

Human Rights & Human Welfare

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 17

2011

Latin America's Indigenous Women

Courtney Hall

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw>

 Part of the [Education Policy Commons](#), [Human Rights Law Commons](#), [Indigenous, Indian, and Aboriginal Law Commons](#), [Indigenous Studies Commons](#), [International Humanitarian Law Commons](#), [International Law Commons](#), [International Relations Commons](#), [Latin American Studies Commons](#), [Social Justice Commons](#), [Social Policy Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hall, Courtney (2011) "Latin America's Indigenous Women," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol11/iss1/17>



All Rights Reserved.

This Topical Research Digest is brought to you for free and open access by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Human Rights & Human Welfare by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

Latin America's Indigenous Women

Abstract

Latin America's indigenous women are as diverse as the land they inhabit. Their uniqueness is shaped by belonging to groups that have their own distinct history, traditions, and identity. Yet despite this diversity, indigenous women confront the same human rights challenges: racial, gender, and socio-economic discrimination. Without ignoring the diversity of indigenous women, a better understanding of their fundamental struggles can be gained by weaving these issues together in a comprehensive narrative.

Keywords

Human rights, Latin America, Women's rights, Indigenous rights, Education, Poverty, Discrimination

Copyright Statement / License for Reuse



All Rights Reserved.

Publication Statement

Copyright is held by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver. User is responsible for all copyright compliance.

Latin America's Indigenous Women

By Courtney Hall

Latin America's indigenous women are as diverse as the land they inhabit. Their uniqueness is shaped by belonging to groups that have their own distinct history, traditions, and identity. Yet despite this diversity, indigenous women confront the same human rights challenges: racial, gender, and socio-economic discrimination. Without ignoring the diversity of indigenous women, a better understanding of their fundamental struggles can be gained by weaving these issues together in a comprehensive narrative.

Indigenous Girls and Education

A considerable educational gap exists between indigenous and non-indigenous populations in Latin America. Indigenous children are less likely to enroll in school, are prone to high drop-out and illiteracy rates, and exhibit poor educational performance. Schools in indigenous communities are usually state-led and because of the tightening of government funding through neo-liberal reforms, are poorly staffed and poorly equipped. Geared towards the dominant populations, educational programs are often mono-cultural and mono-linguistic and are insensitive to the cultural differences of the indigenous peoples that they serve. The orientation ultimately inhibits a child's ability to learn, which can be especially detrimental for girls.

In Mesoamerican and in other indigenous cosmologies, the woman is thought to be an incarnation of the earth; this belief is reflected in her typical duties within the indigenous community. Besides domestic duties, women are coupled to the land and are responsible for the provision of food, the cultivation of plants, and the protection and maintenance of the environment. These tasks are appreciated and are essential to the community. Girls learn these important agricultural and ecological skills through active participation and observation of their elders. Mothers need their daughters to help with harvests and related work throughout the year, which causes conflicts with schooling. Not recognizing the spiritual or practical responsibility that girls have in agriculture, state-led education programs fail to adjust academic schedules and curricula to accommodate this, as well as other, traditional practices. This is but one reason indigenous girls tend to have more absences from school than their male counterparts. Girls begin to fall behind their peers, which can subsequently affect their motivation to stay in school.

Possibilities of greater economic and political participation encourage parents to keep their daughters in school. However, because schools are ill equipped and teachers under qualified, the level of scholastic achievement among indigenous populations is low. Some members of the community only acquire one or two years of primary education. The mono-cultural and assimilatory nature of the schools forces dominant thinking on the children. When they leave school, children have a hard time orientating themselves in society because the skills they acquired in school are useless in most indigenous societies and are inadequate for integrating into mainstream society. Girls are losing the skills of their mothers and elders as government schools seek to assimilate indigenous populations into mainstream society. While Harakmbut girls in the southeast Peruvian Amazon attend religious boarding schools, boys participate in intercultural education programs that aim to prepare students for the indigenous political scene. In the boarding schools however, girls are

subject to a gender-based education, which grooms them for domestic work and to be subordinate to men (Aikman 2002).

