “this land,” the continent, has merged with contributing to “this country,” the United States. This conflated pre-U.S. and post-U.S. “America” contrasts with Europe in his statement. Naming the memorial after Custer reflected “Old World Thinking” – that is, a European way of thinking. The American way of thinking was to recognize Indian accomplishments in the past and present.

The site of Little Bighorn led one Lakota Sioux to carefully consider her relatives who had fought the United States in the battle there, but she continued to identify with the United States. In a letter to the editor of Indian Country Today, Claudia Iron Hawk Sully from Wounded Knee, South Dakota, described her visit to the Little Bighorn memorial. She wrote that she had stood by the monument and envisioned the battle as it had been recounted to her by her grandfather Iron Hawk, who had been with Sitting Bull and Gall. She related to the place as a sacred burial site connected to Lakota religious

933 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.20, p.11.
beliefs: *in the sacred circle, evil acts return to the actor*. Sully seems to have interpreted the site, the memorial, and what happened not in terms of nations fighting each other but in personal terms, concluding that wrongdoers will suffer. The war between her ancestors and the United States did not at all lead her to dissociate herself from the United States. On the contrary, she stated:

Someday I envision a Lakota or native sitting at the White House as President – through education and unity this will happen – but we should never forget our religion, language, culture as Wakan Tanka gave us these, not Europeans or schools. The Spirits of our ancestors and relatives are not forgotten.935

Native Americans in this account are part of the United States, but this does not entail assimilation into mainstream America. Traditional Indian culture and values are to be preserved.

Education is mentioned in the quote as the means of achieving the goal of a Lakota president of the United States, and it has also been described as the means of achieving “the American dream.” An advertisement printed in *News From Indian Country* asked people to donate money to help “an American Indian realize his or her American Dream … a College Education.” They were asked to invest $24, the price paid for Manhattan Island by the Dutch in 1626. The money would go to a scholarship fund to help subsidize the education of American Indian students, for education is “the key to opportunity and hope in our society.”936

Very little discussion about American symbols appeared in the 1992 newspapers. The reason for this may have been that the American flag was largely accepted as a symbol among Native Americans. *Indian Country Today* published a photo of a Native American man holding the U.S. flag under the headline, “Reflections on a Flag.” The text under the photo read as follows:

Martin Thunder Hawk, of Post 265, is the American flag bearer at the opening of Little Wound High School’s homecoming football game against St. Francis Indian School recently. The Oglala Sioux flag was also displayed.937

The two flags, those of the United States and of the Oglala Sioux, were obviously seen not as contradictory but as complementary. Indians belonged both to the United States and to their tribe.

As in the early 1970s, however, the U.S. flag became an issue of discussion whenever Indians displayed it upside-down. This took place at a protest

against using Indian mascots in sports games. Several non-Indians became angry because the demonstrating Native Americans had hung the American flag upside-down; they called for them to show respect by turning it right-side-up. Once again, Indians explained their action as a sign of distress, further clarifying that their action did not demonstrate a lack of love for “this country.” The paper reported:

Mr. Banks, 938 a U.S. Navy Veteran, took the microphone and explained it was an international sign of distress that was observed by all nations. “We love this country, we just don’t trust the government,” Mr. Banks said. 939

What Banks meant by this country is not evident in this statement; however, as he continued, he connected the term to the land. He stated that “For well over 20,000 years, we have been defending this Mother Earth. We didn’t go and hide-out in Canada”940 (referring to those who fled to Canada to avoid being drafted to serve in the Vietnam War). Banks did not make any distinction between an earlier America and the United States. In his mind, Native Americans had always defended “this country” whether it was part of the United States or not.

Serving in the U.S. military

Largely in contrast to what was expressed in the newspapers from the early 1970s, Indians serving in the U.S. military in 1992 identified with the United States. In one letter to the editor, an Indian Vietnam veteran informed the readership that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial would be dedicated with ceremonies in September 1992. He stated that such an honorary ceremony was “long overdue.” The same letter also referred to the war between Indians and white settlers in Minnesota in 1862, stating that at the time, Minnesota “honored Native Americans by hanging, shooting or neglecting them.” The writer went on to point out that “since that time Native Americans have become veterans of every war […] the United States has entered into, serving with honor alongside other Americans without recognition outside the Native American community.” The reference to “other Americans” clearly shows identification with the United States; the writer saw himself as one American among others. The events of 1862 involved the awful treatment of Indians, but that did not place Indians tribes outside the United States. The letter goes on to assert that opening the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial was “an Historic event and the closing of a circle that began in 1862.” This new beginning would bring peace: “The time past is past, let us learn

