Social and Cultural Policies Toward Indigenous Peoples: Perspectives from Latin America*

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*Dedicated to the memory of José Lameiras (1938–2003).

Key Words

postcolonial ethnicity, indigenous rights, populism, indigenous movements, multiculturalism

Abstract

Throughout the twentieth century, social and cultural policies toward indigenous peoples in Latin America have been closely related to *indigenismo*, an ideological movement that denounced the exploitation of aboriginal groups and strove for the cultural unity and the extension of citizenship through social integration and "acculturation." This review traces the colonial and nineteenth-century roots of *indigenismo* and places it in the context of the populist tendencies in most Latin American states from the 1920s to the 1970s, which favored economic protectionism and used agrarian reform and the provision of services as tools for governance and legitimacy. Also examined is the role of anthropological research in its relation to state hegemony as well as the denunciation of *indigenista* policies by ethnic intellectuals and organizations. In recent decades, the dismantling of populist policies has given rise to a new official "neoliberal" discourse that extols multiculturalism. However, the widespread demand for multicultural policies is also seen as the outcome of the fight by militant indigenous organizations for a new type of citizenship.

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INTRODUCTION

WGIP: Working Group on Indigenous Populations

The concept "indigenous people" gained legitimacy in the contemporary vocabulary of international law with the creation in 1982 of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) (Gray 1997, pp. 9, 13–15). The establishment of this group, which meets annually, helped to open up a new political space. In the words of its chairperson, the WGIP has allowed grassroots movements "to gain direct access to the UN" (quoted by Karlsson 2003, p. 403; see also Gray 1997). It has also influenced NGOs, state institutions, and international development agencies—the World Bank included—to express greater concern for the plight of "the indigenous" and to propose new strategies and policies designed to benefit them. In turn, numerous social movements worldwide have adopted the term "indigenous people" as a self-identifying and self-empowering label that epitomizes a past of oppression and that legitimizes their search for social, cultural, and political rights (Karlsson 2003, pp. 404–6). (An important leader of the Miskito movement in Nicaragua once told me: "As peoples, we are entitled to free self-determination; as ethnic groups, we are objects of anthropological study.") Anthropologists have also contributed to the diffusion of the term, although recently there has been some disagreement over its usage, causing some heated debate (see Kuper 2003 and the ensuing discussion in *Current Anthropology*). I refer to this debate at the end of the article.

In Latin America, the term *indígena* has been used by many social scientists and politicians, in contradistinction to other terms such as *indio* (Indian), *tribesman*, or *ethnic group*. *Indio* was the colonial term used by the Iberian conquerors and their descendants to refer to the inhabitants of the Americas, because Colombus and his companions initially thought that they had reached the shores of India. During the colonial period, the word *indio* bore the connotation of legal inferiority in a caste society (Aguirre Beltrán 1972); it was therefore rejected as derogatory by many post-Independence scholars and legislators, although it did not disappear from everyday speech (see Bonfil 1970). (And more recently some radical movements call themselves *indios* as an expression of defiance; see Bonfil 1981; Barre 1983, pp. 18–19.) *Tribesman*, or *indio tribal*, was popular among anthropologists influenced by evolutionist theories, particularly those of Morgan (developed by Bandelier in relation to the Mexican situation), according to which pre-Columbian American societies lacked state institutions and were organized solely on the basis of kinship (see White & Bernal 1960). Subsequent research showed this characterization to be untrue for the Mesoamerican and the Andean regions; however, the term tribe is still employed in referring to the groups of the Amazon basin (see Ribeiro 1970). As for *ethnic group* (or *etnia*), it is used in a Boasian sense to emphasize the particular cultural characteristics and feelings of identity of a given collectivity, often with little regard for its relationships with the state. Thus, its meaning tends to abolish "a necessary level of analysis," namely, the historical insertion of the aboriginal population in the construction of the modern nation-state (de Oliveira 1999, p. 125). To the contrary,

the generic term *indígena* has been construed in order to express such insertion—as well as, sometimes, to disguise its contradictory nature (Aguirre Beltrán 1958; see Eriksen 1993, pp. 13–14). In general, *indígena* is the preferred term in the Latin American academic literature, although alternatives that purport to have a neutral connotation, such as *aborígines* or *amerindios*, are also acceptable.

After national independence, the "Indians" were often regarded as a problem: For the white and *mestizo* (mixed blood) elites, they represented "the savage otherness" hostile to (European) civilization. But they were also seen as "redeemable" by Liberal intellectuals, who argued in favor of state action—what we would call social policies—to improve their welfare. In addition, state ideologists were interested in constituting a unified sense of national identity, which required the implementation of "cultural policies" especially designed for the *indígenas*. Gradually, the discourse of "redemption and nationalization" became official in most countries. However, the point of departure for both types of policy was to establish the distinctive traits of the indigenous peoples and the path that would lead to their desired transformation. In fact, an important factor for state hegemony in Latin America has been the capacity on the part of governments to define what it is "to be" indigenous and to generate the conditions for a specific political-indigenous identity to emerge within the nation. To name a particular kind of population and chart its destiny through coercion and consensus became (and remains) an essential part of the cultural revolution implied in the process of state formation (see Corrigan & Sayer 1985). The term *indigenismo* was coined to refer to the congeries of discourses, categorizations, rules, strategies, and official actions that have the express purpose of creating state domination over the groups designated as indigenous, as well as instilling them with a sense of national allegiance, but which have also carved out an institutional niche for these groups to further their own agendas and advance their demands for citizenship. In this process, the anthropological profession found a political voice and a controversial role.

In this article, I focus on the impact of the state—its actions and pronouncements—on the dialectics of the relationships between the indigenous sectors and the dominant society. (A thorough review of ethnic politics in Latin America should also take into account the population of African descent, precluded here for lack of space.) I start by briefly referring to the birth of *indigenismo* and its complex relationship first with Latin American Liberalism and then with the populist trends that permeated the politics of the region from 1920 to 1970. Second, I examine the debates and resolutions of the First Inter-American *Indigenista* Congress, in 1940, which completed the conversion of *indigenismo* into state ideology and anthropological doctrine. Third, the rise and fall of *indigenismo* as a hegemonic tool will be seen in relation both to changes in overall state agendas and to the emergence of indigenous organizations and movements. Finally, I look at the paradoxical relationships between neoliberalism and *indigenismo* at the dawn of the twenty-first century, in an international ("globalized") context that includes the following: (*a*) widespread concern for human and cultural rights that has contributed to the strengthening of indigenous actors, (*b*) the emergence of "indigenous movements" in the postcolonial world at large, and (*c*) a debate within the anthropological profession and the social sciences on multiculturalism and collective rights.

