

The Indigenous Movement in the Americas: Reflections on Nationalism and Ethnicity

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RESUMEN

La etnicidad ha contribuido a la deconstrucción del viejo discurso asimilacionista del estado-nación en las Américas. Junto al concepto de género, ambas nociones ponen en duda al estado-nación con su única cara basada en las políticas del exclusión. La unidad indígena continental está basada en el hecho que las "First Nations" o pueblos originarios poseen una historia común de colonialismo y de imposición por el estado-nación de nacionalismos basados en deberes ante que en derechos. En la medida en que el estado-nación latinoamericano se transforma en un aparato funcional del capital dentro del nuevo orden mundial -- antes que en sistema verdaderamente regulador -- la etnicidad puede contribuir a edificar espacios dentro de los territorios en los que las políticas igualitarias fomenten la autonomía, la dignidad, la ciudadanía completa, la participación y la autodeterminación.

Introduction

Both the concepts of nationalism and ethnicity, when applied to the recent experiences of Native Peoples in the Americas, problematize unsolved views regarding racial history and racialization. As nationalisms in the Americas collapse due to the on-going process of globalization we witness the resurgence of ethnicity.

Ethnicity, closely linked to a process of identity retrieval experienced by Native Peoples within nation-states, tends to act as a catalyst against anonymity in the global village. Ethnic demands search local spaces to implement self-determination where possible, or at least create spaces of autonomy so that surviving Indigenous Peoples may retain collective human rights claims to their territories, otherwise threatened by market forces. Since legalistic maneuvering did not help guarantee Indigenous territories, they have become "pieces of land." It seems that forced assimilation or simply plain denial of their presence maligned the integrity of such Peoples which articulates itself now through the concept of ethnicity.

Our main purpose in this paper is to understand precisely how ethnicity is related to Indigenous Peoples both in the North as well as the South. The discussion backdrop for this comparison is the way in which modern

anthropology constructed an Indigenous image to feed the West, but also how nationalism (especially the Latin American variant) appended Indigenous roots to assimilative discourses, making them inanimate objects belonging to archeology. Roots were allowed, but not the resilient survivors from the depths of history--survivors nation-states hoped to forget. The article has two parts, a view of the situation in Latin America, and a view of the situation in North America. It is a first attempt at understanding the fate of Indigenous Peoples hemispherically.

As an intellectual accomplice to European colonialism, early modern anthropology based its primary scientific discourse on the textual narration of the continuous survival (in Latin America) or the irreversible vanishing (in the United States and Canada) of Indigenous Peoples as cultural artifacts. Native "Americans" have been the staple in Western anthropology's academic diet, and anthropologists have lived on the cutting edge of the Indian image industry. The voices of living Indigenous Peoples, however, have not been heard by the Euro-American audiences watching this colonial drama, except when they have spoken in the militaristic language of "uprisings" and "revolts." Reasoned efforts at dialogue and negotiation have been either passively ignored or actively subverted by the

culture of dominance, although Indigenous Peoples have increasingly participated in international affairs during the twentieth century by campaigning for political recognition and self-determination.

The construction and consolidation of the modern nation-state, which began in the Americas near the end of the seventeenth century and continued until the expulsion of Spain from Cuba in 1898, functioned to encapsulate the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas within these dominant geopolitical entities. During this period of "liberation" (as it is known in nationalist histories throughout Latin America) or "independence" (in the United States), Indigenous Peoples waged wars of resistance against the inheritors of colonial politics. European colonists had provoked revolutionary wars to escape the tutelage of their imperial sponsors, yet each newly formed nation-state quickly demonstrated the incompatibility of political idealism and racial ideology by establishing colonial relations with "their" natives. As American nation-states consolidated power through pyramidal and exclusionary social structures, Indigenous Peoples found themselves occupying the lowest levels of these emerging, stratified political economies; they became disenfranchised, non-citizen residents of "liberated" countries that sought to destroy their existence as autonomous communities.

