

Multi-Community Governance: Some International Comparisons

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Vancouver, Coast Salish Land

Question 1:

Who is the collective “self”
in self-determination
and self-governance?

United States



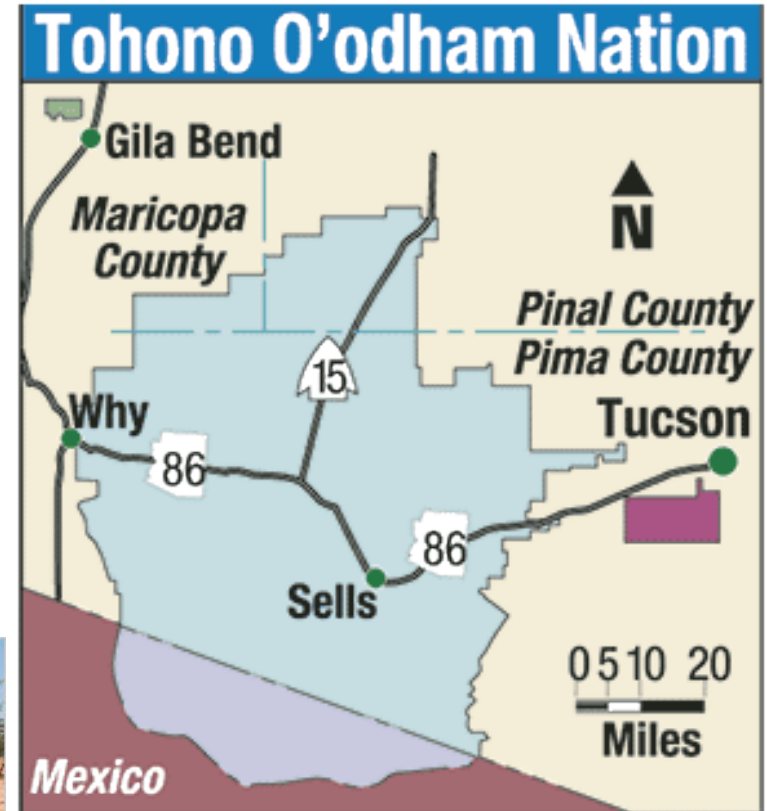
Gwich'in Nation

The Gwich'in, dispersed among communities in Alaska, Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories, are trying to find ways to act as one nation across a vast space and an international boundary.



Tohono O'odham Nation

A 75-mile long international boundary cuts through O'odham lands, dividing both place and people. The Nation insists on treating O'odham south of the border as citizens, asserting its own understanding of boundaries and nationhood and resisting the proposal to build a wall that would further separate them.

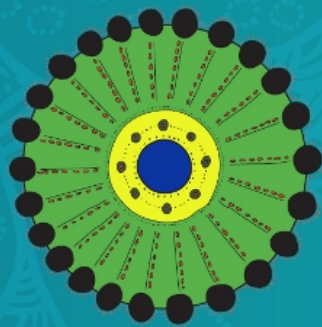


Tucson Citizen

Australia

Thamarrurr Regional Council

Multiple groups, sharing
neither language nor
country, forced into a
central service center,
joined together to create a
regional government



THAMARRURR DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION



Belize



Supreme Court of
Belize confirms
Indigenous rights
over land, 2007

**“Jim! We won!
We won!”**



“...now what?”

Not everyone is moving
to larger structures...



White Earth Nation

Not everyone is moving to larger structures. The White Earth Nation in the US currently is breaking away from the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe—a group of five nations—and trying to establish its own constitution and government.



Multiple Sources of Change

- Reassertions of identities that were cut by colonial boundaries (for example, Tohono O'odham, Gwich'in, Ktunaxa, Ngarrindjeri)
- More effective land claims (for example, Noongar)
- Newly recognized rights or assets (for example, Maya in Belize)
- Scale and capacity considerations (for example, Thamarrurr, Crees)
- Crisis (for example, Crees)

Question 2:

How Should We Govern?

United States

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

In 1855, the US forced three nations—Bitterroot Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai—to settle together on one reservation in Montana. Whose traditions should they follow?



One of the three is larger than the others. So they decided against direct election of a chair. Instead, parliamentary style, they elect a council with representatives from each tribe. Then the councilors choose one of them to serve as chair.



Laguna Pueblo

There are six villages, each with representation on a central council. Laguna citizens describe these councilors as “elected officials.”



But there are no contested, western-style elections at the Pueblo. Each village gathers and, in its wisdom and by processes not written down, chooses who it wants to serve.

As one councilor says, “When you become a councilor, you’re not given power. *You’re given responsibility.*”

Cochiti Pueblo



Six officers are chosen by the senior spiritual leader each year. The Governor has secular responsibilities, the War Captain has spiritual responsibilities (separation of powers).



- Anyone appointed to one of the six positions is a member of the legislature for life
- To the outside, the Governor looks like the most important person, but inside, the War Captain is. The Governor's job is to protect the sacred core of Pueblo life from the outside.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation



Meetings of the legislature are held using video conferencing.