Indigenous Poverty is Women's Poverty

For most indigenous societies in Latin America, men and women's roles were traditionally complementary. There was a double-headed household, the idea that men and women formed an inseparable pair, and no hierarchy of power. With the disintegration of indigenous communities from outside pressures, complementarity is fading. Globalization, poor education, and the out-migration of indigenous men have changed women's roles dramatically within their community. Women's positions are diminishing to a second-class status as they are becoming politically and economically dependent on men.

The importance of monetary income has risen in indigenous communities as a means to pay for education and food. Because men have a better chance of finding mainstream employment, out-migration of men has become prevalent as a strategy for households to earn monetary income. The accumulation of capital wealth in the hands of men only exacerbates the crumbling institution of reciprocity that exists between men and women. Women's ability to participate economically is attenuated by heavier domestic workloads as a result of the men's absence.

Gendered-education and the influx of cheap food and goods also threaten women's abilities to contribute monetarily to their communities. With the opening of markets as a result of neo-liberal reforms, women struggle to sell agricultural goods and textiles due to competition from cheap imports. As indigenous communities become increasingly exposed to the dominant society through work and education, indigenous styles of dress have evolved. Purchasing mass-manufactured textiles is an attractive and cheap alternative for people who wish to separate themselves from their indigenous roots and communities. However, a shrinking market for indigenous textiles and crafts only exacerbates economic difficulties for women. As earning money using traditional skills becomes increasingly more arduous, women's poverty – and thus indigenous poverty – only intensifies.

Indigenous Women and Double Discrimination

Threats from the dominant society to assimilate are pushing indigenous groups to strongly promote cultural integrity and self-governance. A strategy of some indigenous movements in Latin America is the re-indigenization of their culture to stimulate self-governance and to convince critics of their authenticity. Because women are more likely to speak a native language, to wear customary dress, and to perform traditional tasks, they are sometimes essential to "proving" the indigeneity of their group. Indigenous communities promoting cultural relativism can lock women into these traditional molds, which can result in further marginalization. Women are discouraged from asserting their individual rights because it could impede the goals and dissolve the strength of the greater indigenous movement. There are women who do choose to assert their individual rights even at the risk of expulsion. Expulsion can be very intimidating because women have to become incorporated within the dominant society, where they face not only gender discrimination, but discrimination of race and class as well. In Chile, not only are indigenous Mapuche women lacking mainstream skills, they are discriminated against because of the way they look. Mapuche women

assert that particular types of work are not available to them because they do not represent the national standard of beauty (Richards 2005). Indigenous women not only face serious challenges that differ significantly from indigenous men, such as gender-based violence, they also struggle in ways that are different from non-indigenous women in the economic, political, and health sectors.

The waning status of women in indigenous communities has resulted in their vulnerability to gender-based violence. Marrying at a young age in various Mesoamerican societies can create a substantial imbalance between partners and can leave women vulnerable to male dominance. In some indigenous communities, gendered violence has become so prevalent that it is seen as a cultural norm. For example, in Palo Alto, Bolivia, violence against young women in pre-marital relationships has become inherent to indigenous society (United Nations 2007). In the Peruvian Amazon, only a mere minority thought that they should not be beaten under any circumstance (Bant and Girard 2008). Violence against women within their households worsens with the sexual and gender discrimination that they face.

Women also have health that is inferior to that of indigenous men and non-indigenous women, which highlights the ethnic and gendered discrimination they face. Throughout Latin America, indigenous women experience higher maternal and infant mortality rates, more still-births and miscarriages, and higher fertility rates. If indigenous women have access to healthcare, facilities are usually ill equipped due to lack of government funding. Language barriers complicate communication between indigenous women and their Western-trained healthcare professionals. Lack of understanding of traditional medical practices and its ties to indigenous spirituality from healthcare providers aggravates cultural gaps and discrimination between practitioners and “beneficiaries”. Because of racial and socio-economic biases, indigenous women have been the subject of forced sterilizations throughout Latin America as targets of nationally and internationally-funded family planning programs. Resentment amongst sterilized indigenous women prevents them and others from seeking medical care even when it is necessary.

