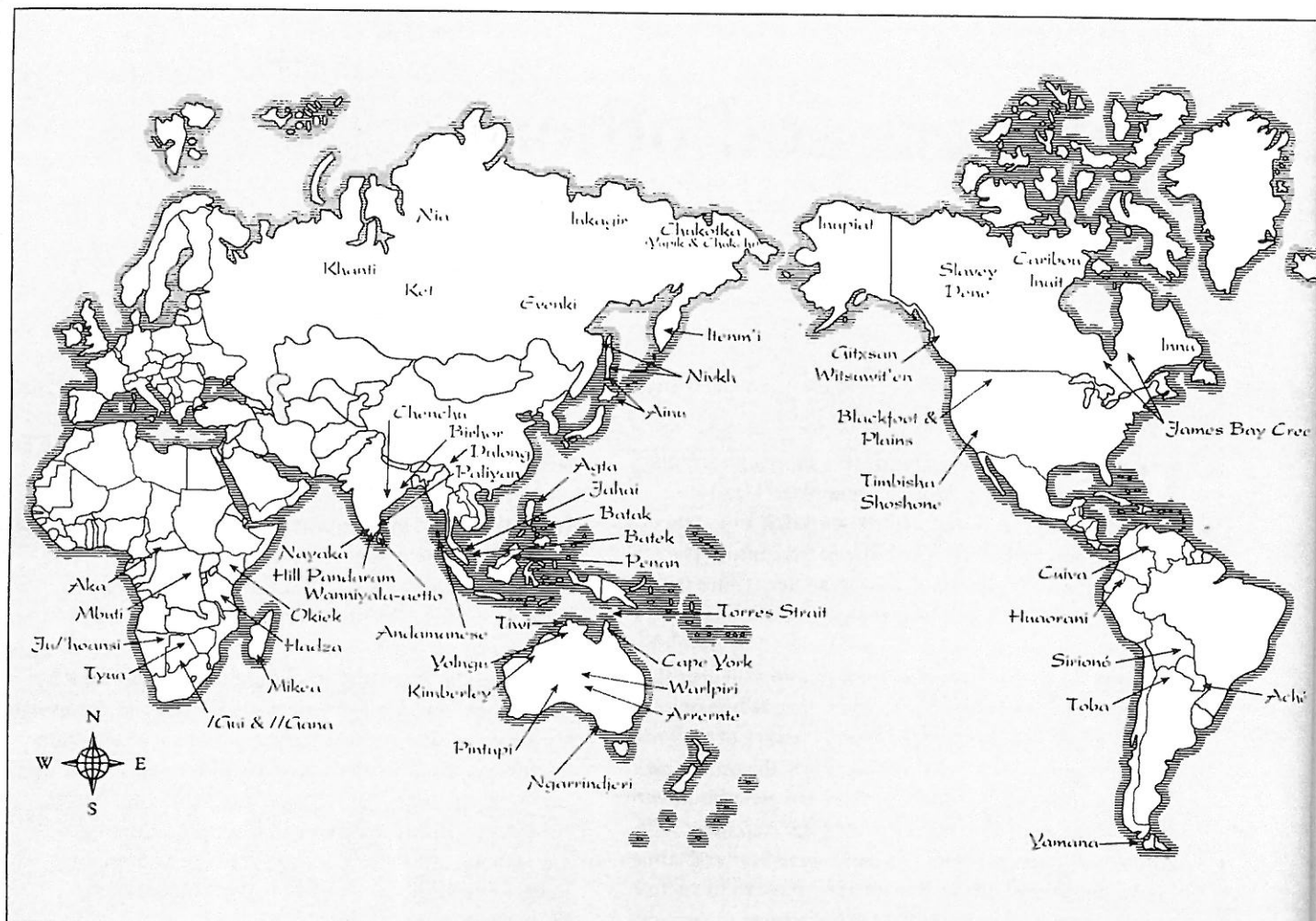




Map 1 Case studies in the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers

one third of the globe, including all of Australia and most of North America, as well as large tracts of South America, Africa, and Northeast Asia. The twentieth century has seen particularly dramatic changes in their life circumstances. The century began with dozens of hunting and gathering peoples still pursuing ancient (though not isolated) lifeways in small communities, as foragers with systems of local meaning centered on kin, plants, animals, and the spirit world. As the century proceeded, a wave of self-appointed civilizers washed over the world's foragers, bringing schools, clinics, and administrative structures, and, not incidentally, taking their land and resources.

The year 2000 will have seen the vast majority of former foragers settled and encapsulated in the administrative structures of one state or another. And given their tragic history of forced acculturation one would imagine that the millennium will bring to a close a long chapter in human history. But will it? We believe not. Hunter-gatherers live on, not only in the pages of anthropological and historical texts, but also, in forty countries, in the

presence of hundreds of thousands of descendants a generation or two removed from a foraging way of life, and these peoples and their supporters are creating a strong international voice for indigenous peoples and their human rights.

Among the public-at-large, images of hunters and gatherers have swung between two poles. For centuries they were regarded as "savages," variously ignorant or cunning, beyond the pale of "civilization." This distorted image was usually associated with settler societies who coveted the foragers' land; the negative stereotypes justified dispossession.

In recent years a different view has dominated, with hunter-less gatherers as the repository of virtues seemingly lacking in the materialism and marked inequalities of contemporary urban life. How to balance these two views? For many current observers the contrast between savage inequities of modernity and the relative egalitarianism of the so-called "primitives" gives the latter more weight on the scales of natural justice. Jack Weatherford's eloquently argued book, *Savages and civilization: who will survive?* (1994), draws on a long intellectual tradition dating from Rousseau which, contemplating the horrors of the modern world, raises the question of who are the