938 Former AIM leader Dennis Banks.
not to go down the war road. The new circle begins – come and dance for peace.”

References were also made to the Navajo code talkers of World War II and their contributions to protecting the land. The protection of “our land” seems to be seen as a thread throughout history, an act performed by fathers and grandfathers, sons and daughters. The national identification lies with the United States in statements about

the sense of duty shown by the American Indian when this nation needed him to bear arms against a would-be conqueror: he cleansed his soul of mortal weakness, and went forward to serve in the forefront of our armed forces.

Another paper described the Navajo code talkers as having shown “not only the spirit of the Navajo people, but the spirit of America in which diverse cultures and languages can unite and fight for the greater good.”

It was deemed important that Indian war veterans be recognized by the larger society. One newspaper reported on a Navajo man who had tried for several years to have a statue erected honoring Indian veterans who had participated in the Vietnam War.

Native Americans’ pride in their war veterans was also attested in other ways in the newspapers. The Standing Rock Sioux, Northern Arapaho, and Crow Tribes all printed advertisements honoring their military veterans. The Navajo Times ran a column called “Military Notes,” in which information about Navajos in the military was posted, reporting milestones such as the completion of military training, promotions, return from duty overseas, and so on.

The United States was not referred to as an enemy even in historic times in the 1992 accounts. Instead, articles stated that war veterans should display their awards and medals, as veterans do, at powwows. It “reflects our pride as Indians and Americans, and what we have contributed to this country.”

Not even references to a historic war with white settlers or with the United States could apparently trigger identification outside the United States, as they often did during the 1970s. Instead Indians seem to have been seen as a mistreated ethnic group as early as the 1860s. There is a reference to Minnesota as a state, but not to the United States. No reference is made to Indians or to Indian tribes fighting against the nation-state, so a wish to remain part of the United States is evident.

References:

941 News From Indian Country 1992, vol.6, no.18, p.10.
Even the Custer Battlefield name change did not particularly trigger identification outside the United States. As already mentioned, Congress had passed a law to rename the site Little Bighorn Battlefield.\textsuperscript{948} Gregg Bourland, chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux, stated that this was the beginning of a new age.\textsuperscript{949} It was also said that the tribal planning committee had chosen Veterans Day as the date for the ceremonial name change because “they feel very strongly, very patriotic about veterans.”\textsuperscript{950} The keynote speaker was a Rosebud Sioux, Lionel Bordeaux, president of the Sinte Galeska University on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. His speech linked veterans from various wars:

On this day throughout the United States people are remembering. They recall the names and memories of those who fought in wars and battles since the time of this country’s Declaration of Independence. We stand here today at the site of one of the greatest battles ever fought in a war of Indian people to protect their way of life, their homelands and their children.\textsuperscript{951}

However, now the struggle had changed. The Lakota people were to be recognized not only for what they have accomplished in war but for other accomplishments, as well as for their culture.

But the second victory is of a new kind, one which may signal a shift of the nature of the struggle. Lakota people are reclaiming their rights to be recognized for their victories and their strengths – not only on a battlefield, but in their education, their arts and in their spiritual way of life.\textsuperscript{952}

America – Indian lands or the United States?

When summarizing how Native Americans understood the concept \textit{America}, it becomes clear that the early 1970s was characterized by a complex relationship between their relation to the United States and their identification as Americans. Native Americans who appear in the newspapers had an ambivalent relationship to the United States and its symbols. What did the United States stand for? Was it a guardian of freedom or an oppressor? Nor was there only one way of understanding what America and Americans were.

The ways Indians related to America in the newspapers can be divided into two basic categories: America as Indian lands and America as the United States. In relation to these different interpretations of what America means, the accounts also attest different ways of understanding who Americans are.

\textsuperscript{951} \textit{Indian Country Today} 1992, vol.12, no.21, p.A2.
\textsuperscript{952} \textit{Indian Country Today} 1992, vol.12, no.21, p.A2.
One interpretation is that Americans equal Indians, connected to America as Indian lands. Another is the idea that white people are Americans; then America is associated with the United States. But Indians could also identify as Americans alongside white people as part of the United States, as demonstrated in the earlier discussion of American identification.

