

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and  
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

2009

## Book Review: *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development* Edited by Miriam Jorgensen

Matthew L.M. Fletcher  
*Michigan State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Fletcher, Matthew L.M., "Book Review: *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development* Edited by Miriam Jorgensen" (2009). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 1009.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/1009>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development.** Edited by Miriam Jorgensen. Foreword by Oren Lyons. Afterword by Satsan (Herb George). Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007. xiv + 363 pp. Figures, notes, references, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$20.00 paper.

The future of American Indian law and policy is here, and it is nation building. Nation building is the struggle of American Indian tribes to exercise tribal sovereignty in a progressive and creative manner to restore and modernize the governance structures of tribal governments. In their essays, Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt, founders of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development and leaders of the Native Nations Institute on Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona, argue that the long-overdue transfer of Indian Country authority and control by the United States to Indian nations is well underway, but that Indian tribes must now move forward to develop effective governance and economic development structures.

*Rebuilding Native Nations* is a powerful restatement and reconsideration of American Indian self-determination, a federal policy approaching five decades in age. Its essays draw upon more than a decade of tribal success stories collected and celebrated by the Harvard Project. Individual chapters focus on particular subject areas such as tribal economic development, intergovernmental relations, and tribal constitutional and tribal court development. The authors draw out commonalities about successful nation building in tribal communities, theorizing an underlying basis, and leading readers to understand how to replicate that success. The chapter on tribal courts by Judge Joseph Thomas Flies-Away, Judge Carrie Garrow, and Miriam Jorgensen, coupled with a chapter by Joseph Kalt on tribal constitutions, demonstrates how a separate and functioning judiciary can assist with building tribal economies by protecting through

the rule of law on-reservation investment by outsiders. Sarah Hicks's chapter on intergovernmental relations shows how tribes can smooth over jurisdictional conflicts, helping better to regulate everything from the environment to taxation to law and order in Indian Country. The chapter on the underrealized potential of tribal citizen entrepreneurship will be especially important to Great Plains tribes without a significant gaming market.

Kalt and Cornell's ground-breaking work on the political economy of Indian Country, begun two decades ago, is continued in this outstanding book, particularly in its section on tribal foundations. The Harvard Project, with its cadre of economists, legal scholars, and political scientists, has fashioned a model of tribal governance involving the exercise of tribal sovereignty in which Indian nations both control their own destinies and do so in a culturally-relevant manner. Without a doubt, *Rebuilding Native Nations* is a must-read for tribal leaders and for any government official doing work within or with Indian Country. For scholars, the book is an outstanding reference. As federal Indian law and policy enters an era of nation building, here is a blueprint for flourishing tribal nations. **Matthew L.M. Fletcher**, *College of Law, Michigan State University*.