After a precipitous demographic drop at the beginning of the Columbian period, Indigenous Peoples in the Andean, Mesoamerican, and (to a lesser extent) Amazonian regions experienced a slow population recovery as they withdrew to the depths of their territories. Elsewhere, Indigenous Peoples have endured the assimilative institutions of the mission and of the reservation while surviving the exploitative labor relations of the plantation, the *hacienda*, the mining *mit'a*, and domestic servitude. They have been primary targets for demonstrably genocidal nation-state policies designed to destroy their existence as Indigenous Peoples by pushing them to the cultural and economic margins of their homelands. Argentina's "conquest of the desert" and the United States' "winning of the west" were colonial adventures separated by

geography, but not by political ideology. Indigenous Peoples have consistently experienced territorial dispossession under this neo-colonial world order, in which nation-states have demonstrated the incompatibility of economic liberalism and racial ideology by allowing "their" natives to sell, but not to buy, land.

Relations between modern nation-states and Indigenous Peoples continue to be mediated by structural discrimination. This is evident in concepts of citizenship and other legal principles that do not recognize collective rights or linguistic and cultural diversity. Territorial losses and ethnocidal policies under the domination of the nation-states prompted Indigenous Peoples to move their protests into the international arena by lobbying the League of Nations formed at the conclusion of the first world war. The Maori of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy presented their human rights complaint in 1920, a time when the concept of "human rights" was still practically unknown as an instrument of Western international law. Haudenosaunee leader Deskeheh "spent over two years attempting to persuade the international community through the League to recognize the national status of his people, but without success."¹

The concept of "nationality" is key to this paper, because North, Central and South American nation-states have consistently implemented nationalist agendas in denying the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Nation-states have been rationalized by the nationalistic discourses that articulate the Western myth of democratic equality, in which every individual is entitled to become a national member ("citizen"). Nationalism as official discourse thus imposes a political identity that supersedes (and allegedly eliminates) ethnic, linguistic and phenotypical difference. Nationalism celebrates the indigenous heritage as an early stage in the geopolitical genealogy of American nation-states, but only as a reality that must remain in the past, replaced by a more "civilized" project. The modern nation-state, therefore, must be

understood as a political metaphor for the Western ideology of progress.

The concept of "ethnicity" is also key to this paper, because ethnic particularity is becoming increasingly viable as a strategy for contesting the authority and legitimacy of the American nation-states. The nationalistic discourses predicated on cultural homogeneity have suffered credibility since the 1960s, and Indigenous Peoples have played a central role in contesting these political myths and metaphors. Despite the existence of various treaties, covenants, agreements and legal arrangements, however, the nation-states continue to impose unilateral political relations with "their" natives. Structural discrimination persists, as few "democracies" recognize the human rights of Indigenous Peoples as collectivities. Yet today researchers confirm that the Indigenous population is approximately the same that it was in 1492. In Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, Indigenous Peoples together constitute over 55 percent (42 million people) of the total national populations.²

Latin America

The experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America suggest a number of cases where ethnicity and nationalism seem to exist as "parallel histories," conceptions of identity that rarely intersect except by accident or in confrontation. The Latin American project remains unfinished insofar as it continues to be haunted by Oedipal anguish, with Latin American elites simultaneously dependent on and resentful of European cultural and economic institutions. Internally, the corpus of political and judicial discourses constitutes an ethnocracy responsible for flawed processes of citizenship-building, because Indigenous Peoples living on territories claimed by nation-states persist as clandestine political entities. They became part of these nation-states not by inclusion, but by exclusion.³

A very recent example of this phenomenon is the Mesoamerican Mayan region of Chiapas, which erupted in protest on January 1, 1994. The area is ethnically Maya, but the socio-economic problems are Central American, and mostly Guatemalan. Chiapas, although claimed by Mexico as part of the nation-state,

is "Mexican" only in a nominal sense and has remained in relative isolation, with neo-feudal landlords engaging in anachronistic practices such as "owning" local Tzeltal Indigenous Peoples as recently as the 1960s. Non-indigenous proprietor families, modern capitalists with a feudal ethos, operate beyond the control of the nation-state and dominate Mayan land and labor (through the quiet acquiescence of the Mexican ruling party, PRI). Mexican nationalism is thus used—and abused—in the service of economic profit. This silent ethnocide of the Maya transformed into the Zapatista "revolt," forcing a re-evaluation of the Mexican nation-state on the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement opened its northern border to free trade. With the implementation of NAFTA, the nation-state assumed the role of business manager, to be regulated by Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of the free market. The Maya of Chiapas have demanded a voice in this process, as it is their territory that will be "free traded."⁴

