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INDIGENOUS POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Contesting Citizenship in Latin America

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Over the past two decades Latin America has experienced a wave of political organizing within and across indigenous communities. Indigenous communities have formed national and international indigenous peasant confederations, indigenous law centers, indigenous cultural centers and, more recently, indigenous political parties and platforms. To challenge the historical image of Indians as a submissive, backward, and anachronistic group, these newly formed organizations have declared, embraced, and mobilized around their indigenous identity. They have established translocal indigenous ties, voiced demands on behalf of indigenous communities, and mobilized to pursue those ends.[1] Demands include, among other things, the right to territorial autonomy, respect for customary law, new forms of political representation, and the right to bicultural education. Organizations have articulated these demands in the streets as well as in the halls of state ministries and legislatures. While the specific characteristics of the organizations and agendas vary considerably, they have collectively demanded changes so that their democratic individual rights may be respected and that new collectively defined indigenous rights be granted. In short, they are contesting the practice and terms of citizenship in Latin America's new democracies.

The emergence of indigenous organizations over the past two decades challenges historical norms and scholarly conclusions about Latin America's nonpoliticized ethnic cleavages. In the twentieth century active rural organizing within and between indigenous communities has traditionally been the reserve of peasant unions, political parties, churches, and revolutionaries. These movements have historically attempted to

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[1] It is important to underscore here what I am *not* saying: First, I am not claiming that organizing in the countryside is new but rather that it has not been carried out by indigenous groups qua indigenous. Second, I am not explaining the emergence of new indigenous identities at the individual or community level—identities that have existed to varying degrees and in various forms over time and space. To the contrary, I focus on the translation of these local identities into political and organizational ones at the regional, national, and/or international level. Third, I do not claim that all Indians live in nonurban areas—although I restrict my focus in this essay to rural-based indigenous organizing. Finally, I do not judge the 'trueness' of an organization's indigenous identity; I do not exclude groups because self-proclaimed indigenous organizations have some nonindigenous leaders, nor do I include organizations that mobilize within indigenous communities for other (non- or anti-indigenous) ends.

mobilize Indians to forge class, partisan, religious, and/or revolutionary identities over, and often against, indigenous ones. Against this backdrop, indigenous communities have rarely organized and sustained social movements that proclaim an indigenous identity and mobilize for indigenous rights.[2] This low level of ethnic mobilization has led social science scholars to underscore the weak politicization of ethnic cleavages in Latin America. They have traditionally concluded that ethnicity in contemporary Latin

[2] Latin American history is dotted by famous although scattered rebellions, including the 1780s rebellion led by Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari. These rebellions remain isolated and short-lived exceptions in Latin American history, although other forms of everyday resistance did occur. By the twentieth century, however, movements rarely mobilized around indigenous-based claims. See Smith (1990); Maybury-Lewis (1991, 207–35); Stern, ed. (1987) and Stern (1992); Mallon (1992 and 1995); and Larson and Harris with Tandeter (1995).

America has had comparatively little impact on the explicit terms of political organizing, political party platforms, political debates, and political conflict, in sharp contrast to other regions in the world.[3] Indeed, scholars and activists alike have argued that ethnic identities would subside and give way to other more modern identities.

The emergence of indigenous organizations over the past two decades, therefore, constitutes a new phenomena that merits explanation. Why has indigenous identity become a more salient basis of political organizing and source of political claims in Latin America over the past two decades? I pursue this question by comparing the post-1945 historical records of rural politics in five cases: Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. I find that indigenous identity has become increasingly politicized over the past two decades in the first four cases but that this trend does not occur in the fifth. This paper, therefore, compares longitudinal with crossnational data to explain the marked but uneven politicization of ethnic cleavages in the contemporary period.

The paper first introduces the reader to the five cases and explores alternative explanations of ethnic mobilization. Drawing on this discussion, I propose a historically grounded comparative analysis that situates politicized indigenous identity and movement formation in relation to the process of state building and democratization. Latin America's state reforms of the 1980s, in particular, challenged the institutional boundaries of rural citizenship. They expanded political opportunities for organizing while simultaneously restricting the terms of political access, participation, and autonomy that rural communities had developed during prior democratizing periods; the state has not effectively extended democratically sanctioned individual rights to the countryside but has effectively dismantled state sanctioned corporate rights. These state reforms have left indigenous men and women betwixt and between—disenfranchised as individuals, disempowered as corporate/peasant political actors, and fearful of unstable property relations on which local political autonomy has rested. With this 'political squeezing' at the national and local level, indigenous men and women have mobilized previous organizational networks (where possible) to demand that constitutionally sanctioned individual rights be upheld and that indigenous collective rights be extended.

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[3] See Young (1976, ch. 11); Young, ed. (1993); Horowitz (1985); Gurr (1993); Patrinos (1994, 13); Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (1994, 207); and Helwege (1995).

This approach combines insights from identity and organizational approaches to collective action and movements but finds that in the absence of grounded comparative and historical institutional analysis, they cannot explain how and when indigenous identity is politically salient; how and when those identities translate into political organizations; and why these phenomena occur in some places and not others. Drawing on social movement theory, I analyze changing macropolitical opportunities, microincentives, mesolevel networks, and symbolic politics, as advocated in Tarrow's work on collective action (1994 and 1996), to suggest the conditions under which identity and organization merge to generate indigenous movements in Latin America.[4]

The Cases

An estimated 90% of Latin America's 35–40 million indigenous peoples reside in Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. These five countries claim not only the largest indigenous populations in the region but also the highest ratio of indigenous to nonindigenous populations: Bolivia (71.2%), Guatemala (60.3%), Peru (38.6%), Ecuador (37.5%), and Mexico (12.4%) (see Tables 1 and 2). Among these cases, Mexico's indigenous population (estimated at over ten million) constitutes both the lowest percentage of the five in terms of the country's total population and the highest percentage of the region's total indigenous population (29%). The rest of the region's countries are home to much smaller indigenous populations—in both relative and absolute terms. Given these similarities, one might expect a similar pattern of indigenous mobilization in Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. The following introduction to the cases reveals, however, that while ethnic cleavages have become increasingly politicized (as the basis for organizing and claim making) in the first four cases, they have not in the last.[5]

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[4] See, in particular, Tarrow (1994 and 1996) and the other chapters in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, eds. (1996).

[5] Country-specific citations are provided below. For comparative discussions, see, in particular, Stavenhagen (1992 and 1996); Smith (1985); Mallon (1993 and 1995); Barre (1983); Kearney and Varese (1995); Urban and Sherzer (1991); NACLA (December

The Ecuadorian indigenous movement has transformed rural organizing and shaped policy debates about bicultural education, agrarian reform, and territorial autonomy.[6] With its origins in disparate organizations, the Ecuadorian movement developed two strong regional federations—ECUARUNARI of the Andes and CONFENAIE of the Amazon. Despite significant differences in the experiences and goals of the two regional organizations, in the 1980s they forged a national confederation, CONAIE, to present a unified national voice to the government for Ecuador's indigenous population. While there are other competing institutional voices (largely represented by the indigenization of the country's peasant unions, i.e., FENOC/FENOC-I), CONAIE has assumed the prominent position in national political circles—demonstrating its power of both mobilization and proposal. CONAIE first shocked the country with its organization of a week-long indigenous uprising that shut down roads, occupied churches, and cut off commerce in Ecuador in June 1990; they have sustained this protest capacity, although in less dramatic ways, throughout the 1990s to contest policies and referendums. Most recently they decided to participate in the 1996 elections. Despite internal debates over these decisions, CONAIE constitutes a national organization that has maintained a united public voice on behalf of much of Ecuador's Andean and Amazonian indigenous population.