Several newspaper texts from the early 1970s portray America as Indian lands—that is, the lands which had belonged to Indians and which Indians had belonged to since before United States was created. The spiritual connection between Native Americans and their lands was, for instance, described in the quote of Standing Bear, who argued that the white man was a stranger to America because he had not been part of its formative process. Native scholar Jack Forbes equated Americanism with Indianism because America stood for Indian values, an Indian way of thinking. Other peoples could be part of America, but their way of thinking had to be harmonized with the Indian way of thinking. This approach to America also appeared in the article stating that the bicentennial of the United States was nothing to celebrate and arguing that Indians should instead mark the centennial of the Battle of Little Bighorn, commemorating the Indians’ victory over enemy soldiers invading their lands.

America could also be equated with the United States, a United States that Indians could be both part of and apart from in the newspapers. Identification with the United States was expressed by differentiating between different kinds of Americans, a group in which Native Americans were included. The identification as part of the United States might also be expressed directly, as in the statement of the man who proclaimed that he was American, that America was his country, and that the American Revolution was as important to him as it was to any other American. Identification apart from the United States appeared, for example, in rejection of the U.S. flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the national anthem apparent in one letter. Several examples of dissociation from the United States also condemned celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States. These individuals did not want to celebrate U.S. independence because Indian dependence had followed it. One writer even compared it to calling on the Jews to celebrate Hitler’s rise to power in Germany.

Much of the newspaper evidence makes no clear identification either of America as Indian lands or of America as the United States. Often speakers and writers referred to both ways of understanding America, and one frequently transformed into the other. In several examples, the idea of America as pre-U.S. Indian land mixed with the idea of America as the United States. This was the case of statements in which Indians considered themselves patriotic Americans; they could not be otherwise because they were the original Americans. Indians here are described as Americans even before the United States existed, but they also constitute one of several categories of Americans in the contemporary United States. A transformation of the mean-
ing of American takes place, transferring patriotism from pre-U.S. Indian lands and lifeways to those of the United States. One is described as continuing from the other.

Another situation in which Native Americans writing in the newspapers oscillated between the meaning of pre-U.S. America and the United States was in relation to the United States’ establishment. Native scholar Deloria, for instance, stated that the Iroquois had defeated the French, laying the groundwork for the United States. If George Washington was the father of the United States, he contended, the Iroquois were the grandfathers.

Moreover, Washington was described as a foreigner to America prior to 1776, that is, prior to the foundation of the United States – he was an Englishman by birth and allegiance. For Deloria, the creation of the United States changed the meaning of America from “Indian lands” to “the United States.” Washington was initially a foreigner to America because America was then Indian land, and there was no United States. But the creation of the United States seems to have changed the meaning of America for Deloria, and it now included the United States. Further, positive aspects of the United States were interpreted as Indian. The ideals of freedom and democracy were American because they had come from Native Americans.

The 1992 newspapers also contain examples of several different ways of understanding what it means to be American. America could be coterminous with the United States; this was the case whenever American Indians were described as having served with honor in the military alongside other Americans or in statements that Indians should have the same rights to their religion other Americans enjoyed. But America could also mean a United States that Indians were not part of, as when America was described as something other than the Western Hemisphere. Americans were asked to admit that they had enslaved people and started a genocide in the Western Hemisphere.

America could also relate both to Indian lands of the pre-U.S. era and to the United States. Quinault President Joe De La Cruz described the United States as having existed only a very short time in American Indian history; America’s past was much longer than the period Europeans had lived on the continent. As in the 1970s, so in 1992 the idea of pre-U.S. Indian lands intertwined with the idea of the United States. This was shown in the article which stated that Indians were the last to receive citizenship although they were the first Americans. Being American involved being part of both the Indian pre-United States and the contemporary United States.

This intertwining of past and present also took place when Native Americans honored war veterans. Warriors fighting the United States were honored as war veterans alongside soldiers who had fought for the United States. Both groups were seen as fighting to protect their country, the first protecting pre-United States Indian lands, the others protecting the United States (in which present Indian lands are located).
These two ways of understanding America – as Indian lands and as the United States – existed in both the periods I have studied; however, they differ in the view they emphasize. In the 1970s, Indians identified much more directly with the pre-United States than with the United States. There were also proportionally more examples in the earlier texts of obvious dissociation from the United States and of identifying the United States with white oppressors. In 1992, few examples emerged of complete dissociation from the United States or of exclusively identifying as pre-U.S. Indians. Instead, the 1992 accounts are characterized by the mixing of past and present, moving between the pre-U.S. Indian country and the present United States.
16. Indian American identification