The internationalization of similar problems has reinforced a wider sense of Indigenous ethnicity that cannot be relegated to the fringes of imposed national boundaries or classist discourses. The leading voices of the Indigenous movement have become international in scope, distinguishing themselves from class- and popular-oriented social movements with clear, and often conflictive, ideological boundaries. The emergence of ethnic and gender analyses, the one-dimensionality of class analysis, and the nationalist/populist discourses that rallied millions of Latin Americans in the 1950s and 60s, together have promoted the current "politics of territorial autonomy and self-determination which contemplates neither separatism nor seizure of state power."⁵

This political trend has energized the reconstitution of the Mapuche of southern Chile and Argentina, who were split by the two nation-states in the 1810s and nearly exterminated in frontier "campaigns" on both sides of the inter-"national" border. The Guarani of the Gran Chaco have experienced an even more complex process of territorial nationalization, with their lands currently claimed by Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil,

Paraguay and Uruguay. In 1994, ten thousand Guarani were found living on cattle ranches in southern Bolivia where they are subjected to a debt-peonage system that constitutes virtual slavery. Guarani representatives and their allies in the international arena are continuing to press for the immediate abolition of these exploitative labor practices.⁶ The process of "becoming citizens" of Latin American nation-states has afforded few civil protections for the Mapuche or the Guarani, who have become the beneficiaries of laws that have always discriminated against them as Indigenous Peoples.

The vitality of ethnic identity is also forging transnational, transregional, inter-gender and inter-ethnic alliances among some groups of Indigenous Peoples living in both Mexico and the United States. The *International Frente Mixteco-Zapoteco* was organized by migrant rural workers in the U.S., who are reconstituting their Diasporic Indigenous community while maintaining a strong connection to their homeland in Oaxaca, Mexico. Their political demands, which are rooted in ethnic identity, have become transnational. They are addressing issues of racial discrimination and labor rights as Indigenous Peoples and on both sides of the Mexico/U.S. border.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon nation-states--Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and the Guyanas--are having similar experiences. Recent developments in global environmental policies have coincided with efforts by the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazonian Basin (COICA) to preserve rights to their territories. Environmental movements in Europe and North America have become an unexpected ally in reinforcing COICA's discourse of ethnic identity. Nationalistic discourses have failed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples, and now both Indigenous Peoples and these environmental advocates have played pivotal roles in rejecting the "transnationalization" of the environment, which is the "habitat" for at least seventy Indigenous communities. While the environmental movements suffer from a degree of naiveté, having relied heavily on the

colonial image of the nature-loving Indian image, their political involvement has served to strengthen the position of Indigenous Peoples in opposing rapacious "development" policies of the nation-states sponsored by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Development Bank, and multinational corporations such as Texaco.

Ethnic and environmental movements have formed alliances that disavow (nation-state) intermediaries, allowing Indigenous voices to speak up over the murmurs of bureaucrats who have never set foot on Indigenous territories while holding the power to decide their fate. This has been true in Ecuador, where lowland and highland Indigenous Peoples and other international delegates, traditionally separated by geographic and linguistic barriers, furthered the process of "continentalization" by drafting an historic document, the "Quito Declaration of 1991." Indigenous Peoples of the Americas proclaimed their hemispheric alliance by drawing a metaphor of unity from an ancient prophecy involving "the reunion of the Eagle and the Condor," symbols of the Indigenous Peoples of, respectively, North and South America. The 1991 meeting in Quito legitimated the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador (CONAIE) as the leading Indigenous voice in Latin America that is challenging the myth of a homogeneous nation-state by articulating the reality of ethnic identity. Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala and Mexico have found inspiration in this movement and have laid claim to their own ethnic identities, organizing long marches to press for, and obtain, concrete responses to their demands.

In Bolivia, the Indigenous movement has criticized the newly elected Aymara vice-president, who was sworn into office in August 1994, as a token leader. They see his election as a neo-liberal and neo-populist maneuver designed to deflect persistent complaints from Indigenous Peoples, especially the Quechua people who live in the coca areas and are known locally as *cocaleros* (coca pickers). The Quechua are under attack by the U.S. embassy and the Drug Enforcement Agency, who are attempting to eradicate all coca plantations and with them the raw material for cocaine.

On the other hand, the Aymara vice-presidency may very well be a Bolivian strategy to diffuse armed violence of the type that is present in Peru.