Conclusion

Feminists often criticize indigenous women for promoting their collective rights by subjecting themselves to gendered inequalities within their communities. Indigenous women, however, see their challenges as uniquely indigenous and therefore requiring indigenous solutions. They recognize the need to assert both their individual and collective rights to contest inequalities. Indigenous women see work with men as essential in order to alleviate the particular human rights challenges that indigenous women face: ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic discrimination. Women, particularly those from Mexico's Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), are leading the way for indigenous women's empowerment by using a distinctly indigenous solution: they are reclaiming the indigenous ideology of complementarity as a strategy to revitalize women's contributions to society.

The struggles faced by indigenous women are complicated and interrelated. Programs and policies that focus on indigenous struggles also need to pay attention to the particular challenges faced by women within indigenous societies. Women need to be empowered economically and

politically so that they can contest abuses and assert their rights. As demonstrated by the women of the EZLN, indigenous women are capable of reestablishing women's importance in society.

Annotated Bibliography

Aikman, Sheila. 2002. "Women's Oral Knowledge and the Poverty of Formal Education in the SE Peruvian Amazon." *Gender & Development* 10 (3):41 - 50.

Annotation: Aikman argues that formal education programs aimed at the Harakmbut people of the Peruvian Amazon are exacerbating problems brought on by migrant workers and extraction industries. The author explains that as the demography of the region began to change, women's traditional agricultural practices adjusted to the growing demand for beer and Andean produce of the migrant population. She contends that this growing demand created a need for money, which, she states, meant the increased extraction of gold and timber, ecological destruction, and the devaluation of women's role in society. Aikman convincingly argues that the establishment of religious boarding schools further exacerbated the devaluation of women in Harakmbut society.

———. 2005. "Partnerships from Below: Indigenous Rights and Girls' Education in the Peruvian Amazon". In Rao, N and I. Smyth (eds.), *Partnerships for Girls' Education*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Annotation: Aikman discusses the growth of the Federation of Natives of Madre de Dios in the Southeastern Peruvian Amazon and its influence in the alteration of educational systems in the region. To demonstrate gender differences in indigenous education, the author follows the life of a young girl to contrast her formal education with that of her male peers. Aikman argues that although access to education was the same for boys and girls, the girls' experiences in religious-based education encouraged assimilation into the dominant society. The author commends the Federation for promoting intercultural education in Peru; however, she criticizes the government for excluding indigenous knowledge in its intercultural programs. Aikman also notes that women are not empowered to work with the Federation and challenges the organization to recognize the effect that the gendered nature of formal schooling has on indigenous girls.

Bant, Astrid, and Françoise Girard. 2008. "Sexuality, Health, and Human Rights: Self-Identified Priorities of Indigenous Women in Peru." *Gender & Development* 16 (2):247-256.

Annotation: Bant and Girard argue that family planning NGOs need to be perceptive of the differences between male and female concerns about reproductive health. The authors explain that while indigenous Peruvian women are concerned about "forced and early marriage, gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancy, and inadequate public health services," men are concerned with increasing their family's fertility. By referencing their own

primary research in Peru, the authors convincingly demonstrate how women's reproductive rights can be marginalized by development NGOs and by the men in their communities.

Bremner, Jason, Richard Bilborrow, Caryl Feldacker, and Flora Holt. 2009. "Fertility Beyond the Frontier: Indigenous Women, Fertility, and Reproductive Practices in the Ecuadorian Amazon." *Population & Environment* 30 (3):93-113.

Annotation: In this article, the authors prematurely argue for the need of a family planning intervention in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Analyzing data from a two-week survey of indigenous women and men, the authors conclude that there is a high fertility rate among the community and a definite lack of conventional birth control use; cyclical planning and use of medicinal plants as traditional methods of birth control are disregarded by the authors of this article. While statistical measures are used in this study, the conclusions drawn from them seem to be biased towards the opinions of the authors, who appear to promote Amazon forest conservation over women's reproductive rights.

Camacho, A.V., M.D. Castro, and R. Kaufman. 2006. "Cultural Aspects Related to the Health of Andean Women in Latin America: A Key Issue for Progress toward the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals." *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 94:357-363.