THE QUEST FOR THE NATION: LIBERAL EQUALITY, POSITIVISM AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The independent states that came into being in Latin America after 1820 articulated a public ideological discourse of universal civil liberties. Even those governments labeled as "conservative" rejected the colonial distinction of "quality" among persons, manifested

in differential legal rights. A Mexican writer and Liberal politician, José María Luis Mora, went so far as to present a motion to the National Congress banishing from public usage all words that might have a caste connotation: There would be no more Indians, Blacks, Mulattoes, or *mestizos*, only Mexicans (see Hale 1972, chapter 7). Yet certain discriminatory practices persisted. For instance, in the Andean countries, Indians continued to pay tribute until the 1850s; and Indian forced labor in the great landed domains or *haciendas* lasted into the twentieth century. The notion also persisted that aboriginal people needed protection and stern vigilance, as children do, and it found reinforcement in the racialist ideas that were widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century (Graham 1990). And the conquerors' distinction between "tame" and "barbarian" Indians (*indios de policía*, who had cities, centralized political institutions, and an advanced agricultural economy, and *indios bárbaros*, who lived in nomadic bands of hunters and gatherers) still determined differences in policies and actions (Service 1955).

The Spanish Crown had forcefully organized the "tame" Indians of the Andes and Mesoamerica into corporate peasant communities with landed resources, a limited form of self-government, and under direct supervision by royal officers and the Church (Wolf 1956). They did not enjoy freedom of movement or labor. Their obligations included communal work, periodic labor services to the authorities and Spanish entrepreneurs, and the payment of a per capita tribute; but they were formally granted the protection of the Crown against aggression and abuses, which were nevertheless all too common (Zavala & Miranda 1954; Parry 1966, chapter 9; Lockart & Schwartz 1983, chapter 4). In contrast, the "barbarian" Indians in the frontiers of the colonial realm—the arid plains and rugged mountains of Northern Mexico, the Caribbean coast, the Argentinian *pampas*, and the Amazonian basin—were pacified through military garrisons (*presidios*) and religious missions (Parry 1966, pp. 168–72, 289–91). At the end of the eighteenth century, the religious orders (mainly Jesuits and Franciscans) had been taken out of the missionary redoubts, and the frontiers were more than ever characterized by actual warfare against the Indians (Viñas 1982, chapter 5). In the Portuguese domains, Indians were generally regarded as "barbarians," and the history of colonization, notwithstanding the official purpose of protecting those bands who accepted evangelization, consisted of campaigns to exterminate the Indians or reduce them to slavery, except in the Jesuit missions, which were themselves dismantled in the eighteenth century (Métraux 1949; Mörner 1965; Ribeiro 1995, pp. 49–55; see Sweet 1992 for a darker view of the missions). The 1758 decree of the Marquis of Pombal, the powerful minister of Portugal who engineered the expulsion of the Jesuits, declared freedom for the Indians (Black slavery continued until 1882) and legal recognition of their lands. But Pombal also created the office of Director of Indians in the main cities: his "protective" tasks included the coercive allocation of laborers to settlers (Maybury-Lewis 1992, pp. 99–101; Ribeiro 1995, pp. 104–5). By 1822, at the time of Brazil's independence, the practices of enslavement and violent displacement had returned (Melatti 1973, pp. 233–34).

At the end of the colonial period not all the Indians were necessarily destitute; however, both in Spanish America and Brazil the newly independent governments had to devise policies to deal with a large number of people who either were subject to terrible aggression or were, to say the least, at great disadvantage. Among the new politicians, the main goals of the enlightened sector were the extension of civil liberties to Indians and their conversion into a prosperous class of small landholders and artisans through schooling and access to the market. This often conflicted with the interests of the *criollos* (American-born people of European ancestry) who dominated the landed estates and the world of commerce; however, this class finally joined

forces with Liberal Party reformers in their fight against Church and Indian property. For Liberal thinkers, indigenous communal institutions were a major hindrance on the road to progress. As early as 1825, Bolívar decreed the privatization of community land and the elimination of traditional communal authorities and obligations. These measures would be maintained in the constitutions of the republics resulting from the old Viceroyalty of Peru (Marzal 1993, pp. 50–52); and they would be more explicitly confirmed in Ecuador by legislation in 1857, and in Bolivia in 1866 and 1874 (A. Ibarra 1992, Rivera Cusicanqui 1985; see Bonilla 1997). In turn, under the leadership of Benito Juárez, who had grown up in a Zapotec community in Oaxaca, Mexican Liberals launched a major offensive against corporate property with the Reform Laws (1855–1856) and the 1857 Constitution (González Navarro 1954, pp. 121–30). Disentailment laws purported to benefit members of the indigenous communities: It was assumed that private property would be an incentive to increase their productivity and competitiveness in the market, but in fact a great deal of land was appropriated by *criollos* and *mestizos*. This explains the eruption of caste wars between the landed oligarchy and the rebellious indigenous who protested the destruction of their livelihood (Reed 1964, Reina 1980, Rivera Cusicanqui 1987, Tutino 1986, Bonilla 1991, Reina 1997). As for the "barbarian" Indians, they continued to experience the violence of the expanding frontier. In Argentina, the dictator Rosas and the presidents Sarmiento and Roca led successive lethal campaigns against the Guaraníes in the East and the Araucanos in the Southwest (Viñas 1982, Helg 1990). In southern Chile, in 1866, the government created redoubts for the Araucanos (Mapuches), but a great deal of their ancestral territory was in fact allotted to white settlers, which provoked the 1880 Mapuche rebellion. Defeated by the national army two years later, the Mapuches suffered the plundering of most of their land (Berdichewski 1975). In Northern Mexico, during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1867–1910), the authorities offered rewards for killing Apaches and sent rebellious Yaquis to labor camps in Oaxaca and Yucatán. In Brazil, the Imperial regime (1822–1889) showed more humane tendencies: It eliminated forced labor, declared that Indians should be protected "as orphans," and put Capuchin missionaries in charge of their catechization and civic instruction; in addition, Emperor Pedro II established new Directors of Indians to regulate the market in goods and labor; but in 1850 all tribal lands were privatized, a move that expedited their appropriation by outsiders (Melatti 1973, pp. 235–36).