Peru's nationalism is systematically racist and seasoned with chauvinistic class-struggle slogans, which has produced movements such as Shining Path, a genocidal response (not unlike the strategy pursued by Pol Pot) that is at odds with Peru's reality. Indigenous Peoples of the Peruvian highlands maintain a localized sense of identity that has not enabled them to mobilize on a larger ethnic or geographic scale. The highlanders of Peru, although ethnically Indigenous, have preferred to fight as *comuneros* (peasants). The lifelong president of the Peasant Confederation of Peru, a Quechua, belongs to the Communist Party, although he detests the Shining Path for its violence. Is the Cold War really over?

The Aymara People continue to be actively involved in Bolivian politics.⁷ By consistently remapping their ancient territory, reconstituting their traditional *ayllu* system, and validating the use of the Aymara language throughout the twentieth century, they are reaffirming their struggle to retain an ethnic identity that is distinct from the Bolivian *q'ara* (the mestizo and urban population). This same strategy can be found to be working quite well among the Mayan ethnic movement of Guatemala/Mexico, the Kuna of Panama and Colombia, and the various Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile and the Amazon Basin.

The United States

While anthropology has been singled out during the past several decades for criticism of its role in constructing the norms of "authentic" Indianness, indigenous identity (and with it indigenous autonomy, sovereignty and self-determination) has long been the target of colonial projections inherent in Western academia and its nation-state politics, economies and religions. The United States and Canada are political entities constructed on the nation-state model, and as such they presume their populations to have clear and uniform American/Canadian political identities. The presence and persistence of In-

igenous Peoples within the boundaries of these two nation-states has always suggested a contradiction of these American/Canadian national identities. From racialized social constructions to legal-political fictions like Chief Justice John Marshall's "domestic dependent nations," Indigenous Peoples in the United States and Canada have always undermined imagined homogeneous nationhoods.

The U.S. and Canadian governments have undeniable and extensive paper trails of international treaties with Indigenous Peoples living in their claimed territories. These paper trails are predicated on the political doctrine that the U.S. and Canada are sovereign political entities that can enter into treaties only with other sovereign nations. This legal principle is clearly spelled out in U.S. constitutional law, for example, and it is this nation-to-nation relationship that constitutes the foundation for all of the treaties between the U.S. and various tribal nations (though the U.S. has always proven reluctant to stand by its own constitutional law with respect to these treaties). The Indigenous Peoples of North America have dual (dual?) political identities: tribal citizenship in "sovereign" Indian nations, and national citizenship in colonial nation-states. These frequently obscured dual identities have a long political and cultural history that reaches from initial "contact" down to the present day.

The "Indian problem" cannot be understood without examining race relations in North America, which have always played an enormous role in the dynamics of American/Canadian politics and culture. When the first colonies were planted in the Southwest and on the Eastern seaboard of what would eventually become the United States, the hapless colonists were acutely aware of the "wildness" that surrounded them. Indigenous Peoples and their worlds were identified as part of this wildness. These strange and dangerous humans, in European terms, constituted a very real threat to all the colonists' social norms, and Indigenous Peoples became a site for the displacement of European fears of the unknown. The "New World" and these new people were wild, virginal, untainted, the embodiment of the potential for progress and

civilization; at the same time, they were savage, beastly, alien, a threat to that very progress and civilization. Indigenous Peoples in North America have always been identified in European, Judeo-Christian terms as good and evil.⁸

Part of this diametrical projection was and still is the imagining of Native peoples as "Indians" rather than as the multitudes of distinct social, cultural, religious, and political entities that they constitute. This oppositional and generic identity Native peoples were/are perceived to have is an enormous factor in what has kept the United States and Canada from fully trying to integrate them into an American or Canadian homogeneous nationhood. Yet this rather obvious cultural "othering" is in direct opposition to the political and legal haranguing between Indian nations and the U.S., Canada, and other European nation-states which created hundreds of treaties.

The United States entered into approximately 372 treaty agreements with more than a hundred Indian nations. However, on March 3, 1871, a rider to an annual appropriations bill suddenly rewrote Indian nationhood and Indian political and legal identity. The Act stated that the U.S. would simply not recognize any "Indian nation or tribe...as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty."⁹ This rather hypocritical and confusing legal mess had been preceded by a Supreme Court decision in 1831. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, Chief Justice Marshall identified Indian populations as "domestic dependent nations" thus writing away much of the independence Indian nations previously had in the eyes of the U.S. courts. Indian law in the United States is extremely convoluted; rulings often get made in direct opposition to previous "supreme" decisions within a few short years, consequently making Indian nationhood tedious at best within the colonizer's courts and government.