Annotation: The authors discuss the importance of cultural sensitivity in healthcare systems promoting indigenous women's reproductive health. They recognize that even with international and national policies and programs, considerable maternal mortality persists. They suggest that the biomedical, or the Western model of health administration, is a significant cause of these problems. They also indicate that the cultural insensitivity of this model inhibits the participation of indigenous women in the self-determination of health. The authors argue that successful case studies in intercultural health systems should influence the implementation of national programs so that health practitioners can adequately address the health issues of indigenous women.

Carruthers, David, and Patricia Rodriguez. 2009. "Mapuche Protest, Environmental Conflict and Social Movement Linkage in Chile." *Third World Quarterly* 30 (4):743-760.

Annotation: Carruthers and Rodriguez maintain that in Chile, economic development undermines indigenous land claims. Citing numerous failed attempts by the Mapuche people to preserve their ancestral lands, the authors emphasize this blatant disregard of native land rights by the Chilean government. Although the authors argue that political and social connections strengthen indigenous interests, the evidence presented in this article does not appear to support this assertion. According to the article, despite political involvement, strong economic coalitions still beat out the interests of the Mapuche people.

Castillo, R. Aída Hernández. 2010. "Comparative Perspectives Symposium: Indigenous Feminisms - The Emergence of Indigenous Feminism in Latin America " *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 35 (3):539-545.

Annotation: Castillo discusses the differences in organized indigenous women's movements in Latin America. She contends that the urban feminist view needs to recognize the unique challenges that indigenous women face. Despite differences in ideologies between native women and urban feminists, Castillo asserts that the two movements should come together in the fight against racism, sexism, and economic exploitation.

Cunningham, Myrna. 2006. "Indigenous Women's Visions of an Inclusive Feminism." *Development* 49 (1):55-59.

Annotation: Cunningham argues that the indigenous concept of duality is not in opposition to feminist views on gender equality. She contends that equality between men and women does not threaten the goals of indigenous movements; it actually strengthens them. The author asserts that indigenous women's participation in feminist movements can advance all women's socio-economic and political rights. While opponents argue that indigenous women's struggles differ from non-indigenous women, Cunningham maintains that both groups must converge in order to create social change. The article exclusively presents the view of the author, a feminist indigenous woman, and does not draw upon additional sources.

Espinosa, MC. 2009. "Ethnic Spirituality, Gender and Health Care in the Peruvian Amazon." *Ethnicity & Health* 14 (5):423-437.

Annotation: Espinosa draws upon her research in the Peruvian Amazon to demonstrate how ethnic and gender hierarchies are affecting the health and healthcare of indigenous women. She asserts that indigenous spirituality is deeply ingrained in traditional healthcare, which can create tension between indigenous women and their Western medical providers. Espinosa provides a descriptive narrative of the Peruvian Amazon's modern and ethnic taboos and argues that knowledge of spiritual proscriptions can help explain the inferiority of women's health compared to that of indigenous men. She contends that gender taboos not only decrease women's health, but can also interfere with women's medical treatments.

Ewig, Christina. 2006. "Hijacking Global Feminism: Feminists, the Catholic Church, and the Family Planning Debacle in Peru." *Feminist Studies* 32 (3):632-659.

Annotation: Ewig uses the forced sterilization events in Peru to demonstrate how family planning initiatives can be manipulated by the government at the expense of indigenous women. Ewig states that the misrepresentation of indigenous women by urban feminist groups is confirmed by the fact that it took a year for the sterilization abuses to be discovered. She stresses that communication between indigenous women and feminist groups is imperative so that they can effectively contest human rights abuses quicker. Although Ewig uses a historical approach to explain human rights abuses in Peru, she makes the article relevant by stressing the ongoing reproductive rights battle in Peru.

Jackson, Jean E., and Kay B. Warren. 2005. "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992–2004: Controversies, Ironies, New Directions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:549-573.

Annotation: The authors assess indigenous movements throughout Latin America and argue that the "re-indigenization" of the region has been a successful strategy in gaining autonomy and self-governance. However, the authors note that sometimes this self-essentialism can be detrimental to women. Indigenous women, the authors contend, are held as cultural placeholders as they are more likely to wear traditional dress and less likely to speak Spanish, which can impede their roles in indigenous societies. The authors maintain, however, that some women have reclaimed their traditional roles in hopes of re-establishing gender complementarity.