We may talk of a Liberal type of *indigenismo*, which defined the *indígenas* as people who lived outside the civilized nation, in the old communities and in the wild frontier, and would be saved through instruction, private property, and the exercise of civil rights. This discourse rejected the notion that they were hopeless savages and insisted on their capacity for education and improvement. Thus, in Imperial Brazil there were progressive writers such as José Bonifacio de Andrade, or Romantic novelists such as José de Alencar who campaigned for more humane public action toward the aboriginal sectors (Maybury-Lewis 1992, pp. 102–3). In Peru, Manuel González Prada denounced the abuses of political bosses and landlords, and in Mexico, Francisco Pimentel insisted on the need to end Indian oppression and segregation (by promoting fusion with white settlers) in order to consolidate an authentic nation "with common beliefs, ideas and purposes" (both quoted in Marzal 1993, p. 383; see also pp. 421–23; Aguirre Beltrán 1973, pp. 69–70). These ideas emerged in the context of a rapidly changing economy that demanded the mobilization of material and human resources for capitalist accumulation, and where the market was construed as the tool *par excellence* of equality and freedom. Obviously, Liberal views, even those tainted by Romanticism, totally ignored indigenous views about their own

identity and destiny. Indeed, there was an oppositional indigenous identity. Developed through centuries of resistance, this identity could be seen in the defense of communal land and institutions as well as in myths of a glorious past and its imminent return; the cult of pre-Columbian sacred mountains, images, and objects; rejection of tributes and levies; and, particularly in the frontier regions, the ethos of the free warrior, willing to die for his people (see Ribeiro 1971, chapter 11; Flores Galindo 1987; Bonfil 1989; Silverblatt 1993; Velasco Ávila 1997; Florescano 1999). In contrast, for nineteenth-century nationalism the "imagining" of the national community (see Anderson 1983) included the total dissolution of indigenous identities in favor of a new, comprehensive matrix, for which the best formula was miscegenation. Thus was born the "myth of *mestizaje*," the inevitable emergence and ascent of *mestizos* as the true citizens of the new nations (Gould 1998, de la Peña 2002). The mixed-blood sector, present since the beginnings of colonization, had grown and prospered throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, finding accommodation thanks to the expanding demand for smallholding produce, free labor, and urban services (Mörner 1967; Sáenz 1970; Lockart & Schwartz 1983, pp. 3l16–19; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). This sector had even absorbed a large part of the population of African origin (Aguirre Beltrán 1972). The term *mestizo* or *misti* (also called *cholo*) had a strong negative connotation in the Andes, since these people often played the role of middlemen at the service of the landed oligarchy; nevertheless, they also symbolized the possibility of upper social mobility (Bourricaud 1975, Degregori 2002). In Mexico, however, many prosperous middle-size ranchers, merchants, urban professionals, and military officers were identified as of mixed blood (see Knight 1990, Mallon 1992, Degregori 2002). Mexican *mestizos* enhanced their prestige as militants in the Liberal Party and as participants in the armed resistance against the U.S. invasion (1847) and the French occupation (1861–67). Two Liberal historians, Vicente Riva Palacio and Justo Sierra, presented the course of the Mexican nation as a march toward unification, impelled by the ascent of the *mestizos*, whose most illustrious representatives were Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz, the two dominant political figures of the century (Basave Benítez 1992, pp. 33–36; Florescano 2001, chapter 9). But the most important Mexican ideologist of *mestizaje* was Andrés Molina Enríquez, a lawyer and sociologist influenced by Social Darwinism. In his book *Los Grandes Problemas Nacionales* (1909), he defined the *mestizo* "race" as the "fittest for survival" in tropical America. In contrast, the Indians were irretrievably fragmented and weakened by poverty and exploitation, and the *criollos* had monopolized the land and become a parasitic lot. Consequently, the solution to national problems lay in the extension of *mestizaje* to all social segments and the consolidation of a strong *mestizo* rule capable of breaking the *criollo* economic predominance through agrarian reform (see Brading 1985a, pp. 64–71; Knight 1990; Basave Benítez 1992). Paradoxically, this racialization of history and politics did not claim the inherent superiority of a given race: Following contemporary positivist geographers (such as Elisée Réclus), Molina Enríquez conceived of "race" as being determined by climate and the evolution of social and economic forces, and he reckoned that racial divisions, particularly those between *indios* and *mestizos*, were extremely fluid. Whereas other social thinkers of the period were writing against racist theories, in Mexico, as in Latin America at large, racist ideas were widespread, and the official censuses continued to classify people in terms of "race," which in the case of "the Indians" was defined not only by perception of phenotype but also by dress, language, and occupation (Klein 1982, Knight 1990).

If the policies inspired by Liberal *indigenismos* were attempting to "de-Indianize" the rural population through education and the market economy, they had only limited success: Many villages remained without schools,

communal institutions persisted in the form of ritual organizations under the guidance of elders, and the expansion of the *latifundios* or great landed domains maintained a system of indebted labor (*colonato* in Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia; *peonaje* in Mexico and Central America; *concertaje* and *huasipungo* in Ecuador, for example) through sharecropping contracts and *hacienda* stores (see de la Peña 1994). In Central America and Southern Mexico, despite official statements about equality, the distinction between the communal indigenous and the nonindigenous culture and identity, expressed in the bipolar opposition between *indios* and *ladinos* (non-Indians), was explicitly reinforced to ensure cheap labor for the plantations (Taracena Arriola 1998). There were also less depressing situations. In Northern Mexico, the temporary return of religious missions at the end of the nineteenth century contributed to a relative decrease in violence, and several local governments created tentative development programs for indigenous peoples. And in Brazil, after the fall of the Empire, the rulers of the "Old Republic" (1890–1930) actually founded a specialized *indigenista* agency in 1910: the *Servicio de Protección a los Indios* (Service for the Protection of the Indians) (SPI), which lasted until 1966. Thanks to the prestige of its founder, Cândido Rondon, the SPI was supported by innovative legislation that forbade the use of violence against Indians and recognized their rights not only to full citizenship and education, but also to residence in their hamlets and territories, collective possession of the land, and maintenance of their customs (Melatti 1973, pp. 236–39; Maybury-Lewis 1992, pp. 104–7). The methods of the SPI were reminiscent of those used by the Jesuit missions. A station or *Puesto Indígena* was established in the vicinity of indigenous settlements by members of the Service, who proceeded to clear the forest and plant orchards, to which the neighboring people had free access. Useful gifts were left on paths in the area. Once friendly communication had been established, sometimes after months of indifference and/or open hostility, select tribesmen were invited to live near the station and organize their own agricultural settlements (Ribeiro 1971, pp. 95–104; see Maybury Lewis 1988). The SPI was in many ways incredibly effective: It pacified, settled, and protected a significant number of groups, all in a period when rubber collectors, cattle ranchers, and agricultural settlers still felt themselves entitled to kill "savage Indians." But its resources were always inadequate—only a small part of the indigenous habitat could be covered—and it lacked the means to protect pacified people from subsequent land invasion and forced labor recruitment or against the devastating epidemics introduced by newcomers. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Amazonian jungle became open territory for fortune hunters, as well as for Catholic and Protestant Missions, acting outside state control (Melatti 1973, pp. 239–40). Even though many religious groups, in concert with the SPI, attenuated the negative effects of outside forces, Darcy Ribeiro (1971, pp. 65–67), a leading anthropologist who spent many years with the SPI, reckoned that the number of indigenous groups or tribes decreased from 230 in 1900 to 143 in 1957 (see also Davis 1977).