Inherent in these continually contradictory Indian laws and decisions is the United States' own notion and assertion of nationality. Native peoples have experienced several cycles of assimilationist/self-determinist

policies. These offers of U.S. "citizenship" or Indian "sovereignty" are directly related to how this nation-state as a whole views itself. In one instance American Indians are independent nations, in another they are domestic dependent nations and in another, like many of the California Indian tribes, they are simply written off as non-existent or inauthentic. Indian nations in the U.S. have gone through genocide, removal and containment, assimilation, "citizenship," termination, and "self-determination." After approximately 200 years of attempts to bring Indian populations within its folds, whether it incurs the out and out death of Indian people or the attempt at assimilating them into the American "melting pot" with promises of "full citizenship" rights, the U.S. has not been able to solve its "Indian problem." Why?

In order to answer this we must question what being "American" constitutes and in doing so we return to those original notions of the wildness of the "new" world. One way of dissecting this wildness is to look at the "new" world in Indigenous terms. Obviously it was not a "new" world, nor was it "wild." Civilization, progress and therefore success in the "new" world were European ideals. Indian peoples, after all, had been living in the Americas successfully and prosperously for thousands of years. Thus it was Native North American world views and the populations who held those world views that were considered deficient by European standards. Simply stated, many Indigenous peoples did and do not hold Western notions of progress and civilization as the ideals of success. In fact, some Indigenous groups hold European notions of progress and civilization as an antithesis to living successfully in the Americas. There probably couldn't have been more different and opposing ideologies of "how things are supposed to be."¹⁰ This racialized perspective on Indigenous world views goes right to the heart of today's Native North American claims of time immemorial land rights and the belief in sacred rights of first "use" of land and resources.

What is and always has been more important than homogenizing Native American populations into the U.S. or Canada is also at

the crux of what gives these tiny "domestic dependent nations" power: land and its resources. In North America, Indian populations are not a threat to the needs of American or Canadian labor, as they are in Latin America.¹¹ However, an estimated 5-6% of the total oil and gas reserves, an estimated 30% of the total coal reserves, and an estimated 50-60% of the total uranium reserves, not to mention sizable percentages of timber and water reserves within U.S. borders, are still maintained on Indian lands.¹² Resources (and, more importantly, their exploitation) is a language the colonial powers understand. Maintaining time immemorial land claims and religious worldviews for political reasons have little meaning to industrial and post-industrial world powers that retain domination through a "free-market" economy that relies heavily on access to and exploitation of natural resources.

One particularly successful example of Indian nations speaking and playing the colonizer's language and political/economic game can be found in a coalition called the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT). Formed in 1975, the coalition was made up of 25 Indian nations that had sizable exploitable energy resources. Modeled after OPEC, CERT's purpose was to make sure the participating tribes got fair market value for their resources since the Bureau of Indian Affairs (which is subsumed under the U.S.'s Interior Department) was failing to protect the interests of its "domestic dependent nations" from various corporate resource development interests.¹³ Today CERT is 53 nations strong with an elected leadership from its member nations and has managed great success in competing with multinational corporations for fair market value of Indian-owned resources.

In the CERT example we can see how, through political unification based on a racialized identity, Native North Americans have successfully built and maintained unified self-determination. This of course is not a new phenomenon, since Indian nations have been forming political coalitions long before the colonizers came to the Americas. What is new, however, is the specific terms of the coalitions: exploitable resources. The tools

and knowledge of self determination have always been there, it is only a matter of understanding and speaking a new language. In simpler terms, the Indian nations that make up CERT are firstly Crow, Navajo, Laguna, etc. and only secondly do they see themselves in terms of some sort of generic "Indian" pact. And their reasons for this are obvious: an ethnic "Indian" argument is understandable and therefore powerful in nation-state terms. "Indian" ethnicity however, can only go so far; at the core of tribal nationhood is the specific historical, political, religious, economic, and social identities of each population.