As I have shown in this study, the Native American relationship to the United States both during the 1970s and in 1992 was complex, multifaceted, and seemingly quite contradictory. Native Americans talked about themselves in the newspapers as both part of and not a part of the United States. These different ways of relating to the United States cannot be explained by simply stating that certain Indian groups, in contrast to others, identified in a specific way. There were certain tribes that predominately identified “outside” the United States, and most commonly this outside identification appeared in some kind of conflict with the United States. However, the same group and even the same person identified as both part of the United States and apart from it. Even statements related to the Wounded Knee occupation, characterized by violent conflict with the federal government, included instances in which Native Americans identified as U.S. citizens.

Some scholars, such as Hoxie and Widdowson, have argued that Native Americans have used language strategically to achieve certain political goals even though these statements do not necessarily reflect how they identify.953 The way Indians identified in the newspapers might then be determined or at least be greatly influenced by the political goals in view in a specific situation. This may be true in some instances examined in this study; however, Indian portrayals of their relationship with the United States and their moving in and out of identification with the United States cannot be explained exclusively as political strategies. Some statements are too incoherent and contradictory to represent a thought-out strategy.

Rosier tried to explain Indians’ contradictory ways of identifying in relation to the United States by introducing the concept of hybrid patriotism.954 This concept might be relevant when discussing the specific issue of patriotism, but there are aspects of Indian identification that it cannot explain. For one thing, Indian identification includes more than patriotism, rendering the concept too restricted for this study. Second, hybrid patriotism cannot explain those instances in which Native Americans identified themselves as apart from the United States. These models must be supplemented in order to explain Indian identification in relation to the United States. I suggest an

954 Rosier 2009.
explanation that combines the perspectives of world view and historical context.

All people have certain perceptions about how the world is constituted, but this theory about the world, the frame of reference against which one interprets experiences, does not have to be coherent. As Gee points out, “each of us can have allegiance to competing and conflicting models.” In other words, when an individual is interpreting his or her experiences, these interpretations sometimes relate to one world view but in another situation relate to another world view. As I have shown, the newspapers attest such different models of the world. Native scholars like Deloria, Cordova, and Norton-Smith have made a distinction between a Western and an Indian model of the world; the distinction has also been the overriding reference point of this thesis. Despite the complications of using such generalized categorizations (there are, of course, internal variations within them), the distinction sheds light on Indian identification in relation to the United States. There are such great differences between the two ways of understanding the world that it is relevant to make the distinction although the two viewpoints are not always clearly separated in the newspaper accounts.

In a somewhat simplified model of how different world views have influenced Indian identification in relation to the United States, one can make the following distinction: on one hand, when a Western world view was referred to in the newspapers, Indians imagined a world made up of states. States have territories that are land, and the land of America is the territory of the United States. The United States is America, and U.S. citizens are Americans. When Indians referred to an Indian world view, on the other hand, they understood a world made up of peoples inhabiting land on which they had been placed by the Creator. These Indian ancestral homelands are inhabited by different kinds of persons, both natural and spiritual. The land of America is Indian land; Indians are Americans. In practice, again, these two views were not always so neatly distinguished.

In this study I have taken my point of departure in different discourses, or ways of talking about the world. How people talk about experiences says something about how they perceive the world and their place in it. Discourses articulate world views. One such discourse is that of sovereign statehood. Whether Indian tribes were talked about as sovereign states or as nations within the United States and whether Indians were talked about as American citizens with civil rights or as citizens of a nation apart, all such statements related to a perspective in which the world is divided into states. Within this overall ideational framework, then, there are several ways that Native Americans could fit in that exist side by side. This conception of a world divided into states has its origin in a Western world view.

955 Gee 1999, p.66.
As stated earlier, the world views that exist in one point in time result from what has happened in the past, as well as from what happens in the present. Many events had unfolded up to the 1970s that had influenced Indian ways of perceiving their place in the world of states. Treaties that Indian tribes had entered into with the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries produced an image of tribes as sovereign states. The discourse of decolonization in the international arena during the 1950s and 1960s, which Cobb talks about, also laid the groundwork for imagining Indian tribes as sovereign nations. An event in history that may have laid a foundation for Native Americans to identify tribes as domestic nations was Chief Justice John Marshall’s definition of Indian tribes as “domestic dependent nations” in his 1832 court decision. Another was the federal government’s encouraging tribes to create their own governments, complete with constitutions and by-laws, in 1934. That all Indians were made American citizens in 1924 obviously made it possible for them to identify as Americans. These examples come largely from U.S. policy, and the fact that all Indian tribes, in one way or another, had to submit to the hegemony of the United States is an important explanation for the contradictory and sometimes mutually exclusive ways of placing Indians in the world of states. The different images that they choose from could be “put forward” or actualized in different situations when considered appropriate. A specific image might be chosen deliberately to achieve political goals, but this did not necessarily always occur.

