

**THE POLITICS OF ETHNICITY  
IN SOUTHERN MEXICO**

Howard Campbell, Editor



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## VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

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ISBN 0-935462-41-4

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vii
FORWARD . . . . .	viii
 Chapters	
I. <b>ETHNIC GROUPS AND ETHNICITY IN SOUTHERN MEXICO AND NORTHERN NEW MEXICO:</b> An Historical Comparison of the Valley of Oaxaca and the Española Valley by Joseph W. Whitecotton . . . . .	1
II <b>LOCAL ISSUES, INTERGROUP CONFLICT, AND ETHNICITY AND THE FORMATION OF MIXTEC REGIONAL COALITIONS</b> by Ronald Spores . . . . .	33
III <b>THE BILINGUAL TEACHERS:</b> A new Indigenous Intelligentsia by Hernández Díaz . . . . .	41
IV <b>NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, THE STATE AND ETHNICITY IN RURAL OAXACA</b> by Leigh Binford . . . . .	59
V <b>ISTHMUS ZAPOTEC INTELLECTUALS:</b> Cultural Production and Politics in Juchitán, Oaxaca by Howard Campbell . . . . .	77
VI <b>THE CREATION AND RECREATION OF ETHNICITY:</b> Lessons from the Zapotec and Mixtec of Oaxaca by Lynn Stephen . . . . .	99
VII <b>COMMUNAL AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY IN OTAVALO, ECUADOR</b> by Les Field . . . . .	123
 Cover illustration by Shinzaburo Nagae Takado	

## INTRODUCTION

Howard Campbell

This volume is based on a session titled "The Politics of Ethnicity in Southern Mesoamerica" at the 1991 Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Papers were presented by John Monaghan, Howard Campbell, Ronald Spores, Leigh Binford, Jorge Hernández Díaz, Joseph Whitecotton, and Michael Kearney. William Roseberry and Lynn Stephen served as discussants. All of the papers dealt with Oaxaca and several explicitly addressed the issue of indigenous intellectuals' role in the construction of ethnic identity. Seeing the similarities in the subject matter of many of the papers, as well as their geographical focus on Oaxaca, John Monaghan offered to publish them in this volume.

All of the papers presented at the AAA Meeting are published in the volume, except for those of Michael Kearney and John Monaghan. Additionally, after discussing our session with Les Field, who is working on similar topics in Ecuador, John and I invited him to submit an article as well as a foreword discussing the papers' theoretical significance. Lynn Stephen also submitted a paper based on her Oaxacan experience.

Oaxaca, one of the most ethnically-diverse regions in the world, has been a privileged location for anthropological fieldwork. In this volume we do not attempt to account for the historical complexities of Oaxacan ethnic diversity. We do, however, deal with the growing importance of ethnicity as a basis for political organizing in contemporary Oaxaca as well as the role of local intellectuals in this process.

The variety of ethnic political struggles and organizations in Oaxaca reflects the great heterogeneity of the state. However, our papers are concerned primarily with Zapotec, Mixtec, and Chatino peoples, three of the largest indigenous groups, and do not exhaust the possibilities of ethnic politicization in the area. They do, nonetheless, highlight the salience of ethnic "tradition" as a disputed terrain and rallying point for indigenous organizing and activism.

Oaxacan ethnic conflicts date to pre-Hispanic times and to colonial impositions. While carrying on aspects of these age-old struggles, contemporary Oaxacan ethnic politics also reflect new social conditions. Perhaps most original and unique is the case of Mixtec migrant workers in California who are recreating ethnic identities and political alliances outside their ancestral homelands (see Stephen's paper in this volume). Yet, within Oaxaca, ethnic political struggles are also taking on novel forms and strategies. These new approaches are both a response to and a result of capitalist economic development and State encroachment. Economic "modernization" has simultaneously impoverished peasants and increased class divisions, and provided new educational and occupational opportunities for native Oaxacans in Mexico City and in their home state.

One of the most salutary effects of these changes is the rise of a large group of indigenous intellectuals often educated in the nation's capital or in Oaxaca City. These teachers, writers, sociologists, and politicians are usually educated in government schools and programs and also find jobs in government-established bureaucracies, schools, research institutes and cultural centers. Among the most important of these institutions are the *Casas de la Cultura*, *Casas del Pueblo*, the research branches of UABJO, CIESAS, and the many other arms of the federal and state government whose acronyms challenge the memory of even the most thorough

anthropologist. More and more, native Oaxacans are writing about their own lives in books, newspapers, and magazines such as *Cuadernos del Sur*, *El Alcaraván*, and *Guchachi' Reza*. Others assume leadership positions in ethnic-oriented political movements such as COCEI in Juchitán.

These developments reflect the contradictory impact of the expansion of Oaxaca's political and economic infrastructure. On one hand, the Indian population is growing, the national government officially sanctioned native people's right to cultural self-determination, and former governor Heladio Ramírez identified himself as a Mixtec. COCEI now dominates politics in Juchitán and maintains cordial relations with the Salinas administration. On the other hand, crowds of impoverished peasants flood the Oaxaca *zocalo* daily to protest economic and political exploitation, thousands of Oaxacans must leave the state every year to survive economically, and the indigenous inhabitants of Huatulco were thrown off their lands to make way for First World jet set tourists. Moreover, opposition political activists are still subject to arbitrary arrest, torture, and sometimes murder.

Within this conflictive milieu, indigenous intellectuals insist on the right to represent the cultural and political realities of their people and their voices are being heard to a greater extent in both local, national, and even international fora. The increasing visibility of native Oaxacan intellectuals is a major theme of this volume and an issue which challenges anthropological practice in the region. No longer can anthropologists claim to be the sole authorities and sources of knowledge about Oaxacan Indian people. Nor can the political and cultural demands of native *Oaxaqueños* be satisfied through worn-out *indigenista* programs, ethnocentric and urban-oriented strategies of national leftist parties, or the sentimental appeals for altruism of liberal social scientists. Indeed, in the future, Oaxacan Indian people will be, to an increasing extent, the ones to determine their own destinies. As part of this growing political strength, they call on non-Oaxacan anthropologists to relate to them in ways which are more cooperative, respectful, and reciprocal. It is with that goal in mind that we present you, the reader, with this volume.

## FORWARD

Les Field

I was asked to contribute a chapter about my work with indigenous Otavaleños of the northern Ecuadorian sierra to this collection concerned with the indigenous peoples of Oaxaca, in the hope that a perspective from an "outsider" might underline and bring into sharper relief salient issues of commonality and contention among the authors. This invitation, which has since expanded into both an introduction to the volume and a separate chapter about communal land and indigenous identity in Otavalo, came as an honor unlooked-for when I first spoke to John Monaghan and Howard Campbell about their session at the 1991 American Anthropological Association Meetings, a session I had been unable to attend. Reading the chapters of this book and reflecting upon their content, it seems clearer than ever that the underlying themes and debates among the session's participants are necessarily of overriding importance to all anthropologists engaged in "ethnographic and analytic discourse with indigenous peoples", a clumsy terminology I deliberately choose in place of the more usual "research about", "investigation of" or "fieldwork among" indigenous peoples. Below, I briefly describe and discuss the positions taken by the authors concerning the key issues of ethnicity, class, indigenous intellectuals, and the strategic role of contemporary anthropology. I conclude by reflecting upon complex conclusions that the positions offered by the authors lead us towards.

### A Critical Reading

Joseph Whitecotton explicitly addresses the longstanding debate within anthropology between materialist and idealist analyses of ethnicity, or what is often cast as "instrumentalists versus primordialists." Using the comparative method, Whitecotton describes ethnicity in two geographical regions, the Oaxaca and Española valleys in Mexico and New Mexico respectively, to bridge the gap between the two analyses and derive a more rigorous approach to the generation of ethnic identities. His particular reconciliation is overtly historical and Wallersteinian, specifying ethnicity as a response to the dynamics of the global political economy, conditioned by both subjective or idealist or cultural perceptions and objective or material or structural circumstances. Whitecotton represents ethnicity and ethnic identity very much as a construction, or "invention" as Hobsbawm (1983) had it, and I sense that all of the volume's contributors would agree to this proposition, while stressing that the construction of ethnicity and ethnic tradition in no way implies artificiality, but rather the active intention and intellectual forcefulness of the indigenous will to survive. In this chapter, Whitecotton is specifically interested in the intensification of ethnic identities and traditions under conditions of rapid social change, conditions under which modernization theorists typically predicted a decline of ethnicity.

This chapter accurately describes, I think, much of the contemporary theoretical advances concerning ethnicity within anthropology, but remains aloof from the intellectual battles taking place between anthropology and the indigenous people that anthropologists objectified in the past. In particular, Whitecotton smooths over the contradictions between class and ethnicity in a manner that the other authors, and the peoples their chapters describe, seem less willing

to allow. Quoting Wallerstein to the effect that both class and ethnicity are "simply collective claims to power and the allocation of goods and service... (a)s such, they are simply one variety of status group," I read Whitecotton as underplaying contradictions, complications and competitions between class and ethnicity for indigenous peoples. It seems that ethnicity is more pervasive and persuasive than class, or at least that ethnicity can successfully articulate class differences in the groups Whitecotton describes.

Moreover, Whitecotton adopts the stance which we may ironically call "traditional" for anthropologists, in that his analysis, while interested in and engaged by the ethnic groups he discusses, occupies a more or less unexamined objectivity, employing the remove of the comparative method, and the goal of the overall increase in anthropological knowledge. The indigenous voice, particularly of the indigenous intellectuals and their analyses, lie deeply embedded within the discourse of the anthropologist, an approach which in the 1990s has been repeatedly challenged on political grounds.

Concerning the fraught relationship between class and ethnicity, both as analytic concepts and lived realities, various authors stake out positions over an indigenous Oaxacan landscape that all agree is and has long been defined and divided by community-locality based identity and the mutual unintelligibility of indigenous languages and dialects. Ronald Spores' chapter reflects, in many ways a pessimistic pole in the debate over indigenous identity in the Mixteca Alta. In his view, neither class nor ethnicity are capable of providing a basis for transcending the divisions of community locality, particularly among the peoples that anthropologists have labelled "Mixtec." This assessment calls attention to the important distinctions between the lived realities of indigenous communities and the analytic fictions of ethnography, such as "class," "ethnicity," and "tradition."

However, authors in this volume do describe indigenous ethnicity as a lived reality, not only an ascribed category, a reality manifesting in ways that anthropologists could not possibly have predicted. Jorge Hernández Díaz recounts the formation of a class-based strata of Gramscian "organic intellectuals" among bilingual Chatino schoolteachers. Using the Gramscian approach, Hernández Díaz describes the schoolteachers' ideology, which embraces both the social services modernization has promised, while offering a vision of a common Chatino identity in which traditional institutions of communal land and labor overcome the divisions of community-locality. This chapter suggests that the Chatino school-teacher intelligentsia is actually capable of generating a common ethnic identity - - but whether such an outcome stems from either particular advantages that Chatino communities feature or from the ideological acumen of the Chatino intellectual strata is left to the reader to decide.

Engaging the class-ethnicity debate from a very different perspective, Leigh Binford's chapter stresses the reality of objective class interests and the need for macro-economic data about the class structure of indigenous areas of the Mixteca Alta in order to assess the Zapotec and Mixtec political movements in that region. His point of entry into the debate derives from the current academic discourse between those social scientists who, on the one hand, contend that indigenous movements of the last twenty years have been a fundamentally new form of social movement, and those, on the other hand, who maintain that such movements are historically rooted in the last seventy years of class-based resistance movements sparked by the Mexican Revolution. Binford seeks to transcend this divide, conceding both that the so-called "new social movements" mine the very same weaknesses in the porous Mexican bureaucracy that

class-based movements successfully resisted in the 1940s and '50s, at the same time that the newer movements deploy ethnically-based strategies that the older movements did not.

Much more essential to Binford's argument is his contention that while ethnicity cannot be discounted or reduced as an element of consciousness and resistance, not all social bases for resistance are created equal. Admitting that class solidarity cannot simply articulate ethnic identity, and agreeing with Philippe Bourgois (1988) that objective economic exploitation "conjugates" with ethnic oppression, Binford nevertheless asserts that class "intertwines" with ethnicity as both a more powerful analytic tool and a more significant stimulus to organized resistance than any other social factor, including ethnicity. The persuasiveness of this approach makes clear the need for much more information about objective economic conditions that form the context for the new indigenous movements. At the same time, Binford's approach needs to be combined with extensive input from indigenous intellectuals concerning the analytic bases for the political ideologies of their movements, a discourse that other authors in this volume explore.

The manner in which the analysis of ethnicity and class coalesce in the indigenous intellectual leadership is extremely varied, and manifests through the contemporary sociocultural pastiche often labelled "post-modern." In an article sharply focused upon indigenous intellectuals, Howard Campbell represents the politics and ideology of an historically rooted strata of Zapotec artistic, literary and activist intellectuals to which anthropologists writing about the Zapotec have heretofore not paid nearly enough attention. Over four generations, the Zapotec intellectuals of Juchitán have defined broad ideological agenda, which in the last fifteen years have skillfully combined community, class, and ethnicity to pursue an autonomous political project in that city. Campbell discerns the contradictions and tensions between alliances based on these heterogeneous concepts as well as the heterogeneous ideological inspirations for Zapotec political ideology, but, interestingly, stresses the Zapotec intellectuals' own resolutions to these contradictions, rather than asserting his analytic authority. His position calls to mind Partha Chatterjee's (1986) characterization of nationalist ideologies in the Third World as profoundly derivative of, even tainted by the nationalisms of the colonial powers. The indigenous ideologies, so far, are not separatist-nationalist; the assessment of their histories and trajectories will necessarily take place, Campbell implies, in an arena that both social scientists and indigenous intellectuals define.

Stephen uses ethnographic material about Zapotec and Mixtec peoples to draw some general conclusions about the creation and recreation of ethnicity in Oaxaca. In her view, the boundaries and contents of Oaxacan ethnic identities are in a constant process of historical change and reevaluation. The expression of ethnic identity, she says, is often linked to social conflict and competition. Finally she notes that ethnicity is closely linked to structures of political and economic power.

In focusing so much upon indigenous intellectuals and their ideologies, re authors in this volume, these anthropologists are somewhat paradoxically addressing the profound disputes over the control anthropologists have traditionally exercised over concepts like ethnicity and class. By choosing a Gramscian approach, Hernández Díaz assumes a particular political stance which both legitimizes the voices of indigenous intellectuals because they are shown to truly represent the indigenous political position, as well as calling attention to the politics of the anthropologist who engages in discourse with indigenous intellectuals. Hernández Díaz politically and theoretically links his own analysis with the thought of the indigenous intelligentsia, bridging the

two through the intervention of a radical movement among Mexican anthropologists, "antropología crítica," which has proposed a participatory indigenist project of collaboration between indigenous intellectuals and anthropologists to achieve linguistic, cultural, political and economic autonomy for Mexican indigenous peoples. Campbell accepts indigenous intellectuals' legitimacy and representativeness as unproblematic; he also addresses the relationship between contemporary anthropologists and indigenous intellectuals from an explicitly post-modern perspective. Having detailed the Zapotec intellectuals' development and political program, Campbell advocates the deconstruction of much of anthropology's conceptualization of ethnicity. He calls for a transformation of the relations of power between "us" and "them", a new discourse based upon a levelled field of legitimated intellectual activity for both indigenous intellectuals and anthropologists. The product of such a broadened discourse will rely upon, I conclude, newly defined objectivities which Haraway (1991) has called "situated knowledges."

In summary, contributors to this volume take part in an analytic and political raising of the stakes in anthropological work with indigenous peoples. At the very least, anthropologists must supersede old debates about ethnicity and propose complex, mutually determining intertwinings of class and ethnicity that put the intellectual activity of indigenous peoples at center stage. Such analyses necessarily engage anthropologists with the production of indigenous identity and ideology in a way that de-objectifies indigenous peoples and points toward a discourse about ethnicity in which new players participate under new rules.

(The sources cited in this introduction are included in the bibliography for the chapter entitled "Communal Land and Indigenous Identity in Otavalo, Ecuador")



# I

## ETHNIC GROUPS AND ETHNICITY IN SOUTHERN MEXICO AND NORTHERN NEW MEXICO: AN HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF THE VALLEY OF OAXACA AND THE ESPAÑOLA VALLEY

Joseph W. Whitecotton

The great French scholar Marc Bloch insisted that social historians must become comparativists lest we remain antiquarians, a theme also echoed in anthropology over the years by scholars as diverse in approach as Edward Tylor, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Julian Steward and Eric Wolf. Of the numerous purposes of comparison, two stand out at this juncture in anthropological history: on the one hand, comparison allows us to ascertain and attempt to explain cross-cultural regularities, a task that must remain as one of the major goals of an anthropological science despite the objections of the postmodernists. On the other hand, comparisons of the controlled or "genetic" kind--when two structures or historical trajectories have much in common--permit us to ascertain, in Sahlins (1985:21) words, "permutations marked by a significant absence." In other words, two similar historical structures, which show marked contrast in one or two areas, allow us to attempt an explanation for the differences.

This paper examines the historical trajectories of two valleys: the Valley of Oaxaca in southern Mexico and the Española Valley in Northern New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> I have selected these two areas because I know them first-hand and have conducted considerable historical research on both. More importantly, the two regions allow for the kind of "genetic" comparison alluded to above. Historically they were both somewhat peripheral parts of colonial New Spain and nineteenth-century Mexico, although they differed in the degree of their "peripheralness." Today, they still contain a diversity of "peoples" and ethnic groups that attract serious scholarly study by anthropologists and others; combined with that fact they also have been major areas of tourist activity.

Although the colonial and early modern histories of the Oaxaca Valley and the Española Valley show many parallels in ethnic group structure, their contemporary histories diverge in one important respect: New Mexico displays an intense manifestation of what might be called "hyperethnicity"--where ethnic concerns seem to permeate daily life--while Oaxaca shows a lower degree of ethnicity development. One purpose of this essay is to explore these historical similarities and differences and attempt to explain them. I also argue that, to a degree, particularly as both New Mexico and Oaxaca experience a similar kind of "incorporation" into the modern world-system through craft and "folkloric" production, ethnicity will again converge in the two areas despite the fact that, on another level, their gross ethnic profiles remain distinct.

In perhaps no other area is there such a vast literature in the social sciences as that concerned with the subject of ethnic groups and ethnicity. In anthropology, this field has had one major historical benchmark: the publication by Fredrik Barth and his colleagues of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969. This volume brought about a redirection that focused attention on the processual and adaptive nature of ethnic group bounding as opposed to an earlier approach that viewed ethnic groups as static, and saw culture, *sui generis*, as the causal source of ethnic group formation (Roosens 1989:11); the two periods in the history of ethnic studies

are designated B.B. (before Barth) and A.B. (after Barth) by Depres (1975). The A.B. approaches are not only more "ecological" and processual than the B.B. ones but also emphasize the incongruity between the subjective identifications of individual actors (either inside or outside the ethnic group in question) and the criteria employed by external investigators in defining an ethnic group. Recognitions of the subjective view of ethnic claims, plus an increasing knowledge that ethnic symbols are as much putative as "real," led to the use of the term "ethnicity" to refer to the totality of identifications found in a society with diverse ethnic groups (for a useful review of these distinctions see R. Cohen 1978).

The recognition that ethnic symbols are putative has spawned a further division in ethnic studies between the "primordialists" and the "instrumentalists" (sometimes called the "situationalists," or the "circumstantialists"). According to Bentley (1987), these distinctions rest on "whether subjective claims to ethnic identity derived from the affective potency of primordial attachments" or whether they derived "from the instrumental manipulation of culture in service of collective political and economic interests" (Bentley 1987:25). Both models accept the Barthian approach to the degree that they seek to ascertain some "objective" grounding for "subjective" ethnic identity and accept the fact that cultural attributes and identity do not exist in a one-to-one relationship (Bentley 1987:25). Moreover,

instrumentalist models hold that, in the context of socioeconomic change, people with common interest form groups to pursue those interests, with ethnicity being the most effective unifying principle for the appeals to be made. In contrast, primordialists point to the potent, emotive symbols ethnicity entails and argue that, in the context of disorienting social change, people retire to their ethnic identity to meet emotional needs (Yelvington 1991:159).

Although there is some disagreement over who represents which position (see Yelvington 1991 and Bentley 1991), the primordialist position would seem to be emphasized by Epstein (1978), De Vos (1975), Geertz (1963), Isaacs (1975), and Keyes (1976), while the instrumentalist position is more characteristic of A. Cohen (1969), Depres (1967), Nagata (1974), and Wallerstein (1979).

The difference between the primordialists and the instrumentalists reflects a basic paradigmatic distinction (particularly in anthropology) between those who view cultural processes and cultural phenomena as primarily "mental" and those who view them as reflecting "material" conditions; in other words, the "mental" approach sees ethnic group formation and ethnic group identity more like the B.B. scholars and their models can be said to be more "cultural" while the materialist (instrumental) approach can be said to be more "social" since the economic and political processes promoting ethnic group formation are emphasized. In these respects, the two approaches focus on very different dimensions in the study of ethnic groups and ethnicity.

There have been a number of attempts to reconcile these two models. Bentley (1987,1991) stresses the failure of the earlier syntheses, such as those of van den Berghe (1978,1981) and Keyes (1981), to explain "how people come to recognize their commonalities in the first place" (Bentley 1987:27). His solution to this problem is to adopt a "practice" approach, adapting the ideas of Bourdieu (1977) to the study of ethnicity. While this would seem, in my opinion, to result in an overemphasis on individuals and individual case histories

(Bentley uses the example of a single woman caught between Filipino and Maranao ethnic identity to make his argument), he nevertheless stresses the importance of history, power, and the analysis of a total social system in understanding ethnicity. He writes:

Tied as they are to temporal processes of reproduction and change, ethnic identity transformation and political mobilization reveal their real import only when viewed in historical perspective. It is for lack of this perspective that ethnicity so often emerges in the literature as an empty vessel given content only by the social contexts in which it appears. Remedying this error requires that investigation of a given case be broadened in time to show how ethnicity contributes to social reproduction, and in space to take account of regional and world-scale factors impinging on systems of domination (Bentley 1987:49).

On a somewhat different level, Harrell (1990) also attempts a reconciliation between aspects of the primordialist and instrumentalist views. He does so by emphasizing that the nature of ethnicity in any social system is a compound of "three kinds of definition and two kinds of relationships" (Harrell 1990:516). Any group is a complex combination of definitions by members of the in-group, by those of neighboring groups, by the state and, I might add, by anthropologists be they state representatives or not. These definitions lead to relationships of difference or similarity, the "paradigmatic" aspect, that interact in relationships of exchange, the "syntagmatic" aspect; groups "trade, feud, intermarry, rule each other, or compete for spoils in a political system" (Harrell 1990:516). Further, it is important to study the interrelationship between the definitions, and the interrelationship between the definitions and the relationships, for they may or may not be congruent. I might also add that the definitions, the relationships, and the interrelationships between the definitions and the relationships may change; thus, it is important to acknowledge that this process has a temporal dimension.

Here I will stress what might best be called the "political economy" of ethnic groups and ethnicity particularly the way in which ethnic groups and ethnicity (defined by a complex combination of internal subjective claims and external attributes) relate to, react to, or resist changing forms of domination be they local, regional, interregional, or world-scale. In this way I hope to make a contribution toward a primordial-instrumental synthesis in ethnic studies, and to move toward an historical synthesis of processes in two regions of the world where scholars have characteristically studied one ethnic group while ignoring the others and where they have typically treated "history" as if it too were a subject for separate consideration.

In brief, what I propose in this paper is a preliminary historical typology of ethnicity or ethnic processes as these processes have been generated by a combination of both external and internal factors. Tracing the historical trajectories of Central Oaxaca and Northern New Mexico since the Spanish conquest, I identify four basic types of ethnicity: defensive or xenophobic identities that use ethnic labels as a synonym for community ethnocentrism that was generated by colonial control of subject populations; a reconstructed ethnicity that results from a greater incorporation of peasant-artisans or craft villages into the modern capitalistic world-system; a more "modern" reactive, primarily politically-based ethnicity resulting from increased hegemonic pressures on groups emanating from national governments; and finally a pan-ethnic instrumental strategy that develops in a society characterized by pervasive ethnicity

and that is structurally similar to modern "civil-rights" movements. The first three of these types are found in both Oaxaca and New Mexico and are primarily related to the incorporation of peripheral areas or groups into larger economic and political systems. The fourth type is found only in New Mexico and seems to be more characteristic of ethnicities within core nations of the capitalistic world-system than it does of peripheral areas. It should be emphasized, however, that all of these types represent points along a continuum and do not constitute absolute categories.

### Setting

The Valley of Oaxaca is, and has been, from early pre-Hispanic times, the core political center of the Oaxacan region; the present state capital, its major city, is located there. It has the prime agricultural land in the state and has been the major hub of activity and is, thus, different from other areas in the state which are more isolated and, in most respects, more rural. However, in a number of periods of Oaxacan history--such as during the cochineal boom of the eighteenth century and the coffee boom of the nineteenth--the Valley was economically peripheral to other areas in the state.

In New Mexico, the best agricultural lands are found in the Española Valley, and this was the area to receive the first Spanish colonial land grant in Nuevo Mexico. An indication of its desirability for settlement

...is the fact that it reached its basic full growth by 1780, an earlier date than for any other region of settlement in New Mexico. This phenomenon was due to a fortuitous combination of fertile soil, adequate water for irrigation, and the relative closeness of the valley to the presidio at Santa Fe from which soldiers could rally for the defense of the settlement. In turn, the closeness of the settlers made it easier for them to defend themselves (Westphall 1983:20).

However, even though the first Spanish capital of the province was located at San Gabriel de los Españoles in the Española Valley, and it remained important economically, the major political center of the Spanish province shifted to Santa Fe, a settlement slightly to the south of, and outside, the Española Valley. During Mexican times this pattern largely continued. Under U.S. control, Albuquerque became the major metropolitan and economic center although "plastic" Santa Fe maintained its status as the state capital and has become the main tourist and "folkloristic" hub.

Thus, the selection of these two valleys must constitute only a starting point for neither is a self-contained unit nor do the two areas have the same relationship to their contiguous regions. Since their relationships to extra-local sites are of some importance in understanding the ethnic histories of the two valleys, at times in this essay I refer to other units such as the Tewa Basin (the maximal Tewa area in New Mexico) Northern New Mexico, (the primary region of Hispano and Pueblo settlement in New Mexico), and Eastern Oaxaca (the maximal Zapotec area in Oaxaca).<sup>2</sup>

Before proceeding, however, let me first point out some additional similarities between the two valleys. Both areas had indigenous agricultural populations that ultimately formed a

lower part of an ethnically stratified society under Spanish rule. Native populations, Zapotecs in the Valley of Oaxaca and Tewa in the Española Valley, survived the Spanish colonial period in agricultural communities that might in a general sense be referred to as "peasant"; the inhabitants were primarily subsistence agriculturalists who retained a significant measure of control over their agricultural lands.