For this reason, when the worldviews of members of Indian nations who own exploitable resources do not believe in resource development, anti-exploitation coalitions have been formed. The conflict over a nuclear waste dump on Mescalero Apache land in late 1994 and early 1995 is a case in point. After grassroots organizing and lobbying by a coalition of Mescalero people, Native American activists, and non-Indian anti-nuclear activists, a vote was held by the Mescaleros on January 31, 1995. The vote determined that a nuclear waste dump would not be placed on their reservation lands despite promises of up to \$25 million to be paid annually to the Mescalero tribe. A few months later, after a petition had been circulated and signed, another election was held. This time, although there again were protests against such a sacrilegious use of the land (by various native organizations like the National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans, some members of the Mescalero tribe, and anti-nuclear organizations), a new decision was made to accept the 31 utilities' and 2 nuclear suppliers' offer.¹⁴ In this instance, a grassroots ethnic/environmental claim to time immemorial land and religious rights was overturned, not by the U.S. government, but by the Mescalero Apache people themselves. At the core of the Mescaleros' decision, and also at the core of the Mescaleros' tribal nationhood, is a specific historical, political, religious, social, and economic identity. An ethnic based argument, no matter how much domestic or international outcry, cannot combat this identity which called for a specific decision.

International lobbying on ethnic terms in North America has had some success, but oftentimes, as the Mescalero Apache case demonstrates, the distinct Indian nations' needs override any sort of generic "Indian" agitation. One particular organization that has received a great deal of domestic and international media attention is the American Indian Movement (AIM). Formed in the late 1960's by urban Indians who had grown up away from their reservations and homelands, AIM sought out confrontation between the U.S. government and Indian people in order to get the U.S. government to assess its failure in holding up Indian treaty rights. Despite success through this sort of activism, AIM has been much ridiculed within Indian communities. The main bent of the criticism lies in AIM's pan-Indian and therefore ethnic approach, which is in direct conflict with tribally specific ways of dealing with issues.¹⁵

Indigenous peoples of North America, when mirrored against the nation-states of the world, reflect a multitude of identities. Native peoples are imagined by themselves and others as tribal nations, domestic dependent nations, intertribal political/economic coalitions, pan-Indian social/religious groups, pan-Indian political groups, citizens of their surrounding nations, and the list goes on. On the surface, North American Indian identities seem unfixed and ever changing yet most often the coalitions, organizations, and nationhoods formed are maintained from very specific tribal foundations. Whether they are "officially" recognized or not, many Indian nations have been able to maintain their tribally specific methods of dealing with whatever its surrounding nation and other world powers deal out, often times simply because of these nation-states' exclusionary policies and decisions. Perhaps then, at least in the U.S., racial ideology has had a hand in helping Indian peoples to continue to undermine this nation-state's imagined homogeneous identity. Indian identity can be shaped or manipulated towards attaining many different goals whether it be the pursuit of group rights, individual rights, land claims, or resource control; whether it be in the halls of the United Nations or in a meeting room of a multi-national corporation. And in

the end, regardless of whether the methods used take the form of a resource cartel or an environmental coalition, at the heart of it all is the presence and persistence of each Indian nation's historical, religious, political, social, and economic identity. This is something that no genocidal, discriminatory, or paternalistic assimilationist or self-deterministic policy has been able to change.

Conclusion

Ethnicity has helped to deconstruct the old assimilative discourse of the nation-state in the Americas. Along with the concept of gender, both challenge the one-face nation-state based on exclusionary politics. The Indigenous continental unity is based on the fact that First, or Original Nations, share the same history of colonialism and nation-state imposition of nationalities based on dues (rather than rights), that have consistently punished and discriminated against them. As the Latin American nation-state becomes a functional apparatus of capital within the new world order, rather than a truly regulatory system, ethnicity could contribute to building spaces within territories where egalitarian politics promote autonomy, dignity, full citizenship, real participation and self-determination.¹⁶

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¹Glenn Morris, "International Law and Politics," in *The State of Native America*, edited by M. Annette Jaimes (Boston, MA: South End, 1992), 75.

²This is the most commonly accepted figure among scholars, whose demographic calculations fluctuate: "A reasonable degree of overall possible error for the hemisphere would be about 25%, which would give a range of 43 million to 72 million." See William Denevan (ed.), *The Native Population of the Americas in 1492* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1992), 291.

³Rene Zavaleta Mercado has written about the poverty of the national consciousness: "To the eyes of the [Bolivian ruling] caste, Indians were not only the soul of [the] country but the main obstacle to its existence." See his essay "El Mundo del Temible Willka," in *Lo Nacional Popular en Bolivia* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1986), 119.