The historical context, of course, greatly influences how one chooses to identify. During the 1970s, given that period’s generally revolutionary discourse, more separatist images were prominent in the newspapers. Indians were not the only group in the United States demanding rights and independence. A general dissociation from the United States was presented in terms of direct sovereignty claims, tribal independence from states, very few claims to civil rights, and very little interest in federal politics.

In 1992, on the other hand, a government-to-government relationship between tribal and federal governments was firmly established. Tribes had greater control over their own affairs in the possibility to decide how to use funds allocated by the federal government for education, health care, and so on. Increased influence over their own lives influenced Indians to identify with different images of Indians’ place in the world of states, and they chose a more inclusive relationship to the United States. There were few examples of sovereignty claims that year; however, the views of tribal government showed significant independence within the United States and greater identification as U.S. citizens, especially through an interest in federal elections.

In addition to relating to a world made up of states, Native Americans also demonstrated another way of understanding how the world is constituted, as a world made up by peoples. When Indians talked about and imagined...

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957 Cobb 2008.
themselves as peoples, they related to the ideas of common ancestry, common culture, and common ancestral lands. Indian lands were sometimes directly connected to the traditional Indian world view of peoples belonging to the lands on which they had been placed by the Creator. When Native Americans related to this world view, protection of their land involved Indian lands. Whether this land was located in a territory claimed by the United States was irrelevant because the division of the world into states was not relevant.

But the idea of organizing the world into peoples also allowed different ways of belonging. “Real” Indians could be defined in terms of cultural values, such as living according to traditional cultural values and taking responsibility for one’s own people. A real Indian could be a caretaker of the land and of all the living creatures on that land. But Indian peoplehood could also be defined in terms of degree of Indian blood, an approach to defining peoplehood that stems from the colonial situation. Tribes that quite extensively adopted individuals from other tribes and races before being incorporated into the United States started to define tribal membership according to blood quantum after the introduction of tribal membership according to a base roll. Consequently, both culture and blood have been used as criteria for defining peoplehood in the newspapers. White people were defined in contrast to Indians, and being a white man related both to cultural values and to race.

In addition, one can see that the historical context had an impact on how Indian peoplehood was presented in the newspapers. In the 1970s, Indian peoplehood was closely connected to the historic Indian. References were made to historic chiefs, historic events, and historic figures, especially the Indian warrior who had fought against the United States. In 1992, Indian peoplehood was constructed much more in terms of a special culture that wanted reconciliation with whites and with each other so that every people could live according to its own values but without conflict with other groups. The switch from historic to cultural discourse greatly affected Indian identification in relation to the United States. This is especially evident in the conception of the warrior, or soldier. In the early 1970s, Indian warriors were largely imagined in contrast to U.S. soldiers, a result of their association with past wars between Indian tribes and the United States. This obviously triggered identification “outside” the United States. But in 1992, the Indian warrior and the U.S. soldier had merged. Emphasis was placed on the contributions Native Americans soldiers had made to protect the land, partly through their cultural uniqueness, as demonstrated by the Navajo code talkers during World War II.

The two ways of organizing the world – one that sees the world as divided into states and another that sees the world as divided into peoples – were not always kept distinct. They overlapped, for instance, when Indianness was defined in relation to U.S. borders in one 1970s article. Only Indians originating from within the U.S. borders were considered “real” Indians; Mexican
Indians were not. White people were sometimes associated with the United States which put the two ways of relating to the world together. However, if white people were blamed for the atrocities that Indians had endured, it was also possible to identify with a United States that was not directly blamed for what had happened in the past.

This overlapping and intertwining of the two ways of understanding the world was especially evident in the study of how Indians related to America and to being Americans. In contrast to what one might think, being an American and identifying with the United States were not always the same thing for the Native Americans whose words appear in the newspapers. This perception of the United States and America as separate entities is helpful when one wants to understand an Indian relationship to the United States that often seems contradictory. America could be understood as identical to the United States; it was then interpreted as the nation-state and consequently related to the world made up of states. However, America could also be understood as something different from the United States; it was then interpreted as Indian lands, the continent of America, which had been Indian long before Europeans arrived. The Indians who wrote in the newspapers interpreted America in both ways.