During the Mexican period, in both areas, these land-based units came under attack. In Oaxaca, Juárez's reforms abolished corporate landholdings, and in New Mexico non-Indians continually infringed on Pueblo lands. In both cases, however, some Indian communities were able to retain their lands and despite significant cultural change entered the twentieth century as distinct entities.

In both the Valley of Oaxaca and the Española Valley, the rural populations inhabit areas that have been considered to be economically depressed by respective Mexican or United States national economic standards. This economic marginality, the fact that they have been perceived as having retained their traditional cultures, and their locations in beautifully scenic highlands have attracted two groups who have had a tremendous impact on them--anthropologists and tourists. As a result, Tewa Pueblos and Zapotecs have turned to craft production and wage labor to supplement their diminishing subsistence autonomy and rising expectations. No less important, both peoples have been subjected to intensive anthropological study which has not only served as another source of revenue but has brought to each a "new" knowledge of their respective cultures that has generated "new" and reinforced "old" ideas of ethnic distinctions and ethnicity.

Despite these similarities between the Española Basin and the Oaxaca Valley, there are important ways in which the two areas are different. Environmental differences between them give the central Valley of Oaxaca much more agricultural potential resulting in a far denser population than in northern New Mexico.<sup>3</sup> Further, unlike Northern New Mexico, Oaxaca's prehispanic populations had a long experience with complex state systems, both indigenous and foreign, and their inevitable accompaniments of warfare, social stratification and elite exploitation. As a result, the transition to Spanish control was less traumatic in Oaxaca because it was eased by the presence of native elites who served as cultural mediators helping to undermine any potential ethnic solidarity between indigenous populations as a whole and Spaniards. In New Mexico, inexperience with state systems acted to intensify ethnic differences between the conquerors and the indigenous population. This led to a concerted effort, which originated at San Juan in the Española Valley, that repulsed the Spaniards in 1680. The "Pueblo Rebellion," was perhaps the first instance of a "Pueblo," or perhaps an "Indian," ethnicity. But even this common cause did not long sustain a Pueblo--let alone an Indian--identity; de Vargas' 1693 "reconquest" was eased by dissension within each of the Pueblos as well as among them.

In New Mexico the presence of non-agricultural nomadic Indians (the so-called *indios bárbaros*) posed new problems for the Spanish system that were not encountered in Oaxaca and that complicated the concept of "Indian." And, although both Pueblo and Zapotec villages were similarly defined as *repúblicas de indios*, closed corporate communities in Wolf's (1955) terms, the municipal-republican form of government that was imposed on Zapotec communities never really developed among the Pueblos except for a brief time after 1812 when, because of new reforms, they were no longer defined as "Indians" (Simmons 1979a).

Another difference is that, after the reconquest, the Pueblos were largely exempt from the tribute demands made on rural Zapotec communities; they also were spared the intense assault on their institutional structure by the Church. So, unlike the Zapotecs, the Pueblos seem to have undergone less "syncretism" of Spanish and Indian characteristics in either the cultural or socio-political realms. However, my feeling is that this lack of syncretism among Pueblos may be overstated in the literature and may reflect conceptualizations of investigators as much as it does actual sociocultural phenomena. This topic is certainly worthy of more careful investigation than it has received in recent times.<sup>4</sup>

### Colonial Ethnic Groups

Although Oaxaca was nearer the core area of New Spain than was New Mexico, both regions constituted "regions of refuge" or "peripheries" during the Spanish colonial period (Aguirre-Beltrán 1979, Chance 1986, T. Hall 1983a, Taylor 1979, Whitecotton 1986). Neither Oaxaca nor New Mexico produced great wealth from either mining or haciendas which had been established in other areas of Mexico, and, except for a brief period during which Oaxaca achieved some prominence as a producer of cochineal, they were both economic backwaters. In neither area were the Spanish conquistador's dreams of great wealth and the life of a gentleman brought to fruition.

Both the Valley of Oaxaca and the Tewa Basin suffered considerable population loss during the Spanish colonial period. This, coupled with colonial policy, reinforced the entrenchment of the community-based Zapotec and Pueblo populations. Neither in New Mexico nor in Oaxaca, did the *encomienda* system take root. In New Mexico *encomiendas* were not reestablished after the Pueblo rebellion; in Oaxaca because of Cortes' struggle with the Crown over his *marquesado* few *encomiendas* were granted, and most Indian communities were administered as *corregimientos*.

In both areas new ethnic groups emerged to fill the labor and economic void because the small Spanish population was largely cut-off from rural sources of labor and wealth. In Oaxaca the Spanish population of Antequera, the colonial name of Oaxaca City, used Tlaxcalan and other Nahuatl speaking Indians (*naborías*), who had been Spanish allies in the conquest, as servants and workers on small farms (Chance 1976, 1978). At first *naborías* lived in ethnically differentiated barrios; later they were joined by Zapotecs and Mixtecs from rural areas in the Valley who sought to escape the Crown's tribute demands. Ultimately these various groups became "mixed" and were increasingly Hispanized. By the end of the colonial period, Oaxacan society had taken on a three tiered look: *peninsulares* and *criollos* on top; *castas* (*mestizos* and other "mixtures") in the middle; and rural community Indians on the bottom.

Although the details were quite different, similar processes operated in colonial New Mexico. Here two new groups emerged because of the shortage of labor and economic marginality: *genízaros*, mostly descendants of nomadic Indians; (see T. Hall 1983a, 1984, and Chávez 1979) and a Hispanic, mostly mestizo, population composed of migrants from other areas of New Spain. In the Tewa basin they came mainly from Sombrerete and Fresnillo in Zacatecas and included *españoles-mexicanos* who were probably "mixed" offspring of Spanish men and Indian women or, in some instances, undoubtedly included Spanish men who brought "Indian" (i.e., *Mexicano*) women. These two groups occupied separate economic niches on the

frontier. The *genízaros* served as a source of labor for the Spanish population. Hispanic settlers from Nueva Vizcaya became farmers, ranchers, and primary food producers for the non-Pueblo population. *Genízaros* and rural mestizo Hispanics, accompanied by Hispanicized Pueblos and some *criollos*, would ultimately evolve into "Spanish-Americans" under United States rule.

Thus, at the end of the colonial period both Oaxaca and New Mexico had similar ethnic profiles; Spaniards including a Creole branch on top who were largely administrators and merchants; *castas* and *mestizos*, including Hispanicized Indians, in the middle; and rural agricultural peasant Indians on the bottom. The nomadic Indians, who were largely held at bay until the Mexican period, formed yet another population. In Oaxaca, there also were black slaves although they always constituted a small group.

### Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Oaxaca and New Mexico

Like much of Mexico, Oaxaca participated in the chaos that developed after independence. The nineteenth century, despite other trends, was characterized by *caudillo* rule and *caudillo* struggles, and two of the great Mexican caudillos were native Oaxacans: Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. Although Beals (1959:30) partly attributes the differences between Juárez and Díaz during the Restored Republic to ethnic factors (Juárez was Zapotec; Díaz mother came from Tilantongo in the Mixteca Alta), their struggles were primarily for political power. Further, there seems to be little "ethnic" flavor in the Oaxacan politics of the period, since Oaxaca had not developed the kind of landed nobility characteristic of other areas in Mexico where of dual ethnic society was prevalent. There was, for example, nothing in Oaxaca like the "caste" system of Chiapas, which clearly defined the social, economic, political, and cultural status of "Indians" and *ladinos*.

After Juárez saved the Republic, Oaxaca became a battleground between two liberal groups, since the conservatives had been totally defeated. One of these factions, with which Díaz was allied, was the *puros* or *rojos* who supported the literal enforcement of the 1857 constitution. The other was the *borlados*, "the tasseled ones," who were more moderate in their views and were Juárezistas. However, regardless of their differences both groups subscribed to the view that ethnic distinctions should be abolished--Indian as a legally defined category did not exist after independence--and that corporate landholdings should be abolished--part of the Juárez reform package. They also agreed that the country should "modernize" as soon as possible, and as a result, commercial agriculture should be promoted (Berry 1981, Falcone 1977, and Garner 1985).

For the most part, corporate landholdings were abolished throughout Oaxaca (Esparza 1988). However, local villagers were able to retain their properties. Competition developed between villagers from contiguous communities rather than between villagers and large landowners as it did in other areas of Mexico. This had the effect of strengthening community identity and preserving local custom. Thus, the association between local village and "Indian" identity was preserved. Educational programs and reforms, promised by the liberals as part of the modernization package, failed to materialize. Even craft skills and production apparently were poorly developed during this period.

Further, the privatization of property did not necessarily encourage expansive commercial agriculture. The promotion of coffee, a major crop of the Sierra region from which Juárez

came, did little to undermine local community control and the autonomy of peasant communities; coffee growing was restricted to small peasant plots. Thus, increased state hegemony over local communities, which the liberals hoped to achieve, was largely ineffective.

Few real altercations developed between rural indigenous communities and the state in nineteenth century Oaxaca. This process continued in the early part of the twentieth-century and meant that the Revolution of 1910 was not nearly as intense there as it was in other areas of Mexico (Waterbury 1975; but also see Garner 1990 for a slightly different view). Struggles that did occur were between factional elites, and divisions within the society that could have surfaced around ethnic issues did not.

This does not imply that there were no class distinctions in Oaxaca corresponding to a division between Indians and non-Indians; clearly Oaxacan elites have been, on the whole, phenotypically "blanco"--excluding Juárez, of course, although there are claims by historians that he was hated because he was "Indian"--and of European or Mexican "heritage" while *campesinos*, who are largely phenotypically and, by cultural heritage, "Indian" in Oaxaca, have occupied the bottom of the social hierarchy. However, while some specific individuals may be considered inferior or stupid because they are "muy indio," this never seems to have applied to Indians in general or to those who might be descendants of the great Mixtec and Zapotec civilizations of Oaxaca. Intellectuals in Oaxaca have always taken great pride in that heritage.<sup>5</sup> Finally, an ambiguity concerning the blurred relationship between biological and cultural features allows individuals to claim an Indian (or non-Indian) heritage in a variety of ways.

In New Mexico, *peninsulares* (or Europeans, as they are called in the colonial New Mexican censuses), always very few in number, left the area after Mexican independence. However, the remaining population could not be supported by merchant capitalism, as were Oaxacan elites, nor was it fed by a large contingent of rural peasants--the Pueblo population was simply too small. The Hispanic and Hispanicized population, who were now all Mexican citizens and called themselves *mexicanos*, increasingly resided in more concentrated rural communities mainly for defense against the threat of raids by nomadic Indians who became more aggressive under Mexican rule. These land-based Hispanic communities in New Mexico--whether more nucleated or dispersed, most settlements of the plaza type were somewhere in between (see Simmons 1969)--did not exist in Oaxaca although some non-Indian ranchos were present there. And, while Oaxaca developed a few haciendas--never as many as there were in most other areas of Mexico--political favors and legislation, such as the Juárez reform laws, allowed certain individuals to take Indian lands and commercially exploit them.

Some individuals, a group that included native New Mexicans as well as outsiders of German and French descent, also prospered in Mexican New Mexico and received large land grants from the governor Manuel Armijo. These *ricos* operated sheep ranches that were based on the *partido* system, which had an effect on villagers similar to that of the *peonaje* system in Mexico. Many of these *ricos* increasingly took advantage of their position and a burgeoning merchant capitalism to further the economic gap between themselves and the community populations; they became the regional and local patrones of nineteenth century New Mexico. These patterns were much more typical of the upland areas to the west and east of the Rio Grande, than they were of the Rio Grande Basin itself.

Particularly in the Española Valley, Hispanic settlers in Northern New Mexico squatted on sizeable areas of unused irrigated lands within Pueblo boundaries. The population of the Rio

Arriba doubled between 1840 and 1880, and there was practically no out-migration. This created considerable land pressure (Carlson 1975:100).

No law prevented non-Indian settlement on Indian lands until the Sandoval case of 1913 (G. Hall 1987:111) when the Pueblos were recognized to be "Indians" by the U.S. Supreme Court and thus wards of the government.<sup>6</sup> However, the Pueblo Land Board of 1924, even though they recognized as valid a "four league" colonial Pueblo land area, allowed Hispanics who had long resided on Pueblo lands to remain there and claim title. Ironically, Pueblos lost irrigated land and gained pasture while Hispanics did the opposite (G. Hall 1987:105-11). The upshot of these decisions was an intensified animosity between Pueblos and Hispanics. This animosity was particularly bitter in the Española Valley where Pueblos and Hispanics lived cheek-to-jowl (Carlson 1975:103-105).

However, it was the increasing settlement of Anglos in New Mexico after 1912 that finally crystallized the three major ethnic distinctions in the region. Hispanos emerged as a more vigorous, and defensive, group when their communal grazing lands were not recognized by the U.S. courts and were taken by either purchase or usurpation, or a combination of both. Anglos and Hispanics were thus in competition for lands just as were Pueblos and Hispanos. Anglo firms, such as Bond and Nohl of Española, both purchased and leased land from the United States government which had expropriated vast portions of vital Hispano grazing and forest land. Bond used the partido system with greater ruthlessness than had even the ricos and reduced Hispano families to poverty and debt.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, Bond's major trading establishment in Española ultimately came to be called "Peoples."

### **Community Identity, Ethnocentrism, and Ethnicity**

Hispanics in New Mexico, now neither Pueblo nor Anglo, found themselves in competition with both and as if to differentiate themselves from further competitors, more recent migrants from Mexico, they called themselves "Spanish-Americans" or simply "Spanish." Now, like their Zapotec and Pueblo analogs, the most important aspect of this ethnicity was its local emphasis and land-based sentiment (Spicer 1972); there were few larger organizational forms to support it. Even the Penitente cult, which intensified during this period and was found in most Spanish-American communities, seems to have lacked a supra-local structure. Spanish-Americans associated themselves with a place, and individual identity became synonymous with community identity (Forrest 1989:180; Van Ness 1979, 1987).

The New Mexican myth, as González (1967) calls it, was probably born at this time, and needing to solidify their ecological niche, the Hispanic population claimed pure Spanish lineage thereby turning its back on both Indians and Mexico. Hispanic towns also came to be more clearly recognized as parallel settlements to Indian Pueblos eventuating in the kind of dual structure found in the case of Nambe town and Nambe pueblo, for example. This ethnic intensity and strong community identity, somewhat ironically, although predictably, developed concomitantly with land-loss among Spanish-Americans.

This community identity was paralleled in the Pueblo and Zapotec cases where it was even more intense. For even though an all-Pueblo council existed after New Mexican statehood, community identity was still the strongest force. And although Pueblos, perhaps, favor those

outsiders of similar linguistic propensity, even then, as Dozier (1970:209), who was from Santa Clara Pueblo in the Española Valley, remarks:

The Pueblo Indian is quite ethnocentric about his pueblo, and considers it the 'center' of the universe. Language, appearance, ceremonials, anything that may be compared or evaluated is at its best in one's own pueblo. Other Pueblo Indians, even those of the same language group: speak funny; dance crudely; are without religious devotion; and either look or behave like Mexicans or Anglos.

Community identity also remained primary in the case of the Valley Zapotecs. During the nineteenth century and throughout the Revolutionary period in this century the great majority of Zapotec communities retained enough land to continue as viable units. Even when there was encroachment, it only reinforced community identity by forcing villagers to struggle with their neighbors or to defend themselves from outsiders who might usurp more of their lands. As a result, as I have observed elsewhere (Whitcotton 1977), there are today no larger social forms that could give efficacy to a pan-Zapotec ethnicity. As Dennis (1987:21) writes regarding Valley communities: "I do not see 'Zapotecness' or 'Mixtecness' as significant ethnic markers compared with village membership." El Guinde and Selby (1976:185-186) remark, almost as if paraphrasing Dozier:

The primary source of identity to the Zapotec villager is his village...beyond it lie persons who are not quite people. They are malicious and malevolent...People in other villages cannot speak properly; their Zapotec is blurred and indistinct. They do not have proper customs.

In fact, in many areas of the Valley of Oaxaca, the notion that others also speak the same indigenous language is not emphasized. Until anthropologists and linguists told them that their language was Zapotec, most villagers thought of it simply as *idioma*, the native language of their town; to them the notion of Zapotec as a single language was not important.

On one level, rather than an ethnicity, notions of local identity in both New Mexico and Oaxaca constitute a defensive strategy which substitute ethnic terms for town or community names. Bricker (1981:176-179), in commenting on community identity situation in Chiapas, has likened this to what anthropologists generally call "ethnocentrism." To the degree that community identity is based on a kind of xenophobia that denigrates outsiders, even if such outsiders share a common structural position in the society as a whole and are also indigenes, this characterization would seem to be more appropriate than to refer to such protective defensive strategies as "ethnic." Although terms like "Zapotec," "Pueblo," "Indian," or "Spanish" (in New Mexico) may be used in the community context, they are used simply to reinforce a community identity and serve as substitutes and equivalencies for terms, such as Mitleños (which refers to the inhabitants of San Pablo Mitla in the Valley of Oaxaca) and Chimayosos (those from Chimayó in New Mexico), that express more accurately what is really meant.

On another level, as Kearney (1988) has observed for the Oaxacan Mixteca, "Indian" culture represents a form of passive resistance, that he calls a "primitive" ethnic identification

or a "latent ethnicity," that, although it has a spurious pre-Columbian authenticity, "constitutes a viable identity that is conspicuously distinct from mainstream Mexican culture and society (Kearney 1988:116)." This "ethnicity," like that of the Valley Zapotec communities, was "doubly determined...by colonial and postcolonial administrative policies" and "by the internecine conflict among neighboring [Mixtec] reserves themselves (Kearney 1988:16).

Finally, there is a degree to which a wider ethnicity exists as a kind of folkloric category in both Oaxaca (see Barabas and Bartolomé 1986) and New Mexico. In Oaxaca, for example, there is both the notion of "peoples" or "nations" and regions. "Zapotecs" are both a "people" and are divided into regions: The Valley, the Isthmus, and the Sierra."

While there may be some efficacy for these designations, for the Zapotecs apparently do have, and apparently have had a common name for themselves,<sup>8</sup> they have little concept of themselves as a "persistent cultural system" or "persistent people" in the sense that Spicer (1971; see also Castille 1981a) has used these terms.

The concept of Oaxaca as a state composed of indigenous cultures and regions has, in fact, intensified as tourism in the state has increased and as anthropologists have made Oaxaqueños more aware of their glorious indigenous past. To the degree that culture, tradition, custom, language, and biological heritage become intertwined with notions of ethnic group, ethnicity becomes a very fluid category. And the anthropological literature on the subject reflects and has contributed to this fluid situation, especially to the extent to which it promotes what Cook and Binford (1990:6) aptly call "ethnicized neopopulism." This philosophical stance celebrates and, exaggerates, the ethnic pluralism of the state. The ethnopolitist approach has certainly had an effect on the rural population in Oaxaca. For the notion that much of the rural population is "Indian," embraced respectively by populists, tourists, and Mexican elites, has had an influence even in villages where the indigenous language has been lost and only Spanish is spoken. Inhabitants still, at least to outsiders, refer to themselves as "Indian" and sometimes speculate among themselves whether they are Zapotec or Mixtec, an issue that they have probably learned from anthropologists.<sup>9</sup> The labelling of their ethnicity by outsiders has created its own hegemony.

A similar phenomenon also exists in New Mexico. Anthropologists, business enterprises, state and federal agencies, and tourists have all promoted both an "ethnic" atmosphere and a folkloristic commoditization of architecture, artifact, cuisine and custom. Established wisdom here has created a division of the state into three "cultures": Indian, Hispanic, and Anglo. Like many other "invented" or "created" divisions within American society, these categories indiscriminately lump concepts such as race, tradition, language, custom, ethnicity, and ethnic group.

### **Crafts and Reconstituted Ethnicity**

Most anthropologists recognize that ethnicity in one of its most frequent manifestations is a process that is largely reconstituted, reconstructed, recreated, reinvented or resurgent (for uses of these terms see Gauper 1984, T. Hall 1983b, 1984, MacCannell 1973, 1984, Roosens 1989, and Van den Berghe and Keyes 1984) since it is a phenomenon that is based on forms and symbols--past or present, borrowed, created, or even invented--used by a specific population to set themselves off from those around them than it is on direct continuities with the past. In

some instances, an intensification of ethnic identification may occur under conditions of rapid social change.

One form of reconstituted or reconstructed ethnicity involves the "commoditization" or the "folklorization" of a culture involving the increasing incorporation of a people or community into the modern capitalist world-system. This process sometimes involves an intensification of ethnic symbols and is well-illustrated by examining the recent histories of the Hispano village of Chimayó in the Española Valley and the Valley Zapotec village of Teotitlán del Valle. Teotitlán has a population of around 3500; Chimayó's size is approximately 2000 inhabitants.

In recent times, each of these villages represent, particularly for tourists, quaint "ethnic" villages, Teotitlán as an "authentic" Zapotec village while Chimayó is typically Hispanic. "Histories" have been constructed in a give-and-take process between locals, tourist agents, and government agencies to show that each village has a prominent claim to fame as a especially important Zapotec or Hispanic community, founded by prominent ancestors. A Teotitlán myth alleges that once, in prehispanic times, it was the capital of the Zapotec nation. Historically this is probably untrue; the most important prehispanic town in the Tlacolula arm of the Valley was Teotitlán's neighbor Macuilxochitl. For Chimayó one legend is that it was founded by a famous Spanish weaver in 1692 even though we know that weaving was probably not introduced into the village until the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Both Chimayó and Teotitlán are known for their weaving. Since the 1970s Teotitlán has developed a prosperous weaving industry which attracts tourists to the village and exports "tapetes" in increasing quantities to other areas of Mexico, the United States, and Europe. This industry, which was stimulated in part by funds that Teotiteco males acquired as *braceros* to the United States during the 1960s, has brought considerable wealth to some families in the village.<sup>11</sup>

When I first visited Oaxaca in 1957, shortly after the new Pan American highway was constructed, few outsiders actually went to Teotitlán. Instead, Teotitecos traveled to various Valley markets, including that of Oaxaca City, to peddle their sarapes and only a few individuals in the community actually were weavers. Now a majority of families in the village weave but few actually sell on the streets of Oaxaca or at local markets. Instead, tourists by the bus load and large commercial purchasers go to the village to buy at family stores or in the central square. According to Stephen (1987a, 1987b, 1989, 1991, 1992), who has done the most recent extensive ethnographic studies of the community, of the three levels of marketing found in the village, those who sell at open air markets or locally constitute the smallest group of families, while the largest are those who market through firms in Mexico or the United States. Teotitlán tapetes may be found almost anywhere craft goods are sold, from specialty shops in Santa Fe, San Antonio, San Diego, and San Francisco to furniture stores in Oklahoma City and Dallas.

Unlike other craft villages in Oaxaca such as Santo Tomás Jalieza and Coyotepec, which have formed cooperatives, competition between families is intense in Teotitlán; so weaving has brought personal prosperity to some families but not to others.

Despite this new-found wealth, and the concomitant development of class differences in Teotitlán, ethnicity has not declined but has intensified, more so than any comparable community in the Valley of Oaxaca. Although there is some recognition that Teotitlán is an "Indian" village it is a Zapotec identity that is promoted.

Weaving is just one way in which this Zapotecness is promoted. Although local weavers recognize, for example, that they use motifs taken from the Mixtec codices, from Klee, from

Escher, from Picasso, and more recently from the Navajo, they emphasize that they are basically "Zapotec." They stress too that weaving is done in a traditional Zapotec manner even though it is known that it is done on the Spanish treadle loom rather than the more indigenous backstrap loom. The use of natural dyes are now promoted as traditional even though from the late nineteenth century until the 1980s aniline dyes were preferred. The prominent use of natural dyes is largely in response to tourist and commercial demands. Now the more successful weavers use local vegetative dyes as well as aniline dyes, which are often supplied by the wholesalers who distribute the weavings, for producing "decorator" colors.

Teotitecos use other local symbols to reinforce their Zapotecness. Villagers, for example, point to the bas relief stones that have been incorporated into the facade of the Church and other walls in the village to attest to Teotitlán's prehispanic greatness. Also Teotitlán takes pride in that it is one of the few villages in Oaxaca that still regularly performs the *danza de pluma*, an alleged traditional Zapotec dance even though its subject is the Spanish conquest and Moctezuma. Further, some villagers have revived their version--in some of the villages of the Valley called the pelota Mixteca--of the ancient Mesoamerican ball game which is played on Sunday. Finally, Teotitecos proudly claim to still speak Zapotec--in fact the language has been revived in recent years and preserved in the village though conscious effort--and that they speak a dialect that, unlike that of neighboring villages, is closer to the aboriginal form. There may be some truth to this; Teotitecos speak a dialect very close to that found in Fray Juan de Córdova's 1578 *vocabulario*.

Thus, the money brought to the community by weaving has helped to promote community identity and Teotiteco Zapotec ethnicity. Wealth has not caused the breakdown of the community; in fact, Teotitecos participate in an abundance of community activities and community projects. They maintain a vigorous fiesta system although the mayordomía system has been on the decline since the 1920s. They have a strong local school system, maintained in an effort to keep their children in the community and, in part, to maintain local values. Finally, they carefully guard their agricultural and land-based traditions; even the most successful weavers claim to take time off from their craft activities in order to plant and harvest their milpas.

Teotitlán constructed a new road in the early 1980s that leads directly to them from the Pan American highway so that tourists would not have to go through Macuilxochitl which Teotitecos viewed as poor and ugly. This act is symbolic of the fact that reconstituted Teotitlán Zapotec "culture" is much more than a continuance of the xenophobic ethnocentrism characteristic of many Valley communities. It is structurally much more modern and much less a vestige of the colonial past; it processually is much more ethnic. While anthropologists who see "romance" in their created traditional cultures may bemoan that Teotitlán ethnic culture lacks authenticity or that it is "staged," they fail to realize, as Greenwood (1982:27) has aptly pointed out, that all cultures "are in the process of making themselves up all the time." One might ask, as does Crick (1989:336), "what in a culture is not staged? What does cultural authenticity consist of?" In sum, culture is not something *sui generis*; it is a social creation and Teotitecos, like the rest of humanity, have an input into the creative culture process.

A similar, though perhaps less intense, reconstructed ethnicity has occurred at Chimayó, New Mexico. When I first went there in 1967, it had neither its own church nor parochial elementary school--they were in Santa Cruz--and while there were two small weaving shops, the

demand for weavings was small. The *santuario* at Potrero, a shrine dedicated to the Christ of Esquípuilas, was locally well-known but attracted little outside attention. In fact, the Santa Cruz priests, though they conducted Sunday mass there, complained that the place was unsafe and should be closed.

At the same time Chimayó played up its "progressive image" and derided nearby settlements for their backwardness. Chimayó's self-image as a progressive community dates back at least to the 1930s; in the Tewa Basin Study (1939b: 59) it is described as an industrious merchant village that engaged in regular trade with the San Luis Valley in Colorado.