Jiménez, W, and M, Vera. 2010. Indigenous Population and Differences in Access to Primary Education in Bolivia. Ottawa: FOCAL: Canadian Foundation for the Americas.

Annotation: The authors explore how Bolivia's changes in educational policy have affected access to education, particularly within the indigenous population. The authors aim to explore what barriers to education exist other than one's ethnicity. They determine that socioeconomic status or area of residency is more important in showing which students are more likely to experience poor education. They assert that indigenous girls and boys from low family income households in rural communities are the most vulnerable to poor school performance and high dropout rates.

Kellogg, Susan. 2005. Weaving the Past: A History of Latin America's Indigenous Women from the Prehispanic Period to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press.

Annotation: In this book, Kellogg uses a wealth of primary and secondary research to narrate the history of Latin America's indigenous women from pre-colonization to the present. She asserts that the asymmetry that exists between men and women is not universal and that there are multiple factors that have shaped gender roles in indigenous societies. In order to assess women's second-class status, Kellogg examines geographic location, trade integration, traditional gender relations, outside intervention, and concepts of racial and ethnic identity. She explains that because women have historically been active agents of change, women can be effective in improving their status in society.

Loewenberg, Samuel. 2010. "The Plight of Mexico's Indigenous Women." *Lancet* 375 (9727):1680-1682.

Annotation: In this article, Loewenberg argues that indigenous women in Mexico are suffering from poor health arising from lack of education, poverty, and insufficient medical staff. He contends that women avoid seeking medical attention because most feel uncomfortable discussing reproductive health with male doctors. Loewenberg asserts that this avoidance is adding to the high mortality rates of women in Mexican indigenous communities. The author cites no sources; however, he uses direct quotes from Mexican doctors and indigenous women to support his claims.

Mantini, L. 2008. "Human Trafficking of Amerindian Women in Guyana: Challenges and Strategies." *International Nursing Review* 55 (3):341-348.

Annotation: Mantini addresses the causes of Guyanese-Amerindian women's vulnerability to human trafficking. The author asserts that the lack of governmental action, human rights violations in the indigenous community, and cultural factors are adding to the crisis. Mantini proposes that international healthcare providers will help to end human trafficking through various programs aimed at the indigenous community as a whole and to women individually. Although the argument may have been more convincing had the author used examples of previous successes to justify how international healthcare providers can alleviate the abuses faced by indigenous women, the article contains pertinent information on human rights abuses faced by women in general.

Marcos, Sylvia. 2006. "Deconstructing Captivities: Indigenous Women Reshaping Education and Justice". In Saad, I.A., and D. Champagne (eds.), Indigenous Education and Empowerment. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Annotation: In this chapter, Marcos uses basic components of indigenous cosmology to explain how native Mexican women are claiming their right to interpret and practice ancient traditions. She asserts that the belief of duality, or the inseparability of the masculine-feminine, is at the foundation of all Mesoamerican indigenous thought. This belief inhibits the hierarchical alignment of deities, which Marcos contends is reflected in the horizontal orientation of Mexican indigenous communities. She argues that the dominant society misconceives that there are indigenous leaders while, in reality, there are only male and female spokespersons who represent the community. Marcos uses quotes from Zapatistas to demonstrate how they are challenging their critics and recreating traditional spirituality.

———. 2009. "Mesoamerican Women's Indigenous Spirituality." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (Indiana University Press) 25 (2):25-45.

Annotation: Marcos contends that revitalization of indigenous spirituality is driving social justice movements in Latin America. Drawing from the First Indigenous Women's Summit of the Americas, the author proves that the indigenous Mesoamerican view of "duality," or the masculine-feminine dual pair, is being reclaimed by indigenous women in an effort to assert their rights. The author convincingly argues that women's alteration of restrictive beliefs in traditional spirituality demonstrates their influence in reshaping indigenous communities.

McKinley, Michelle. 2003. "Planning Other Families: Negotiating Population and Identity Politics in the Peruvian Amazon." *Identities* 10 (1):31.