SPI: Service for the Protection of the Indians

THE RISE OF POPULIST INDIGENISMO AND THE CONGRESS OF PÁTZCUARO

The strategy of the SPI did, nevertheless, provide some inspiration for the development of what might be called populist *indigenismo*. The first populist regime in Latin America emerged in Mexico, as a consequence of the social revolution that broke out in 1910. After 1920, the language and agenda of populism characterized many parties and governments in the region, in the context of the "oligarchic" state in crisis, aggravated by the worldwide economic crisis of 1929 (see Carmagnani 1984; Córdoba 1973; Hennessy 1969; di Tella 1973; de la Peña 1994, pp. 405–7). Populist discourse emphasized the alliance

between a nationalist political leadership and the grassroots movement. Included in this alliance were other "progressive classes" (the modern industrial bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy) who joined in the struggle to displace both the "regressive classes" (the traditional landed oligarchy, the moneylenders) and the imperialist forces in order to usher in a new era of modernity and social justice. In Mexico, the 1917 Constitution instituted agrarian reform—the return of land to dispossessed agrarian communities and the distribution of large landholdings to landless peasants—and the recognition of rights for salaried workers as key elements in the populist pact. The indigenous peoples, however, were conceived of as being not simply an integral part of the dispossessed masses, but also as bearers of a valuable culture that should enrich the national patrimony. A positive valuation of the indigenous world had been previously articulated in statements by enlightened, anti-Spanish *criollos* at the time of independence. Similarly, Porfirio Díaz had used Aztec emblems as symbols of his regime. But the reference had been to the "glorious" pre-Columbian period (see Villoro 1950, Brading 1985b, Ochiai 2002). In contrast, anthropologists of the Mexican Revolution were interested in the contemporary Indian as a source of national identity. Led by Manuel Gamio, their intellectual tool was the Boasian concept of culture: a coherent ensemble of ideas, values, norms, symbols, and practices, which in principle deserved respect because it represented the basic equipment of a collectivity for human survival and progress in a given habitat. In his writings, Gamio defended the virtues of contemporary indigenous cultures—artistic abilities, agricultural wisdom, communal solidarity, hospitality, physical courage, and endurance—as well as the validity of their claims, put forward by Emiliano Zapata's program for the devolution of land to the communities.

Gamio had been a student of Boas at Columbia University and his assistant at the International School of American Archeology and Ethnology in Mexico City. However, he had important differences with his mentor in that he was also influenced by positivist and nationalist ideas through Molina Enríquez, his teacher at the National Museum of Mexico (Brading 1988, de la Peña 1995). In his first book, *Forjando Patria* (1916), Gamio laid out his ambitious project of "forging the fatherland" by "incorporating" the indigenous peoples into the modern national matrix, while at the same time introducing their virtues into the wealth of national culture. But this task required careful, state-sponsored research, to distinguish "positive" from "negative" aspects in vernacular cultures and to find the best strategies for their gradual transformation. In 1918 Gamio was appointed Director of Anthropology, a position tailored specifically for him, in the federal Ministry of Agriculture, He used this position as a platform from which to launch a multidisciplinary program of regional research in the Teotihuacan Valley, the area surrounding the most important archeological site in the country. Gamio, a professional archeologist, conducted the excavation and restoration of the emblematic pyramids as well as an ethnographic survey, and designed the main lines and methods of research for a multidisciplinary team of historians, geographers, lawyers, linguists, educators, and even a painter and a cinematographer. The local school became the center for intensive courses in Spanish and for workshops on ceramics, carpentry, stone carving, and other crafts, as well as providing civic instruction for children and adults. There was also a communal field to be used for agricultural experiments. The collective results were published in *La Población del Valle de Teotihuacán* (1922), which aroused great interest in government circles and became a model for applied anthropology. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education had established a Department of Indigenous Education and Culture, which also set up a new type of school in the villages, called *Casas del Pueblo* (Houses of the People). Teachers were expected to organize workshops for adults and children, promote communal cooperation, and develop a

new pedagogy where local knowledge would be the starting point. Concomitantly, the Ministry launched the *Misiones Culturales*, which organized mobile volunteer brigades of urban intellectuals, artists, and university students to teach in the *Casas del Pueblo* (Corona Morfín 1963). Another innovation was the opening in 1928 of a House for Indigenous Students in Mexico City, where young men received room and board while engaged in higher education (Loyo 1996).

José Vasconcelos, the founder of the Ministry of Education in 1921, coined the term "the cosmic race" to refer to the *mestizos*. But for him, as for Gamio, *mestizaje* now had a fundamentally cultural and social content (see Vasconcelos 1960). Their ideas found echoes in other Latin American essayists who undertook their own critique of liberalism. In Peru, Dora Mayer wrote extensively in denunciation of the endless abuses of landowners and authorities, and the absence of effective labor legislation; she was one of the founders of the *Asociación Pro-Indígena*, which forced the Congress to debate indigenous issues (Marzal 1993, pp. 423–25). The 1920 Peruvian Constitution—promoted by President Leguía (1919–1930), who sought the support of the highland communities, while simultaneously courting the emergent industrial bourgeoisie and opening the doors to foreign capital—recognized the legitimacy and inalienability of communal property and the obligation of the state to foster the development of indigenous communities in accordance with their particular needs. This was a radical step, and it allowed for the recovery of village holdings expropriated by previous legislation, as in Mexico. Leguía also abolished forced labor and created a Bureau of Indigenous Affairs and a Council of the Indigenous Race, although the actions of these institutions were blocked when they became too independent (Davies 1970; Mallon 1983, pp. 234–43). But the most important contribution of Peruvian *indigenismo* came from the radical left, which advanced the thesis that indigenous communities carried the seeds of socialist transformation. This thesis was upheld with particular zeal by José Carlos Mariátegui, the founder of the Communist Party of Peru, and by Hildebrando Castro Pozo, a lawyer with socialist leanings. Mariátegui's *Seven Interpretative Essays of Peruvian Reality* (originally published in 1928) coincides with Molina Enríquez's denunciation of the "feudal" *hacienda* as the major obstacle in the development of a modern, fair economy, and with his definition of "the Indian question" as "the land question"; but he sees the solution not in converting the Indians into *mestizos*, but rather in reinforcing and modernizing their communal organizations that, thanks to ideological education, would become socialist cooperatives (Mariátegui 1980). Castro Pozo began his career working for the Ministry of Agriculture. His direct experience of rural realities allowed him to write ethnographic essays on indigenous culture and to become a consultant for the 1920 Constitution, and then head of the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs (until he was exiled in 1923). His major work, issued in 1933, is entitled *From the Ayllu to Socialist Cooperativism* (*ayllu* being the Quechua name for indigenous community). Again, his point of departure is the great value of the communal ethos, the basis on which independent cooperatives of production could be developed, in association with credit and marketing cooperatives and a program of agricultural schools. To this end, he developed a detailed methodology (Marzal 1993, pp. 25–32). In 1929, the Ministry of Public Instruction created a special Direction for Indigenous Education, which established schools in the highlands. In 1933, a new constitution confirmed the 1920 provisions for indigenous communities, but also allowed for the partition of *haciendas* if required by the common good. And in 1939, a Program of Cultural Brigades, inspired by the Mexican Cultural Missions, began operation across the country (Favre 1988, pp. 120–21).