Often, Native Americans moved between the two ways of understanding America, and sometimes the two approaches merged. This was the case of the man who stated that Indians could not be anything except patriotic Americans because they were the original Americans. This was also the case when Indians celebrated their war veterans whether they had fought against the United States or for it; these warriors had all protected their own land, America.

How individuals see themselves and relate to other people is determined by how they see the world and understand the way it is constituted. However, there is not merely one way to imagine one’s own place in the world and relate to others; a myriad of possibilities has been created throughout the course of history owing to the different images one comes into contact with and internalizes throughout life. The world views encountered are never completely coherent but encompass incompatible parts that can be kept discrete. But they can also overlap and intertwine. What one chooses from among the various possible ways of identifying depends largely on historical context, what is needed in a given moment. As I have demonstrated, the revolutionary 1970s created separatism in identification, whether referring to statehood or peoplehood, while the context of the 1990s called for internal self-government alongside reconciliation with other peoples.
As I return to my starting point, the protest meeting opposing the 1992 celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of America in Denver, it is now clear that my interpretation of the event was quite ethnocentric. I interpreted what I had seen from a Western perspective in which the world is composed of states that have citizens and clearly defined borders. In my mind, Columbus Day was a celebration of the United States defined as a state, and waving the American flag constituted celebrating the United States. When the Native Americans present talked about the genocide against Indian peoples, I made an association with past wars that the United States had waged against Indian tribes and with the country’s assimilation policies, which had led to deaths and loss of culture.

This study has made plain that the event may be and probably should be interpreted differently. There are, of course, many ways that the Native Americans who participated in the protest meeting might have understood the celebration of Columbus Day; however, based on my findings, I offer the following interpretation.

The protest did not oppose a celebration of the United States but the celebration of Christopher Columbus himself. He was blamed for atrocities he personally committed, as well as for those of the Spaniards and other Europeans. The United States may not have been considered an offender at all.

Judging from the newspapers, Native Americans identified quite strongly as part of the United States. The American flag seems to have represented the United States in 1992, and it may have been connected to certain values, particularly freedom and democracy. Those values had come from Indians; they had been adopted and taken over by the United States when it was created.

The Vietnam War veteran who was honored by carrying the flag at the front of the dance parade did so as a warrior who was a protector of America. Just as warriors of the past protected Indian lands, warriors of modern times also protected their lands. That the first case involved Indian lands located outside the United States while the second involved territory inside it did not matter. Indians had been placed on their land by the Creator, and it was irrelevant whether that land now formed part of the United States. However, the idea of the United States might also merge with the idea of Indian lands, and the idea of America could incorporate both the pre-U.S. Indian lands and the Indian lands of the United States. Here it may be relevant to
apply Rosier’s hybrid patriotism: a conception of a United States that merges with the Indian one, a perceived continuity in a love of America as Indian land and a love of America as the United States. What seemed to be a very contradictory way of relating to the United States no longer seems as contradictory.
Svensk sammanfattning

Problemformulering, teori, metod och källor
Syftet med denna studie är att förklara det tillsynes motsägelsefulla sätt på vilket den amerikanska ursprungsbefolkningen har relaterat till USA, där de både har identifierat sig som en del av och inte en del av nationen. Studien tar sin utgångspunkt i det tidiga 1970-talet då den indianska politiska radikalismen var synlig i det amerikanska samhället och då samhället i allmänhet präglades av radikala politiska idéer. En jämförelse görs också med år 1992, då 500-årsjubileet av Columbus upptäckt av Amerika firades.

Syftet med avhandlingen kan sammanfattas i tre frågor: Hur identifierade sig indianerna i relation till USA under tidigt 1970-tal och år 1992? Är det möjligt att se ett mönster i hur de identifierade sig? Hur kan de olika sätt att relatera till USA förklaras?


Som källmaterial använder jag mig av indianska tidningar som distribuerats över hela USA (och utanför) och som vänder sig till en generell indiansk publik och inte till specifika indiansamman. Denna typ av tidningar som publicerades under en eller båda av mina undersökningsperioder är Akwesasne Notes, Wassaja, News From Indian Country, Indian Country Today och Navajo Times. Jag använder mig av alla dessa tidningar i min studie.