Annotation: Drawing upon personal experience as the director of a reproductive rights organization, McKinley analyzes indigenous family planning programs in the Peruvian Amazon. She criticizes internationally-funded family planning programs by asserting that their main goal is not to empower women, but to promote reduction in fertility. She demonstrates this claim saying that family planning programs "fail" when they do not see reductions in family sizes. She contends that many of the problems of these programs stem from the social distances between the program practitioners and their "beneficiaries."

McKinley states that programs are usually derived in a top-down manner that inhibits poor, indigenous women from participating in determining their own targeted fertility.

Monasterios, Karin P. 2007. "Bolivian Women's Organizations in the MAS Era." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 40 (2):33-37.

Annotation: Monasterios, an advisor on indigenous and gender issues to the Evo Morales administration, outlines four of the most popular women's movements in Bolivia and highlights their major differences. She asserts that with Bolivia's restructuring and decolonization, the role of women's groups will face significant changes, noting that NGO-based women's groups which played significant mediating roles in the past have already had their authority questioned. Monasterios contends that grassroots campaigns of indigenous women are going to be playing a more central role to the women's movement.

Munarriz, Gerardo J. 2008. "Rhetoric and Reality: The World Bank Development Policies, Mining Corporations, and Indigenous Communities in Latin America." *International Community Law Review* 10 (4):431-443.

Annotation: Munarriz argues that the World Bank's policies on mining in Latin America have harmed indigenous people and that the attempts to reconcile injustices have had further detrimental effects. Munarriz augments his case by using the historical account of Alberto Fujimori's economic policies in connection with the World Bank, the reconstruction of the Peruvian Constitution, and the subsequent revocation of the land rights of indigenous Peruvians.

Oquendo, Ángel R. 2005. "Indigenous Self-Determination in Latin America." *Florida Journal of International Law* 17 (3):625-631.

Annotation: Oquendo proposes that attaining indigenous self-determination in Latin America has two requirements. First, he argues that national identity needs to take a "progressive nationalism" approach, which is the idea that indigenous culture and national culture are equal but separate. Secondly, he asserts that laws protecting indigenous rights must be upheld in practice. He draws upon studies of the Mapuche people of Chile from experts Jorge Ivan Vergara and Rolf Foerster. Although Oquendo seeks to address self-determination of indigenous people in all of Latin America, he focuses mainly on Chile and fails to address other situations. He does, however, try to reconcile this by acknowledging the need for further analysis.

Radcliffe, Sarah A. 2007. "Latin American Indigenous Geographies of Fear: Living in the Shadow of Racism, Lack of Development, and Antiterror Measures." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97 (2):385-397.

Annotation: Radcliffe explains how geography can be used as a tool for development in addressing indigenous issues. She asserts that current neo-liberal and post-development models actually limit development and create perceived geographies of fear. She highlights the multi-dimensionality of geography, which analyzes not only the political economy but

also spatial and cultural aspects -- areas where current development approaches fail.

Although the purpose of the article was to defend geography's legitimacy in development, it has pertinent information regarding issues of indigenous rights and development policies.

Richards, Patricia. 2005. "The Politics of Gender, Human Rights, and Being Indigenous in Chile." *Gender and Society* 19 (2):199-220.

Annotation: Richards argues that current global views of human and women's rights can differ from those of indigenous communities. She draws upon personal interviews with Mapuche women of Chile to show that their interests are quite different from non-indigenous Chilean women. Richards stresses that universal feminist ideals do not adequately embody indigenous women and their culture. Her ability to gain the trust of the Mapuche women is obvious in the caliber of the argument that she poses: Mapuche women define their rights in association with their people, as well as in complement with Mapuche men.

Sanchez-Perez, Hector Javier, Guadalupe Vargas Morales, and Josep Maria Jansa. 2005. "The Conditions of Life and Health for Indigenous Women in Areas of High Marginalization, Chiapas, Mexico," in Eversole, R., J.A. McNeish, and A.D. Cimadomoro (eds.), Indigenous Peoples and Poverty: an International Perspective. London: CROP International Studies in Poverty Research.