Since the late 1960s Chimayó has undergone considerable change. It has built its own church and school and established a volunteer fire department. At about that same time a restored "hacienda" opened as a restaurant that served native New Mexican cuisine. Before long this restaurant had become very popular throughout Northern New Mexico, especially attracting tourists and locals from Santa Fe. Today Chimayó promotes its Hispanic heritage much more than it did in the 1960s. In the 1960s locals referred to their community as "Spanish" or "Spanish-American" while today they are much more likely to use the terms "Hispano.," "Hispanic," or even "mexicano;" the latter term is acceptable in Spanish but the English "Mexican" is strictly avoided.

For most of its history the internal economic structure of weaving in Chimayó has been different than in Teotitlán where weavers have usually produced and sold their own wares--although this is apparently changing. In Chimayó the two older weaving shops not only sold their own products, they served as outlets for an extensive cottage industry which operated in a typical "putting-out" system.

Recently, however, several new weaving shops have opened to create new competition in the town.<sup>12</sup> Chimayó has not achieved the broad international reputation that Teotitlán has, possibly because the Hispano weavers have seemed more reluctant to adapt to the whims of the consuming public than have the aggressive entrepreneurs of Oaxaca. Their weavings, with some exceptions, are still typically of the colorful Rio Grande style. This weaving tradition dates from the nineteenth-century and is part of the general influence of the Saltillo pattern which spread throughout Mexico with symbols of Mexican independence and influenced weavers--including undoubtedly those of Teotitlán del Valle--from New Mexico to Guatemala (Baizerman 1987).

In addition to the weaving, wood carving shops have opened in Chimayó by artisans from nearby Córdoba, also a craft village (see Briggs 1980). The restaurant has expanded, and the owner has opened a bed-and-breakfast across the street. At the plaza of Potrero in Chimayó, a number of stores and food stands have been opened for visitors, and another Potrero shrine, associated with Santo Niño de Atocha, has been restored and reopened. The *santuario* has become famous throughout the Southwest and now attracts pilgrims--especially on Good Friday--in large numbers; one source claims that 50,000 pilgrims and tourists visited there in 1987 (Anonymous 1988). A annual celebration dramatically portraying the conquest of the Moors by Santiago, which was canceled in the 1960s, has been revived. The new Chimayó church, which is very different from the more architecturally New Mexican one at Santa Cruz was praised by parishioners for its modern style when it was built. Recently, however, it has been expanded with an addition in the New Mexican adobe-style architecture.

To be sure, Chimayó is simply participating in what has been a general increase in ethnic awareness in the United States. It also is part of a recent attempt to promote the Hispanic

heritage in the Española Valley--that is, in general, to make it much more visible than it was in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>13</sup> As Rodríguez (1987) has noted for Taos, New Mexico's increased tourism has intensified ethnic differences in the area. I know of no other place in the Tewa basin where this intensity has crystallized in a display of Hispano symbols and identity as much as it has at Chimayó.

Clearly both Teotitlán del Valle and Chimayó represent examples of a kind of "instrumental" ethnicity that is most typical of successful craft communities whose inhabitants find it profitable to promote their products in ethnic terms.<sup>14</sup> Since this ethnicity involves numerous primordial-like or "traditional" symbols, it is not totally "inauthentic" even though various individuals who are only marginally indigenous to the community (a phenomenon more prevalent in Chimayó than in Teotitlán) may participate in the ethnic mystique. Also in such cases, the ethnic symbols stressed to outsiders may differ from those emphasized among insiders.

Further, these ethnic reconstitutions and intensifications should not be considered as mere survivals from the past or as vestiges of colonialism. Instead, they result from the greater incorporation of each area into the modern capitalist world-system and involve new cultural creations. In Thomas Hall's (1985, 1986) terms, these phenomena are characteristic of areas that have formerly been regions of refuge and are now becoming dependent peripheries. Teotitlán artisans, for example, are competing not only with other Oaxaca village craftsmen but with other weavers in an international market. Their products are found in many areas of the United States, including, of course, Santa Fe. There "Zapotec rugs" made by Teotitecos compete with Navajo, Chimayó, Peruvian, and East Indian textiles.

This type of competition and greater involvement in the world-system as craft producers is also typical of the Tewa Pueblos in the Española Valley. As part of a general resurgence of Indian crafts in the United States, San Ildefonso and Santa Clara, to a considerable extent, and San Juan, to a degree, have become, at least in part, craft villages. Both Santa Clara and San Ildefonso, the home village of the famous María Martínez, make a highly polished black pottery that is highly desired by collectors and tourists alike. While pottery making is a famous Pueblo trademark, it was lost and then revived in the 1930s as part of a general promotion of Pueblo crafts under the direction of anthropologists and artists in the Santa Fe Area (Tewa Basin Survey 1939a).

None of the Tewa Pueblos has undergone the kind of intense ethnic recreations typical of Zapotec Teotitlán or Hispano Chimayó as a result of their craft endeavors although this statements needs to be qualified in various ways. Crafts have brought tourists to the Pueblos and have been responsible for the reintroduction of old "traditions" and "customs;" this is particularly the case at San Juan, where beginning in the 1960s and 1970s (Ortiz 1979), tourist demands for crafts, many of which were not traditional to the Pueblo, stimulated a craft cooperative. This has continued until the present day and has increasingly involved more and more individuals in craft production. As in other Tewa Pueblos (see Arnon and Hill 1979, Edelman 1979, Edelman and Ortiz 1979, Lambert 1979, and Spiers 1979), outside demands for crafts have stimulated, and reawakened an interest in reviving or reconstructing "Tewa," "Pueblo," "Indian, or "Native American" activities and artifacts.

Nevertheless, Tewa and Pueblo reconstituted ethnicities lack the intensity of those found at Chimayó and Teotitlán. Their special status as reservations which allows them access to

special federally sponsored projects undoubtedly has had a profound effect on the character of ethnic reconstruction.

### **Ethnic Intensifications and Political Movements**

Ethnic intensifications are not only stimulated by greater participation in an international market, however. They may result from a conjunctural loss of economic and political autonomy especially in situations where some degree of economic security, such as reliable wage labor, does not compensate for the loss. In Northern New Mexico some Hispanos have perceived the usurpation of their grazing lands by the United States as a violation of their rights, a perception that promoted the formation of Reies Tijerina's *Alianza Federal de Mercedes* (see Knowlton 1985 and Swadesh 1969) in the 1960s. The philosophy of this movement sanctioned the repossession--by armed force if necessary--of government lands, secession from the United States, and virtual economic autarky as solutions to Hispano problems; it also promoted an Indo-Hispano ethnicity that, however, had more appeal for New Mexican Hispanos than it did for New Mexican Indians who had greater economic and political security. As Wallerstein (1974) has noted, economic and political autarky is one possible response to greater incorporation into the world-economy--China and Albania have each adopted this tactic in the past. Although the Alianza movement was a microcosmic example of the process, Indo-Hispanic ethnicity is also comparable to the intense nationalism fostered by Chinese and Albanian leaders.<sup>15</sup>

A kind of Zapotec "nationalism" is exemplified by the community of Juchitán in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec region of Eastern Oaxaca outside the Valley of Oaxaca.<sup>16</sup> Juchitán was founded after the Spanish conquest and has a history of rebellion and resistance to state hegemony that dates back to the colonial period. During his governorship of Oaxaca in the nineteenth century, Juárez sent troops to the Isthmus to prevent a takeover of salt beds that had been privatized by his reform laws. Juchitecos who had lost use privileges to this vital resource were attempting to reclaim it. In 1869 and 1870, Oaxacan governor Felix Díaz, the brother of Don Porfirio, took the national guard to Juchitán and ruthlessly crushed an uprising among villagers who had been smuggling indigo and brazilwood and who refused to submit to state taxation. In the end, the Juchitecos got their revenge against Governor Díaz; during the struggle between the Porfiristas and those loyal to Juárez after the presidential election of 1871, Felix Díaz was captured and executed by loyalists in Juchitán (Falcone 1977:646-650).

In the early twentieth century, Juchitecos formed a scholarly society that advocates the use of a polished "flowery" Zapotec as a symbol of upper or middle class status. Juchitán is a stratified community and "Zapotecs" there, unlike most areas of Oaxaca, do not constitute the lowest and poorest social grouping. In fact, as Royce (1975,1982:169-183) has indicated, it takes considerable wealth to sponsor one of Juchitán's 27 velas (neighborhood saints celebrations), a corporate group organization promoting neighborhood integration, and an important delineator of the "Zapotec style," which includes "cultural" attributes and symbols created over the years from many sources. In many instances, lower class "Zapotecs" neither speak the native language nor can they afford to own the expensive women's fiesta costumes which are a necessity to achieve and maintain high social status. However, they may participate in "being Zapotec" as a non-sponsor.

Juchitán is the second largest municipality in the state of Oaxaca and the largest Isthmus Zapotec community. Founded before the Spanish conquest in the fifteenth century, some 80% of its population today can be considered "Zapotec" while 20% are identified as "Mexican"; this latter category includes Italians, Japanese, Lebanese, Spaniards and North Americans (Royce 1982:169). Juchitecos draw a sharp contrast between Mexican and Zapotec "styles" even though individuals who identify themselves as Zapotecs frequently shift from one to another in situational contexts. Since Juchiteco Zapotec ethnicity does not correspond to the usual Mexican, Oaxacan, or North American stereotypes of "Zapotec Indians" Juchitecos are often forced, particularly in social situations outside of their town, to compromise or modify their particular notions of "Zapotecness."

Maintenance of control of the town's political and economic structure is clearly one reason for the fierce promotion of "Zapotecness" by the Juchiteco elite. This ethnic posture not only is a form of resistance to the takeover of the town by local Mexicans but also constitutes a resistance against outside Mexican, including Oaxacan, hegemony.

In 1982, Juchitán elected a municipal presidente in opposition to the nationally sanctioned PRI candidate. National troops were eventually sent to remove him from office--against the armed resistance of locals--because he allegedly, in concert with other Juchitecos, fomented student unrest and attacks on the *federales* in Oaxaca City.

A coalition of workers, peasants, and students--called COCEI--has been formed in Juchitán as an organization in opposition to the policies of the major current Mexican political party, PRI. This organization has used ethnicity and the *vela* networks as mechanisms to recruit members (see Stephen 1989:55-56; Rubin 1987). In another Isthmus community, Espinal, particular *vela* organizations have become associated with specific political parties (Binford 1989).

Like the Hispanic Alianza movement in New Mexico, Isthmus "Zapotec" ethnicity would seem, for the present, to be primarily a local political phenomenon; its primary association is with Juchitán. And, at least in part, it is oriented toward autarchy. Moreover, Campbell (1991) makes the important point that part of its success must be explained by its ability to draw on a long tradition of Juchiteco Zapotec symbols and Zapotec Juchiteco ethnicity is not totally "invented" in the sense that Hobsbawm and others (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) have written of "invented traditions." Campbell makes the further important point in his chapter on "Isthmus Zapotec Intellectuals" in this volume that local Zapotec stress the "essentialism" of Zapotec ethnic uniqueness while outside scholars tend to emphasize its constructed nature. Both points of view are necessary to fully comprehend it.

Further, as Stephen (1989) has observed, there are definite common structural similarities between Teotitico and Juchiteco ethnic organization. However, their structural similarities would seem to be less important than their political economic differences for Teotitlán's reconstructed ethnicity is much more of a direct entrepreneurial strategy. Nevertheless, it does seem plausible that these two quite distinct ethnic intensifications might constitute a basis for a wider "Zapotec" ethnic identity in the future should ethnic movements continue to proliferate in Mexico as they are throughout the world.

## Discussion

The ethnic situations that we have discussed, regardless of the degree to which they use primordial symbols, are also clearly reactions to larger processes, the result of the stresses brought about by an interface with a larger social system. That they employ ethnic symbols may in fact mask their structural similarity to other economic and political responses that have been made to external pressures. Wallerstein (1979:172-175) has observed that ethnic groups are like classes, simply collective claims to power and the allocation of goods and services. As such, they are simply one variety of status group.

Ethnicity represents one of the most pervasive responses to social change in the modern world. According to T. Hall (1986), on one level, incorporation into a larger social system--a world-economy--involves a change from a separate society to an ethnic group within a larger society even though this change may be highly variable. In a classic world-system perspective, for example, this process is different in core states than it is in peripheral areas.

In peripheral areas indigenous distinctions, which may be partially preserved with incorporation, are frequently a legacy of colonial administration and may appear more tradition bound, although, as both Wolf (1982:71) and T. Hall (1983b, 1984:129-130) have emphasized, this appearance is more apparent than real since it has been created by the interaction of "internal" and "external" factors. Incorporation into larger states or arenas in no sense implies that local groups have no defense or are unable to respond in some way to external pressure; a classic criticism of Wallersteinian world-system theory is that it does not allow any room for resistance, adaptation, or creativity by local actors (Thompson 1989).

The kind of ethnocentric ethnicity and indigenous distinctions that we have seen in the case of Zapotec pueblos and Pueblo communities constitute a passive resistance to such external colonial pressures by the populations of peripheral areas. A similar Hispanic community identity developed largely in response to the colonialism of the United States. Competition between communities clearly fueled distinctions between Indian communities, Hispanic communities, and Anglos in this context.

Incorporation is a matter of degree, however, and must, as T. Hall (1986), has observed, be viewed as a continuum. Peripheralization is a process involving numerous dimensions. In similar terms, there may be peripheries within peripheries, and peripheries within cores. The Valley of Oaxaca remained a periphery within a periphery both under Spain and Mexico; the Española Valley evolved from a periphery within a periphery to a periphery within a core, as it was ultimately incorporated into the United States political economy.

As incorporation into a world-system may be viewed as a continuum, so, it appears, must the processes of ethnic group formation and ethnicity. For example, the resistant ethnocentric stances associated with Pueblo, Zapotec, and Hispano community identity imply a lesser degree of incorporation into a larger system than do the reconstructed ethnicities of Zapotec Teotitlán del Valle and Zapotec Juchitán, which are becoming increasingly dependent on the world-system. Other craft villages in Oaxaca represent intermediate points between these two degrees of incorporation. Coyotepec, San Antonino Ocotlán, Santo Tomás Jalieza, Santa María Atzompa, San Martín Tilcajete, and Arrazola to name only a few, are increasingly dependent on the world market, through tourism and international trade.<sup>17</sup> The Oaxaca Valley is almost like a mini world-economy with an internal division of labor in which each village specializes

in some commodity. While some villages have more of a claim to a "traditional" or "authentic" Zapotec ethnic heritage than others--a factor that would seem to ultimately have an important effect on the success of a particular craft--the competition is increasingly far from traditional as craftsmen in Coyotepec and San Antonino (whose craft of embroidered dresses is less than 30 years old; see Waterbury 1989) compete with others in far away places which they possibly don't even know exist.

The Chimayó expression of Hispano identity and the Indo-Hispanic stance of the Alianza movement lie further along the continuum toward full dependency incorporation in the capitalist world-system even though the Chimayó expression has much in common with Zapotec Teotitlán. Based on language and more "universalistic" ethnic characteristics, these latter expressions could easily be subsumed under a Chicano or Latino ethnic movement which is yet a more fluid and at the same time a more fully dependent type of ethnicity. With these movements we stand cheek-to-jowl with the core.

I suppose, in part, this is my response to the Hispano- Homeland controversy--a debate concerning the relationship of Northern New Mexican Hispanos to Mexican-Americans or Chicanos.<sup>18</sup> Hispano, or Spanish-American, ethnicity, while in part primordial like Zapotec or Tewa ethnic identity, is nevertheless more adaptable to larger scale ethnic movements. And while, to some degree, Pueblo and Zapotec expressions may be considered "invented," "created," and situational, Hispano ethnicity is "invented," "created," and situational in a sense that the others do not seem to be. The Chicano lowrider on the streets of Española, like his middle-class politician counterpart,<sup>19</sup> faces in two directions. He can look to his Hispano heritage even though he has been disembedded from traditional ascriptive symbols, such as a land-based community identity. He also can look toward a much broader horizon and consider himself to be a member of an enormous group that has tremendous potential political and economic clout. The older Chicano movement, which embraces symbols structurally similar to the more recent Hispanic or Latino ethnicities, takes us closer to typical core ethnicities such as that associated with the label Black or African-American. In that regard, modern New Mexico, which would appear to be in some respects like a periphery within a core, is more like a core than is Eastern Oaxaca. But as a region in the core, it is less like a core region than California or Texas, both of which can and do exhibit more intense, if different, manifestations of "chicanismo" or "Latino" ethnicity.

Pueblo villagers who produce competing crafts, work at Los Alamos, and have large bingo enterprises protected by the federal government, stand somewhere else in this system. Most of these villagers probably have not been agriculturally self-sufficient since the 18th century (Tewa Basin Study 1939a). However, it seems unlikely that New Mexico's Pueblos--qua Tewas or Pueblos--will participate in the kind of emergent core ethnicity characteristic of Hispanos, Chicanos, and Latinos. Pueblos could embrace, and indeed some have promoted, an "Indian" or Native America ethnicity. But Pueblos, still tied to their corporate community structure as federal reserves, have not been very active in pan-Indian movements, though they have been active in promoting larger Pueblo economic activities.

There are many latent ethnicities, as Kearney (1988; Nagengast and Kearney 1990) calls them, waiting to be reconstituted in new settings and under new conditions just as there are new ethnicities to be created. The increased migration of laborers from Mexico to the U.S. involves not only a greater involvement in the capitalist world-system but also involves increased

dependency. As Mixtecs have used their latent ethnicity to forge a new Mixtec identity as a result of their experiences as wage laborers in the world market, so others may follow.

## NOTES

1. This is a revised version of two papers presented at two national symposia. The first paper was presented in the symposium "Ethnic Relations in the Southwest" at the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory in Oakland, California, on November 5, 1987. I am grateful to Thomas D. Hall, Sylvia Rodríguez, Marianne Stoller, and John Van Ness--co-participants in this seminar--for stimulating discussions of the topic in general and for helpful comments on my paper in particular. The second was given during the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago in 1991 in the session, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Southern Mexico." Leigh Binford, Howard Campbell, Michael Kearney, John Monaghan, William Roseberry, Ronald Spores, and Lynn Stephens--co-participants in the session--provided a stimulating collegial atmosphere for the exchange of information and ideas. I also wish to thank Ronald Waterbury for his most helpful comments on my paper.
2. The following works provide information on the social history of the Valley of Oaxaca and the Zapotecs: Chance (1978), Cook and Binford (1990), Cook and Diskin (1974), Dennis (1987), Esparza (1988), W. Taylor (1972), Waterbury (1975), and Whitecotton (1977); for New Mexico, the surveys by Briggs and Van Ness (1987), Campa (1979), Carlson (1990), deBuys (1985), Dozier (1970), Eggan (1979), Forrest (1989), González (1967), Kutsche (1979), Schroeder (1972, 1979), Simmons (1979a,1979b) and Williams (1985) are most useful for tracing the history of ethnic relations.
3. W. Taylor (1972:17-18) estimates that the Valley of Oaxaca in 1521 had 450,000 native inhabitants, a population that dwindled to about 45,000 in the 1630s; Schroeder (1972: 48) estimates that at most the Pueblo population-- including the Hopi of Arizona--was 100,000 at Spanish contact; the Tewa may have numbered 8,000 with single towns as large as 1,000; I (Whitecotton 1977:138) estimate that the smallest Zapotec *cabecera* was probably around 2,000 inhabitants.
4. A number of investigators, such as F. Ellis (1981), Wilcox (1981) and Dobyns and Euler (1980) have questioned the view that Pueblo culture is "compartmentalized" rather than a syncretism of Spanish and Indian traits; they also have argued, as has Simons (1969), that the concept of a "closed corporate peasant community" may be useful for understanding Pueblo communities.
5. A whole literature glorifying the Zapotec heritage evolved in Oaxaca and came to be regarded as "gospel" truth even though, in the beginning, it was admittedly, in large part, fictional. See especially the work by Martínez Gracida (1888) which has been the major source for a number of textbooks used in the schools of Oaxaca.
6. Under early United States rule (until 1913) in New Mexico, Pueblos were not defined as Indians because they were sedentary agriculturalists. "Real" Indians were thought to be nomadic (for a discussion see G. Hall 1987).

7. Data on Bond and his practices, along with that of other Anglos who operated stores and sharecropped with sheep, may be found in Bond (1946), Carlson (1969), Tewa Basin Study (1939b:99-111 and 1939c: 144-155) and Grubbs (1960-1962).

8. The various Zapotec groups use some variation of the common term *bene zaa* to refer to themselves. Although there is some controversy over the meaning of this term, it is probably best translated as "native people" and not as "cloud people."

9. In a book on the sierra Zapotec, Nader (1990:16) remarks that the inhabitants of this area did not call themselves Zapotec until recently.

10. Chimayó really consists of 11 different *placitas* which, have come to form a single community even though parts of the town are found in different counties (Santa Fe and Rio Arriba). Chimayó is apparently derived from a Tewa word and may have been a Tewa settlement at one point in its history despite the fact that some local inhabitants claim that it also was settled by "Guatemalan Indians." This latter tale results from a confusion over the Christ of Esquípuilas which is the patron of the *santuario*; although this *santo* undoubtedly originated in Guatemala, no migration of populations took place. There is also a myth that weaving in Chimayó represents an uninterrupted tradition going back to the time when the Tewa occupied the area and that Chimayósoos are mixed Indian-Spanish. During the forties Chimayó blankets were marketed as if the Chimayos were another southwestern Indian tribe. For a history of this village and historical "traditions" see Baizerman (1987), Borhegyi (1954a, 1954b, 1956), Kay (1985), Mera (1987) and Scott (1964).

Other Hispano settlements in the area also have legends tracing their origins directly to Spain. For example, members of a well-known family in nearby Española claim that town was named for their great grandmother who was a "fancy" lady brought from Spain by their The Newberry Library great grandfather.

11. Much of my information on Teotitlán del Valle comes from my own field work unless otherwise noted; for additional information on this community see Cook and Binford (1990), Silva (1980), Yescas Peralta (1954), R. Taylor (1966), and particularly Stephen (1987a, 1987b, 1989, 1991, 1992).

12. The weaving industry in the two villages changes organizationally through time, a phenomenon that is in need of further study. For example, Chimayó had 6 shops or dealers in the 1930s (Tewa Basin Study 1939b:64-67) but these had diminished to two or three by the 1960s; they are now on the rise again. In addition, the weavers are experiencing competition from outside. For example, one of the weaving shops opened a branch in Albuquerque; they threatened to sue another shop in Albuquerque for advertising "Chimayó weavings" when, in fact, they were not being made by Chimayó weavers. The suit was dropped when the ad was changed to "Chimayó Style weavings."

13. My own work in the Española Valley--and that of my students at the time--is reported in Whitecotton (1970, 1976) and R. Ellis (1976, 1980).

14. For a discussion of the impact of tourist or commercial arts on ethnicity see Crick (1989), Graburn (1976), and Smith (1989); for a Tarascan community that exhibits intensified "Tarascanness" as a result of an increasing involvement in tourism, see Nolan (1987).

15. The Tijerina movement also may be likened to a revitalization or nativistic movement as it has been by some authors. Certainly such movements share many characteristics with the autarkic nationalistic strategies of modern nations that have their origins in peasant ideologies. Listening to Tijerina, I was certainly struck by the charismatic utopian peasant-like ideology which permeated his powerful speeches and presence.

16. On the history of Juchitán see Covarrubias (1954), Tutino (1980), Royce (1975) and especially Campbell (1990).

17. Two incidents indicate the increasing role of tourist demand and its relationship between ethnicity construction. A prominent wood carver in Arrazola showed me a video about his work narrated by Vincent Price on the VCR in his home. This video called the carvers of Arrazola "Zapotec" even though they themselves make no such claim; at present they associate being "Zapotec" exclusively with speaking the language which no one in their village does. Perhaps in the future, the North American equation of biological heritage and ethnicity, plus incentives for sales, will create self-proclaimed Zapotec wood carvers in Arrazola.

Another incident involves "Jackolope," an import store in Santa Fe, New Mexico. When I was there in August of 1991 they had a couple from Santa María Atzompa who were demonstrating pottery making. In the same store, there was an exhibit of another potter from Atzompa said to be the son of Teodora Blanco. In the exhibit he described himself as a "Zapotec" potter making "Zapotec" pottery. As far as I know, for reasons similar to the inhabitants of Arrazola, villagers from Atzompa have never claimed a Zapotec ethnicity although some sources mention them as "Mixtecs."

18. The Hispano Homeland controversy, generated in response to a paper by Richard Nostrand (1980), appears in volume 74 of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and includes comments by J.M. Blaut and Antonio Ríos-Bustamente, Marc Simmons, Fray Angélico Chávez, D.W. Meinig, and Thomas D. Hall as well as a response by Nostrand. Additional papers on this topic were presented at the Western Social Science Association Meetings in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1985.

19. New Mexican politicians often claim various ethnic identities to promote long-lasting and highly lucrative political careers. One of the most famous is an Española politician who, because of extensive kinship ties, can claim many identities ranging from traditional Tewa or Spanish-American to Native American or Chicano. Interestingly enough, this politician owned and operated a local restaurant that specializes in Native or "Mexican" cuisine but has an Indian decor--patrons sat at tables which are inside wooden tipis.

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## II

### LOCAL ISSUES, INTERGROUP CONFLICT, AND ETHNICITY AND THE FORMATION OF MIXTEC REGIONAL COALITIONS

Ronald Spores

It is well known that the Mixteca has for centuries been an area of intense local affiliation and identity. It is also one of the most conflictive areas in North America, with a pattern and frequency of inter-community conflict that is virtually unmatched anywhere on the continent. Since Prehispanic times, Mixtecs have been strongly attached to their individual communities. They think of themselves first and foremost as residents of a given pueblo far more than belonging to a political district, ethnic group, state, or nation. As Nagengast and Kearney (1990) have indicated, the Mixteca is an area where "the primary political opposition is between villages, and ethnicity is not salient." In support of this view, Bartolomé and Barabas (1986: 28-29) have remarked with respect to Oaxaca in general that "esta tendencia hacia la autarquía y el conflicto intercomunal se registra aun entre comunidades pertenecientes a la misma etnia...." They also find themselves in agreement with de la Fuente, who called these groups "pequeñas repúblicas enemistadas." Although it is tempting to limit discussion to the issue of community and intercommunity relations and the causes and consequences of intergroup conflict in the Mixteca, this paper focuses on ethnicity and the recent history of regional coalitions in the area.

During the incessant intercommunity conflicts of Colonial times, the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, it was relatively common for two communities to form temporary alliances against another community or communities. We have seen these alliances in the Mixteca in the case of Achiutla joining with its bitter enemy Tilantongo against Yucuañe, or Atlatlauca joining with Tlaxiaco against San Miguel el Grande. These alliances were fragile, normally short-lived, and normally addressed a single issue, that of coinciding interests of individual communities to protect or extend boundaries or simply to engage in conflict. From either an ideological or structural perspective, none of these arrangements involved larger ethnic or ideological issues or inter-class confrontation.