In spite of legislative and educational improvements, Peruvian *indigenismo* moved

DAAI: *Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas*

slowly, in the context of successive governments dominated by the oligarchy. The main opposition force to emerge during this period, the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Antiimperialista Party (founded in 1924), with a distinct populist orientation, was in favor of *mestizaje* but cared little about agrarian reform or indigenous culture—and was soon proscribed. In Mexico, however, *indigenista* policies had become a significant part of the state apparatus. Moisés Sáenz, another alumnus of Columbia University, had been influenced by Boas and Dewey, and as Vice-Minister of Education committed himself to the reform of rural schools. Aware of the very limited efficacy of *mestizo* or white teachers, who did not understand the indigenous languages, he promoted applied research for bilingual education, with the assistance of the Summer Linguistic Institute, a U.S. religious institution that translated the Bible into indigenous languages and had also developed innovative methods of literacy instruction. Like Gamio, Sáenz organized a multidisciplinary team and conducted regional research in Michoacán, where he encountered the hostility of political bosses who had been using the agrarian reform program for their own benefit (Sáenz 1936). He therefore insisted on the need to invigorate communal political structures against manipulation by the new *caciques* (see Friedrich 1986). In his view, *indigenismo* should rely not on "incorporation" but rather on "integration" policies. The implication was that without active participation from the grassroots, the "forging of the nation" would become an authoritarian imposition (Sáenz 1939). He therefore designed a new institution, the Autonomous Department for Indigenous Affairs (DAAI: *Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas*), created by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1935, to bring together anthropologists, linguists, and educators charged with carrying out a type of regional applied research that would take into account communal initiatives and actors. The DAAI teams also organized Regional Indigenous Congresses where ethnic representatives presented economic, social, and cultural demands, as well as an Assembly of Philologists and Linguists, which promoted a Council of Indigenous Languages. One example of the DAAI orientation and activities was the Tarascan Project, which developed a method of literacy instruction in the vernacular and designed an Academy of Tarascan Language and Culture with the participation of indigenous scholars (Heath 1972, pp. 117–19; Aguirre Beltrán 1973, pp. 166–71). Another salient example was the research on the Yaquis. They were an old frontier group who maintained a strong social organization, originating from the Jesuit missional redoubts, and an oppositional identity, which allowed them to make a significant contribution to the revolution against Díaz's dictatorship. Under the auspices of the DAAI, anthropologist Alfonso Fabila collected extensive historical and ethnographic information, taking into account his informants' perspectives, and presented a detailed description of the efficient functioning of the Yaqui system of government in support of their demand for formal recognition by the Mexican state (Fabila 1940). Most DAAI members were leftist sympathizers or members of the Communist Party; their contribution to a new discussion on the nature of indigenous groups in Mexico was inspired by the Soviet model of autonomous "nationalities." In this model, nationalities were defined as human collectivities with a common territory, history, language, culture, and psychology, and therefore entitled to self-government.

Sáenz visited several Latin American countries, often as an official consultant. He wrote reports on the indigenous question in Guatemala, Peru, and Ecuador (see Aguirre Beltrán 1970). Convinced that *indigenismo* should become a well-structured continental movement and a key form of international cooperation, he was one of the main organizers of the 1940 First Interamerican Indigenist Congress, hosted by the DAAI in the city of Pátzcuaro— a symbolic site, founded by Vasco de Quiroga, the sixteenth-century bishop who

applied Thomas More's utopian ideas to indigenous communities. Over 200 delegates from 19 countries attended the Congress (countries not attending were Canada, the Guyanas, Haiti, and Paraguay), including official government representatives, academics, and 47 members of indigenous groups from the United States, Mexico, and Panama. In his inaugural address, President Cárdenas praised the role of scientific research in the development of social policies and declared that the aim of his government was "to Mexicanize the indigenous" and not "to indianize Mexico" (Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano 1940, pp. 7–12). Sessions were divided into four sections: economics, biology, education, and law. In the general conclusions most delegates agreed on (*a*) the adoption of the terms *indígena* and *indigenismo* rather than *indio* and *indianismo*; (*b*) the principle of "total respect" for "the indigenous dignity and personality" without prejudice to their citizen rights or the unity of the nation; (*c*) the creation of an *indigenista* government agency in each country, with a director of ministerial rank; (*d*) the creation of an Interamerican Indigenist Institute jointly supported by all governments; (*e*) a policy of gradual integration—neither the model of "incorporation" nor the U.S. model of reservations. In the economics section, discussion centered on the destructive effects of the *latifundios* and the virtues of communal nature of the indigenous economy (Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano 1940, pp. 35–48). In consequence, the resolutions of the Congress included an urgent call to implement agrarian reform programs in all countries and to foster cooperatives. The biology section discussed the extreme vulnerability of indigenous areas to epidemics and chronic illnesses, and recommended biomedical research and sanitary campaigns as well as recourse to traditional medical practices if they proved to be effective (Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano 1940, pp. 40–43). The discussion on education was perhaps the most radical, since most participants defended not only the teaching of literacy in the vernacular, but also called for the revitalization of indigenous languages and stressed the utility of indigenous languages for expressing and adapting scientific and philosophical concepts (Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano 1940, pp. 28–34). These positions, in somewhat moderate terms, were included in the Congress' resolutions. As for the legal section, its results were much more timid: Full citizenship for indigenous individuals was reiterated, but any consideration of communal government or customary rights was rejected (Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano 1940, pp. 44–48).

The Congress was a conceptual watershed: the Liberal dismissal of "the Indian question" was abandoned; government representatives accepted the value of indigenous cultures, languages, and collective organizations; the indigenous capacity for full citizenship was recognized; land devolution and distribution was put on the public agenda together with special programs of economic and social development. However, although the delegates rejected the paternalistic notion of "incorporation," the distinction between the "positive" and the "negative" elements (defined as such not by the indigenous peoples but by the *indigenista* officers) remained, for instance, in relation to medical practices and legal and political institutions. In practical terms, a major achievement was the founding of the Interamerican Indigenist Institute (with Sáenz as its first Director, but he died suddenly and was replaced by Gamio), which started publication of *América Indígena*, a respected academic journal, and a monograph series. Yet after the excitement of the Congress, populist *indigenismo* lost its initial impetus, which had occurred in the context of a generalized crisis of "the oligarchic state" in Latin America (Carmagnani 1984). Even in Mexico, the DAAI experienced a terminal illness when President Ávila Camacho followed Cárdenas. In the context of Mexico's entry into World War II, *indigenistas* were often accused of being dangerous agitators against national unity.

When a new institution, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), was created in 1948, the idea of cultural unity as a prerequisite for national formation returned as one of its platforms.