TABLE 1

1979–1991 Estimates of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America Organized by % of Total Population

	Estimated Population	% of Total Population
Populations over 10%		
Bolivia	4,985,000	71.2
Guatemala	5,423,000	60.3
Peru	8,097,000	38.6

1991); Mayer (1996); Adrienzén, Blanquer, et al. (1993); Brysk and Wise (1995); Van Cott (1994); and Yashar (1996).

[6] For a discussion of the Ecuadorian movements, refer to Zamosc (1994); Selverston (1994); Almeida, Carrasco, et al. (1993); Trujillo (1994); Almeida, Vinueza, et al. (1992); and CONAIE (1989).

Ecuador	3,753,000	37.5
Mexico	10,537,000	12.4
Populations between 5% and 10%		
El Salvador	500,000	10.0
Belize	15,000	9.1
Panama	194,000	8.0
Chile	767,000	5.9
Populations under 5%		
Guyana	29,000	3.9
Honduras	168,000	3.4
Surinam	11,000	2.9
Paraguay	101,000	2.5
Colombia	708,000	2.2
Nicaragua	66,000	1.7
Argentina	477,000	1.5
Venezuela	290,000	1.5
French Guyana	1,000	1.2
Costa Rica	19,000	0.6
Brazil	325,000	0.2
Uruguay	0	0.0

Sources: Varese (1991); and Yasher (1996, 92).

The contemporary Bolivian indigenous movement has also shifted the basis of rural organizing and terms of political discourse.[7] With the founding of Katarismo in the late 1960s, a heterogeneous movement of students, intellectuals, and peasants came together to reclaim their indigenous voices and autonomy in the Andean-based peasant movement and universities. Katarismo is famous for having assumed control of the peasant association, asserted greater independence from the national labor federation, and challenged the military-peasant pact. It did not sustain political momentum, however, but spawned union factions and a series of competitive and largely unsuccessful urban political parties—the election of Víctor Hugo Cárdenas as Bolivian vice-president, notwithstanding. The Bolivian Amazon has also become a more active site of indigenous organizing at both the local and regional level, as illustrated by the formation and expansion of CIDOB—and its constitutive regional organizations. The scope, dynamism, and salience of Amazonian indigenous organizing was marked by a 1990 indigenous

march that covered 650 kilometers from the lowlands of the Bolivian Amazon to the highland capital of La Paz, an event that generated national political discussions about indigenous territorial autonomy. Indigenous protests over proposed changes to agrarian reform at the end of 1996 have also attempted to capture national attention and influence that national policy agenda. While the Bolivian movements have not developed a national confederation that speaks and negotiates on behalf of Bolivia's Amazonian and Andean indigenous peoples, they have placed indigenous questions up front and center as Indians demand territorial autonomy and a voice in Bolivian national and local politics.

The Guatemalan indigenous movement emerged with the organizing and coordination for the Second Continental Meeting of Indigenous and Popular Resistance in 1991, which took place in Guatemala.[8] Following the meetings, various Mayan organizations were founded that proclaimed the centrality of their indigenous identity—as witnessed by the gathering of Mayan priests and the formation of Mayan coordinating committees, Mayan legal centers, and Mayan peasant movements. These incipient organizations challenged the predominantly class-based discourse and goals of Guatemala's dominant popular movements and have sought to create organizations more responsive to indigenous communities, cosmologies, and concerns. While organizationally diverse and often competitive, these organizations, alongside independent Mayan intellectuals, have come together in ongoing national forums to participate in the peace process, particularly as it touches on indigenous communities; these efforts have thus far culminated in the 1995 Accord on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This coalitional work has also reverberated in electoral politics. In mid-1995 many indigenous popular movements decided to form a political coalition, Nukuj Ajpop, and ran a number of successful municipal and legislative candidates in the end-of-year election. The Guatemalan movement remains more incipient and fragmented than its Ecuadorian and Bolivian counterparts.

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[7] See Cusicanqui (1980); Klein (1982); Libermann and Godínez, eds. (1992); Albó (1994); Ticona, Rojas, and Albó (1995); and Mallon (1993).

[8] See Bastos and Camus (1993 and 1995); and Smith (1990).

Mexico's indigenous movements gained international and national attention with the Chiapas rebellion by the Zapatistas, initiated on 1 January 1994.[9] The Zapatistas' largely indigenous army took up arms and, compelled the Mexican government to engage in negotiations.[10] Many have questioned whether this movement is a prodemocracy and propoor movement composed of Indians or an indigenous movement (explicitly designed to address 'indigenous concerns and goals'). Given that the EZLN's agenda includes platforms for indigenous autonomy and cultural respect, one must include this as a kind of indigenous movement but one that is more politically diffused and coalitional in nature—combining demands specific to indigenous communities with claims for democratization that have broader appeal. The Chiapaneco movement has engineered a political opening for Mexico's indigenous peoples by providing new spaces for discussion and negotiation of the indigenous right to autonomy. But it remains one among many localized indigenous movements in Mexico. The historically and comparatively limited capacity of Mexico's Indian communities to constitute a significant and independent national movement led noted scholars such as Florencia Mallon (1992) to remark on the historically minor role that indigenous organizations have played in that country. Against this historical pattern, the Chiapas rebellion and its impact on regional organizing and national agenda setting seem to have mounted a challenge.

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[9] Among the burgeoning literature on Mexico's indigenous movement, particularly Chiapas, see Nagengast and Kearney (1990); Collier with Quaratiello (1994); Harvey (1994); Hernández (1994); Rubin (1994); Fox (1994a, 24–27); Burbach and Rossett (1994); Benjamin (1996); Stephen (1996).

[10] Armed ethnic violence is rare in Latin America—in contrast to most regions of the world. While violence does occur, it tends to be in the following contexts: a) the state uses violence to repress indigenous groups (often bordering on ethnocide) but violence between ethnic groups does not follow; b) indigenous communities use violence for explicitly class-based ends, as occurred with much of the guerrilla organizing from the 1960s on in Guatemala and Peru; and/or c) indigenous groups use violence against the state rather than against nonindigenous groups to achieve democratic goals. In the context of this paper, only the third category constitutes a case of armed ethnic protest, with Chiapas as the only Latin American example.