Other coalitional efforts of a military or protectionist sort arose out of the instability and hostilities of the Mexican Civil War period between 1915 and the mid 1920s. These were also organized ad hoc under external threat and with little or no enduring structure. In response to persisting hostilities after the Civil War, the Governor of Oaxaca authorized the establishment of community militias, or Defensas Sociales. The Ayuntamientos organized within their jurisdictions "grupos de ciudadanos que poseyendo armas propias y con plena espontaneidad prestaran los auxilios necesarios para la seguridad pública." <sup>1</sup> These locally focused associations soon became a problem, however, as they developed into uncontrolled vigilante groups and involved themselves in inter-community warfare and otherwise exacerbated conflict, and they had to be forcibly disarmed by federal troops.

More persistent in structure and function were organizations that emerged on a regional level during the 1920s and 1930s with respect to land redistribution and/or labor issues. These organizations, inspired by the reformist rhetoric and legislation of the post Civil War period, were organized around single issues or in an effort to gain specific concessions or objectives.

such group which organized in the early 1930s in Mexico City was the Agrupación Socialista Orientadora Mixteca "Tlaxiaco". This was an organization made up of approximately one hundred Tlaxiaco natives, most of them professionals or skilled workers, and their families resident in Mexico City.<sup>2</sup> Their slogan was "Mutual Protection. United, We Shall Overcome." In 1935, the group raised funds for construction of the Mercado Juárez in Tlaxiaco and for school construction. Although technically a coalition, and an apparently successful one, the activities and the interests of the group were directed almost exclusively to Tlaxiaco and civic improvement, rather than toward Mixtecs in general or toward the greater Mixteca.

Another, more specifically focused, group organizing in the 1930's was the Liga de Resistencia de Arrieros Socialistas de la Mixteca, with its headquarters in Tlaxiaco.<sup>3</sup> The group coordinated its efforts with La Liga Socialista de Arrieros de Nochixtlán since their interests and work-space often coincided. The objectives of both groups were to promote and protect the interests of a large number of pack-train operators and workers, the backbone of the transportation system in the Mixteca. The group was often involved in disputes over rates and salaries, violations of federal work laws, contracts, and other conflicts, particularly with merchants in Tlaxiaco.<sup>4</sup> These professional, rather than community-based, organizations continued to operate into the 1950s when mineral production declined in the area, roads were completed and automotive transportation largely replaced animal conveyance. While they were in existence, the carriers' coalitions were usually effective in their negotiations with local merchants and producers. Their demands did not extend beyond their specific endeavor, however, and there was no articulation of any sort of ethnic or Mixtecan ideology. They did, however, maintain broader alliances with such regional, state, and national organizations as the Confederación de Ligas Socialistas de Oaxaca and the PNR (later PRI) affiliated Unión Revolucionaria de Campesinos.

Some efforts at supra-community coalition have met with at least limited success. These have been concerned with limited goals or specific issues: road construction, irrigation or potable water projects, electrification, or responses to local crises such as earthquakes. Other attempts to organize broad regional or Pan-Mixteca coalitions, or those which appeal to anything resembling a Mixtec ethnic identity have either failed to materialize or accomplished little.

The most notable effort at coalition came in November of 1951 with the formation of the Coalición de los Pueblos Mixtecos Oaxaqueños. This group was organized by educated professionals, politicians, bureaucrats, and teachers born in the Mixteca but residing in Mexico City or dividing their time between the Mixteca and Mexico City. The president, principal founder, and guiding figure in this coalition was Dr. Manuel Hernández Hernández, who was the Mixteca's most prominent leader, sometime legislator, sometime bureaucrat, but full-time political broker and social activist. The central executive committee of the organization included prominent educators, lawyers, representatives from medicine, education, law, and the sciences. The technical consultant for the group was Alfonso Caso, Director of INI.

A devastating earthquake struck the Mixteca on 24 May, 1959. Dr. Hernández Hernández, who was simultaneously Diputado Federal for the districts of Teposcolula, Tlaxiaco and Nochixtlán, and President of the Coalición de Pueblos Mixtecos, quickly reconnoitered the area, assessed damage, processed information from local authorities and residents and made two reports to the President of the Republic.<sup>5</sup> Extensive damage had been caused by the earthquake,

and Hernández Hernández described the problems and asked the President to intervene with relevant agencies to provide relief. In effect, Hernández Hernández acted as facilitator-mediator for the individual communities, some outside of his political jurisdiction in Coixtlahuaca, Huajuapán and Juxtlahuaca, by processing and delineating their demands to higher authorities. The relationship of community to facilitator, then, was of a dyadic nature, and there was no hint of a Pan--Mixteca amalgamation of interest and effort.

Earlier in 1959, Hernández Hernández had intervened on behalf of 14 of the largest communities in the Mixteca Alta, seeking to mediate their demands to the Comisión Federal de Electricidad for dam construction and electrification.<sup>6</sup> Each community presented its own demands to the government agency with notification to Hernández Hernández who collated and endorsed the demands and promoted the interests of the communities with the appropriate bureau and officials.

In 1975 Hernández Hernández, as president of the Coalición de Pueblos Mixtecos, intervened in requests presented by at least 55 communities in the Districts of Nochixtlán, Tlaxiaco, Teposcolula, Coixtlahuaca, Silacayoapan, Huajuapán and Jamiltepec.<sup>7</sup> Intervention was made on behalf of specific communities with the Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Director General of Electrification in the States, C.F.E., Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia, the governor of the state, and numerous other state and federal agencies. Demands involved schools, health care delivery and hospitals, highway and bridge construction, potable water and irrigation works, schools, electrification, telephones, sanitation and public health. Although requests were grouped, each community's demands were presented individually.

Hernández Hernández was a tireless worker, constantly negotiating on behalf of the Mixteca with Caso and INI, the Secretarías de Salubridad y Asistencia, Educación Pública, Recursos Hidráulicos, the Presidencia, Comunicaciones y Transportes, Conasupo, Obras Públicas, the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonización, the Comisión Federal de Electricidad, federal diputados, the governor of Oaxaca, judicial authorities at the federal and state level, and with unions and other coalitions. Hernández Hernández, employing the Coalición as his operational base, was a major broker between the Mixteca and state and federal government. He was unusually adept at working the political network of the nation to bring about significant change throughout the Mixteca. Given the enormous problems faced by the Mixteca from the 1950s to the 1980s, his achievements border on the heroic.

The focus of Hernández Hernández and the Coalición was always on the Mixteca region, but more specifically on its individual communities. Nowhere in the report of the "Labores de la Coalición" of 1964-65, for example, do we find mention of any long range plan for the Mixteca or Mixtecs. This is also true for the 1970-71 and 1975 reports of the activities of Hernández Hernández and the Coalición. Community demands were closely monitored and promoted. He served as an effective gate-keeper in the presentation of demands, as the key figure in the informational feedback loop and as a primary facilitator in the delivery of services to the region. Demands centered around resolution of conflict, land entitlement, resettlement and migration, public education, acquisition of potable water systems, irrigation and erosion, electrification, roads and bridges, extension and repair of telephone systems, health centers and delivery, distribution of subsistence goods, administration of justice for Indians, protection of resources, and general development and advancement of the region.

As stated, the orientation of Hernández Hernández and the Coalición was on the region but with specific efforts being directed to individual communities and their problems. Never was there an explicit appeal to Mixtec ethos or ethnicity, no rebellious intent, no call to organize and fight the oppression of the state or the privileged class. Except for expressions of annoyance with the slowness of government agencies to respond to demands, the extensive Hernández Hernández correspondence is notably free of accusations or attempts to fix blame. The focus was problematic, but the mood was always hopeful that something could be done. Such and such needs to be done. Search for, and move toward, a solution.

In all of Hernández Hernández's activities until the 1980s we may observe a long series of mediated dyadic relationships between community and higher level agencies or between communities and an interested constituency, normally residents of a particular community, such as "Tlaxiaqueños Resident in Mexico City" or "Asociación Unificadora Coixtlahuacuense", for promoting the general welfare of the community, intervention with public officials or agencies, funds, specific crises, or for multiple objectives of particular communities. There is no pooling of effort or interests, no marshalling of group support on a regional level, no sacrifice of local interests and objectives on behalf of the region as a whole, no sense of ethnic, or even regional, unity.

Grupo de Tlaxiaqueños Radicados en el Valle de México, A.C., an apparent successor to the Coalición de Pueblos Mixtecos, was established in the early 1980s. According to their charter, it is a group made up of individuals born in Tlaxiaco and living in the Valley of Mexico.<sup>8</sup> Their objectives are to represent the general interests of Tlaxiaqueños, to study questions affecting administrative activities in Tlaxiaco, to participate in the defense of the general interests of Tlaxiaqueños, to act as a consultative body with respect to various civic and administrative activities, such as construction, in the Municipio of Tlaxiaco, to exercise the right of petition to state and federal authorities in administrative, legal, and economic matters, and to act as a commission of arbitration and mediation with respect to internal differences of Tlaxiaqueños located in the Valley of Mexico and the Municipio.

Between 1982 and 1985, the Grupo de Tlaxiaqueños was involved in fund raising for construction and repair of public buildings in Tlaxiaco, celebration of important events in Tlaxiaco or involving Tlaxiaqueños, such as those honoring Hector Ramirez Bolaños, or RAM, the great newspaper caricaturist, the creation of a nursery in Tlaxiaco, celebration of the Tlaxiaco centennial in 1984, and creation of a cultural and promotional film about Tlaxiaco.<sup>9</sup> Later, the concerns of the coalition shifted somewhat from basic services (water, health, electrification, telephones, inter-community conflicts) to construction, community boosterism, administrative matters, and political, ceremonial and symbolic endeavors. Consistently, however, the group was community oriented. Ethnicity or the Mixteca as a whole were never important issues.

Although the matter has yet to be studied in depth, it is quite evident that a concept of ethnic unification may be emerging among the Trique, a very strong cultural and linguistic enclave within the Mixteca. Although the region which spans portions of three distritos, Tlaxiaco, Putla, and Juxtlahuaca, has for generations been torn by intergroup violence, there is growing recognition of a common Trique ethnicity and language. There are signs that Triques are organizing on a supra-community level. This is one of the most conflictive areas in all of Oaxaca--and that is saying a lot--and most of the conflict takes place between Trique

communities. The militant Movimiento de Unificación de Lucha Triqui (MULT) was formed in 1981 (Cruz 1986: 437-442). The organization was created with the help of the Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudiantil del Istmo (COCEI), and it is unclear whether this development represented a grass-roots political movement out of the Triquería or was a largely externally initiated movement arising out of the nationally pervasive student and teacher movement, the critical economic situation of the early 1980s, and growing national awareness of the general plight of Indians. The movement does seem to have met with some limited success by calling attention to conditions in the Mixteca and affecting elections..

During the past thirty years Marcos Sandoval of San Andrés Chicahuastla emerged as an effective leader and mediator on the intercommunity level. He has made serious efforts to mediate and resolve intercommunity conflicts and to raise Trique ethnic awareness. He and members of his family have sponsored the development of a weavers' guild in San Andrés that includes women from San Andrés and surrounding ranchos, but this remains a basically San Andrés coalition. Until medical disabilities and advancing age conspired to limit his activities, Don Marcos regularly intervened in local conflicts while promoting Indian affairs at the national level. Neither he nor others, however, have succeeded in bringing social and political cohesion to the Triques. Much of the organization and ethnic consciousness raising is the result of influences by political activists or teachers, but it is equally clear that the Triques themselves, Marcos Sandoval, Jr. among them, have been instrumental in both the initiation and leadership of their own ethnic movement. Thoroughgoing study of the Trique movement in the Triquería and in their colonies should be given high priority by anthropologists.

### Conclusions

According to Barth (1969: 10-11), "ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves." "Ethnic group" designates a population which:

- is largely biologically self-perpetuating
- shares fundamental cultural values
- makes up a field of communication and interaction
- has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

For these criteria to be relevant to the Mixteca, we must equate "ethnic group" with village, pueblo, or community. With this qualification in mind, it is possible to recognize and distinguish "ethnic groups" in the Mixteca. The ethnic groups, according to Barth's criteria, would be the villages. Beyond that level, the designation "ethnic group" has little relevance.

Crises, common interests and needs, charismatic leadership, and external threats have not brought communities together in a regional "community". Any such tendencies are impeded by a long-standing enmity between communities, a pervasive ethos of limited good--that is, political-economic resources are limited, and there is never enough to meet the demands of all communities resulting in a kind of community *egoismo*, and a seeming inability to organize beyond the community level. To date, ethnicity has not played a significant role in the

coalitional equation or in hundreds of conflict cases, the presentation of demands or statements of public interest. The external conflicts that Bartolomé and Barabas (1986:29) suggest to be the critical factor in the circumstantial agglutination of communities and the formation of ethnopolitical movements simply have not occurred or have not occurred with sufficient force in the Mixteca to induce significant supra-communal regional organization or ideological unification.

So, what would induce amalgamation, give a sense of common identity and purpose, a sense of "we Mixtecs against all others?" This occurs when they leave their home communities, move outside to the *colonias* that they have established in Tehuantepec, Mexico City, Ensenada, southern California, Fresno, Chicago or in Woodburn, Oregon. This linking on the basis of regional or ethnic identity seems to occur when Mixtecs feel threatened, alone, defenseless and disenfranchised. The traditional community support group is missing. This results in a grasping for an identity, for collateral and moral support beyond the traditional family, compadrazgo, and community level. "We have something in common. We are Mixtecs." (Hernández Hernández 1965: 50-52; Kearney 1988; Nagengast and Kearney 1990).

The concept of "ethnicity", in the sense of social identity, ethnic pride or strong, even militant, identification with a particular ethnic group, emerged strongly in the United States in the 1960's with Blacks and Black Pride, the Chicano movement, the Native American movement, etc. It is also at this time that anthropologists began paying attention to the concept and began explicit studies of "ethnicity". In the 1970s and 1980s, ethnicity became the subject of attention of Latin Americanist scholars, particularly with respect to groups that have suffered obvious oppression, and are without an effective voice or representation. Anthropologists, in effect, took it upon themselves to speak for these groups, to attempt to represent their interests, and to plead their cause, as well as to define, describe and analyze the concept and the reality of ethnicity.

In recent years, teachers, particularly bilingual Mixtecs, have emphasized Mixtec ethnicity in the classroom, in the promotion of programs of regional development, and through the opening of regional centers, such as that now operating in Nochixtlán. While efforts at social and political activism seem to have been effective in Tehuantepec and in a few communities in the central valleys of Oaxaca and in the Sierra, it has yet to have a significant impact on the soci-political and economic status quo of the Mixteca (Cruz 1986).

An additional point worth stressing is that there is a strong temptation on our part as anthropologist-spokespersons for the groups that we work with, to impute a social identity to those groups when they themselves may not have an ethnic consciousness or their concept of their ethnic identity may differ substantially from the one which we may assign to them. The extension of this point is that I do not believe that there is now, or ever has been, an ethos of Mixtec ethnicity among the populations resident in the Mixteca of Oaxaca. There is an identification with the Mixteca region, but far stronger is the identification with community. Butterworth (1962, 1972, 1977) and Orellana (1973) found this to be true even among migrants who had established themselves in Mexico City. "Soy Mixteco" means that "I am from the Mixteca", and sometimes, that "I speak Mixteco", but it does not mean that one is culturally or ethnically Mixteco. One would call attention to oneself in this way only when contrasting oneself to Zapotecos, Chinantecos, Norteamericanos, etc. Mixtecs residing in the Mixteca do not dwell on Mixtec culture or being identified with 200,000 other Mixtec speakers, and they voice no particular pride in their Mixtecicity.

The failure of regional coalition in the Mixteca during the twentieth century results from several factors: a) a powerful and overriding identification with, and allegiance to, the local community; b) a lack of developed mechanisms, or appropriate structures, for regional, supra-community or multi-community organization; c) linguistic or dialectical differences; d) the failure of coalescence of a Mixtec ethnic identity despite common linguistic, cultural, and historical roots; e) with the notable exception of Manuel Hernández Hernández, effective regional leadership has failed to materialize; f) the reluctance of local groups to recognize, or to acquiesce to extra-communal, regionally-based leadership; g) the lack of clear external threats to the region; and h) the failure of federal and state governments to promote or encourage regional leadership, programs or coalitions directed by other than bureaucrats and or other "outside" professionals. Given the strength of these impediments, I believe that it is most unlikely that regional coalitions along ethnic or political lines, or a concept of Mixtec ethnicity will ever emerge in the Mixteca itself. It has not happened in the past, and in spite of changes, or perhaps because of changes, it will not happen in the future.

### NOTES

1. AGEO: Memoria Administrativa presentada por el Gobierno. Informe administrativo rendido por el Gobernador del Estado, General Manuel García Vigil, Septiembre, 1921)
2. ARM, Presidencia, sin clasificación, Correspondence of Dr. Leovigildo Vásquez to Presidente Municipal Benjamín Bolaños Jiménez, 31 August, 1935 and from Bolaños Jiménez to Vásquez, 9 September, 1935.
3. ARM, Presidencia, sin clasificación, Correspondence of Julio Santiago to the Presidente Municipal of Tlaxiaco, 15 February, 1937.
4. ARM, Presidencia, sin clasificación, Acta between merchants of Tlaxiaco and Delegado de la Liga, Max Cenobio Robles, 12 February, 1937.
5. ARM, Presidencia, 1959, sin clasificación, letters from Hernández Hernández to Aldolfo López Mateos, 8 June, 1959 and 28 June, 1959.
6. ARM, Presidencia 1959, correspondence from Hernández Hernández, 26 January, 1959 and 24 February, 1959.
7. AGEO Gobernación, Correspondencia del Gobernador, sin clasificación, 1975. Correspondence dated 13 June, 24 July, 8 August, and 19 August, 1975.
8. ARM, Presidencia, sin clasificación, Estatutos de T.R.V.M, sin fecha.
9. ARM, Presidencia, sin clasificación, correspondence between representatives of T.R.V.M. and the Presidente Municipal of Tlaxiaco, 7 May, 1982; 7 June 1982; 13 January, 1984; 8 December, 1984.

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- AGEO Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Oaxaca.  
ARM Archivo Regional de la Mixteca, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca

### III

#### THE BILINGUAL TEACHERS: A NEW INDIGENOUS INTELLIGENTSIA

Jorge Hernández Díaz

From 1970 to the present, an important political mobilization of the indigenous population has taken place in Mexico and especially in the state of Oaxaca in Southern Mexico. Although it has been most visible when implemented by formally constituted organizations, political mobilization of indigenous people in Oaxaca has not been restricted to them. Many political actions of indigenous populations have been carried out by local communities or individuals. Nevertheless, these often subscribe the political agendas of the State and nation-wide organizations.

In this paper, I examine the political role of a group of indigenous professionals who act as organizers of the Chatino peoples.<sup>1</sup> The interaction between Chatino villages and the so-called national society has been so intense and long lasting that at the present time one cannot speak of them as isolated communities. Yet Chatinos' belief that they have a distinctive socio-cultural identity has not been eliminated. On the contrary, interaction between the Chatinos and the national society often reinforces this belief, especially among those most permanently and intensely engaged with the so-called national society, such as the bilingual teachers. These political brokers can be categorized, in Gramsci's terms, as organic intellectuals.

During the twentieth century, indigenist policy has experimented with various methods to integrate the indigenous population. One of these methods involved training indigenous teachers in special federal government schools. This program began in the 1920s with the establishment of the rural school which "became a center not only of education (neutrally defined), but also of technological diffusion, agrarian reform, political mobilization, and nationalist propaganda" (Knight 1990:81; c.f., Vázquez 1970:33), and has continued in different forms up to the present (Aguirre Beltrán 1971:16; Riding 1986:287-299). During the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of indigenous bilingual teachers were trained and placed in indigenous villages.

Inspired by Wolf's (1956) idea of cultural brokers, Aguirre Beltrán, one of the most lucid spokesmen of official indigenist policy, elaborated a theory and program for indigenous formal education. Aguirre Beltrán (1973, 1988) argued that to reach the desired goals of Mexican indigenism, education should play a principal role, and that the teachers should be "those *comuneros* who by spending a year or more in a formal educational institution may be considered apt to act as intermediaries between the ethnic community and regional society" (Aguirre Beltrán 1988:23). All previous efforts notwithstanding, it was only in the period between 1970 and 1976 that bilingual education in indigenous regions was fully implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> Oaxaca contains approximately 25% of the Mexican indigenous population distributed among 16 discrete ethnic (linguistic) groups. The Chatino number approximately 38,000 people who mainly inhabit the Sierra Madre del Sur in the Juquila and Sola de Vega districts. For detailed information about the Chatinos see Greenberg (1981, 1987), Bartolome and Barabas (1982), Hernández Díaz (1987, 1988).

During the populist administration of Luis Echeverría, Aguirre Beltrán served both as director of the National Indigenist Institute (INI) and Vice-Minister of Culture in the Ministry of Education. He has recently written that "After Lázaro Cárdenas, no incumbent of the highest office in the republican system did more for the improvement and integration of the Indians in the political and economic life of the nation than President Echeverría and his Wife, Doña Esther Zuno" (Aguirre Beltrán 1988:32).

### **The Organization of Indigenous Professionals**

As part of its populist agenda, Echeverría's administration fostered the formation of indigenous organizations of national scope. Two of the most important associations are the National Alliance of Bilingual Indigenous Professionals (AMPIBAC) and the National Council of Indigenous Peoples (CNPI).

The CNPI was formed in 1975 as a result of the First National Congress of Indigenous People celebrated in Patzcuaro, Michoacán and presided over by President Echeverría. The Congress was organized by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (SRA), the National Indigenist Institute (INI) and the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) (Aguirre Beltrán 1971:26-27). The fact that the congress was organized by dependencies of the federal government indicates that the CNPI was not autonomous from the State. Some authors interpret this event as illustrating the Mexican government's intent to control indigenous organizations (Burguete 1984). In its constitutive statutes, for instance, the CNPI proclaimed its alliance with the federal government. Its demands were basically respect for cultural specificity and denunciations of local and regional caciques (Burguete 1984; Sarmiento 1985). At its second congress in 1977 the CNPI's demands became more radical, and an attempt was undertaken to separate it from official institutions. The proceedings of the third Congress of the CNPI, held in 1979, were more radical yet. While the CNPI did not achieve separation from the Mexican government, it did achieve enough autonomy and political space to at least denounce some of the injustices committed against indigenous communities by the government and regional bosses (Mejia and Sarmiento 1987). However, this did not necessarily make it a threat to the government. As a result of the founding of the CNPI Indigenous Supreme Councils for each indigenous ethnic group (i.e., all communities sharing the same language) were established.

The National Alliance of Professional Indigenous Bilingual Civil Associations (ANPIBAC) was formed by professional indigenous people (mainly teachers and technicians). It brought together about 22,000 bilingual teachers from most of Mexico's 56 indigenous ethnic groups. Like the CNPI, ANPIBAC was founded with ample support from the Mexican government (Barre 1983; Mejia and Sarmiento 1987; Burguete 1984). ANPIBAC called for bilingual and bicultural education as conceived by and for the indigenous people as subjects of their own history and historical destiny. According to this organization, bilingual teachers must first teach their own culture and only then teach the universal values of other cultures. The members of the organization also demand official recognition of their ethnicity, their Indian identity. Hence education became a means for reinforcing ethnic identity (Hernández 1988:174).

ANPIBAC conceived its struggle as part of a broad movement, but insisted on respect and the valorization of the peculiarities of each indigenous ethnic group. Today, people affiliated with this organization believe that they are fighting against a common enemy which has gathered

them into one category: the "*Indio*," but they also see in this global categorization a source of strength. AMPIBAC assumes that indigenous communities are being destroyed by the capitalist system (Hernández 1988: 175). They claim that their goal is to maintain their specific ways of life, culture and identity. They do not intend to transform the bases of the national political system; rather, they want a place in the national political arena:

Starting from the point of what we actually have and who we are, we put forward a historical demand for a dignified and human place in the context of the country, in order to contribute to its transformation and development, to struggle for economic, cultural, and political independence, and for a development defined by all, indigenous and non-indigenous people, as Mexicans. (Hernández 1988:181)

Some young, bilingual teachers were influenced by a new generation of anthropologists in the 1970s who criticized state indigenist policy. In the classic book titled *De Eso que Lllaman Antropología Mexicana* (That Which They Call Mexican Anthropology), a group of radical anthropologists denounced the programs of official institutions as pernicious to indigenous cultures (Warman et al 1970; de la Peña 1988:369). In Mexico, this new current is known as Critical Anthropology. Together with the indigenous professionals the radical anthropologists have sought to establish a new indigenist policy called "participatory indigenism" (*indigenismo de participación*) and to mobilize indigenous people to support it.

In reacting to the older assimilationist program, some indigenous leaders and anthropologists from the Critical Anthropology movement have gone on to propose a different indigenist policy. This proposal, which has been characterized as radical indigenism, assumes that the Spanish conquest interrupted the civilizing projects of indigenous ethnic groups (Bonfil Batalla 1979: 39-65; Bonfil Batalla 1988). Consequently, the anthropologists demand conditions that would allow indigenous people to recuperate these projects. The demands can be summarized as follows: 1) respect for the indigenous populations' rights to continue being culturally distinct; 2) recognition of indigenous languages as official ones; 3) recognition of and respect for ancestral cultures; and 4) conditions to maintain ancestral and/or traditional technologies (participants in the movement assume that the indigenous groups maintained a harmonious relationship with nature, a relationship which has been broken by the immersion of indigenous communities into the capitalist economy).

Rather than seeking to sever the relationship between the Mexican State and the indigenous groups, the program proposed by indigenous leaders and anthropologists presumes such a relationship, while restructuring the official indigenist policy. It has been called *indianismo* instead of *indigenismo* (Hernández 1988; Hernández and Hernández 1979). Indigenous leaders claim that the principal difference is that *indigenismo* is the policy of the non-Indian for the Indian and *indianismo* is the policy of the Indian for the Indian. On the other hand, some authors have said that *indianismo* is the policy of some Indian anthropologists and the indigenous intelligentsia who act in the name of the rest of the indigenous population (Burguete 1984).