I avhandlingen undersöker jag hur indianerna talade om sin relation till USA, både direkt och indirekt, för att se om de placerar sig själva som en del av eller inte en del av USA. Det inkluderar både begreppsanvändningen och sättet att resonera på. Jag noterar alla påstående som på något sätt ”placerar” indianerna, antingen ”inuti” eller ”utanför” USA.
När jag strukturerar det insamlade materialet tar jag de två världsbilderna, den västerländska och den indianska, och deras olika förståelse av vad en nation är som utgångspunkt.


Det andra perspektivet tittar på hur indianerna identifierade sig i relation till USA från en annan synvinkel. Här är det föreställningar om Amerika och att vara amerikan som är i fokus. Vilken innebörd hade Amerika och att vara amerikan för de indianer som framträder i tidningarna? Hur förhöll man sig till amerikanska symboler?

**Identifikationsmönster på 1970-talet**


Tidningarna visade mycket lite intresse för amerikansk federal, statlig och lokal politik under 1970-talet. Detsamma gällde för medborgarrättsrörelsen och andra etniska rörelser. Indianerna ville inte ha lika rättigheter, de ville ha speciella rättigheter och de identifierade sig i första hand med andra koloniserade folk i världen.


Det var dock inte bara USA som beskrevs som fiende i tidningarna. ”Den vite mannen” var en annan fiende. Iblad var han nära associerad med USA, t.ex. när USA beskrevs som den vite manns stat, och i andra fall separerades han från nationen. Föreställningar om den vite mannen var nära relatrade till ras men inte uteslutande. Han utgjorde i första hand bild av ”den andre” som också var kopplat till värdningar och sätt att leva. Det vta kontrasterades mot det som var indianskt och det indianska var det goda sättet.

Identifikationsmönster år 1992


År 1992 handlade folkdiskursen om rättigheter till indiansk kultur inom den amerikanska nationalstaten. Målet var ett enat USA där olika folk kunde hålla samman men ändå bevara sin unika kultur. Även om dikotomin mellan indianers och vita människors tänkande fanns kvar i tidningarna från 1992, var man inte alls lika kritiska. Även om vita människor hade begått över-
grepp mot indianerna, var det framför allt européer och Columbus personlig-
en som beskrevs som de skyldiga. USA beskrevs sällan som angriparen.

**Amerika och att vara Amerikan**

Det sätt på vilket indianerna relaterade till begreppet Amerika i tidningarna kan delas upp i två grundläggande kategorier. Amerika som indianskt land och Amerika som USA. I relation till dessa olika tolkningar får också bety-
delsen av vad en amerikan är olika innebörder. En tolkning är att amerikaner är detsamma som indianer, något som är kopplat till indianskt land. En an-
nan föreställning är att vita människor är amerikaner, och att vara amerikan
blir därmed kopplat till USA. Indianer kunde dock också identifiera sig som
amerikaner tillsammans med vita människor som en del av USA.

Det finns flera texter i tidningarna från tidigt 1970-tal som beskriver
Amerika som indianskt, dvs. som landet som tillhörde indianerna och som
indianerna tillhörde sedan långt innan USA skapades. Denna koppling till
landet beskrevs t.ex. genom ett citat från Standing Bear som hävdade att den
tvite mannen var en främling i Amerika eftersom han inte varit en del av dess
formativa process. Den indianske forskaren Jack Forbes, satte likhetstecken
mellan ”amerikanism” och ”indianism” eftersom Amerika stod för indianska
värderingar och indiskt sätt att tänka. Andra folk kunde bli en del av Ame-
rika, men deras sätt att tänka måste harmoniseras med det indianska tänkan-
det.

Amerika kunde dock också likställas med USA, ett USA som indianerna
kunde både vara en del av eller inte en del av. En man hävdade t.ex. att den
Amerikanska revolutionen var lika viktig för honom som för andra amerika-
ner. Det fanns också exempel på indianer som inte identifierade sig som en
del av USA, t.ex. genom att de tog avstånd från den amerikanska flaggan
och den amerikanska trohetseden. Det fanns också flera exempel på kritik
mot firandet av 200-årsjubileet av USAs grundande i tidningarna.