Finally the Peruvian movement is largely, although not entirely, nonexistent.[11] The low level of indigenous organizing is particularly striking given Mariátegui's path-breaking arguments in the early twentieth century and the ensuing debates about Peru's indigenous core and its role in contemporary society and politics. Nonetheless it is widely observed that: "In Peru, there is no Indian movement. The political proposal to organize specifically around indigenous identity is a profound failure in the country" (Mayer 1996, 9, translation by author). Organizing in the countryside has developed along different lines. On one hand, *Sendero Luminoso* has until recently organized quite effectively throughout much of the Peruvian countryside; although this movement organizes indigenous peasants, it rejects demands or agendas emanating from an indigenous identity.[12] On the other hand, Starn (1991) highlights the emergence of *rondas campesinas* in Peru. These peasant organizations have come to play a role in the adjudication and enforcement of justice as well as the oversight of public works projects in particular communities. The *rondas campesinas*, however, appear to have remained localized in nature and do not focus on indigenous-based concerns per se. In this sense, the emergence of both *Sendero Luminoso* and the *rondas campesinas* highlight the limited role of indigenous identity as a basis of mobilization and claim-making in Peru. The exception is small Amazonian-based organizations, which remain marginalized from national politics and each other; they have developed greater ties to Amazonian indigenous movements in other countries.

In short, while indigenous communities have mobilized and been mobilized in the past, ethnic cleavages have become significantly more politicized in recent years in Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico. The resulting organizations all share a commitment to organize and defend Indians as Indians—even while they have emerged with varying degrees of strength.[13] They are fundamentally demanding both that the

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[11] See Cotler and Portocarrero (1969); Handelman (1975); McClintock (1981 and 1989); Starn (1991, 63–69); Seligmann (1995); and Mayer (1996).

[12] Given that I define movements as indigenous insofar as they appropriate indigenous identity as a central identity from which political claims stem, and given that *Sendero* rejects indigenous-based political claims, I exclude it from the universe of cases discussed here.

[13] In this article I emphasize similarities among the Ecuadorian, Bolivian, Guatemalan, and Mexican cases vis-à-vis the Peruvian. In the larger project, of which this article is

promise of democracy be fulfilled (to include and respect the individual rights of indigenous men and women) and that the state legally recognize indigenous community rights to land and local forms of governance. From this perspective, these movements have assumed an indigenous identity and focus that is not prevalent in Peru's rural organizations. Ethnic cleavages in Peru are politically overshadowed by class-based organizing and protest. An explanation of the rising political salience of indigenous organizing, therefore, requires not only that we explain why it has developed recently in Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico but also why it has remained so weak in Peru.

Competing Explanations

The emergence of indigenous protest and organizing in Latin America challenged the idea that ethnicity as a political identity was anachronistic and ephemeral.[14] Whether operating from a liberal or Marxist perspective, theorists, activists, and policymakers had assumed that indigenous identities would recede as other more modern identities and loyalties replaced them. While liberals assumed that individuals would shed ascriptive loyalties in exchange for primary ties to the nation-state, Marxists assumed that individuals would develop a class consciousness that would determine their interests, loyalties, and action. From these perspectives, nonpoliticized ethnic cleavages in Latin America were indicators of greater progress and modernity when compared to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The recent surge in indigenous organizing and protest in Latin America, therefore, challenged the universal and teleological assumptions of both Marxism and liberalism, which had assumed given primary identities and directions of change. It also opened up the field to a competing set of partial explanations of indigenous collective action and protest.

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part, I also explore variations in the organizational strength of Ecuador's, Bolivia's, Guatemala's, and Mexico's movements (scored on the basis of a composite index) against variations in each country's experiences with democratization, state building, and international funding.

[14] For an overview of these challenges, see Esman (1994); and Young, ed. (1993).

1. Primordialism[15]

While liberals and Marxists were surprised by indigenous protest and the politicization of ethnic identities, primordialists were not. Primordialists assume that ethnic identities are deeply rooted affective ties that shape primary loyalties and affinities. From this vantage point, ethnicity becomes a reference point for actions and affiliations, often of more importance than individual or class material concerns. While most primordialists grant that these identities are historically rooted, some primordialists argue that these identities are biological in nature (Van den Berghe 1981). While it is not assumed that all ethnic identities lead to conflict, it is assumed that all actors possess a strong sense of ethnic or racial identity that *primarily* shapes their actions and world view. With these assumptions, it is not surprising when individuals and communities advance and/or defend ethnically derived concerns—particularly when they perceive a disadvantage. The emergence of indigenous organizations and protest are therefore seen as the rearticulation of these deeply ingrained identities.

These arguments have found their greatest renaissance among theorists analyzing the resurgence of ethnic and nationalist sentiments in the former Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia, Burundi, Rwanda, and Israel/Palestine. In all cases it is argued that a deeply rooted sense of national identity and antagonism is given. In the first two cases it is argued that the regimes repressed these identities but never obliterated them; the subsequent breakdown of repressive political institutions opened the space for submerged ethnic identities to resurface. In the latter three cases the ongoing conflict is seen as the expression of historic antagonisms and deeply rooted animosity—whether expressed within a state or between states.

Yet, primordial arguments, as they are generally applied, fall short on a number of points. First, they cannot be empirically sustained; they sidestep the issue of why these identities emerge as a central axis of action in some cases and not others. Ethnic identities and conflicts are not everywhere reclaimed, even when there are moments of political opening. The case of Latin America is most instructive here. Earlier rounds of democratization did not lead to the emergence of indigenous organizations or ethnic

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[15] See, in particular, Geertz (1967); Isaacs (1975); Stack (1986); Connor (1994); Van den Berghe (1979 and 1981).

conflict—even when indigenous identities were clearly significant at the local level. Indeed, the first claim of this paper is that this politicization is a new phenomenon in the region. Second, ethnic political identities do not everywhere become a salient political identity. Hence, even if democratization allows for the greater expression of ethnic identity, this does not mean that it is an identity that is politically assumed. And third, even if we assume that ethnic loyalties are given, unchanging, and deeply rooted (an extremely dubious assumption to begin with), the theory provides little handle on why or how these identities translate into political organizing and action in some cases and not others, at some moments in time and not others; for even if ethnicity is the primary identity that affects how one votes, where one lives, and how one spends one's money, it does not mean that individuals will join political organizations and mobilize on behalf of their ethnic group. In short, the emergence of ethnic movements and conflicts speaks to the existence of deeply rooted and felt identities; but primordial arguments fail to problematize when and why these identities become politically salient and the conditions under which they engender political organizations.

2. Instrumentalism[16]

Challenging the identity-oriented explanations proffered by primordialists, instrumentalist or rational choice explanations assume goal-oriented and utility-maximizing behavior. Beginning with assumptions about individual calculations and intentionality, most instrumentalists assume that individuals act to pursue/defend material goals or political power. From this perspective the central question is why people choose to act collectively. The question requires particular emphasis given the possibilities of free-riding; why would one participate/organize/act if one could enjoy collective benefits without participating in a given movement? To address why one would act collectively, rational choice theorists adduce the positive incentives for doing so and/or costs for failing to do so.

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[16] See Rabushka and Shepsle (1972); and Bates and Weingast (1995). For a foundational text, see Olson (1965). For sympathetic but critical elaborations, see Elster (1986); and Laitin (1986).