INI: Instituto Nacional Indigenista

ACCULTURATION POLICIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF INDIGENOUS MOVEMENTS

At the time of the foundation of the INI, there was already a wealth of anthropological research on the indigenous societies of Latin America, undertaken by the *indigenistas*, by universities in the region, and by academic institutions in the United States and Europe (of which the Smithsonian was perhaps the most important, but the Universities of Chicago, Columbia, Yale, Paris, among others, were also significant). A more careful consideration of the definition of the *indígena* within the national society was thus possible (see Melatti 1973, pp. 35–42). Definitions based on race were seen as imprecise (is there really an "Indian race"?) and carried a negative connotation. Culture (an index favored by Gamio) had the drawback of the very real difficulty after centuries of contact in distinguishing "Indian traits" from "European traits," even with the Indians on the old frontiers (see Foster 1960). In any case, culture could no longer be regarded as a homeostatic entity. The linguistic criterion was more precise and reliable, but there were groups who, having lost the old language, maintained their communal institutions and assumed an indigenous ethnic identity. In order to overcome these problems, the Second Inter-American Indigenist Congress, which met in Cuzco, Peru in 1949, chose a definition based on "social conscience," i.e., on self-identification and identification by others as members of an ethnic indigenous group with a distinct history and culture. Most countries nowadays use the index of language in their census questionnaires, but many also include questions on self-identification. In Chile, an additional index is the surname.

However, Alfonso Caso, the founding director of the Mexican INI, and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, its leading theorist, sought to put this definition in the context of a process of change. Caso, trained both as a lawyer and an archeologist, equated self-identification with membership in a community recognized as indigenous. (The assumption was that the local community, not a larger collectivity, was the relevant unit). This added a necessary social dimension to the analysis, since the subject of transformation by *indigenismo* was not the isolated individual but the community. The concepts expressing this transformation were "acculturation" and "community development" (Caso 1971). Acculturation, a term already widely used by anthropologists in the United States (e.g., Linton 1940, Tax 1952, Adams 1957), implied the interaction between two or more groups bearing different cultures, which resulted in their reciprocal influence and modification. The type of acculturation envisaged for the indigenous community was one that would generate modernization and development, i.e., a new type of organization conducive to economic growth and generalized welfare, as well as a *mestizo* culture, by combining endogenous and exogenous forces. In turn, Aguirre Beltrán, a physician also trained in anthropology by Herskovits at Northwestern University, added a further consideration of differential power and a regional dimension to this analysis. He argued that the location of the indigenous communities was not random; they had survived in "regions of refuge" (a term taken from ecology), where the impact of the modernizing state had not yet been felt. These regions were not culturally homogeneous, but "intercultural," i.e., the indigenous culture could be understood only in terms of its relation with a dominant *mestizo* (or *ladino*) culture. Typically, the dominant sector lived in an urban center that exerted economic, political, and cultural domination over the *indígenas* living in rural communities. Economic domination was related to land monopoly and the persistence of precapitalist

relations of production; political domination, to coercion and the control of government institutions; cultural domination, to exclusion of the communities from schooling, health and communication services, strategic knowledge, and national identity. In consequence, interaction between the dominant and the subordinate sectors resulted not in *mestizaje* but in a distorted type of acculturation that reinforced differential power. "To be Indian" meant to be stationed in a subordinate position, as in the colonial caste system. Therefore, *indigenista* actions should be directed toward breaking up the asymmetrical intercultural system (Aguirre Beltrán 1958, 1975).

On the basis of this model, the INI designed a precise plan of action. It began with the creation of a Coordinating Center in the urban nucleus of the intercultural region, with a permanent program of regional research and diagnosis. With the backing of diverse government agencies, the Center would promote land distribution. It would make agricultural extension, marketing facilities, literacy programs, health campaigns and clinics, and schooling available to the communities. Prevention of mistreatment of *indigenas* would require intervention in the administration of justice. And the INI would encourage indigenous organization and participation in municipal politics. The first Center was created, in 1952, in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, by Aguirre Beltrán himself. In 1970, there were 12 Centers where multidisciplinary teams, usually under the direction of professional anthropologists, managed cooperatives, clinics, and boarding schools.

The model was extended to other countries through the Inter-American Indigenist Institute, which was officially linked to the Organization of American States in 1953, in the context of an increasing U.S. influence in Latin America (see Adams et al. 1960). In Ecuador, for instance, the Instituto Indigenista Ecuatoriano (INE) was founded in 1943 under the directorship of Pío Jaramillo, a social historian who had attended the Pátzcuaro Congress (Moreno Yáñez 1992, pp. 38–41). The INE promoted research, published a journal (*Atahualpa*), and contributed to the formation of a cadre of scholars whose work could profit from ideas coming out of the Mexican INI (see Rubio Orbe 1956, Burgos 1970, Villavicencio 1973); however, its direct participation in public programs was limited to government consulting. In 1945, the new Ecuadorian Constitution decreed as a state obligation the education of the indigenous population by means of bilingual methods of instruction. After 1953, a policy of community development was implemented in Ecuador by the Andean Mission (funded by the United Nations), with the collaboration of the Summer Linguistics Institute and the U.S. Peace Corps (A. Ibarra 1992, pp. 17–25). Similarly, the Peruvian delegates to Pátzcuaro founded the Instituto Indigenista Peruano (IIP) in 1946, which started some community development programs and in 1951 signed an agreement with the University of Cornell by which the latter became the administrator of a large *hacienda*,Vicos, with a resident population of over 2000 Quechua-speaking natives. Vicos was, on the one hand, a project pioneering modern agricultural techniques and on the other, a laboratory for anthropological research on social change. Officially, it was rated a huge success in that the tenants were able to buy the *hacienda* from its owner (a government agency) in 1962 (see Holmberg 1960; Marzal 1993, pp. 467–69). The Andean Mission was also established in Peru in 1953; and in 1959, the IIP launched the National Plan for the Integration of the Aboriginal Population, which included intervention by international agencies and the U.S. Peace Corps in the task of indigenous "acculturation" (Barre 1983, pp. 51–52). In Colombia, where the old Indian *resguardos* (communal property) had been legally recognized since 1890, the Institute of Ethnology began research in the early 1940s, but an indigenist agency, the Division of Indigenous Affairs, was created as late as 1960. It was intended to work in close relationship with

INE: Instituto Indigenista Ecuatoriano

IIP: Instituto Indigenista Peruano

ILO: International Labor Organization

MNR: Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario

IIN: Instituto Indigenista Nacional

the Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute, which faced strong resistance and political opposition from the landowners (Fals Borda 1975; Barre 1983, p. 76). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Andean Mission was present in the countries throughout the region, promoting productive cooperatives and policies of resettlement and education. In 1957, the U.N. International Labor Organization (ILO), in its Convention 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, followed the same principles of the Pátzcuaro Congress (Favre 1996, pp. 90–91).