With the emergence of ethnic organizations and the Critical Anthropology current, the debate among social scientists, politicians, and indigenous leaders concerning the situation of the so-called "Indian" population intensified. Two broad tendencies can be identified. Proponents of the first argue that *Indios* will be assimilated into the "national society" and will disappear as

a social category (Aguirre Beltrán 1976; Díaz Polanco 1987). Representatives of the second claim that ethnic groups existed prior to class society and will survive the demise of the capitalist system (Bonfil Batalla 1988; Bartolomé 1979; Warman 1989; Stavenhagen 1980). This is the social context within which what I have called the new "indigenous intelligentsia" operates.<sup>2</sup>

### **A Regional Indigenist Project**

Generally speaking, indigenist policy has been carried out by the federal government. However, various regional experiments have been undertaken in an effort to discover the most viable means of putting indigenist policies into practice. In Oaxaca, the Institute for Research and Social Integration of Oaxaca State (IIISEO) was inaugurated in 1969. Its basic functions were educational: the development of methods for teaching Spanish as a second language, the preparation of instructional materials appropriate to indigenous people, the training of bilingual teachers, the creation of a local bilingual education bureaucracy, and a research arm concerned with issues of indigenous education. During the 1969-1974 period the IIISEO trained approximately five hundred young indigenous people as cultural brokers, four hundred as promoters, fifty as bilingual technicians. In addition, thirty individual received B.A.s, majoring in "administration of education programs and development of the indigenous environment" (Nolasco 1978:253-259; Nolasco and Acevedo 1986).<sup>3</sup> It was intended that newly trained personnel would return to their communities of origin to apply what they had learned in the classrooms. Although the IIISEO was founded as a dependency of the Oaxaca state government, it was officially linked to the INI from the beginning; however, both institutions were organically integrated when Aguirre Beltrán was nominated Vice-Minister of Popular Culture and director of the INI:

This twofold designation allowed agencies such as the Direction of After-School Education in the Indigenous Regions, the Cultural Missions, the Farming Brigades, Improvement of Indigenous People Life Brigades, and the System of Rural Schools that develop most of their activities in indigenous communities to be organically linked. (Aguirre Beltrán 1971:17)

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<sup>2</sup> Other national organizations were created independently of the government, though by people with the same social background as those who formed the government-linked organizations identified above. Two examples are the Cordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas (CNPI, which is the same acronym as the official organization) and the Organizaciones Indígenas Independientes (OIIS). The Cordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala (CNPA) incorporates an important number of ethnic regional organizations and also affiliates non-indigenous organizations. It is actually a confederation of regional organizations.

<sup>3</sup> The IIISEO program was canceled in 1981 after Oaxacan right-wing groups accused the program of being a center for training leftists and guerrillas.

Indigenist policy has never been the product of consensus and the IIISEO project was no exception. In Oaxaca, Margarita Nolasco, the director of IIISEO, was one of the authors of *De eso que LLaman Antropología Mexicana*, while Aguirre Beltrán, at that time INI director, was a severe critic of the book and its propositions (Nolasco 1970: 67-93; Aguirre Beltrán 1976: 98-117). The dynamics of these contradictions can be better understood if one considers that Arturo Warman, one of the most ardent critics of indigenist policies during the 1970s, became director of INI. These facts suggest that the Mexican government apparatus is a contradictory arena where political confrontation often gives way to political co-optation.

The implementation of bilingual education has led to major changes in the relationship between indigenous people and the national social formation. In Oaxaca, the demand for technicians and bilingual teachers was so great that it could not be satisfied with available trained personnel. For instance, data from the Chatino region indicates that very few of those hired as bilingual teachers have degrees from the IIISEO, that many do not even have specialized degrees, and an important number have completed only elementary or secondary school (Table 1).

### **The Bilingual Teachers and the Chatino Communities**

In Chatino communities in the early 1970's, an official recruitment campaign was launched for people with elementary or secondary school education who wanted to work as bilingual teachers. The earliest recruits received three months training in the IIISEO; the remainder were immediately put to work without any training.

The INI established a coordinating center in the Chatino region in 1973, with the main office located in Santa Catarina Juquila. It is important to keep in mind that the INI's main stated objectives are: 1) to achieve greater participation of indigenous people in economic production and ensure them the benefits of national development; 2) to provide basic necessities; 3) to enhance the capacity of ethnic groups to defend their basic individual and social rights; 4) to strengthen national consciousness while respecting ethnic pluralism (Aguirre Beltrán 1971; Baez-Jorge 1978:293). In 1974 a bilingual education regional center was also established in Juquila.

National indigenous organizations were also extended into the Chatino region. As explained earlier, after the formation of the CNPI, Indigenous Supreme Councils were established among each ethnic group. I will discuss below the central role that bilingual teachers have played in this process.

The presence of bilingual teachers has modified the political situation of indigenous communities throughout Oaxaca. Today they represent an important part of the federal education system and the teachers' union, the largest and most powerful union in Mexico. In the state of Oaxaca, teachers have begun a democratic movement within which the bilingual teachers' section (commonly known as "*los promotores*") is among the most combative. Along with the teachers union, the *promotores* also play influential political roles in their communities of origin as well as in those communities where they work.

Table 1. Number of Bilingual Teachers by Years Completed in School

Year of Contract	Number of School Years Completed								
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	total
1973	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1974	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	1	6
1975	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	4
1976	1	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	5
1977	2	1	2	4	-	-	-	-	9
1978	-	-	1	3	4	1	-	-	9
1979	5	1	4	5	-	1	-	-	16
1980	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	5
n/d	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	6
Total	13	5	10	25	5	3	0	1	62

Source: Based on statistics of June 1980 from the Regional Direction of Indigenous Education in Juquila. In Mexico elementary school lasts 6 years and secondary school lasts 3 years. In this table, those people registered with 11 to 12 years in school were from specialized teachers' schools (Escuelas Normales). The one case with 13 years in school was of an individual in the first year at the college level.

In 1980, 62 bilingual teachers were working in Chatino communities, of which 53 had only 6 to 9 years schooling. It is important to note that the majority of teachers hired during the last three decades by federal schools that do not include bilingual education have degrees from specialized centers (Escuelas Normales). According to information from the Coordination of Bilingual Education in Juquila, while the number of bilingual teachers increased to 250 in 1990, their average level of training was almost unchanged. The government's many programs to facilitate teacher training appear to have had little impact on bilingual teachers.

As I said before, the Mexican government has spent enormous sums on a national education system in which the diffusion of Spanish has been a crucial goal. In the Oaxacan countryside such programs confronted serious obstacles: a poorly developed system of roads, heavy monolingualism, and the different value placed on formal education by rural people. Moreover, until the 1970s, when bilingual teacher began to work in the region for the first time, education before that time was uniformly in the hands of people who spoke only Spanish. For the vast majority of Chatinos, formal schooling was minimal and education focussed on the acquisition of the knowledge required to survive in the region. Chatino males traditionally entered the cargo system at 13 to 14 years of age, at which time many of them married. (Girls typically married between 12 and 13). Fathers began to take their sons to work in the fields when the

boys reached six or seven years old, and instructed them, often by example only, local agricultural techniques. Girls had a similar experience; they were informally taught the so-called domestic tasks, basically activities related to food processing and child rearing. Given these circumstances, few children remained in school for more than three years. Formal schooling was viewed as an investment without tangible benefit. Chatino adults commonly state that school makes people lazy, and that people who go to school do not want to work in the fields anymore. It is obvious that those who did go to school were from better-off families which could afford to excuse their children from agricultural tasks; there were only a few such families in Chatino communities.

Table 2. Distribution of Schooling Years and Age in Those 10 Years and Older in 487 Chatino Households

Age	Years of Schooling					total
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	> 10	
10-14	73	205	107	7	0	392
15-19	37	73	135	15	5	265
20-24	78	59	98	9	5	249
25-29	69	78	35	2	0	184
30-34	81	45	18	0	1	145
35-39	93	45	10	0	1	149
40-44	77	43	7	0	0	127
45-49	53	28	1	0	1	83
50-54	43	28	5	0	0	76
55-59	27	11	0	0	0	38
60-64	34	7	0	0	0	41
65-69	11	4	1	0	0	16
70-74	8	3	2	0	0	13
75-79	8	2	1	0	0	11
> 79	12	1	3	0	0	16
Total	704	632	423	33	3313	1,805

A careful examination of Table 2 suggests that in Chatino communities the school system has reached a considerable part of the population only in recent times. Taking into consideration that the above information was gathered in 1986, it becomes apparent that very few individuals had completed elementary school when Chatinos were first hired as bilingual teachers. Those who in 1986 were 34 years old or older had the best chances to become bilingual teachers during the 1970s, but there were very few of them. Those with the largest number of years of formal schooling are typically from households in the upper strata of the socioeconomic hierarchy, so

that bilingual teachers tend to represent a relatively privileged minority of the Chatino population. It is precisely individuals from this socioeconomic category who acquire knowledge of Spanish as part of their cultural, or symbolic, capital (Bourdieu 1988; 1990).

Today, bilingual teachers are elaborating a body of ideas in which selected aspects of Chatino life are used to justify their political claims. Though a numerical minority, the bilingual teachers are distributed throughout the Chatino region because of their professional activities. Based upon interviews with bilingual teachers in the field, as well as published interviews and scholarly papers produced by social scientists, I present below a representative selection of the ideas subscribed to by this group.

### **Social Characteristics of Chatino Bilingual Teachers**

Among the Chatino population, a group has emerged that cannot be totally understood in terms of an approach to class that privileges the distribution of property. It is obvious that in economic terms these people are better off than other members of their ethnic group. However, they occupy a lower rung on the economic ladder than other social strata in the region. To situate the bilingual teachers collectively in the regional social structure one should consider that they acquire their position through education and intellectual labor.<sup>4</sup> The bilingual teachers not only form part of a middle class, but they also play important political roles within Mexican society. Since socioeconomic indicators do not suffice to define this group an alternative approach focussing on the commoditization of knowledge and education is suggested. Here education is considered a kind of symbolic capital, that is capital endowed with a specific symbolic efficacy (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1990:111-2; Williams; 1980:42-3).<sup>5</sup> Thus, the bilingual teachers can be considered to have two uniquely valuable non-material assets: 1) their formal education and knowledge of Spanish, and 2) their knowledge of the wider social formation.

Before proceeding with this discussion, I shall examine this group more closely through two representative biographical sketches, those of Ms. Cirila Sánchez Mendoza and Tomás Cruz Lorenzo, whose personal histories are well publicized and documented.

Ms. Sánchez is remarkable because of her meteoric rise and unprecedented career as a politician in a system dominated by mestizo men. Ms. Sánchez says that she started learning Spanish when she was 11 years old:

I was eleven years old when I was asked to marry--you know that in my homeland they used to ask the girls to marry when they were five or six years old, and they married at 13 or 14 of age--my parents did not want to promise me at that early age and so they took me to San Miguel Panixtlahuaca so that I might

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<sup>4</sup> Although the Chatino people are differentiated into social strata and classes, the number of professionals is very limited, controlled by the state apparatus, and concentrated in public services such as education and technical assistance.

<sup>5</sup> An alternative approach to class identification, one in which property relations (materially defined) are not privileged is developed by Wright (1985: 148-153).

learn Spanish. They left me with some acquaintances and registered me in the third grade.... The following year I went with my sister to Juquila, there they put me back in second grade. I am an indigenous person of the Chatino group and I learned Castilian only when I was a little older. (Sánchez 1989:34)

Ms. Sánchez studied at the IIISEO. After completing her training as a bilingual teacher at the age of 18, she began to work as a Spanish teacher with Chatino children. The following year she assumed the directorship of the Regional Center of Bilingual Education in Juquila, a position that she held until 1980 when she was expelled by a group of colleagues who accused her of corruption and authoritarianism. However, she continued as a representative of the Chatino Supreme Council and became its president in 1980.

In a meeting during the presidential campaign of Miguel de la Madrid, Ms. Sánchez, speaking in the name of indigenous people in general and the Chatinos in particular, denounced the activities of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), which she considered to have pernicious effects on indigenous communities. At the same time she denounced the activity of the logging companies which she accused of stealing natural resources legitimately owned by indigenous communities. In 1983, she was the only woman candidate nominated by the ruling party to become state representative (*diputado local*), and three years later she became a federal representative (*diputado federal*). Many local political analysts attribute her nomination as a state representative to her public role as a defender of indigenous rights.

Mr. Cruz Lorenzo also worked as a bilingual teacher for a few years, and also had to abandon his position after a confrontation with the educational authorities. Together with Ms. Sánchez he founded the Chatino Supreme Council. After being forced to abandon his teaching position he went to work as a truck driver for the state-owned food supply company (CONASUPO), an institution that also plays an important political role in the mobilization of rural communities. Living in Oaxaca but constantly traveling to the Chatino region, Mr. Cruz Lorenzo maintained an important network of political ties with teachers he served with and community leaders who administer the CONASUPO stores. This situation continued until 1988 when the new Mexican administration began to cut funding for programs such as CONASUPO. Cruz Lorenzo was fired, returned to his hometown of Cieneguilla and organized a cooperative to log the communal forest. A year later, he was murdered in Juquila. To this day, no one knows (or wishes to reveal) who killed him or what their motives might have been. One newspaper article reported that at the time of his death Cruz Lorenzo was working on a compilation of Chatino oral history for "*la Casa de la Cultura*" (The House of Culture), a dependency of the state government. While working in Oaxaca, Mr Cruz Lorenzo began to publish analyses of events in the Chatino region. Among the most notable is a chronicle of the Yaitepec conflict (Cruz Lorenzo 1987) (the best published to date), and a study of the expansion of marijuana plantations in Chatino communities.

In what ways might these two cases shed light upon the new Chatino intelligentsia? Ms. Sánchez had to migrate to Juquila in order to finish elementary school, and then to Oaxaca to finish secondary school before entering the IIISEO program. Mr. Cruz Lorenzo learned Spanish because his uncle was a teacher. To be able to travel to a city to learn Spanish or to have a relative who is a teacher is unusual among the Chatino and evidences membership in a relatively privileged elite. This social group is particularly interested in Chatino history and culture and

in Chatino traditions and distinctiveness, and is dedicated to expose and combat outside exploitation.

For the intelligentsia, ethnic status is more than an object of folkloric curiosity. For example, Ms. Sánchez said that she was discriminated against while attending elementary school in Juquila. The bilingual teachers confront frontally the framework that denigrates their indigenous identities, which then becomes much more evident since they are immersed in an educational system whose main goal has been to implant a national mestizo identity.

Many other bilingual teachers followed trajectories similar to those presented above. For example, a colleague of Ms. Sánchez became the first female municipal president in the Chatino area, and perhaps the first indigenous female municipal president in Oaxaca. She also authored a book designed to teach Chatino children in their own language.

Although other Chatino teachers are not as well known regionally, many are nonetheless important personalities with considerable capacity to influence local political decisions. In 1990, bilingual teachers served as presidents in three municipalities, but more importantly, the municipal secretaries

(*secretarios municipales*) in almost all the Chatino towns were bilingual teachers whereas in the past they were *mestizos*. With bilingual teachers now filling these posts, the community as a whole is able to achieve a higher degree of autonomy than in the past. However, it must be acknowledged that it is only because of links with the national social formation that members of this new social group fill these political positions.

### **The Chatino Teachers' Political Views**

Although Chatino teachers were trained by the federal educational system, their attitudes towards it are ambivalent. On one hand, they place high value on official education because it provided them with a profession. On the other hand, they condemn the federal educational policy that undermines Chatino customs and traditions. This ambivalence pervades their views. As Cruz Lorenzo writes:

The Chatino people of my age have a great responsibility to our own people since it can be said that we are the generation of change, the generation that has to face change. In general, our fathers were the last generation that did not attend school, and our children are the first generation that has been massively formally educated. The school is the chief place where we are taught that our customs are false, and our knowledge is characterized as ridiculous in comparison to science. Our children are learning this and then abandoning and belittling our rituals which they qualify as irrational, superstitious, absurd, and false. Now the only truth is the Western truth; there is no longer the Chatino truth, even when our truth might have allowed us to live for centuries. (Cruz Lorenzo 1989:24)

On the other hand, school is also understood by the bilingual teachers as a mechanism that can become a political tool that allows them to value their own culture as opposed to mestizo culture. A very good example is the introduction to the teachers' manual for educating Chatino children in their own language. That manual, authored by a Chatino teacher who is a former

municipal president of Tataltepec de Valdez and used by all Chatino bilingual teachers, presents as one of the main objects of bilingual education the valuing of Chatino language and culture:

It is important that from their first months at school the children should know that the fact of having a language and culture different from others does not make them inferior. They should learn that it is not necessary to reject one's own language and culture to adopt the national language and culture. On the contrary, it is necessary to maintain and develop the mother tongue, and to know and understand one's own customs and values in order to secure the ethnic identity, and then one can enrich them by learning how to speak Spanish and knowing other customs, traditions and values. (López Ruiz 1985:9)

The presence of two pedagogic alternatives or approaches to culture pervades the discourse of the Chatino professional. On one hand the bilingual teachers admire the benefits of "western" culture. On the other hand they condemn the negative effects that that culture has on Chatino culture. Among their demands, public services are given a high priority as illustrated in another statement by Cruz Lorenzo:

Every community wants schools, roads, health centers, church buildings, and a big *palacio municipal*, the construction of which means a great physical and economic sacrifice for the communities' citizens. But most importantly, all this means a displacement of our own way of doing things. (Cruz Lorenzo 1989:28)

The indigenous teachers passionately defend what they call the "rational" use of Chatino natural resources, by which they mean the employment of swidden techniques. While formulating this defense the bilingual teachers recur to class and ethnic elements as factors that justify their claims, as shown in the following statement:

It should be clear that the absolute owners of these lands and their natural sources are we the indigenous people, and that no foreign enterprise has the right to exploit them. (Sánchez 1983:3)

They advocate the productive use of natural resources by and for Chatinos without intermediaries. This is not an abstract polemic, but has quite pragmatic consequences. Cruz Lorenzo was killed precisely at the time he was organizing a regional communal forestry cooperative.

Indigenous intellectuals are aware that their communities are socially differentiated, and their solution is to promote a return to "traditional" social relations. The past is here recuperated in order to confront the future:

Harmony in the work between men and gods is what makes it possible for us to eat and to live as a community. If our gods created things in common and help us in life collectively, we cannot be better than them and own things individually. (Cruz Lorenzo 1987)

The recuperation of the "original" Chatino organization is consistently put forward as an alternative to the current misery of Chatino communities, a misery that is attributed to exploitation by outsiders.

To return to constitute ourselves as self-sufficient communities is one of our immediate goals since we have seen ourselves obligated to abandon our principal activity: agriculture. For this reason we ask that traditional agriculture be supported and given impulse. (Sánchez 1983:3)

The basic demands of the Chatino intellectuals fall into two categories: those which refer to economic conditions and those which refer to culture. Close examination reveals that demands pertaining to the ethnic dimension are linked with economic demands. Mr. Cruz Lorenzo says:

For us things should be collective. It was the way we learned it. For example, the land was given by the deities to the community; it was not given to individuals. For that reason it was worked communally and nobody was owner or felt himself to be owner of the land that he worked. (Cruz Lorenzo 1987)

Ethnic elements as motives for political mobilization are consistently employed by indigenous professionals in order to achieve their goals. These few examples illustrate that the demands of the Chatino teachers do not differ from demands articulated by nationwide ethnic organizations, and that, like their partners in national organizations, Chatino bilingual teachers are basing these demands upon what have been considered primordial elements of indigenous identity. While the bilingual teachers mobilize the rest of the Chatino population at the local and regional levels, their project is linked with that of the national indigenous movement with which they are affiliated.

### **The Chatino Teachers as Organic Intellectuals**

The above description shows that Chatino teachers are elaborating a perspective that reappropriates the cultural markers that have been historically manipulated by mestizo policymakers to keep them subordinated. Reversing that tendency, bilingual teachers use ethnic symbols in a political campaign aimed at ending the asymmetrical relationship they have with the national social formation. They reject assimilation as the desired route to integration with the Mexican state and employ their ethnic identity to delegitimize the prevailing arrangements, which they perceive as a calculated policy of hegemony. Consequently they demand changes that would guarantee their reproduction as distinctive culture-bearing ethnic groups. Still, the Chatino demands are less far reaching than those promoted by the Isthmus Zapotecs or Triques, who not only seek political autonomy but also link their claims with those made by class-based organizations that oppose the system and demand structural changes (Campbell 1990; Parra 1987).

Indigenous teachers use of their so-called traditional traits as a means to claim their rights reveals two contradictory dynamics. On one hand, the indigenous teachers are working to "modernize" their communities, that is to obtain access to the same services available in urban areas (telephones, running water, secondary schools, health centers, and food distribution stores,

etc.), but on the other hand they have constructed an ideology that rejects "modernization" and privileges "traditional" institutions, such as communal work and collective ownership of the land. In short, they are engaged in "a dialectical process that preserves ethnic groups by emphasizing their singularity and yet also engineers and lubricates their modernization by transforming them into political conflict groups for the modern political arena, where they must deploy cosmopolitan modern skills and resources" (Rothschild 1981:3; cf. Campbell 1990).

In the Chatino region, as in other indigenous areas of Mexico, preexisting cultural elements served to differentiate people into distinct groups. The real and important question, however, is when and why those traits are used as banners of political mobilization. What the bilingual teachers are endeavoring to do is to bring those elements to the consciousness of the Chatino people. In this respect, bilingual teachers are acting as organic intellectuals in order to mobilize their people to struggle and constitute themselves as an ethnic group. As I said elsewhere, the professional middle class pushes indigenous groups to organize beyond the local level. The Chatino today have the potential to build a political organization through their ethnicity.

This is not to imply that others never engage in intellectual activities. Everyone is in a very real sense an intellectual, but under specific circumstances some people acquire the specific role of organic intellectuals, which is to say that they take on the role of political organizers and producers of an ideology (or philosophy) representative of a given social group (Gramsci 1975: 15). The bilingual teachers' political activity is not consensually accepted by all Chatino people, but insofar as they are able to implement their political program, their ideas will become the hegemonic program among the Chatino population. They act as mediators of political consciousness.

The bilingual teachers are not easy to situate in the socioeconomic structure. They do, however, represent a relatively homogeneous group based on their privileged access to education. In this regard, the school has been the main institution where organic intellectuals are formed and act, a situation that has ample historical precedents (Gramsci 1975: 16; Mannheim 1985: 154). In the Chatino bilingual teachers' case, school played a twofold role. On one hand, as an arm of the State it enforces certain conceptions of national identity; on the other hand, it is the place where hegemonic ideas are being questioned. A national consciousness fitting the image of those in power is required by the ruling elites and the owners of the means of production. Yet the construction of this consciousness is by no means a simple imposition of the dominant classes upon the subordinated ones. If that were the case, as Williams says, it would be "a very much easier thing to overthrow" (1980:39).

Thus, it is important to note how the national political system is now used as an element by the Chatino people to struggle for a place within it. In this regard, ethnicity becomes the crucial principle of political legitimation and an effective instrument for promoting changes in the conventional forms of competition for power and wealth. Political scientists argue that one cannot fully understand why ethnic mobilization is more effective than class mobilization in formulating economic claims if one does not consider the role of the State in which these movements are inserted (Rothschild 1981; Nagel 1986; Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Brass 1985). In other words, "both dominant and subordinate groups come to view the state as the gatekeeper of the contradictions and the controller of the conflict. Hence either exclusive or participant power over and in a state apparatus becomes for them a crucial need and goal" (Rothschild 1981:4).

Without viewing the state apparatus as the space where the different forces converge, fighting for power or at least opening a space where political claims can be legitimated, it is difficult to explain the formation of the indigenous professionals and the political mobilization of ethnicity. Only through close study of the bilingual teachers can we comprehend indigenous political mobilization under conditions that have theoretically been regarded as destined to erode rather than strengthen ethnic solidarity. Moreover, the Chatino situation demonstrates the role that representatives of the Mexican State apparatus and its agencies played in the formation of a middle class that now is contesting the State's indigenist policy, and simultaneously implementing in their communities the kind of "integration" to which indigenism aspired.

Obviously it is not a goal of the State to strengthen indigenous ethnic identities. Considering that those who introduced bilingual education also advocated the assimilation and acculturation of indigenous people (for example Aguirre Beltrán), it becomes clear that the original goal was to use indigenous people as vehicles to achieve the desired acculturation process. Indigenous peoples' resistance to such assimilative pressures has been effective only because the very same State apparatus that promotes assimilation paradoxically supplies the instruments for resisting it.<sup>6</sup>

The current concern with ethnic identification and the trend toward ethnic group politicization will not eliminate other possible affiliations. Ethnicity and class cleavages clearly interact. What we have observed is that ethnic claims (with respect to languages, customs, etc.) are not integrated with class (or other) demands. Rather the inverse operates--class demands are elaborated from an ethnic perspective.

Some ethnicity experts point out that ethnic groups become interest groups in "modern" societies. They note that ethnically-based social movements stress putatively distinctive and unique cultural heritages at the very historical moment that these same ethnic groups are becoming active participants in the "modern" political arena (Brass 1985; Rothschild 1981:3). This may be correct but it is also a superficial analysis because it does not transcend the descriptive and determinist perspective. The belief that modernization promotes ethnic politicization is partially correct. The highly politicized Isthmus Zapotec, for instance, reside in a region with better roads, more communication, and so on than most areas of Oaxaca. But these facts refer to physical infrastructure rather than people. The significant question should be: what social sectors profit from or use these "modern" commoditized facilities?

I suggest that indicators of modernization are also consequences of social differentiation. The fact that radio, television, electricity, and secondary schools are introduced into Chatino

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to keep in mind the fact that the Mexican state apparatus is not an homogeneous entity. During the Echeverría government when the Supreme Councils (los Consejos Supremos) were established taking the cargo system (and basically the principales) as a model, indigenous national organization was developed from the top down. It was suggested that one principal from each ethnic group should participate in this organization. In most cases (there were meaningful exceptions), however, young indigenous technicians assumed these positions. For instance, in the Chatino region two teachers were the most prominent representatives of this organization. Thus an organization designed to control the indigenous population is now used to struggle against those who formed it.

towns not only tells us that these communities are now more "modern" than before, but also suggests that there are people in the Chatino communities who can afford these goods and services. In Marxist terms one can attribute this to the dominance of capitalist relations of production. If so, then it becomes possible to hypothesize that in Mexico ethnopolitical mobilization will grow with "modernization" rather than decline, since class differentiation of the indigenous people also promotes conditions for the formation of a middle class that eventually acts as organic intellectuals on its account. Here it is very important to note that the confrontation within the State is very likely to continue if the State insists upon fostering an ideology that emphasizes a unified nationality rather than a concept of national citizenship that tolerates pluriethnicity or cultural diversity. If the former situation persists, two groups will continue to coexist and confront one another over different political projects for the constitution of the Mexican State.