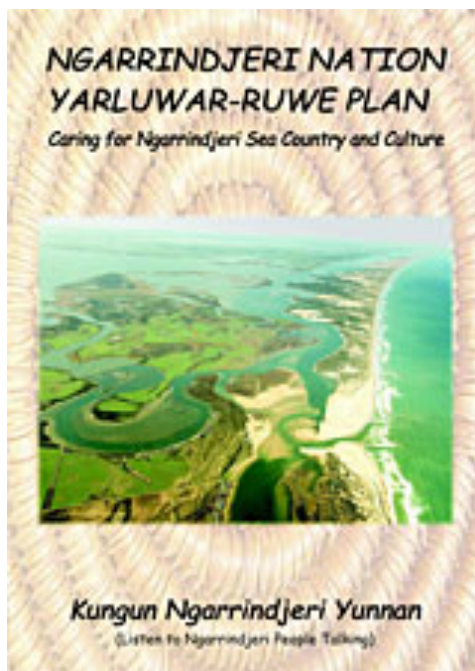
Its more than 25,000 citizens have dispersed across much of the U.S.: Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver, etc. In 2007 the nation revised its constitution, creating a 16-member legislature. Half the seats must be filled by citizens resident in Oklahoma. The other eight are from—and represent—districts across the U.S.

Australia

Ngarrindjeri Nation

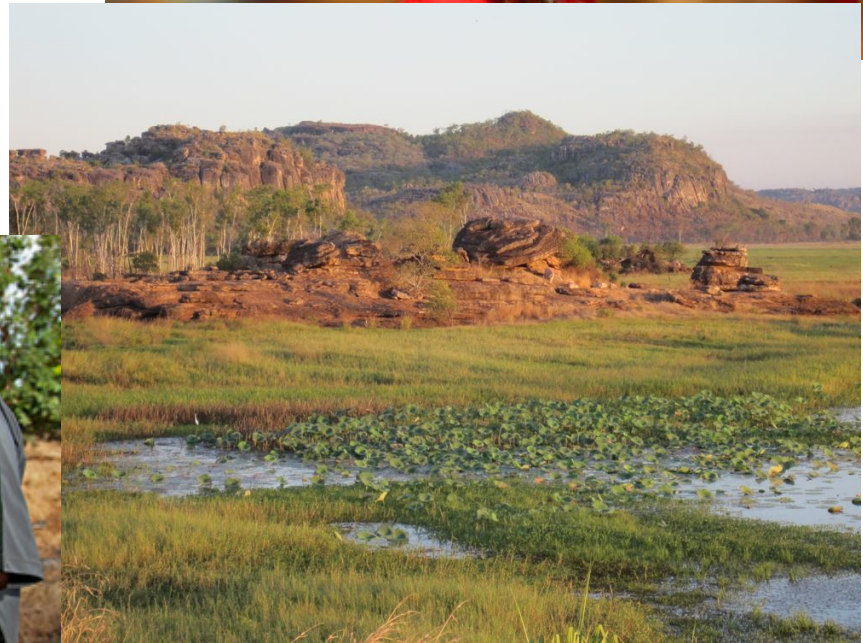
Despite the indifference of the Australian government, the

Ngarrindjeri are revitalizing older governing structures, making collective decisions, and dealing with other governments *as a nation*.



West Central Arnhem Regional Authority (WCARA)...

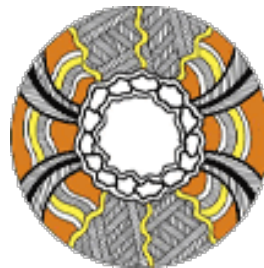
...an effort by several Native communities, despite cultural and language differences, to create a regional government. Torpedoed by federal policy change.





Gunditjmara Nation

Within the **Gunditjmara Nation**, decision-making apparently complies with imposed governmental requirements, but behind that façade, a more traditional structure and process operate. That's where the real power lies – and it works.



GUNDITJ MIRRORING
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation

Aotearoa (New Zealand)

the Māori people



Tainui, located in the Waikato region of Aotearoa

- About 52,000 citizens
- 33 hapuu (sub-tribes)
- 68 marae (communities or family groupings)
- A parliament; each marae has representation
- An executive board elected from parliament



You may not want to share an entire government. Perhaps you only need to share parts of it...



Northwest Intertribal Court System

“When representatives from tribes throughout Western Washington met in 1979 to explore ways of meeting their justice needs, they realized that there were neither sufficient financial resources nor enough people with the necessary experience to provide individual justice system services for each tribe. They concluded that the most practical solution was to pool their resources to establish a court system: the Northwest Intertribal Court System (NICS).”



Northwest Intertribal Court System

“NICS acts as a personnel bank. It started with one full-time judge and now offers prosecutorial, juvenile, code writing, appellate and training services in addition to judicial services.”

“Each tribal court is located on its respective reservation. Each tribe has its own particular set of laws.”

Intertribal Court of Southern California

Twelve small nations in San Diego County are members of the Intertribal Court of Southern California



The court serves the judicial needs of all twelve tribes

Changing Governmental Forms over Time

Pre-Invasion:
self-determination



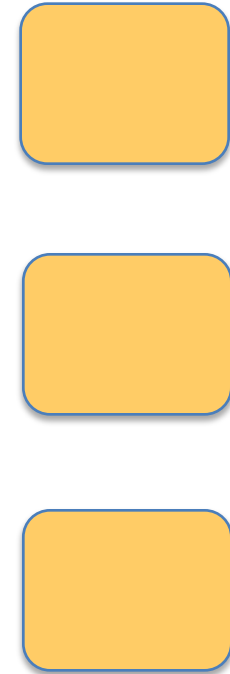
Multiple forms

In between:
Dominant
CANZUS regimes
impose common
forms



Change toward
common forms

Today:
self-determination
(with some constraints)



Change toward
multiple forms
(but different
from before)