While rational choice explanations of collective ethnic action vary widely, they tend to shift the question away from why ethnicity becomes salient and focus on how political entrepreneurs use it as a weapon to mobilize support and incite political passions for political or economic ends. From this perspective, the identification, mobilization, and politicization of an ethnic group becomes a means to achieve political power and/or greater material benefits—often at the behest and benefit of a leader. In this scenario the politicization of ethnicity is largely instrumental to achieving other (often nonethnically defined) material ends; the ethnic card is one tool among many. The conditions under which ethnicity becomes politicized is less relevant to these studies than modeling and predicting the utility of and capacity for collective action.

Yet it is precisely this recrafting of the question that poses significant limitations to explanations about why ethnic loyalties become the basis for political action at one time versus another. These studies provide little insight into a) how one arrives at utility functions—particularly if actors are not acting in their economic self-interest—without making post hoc arguments; b) why actors occasionally act in ways that appear detrimental to their material interests; and c) when and why ethnicity (as opposed to other categories) becomes politicized. To answer these central questions one needs to move away from rational choice's trademark parsimony to historically grounded determinations of preferences and institutional boundaries.

In short, as Laitin (1986) and Varshney (1995), among others, have noted, rational choice explanations are good at explaining organization building and maintenance but are less equipped to explain the conditions under which ethnic identity becomes politically salient for people as a collectivity. This is what led Cohen (1985) to distinguish between social movement theorists who focus on strategy (discussed here) and those who focus on identity (discussed next).[17]

3. Postmodernism

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[17] Following Cohen's article many argued that the social movement literature divided between those who focused on either identity or strategy. Also see Munck (1995), who convincingly argues that while the social movement literature has focused on identity formation and social coordination, there is insufficient theorizing of social movements as strategic actors.

Postmodern alternatives challenge all of the prior modernist approaches.[18] Despite their rich diversity, postmodern approaches commonly assume that identities are not given or ordered but socially constructed and evolving. One cannot assume that individuals will identify with or act according to structurally defined positions as Indians, workers, or women, for example. To the contrary, it is argued that structural conditions do not determine or define actors in any kind of uniform, unitary, or teleological fashion. Individuals are plural subjects and power is more diffuse. As subjects, people can assume a (discursive) role in fashioning and reconstituting their identities.[19]

Postmodernism opened the door to seeing ethnic identities as primary and purposive without arguing that they are primordial or instrumental in nature. By challenging structural and teleological explanations, it problematized identity rather than assumed it. By refocusing on the local, analyzing discourse, and highlighting identity as a social construction, postmodern studies have heightened our sense of context, complexity, and the dynamic process by which agents might (re)negotiate their relations to a diffused set of power relations. Indigenous identity is, from this perspective, both constituted by social conditions and renegotiated by individuals.

This paper draws on postmodern assumptions that individuals are plural subjects with multiply configured identities; these identities are socially constructed and transmutable. But it also assumes that very real structural conditions of poverty and military rule can impede the unencumbered expression of identities and pursuit of collective action just as they can shape needs as preferences.[20] Given the structural conditions faced by Latin America's indigenous population, I do not single-mindedly

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[18] For particularly influential postmodern and post-structural statements on identity, see Foucault (1980); Laclau and Mouffe (1985); Touraine (1988); and Melucci (1989).

[19] There is no agreement on the degree of choice that actors have. While Foucault emphasizes the pervasive and diffused power relations that constitute and define individuals, Laclau and Mouffe as well as Melucci argue that diffused and fragmented power relations provide multiple entry points for individuals to discursively reconstitute their identities or subjectivities.

[20] See Slater (1991). He critically compares the West European origins of the postmodern approach against the Latin American context. In Latin America's context of greater poverty, less democracy, and more troubled development, Slater argues that one cannot just dismiss material concerns in the rush to account for more plural subjects, interests, and organizations.

ascribe to the literary method that pushes scholarship largely in a discursive and relativist direction. Discursive and decentered analyses, moreover, cannot speak to the comparative questions raised in this paper; while problematizing ethnicity, postmodern approaches can neither explain why it becomes assumed as a salient *political* identity (across cases) nor delineate the conditions under which people are likely or able to organize politically around that identity. Many postmodern theorists would argue that these questions assume false assumptions about universal explanations (where none exist). Ultimately, the postmodern distancing from generalized explanations begs the question as to why indigenous movements have emerged throughout the Americas in the past decade.

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Seen as a whole, the ahistoricity of the three prior approaches limits their ability to explain the contemporary salience of indigenous identity and organizing in Latin America. The primordialists view identity as a constant, therefore negating the possibility for change over time; instrumentalists assume given utility functions for individuals and, therefore, place historical context outside the model; postmodernists—even while they focus on process and context—challenge historical master narratives and see identity and identity-related action as largely contingent and nongeneralizable. This has led Mallon (1995, xvi) to state so succinctly that postmodern approaches are 'distressingly ahistorical.' It is an observation that can be made of the other approaches mentioned here. Yet, in the absence of evaluating the contemporary period against prior ones, one cannot explain the identity and organizational related dimensions of Latin America's more politicized ethnic cleavages. In short, while the prior three approaches cannot be summarily dismissed, nor can they be relied on individually to explain the politicization of and organization around indigenous identity. Balancing primordialists against postmodernists, I acknowledge the power of ethnic ties without assuming that they are primary or unchanging. Confronting instrumentalists' concern for organization building (and the problems of collective action), I evaluate the

conditions in which actors can and do join organizations. To integrate identity and organizational questions, I situate these questions historically.

The Argument

I argue for a more historically grounded multilevel approach that is sensitive to a) the micropolitics of identity: why have indigenous identities recently become more politically salient in the region? b) the mesopolitics of organizational capacity: how is it possible to form regional and national (i.e., transcommunity) identity-based organizations—particularly given the localized terms of indigenous identities and institutions? and c) the macrocomparative politics of opportunities: why have those identities successfully translated into indigenous social movements in the past two decades in Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico but not in Peru. By addressing these three levels, I pursue the challenge posed in recent social movement works: to integrate a concern for changing political opportunity structures, social networks, and shared symbols that imbue movements with meaning. The recent work by Tarrow (1994) and the edited volume by McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996), in particular, advance the argument that we need to integrate these varying levels of analysis if we are to explain the identities and organizational outcomes of movement formation and if we are to generate comparative conclusions. In short, they attempt to move beyond the drawbacks of the approaches outlined in the prior section while acknowledging the need to integrate concerns for identity and organization.

But if a concern for changing opportunities, networks, and symbols provides an initial framework, it does not provide an explanatory anchor for *which* opportunities, networks, and symbols prove most important. The most compelling comparative arguments have been advanced by theorists who have focused their explanations of social movements as they relate to the process of state building. State building defines and institutionalizes citizenship, it creates spaces for organizing and the formation of civil society, and it provides the resources for challenging the state itself.[21] As a political

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[21] This approach draws on the insights of an esteemed group of theorists, including Tocqueville (1954); Tilly (1978); Skocpol (1979); Bright and Harding (1984); Laitin

target and provider, state building is central to social movement identity formation and organization. It shapes opportunities, motives, networks, and symbols.