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## IV

### NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, THE STATE, AND ETHNICITY IN RURAL OAXACA

Leigh Binford

*In Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) critique Marxism for prioritizing the economy in social analysis and the working class in political activity. They argue that productive relations are only one among a plethora of social relations around which political organization can ensue, and they emphasize the salience of "new social movements" such as those concerned with gender, ethnicity, community, etc. Rather than a progressive growth of working class organization, they maintain that socialism must be constructed through a progressive extension of democracy to link more and more of these otherwise independent organizations through a "chain of equivalence." Hence gay people, racial and ethnic minorities, environmental and anti-nuclear activists, and women have equally important roles to play in the attainment of an alternative future as the working class.<sup>1</sup>

Like Europe and the United States, Latin America is the site of new social movements, despite the somewhat different conditions reigning in that area.<sup>2</sup> This paper deals with Mexico, where a growing amount of publicity has been extended to new social movements--neighborhood organizations, ecology buffs, feminists, indigenist organizations, human rights groups and so on (Foweraker and Craig 1990; Stephen 1992; Carr and Anzaldúa 1986; Munne 1992). From the perspective of new social movements theory, such movements foretell the demise of PRI political control and are the harbingers of a new wave of democracy that will transform Mexico, though not in the way predicted by earlier Marxist class analysis. In several cases PRI has considered the issues raised "hot" enough to have implemented what Munne (1992:125) refers to as "preemptive reforms" to divert or coopt potential threats to its system of political control.<sup>3</sup> By analyzing several cases, I shall argue that supposedly "declassed" social movements also incorporate elements of class even in their supposedly classless ideologies, and that new social movements theory errs in its claim that the analytical distinctions between class and nonclass (gender, etc.) issues derive from empirical referents.

An empirical--one might even argue empiricist--critique of new social movements theory argues that it does not apply to the Mexican situation. The critique suggests that a close examination of post war history reveals an enduring foundation for contemporary movements, which continue to be involved with the bread and butter issues of wages, benefits, and working conditions. According to Knight (1990:79), there is a real question as to "how far it [new social movements' theory] represents a break with the past, and how far it points the way to a new future . . . . To some degree, it seems to me, intellectual fashion has outrun reality." Knight attempts to show that what is currently taken as "new" in the social movements field would appear less so had social scientists carefully investigated the 1940-1965 period and if there existed an agreed upon methodology for measuring the power of the state and movement within civil society over time (1990:80). With the exception of the ecology movement, therefore, Knight finds that in Mexico there is "nothing new under the sun."

Jeffrey Rubin (1990, 1991) concurs with Knight, adding that a particularly pervasive model of state corporativism dominates social scientists' thinking, blinding them to the partiality of state domination and the long lineage of local challenges to PRI control:

In this view, recent popular movements have forged new forms of political action and representation through grassroots mobilization based on common economic interests and carried out through variations of direct action organizing. Analyses of recent grassroots movements generally begin in the 1970s or 80s, refer briefly to past forms of corporate representation that supposedly worked well and then ceased to function effectively, and go on to describe organizing campaigns, mobilization tactics, and negotiations with state officials that brought about the establishment of grassroots oppositions (1991:7).

In his analyses of the Juchitán, Oaxaca, Rubin demonstrates, against the received wisdom, how "an uneven state presence, as well as forms of elite control and popular resistance, were forged amidst regional conflicts and forms of autonomy--and subsequently challenged and reformed--that best explains the nature of politics and economic activity" (1991:7).

The Juchitán case will be discussed in some detail below. Here I merely want to note that while the Knight/Rubin thesis is preferable to that of new social movements' theorists, it, too, misconstrues the problem. An overemphasis on the historical antecedents of contemporary social movements in Mexico distracts attention from the ways in which they weave new thread into old cloth to create a fabric that is distinctively different from that of the past. In investigating some of the ways that this has come about, I will examine two contemporary movements, the COCEI of Juchitán, Oaxaca, and various Mixtec organizations of northern Mexico. In essence, then, I will argue against both new social movements theory and the "continuity" thesis posed as an alternative by Knight and Rubin.

### **A Hegemonic PRI?**

Before examining these cases, however, I want to suggest that Knight and Rubin argue against a stereotypic vision of PRI control that has reigned with much more force in history and political science, the disciplines with which these writers are formally associated, than in anthropology. Even if it does not address the issue of PRI control directly, a careful reading of the ethnographic record evidences the compromises entailed in PRI's penetration of the countryside, and various resistances to it.

For instance, historians and political scientists may believe that the governor or other important state-level officials invariably appoint PRI municipal candidates, but social scientists who have worked in rural indigenous communities know better. Fausto Díaz Montes (1990:71-72) notes that in small rural indigenous municipalities of Oaxaca:

where there is a tradition of selecting local authorities through a town meeting or plebiscite, the PRI followed the procedure called "Usos y Costumbres de los Pueblos" (People's Uses and Customs) which consisted of letting the people select

their authorities and present them as candidates of the PRI. According to PRI files this procedure was followed in 521 of the 570 *municipios* [in 1986]. However, this procedure was disturbed in some *municipios* due to the intervention of local *caciques*, regional politicians, or government officials (1990:71-72).

Hence, elected officials are technically affiliated with PRI though by no means necessarily politically controlled by it. They are removed from below by local fiat as frequently as from above by higher authority (Hernández Díaz 1987:54 provides a contemporary example from among the Chatino people). Moreover, the PRI has been forced to compromise with regional *caciques* throughout the post-revolutionary period (this has been succinctly analyzed both by Luisa Paré (1977) in her work among coffee growers in Puebla Northern Sierra and by Paul Friedrich in his study of Tarascan strongmen (1986)). I would suggest that the principal reason why ethnographically-based observations failed to influence earlier political science and historical analyses of the State and political process is that until recently (1970s), social science practitioners seldom ventured far outside their own discipline's boundaries. However, we might also note a pervading interest in dissecting the apparatus of PRI control (rather than challenges to it), and in anthropology, a narrow focus on culture and community and a tendency to interpret rural "systems" as internally homogenous and self-replicating even when confronted with evidence to the contrary (cf. Smith 1977).

With this proviso we can now examine two case studies of contemporary social movements: the COCEI of Juchitán, Oaxaca and various Mixtec organization sited in the border area of northern Mexico and the southwest of the U.S.

### **The COCEI in Juchitán**

The Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec has become one of Mexico's, and perhaps Latin America's, most studied social movements. Based in Juchitán de Zaragoza in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, COCEI won the 1981 Juchitán municipal elections and ruled the city, Oaxaca's third largest, for seventeen months before being impeached by the PRI-dominated legislature in August 1983 and forcefully ejected from office in December of that same year. Surviving several years of repression (Amnesty International 1986), COCEI returned to rule Juchitán as the minority partner in a PRI-dominated coalition in 1986, and, perhaps benefiting from the ascendance of a liberal Mixtec governor in 1988, gained the majority position in the city council in 1989 (Campbell 1990).

COCEI is attractive to researchers because it is a radical local/regional movement that has demonstrated substantial success in a nation in which many similar efforts have been co-opted by the State or violently repressed out of existence and because the leadership and most of the followers are Isthmus Zapotec people who are conscious and proud of their identity. This identity is rooted in a local vision of Isthmus history that also informs claims to communal land, agricultural credit, and the right to pursue "traditional" farming of corn and beans. Demands for restoration of the social relations of the past, which involve a vehement critique of capitalism as antithetical to the essence of Isthmus Zapotec, is promoted through carefully thought-out political strategies that combine direct action campaigns--traffic stoppages, sit-ins, marches and demonstrations, hunger strikes--with political re-education through popular radio, cinema, art, and literature, much of which has been patronized by Francisco Toledo, a wealthy and renowned

Mexican painter of Isthmus Zapotec extraction (López Mateos 1991; Campbell 1992, 1990:369-397; see *Guchachí Reza*).

Zapotec and other writers (eg. Tutino 1981, Campbell 1990; Campbell and Binford in press; de la Cruz 1987) have observed that Isthmus history is replete with rebellions and revolts against Spanish colonial authorities, French invaders during the French intervention, and mestizo representatives of Oaxaca state and the federal government. The last major uprising occurred in 1911, when Che Gómez led a revolt against the Oaxaca state government (de la Cruz 1987). In the 1930s Isthmus social relations entered a thirty year period of relative stability when, according to Adriana López Monjardin (1979), "nothing happened," or at least nothing of any consequence (but see Rubin 1990, 1991). Juchitán was ruled by Heliodoro Charis, an ex-revolutionary war general and notorious cacique. Charis used his influence to acquire various services for the town, but he also seized large tracts of land and established an extensive cattle ranch. During this period, Juchiteco peasants continued to sow communal lands (untitled) in corn, beans, and squash for subsistence and sesame seed for market sale. The population was divided mainly between a small merchant and landowning elite, partly of Spanish and Lebanese origin, and a socially differentiated peasantry.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Juchitán was targeted for incorporation into a vast federal irrigation project. The project was financed through a combination of federal money and a loan from the Interamerican Development Bank. Arturo Warman (1983), until recently head of the National Indigenist Institute in the Salinas de Gortari government, worked for the government at the time and later remarked that:

What perhaps makes the greatest impression on me still is that the enormous hydraulic work was planned, decided upon, and constructed from the center of the country. The local population was never consulted. The state never permitted it to participate in the decisions, nor even informed it regarding what might be the intent and objective of the enormous irrigation work.

State authorities failed to undertake a systematic study of pre-irrigation land distribution and tenure systems. In fact the land had never received any official tenure status, which gave impetus to speculative movements on the part of wealthy people both within the region and outside it. By the time government officials realized their error and sought to redress it, a large portion of the peasantry had been dispossessed (Binford 1983, 1985). The resulting alteration in the region's class structure was, in my view, a necessary condition for the rise of the radical, class-based Zapotec movement that formed in Juchitán in 1973 (Binford 1983; 1985).

This sketchy history adheres to the story line to which Knight and Rubin object: a lengthy period of political calm characterized by almost complete PRI hegemony, followed by a post-1968 eruption of popular sentiment and mobilization and the formation of a regional organization making radical demands on the regime and competing openly for power. From this same vantage point, COCEI seems to embody much that is key to the new social movements discourse: an ethnic as opposed to class-based opposition to the State; resistance materialized by harnessing well-hewn organizational strategies to local cultural norms and values; a platform emphasizing collective participation in decision making, clean elections, and honest municipal administration alongside demands for local and regional development.

In his alternative analysis Rubin (1990, 1991) sustains the view that even if COCEI represents a departure in some ways, it also continues past trends that have been overlooked by social scientists because of their incorrect assumption that before 1968, PRI's control was ironclad and airtight. Rubin concludes that historically PRI has been more like a piece of swiss cheese (Knight 1990: 93, 96) than an impenetrable stone wall; local and regional resistance to PRI rule has been continuous, and negotiated settlements for the sake of maintaining the peace a commonality. In fact, Rubin convincingly demonstrates that there are historical precedents within the local PRI for many of contemporary demands, as well as to the practical political strategies accredited to COCEI. In this sense, COCEI and other apparently "new" social movements in Mexico represent as much continuities from the past - a PRI past I might add - as they do departures from it.

I do not believe, however, that such an analysis goes very far toward explaining COCEI's success. A better approach is through a closer examination of the social and economic dislocations wrought by the State's development projects: land concentration and fragmentation, an increasing dependence on commodity markets, and intensified investment and an increasing hierarchicalization of control in the region. This latter development was largely an effect of the increasingly monopolized access to raw materials and means of production instrumental to agriculture by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the government's agrarian banks, and other organisms. Unfortunately, not a single serious examination of Isthmus economy and class structure has yet taken its place alongside the dozens of studies of Juchiteco politics, history, and ethnicity. Statements about the COCEI's constituency invariably involve generalization from knowledge of a small number of households (this in a city of perhaps 100,000) or rough approximations drawn up from guesstimates about the class membership of participants in demonstrations and rallies. Even in the absence of such data, it is clear from COCEI platforms and activities that the movement leadership responds to a set of needs that, even assuming historical precedent, have become particularly acute since the mid-1960s (Campbell and Binford in press). It is also clear that the COCEI organization (structured around neighborhood committees), ideology (the recovery of *Lo Zapoteco*), strategy and tactics (marches and rallies drawing on fiestas, gender segregation) derive from Zapotec cultural interests enriched by political ideologies and organizing tools appropriated by Zapotec leaders from urban Mexican social movements, from other Latin American nations and perhaps elsewhere (Campbell 1990, chapters 6-7).

### **Passive and Active Resistance among Mixtec**

The second case of "new" social movements in Oaxaca involves the development of a pan-Mixtec ethnic identity englobing the multiple competing identities that historically characterized Mixtec villages since the colonial period. What makes this movement or movements (since a number of distinct organizations are involved) new are that they have developed far outside the Mixteca proper, in the northern Mexican states of Sinaloa, Sonora, and Baja California, as well as to the north in the United States. We are indebted to Michael Kearney, often working in collaboration with Carole Nagengast, for a cogent series of articles and papers about these developments (cf. Kearney 1988, 1991a, 1991b; Kearney and Nagengast 1990; Nagengast and Kearney 1990). Kearney speaks of a transition from a village-based

"passive resistance" in the Mixtec heartland to a more inclusive "active resistance" that develops in the areas to which Mixtec peoples migrate (Kearney 1988). Kearney centers his analysis on the inhabitants of San Jerónimo Progreso, though recent work (Kearney 1991a) indicates that many of the conclusions are applicable to a larger region.

Everyone in San Jerónimo speaks Mixtec and about half (46%) of the adults speak Spanish, although few of them speak it well (Stuart and Kearney 1981:4). The mountainous geography and low level of infrastructure has meant that historically the community suffered relative isolation. Stuart and Kearney (1981:4) noted that "Opportunities for making a living in San Jerónimo are severely limited." Agricultural holdings are small (generally less than 2 hectares) and the average household produced only 210 kg. of corn in 1977, approximately one-sixth the minimum consumption requirements (*ibid*:5). The absence of compensatory income sources in the region has forced most Mixtec peoples to enter the migratory stream. Before the 1960s Mixtecs from San Jerónimo worked as seasonal harvesters of sugar cane on plantations in Veracruz and Puebla, but when harvesting machines displaced workers in the fields, they began to move north, working first in the irrigated fields of Sinaloa, and then moving into urban sectors of Tijuana, Nogales, and Mexicali, from which it was but a few short yards to the border and the higher wages that could be earned in the United States. Since 1978-79 Mixtecs migrated into the San Quintín Valley of Baja California Norte, where they have come to constitute the majority of migrant workers picking tomatoes on family-owned ranches and for transnational firms (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:76).

The money earned in Mexico or the U.S. is returned to San Jerónimo and other Mixtec communities from whence the migrants originated. Much of it is spent to purchase food, agricultural inputs, consumer goods, and to construct new houses of concrete floors and cement block walls, which have replaced the "traditional" conical homes with pole frames and thatched roofs (*ibid*). Stuart and Kearney (1981:26) noted that:

Without the possibility of migration earnings the village could not exist as a viable community at its present population... Without the possibility of temporary agricultural wage-labor migration, over 80 percent of the present population would have been forced to become permanent migrants in Mexican cities or simply would not have survived.

But while migrant earnings sustain Mixtecs in San Jerónimo and elsewhere in the region, they do little to alleviate the need to migrate. In San Jerónimo Progreso, other Mixtec communities, and elsewhere in Mexico, few opportunities exist to develop new income-generating activities or to expand those currently available (Reichert 1981; Grindle 1988; Massey et al. 1987).

The paradox of Mixtec migration is that it has led to the development of a concept of pan-Mixtec ethnicity that did not exist within the Mixteca itself. That is to say that in the agricultural fields and cities of Sinaloa, Sonora, and Baja California, and in the United States as well, Mixtec peoples are transcending their historic separation into mutually exclusive and frequently antagonistic communities. In the areas to which they have migrated, they have formed organizations to defend their interests, and these organizations are consciously Mixtec in a way that Mixtec in the Mixteca are not: "[W]ithin the Mixtec, individuals identify

themselves as being from a given village. The primary political opposition emerges between villages, and ethnicity is only occasionally salient" (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:69).

Nagengast and Kearney explain that the Mixteca was marginal to the main thrust of Spanish colonialism. As in other Mesoamerican areas, the indigenous population was conquered, suffered enormous population decline, and was reorganized under the auspices of the colonial state. But poverty of natural resources mitigated Spanish exploitation which involved the extraction of taxes, tributes, tithes, and migratory labor without destroying the matrix of community life (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:71). Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to view the communities and the people residing in them as "survivors" preserving "traditional culture" in the wake of colonial (and later postcolonial) assault. The civil-religious system, dress, and, indeed, the strong, seemingly atavistic concern with village endogamy and preservation of community resources were products of the colonial system, although they also came to be creatively employed by inhabitants as means of defense against exterior interference in local affairs. And the Mixtec language, which was "[O]ne of the few genuine survivals of the pre-Columbian past" came to invest all other traits with an apparent authenticity (*ibid*).

Thus Kearney speaks of "traditions" that developed in the Mixteca as forms of "passive resistance" against Spanish and later Mestizo rule. These village-based "traditions" did not prevent the exaction of value from the community, but they did serve to insulate people against day-to-day interference in local affairs, provided community inhabitants with substitute means of acquiring status to those in the Spanish and mestizo-dominated spheres from which they were excluded, and perhaps even redistributed portions of community resources from wealthier to poorer members (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:71; Smith 1977).

All these developments took place within the circumscribed sphere of the village and its surrounding land base, and had the effect of separating one Mixtec community from another. Like other communities in the Mixteca, San Jerónimo developed into a "closed corporate community" (Wolf 1957), insulated (though not isolated) not only from the dominant classes but from other Mixtec communities. Boundary disputes, encouraged by the State, played an important role in impeding horizontal linkages between different communities. Dialect differences and "differences in collective representations...no doubt intensified during the centuries of imposed isolation [and] continue to be seized upon as icons of village singularity, symbolizing imputed insider-outsider status" (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:72). Nagengast and Kearney (*ibid*) conclude:

In short, new "traditional" forms continued to develop in response to oppression, forms that diverged from one village to the next and from those emerging in mestizo communities. Thus the perpetuation of local identity has facilitated and justified a collective closing of ranks against outsiders. It is our contention that this closing has historically constituted passive resistance to outside dominant forces and has meant that in the Mixteca, villagers ordinarily identify themselves as being from their particular village, rarely as Mixtecas, and almost never as indios.

Kearney maintains that passive resistance was rooted in local cultural form, and as such impeded the development of a broader collective response to the forms of oppression that all

Mixtec peoples suffered. It was a resistance that developed within the folds of colonial and postcolonial domination; the colonial system constituted its context, and acted as a containment force upon its possibilities. On the one hand, then, the interpretation of cultural form as "resistance," suggests that dominance is always partial, never total; but the "passive" nature of the resistance manifests its limits at any one time.

In labor camps of the Culiacán Valley of Sonora or the San Quintín Valley in Baja California Norte, the border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali where Mixtec peoples aggregate in shanty towns, and in the United States, Mixtec people are objectified and exploited without regard for their communities of origin. Directly incorporated into the capitalist system as wage workers, they are yet assigned a more subordinate status based upon mestizo and anglo stereotypes of their biological and cultural capacities. In the San Quintín Valley, for instance, Mixtec workers are housed in long corrugated sheds of sheet metal divided into small, windowless dirt-floored rooms, each usually inhabited by a single family of six or more persons (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:65). Mixtec migrants in this and other labor camps are frequently assigned to work with hazardous pesticides without proper safety precautions or equipment; poisoning of field workers through direct use and of camp inhabitants through wind-blown drift or contamination of the water supply is common (Wright 1990). On the other hand, mestizo packing shed workers are supplied with small row apartments and eat in a cafeteria (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:65). It is clear that Mixtec migrants are subject to a double or as Bourgeois (1988) calls it, "conjugated" oppression; they are oppressed both as wage workers and as members of a discriminated ethnic minority.

Similar problems arise for those Mixtec peoples who have settled permanently in border towns such as Tijuana and Nogales, where they attempt to extract a meagerly living in the informal sector of the urban economy. The men engage in casual labor, while the women sell trinkets, *tenates*, or hats brought from the home communities where they were produced (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:78). They live clustered in poor *barrios*, are known locally as "Los Oaxacas" or "Los Mixtecos," and are harassed and intimidated by the local police, who frequently arrest them until relatives are able to collect the money to pay the "fine." Forced together for protection in this urban sphere, some of the barriers common in the Mixteca are breaking down and marriages are taking place between people from different villages.

Under these circumstances, the petty battles over land that take on great meaning in the Mixteca recede before the necessity of collective defense in the face of direct threats to their health and well-being. Kearney notes (1988:124) that:

The Mixteca is a mosaic of . . . semi-autonomous communities locked into age-old feuds with their neighbors, feuds that engender but also dissipate resistance. In the North the terms of the conflict are restructured, the repression is more immediate, and the resistance to it more conscious and therefore more active.

Hence, Mixtecs in the San Quintín Valley have joined the Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC) that opposes the PRI; those living in Tijuana formed the Asociación de Mixtecos Residentes en Tijuana (ASMIRT) after public confrontations with municipal authorities in 1984 over police maltreatment and extortion of women street vendors;

and the Asociación Cívica Benito Juárez as well as the Comité Cívico Popular Mixteco developed to defend Mixtecs in the United States. The last mentioned organizations promote village development projects in Oaxaca, but they have also increasingly concerned themselves with discrimination, exploitation, health, and human rights abuses in Mixtec enclaves in California and Oregon, and they are attempting to develop a labor contracting organization so that they can short-circuit labor contractors and sell their labor directly to growers (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:84-85). In April 1989, Governor Heladio Ramirez of Oaxaca, himself Mixtec, even travelled to California to consult with Mixtecs there and hear Mixtec complaints about extortion by government officials on their journeys north, dishonest telegraph operators who appropriate portions of remitted monies sent to families in the Mixteca, and economic conditions in the Mixteca itself (Kearney and Nagengast 1990).

It is certainly possible to "discover" precedents for the organizations in northern Mexico and the United States back in the Mixteca. Language and perhaps world view are shared by many of the participants; in fact one may argue that none of the major elements of pan-Mixtec identity are completely new. What is new is the consciousness of their shared character and, perhaps more important, of the shared status as a discriminated ethnic minority. In northern Mexico and (particularly) the U.S., Mixtec migrants confront the day-to-day consequences of being "otherized" by a mestizo or gringo majority, and they defend themselves by suppressing inter-community conflicts over land and other resources, conflicts which have little meaning when everyone is working for wages, living in squalid labor camps or *barrios*, and subject to the same risks of pesticide poisoning, trickery by labor recruiters, or police abuse.

As in the case of COCEI, Mixtec organization exhibits a political economic dimension. Here it is simultaneously negative and positive: negative in the sense that State investment policy over the last half century has intensified the underdevelopment of the Mixteca relative to other areas of Mexico; positive because the forced migration north and to the cities, which meant direct incorporation into capitalism, involved a socialization of work process that occurred in rural Mixtecan villages in a limited and culturally-mediated form (harvest brigades, collaborative village work projects, etc.) that contrasted with the much greater frequency of household-based petty production. The ethnic element, present in its constituent features and meaning-laden but contained by regional fragmentation, is activated in the north through the mediation of discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusions: New Social Movements or More of the Same?**

It is possible, on the basis of these case studies, to suggest some shortcomings of both the new social movements of approach of Laclau and Mouffe and of the "continuity" thesis argued by Knight and Rubin. As discussed earlier, new social movements theory maintains that social movements rather than class will compose the basis for a radical democratic challenge to authoritarian regimes. Each individual participates in a variety of social relations (sex, race, nationality, vicinity), each of which defines a subject position, discursively constructed; there is no way to predict, using class analysis, which of these potential identities will become the politically salient ones. Thus for new social movements theorists, a constantly shifting terrain of politics and ideology supersedes a more stable economic positioning as the centerpiece of social analysis (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 1988).

In so far as they are directed towards distinct ends, Laclau and Mouffe consider social movements to be analytically independent of one another. But where such movements are oriented towards the redress of inequality or the defense of equality they are engaged in a general process of promotion of democracy. The democratic transformation of a society depends, therefore, on the collaboration of different democratically-inspired movements: "[I]f every antagonism is necessarily specific and limited, and there is no single source for all antagonisms, then the transition to socialism will come about only through political construction articulating all the struggles against different forms of inequality" (Mouffe 1985:98).

However, as the authors are aware, such collaboration will only be possible if some subordinated groups (working class white males) give up privileges currently maintained at the expense of other subordinated groups (racial and ethnic minorities, women). Thus Mouffe (1988:100) notes that, "The defense of acquired rights is therefore a serious obstacle to the establishment of true equality for all." His solution is a new conception of democracy based on "a central notion of *solidarity*" (*ibid.*) Solidarity presumes identification with another's person or situation and thus entails "recognition" of a basis for collective struggle. For Laclau and Mouffe, it is democracy itself, broadly defined as "a principle of equality" that provides the basis for such recognition: "As soon as the principle of equality is admitted in one domain . . . the eventual questioning of all possible forms of inequality is an ineluctable consequence. Once begun, the democratic revolution has had, necessarily, to undermine all forms of power and domination, whatever they might be" (Mouffe 1988: 94). In other words, through struggle subjects progressively equate their rights with the rights of others, in the process levelling the differences among them (all are victims of inequality, broadly defined). In this way the authors preserve a concept of progress and historical unfolding that they earlier threw out; for the capitalist economic crisis, they substitute the political crisis that was put into motion with the democratic revolution.<sup>5</sup>

In my view new social movements theory fails to provide a sound explanation of how the various subjects growing out of fragmented subject positions might reunite to assume a collective political project. It is not adequate to maintain, as they do, that solidarity will be forged through collective struggle to overcome "inequality" without positing a systemic view of inequality that links the subject positions of those in struggle. This, I believe, is where Marxist theory and its integrated vision of social and economic relations is useful. The Marxist critique of capitalism provides a set of categories (capital, surplus value, exploitation, rent, exchange value) that provide the basis for a collective subject of the greatest dimensions. Further, I would argue that all new social movements articulate in their discourses concepts that have a place within political economy, and that once integrated provide the basis for political solidarity with others.<sup>6</sup> This point can be illustrated through a brief discussion of the two case studies, both of which focus on the interpellation of class and ethnicity.

Consider Mixtec migrants to the United States. Mixtec workers and semi-proletarianized peasants join together to protect themselves against both generalized racism and capitalist exploitation, which they experience as conjoined empirical realities. Given the racist environment they confront, the incorporation of Mixtec workers into extant gringo labor organizations is not a realistic option; hence, they organize on the basis of the only identity collectively available to them: as victims of human rights abuses (Kearney 1991a). In practice if not in theory Mixtec ethnic identity *is* infused with class content since migrant Mixtecs share

a common position within the ensemble of productive relations. This does not imply that ethnicity can be reduced to class. If it were, autonomous Mixtec organizations would not be necessary. But analysis must respect the complexity of the empirical situation, in which ethnic discourses interpellate class ones.<sup>7</sup> In short, Mixtec ethnic organizations *are* class organizations as well.

