A concern with the other has been present for half a millennium in western thought. The classic concept of indigenousness denoted the lowest position in the scale of civilization by creating the remote other. However, the historical changes can be traceable also in the different positioning of the remote other. The fall of colonialism brought about fundamental challenges and redefined the terms of this relationship.

In this thesis I have discussed the relationship between the human rights and anthropology with a special focus on the indigenous rights, as they form a unique crossroad between various disciplines and sciences. In order to closely analyze the transnational activism I held a specific focus on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in the broader context of the historical developments of the indigenous rights. It was shown, how the indigenous people were initially constructed as distinct, and subordinate groups via the polyvalent discourses of the noble and ignoble savages. Although created half a millennium ago, the relics of the stereotypical thinking have craved their ways into the modern institutional setting. Despite the fact that currently there are more opportunities for indigenous peoples to participate in institutional activities than ever before, the issues indigenous people confront are continuously stabile. It is, therefore, important to pay closer attention to the effectiveness of the existing framework. By ethnographic description focusing on the social agency within the institutional framework I aim to depict the organizational setting of a specific space, a United Nations’ mechanism. Where the legal and political theory mainly approaches the institutional system, in this thesis I tried to capture the human component of the system. Moreover, by highlighting the discrepancies between the rhetorical and actual spheres, I hope to shed some light on the possible space for improvement.