The effectiveness of *indigenismo* was dependent on its linkages to agrarian policies, as Mariátegui had foreseen. The relative success of the agrarian reform programs in Mexico (1920–1940), Bolivia (1952–1970), Ecuador (1964–1976), Colombia (1966–1976), Peru (1968–1975), and Venezuela (1970) allowed for some improvement in the lot of indigenous peoples, but not even in Mexico were the *indigenista* agencies directly involved in the operation of those programs (see de la Peña 1994). The Venezuelan, Ecuadorian, and Colombian programs were rather moderate—the land marked for redistribution was mainly unused or lying fallow—and had the blessing of the United States (through the Alliance for Progress), whereas the Bolivian and the Peruvian models were directed toward the expropriation of *haciendas*. In Bolivia, an official Instituto Indigenista Boliviano had been created in 1941, but it was superseded by the 1945 National Indigenous Congress, convoked by the populist President Villarroel, and then by the 1952 revolution. The Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR), in power from 1952 to 1964, decreed the effective distribution of large landholdings among indigenous and *mestizo* landless peasants, as well as the recognition of communal property. The Third Inter-American Indigenist Congress took place in Bolivia in 1954 and it was devoted to the indigenous agrarian question; however, the main interest for the MNR was the creation of a national, culturally homogeneous peasantry (Patch 1960; Barre 1983, pp. 40–42). There was a similar goal in the Peruvian Agrarian Reform, launched in 1969 by the populist military government of Velasco Alvarado, which decreed that Indigenous Communities should be renamed Peasant Communities (and therefore the Office for the Integration of the Aboriginal Population ceased to exist). *Haciendas* were not partitioned but were converted into cooperatives, which, in the highlands, also absorbed community land (see McClintock 1981).

There were two countries with significant indigenous populations where agrarian reforms were aborted: Guatemala and Brazil. In Guatemala, the Ubico dictatorship had refused to comply with the Pátzcuaro resolutions, since "there was no Indian problem," but in 1944 Arévalo's populist revolution founded the Instituto Indigenista Nacional (IIN). From 1949 to 1954, under the directorship of anthropologist Joaquín Noval, the IIN developed a vast plan that included field research, publication of indigenous alphabets, translation of official documents into indigenous languages, building of schools and clinics, and promotion of traditional crafts as well as the design of programs of bilingual education, rural credit, and employment (Adams 2000). In 1952, President Arbenz, Arévalo's successor, began a program of agrarian reform directed at partitioning large landholdings, and the formation and empowerment of rural unions and agrarian village committees. At the same time, partisan political activism was spreading, and the opportunities for new types of leadership to emerge were creating tensions and internal rivalries in the communities (Murphy 1970, Handy 1990). In contrast to Bolivia, where the revolutionary government received technical assistance and loans from the U.S. government, in Guatemala agrarian activism conflicted with the interests of American companies. In 1954, a U.S.–backed military coup brought land distribution and indigenist activities to a violent end. The IIN then became a part of the Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, an academic

institution. In Brazil, Goulart's reformist government (1961–1964) seemed to be in sympathy with the idea of thorough-going agrarian reorganization, as it was pushed by the Peasant Leagues in the Northeast, but again a military coup intervened. However, indigenous land continued to be under formal protection by the same law that had created the SPI in 1910. In 1967, a new agency, the National Foundation for the Indian (FUNAI), took the place of the SPI, and in 1973, the military government promulgated the Indian Statute, which put the tribes under the direct tutelage of the state and charged the FUNAI with the task of delimiting and registering indigenous territories, but without recognizing the collective property of indigenous peoples. On the contrary, indigenous persons could acquire private holdings, as could colonizers, "for reasons of national security" (see B.G. Ribeiro 1987, pp. 162–71). In practice, under the military government (1964–1982), the FUNAI was no more effective than its predecessor had been in preventing indigenous displacement and killings, and was even instrumental in allowing increasing penetration by agribusinesses into the tropical forests (Maybury-Lewis 1988, pp. 267–88; Maybury Lewis 1992; Sierra 1995).

After 1970, *indigenismo* became the target of a number of attacks. From the political left, its policies were accused of playing into the hands imperialist agencies as well as causing divisions and confusion among different segments of the working class—not to mention being highly incompetent, inasmuch as indigenous groups continued to be the poorest of the poor. In Brazil, two anthropologists who had worked for the SPI, Darcy Ribeiro (1970) and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1964), in a thorough critique of the concept of acculturation, showed that the real alternatives for indigenous cultures, given the violent impact of the dominant culture, were disappearance or resistance, both active and passive. They argued that cultural change was often a strategy for preserving indigenous identity—and it was therefore a form of resistance (see Adams 1996). In Mexico, radical anthropologists denounced the INI for its complicity with the authoritarian ruling party, its persisting paternalism, and its role in reproducing a situation of "internal colonialism" (Bonfil et al. 1970). The First Barbados Conference, convened by the World Council of Churches in 1970 and attended by anthropologists and indigenous leaders, used the term "ethnocide" to describe the assimilative programs implemented by *indigenista* agencies (Colombres 1975). However, paradoxically, the most incisive critics came from a category of people who were themselves the result of acculturation policies: the new indigenous intellectuals. An important strategy of the Mexican *indigenista* programs as well as similar programs in Latin America had been the recruitment of young Indians into higher education to train them to become cultural brokers and eventually to constitute a new type of leadership in their own communities. Similarly, the Church had been preparing young people as catechists and selected the most promising to train as lay deacons. In Mexico, the INI hired these people as bilingual teachers and cultural promoters, and some who completed university programs became academics, civil servants, or independent professionals (Gutiérrez 1999). Many also became involved in radical student politics or participated in peasant and migrant movements. In the 1970s and 1980s many emerged as leaders or ideologists of organizations and social movements of a new, ethnic type. As Xavier Albó (1991) has pointed out, Indians, who rarely participated in politics except in the role as migrants, peasants, rural laborers, casual urban workers, etc., suddenly became political actors in their own right. Many explanations have been advanced for this phenomenon: the erosion of class identities in the context of transnational capitalism, the slowness of agrarian reform, the ineffectiveness of social policies in general and *indigenismo* in particular in ending racist exclusion, and the fact that a sizable number of indigenous people were no longer

FUNAI: National Foundation for the Indian

peasants or manual workers, among others (Bonfil 1981, Albó 1991). The influence of international declarations on human rights, ecological protection, decolonization, and cultural entitlements was also important.