The case of COCEI speaks to the same issue. For most of the twentieth century, class divisions were minimal in Juchitán and Zapotec people resisted outside encroachment by organizing on the basis of a shared history and culture. These projects hardly threatened the PRI, which was locally represented by Zapotec landowners and merchants. The COCEI class project became possible only when class divisions within the town intensified. But rather than elide an existing ethnic identity, COCEI leaders creatively harnessed it to a radical class-based political project. Again, class and ethnicity are mutually reinforcing rather than competing approaches: *in the discourse of COCEI, to be truly Zapotec is to be among the poor and exploited.*<sup>8</sup> For this and other reasons, rich Zapotec, whose wealth facilitates and business interests necessitate the adoption of local material symbols of mestizo identity (clothing, house style, automobiles), are hard-pressed to substantiate their identity to the satisfaction of the poor majority. Thus the discourse about who and what is Zapotec is *simultaneously* a discourse about the ways in which class and ethnicity *should* intertwine, or, to push the argument to its extremes, it is (in this instance) a discourse about the ways in which ethnic identities incorporate class identities. ["Real" Zapotec are peasants and workers.]<sup>9</sup> As Campbell (1992:54) recently noted:

COCEI's cultural revival . . . is not merely a revaluation of Zapotec history and the Isthmus cultural heritage, but a dynamic process creating new interpretations of what it means to be Isthmus Zapotec, and initiating new strategies for community reproduction within the parameters of modern Mexican political economy.

Finally, it is worthwhile noting that COCEI has had some limited successes organizing among mestizo workers and peasants. Such organizing efforts invariably involve appeals to shared economic concerns and de-emphasize Zapotec ideological concerns (Campbell 1990). I expect that a closer materialist examination of many supposedly "declassed" social movements would prove equally fruitful.<sup>10</sup>

In an alternative to new social movements, Knight (1990:93) adopts a "continuity" thesis based on the claim that PRI has never gone unchallenged, that its hegemony has always been partial, never complete, and that the current challenges are best seen as continuations rather than departures from those of the past. Knight (1990:87) states that in Mexico there is "Nothing New Under the Sun," and while there are "some genuine innovations," there are "numerous continuities" (1990:90). Rubin (1991:25-26) argues more specifically for an alternate two-stage framework for understanding Mexican political history: first, a post-revolutionary phase in which caciques bargain for regional autonomy, corporatist structures are only unevenly and incompletely established, regional economic and political arrangements are perpetuated even as they are altered, and indigenous culture sustains a modicum of independence; second, disruption of those autonomies by national and regional patterns of economic development, and the development of "elite and popular mobilizations" that

"challenged the political power and procedures that both upheld and constrained autonomy" (Rubin 1991:25-26).

However, I believe that it is important to differentiate between elite mobilizations and popular mobilizations. The demands of the former, even if articulating generally felt needs, are usually aimed at the preservation or expansion of wealth and political influence of a privileged minority. Such was the case when, in the earlier 1960s, the Juchitán agrarian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie organized peasants to resist a forced ejidalization of Juchitán's land that would have curtailed or at least retarded the peasants' demise. However, the sixties organization in no way foreshadowed the radical critiques of land monopolists that COCEI made in the mid 1970s. Those critiques endorsed land invasions, seizures, and redistributions that would return to popular control Juchitán's historic patrimony.

New social movements theorists argue that history has outrun our conceptualizations of it and that radically different approaches--by which they mean a trading in of class analysis for new social movements theory--are required. Knight, on the other hand, argues the opposite: that in the case of twentieth century Mexico, intellectual fashion has outrun history. Thus Knight, who believes that changes in academic theory can be "compared" to reality and assessed accordingly for their veracity, reads (as does Rubin) contemporary social movements more as images of the past than harbingers of the future. With a few minor modifications--ecology buffs for Knight, Juchiteco class politics for Rubin--the future doesn't look too different either, nor too promising.

Rubin (1991:27) states that in Latin America of the 1980s, we should be aware that, "each present is shaped by multiple pasts and in turn influences the next present, how structures and patterns endure and are transformed, go back on themselves, and share multiple arenas in different ways." And Knight (1990:99) affirms that:

Mexican political history, especially at the local and regional level, is one of constant, constrained conflicts and changes. It is a myth to believe that change is a recent phenomenon, that a monolithic state once ruled impervious to popular protest, or that the concessions made to recent social movements are of a completely new order. Instead we may posit a rolling cycle of renovation, stabilization, ossification, protest, and renewed renovation . . . . But even a cluster of such cycles of renovation--propitiated in some measure by the new administration--may not yield genuine structural change.

But if in fact Mexican political history is conceived as a series of enduring patterns or "rolling cycles of renovation, stabilization, ossification, protest," etc., how are we ever to grasp fundamental structural changes when they occur? Surely, renovation, stabilization and the rest also entail new facets, features and relationships which are just as important to grasp as the enduring patterns that, on close observation, may not appear so enduring after all.<sup>11</sup>

I want to end by suggesting that a point-by-point comparison of past social movements with present ones without proper historical contextualization is a mistake. The forties to the sixties was an expansive phase of capitalist development in Mexico based on import substitution industrialization. The period since the early seventies has been characterized by a deceleration of economic growth (with the exception of the artificial petroleum- and loan-based growth of the

late seventies), a tremendous crisis of small-scale agriculture, and the opening of the economy to international investment (Teichman 1992). Two decades of crisis have been accompanied by a tremendous uprooting of the rural population, destruction of the environment, incorporation of women into commodity production and the penetration of capitalism into the most far flung corners of the nation (Stephen 1992; Goldrich and Carruthers 1992). This has threatened well-established identities and given rise to new ones. The forties *ejidatario* is the eighties farmer-migrant worker-petty merchant, possibly traversing national boundaries in an effort to piece together a subsistence income. Whether contemporary social movement appear similar to or different from those of the past (form and content) is less important than the care we take to register the very different socio-economic and political environments in which they operate and which will influence their further development.

We might also attempt to be more sensitive to the innovative feature of movements that on appearance are like those of the past. Indigenous movements have a lengthy lineage in Mexico, yet COCEI seems unique for embracing international cultural styles and political strategies and remolding them to fit local needs. The "transnational ethnicity" of Mixtec peoples resident in the United States, founded in human rights discourse, transcends not only cultural but national boundaries.<sup>12</sup> I choose to discuss these cases because I have some familiarity with them, not because I believe that they are unique. What is unique is the way in which contemporary investigators such as Campbell, Kearney and Nagengast have avoided simple dualisms (class *or* ethnicity, continuity *or* innovation) in a way that many other researchers have not.

#### NOTES

1. For a historical sociology of "post Marxism" see Chilcote (1992).
2. Petras (1992) traces the growing conservatism of Latin American writings to the replacement of "organic intellectuals" by "institutional intellectuals" working in externally funded research institutes and think tanks.
3. Munne (1992: 125) says that such reforms pursue both substantive and organizational preemptive strategies: "The substantive strategy seeks to reduce political pressures by distributing resources to potential critics of the system, and the organizational strategy seeks to reduce the threat of dissent by providing formal avenues of participation to potential dissenters."
4. In his most recent analysis, Kearney (1991a) focuses on Mixtec organizations in the United States as the most successful in formulating a pan-Mixtec identity. He claims that Mixtec migrants suffer exploitation and discrimination in four distinct contexts (fields of Sinaloa and San Quintín, border cities such as Mexicali and Tijuana, and as undocumented immigrants and low wage workers in the United States). He argues that because the U.S. migrant has experienced these other contexts, he/she "to some extent escapes the defining power of any single determining subject position. Thus, to the degree that one who moves through such diverse formative milieux experiences differentiation, it is a differentiation which is internal to the person, i.e., an internal differentiation." This provides the maximum

opportunity for reintegration: "But the form of the Mixtec Associations in California defy this presumed postmodern imperative to fragment the subject, and instead, and also in defiance of Foucault, reintroduce a reconstituted subject back into history, a subject that has been reconstituted out of the raw material of ethnicity" (1991a:32-33).

Frankly, I find little evidence in his article in support of this argument. The strongest evidence is that Mixtec organizations in Mexico have had limited success in relationship to those in the U.S. The success of the latter is attributed to the fact (claim?) that U.S. migrants have experienced a variety of different subject positions (Oaxacan peasant, northern Mexican agricultural migrant, exploited border resident, undocumented U.S. migrant) which they in some manner "combine" at the U.S. terminus of their long migratory journey. Kearney treats subject positions like coins of different denominations that can be cashed in under appropriate circumstances.

5. They insist on connecting inequality to discourse. Hence, it is discourse which defines the rights and obligations of a particular subject position and democratic discourse which elucidates denial of previously defined rights or discriminatory application of the system of rights.

6. An excellent example concerns the civil disturbance centered in South Central Los Angeles. First treated as an African American reaction to the Rodney King verdict, the disturbance soon came to be seen, even by many conservative commentators, as a fundamentally class phenomenon crossing racial and ethnic boundaries. Whites, Latinos (of various national origins) and African Americans all participated in the collective redistribution of the wealth. To white middle class Angelenos, among the most frightening specters of the disturbance were the hand-painted signs "Crips + Bloods + Mexicans."

7. Apart from demands directed towards redress of human rights abuses in Mexico and the U.S., California Mixtec organizations seek improvements in the working and living conditions of migrants and Mixtec farm workers (Kearney 1991a:19-21).

This is not "proof" of the weakness of Marxist class analysis so much as demonstration that the work environment is the site (or object) of discourses which functionally split the labor force/s into competing factions. Analyzing that splitting necessitates a historical analysis and employment of other (non-Marxist) theories that invigorate class analysis, but the best Marxist empirical work has always done just this. As Geras (1987, 1988) notes, the new social movements critique of Marxism is a critique of a crude caricature of Marxism.

8. Thus, when a COCEI peasant leader was seen publicly sporting a Rolex (given by PRI to all federal deputies) and wearing shoes rather than sandals, he was thought by some Cocéistas to have sold out. Recent PRI strategy in Juchitán has shifted from a politics of confrontation to one of accommodation and attempted cooptation (Campbell and Binford in press).

9. In my experience in the Zapotec town of Espinal, three km. north of Juchitán, identity tended to be posed first in terms of employment, eg. "peasant," or family (surname) before ethnicity, even to outsiders such as myself. "Zapotec" was used situationally, particularly during politically rallies, labor disputes with mestizo sugar refinery administrators, or during May-June fiesta season when many visitors arrived to attend the colorful *velas*. Of course, ethnic identity can be assumed and need not be a topic of pervading concern where it is widely shared.

10. Much more could be said about these issues, but let me address one potential objection. I am not arguing that gender, ethnic, and other identities *are* class identities, that class analysis can somehow explain gender, ethnic, etc. conflicts. But I am arguing against the idea that all potential identities be accorded the same analytical weight. The fact is that whatever one's gender or ethnic identity, stand on environmental or nuclear issues or what not, s/he still must make living. This fact provides a material basis for the political organization of otherwise disparate groups.

Second, it is true the economic relations of late capitalism have been increasingly fragmented at the level of appearances. This is a function of economic stagnation; the information and communications revolution; and regional, national, and international uneven development. One of the principal manifestations is the expansion both in developed capitalist and underdeveloped nations of the "informal sector," which presents a dizzying array of economic relationships that contradict the classical Marxist prediction of the steady growth and organization of the industrial working class. Nonetheless, all such workers are subordinate actors in economies in which wealth and power are controlled by a few. This point contains the seeds of a powerful critique of the capitalist system with great potential for political mobilization.

Third, the claim made by proponents of new social movements that the focus of organization has shifted from issues involving production to those involving consumption is incorrect in two respects: first, because in Third World nations where the number of economically marginalized citizens continues to mount production issues remain critical; second, because confining production and consumption to different spheres separates what should be analytically linked.

11. I do not intend to imply that Knight and Rubin view COCEI or any other contemporary social movements in Mexico as simple holdovers from the past. But in their efforts to link present with past, they focus too much on the form assumed by contemporary movements and not enough on their content. COCEI may "look" like anti-PRI organizations because it employs some classic strategies and tactics, but the social character of its constituency and their anti-capitalist goals lend it a qualitatively different character. To emphasize the continuity of strategy and tactics makes COCEI look too much like a liberalized PRI.

12. Another example of boundary fragmentation is the demand made by the FMLN (Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation) that the approximately one million Salvadorans resident in the United States be allowed to vote in the 1988 elections. The demand was rejected by the ruling ARENA party.

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ISTHMUS ZAPOTEC INTELLECTUALS:  
CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND POLITICS IN JUCHITAN, OAXACA

Howard Campbell

As Fabian has noted, anthropology historically founded its legitimacy on the study and explanation of "the other," an other who supposedly operated in a different relationship to time and history than did the people of the anthropologist's culture (1983). By denying the other coevalness, the anthropologist also denied part of the other's humanity. Others were destined to an ahistorical life of ritual and ceremony which only a professional anthropologist could meaningfully decipher.

Anthropologists have deconstructed the notion of the timeless other, but it is also time to do away with another anthropological fiction which perpetuates colonialism within the field: the idea that our informants are incapable of interpreting their own reality in anthropological terms, that only "we" can interpret "them." Anthropologists have reserved for themselves the unique ability to decode the hidden meanings of the natives who supposedly use their languages, symbols and rites without analyzing them objectively. When the others do begin to speak and write about their cultures and histories, it is said that they are inventing tradition, imagining communities, or engaging in indigenous essentialism (Hobsbawm 1983; Anderson 1983; Warren 1992).

In today's anthropological climate, most cultural complexes are viewed as recent constructs rather than as ancient customs rooted in history, groups of people are seen as divided and conflictual rather than united, and "indigenous" statements about cultural identity are often reduced to the pejorative label "essentialism" (i.e., they are criticized for reifying a united subject). All of these perspectives are a consequence of the impact of postmodernism on anthropology which has produced an intense scepticism about cultural authenticity and the politics of representation. Now, informants' views of their own society must be deconstructed by the anthropologist to reveal their disguised agendas, manipulation of symbols, and construction of identity. Ironically, the end result of this is the perpetuation of the anthropologist's authority as the only capable interpreter or exegete of the other. In the process, the other is denied status as an intellectual being whose interpretations and analyses could be considered equally valid as those of the fieldworker.

My argument, then, is that we need to take indigenous intellectuals more seriously (cf., Feierman 1990; O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992:160; Nahmad 1990).<sup>1</sup> Instead of reducing our informants' statements and writings to "inventions," "reifications," and "constructions," we need to examine the intellectual histories of the societies we study. Such an approach can begin to reduce the hierarchies of knowledge which privilege anthropological explanations over the devalued ideas of the other.

## Isthmus Zapotec Intellectual History

To illustrate these issues I will examine an Isthmus Zapotec intellectual movement of Juchitán, Oaxaca. Juchitán has become well-known in Mexico as the center of a radical movement, COCEI, which defeated Mexico's dominant party (PRI) in municipal elections in 1981.<sup>2</sup> Juchitán became the first city in Mexico with a leftist government and a rare community administered by native people. After winning local elections in 1989, 1992, and 1995 Juchitán has become a left-controlled community in the sea of PRI-dominated Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Closely related to COCEI is a dynamic Zapotec cultural movement whose leader, Francisco Toledo, has become one of Mexico's most famous painters and a leading figure in the Latin American art world. Toledo also runs his own publishing company, Ediciones Toledo, which produces books concerned with Isthmus Zapotec history as well as other titles dealing with southern Mexico. Other lesser-known, but also talented, Zapotec writers and painters include Víctor de la Cruz, author of many books of poetry and local history and the editor of *Guchachi' Reza*, one of the finest literary publications produced in rural Latin America; Macario Matus, a poet, journalist, and local historian who writes for Mexico's major newspapers and has published numerous volumes of poetry; and Sabino López a surrealist painter who has displayed his works in the Phillippe Briet Gallery in New York City. This group is linked to another three dozen or more Juchitán painters, poets and musicians who have published or exhibited their works in many parts of Mexico and abroad.

The center of the movement is the *Casa de la Cultura* of Juchitán. This local cultural center is located in an expansive old brick schoolhouse with high-pitched ceilings, tile roofs, and an open patio that contains a garden of tropical native plants. It also features an archaeology museum, modern art gallery, print shop, library, stage, and other facilities. On a daily basis the Zapotec intellectuals meet in the *Casa* to discuss their current projects, argue about new theories and trends in the art world, and plan new books and magazines. These open-ended discussions also spill over into local bars and cantinas where roving Zapotec troubadours entertain the intellectuals as they hone their skill at reciting poems, recounting vignettes of local history and folklore, and telling colorful lies (a genre of oral discourse known in Zapotec as *didxaxhihui*).

Juchitán, thus, has a lively local intellectual scene which produces art work and literature that is both commercially successful and critically acclaimed by urban Mexican cultural elites. But this is not a new phenomenon in Juchitán. The Zapotec intellectual movement contains at least three generations of musicians, bards, historians and painters -- and a fourth generation of indigenous intellectuals is emerging today. Juchitecos will tell the persistent anthropologist that all Juchitecos play the guitar or at least have written a poem or two, and indeed the number of published and unpublished writers in Juchitán is impressive. In Juchitán it is not considered a rare activity for young men to compose songs, write prose, or paint (Everts 1990:150). Instead it is viewed as a normal pastime that is valued and encouraged.

Historically, the focus of Juchitán intellectual life has been the celebration of and elaboration on Zapotec customs, language, and history. Yet this has not occurred in an intellectual vacuum. Juchitán, located adjacent to the Pan-American highway and situated in the narrow Isthmus of Tehuantepec which divides southern and central Mexico, has for centuries been a crossroads of merchandise, ideas, and people. Juchitecos have also ventured far and wide from the community but returned to share their new knowledge with local people. Isthmus

Zapotec people are very open to foreign ideas and customs which they have integrated or adapted to their own cultural repertoire (Royce 1975). Building on these interchanges, the Zapotec intellectuals have formed a sophisticated movement which simultaneously engages in self-commentary for local consumption, interprets Isthmus culture and history for outsiders, and blends elements of urban Western culture into Zapotec life. The movement is multi-faceted, synthetic, and creative. To call such a history of intellectual production an invention of tradition, indigenous essentialism or folk knowledge would be not only insulting but wrong.

### Origins

Historically, the Isthmus Zapotec people, especially those of Juchitán, have been described as intensely proud (Brasseur 1981; Covarrubias 1946). This is reflected in their writings which evidence a fascination with local customs, linguistic features, and history. The first Isthmus Zapotec intellectual to publish extensively was Arcadio G. Molina, a school teacher in the small town of San Blas Atempa adjacent to Tehuantepec. In the Isthmus, San Blas is known as an independent, rebellious town like Juchitán. In the 1860s, during the French Intervention, San Blas sided with Juchitán and Porfirio Díaz against Tehuantepec and a French battalion in battles that are now legendary in the Isthmus. These battles inspired Molina's best-known book (1911), which celebrates the heroism of Juchitán and San Blas and decries the "Tehuano traidores" who sided with the Europeans. De la Cruz (1984) has hypothesized that it is precisely this ethnic independence, as opposed to the Tehuanos' tendency toward accommodation with outside cultural influences and political authorities, which produced Zapotec intellectuals in San Blas and Juchitán rather than Tehuantepec.

In 1899 Molina helped anthropologist Frederick Starr collect Zapotec songs in the Tehuantepec area (de la Cruz 1984:20). In Starr's account of his travels (1908:164-5), he observed that Molina

is one of the few indians of the district who has taken an interest in the study of his native tongue. He has already published a grammar of the Zapotec, as spoken in his village. He has also printed a little tract for lovers, in which high-sounding phrases are translated from the Spanish into Zapotec. He has also prepared, and holds in manuscript, a dictionary of the dialect containing some 4,000 words.

Molina's Zapotec grammar (1899) is thorough and well-organized, and would be a useful tool for anyone trying to learn the Zapotec language today.<sup>4</sup> An elderly San Blas man who I interviewed recently had Molina as his grade school teacher and remembers him as a brilliant educator.

Following Molina's lead, the generation of Juchitecos who participated in the Mexican Revolution produced several intellectuals of which the best known was Enrique Liekens (1882-1978). Liekens, who spoke five European languages as well as Zapotec, later became a diplomat and wrote an etymological study of the words used to refer to the Zapotec people (1952), and many poems. Juchitecos of Liekens' generation also composed corridos commemorating their military experiences in the ranks of Carranza and Obregón (de la Cruz 1983).

## The Neza Generation

In 1923 a group of Isthmus Zapotec youths formed the Society of Juchiteco Students in Mexico City which published a monthly periodical, held cultural events, and organized the first Isthmus *vela* (fiesta) ever held in the capital (Henestrosa 1987b). In 1929, a young Juchiteco intellectual named Andrés Henestrosa published his first book *Los hombres que dispersó la danza* [1929] (1987a) which became a hit in Mexican literary circles.

Henestrosa's career was made possible in part by his relations with a powerful patron (José Vasconcelos) and his opportunity to attend North American academic institutions (the universities of Illinois, California, and Tulane) on a Guggenheim fellowship.<sup>5</sup> While in Illinois, Henestrosa studied with the American anthropologist Sol Tax (de la Cruz 1990:190). Henestrosa's literary strength, however, was less his cosmopolitanism than his recording of and embellishments on Isthmus Zapotec folklore and oral narratives. When I interviewed him in 1988, Henestrosa described his first book as a collection of literary inventions, creations, and explanations of "legends, myths, and fables that I heard [as a boy] in the indigenous language."

In the 1930s, Henestrosa was one of the prime movers behind an Isthmus Zapotec writer's group that created the periodical *Neza* [1935-37] (1987) and an essentially symbolic Zapotec Language Academy which, though short-lived, expressed the Juchitecos' passion for their culture. Much of this activity went on in Mexico City instead of Juchitán. Pancho Nácar, who wrote the first significant poems in Zapotec, did so while working in an office of the federal bureaucracy (de la Cruz 1982:7). Other members of the Juchiteco intelligentsia were students, teachers, doctors, and so forth in the capital city. As elite Juchitecos became more involved in the larger Mexican society their appreciation of their own culture increased and led them to glorify the Isthmus, albeit from a distance, in their writings.

From a national perspective, *Neza*, Henestrosa's writings, and the other works of the early Juchiteco intellectuals may be considered part of a larger process of post-revolutionary indigenismo, in which the Mexican state attempted to assimilate Indian traditions and communities into "the nation." However, for Juchitecos, they were emblematic of Juchitán's independent cultural vitality. A popular local adage symbolizes the Juchitecos' intense localism: "*Juchitán es el ombligo del mundo*" ("Juchitán is the center of the world"). The Juchiteco intellectuals remained chauvinistically proud of their culture even though they made their homes in Mexico City. They frequently made pilgrimages to their beloved pueblo bringing with them friends from the Mexico City bohemian intellectual scene, such as Langston Hughes, French photographer Henri Cartier Bresson, poet Alfredo Cardona Peña, and Miguel Covarrubias (Henestrosa 1987b). Back in the city they elaborated on their experiences and Juchiteco culture in books, poems, and especially *Neza*.

The thematic range of *Neza* was broad for such a small publication. Among the topics frequently examined in its pages were: Isthmus geography, poetry, music, mythology, folklore, Juchitán civic issues and social life, biographies of famous Istmeños, and photography. But its overriding concerns were the Zapotec language and culture, and the ethnology and history of the Isthmus. One issue of *Neza* (November 1935, no. 6), for example, contained articles entitled "Songs of the Isthmus," "Zapotec Mutualism," "The Poetry of Pancho Nácar," "Juchitán and its Personages," and so forth. Another (August 1935, no. 3) issue includes this romantic description of Juchitán, typical of the fervent ethnic nationalism of the Zapotec intellectuals:

From this moment onward the traveller experiences a strange sensation. He glimpses a primitive community, suddenly separated from those he is accustomed to seeing. He discovers an inexhaustible wellspring of emotions. Juchitán, that mysterious land, as if suspended in time and space, begins to overwhelm him with its vigor, with the force of its reality...

But the unique and marvelous aspect of Juchitán, which is impossible to find in any other region of the Republic is the sculpted richness enclosed in all of its manifestations. Life has a definite, perfect rhythm. No brusque contractions break the harmonious unity of the environment. The people, the houses, and the geographic conditions are made to produce an artistic impression. The beauty of the women of the Isthmus, of Juchitán, and of adjacent pueblos like Ixtaltepec is proverbial. (Mata 1935)

The Juchiteco writers created a rich body of local ethnography and self-commentary in which Juchitán invariably figured as a kind of indigenous promised land, the mecca of Zapotec civilization. Gabriel López Chiñas, the noted Juchiteco poet, spoke for all of the Isthmus intellectuals when he wrote of his love for the native language:

Ah, Zapotec, Zapotec!  
language that gives me life,  
I know you'll die away  
on the day of the death of the sun.<sup>6</sup>

The *Neza* generation collected and analyzed the gamut of Zapotec customs--everything from burial etiquette to the precise pronunciation of Zapotec words--and created original poems and short stories in the native language. While these activities and productions were primarily intended for local consumption, they also were directed at the society at large, as a statement that a thriving regional indigenous culture persisted in the Isthmus within the confines of mestizo Mexico. In this sense, the *Neza* cultural movement not only created works of intrinsic aesthetic value but engaged in a discourse of ethnic self-affirmation. However, the *Neza* experience also represents the Juchiteco intelligentsia's coming to grips with its own growing assimilation into Mexican society. Thus, faced with the choice of leaving their Zapotec identities behind, the urbanized Juchitecos opted to celebrate and objectify Isthmus life while simultaneously ceasing to participate in the everyday culture of their people.

Although *Neza* no longer appeared in the 1940s, Henestrosa and López Chiñas, in particular, continued to write prolifically. López Chiñas gained prominence both in the professional world of Mexico City--where he was a professor at the national university and for a time the director of the school's radio station--and in the literary milieu. His best known works were *Vinnigulasa* (1974), a collection of myths and folklore similar to Henestrosa's magnum opus (*Los hombres...*), and a volume of bilingual (Zapotec-Spanish) poems (1975), richly illustrated with color photographs, personally authorized for publication by President Echeverría. López Chiñas (1982) also published approximately 8 other books of prose and poetry, and had his work translated into English, French, and Polish.

Henestrosa, who in his late-80s is still an active public figure in Mexico, was even better connected in the nation's capital than López Chiñas. Confidant of presidents and the wealthy, former senator and aspirant for the governorship of Oaxaca, and editor and columnist of major Mexican newspapers, Henestrosa has had the opportunity to present his observations on Isthmus Zapotec life and culture in the most prestigious intellectual forums of the country for the last 60 years. While Henestrosa and López Chiñas are the best known Juchiteco authors, dozens of other poets and writers--in particular Wilfrido Cruz, Nazario Chacón, and Gilberto Orozco--participated in the halcyon years of the Isthmus cultural movement. Although the main venue of the *Neza* literary generation of the 1930s and 1940s was Mexico City, in Juchitán itself a vibrant cultural scene existed, and continues today.