In the context of Latin America and contemporary indigenous movements, I argue that the political liberalization of the 1980s provided the changing *macropolitical opportunity* for organizing, as states demilitarized and legalized arenas in which to form associations and speak more openly. But the *microincentive to organize as Indians* stemmed from the political disenfranchisement that resulted in the 1980s from the ways in which democratization and economic reform interacted and unfolded in the countryside. Liberal democracy's unfulfilled promises in the countryside continued to leave Indians disenfranchised as individual citizens; the economic reforms, however, dismantled corporate peasant institutions (which had provided channels for national participation and access) and challenged local community institutions and property relations (which had provided indigenous communities with a modicum of political autonomy and economic security). In other words, this combination of state policies left Indians disenfranchised as individuals, disempowered as corporate/peasant political actors, and challenged politically and materially at the local level.

While rural organizing and protest was a response to this 'political squeezing,' the indigenous character of the ensuing movements stems from the fundamental challenge that these reforms have posed to indigenous political authority structures and property. It is this last element that has most directly challenged Indians as Indians; for it is at the local level where indigenous identities, authority structures, and material resources have historically been most clearly embedded. Under these conditions indigenous communities have attempted to give national political expression to their localized political identities as Indians. The *mesolevel capacity to organize as Indians*, however, has depended on the transcommunity networks previously constructed by state, church, and union rural organizing. Indigenous organizations have *symbolically* been able to construct the idea of an indigenous movement—despite the rather diverse nature of their

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(1986); Tarrow (1994); and Foweraker (1995). These scholars focus on the state and state building as it shapes social movements. Also see Anderson (1980), who analyzes nationalism, in part, as a response to state building.

struggles vis-à-vis the state—by universally demanding land and denouncing neoliberalism.

Changing Macropolitical Opportunities: Political Liberalization

The political liberalization of the 1980s provided a changing political opportunity for legal popular movement organizing in general.[22] I understand political liberalization to comprise increased respect for freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of the press.[23]

Overall, political liberalization created new spaces for the expression and organization of indigenous identities across communities. With declining repression and increasing respect for civil rights, citizens confronted fewer constraints against expressing opinions publicly, distributing information, organizing across communities, and holding public assemblies. In late 1995 and early 1996 interviews with Guatemalan, Bolivian, and Ecuadorian indigenous leaders, for example, it was generally stated that political liberalization/democratization created a more conducive context for organizing. While they often qualified these comments by emphasizing ongoing human rights

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[22] There has been considerable debate about what constitutes a political opportunity structure and what its impact is on a movement's emergence and form. See Doug McAdam (1996, 27), who presents an overview of these debates and lays out four dimensions constitutive of the political opportunity structure: "1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system[;] 2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity[;] 3. The presence or absence of elite allies[;] 4. The state's capacity and propensity for repression." These four dimensions, however, are not equally applicable and influential in all cases—not least because the types of movements studied vary widely from antiauthoritarian struggles to identity-based movement to antidrinking campaigns; these movements confront different obstacles. In the case of Latin America's indigenous movements, elite alignments and access to elite allies do not uniformly play a role in movement *formation*—even if they do affect *policy success.* I focus here on the first and fourth dimensions laid out by McAdam and refer to this as 'political liberalization'—a term commonly used in the Latin American democratization literature to indicate a move away from authoritarian rule.

[23] See Freedom House scores (various years) which indicate general improvement in civil and political rights throughout the 1980s. These much-debated scores, however, provide little insight into how political liberalization at the national level affected rural areas such as Guatemala's highlands and Chiapas, Mexico.

violations, unfulfilled promises, and serious political constraints, they did acknowledge that when some form of political liberalization permitted the existence of legal (as opposed to clandestine) social movements, this significantly enhanced the capacity of communities to organize. And indeed, the emergence of legal indigenous social movements largely coincides with the current round of democratization.

Political liberalization is necessary, therefore, to explain the politicization of indigenous identity and its manifestation in legal social movements. Political liberalization, however, cannot be sufficient to explain either organization or identity questions. On the movement side, political liberalization does not always result in political organizing; indeed, the development of political parties in the most recent round of political liberalization has, in many places, eclipsed urban social movement activity.[24] On the identity side, the politicization of indigenous identity has not occurred every time that liberalization and/or democratization has occurred in Latin America. Political liberalization did not generate indigenous organizing in the pre-Fujimori Peru of the 1980s nor did it do so in prior rounds of liberalization in Ecuador and Bolivia. To address why indigenous ethnic identity becomes the basis for political mobilization at some times and not at others we need to explain what it is it about the most recent round of democratization that distinguishes it from others, would motivate people to organize around indigenous-based concerns alongside more material ones, *and* would allow them to organize as such. In short, we turn next to motive and capacity.

Posing Microincentives to Organize as Indians: State Reforms Recast the Terms of Rural Citizenship

The current round of political and economic liberalization has disempowered indigenous communities. As elaborated below, in practice these reforms have diminished

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[24] Social movement theorizing had envisaged the democratization impact of antiauthoritarian social movements. With the advent of democracy, however, these organizations declined in strength and impact. Rather than deepening democracy, democracy appeared to weaken them; political parties displaced many movements and/or marginalized them. See, in particular, chapters in the following edited volumes: Foweraker and Craig (1990); Eckstein (1989); Escobar and Alvarez (1992); and Jelin and Hershberg (1996).

national access to political institutions just as they have jeopardized local indigenous ones. Confronted with vanishing entry points for participation, representation, and resources—with *individual* democratic rights breached, historically constructed *corporate* rights dismantled, and local indigenous *community* institutions jeopardized—state reforms are perceived as displacing Indians at all levels. The final challenge to local institutions, in particular, has catalyzed Indians to mobilize as Indians to demand citizenship rights that include individual rights alongside community ones.

Earlier rounds of democratization (and some authoritarian periods) expanded the role of the developmental state as a result of populist, corporatist, and/or Keynesian coalitions. While earlier rounds of democratization rarely respected individual democratic rights within indigenous communities, democratically elected leaders often promised at least one of two goods: 1) the provision of social and economic policies targeting peasants as a corporate sector; and 2) institutionalizing corporate forms of state representation that appeared to offer access to the state. These state practices had a multifold effect. First, they resulted in greater state patronage in agricultural rural areas—with the formation of development agencies and Indian institutes to distribute/protect landholdings, extend agricultural credits, and/or oversee agricultural subsidies, for example. In this way, they largely defined the state's relationship with rural citizens as one mediated with them in their capacity as peasants. But greater state penetration, land reforms, and the establishment/protection of property rights somewhat unwittingly, although not uniformly, increased local autonomy—as peasants often increased their economic independence from landlords and de facto carved out local spaces for traditional authority structures and customary law.[25]

Consequently, earlier and successive rounds of democratization fortified the state's role in the countryside, attempted to incorporate the rural population as peasants, resulted in a smattering of corporate forms of representation and resource allocation, and de facto increased local political and economic autonomy at the local level. With this redefinition and nominal protection of rural property rights, rural men and women assumed a peasant status before the state and practiced an indigenous identity derived

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[25] For a discussion of customary law in Latin America, see Stavenhagen and Iturralde (1990).

from and structured by local practices. Local communal practices were shielded and national access to the state at least nominally extended. These corporate/clientelist arrangements were most advanced in Mexico and Bolivia, followed by Ecuador. Incipient efforts to expand a developmental state that developed patronage ties with the peasantry in Guatemala (1944–54) and Peru (1968–75) were equally significant. However, military counter-reformers in Guatemala and Peru reversed these developments in 1954 and 1975, respectively. In the 1980s liberalizing/democratizing regimes in Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador would follow suit, although under significantly less coercive circumstances.