⁴See Araceli Burguete, "Chiapas: Maya Identity and the Zapatista Uprising," *Abya Yala News. Journal of the South and Mesoamerican Indian Information and Rights Center* (Berkeley) 8, no. 1-2 (Summer 1994), 6-11.

⁵See Guillermo Delgado-P., "Ethnic Politics and the Popular Movement," in *Latin America Faces the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Susanne Jonas and Edward J. McCaughan (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), 77-88; Guillermo Delgado-P., "Entre lo Popular y lo

Etnico" (parts I, II), in *Revista Unitas* (La Paz, Bolivia) 11, 12 (1993, 1994), 90-105, 26-42; and Glenn Switkes, "The People vs. Texaco," *NACLA* 28, no. 2 (Sept.-Oct. 1994), 6-8.

⁶See Guillermo Delgado-P. and Sebastian Lara, "Guaranies Evige Kamp for Frihet," *Regnbuen* (Oslo, Norway) II (1994), 6; and Ana Rebeca Prada "El Pueblo Guarani y El Plan de Todos" *Bolivia: Semanario de Noticias* (La Paz), II, no. 23 (1994), 8-9. Paraguay preserved the Guarani language making it a bilingual Spanish-Guarani speaking country, although the Guarani population continues to fall dramatically.

⁷See the publications of The Taller de Historia Oral Andina, Andean Oral Workshop of La Paz (Bolivia). Its current director, Maria Eugenia Choque, an Aymara herself, has become intensively engaged in the process of territorial and linguistic recuperation and she remains an autonomous voice within the Aymara movement.

⁸Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Image of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1978), 28.

⁹Arlene Hirschfelder and Martha Kreipe de Montano, *The Native American Almanac: A Portrait of Native America Today* (New York, NY: Prentice Hall, 1993), 54.

¹⁰Vine Deloria, Jr. *God is Red* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994), 1.

¹¹As in Latin America, Native peoples in North America went through an enormous decline in their populations. This is probably one of the most tangible reasons North American Indians have maintained separate identities since their populations were not a viable resource for the birthing of the new nations. Disease and war among other things claimed immense numbers of North American Indians so that by 1890, it is estimated that there had been a 95% reduction in native populations within U.S. borders (Hirschfelder, 36). Today within the United States, native peoples make up .8% of the total population and if looked at in relation to

the large Indigenous populations of Latin America, it is fairly clear that at least today, incorporation of such a small part of the total population is far down on the ladder of national importance.

¹²Hirschfelder, 214.

¹³The BIA has often been faulted for not looking out for the best interests of Indian nations and much of this is due to the influence the Interior Department has on BIA policy. The U.S.'s Interior Department is in charge of natural resources (Bureau of Mining, United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, Parks, Fish and Game, Reclamation, etc.) yet it is also in charge of "America's" Indians (BIA). Questions have been raised as to why the BIA is not moved to the Department of Health and Human Resources since this is the federal department that works with people. The conclusion is obvious; the U.S. government isn't as interested in its responsibilities to Indian populations as it is interested in maintaining control over Indian-held resources.

¹⁴Luther J. Carter, "The Mescalero Option (storage of nuclear waste at Mescalero Apache tribe reservation in New Mexico)," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 50, no. 5 (September-October 1994), 11-13.

¹⁵Another criticism of certain factions of AIM is the early and still somewhat persistent use of Marxist and therefore classist discourse in these particular factions arguments. Indian nations rely not on a classist perspective but on a tribally specific social-historical-religious perspective that is often at odds with this Western capitalistic economic viewpoint. See Russell Means, "Indictment on Industrial Society," International NGO conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Land, Geneva, September 15-18, 1981.

¹⁶The Continental Indigenous movement is based upon a self-determinative position. Two international instruments assist them in justifying such claims. The first is article ILO's Article 169 (of which only seven nation-states are signatories), the second is the UN Declaration of Indigenous Human Rights soon to be presented to the General Assembly.

Other international documents belong to the continental movement, and their purposes are declarative of their need to assist each other in the demand for self-determination. An international office of the Indigenous Press, AIPIN, and CONIC, an international coordinating and decentralized body are new contributions that to be effective, need to reinforce their struggles from a continental and transcommunal position, rather than only a national one. Several national organizations of Indigenous Peoples are working in this direction.