Många tidningsartiklar gör emellertid ingen klar skillnad mellan Amerika
som indianskt land och Amerika som USA. Flera artiklar refererar till båda
sätten att förstå Amerika. Idén om Amerika som indianskt land och som
USA blandas. I ett uttalande sägs att indianer betraktar sig som patriotiska
amerikaner, de kunde inte göra annat eftersom de var de ursprungliga ameri-
kanerna. Innebörden av ”Amerika” förändras från indianskt land före USAs
grundande till staten USA. Den ena ses som en kontinuitet från den andra.
Indianerna beskrevs också som delaktiga i USAs grundande i tidningarna
från det tidiga 1970-talet. Om George Washington var USA:s fader så var
Irokeserna dess farfar, skrivs i en artikel. Till skillnad från indianerna var
Washington en främling i ”detta land” före 1776, eftersom han var en eng-
elsman både genom härstamning och genom lojalitet till Storbritannien.
Idéer om frihet och demokrati var också amerikanska därför att de kom från
indianerna.
Tidningarna från 1992 innehöll också flera olika sätt att förstå vad det innebär att vara amerikan. Amerika kunde betyda detsamma som USA, t.ex. när indianska soldater beskrevs som personer som tjänat sitt land tillsammans med andra amerikaner. Detta synsätt framkom också i påståendet att indianer borde ha samma rätt att utöva sin religion som andra amerikaner hade. Amerika kunde emellertid också betyda ett USA som indianskaerna inte var en del av, t.ex. när Amerika beskrevs som något annat än den Västra hemisfären. Liksom under 1970-talet kunde Amerika referera till både indianskt land före USAs grundande och till USA. En skribent hävdade t.ex. att USA bara hade existerat en mycket kort tid av de nordamerikanska indianernas historia. En annan artikel hävdade att indianerna var de sista att få medborgarskap trots att de var de första amerikanerna. Att vara amerikan inkluderade både att vara del av ett indianskt Amerika före USA och att vara den del av det samtida USA.


Sammanfattande slutsatser
Under både tidigt 1970-tal och under 1992 var indianernas relation till USA komplex, mångfacetterad och ganska motsägelsefull. Indianerna talade om sig själva som både en del av och inte en del av USA i tidningarna. Dessa olika sätt att relatera till USA kan inte uteslutande förklaras med att olika indianska grupper till skillnad från andra identifierade sig på ett specifikt sätt. Även om vissa indianska grupper ofta än andra beskrev sig själva som ”utanför” USA kunde samma grupp, och till och med samma person, identifiera sig på olika sätt i relation till USA. För att förklara de till synes motsägelsesfulla sätt på vilket indianerna har relaterat till USA har jag utgått både ifrån den historiska kontexten och indiansernas förståelse av hur världen är konstituerad.

Den historiska kontexten har haft stark påverkan på hur indianserna identifierade sig i relation till USA vid en specifik tidpunkt. Under det radikala 1970-talet, då revolutionär idéer var relativt vanliga i samhället, fanns mer separatistiska föreställningar representerade i de indianska tidningarna. År 1992 hade indiansammanhållna fått mer inflytande över sina egna samhällen, både politiskt och ekonomiskt, vilket gjorde att de valde en mer inklude-

Hur individer ser sig själva och hur de relaterar till andra folk bestäms också av deras förståelse av hur världen är konstituerad. Det finns dock inte bara ett sätt på vilket man kan föreställa sig sin egen plats i världen och att relatera till andra. Det finns en mängd olika möjligheter vilka har skapats genom historien beroende på vilka idéer man kommit i kontakt med och internaliserat genom livet. Världsbilder är aldrig fullständigt coherenta utan de innehåller motsägelsefulla delar som kan hållas isär men som också kan överlappa och flätas samman. Denna ”blandning” av föreställningar gjorde att ”Amerika” kunde få olika betydelser och att USA och Amerika kunde ses som separat enheter av indianerna. Denna åtskillnad mellan USA och Amerika är betydelsefull för att förstå det motsägelsefulla i hur indianerna identifierade sig i relation till USA. Amerika kunde förstås om identiskt med USA. Det tolkades då som en nationalstat och man relaterade till en värld som bestod av stater. Indianerna kunde identifiera sig med USA både som medborgare och del av en indianstam som utgjorde en ”nation inom nationen.” De kunde också ta avstånd från USA och se stammen som en suverän stat. Amerika kunde emellertid också förstås som något annat än USA, som indianskt land, den amerikanska kontinenten som hade varit indianskt långt innan européerna kom. Vilket förhållningssätt de valde berodde på sammanhanget.
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