The most recent round of political liberalization/democratization is distinct from earlier ones. It still breaches individual rights in the countryside.[26] But it has also occurred in tandem with (or following) the contraction of state policies that favored peasants and small farmers and gave them a semblance of political representation within the national state. Jettisoning populist discourse once in office, Latin American governments have implemented or supported neoliberal reforms with the promise of reducing rent-seeking and promoting growth with market-generated efficiency.[27] Stabilization and structural adjustment measures have resulted in reductions in ministerial budgets for ministries of agriculture; social services, including health, education, and infrastructure; and economic programs, including protection of peasant lands, access to credit, agricultural subsidies, and the like. Real wages in the agricultural sector steadily declined from the 1980s on so that by 1992 they had declined by 30%. Compounding this process, political parties have been least likely to organize and target rural areas because of low electoral returns in the countryside and, therefore, unlikely to tailor political agendas to redress agricultural inequities and needs.[28] As a whole, these policies

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[26] See O'Donnell (1993 and 1994).

[27] See Conaghan and Malloy (1994) for an excellent comparative study of the relative success of neoliberal reforms in Bolivia against their less successful Andean counterparts in Ecuador and Peru. Also see Kay (1995) for an overview of agricultural developments within the context of neoliberal reforms.

[28] See Wilkie, Contreras, and Komisaruk (1995, Table 3107, 990); for the countries discussed here, overall figures for social expenditures, calculated as central government expenditure per capita, declined between 1972–90 in the following areas: a) education, b) health, and c) housing, amenities, social security, and welfare. In Ecuador, however,

have weakened national peasant movements that might have imagined a greater political space for themselves in democratizing countries.

Seen as a whole, these economic policies have increased uncertainty about property relations. No longer assured of state-backed access to land credit and subsidies, many indigenous peasants have come to fear that their economic situation will deteriorate even further as they are unable to make ends meet and encounter the option of selling off land to acquire capital to pay debts. Importantly, the issue extends beyond material concerns. In Bolivia, Ecuador, and Mexico, it also refers to the declining capacity to maintain local forms of political governance that had often assumed or hid behind the constitutional protection of communal lands. For even if states did not respect indigenous jurisdiction over communally recognized properties, indigenous communities often did. Ströbele-Gregor (1996, 77) notes, for example, that the Bolivian land reform "created an economic foundation for the maintenance of communal structures and 'traditional' organizational patterns even after the [1952] revolution." The Bolivian and Ecuadorian states removal of controls on agricultural products in the mid-1980s and the Ecuadorian state's suspension of agrarian reform clearly pose challenges not only to material conditions but to political communal institutions as a whole.[29]

This challenge is perhaps clearest in the Mexican case.[30] Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution legally protected communally owned lands (or *ejidos*) and laid the framework for subsequent rounds of land reform. Following the 1930s land reform programs, Indian communities regained title to land—even if it remained lower in quality than land distributed elsewhere. In Chiapas 54% of the land came to be held as *ejidos*. In the 1970s, moreover, the state began to invest heavily in agriculture once again—overseeing further land distribution, social programs, food distribution and purchasing projects, and targeting of *ejidos*. While the benefits were often subject to

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expenditures in the first and third categories increased for these years. The figures for Guatemala are largely missing. Also see Urioste Fernández de Córdova (1992,109–34); Moreno and Ros (1994); Lustig (1995); Haggard and Kaufman (1992), particularly the chapter by Nelson; Janvry et al. (1994); Jayarajah and Branson (1995); Morley (1995); and Helwege (1995, 115).

[29] See Ströbele-Gregor (1996); Conaghan and Malloy (1994, 140); Zamosc (1994); and Selverston (1994, 145).

[30] See note 9.

corruption, this investment did demonstrate active state involvement and a promise of support. The 1990s, by contrast, reversed both policy and discourse. The Salinas administration's 1991 decision to dismantle constitutional protection for this corporately held land catapulted many indigenous communities and the Zapatista army to protest.

Seen comparatively, the Latin American state of the 1980s plays a less prominent role in social provision and has decreased the entry points for corporate groups to gain access to the state. But it has not supplemented these changing corporate relations by institutionalizing the individual representation and mediation theoretically characteristic of the liberal state. In the absence of viable and responsive democratic institutions to process their individual claims and confronted with diminishing corporate protection, indigenous men and women have been left to turn to local forms of political identity and participation; state reforms that privatize property relations, however, have also inserted instability and challenges to previously more secure local community spaces in which indigenous authority, practices, and material production had been institutionalized.

The Bolivian and Ecuadorian Amazon followed a different historical course from the story just outlined about how democratization and neoliberal reforms have politically squeezed indigenous communities. But the Amazonian experience is the exception that proves the rule about the significance of state challenges to local political and material autonomy. In the Amazon the state has historically been weak—with limited impact on policy, social services, infrastructure, government access, or institution building. Populist and corporatist policies did not find significant institutional expression in the Amazon. While the state expanded in the Andes, the Amazon remained relatively marginalized from contemporary politics, the market, and the state's role in each. Indeed churches often assumed a parastatal role in these areas. The 1970s and 1980s, however, witnessed the increasing penetration of the state into the Amazon—as the state constructed development agencies that, among other things, encouraged colonization by Andean peasants (indigenous and nonindigenous). The 1980s also witnessed the expansion of cattle ranchers, logging operations, and oil exploration, often by foreign companies. Together, these developments have challenged indigenous Amazonian communities that had both remained relatively independent from the state and sustained political and economic control over vast land areas.

Throughout Latin America, therefore, the 1980s and 1990s have witnessed a significant change in state-rural relations. In agricultural areas the state has dismantled corporate forms of representation, agricultural subsidies, and protection of communally and individually held lands. In the Amazon the state has increased its presence and promoted colonization by Andean nationals and foreign companies. In both cases the state's challenge to land tenure and use patterns has threatened material livelihoods and indigenous forms of local governance—both of which had depended on more stable property relations established with the developmental state.