Annotation: In this chapter, the authors examine discrimination in Chiapas, a state which they argue has the worst marginalization in Mexico. The authors use demographic indicators to emphasize indigenous women's struggles in the socio-economic, educational, and health sectors of Mexican society. Through a wealth of data, the authors demonstrate that indigenous women in rural Mexico face significantly more discrimination and marginalization than indigenous men. They also contend that indigenous women experience higher maternal mortality rates, achieve lower educational levels, and have less access to healthcare than non-indigenous women; the severity of these can worsen between indigenous groups.

Smith-Oka, Vania. 2009. "Unintended Consequences: Exploring the Tensions between Development Programs and Indigenous Women in Mexico in the Context of Reproductive Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 68 (11):2069-2077.

Annotation: Through an in-depth case study, Smith-Oka shows how government policies and development programs in family planning can actually hinder women's reproductive rights. The author focused on a small indigenous village in Veracruz, Mexico to demonstrate the coercive measures used to promote contraceptive use. Smith-Oka argues that the stipend given by the NGO Oportunidades, together with the local medical clinic's bias towards government population policy, causes women to have fewer individual rights. The author contends that indigenous people are often targeted in family planning programs because of the Mexican government's fears of high population and underdevelopment.

Stocks, Anthony. 2005. "Too Much for Too Few: Problems of Indigenous Land Rights in Latin America." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (1):85-104.

Annotation: Stocks uses his 26 years of field research in Latin America to argue that indigenous land laws are not being upheld. He effectively draws upon four different nations' histories to show similarities in the struggle for indigenous land rights. He maintains that even in countries with the best legal frameworks, indigenous lands are not always protected. He asserts that this failure by the government to maintain native land claims is due to the decentralization of governments by neoliberal economic movements. The author's historical approach to his argument is successful because of the ongoing consequences of neo-liberalism in Latin America.

Swanson, Kate. 2010. Begging as a Path to Progress – Indigenous Women and the Children and the Struggle for Ecuador's Urban Spaces (Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Series), Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Annotation: In this book, Swanson discusses indigenous people begging on the streets of Ecuador's urban centers. She asserts that as money becomes more important in indigenous communities, the indigenous women of Calhuasí use begging as a strategy to earn income. Although there are changing gender roles in these Andean indigenous communities, Swanson argues that women have the potential to earn significantly more income on the streets than men. This, she says, makes men responsible for domestic tasks. Swanson contends that begging can have positive implications for indigenous women as they are gaining greater autonomy and knowledge of their rights by increased exposure to the dominant society. However, she also warns that exposing youth to urban gender ideologies is instigating discrimination and sexualized violence.

United Nations Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. 2007. Indigenous Women and the United Nations System: Good Practices and Lessons Learned. New York: United Nations.

Annotation: This book compiles 18 UN-case studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to highlight the problems and accomplishments of indigenous women. The studies propose that for women's advancement projects to succeed, the participation of both men and women is crucial. The case studies in this book demonstrate the complexity of gender identification of indigenous women and that development programs should be sensitive to this issue.

———. 2009. "The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples." New York: United Nations. Available online: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/SOWIP_web.pdf.

Annotation: This report by the United Nations methodically analyzes indigenous issues throughout the world. The report emphasizes the importance of indigenous land rights and their essentiality in the maintenance of indigenous economies, preservation of the environment, protection of culture, and promotion of health. The authors of this report note that the lack of disaggregated data on indigenous peoples complicates the UN implementation and development of programs to assist these populations.

Van der Hoogte, Liesbeth, and Koos Kingma. 2004. "Promoting Cultural Diversity and the Rights of Women: the Dilemmas of 'Intersectionality' for Development Organisations." *Gender & Development* 12 (1):47-55.

Annotation: The authors argue that development organizations need to recognize that indigenous women face double discrimination for being part of an ethnic minority group and for being female. The authors contend that women will be accused of threatening their culture if they try to defend their individual rights. For this reason, they say, women will often deny that they face inequality so that development organizations do not stigmatize their community and they are not excluded by community members. The authors conclude that development organizations need to help, not hinder, indigenous women's efforts in challenging cultural relativism and fundamentalism so that they may fully exercise their rights.