What is obvious is that ethnic movements are now demanding new spaces for a dignified, differentiated participation as citizens in their national societies. In the 1974 Indigenous Congress of San Cristóbal de las Casas, indigenous spokesmen protested against the implicit racist assumption of the superiority of Western religion, medicine, or law over "non-Western culture." The 1973 Tiwanaku Manifest, to which several Bolivian and Peruvian organizations subscribed, rejected the condition of being "foreigners on their own land" to which they were condemned by policies of assimilation (LeBot 1988). The Bolivian Katarista movement (named after Tupac Katari, a rebel against Spanish colonialism), founded in La Paz in the 1970s by Aymara students and workers, combined militancy in a radical labor union with the recovery of ethnic identity, and pioneered the demand for a multicultural state (LeBot 1988, Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). In Ecuador, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador represented indigenous groups throughout the country in their struggle for land, fair economic policies, cultural recognition, and political representation; and their collective power has been demonstrated in several strikes and road blockages that brought the country to a standstill (Zamosc 1994, Araki 2002). One should also mention the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca in Colombia, which for many decades defended their land, culture, language, and forms of government (Gros 1988); and the organizations of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, with their successful project for multiethnic autonomous regions (Barre 1989). In Mexico, in addition to the controversial Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional in Chiapas, there are a number of strong organizations such as the Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata and the Organización Nación Purhépecha in Michoacán; the Coalición Obrero Estudiantil del Istmo—a major political force in Oaxaca; the Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas in Guerrero, which stopped construction of a dam that would have flooded 35 communities–and many local groups striving to recover specific aspects of their traditional culture and forms of self-government (de la Peña 2002). In all these examples, "indigenous peoples" appear as dynamic realities: They are no longer confined to regions of refuge; they have multiple and varied demands and are a presence on the national as well as the international scene. Their new leaders should not be idealized (for instance, a part of the indigenous elite that began to emerge in Guatemala during the 1950s supported the repressive military government in the 1970s and 1980s; see Arias 1990). The point is, however, that by the end of the twentieth century the logic of *indigenismo* had been subverted: The state can no longer "name" the indigenous subjects or define their destiny; on the contrary, indigenous peoples are defining their own aspirations and forging a new type of nation where they would not be forced to choose between oppressive marginality and assimilation.

MULTICULTURAL POLITICS: A NEOLIBERAL INDIGENISMO?

As in any hegemonic discourse, populist *indigenismo* gave rise to a "language of contention" (Roseberry 1994): Categories such as acculturation, *mestizaje*, community development, and region of refuge became common currency for its critics and opponents alike. This language began to change after 1970. New categories—human rights, ethnodevelopment, multiculturalism, cultural rights, participatory research, autonomy—originating in documents issued by international institutions, are now being articulated in official statements in the context of a new hegemonic negotiation (Stavenhagen 2000). The recent transformations of Mexican *indigenismo* may be illustrative of a more general

process. In the 1970s, the Mexican government responded to protests against the INI by increasing its budget, creating many new coordinating centers, and co-opting leaders. Accusations of paternalism were met by fashioning new corporatist "Indian" associations, controlled and funded by the ruling party. But these associations proved incapable of rallying extensive support or quieting discontent. The existing national structure of political mediation was crumbling under the weight of a major economic crisis. Indigenous grievances were not isolated. The 1970s witnessed a series of independent social movements both in the countryside and in the cities, followed by widespread protests against scarcity and political authoritarianism in the 1980s and 1990s. After 1982, the downturn in international oil prices reduced the heavily indebted government to virtual bankruptcy. As a result, public expenditure on social programs had to be cut, economic protectionism came to an end, and the corporatist system of control became too expensive to maintain. Like other federal institutions, the INI modified its structure by transferring functions to NGOs as well as to indigenous organizations. The lack of viability of the old system of political control allowed for an incipient democratization, and as groups within the society at large have taken on greater visibility, indigenous movements have emerged to claim their right to participate.

Mutatis mutandis, other countries in Latin America have followed a similar course: debt, crisis, economic adjustment, democratization. In the context of an open, global economy, states have less space for maneuver and have become dependent on powerful international financial agencies, which determine their policies. The meaning of the term "social policies" has changed drastically. Where once intertwined with development policies and implying intervention by an authoritarian state that mobilized people and shaped the economy, social policies came to be associated with a measure of compensation to segments of the population lacking the capacity to compete in the marketplace. With such policies, the state claims relief from all other responsibilities for the economic viability of these disadvantaged groups; they have to become self-reliant through "ethnodevelopment" (i.e., muddling through with their own cultural resources) (see Favre 1996, pp. 119–24). However, contemporary indigenous movements are much more than the result of neoliberal manipulation. Growing out of the struggle for land rights, expanding in the fight against racism and violation of their civil rights, they soon discovered that defense of their civil rights implied the rejection of a definition of indigenous identity as inferior or anomalous. They therefore demanded the recognition of indigenous culture, social organization, and forms of government as valid and valuable (Albó 1991). The overwhelming majority of indigenous movements are not claiming political independence or artificial isolation but are demanding an inclusive definition of the nation where the right to cultural diversity is an essential aspect of citizenship. When there is genuine, strong political indigenous representation, social policies would not be formulated on the basis of one or other version of *indigenismo*, but instead by democratic negotiation.

The new language of contention is also part of the globalization process. The draft of the Declaration of Indigenous Rights, produced by the WGIP in 1989, was accepted by the U.N. for preliminary discussion in 1993. Convention 169, a new ILO document that replaced Convention 107 and that adopts a firm position in favor of cultural diversity and indigenous empowerment, was approved in 1989 and subsequently ratified by several Latin American governments. These documents, along with statements from other multilateral organizations, have influenced change in several national constitutions that now recognize the multicultural nature of their respective countries, as well as the rights of indigenous peoples to cultural distinctiveness, sustainable development, political representation, and limited self-government

(Assies et al. 1999, Van Cott 2000, Sieder 2002). For instance, indigenous *resguardos* in Colombia have been confirmed as rightful owners of large territories and their bodies of authority are entitled to the same benefits as any local government; in addition, two seats in the senate are reserved for Indian representatives. Similarly, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, as well as Mexico, modified their constitutions to define their nations as multicultural and/or pluriethnic and to accept the legitimacy of indigenous jurisdiction and customary law. Nicaragua was a pioneer in the official creation of pluriethnic autonomous regions; but later Mexico also adopted the term autonomy to characterize the nature of local indigenous governments. In turn, both Brazil and Chile recognized the legal existence of indigenous communities and their lands. Even if most legislative changes are still too general, they imply a radical rupture with the previous situation of constitutional void.

Although indigenous peoples are being badly hit by international economic forces, with many workers often forced to move away from their communities in search of jobs, political recognition is the vital prerequisite for them if they are to avoid a future in which all they can expect is to wait for handouts from a reluctant state. That is why "indigenous people" cannot simply be equated with other terms redolent of colonialism (such as native or primitive) and essentialism, as some anthropologists advocate—e.g., Adam Kuper, in the polemical article cited above. The issue is not whether the definition of the term could be improved (as it certainly could be), but rather whether it would provide a rightful political personality to human groups who have been previously excluded and subordinated. In this sense, the appropriation of the concept by grassroots movements can become a weapon in their quest for social justice and equitable national belonging in the years to come.

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