Ironically, the argument developed thus far draws in unintended ways from the liberal and Marxist arguments summarily rejected at the beginning of the last section. For if the teleological assumptions of liberal and Marxist approaches about identity, change, and progress have proven problematic, the simultaneous failure of democratic regimes to uphold liberal conceptions of the individual coupled with a state that attempted to challenge corporate (i.e., class and community) identities created the political opportunity, impetus, and challenge for indigenous communities to secure old and new political institutions. Indigenous communities are organizing along ethnic-based lines to confront this political and economic challenge at the local and national level; the organizational capacity to do so, however, would depend on networks left in place by prior rounds of movement building.

Mesolevel Variations: Organizational Networks

Movements do not emerge mechanically as new political opportunities and needs present themselves. This is particularly the case when indigenous identities have historically been tied most clearly to the community as opposed to national or regional institutions. Indigenous movements depend, therefore, on the construction of *transcommunity* networks. In Latin America, the state, unions, and churches have played a crucial role in creating ties among communities, training leaders upon whom many communities depended, promoting bilingualism, and raising literacy rates. In the effort to transcend localized indigenous identities, these institutions unwittingly provided institutional links that became a basis for subsequent organizing of regional and national indigenous movements.

The state in all cases, for example, attempted to mobilize support and control rebellions within peasant communities—as part of the developmental policies just discussed. With the passage of land reforms and formation of associated peasant unions, states hoped to construct a national peasantry, to weaken more localized ethnic identities, and to forge a nation-state. The land reforms and associated unionization of the countryside in Mexico (the 1930s, in particular), Bolivia (1953), Ecuador (1963, 1974), Guatemala (1952), and Peru (1969) played a significant role in attempting to achieve these ends. These processes were most advanced and sustained in Mexico and Bolivia, followed by Ecuador. In Mexico and Bolivia peasant communities became tied to corporatist state-parties and, in exchange for state patronage, were promised access to land, economic support, and social services. In Ecuador peasants were not incorporated into a corporatist state or tied to a particular party. But with land reform the Ecuadorian politicians and military officers set out to strengthen state capacity. An increased state role in development and administration strengthened the Ecuadorian peasantry's dependence on the state for land and services—without the Mexican or Bolivian symbolism of political inclusion via corporatism. In short, twentieth-century state building in Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador attempted to institutionalize a nationally organized peasantry and subject them to the state. Yet this common state-building process unintentionally not only increased the space for local forms of governance within

indigenous communities but subsequently facilitated cross-community organizing as well as crystallizing the state as the locus of power and, therefore, the target of organizing.

Guatemala's (1944–54) democratic regime and Peru's military reform government (1968–75) also passed land reforms and encouraged peasant organizing, but subsequent counter-reform governments in Guatemala (1954) and in Peru (1975) undermined this process. The Guatemalan and Peruvian peasantry of the 1980s and 1990s have not sustained transcommunity peasant networks as a result of patron-client ties with the state, as in Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador. The Guatemalan and Peruvian states have been hostile to peasant demands and have attempted to localize, disarticulate, and repress rural organizing efforts. Consequently Peru has never really achieved and sustained a national peasant network—except briefly (if then) during the Velasco government (1968–75).[31] In the absence of sustained political liberalization and a more sustained developmentalist state in the Peruvian countryside, it has been difficult to construct a national peasant movement. And in the absence of these kinds of networks, it has been difficult to construct an indigenous identity and organization that transcends its more localized referent. Guatemala, unlike Peru, did subsequently organize an opposition peasant movement on the basis of networks constructed by the Catholic Church.[32]

In Latin America the Church has helped to construct and strengthen rural networks among communities in Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Ecuador. In open-ended interviews conducted during research trips in 1995–96 indigenous leaders and representatives of the church often highlighted the role of churches in indigenous communities. While often resentful of the patronizing role played by churches of all denominations and faiths, indigenous leaders acknowledged that churches have addressed literacy problems and helped to provide skills to confront the state; this was particularly the case in Guatemala, Mexico, and the Amazonian regions of Bolivia and Ecuador. So

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[31] See, for example Cotler and Portocarrero (1969); Handelman (1975, ch. 6); McClintock (1981); and Seligmann (1995).

[32] Although the prominent liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez is Peruvian, very little has been written on the role of liberation theology and theologians in Peru, particularly in the countryside. See Peña (1995), who evaluates liberation theology and the church hierarchy's reaction to it; he does not address, however, the impact of liberation theology on particular communities.

too, church leaders inspired by liberation theology created Christian base communities (CEBs) that provided a common language, encouraged an activist position, and created lay leaders who could travel among communities to address local and national problems.

In Guatemala many post–Vatican II clerics and lay persons traveled throughout the countryside to organize Christian base communities. In discussions with indigenous and peasant leaders CEBs were seen as having played a central role in overcoming the isolation that indigenous communities had experienced (following the 1954 counter-reform) and in providing a common language with which to take action. Indeed, many of the peasant leaders of the CUC, Guatemala's national peasant union of the 1970s and 1980s, became leaders through the CEBs. Partially on the basis of the work of CEBs, the CUC was subsequently able to reconstruct networks among rural communities—although in the context of an authoritarian state. The hypothesized absence of these networks (by unions and/or political parties) goes a long way towards explaining the comparative absence of organizing among indigenous communities in the Peruvian Andes.

The role of churches in Chiapas has also been well documented. Bishop Samuel Ruiz helped to create fora for and bring resources to indigenous communities. He helped to organize grassroots indigenous representation for the 1974 Indigenous Congress and encouraged more active forms of localized organizing.[33] The influence of the church has extended beyond Ruiz and the Catholic Church, to include Protestant churches (Collier 1994, 55). In Bolivia and Ecuador, a more heterogeneous church presence—Salesians, Franciscans, Protestants, Summer Institute for Linguistics, etc.—also played a particularly important role in the Amazon in bridging significant differences among communities, in addressing illiteracy, providing radio services, and organizing against land invasions, as with the famous Shuar Federation in Ecuador.[34] It helped indigenous people to reconstruct ties and identities as Indians that went beyond their immediate localities.

> With the advance of missionary work, bilingual education, and land-tenure struggles...tribal boundaries and affiliations emerged as powerful political categories. "Tribe" became a way that native peoples could frame their

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[33] See, for example, Collier (1994); Chojnacki (1995); and Floyd (1995).

[34] See, in particular, Brown (1993, 307–26); and Santana (1995, ch. 6–7).

> identities and demands without being assimilated into existing advocacy institutions (national political parties, labor unions, peasant organizations, etc.) that historically have treated Indians in a paternalistic manner, if they notice them at all. (Brown 1993, 316)

In short, states, unions, and churches provided networks that enabled communities that were indigenous to transcend localized identities and to identify commonly trusted leaders. They provided literacy skills that enabled indigenous leaders to gain access to outside agendas and to communicate with the state. These networks provided a basis for indigenous mobilizing in the 1970s–90s. Where they existed, communities were able to transcend localized identities and to mobilize in the 1980s and 1990s to protect/secure property relations that would address both material needs and lay the geographical basis for localized political autonomy. Where these networks did not exist on a national scale and in sustained fashion, as appears to have been the case in Peru, indigenous mobilization did not occur. And where they did not exist in Mexico, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, indigenous mobilization did not occur on the same scale.

Unifying Demands or Symbols?

Latin America's indigenous movements have engaged in symbolic politics to encapsulate their demands, to mobilize support, to create a cohesive movement, and to delineate a clear target. In this arena land and neoliberalism dominate the discursive agenda. While the former has provided a common glue for positive agenda-setting, the latter has provided a common glue for target-making.

The demand for land is central but complex. Indeed, the common cry for land masks varied concerns: titling of individually managed lands; titling of collectively held lands; protection of previously protected communally held lands; and redistribution. While in some cases land rights are seen as collective—in the Amazon and Mexico—in others they are seen as individual—in the Andes and Guatemala. Yet whether organizations demand individual or collective titling/protection, whether land is seen as part of indigenous cosmology or not, they all seem to share a political component; for so long as property relations are stable in a given area, it becomes easier to establish and sustain local forms of indigenous governance—whether recognized or not by the national state. Land, therefore, refers to productive capacity and the locus for establishing and

sustaining community practices and local authority structures. The threat to property relations, therefore, is more than economic in nature and strikes at the very core of local community political practices. From this perspective land demands are the symbolic glue that enables communities to mobilize around one issue which, in fact, can hold very different meanings and goals for the mobilized communities; the case of the Ecuadorian national confederation, CONAIE, is paramount here insofar as Amazonian Indians demanding territorial autonomy and Andean Indians demanding redistribution can come together under one organizational structure to struggle for land—in its varied political and economic interpretations. In short, land becomes a generally used rubric that includes material, political, and cultural claims.

Part of what makes this glue stick, however, is a common political target. And it is here that neoliberalism as a political symbol has become so pervasive. It is difficult to read indigenous pamphlets, to attend a march, or to conduct an interview without having reference made to the negative impact of neoliberalism on indigenous communities and property relations. Neoliberal reforms have clearly threatened rural property relations, as noted; but this has not been the case everywhere—particularly not in Guatemala where land demands revolve largely around the right to lands historically held but alienated—nor has it manifested itself similarly—as we have seen in the Andes in contrast to the Amazon. Nonetheless, it has become the symbol/discourse to target the state for retribution, justice, and guarantees. Neoliberalism has become a symbol of the state itself—a symbol that enables indigenous movements to similarly target the state nationally and even internationally. It is under this rubric that the EZLN called for an international conference against neoliberalism and for humanity.

Concluding with Democracy

I have proposed a comparative and historical institutional approach to address the recent intersection of indigenous politics and movement formation in Latin America. By addressing how state building has reframed political institutions, networks, and symbols, I have addressed the conditions under which indigenous movements have emerged in Latin America. In particular, I have argued that Latin America's indigenous movements

are primarily a response to the twin emergence of incomplete political liberalization and state economic reforms. Political liberalization in the 1980s provided greater space for the public articulation of ethnic identities, demands, and conflicts. Nonetheless, indigenous communities have experienced a new stage of political disenfranchisement as states fail to uphold the individual rights associated with liberal democracy just as economic reforms dismantle state institutions that had previously extended de facto or de jure corporate class rights and community autonomy. Building on social networks left in place by prior rounds of political and religious organizing, indigenous groups have mobilized across communities to demand rights and resources denied them as Indians. At base, they have mobilized around land rights as a means to achieve material survival with local political/regional autonomy.

This argument hinges on a more nuanced understanding of Latin America's democratic institutions than that generally adopted in the democratization literature. The recent democratization literature has largely analyzed urban, elite, and institutional transactions, including elite accommodations, pact making, institution building, agenda setting, and party systems.[35] By focusing on national political institutions, forms of representation, and agenda setting, they have underscored the different types of democracy that urban politicians can construct. These newly constructed institutions matter not least because they a) provide a clear set of rules and regulations for ordering political interaction and making politics more transparent and predictable; b) freeze power relations and institutionalize compromise; and c) create a new set of vested interests. State institutions matter, therefore, for the locus and direction of political interaction.

But the story told here suggests that democratization studies would do well to disaggregate their institutional studies to account for local politics, channels of representation, and the countryside. Granted that one needs to analyze institutions, but the democratization literature has largely assumed a unitary process of institutional engineering. Yet, as we have seen, state structures are not homogeneous in their scope,

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[35] See, for example, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986); Malloy and Seligson (1987); Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela, eds. (1992); Higley and Gunther, eds. (1992); Linz and Valenzuela (1994); and Mainwaring and Scully, eds. (1995).

presence, or capacity. One cannot just effect national institutional changes and expect them to have similar results throughout the country—particularly given variations in local state institutions, practices, and social relations.[36] Latin America's indigenous movements provide a mirror to the weak process of democratization and state building in the countryside and the deleterious affects that the current transition has had on indigenous communities.

As indigenous organizations demand autonomy and respect for local forms of governance, they also challenge liberal democratic assumptions. For rather than delineating a single relationship between the state and its citizens, indigenous organizations are demanding multiply configured types of citizens with boundaries that guarantee equal rights and representation at the national level and that recognize and respect corporate indigenous governance structures, rights, and law in a given indigenous territory. As policymakers face the challenge of responding to indigenous organizations and their demands, they confront the issue of if and how states can recognize both individual and communal rights in an ideologically meaningful, practically feasible, and enduring way. To address this question requires that one address if and how the law can be configured on the basis of universal claims to citizenship and targeted/differentiated claims to difference. These questions are not just philosophical but ongoing practical ones as the various Latin American states grapples with how to consolidate their tenuous democracies.

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[36] See Putnam (1993); O'Donnell (1993); Fox (1994b and 1994c); and Fox, ed. (1990).

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Indigenous Parties and Democracy in Latin America. Latin American Politics and Society, Vol. 47, Issue. 04, p. 161.Â Finally, I want to link the contemporary neoliberal citizenship regimes to the contemporary neoliberal reforms that have redefined Latin America's political economies and dismantled many of the social programs that were once tied to social rights. 8 For classic perspectives on Latin American corporatism, see Malloy, James M., ed., Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America (Pittsburgh, Pa. (2005) Madrid. Latin American Politics and Society. In recent years, important indigenous parties have emerged for the first time in Latin American history. Although some analysts view this development with trepidation, this essay argues that the indigenous parties in Latin America are unlikely t...Â To the contrary, the emergence of major indigenous parties in Latin America may actually help deepen democracy in the region. These parties will certainly improve the representativeness of the party system in the countries where they arise. They should also increase political participation and reduce party system fragmentation and electoral volatility in indigenous areas. Indigenous movements have reinvigorated Latin Americaâ€™s democracies. The political exclusion of Indigenous peoples, especially in countries with substantial Indigenous populations, has undoubtedly contributed to the weakness of party systems and the lack of accountability, representation, and responsiveness of democracies in the region.Â The literature on Indigenous movements and democracy in Latin America is focused primarily on explaining the sudden and unexpected emergence of Indigenous peoples as critical new social actors in Latin Americaâ€™s most recent round of democratization.Â In Nicaragua, Indigenous groups have successfully contested regional elections by way of their own electoral vehicles since 1990.