### **Artistic and Intellectual Life in the Community**

Unlike the *Neza* generation most Zapotec intellectuals were unknown outside the Isthmus. Indeed, many local poets, musical composers, and orators of mid-20th century Juchitán were either monolingual with little formal education or native Zapotec speakers who spoke Spanish with some difficulty and seldom left their hometown. Since at least the late 19th century, Juchitán and Tehuantepec have maintained a rich ceremonial calendar revolving around dozens of annual fiestas or *velas* in which music and verbal performances play an integral role. Unlike many other Oaxacan towns that are known for the creativity of their popular arts and crafts, the Isthmus Zapotec villages have specialized in the production of songs and romantic poetry. Although until recently few Istmeños had become accomplished sculptors or potters, Covarrubias observed in 1946 that "the literary and musical arts play an extremely important part in their lives" and the Isthmus Zapotec "cultivate language with an unusual intensity" (1946:310).

Professional orators (*chagoola'*) are an essential part of traditional Zapotec weddings, funerals, wakes, etc. Córdova referred to this genre of public speaking in the 16th century (de la Cruz 1983:21), and the pre-Hispanic codices were sung and danced. Indeed, many Oaxacan oral traditions are deeply rooted in history. Though professional orators are declining to some extent today, each Isthmus community used to have a number of respected, often elderly men who presided over religious and secular occasions and delivered prayers and sermons (*libana*) in Zapotec and Spanish. Juchitán political and civic functions were, and continue to be, showcases for eloquent verbal performances often including lively jokes in the Zapotec language. Singing is also highly valued and each local band usually has one or two individuals with strong vocal chords.

Isthmus brass bands typically feature 7 or 8 musicians playing drums, trombone, trumpet, tuba, saxophones, and clarinets. Their trademark is the *son* which is derived from 19th century Spanish waltzes played, according to Covarrubias (1946:323), "with a colorful, barbaric orchestration that gives [it] a strong and individual character." Although *sones* are common in other parts of Mexico and Latin America, the honking cacophony and jazzy ad-libs featured in the Isthmus *son* and the repetitive, circular Zapotec dance-step punctuated with occasional hops or skips which accompany it are inimitable. A number of these *sones* (*La Llorona*, *La Martiniana*, *La Petrona*, *Son Yaa*) composed primarily by Istmeños such as Eustaquio Jiménez, Juan Stubi, Saúl Martínez, and Rey Baxa have become ethnic anthems which elicit strong

feelings of solidarity among Istmeños. The verses to these songs, and their myriad variations, are sung with emotion and panache by Zapotec performers at the major Isthmus fiestas.

The countless Juchitán bars and cantinas are a main stage for the Zapotec troubadours who sing their own compositions or popular tunes accompanied by guitars, marimbas, and other instruments, interspersed with spicy jokes and lies (*didxaxhihui*).<sup>7</sup> Included in the traditional repertory of the bohemian minstrels are *sones*, *mazurkas*, *mazurkas*, polkas, waltzes, *colombianas*, tangos, and *corridos* (Torres Medina n.d.:10). Zapotec guitarists also perform at the endless rounds of velas, weddings, birthdays, *quinceaños*, funerals, etc. but there they are overshadowed by the bands which are an indispensable part of all Isthmus ritual occasions. "Pancho Tina," one of the most amusing contemporary Zapotec entertainers, however, is not a guitarist but the player of a kind of washtub bass instrument from which he coaxes a funky rhythm to accompany his hilarious songs and jokes, often made up on the spot. He was preceded in the 1930s and 1940s by another uniquely Zapotec musician named Cenobio, a blind, monolingual flautist who played his own songs in Zapotec on a three-holed *carrizo* cane flute at Isthmus social events and fiestas.<sup>8</sup>

### **COCEI and the Juchiteco Cultural Revival Movement: From *Neza* to *Neza Cubi* and the *Casa de la Cultura***

After the initial effervescence of the *Neza* generation, the Juchiteco literary movement continued to produce chapbooks of poetry and amateur ethnology but without the national attention it had attracted previously. In the early 1950s there was an attempt to revive the journalistic tradition of *Neza*: unfortunately *Didcha*, its successor, disappeared after only 4 issues. In Tehuantepec, the cultural publication *Guiengola* emerged in the late 1950s and continued until at least 1969. *Guiengola* appeared very infrequently in the 1960s and eventually disappeared entirely after the death of its founder Carlos Iribarren Sierra.

Also during the 1960s a talented Zapotec doctor and budding politician, Facundo Genico of San Blas Atempa, Oaxaca published a regional muckraking newspaper (*La Voz del Istmo*) in which he called for promotion of the Zapotec culture and local political autonomy. These efforts came to an end in 1964 when Genico died in the custody of local police who tortured him in reprisal for his alleged sponsorship of the murder of the Tehuantepec mayor. But other Zapotec intellectuals would soon continue the work of indigenous cultural promotion begun by Genico.

#### ***Neza Cubi* (The New Road)**

The emergence of the *Neza* intellectual generation was a cultural response of Zapotec people to the pressures and opportunities created by economic modernization, migration, acculturation, and access to higher education in post-Revolutionary Mexico. Although Juchitán was never completely isolated from the Valley of Mexico, it was, until the Revolution and the construction of the Tehuantepec railroad, a very inward-focussed community located in a hot, inhospitable region where travellers seldom lingered and local people seldom left. The Juchitecos who took advantage of greater opportunities available in the 1930s and 1940s were primarily from the middle and upper classes. Their objectives in *Neza* were literary and ethnological: to write good poetry and celebrate their ethnic roots. Only an occasional article referred to the

diseases (e.g., malaria and typhoid) afflicting the Isthmus, the bad hygiene of school children, and the other social problems of the area.

If the Juchiteco ethnic elite were the first to react intellectually to the mixed blessing of modernization they did so in a non-polemical way. Their writings were not political although their invocation of ethnic identity was part of a phenomena Royce (1975:203) has described as the manipulation of Zapotec style by the upper and middle classes to preserve their dominance in Juchitán. From the 1960s to the present, the increasing social tensions within Isthmus society have caused Zapotec cultural production to become a more divisive issue.

In 1968 a new magazine appeared which aimed to put Istmeños back in touch with "the spirit of their ancestors" and revive the cultural projects of the *Neza* generation.<sup>9</sup> Called *Neza Cubi*, which means "new" or "reopened road," it was created by two young Juchiteco college students: Macario Matus and Víctor de la Cruz. Matus, the prime mover behind the magazine, attended the national teacher's college--a prime site of student radicalism--and was heavily influenced by exiled Central American intellectuals and the 1968 Mexican student movement. He was also a writer for the Mexican Communist Party newspaper. One of the initial actions of the *Neza Cubi* generation, in December 1967, was to organize the first exposition of books by Isthmus Zapotec writers. At the exposition in Juchitán a poster on the gallery wall proclaimed in Zapotec: "If you speak Zapotec, learn Spanish and study many books, in that way you will be twice as valuable!" (Primera Exposición 1967:20).

From *Neza Cubi*'s outset it was clear that its cultural mission had become politicized. The first issue of the magazine spoke of "disputes that are dividing us," the poverty, filth, and diseases of Juchitán, and the need to unite divergent factions. Another issue bitterly attacked the Isthmus professionals who claimed to love Juchitán but lived in Mexico City and never did anything to support their impoverished town. The editor growled that these mediocre bourgeois individuals request to have their remains returned with honor to the Isthmus upon their deaths but instead they should be incinerated and the residue thrown into a sewage drain! Other articles complained that unscrupulous composers and musicians were plagiarizing and profiteering from Juchitán's folk tunes, that upper class intellectuals (the *Neza* group) were not supporting the younger generation, and that the rich had celebrated a *vela* in 1969 while the poor of the southern part of town were inundated by severe flooding. Moreover, a round table discussion on Isthmus agricultural problems sponsored by *Neza Cubi* found evidence of "sinister control of economic and political affairs by a small caste" which "obstructs the economic development of the region." Finally, de la Cruz lamented that the system of kinship organization which formerly united all the Zapotec as *bichi* (brothers), had disappeared. "The current social system has degenerated so much," he complained, "that it would be ridiculous to use this term today."

One reason for the greater politicization of this generation was their social class background and contact with the 1968 student movement. Unlike the Zapotec elite who wrote in *Neza*, many of the *Neza Cubi* intellectuals came from working-class, peasant, or lower-middle class families. Matus' father, for example, was a bricklayer, while de la Cruz's father raised cattle on a small scale, and Toledo was brought up by his grandfather, a shoemaker. Also, unlike the *Neza* intellectuals, the younger generation brought their movement back to Juchitán. In this, they were part of a broader process of "returning to the pueblos" by rural Mexican intellectuals and activists in the aftermath of the 1968 movement. Realizing that the political struggle in Mexico City had been destroyed by the Tlatelolco massacre, these individuals sought

cultural authenticity in the villages, and pursued the new possibilities for rural grassroots change offered by the populist Echeverría regime (Zermeño 1987:69).

### **Francisco Toledo and the Casa de la Cultura**

Although *Neza Cubi* disappeared after 1970, the new focus of the Juchiteco intellectuals' energies was the creation of the *Casa de la Cultura* whose opening on March 22, 1972 commemorated the 312th anniversary of a famous Zapotec rebellion against the Spanish. The *Casa de la Cultura* is the headquarters of the contemporary Juchiteco intellectual circle whose predecessors Covarrubias (1946:161) described as "a peculiar intelligentsia that cultivates poetry" and hangs out in bars "engaging in deep philosophical discussions over iced beers."

On an average morning, the *Casa* is relatively quiet except for the laughter and chatter of the bohemian Juchiteco poets and painters criticizing each other's work, discussing local politics, or playing chess. Occasionally, the rapid gait of an earnest-looking COCEI activist trying to locate someone will interrupt the languid atmosphere of the place. In the afternoon, when school gets out, the *Casa* fills up with noisy Zapotec schoolchildren who come to use the *Casa's* library or play with their friends. By this time, the artists have moved on to a nearby cantina to continue the day's gossiping, sell a few paintings to local businessmen, recite poems, or arrange the publication of a pamphlet of poetry or local history. After listening to the Zapotec ballads of a local guitar player and consuming numerous *caguamas* (liter bottles) of Corona beer, the intellectuals disband until the next meeting. Somehow, in between this regular routine of socializing and drinking (in addition to the almost weekly velas or wedding fiestas), the Juchiteco artists and writers find time to publish numerous books and pamphlets and paint a diverse portfolio of avant-garde paintings.

A key figure behind the *Casa* and the emerging Juchitán cultural movement was Toledo, who by the 1970s was already a famous artist residing in Mexico City. As a child in Juchitán, Toledo demonstrated his talent by drawing and painting on the walls of his family's house. After secondary school in Oaxaca, Toledo went to Mexico City where he obtained training in the *Taller Libre de Grabado* (Sparks 1989:1). While still a teenager, he had solo shows in Mexico City and Fort Worth, Texas. In 1960, at the age of 20, he went to Paris, where he studied under William Hayter. There, as in the case of Henestrosa, Toledo's contact with the great cultural traditions of the West reinforced his appreciation of his own culture. Although Toledo is said to have wandered through Europe wearing, even in winter, Isthmus huaraches and peasant garb, he took some time along the way to steep himself in the work of Paul Klee, Jean Lucat, and Salvador Dalí (Everson 1978). By 1965 his works had appeared in major galleries in Paris, London, and New York. Today, Toledo is considered one of Mexico's most famous painters (Everson 1978). Riding (1985:305) notes that Toledo's works routinely fetch five-figure prices.

Having such a wealthy and influential patron (along with the direct aid of President Echeverría) gave the *Casa* a tremendous boost. Its small modern art gallery housed not only the valuable works of Toledo but prints and original paintings by Mexican and foreign masters (e.g., Tamayo, Cuevas, Rojo, Matta, Ernst, Lam, Nichisawa) which he had obtained in his travels.<sup>10</sup> In addition to approximately 200 art works, Toledo also gave the *Casa* expensive art books, Zapotec archaeological treasures, and photographs (*Unomásuno* 4/21/89). These items were kept in the *Casa's* exposition halls, museum, and library. Other *Casa* facilities included a stage and classrooms in which instruction was given in art, indigenous music, the Zapotec language,

theater, dance, and literature. Toledo has also auctioned off some of his own expensive art work to raise funds for the *Casa* and the COCEI. With such impressive cultural resources for a rural Mexican community, the *Casa* was well-disposed to engage in its mission to revive and promote Isthmus Zapotec culture.

Despite the *Casa's* overtly cultural agenda, its activities have always been influenced by political considerations. Against Toledo's wishes the *Casa* was granted a subsidy by the National Fine Arts Institute and Oaxaca state government (INBA)<sup>11</sup> (*Unomásuno* 4/21/89). This gave the national and state governments political leverage over the *Casa* which they would use in the future. Moreover, with economic development projects transforming the Isthmus landscape and challenging indigenous traditions, the young Juchiteco intellectuals (nearly all of whom are COCEI supporters) began to see cultural revivalism as not merely a literary pastime or dilettantish hobby but a political imperative. Whereas the relatively affluent and privileged *Neza* generation faced the choice/pressure of individual assimilation into a mestizo urban lifestyle, the *Neza Cubi* intellectuals--allied with COCEI--felt that the very foundations of their indigenous, agrarian society were being undermined, and they sought to defend it. Thus, when the radical Zapotec political movement, COCEI, took power in Juchitán in 1981, its self-described "People's Government" vigorously supported indigenous cultural projects.

### **Cultural Programs during COCEI's People's Government**

The most noteworthy accomplishments of the COCEI administration, reflecting its overt ethnic orientation, occurred in the cultural realm. In just two years the People's Government supported the following projects: a public library, a bookstore, a literacy campaign, a radio station, schools, a publication series, and the multifaceted activities of the *Casa de la Cultura*. For COCEI, Isthmus Zapotec culture was not only the historical foundation of Juchitán radical politics, it was also a community resource to be nurtured and extolled in the present. Likewise, Zapotec culture became a weapon mobilized by left-wing painters, writers, and musicians against the PRI.

Since its founding in 1972, the *Casa de la Cultura* has been the center of the Isthmus Zapotec intellectual movement. During the People's Government the *Casa* also became a bastion of ideological support for COCEI. Prior to the People's Government, the *Casa de la Cultura* published a few booklets of poetry and encouraged local artists, but when COCEI took control of City Hall, Zapotec intellectuals had unprecedented access to resources. Moreover, the volatile political atmosphere of Juchitán between 1981 and 1983, and the COCEI administration's ties to national leftists and urban intellectuals injected new life into the local cultural movement. During this period, the *Casa* conducted classes concerned with Zapotec poetry, autochthonous music, and Zapotec language; and held workshops devoted to drawing, painting, dance, photography, and piano. In addition to these activities, the *Casa* was the site of political lectures, poetry conferences, films, photography expositions, and art exhibitions--often with a marked anti-PRI bent. The *Casa's* photography salon displayed pictures of COCEI marches and ethnographic photos of Isthmus life by famous Mexican and foreign photographers as well as some local camera aficionados.

The remarkable range and sophistication of the *Casa's* programs (for an institution located in an impoverished rural region) are possible, in large part, because of the financial largess of Francisco Toledo and the political backing it receives from COCEI and numerous local

intellectuals and artists. These efforts are controversial because PRI has tried to wrest control of this key cultural institution from the largely pro-COCEI artistic community.

### **Zapotec Art, Literature, and Historiography during the People's Government**

With the support of COCEI, the Juchiteco intellectual movement produced significant works of art, poetry, and local history. Toledo led the way with his wide repertoire of paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Toledo's work is filled with Isthmus flora and fauna, imbued with key imagery and symbolism of rural Zapotec life, and nurtured by the imagination and fantasy of Zapotec folklore and mythology. One of his biggest artistic successes consists of a 49-piece show demystifying Mexican national hero Benito Juárez and juxtaposing the official history of Juárez with a Juchitán-based view (Toledo 1986). This perspective, linked to COCEI's version of Isthmus history, emphasizes the burning of Juchitán by Juárez's soldiers. The largely pro-COCEI cadre of young Isthmus artists who follow Toledo also paint political themes, such as key moments in COCEI. In addition, many of them utilized their skills to promote COCEI directly in wall murals, multi-colored street graffiti, political banners, and pro-COCEI paintings with ethnic imagery (such as red COCEI flags in the form of Juchiteca *huipiles*) on the houses of the movement's two land invasion communities.<sup>12</sup>

The contemporary literary movement in Juchitán has been fueled by the struggles of the COCEI, and most of the new generation of Isthmus Zapotec writers are key COCEI supporters (Campbell 1989). The poetry of Matus, de la Cruz, Alejandro Cruz, and Enedino Jiménez focus on Isthmus Zapotec culture, the struggles of COCEI, and the martyrdom of *Coceístas* (de la Cruz 1983). In addition to the four major poets, a young crop of Juchiteco bards emerged during the People's Government and afterwards when writing protest poems became a popular activity among COCEI youth. Being a radical poet or artist has its risks, however. Right-wing thugs constantly hassled Matus, a PRI mob assaulted de la Cruz and Toledo in 1983, and PRI members murdered Cruz in 1987. PRI members have also tried to discredit Matus with homophobic attacks, and Toledo has been charged with immorality for the graphic sexuality displayed in his paintings (e.g., sex between different animal species or between humans and animals) (Santana 1988:65).

Key elements in Zapotec cultural programs of this period were the recuperation of local oral, musical, and written traditions, research on history and mythology, translation of famous poems and literature into Zapotec, and production of original Zapotec or Spanish language works focused on regional themes. During the COCEI administration, Zapotec writers published dozens of books and pamphlets. These included a collection of Isthmus *corridos*, a literary anthology, several volumes of poetry, a Zapotec-Spanish dictionary, a collection of vintage portraits by an early 20th century Juchiteco photographer, and many other works concerned with regional history and culture. However, the most noteworthy publication of the time was the extraordinary magazine, *Guchachi' Reza*, edited by de la Cruz et al, which will be discussed in detail below.

Another major editorial accomplishment was *H. Ayuntamiento Popular*, which consists of a chronicle of COCEI political events by Carlos Monsiváis (one of Mexico's best-known authors) and ethnographic photography by Rafael Doniz (Doniz 1983). Doniz's striking photographs deal with significant occurrences during the *Ayuntamiento Popular*, characteristic Zapotec social activities, and panoramas of the Isthmus. This book and *Guchachi' Reza* disseminated information about COCEI to intellectual circles in urban Mexico and abroad.

Several albums of Isthmus music, recorded with the help of the *Casa de la Cultura*, also attracted attention to the Zapotec cultural movement.

### ***Guchachi' Reza: Juchiteco Localism and the International Art and Literary World***

The best known Juchiteco publication is *Guchachi' Reza (Sliced Iguana)* published by Víctor de la Cruz. Heir to the traditions of *Neza* and *Neza Cubi*, *Guchachi' Reza*, takes its name from a popular *son*; it was an apposite choice since the *guchachi'* (iguana) is a prized delicacy in the Isthmus, a kind of totem for the Zapotec, and a symbol of resistance to harsh conditions. While COCEI governed Juchitán, this remarkable multi-genre magazine was designed by Mexico's best graphic artists. Adorned with Toledo's art, the works of young Juchiteco painters, and colorful ethnographic photographs of Zapotec life, each issue of *Guchachi' Reza* included a rich mix of poetry in Zapotec and Spanish, folklore, historical documents relevant to Juchitán, COCEI political statements, social science analyses, and other material concerned with Isthmus Zapotec culture.

The pastiche format of *Guchachi' Reza* resembles that of *Neza*; however it is far more heterogeneous (including many items by non-Zapotec intellectuals and artists), emphatically avant-garde,<sup>13</sup> and polemically anti-government/PRI. Particularly interesting facets of the magazine are articles, essays, and historical documents concerned with the Zapotec written by non-Isthmeños. These views are supplemented by Juchiteco intellectuals' comments on foreign observers' writings about the Isthmus. In the process, the Zapotec intellectuals subvert the external discourse about Juchitán, while enriching their own self-representations and self-definitions.

*Guchachi' Reza*, like the paintings of Toledo, is fashionable and upscale despite its relatively humble origins. For example, the translation of Brecht and Neruda into Zapotec reflects local writer's awareness of trends in radical literature (see *Guchachi' Reza* 13, 24). In fact, *Guchachi' Reza's* readers are more likely to be gringo anthropologists or urban Mexicans than Zapotec peasants. Yet, COCEI's opponents were so convinced of the magazine's subversive potential that they burned it and parts of the COCEI-created library of Juchitán when they crushed the People's Government in 1983 (de la Cruz 1984).

*Guchachi' Reza's* juxtaposition of drawings and paintings by famous Mexican artists with poetry and artwork by Juchiteco intellectuals is indicative of the richly polyphonic and eclectic nature of the Zapotec cultural movement. In addition to presenting Zapotec translations of works by famous European poets, the magazine has also published Spanish versions of writings by Edward Weston, D. H. Lawrence, Paul Radin, and Desiré Charnay about Oaxaca. Although the magazine's overriding concern is local cultural expression and history, its form and content make clear that the Juchiteco intellectuals consider Zapotec culture on a par with that of European societies, and that they see no necessary contradiction between intense localism and global trends in the art and literary world (which they appropriate for their own purposes).

The excellent technical quality of *Guchachi' Reza's* layout and contents (to my knowledge there is no comparable publication anywhere in Mexico) was made possible by the contributions of Toledo's friends in the Mexican artistic elite, and influential intellectuals who supported COCEI for ideological reasons. Indeed, COCEI became an international cause célèbre. Juchitán City Hall and the *Casa de la Cultura*, became major stops for foreign artists, urban intellectuals,

and social scientists passing through Southern Mexico, along with more familiar sites on "the gringo trail" such as Palenque and San Cristóbal.

This was not the first time that Juchitán had appealed to such outsiders. In the 1920s and 30s, Covarrubias, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo came many times to the Isthmus to paint exotic scenes of Zapotec women, Isthmus flora and fauna, and local life. At about the same time, Eisenstein--impressed by "the fantastic structure of pre-logical, sensual thinking" he found in the Mexican tropics--filmed parts of a movie in Juchitán and San Blas (Richardson 1988:170).

What is important about these visits is their impact on local intellectual life. The Juchitecos' contact with Polish and French anthropologists, Australian and U.S. journalists, Japanese painters, and Chicano radicals (just to give a few examples) provided the movement with otherwise inaccessible forums for their ideas. The *Cocelistas'* ties with famous Mexican intellectuals such as Elena Poniatowska, Carlos Monsiváis, Arturo Warman, and Fernando Benítez shielded COCEI, to a degree, from extreme government repression and gave it powerful spokespeople in the nation's capital. Moreover, Juchitán's connections to the national and international cultural world and left intelligentsia fertilized local cultural life, provided multiple outside influences on Zapotec intellectuals and artists, and helped Juchiteco painters gain access to more lucrative markets for their works. In so doing, the leftist Zapotec intellectuals were able to bypass the bourgeois cultural establishment which was hostile to their leftist political views and iconoclastic style. Because of Juchitán's political visibility and COCEI's ties to leftist power brokers in Mexico City, several Juchitecos even obtained scholarships to study in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries.

What distinguishes Juchitán from many other Mesoamerican rural communities is that these interactions with outsiders, rather than eroding local culture, stimulated it and provided the raw material for new ethnic self-definitions and cultural productions. But these developments occurred in ways that were largely defined by the Isthmus Zapotecs themselves. This was possible in the *Neza* era because of the political and economic autonomy Zapotec people have maintained in Juchitán. It is possible today, COCEI ideologues argue, due to the movement's continued defense of the Isthmus Zapotec way of life. Two main centers for the defense and transmission of Zapotec culture during the People's Government were cantinas and a radio station sponsored by COCEI.

### **Juchiteco Bohemians and Isthmus Cantinas**

Isthmus cantinas are one of the key arenas for social interaction among Zapotec men (analogous to women's social sphere in the market place) and the main hangout of the Juchiteco bohemian intellectuals. Although the word *cantina* may conjure up images from third-rate Western movies, the COCEI intellectuals and artists have made them a part of a provincial "cafe society." Isthmus bohemian *cantina* life has a long history which goes back at least to the days of the romantic musicians Jesús (Chu) Rasgado and Saúl Martínez (ca. 1900-1950s) and the *indigenista* poets of the *Neza* generation (1930s-1940s), even though the latter frequented Juchitán cantinas only on vacations from their jobs in Mexico City or during the fiesta season.

Many of the current generation of Juchiteco intellectuals also discovered *cantina* life when they came home to Juchitán during the Christmas holidays or other periods when their university classes were in recess. When they returned permanently to their hometown, they focussed their energies on learning about, reviving, and recreating Isthmus cultural traditions as part of a more

general program of agitating for political change. One aspect of this process was active involvement in the cantina social world.

Cantinas are the setting for complex social interactions which may include making business deals, establishing political alliances, strengthening social ties, and exchanging gossip and other valuable bits of information. In general, however, the cantina provides a kind of time-out period or escape from the daily routine in which Zapotec men can "let their hair down." Cantinas are thus an ideal spot for the cultivation of the aesthetic or romantic side of life: engaging in philosophical discussions, telling jokes and lies, transmitting oral traditions and folklore, playing guitars, singing songs, and reciting poems.

In Juchitán, bars open in the early afternoon and quickly fill up because the prime drinking hour in the Isthmus is during the day rather than at night (local peasants do most of their work during the cooler morning hours and are often free in the hot afternoons). The more popular cantinas attract an eclectic mix: peasants wearing red bandannas, huaraches, and rough work clothes; businessmen and professionals in *guayaberas* (an elegant type of shirt made in Yucatán), slacks and dress shoes; working-men; and poets, artists, and COCEI activists dressed like the peasants. Men of all strata of Zapotec society socialize freely in an atmosphere of alcohol-lubricated camaraderie, while engaging in playful insults and double entendre word play. Fights occur from time to time also.

Although an outsider entering *La Flor de Cheguigo*, a drab two room, brick building, might not consider it a spot where much intellectual activity goes on--one must weave past shouting drunks, small metal tables covered with beer bottles, plates of food, and groups of men laughing and arguing--if one stayed for awhile one might notice some interesting things happening. For example, some of the scruffy-looking types at one of the tables might have with them pamphlets or hand-written drafts of their own poetry, a copy of *Guchachi' Reza*, or a beat-up portfolio crammed with their recent water color paintings. If one could forget about the garish posters on the wall of voluptuous blond gringas and the strong smell of urine wafting from a nearby cement trough, one might also realize that in addition to the ritualized verbal jousting and endless joking, the clientele would also be discussing their favorite poets, fine points of local history, Zapotec linguistics, COCEI political strategy, or the latest happenings in the Isthmus art world.

The atmosphere in the trendy *Bar Jardín* is more obviously arty with large, bright paintings by the Juchiteco artists hanging from the walls, and Zapotec songs blowing from a small stereo. Several other Juchitán bars, such as *Los Tulipanes*, are also frequented by the local art crowd. Additionally, a COCEI leader used to run *Ra Bache'za*, a combination cantina/restaurant which served as a meeting place for radical poets and painters.

On any given day of the week, the bohemian drinking crowd at *Ra Bache'za*, *Los Tulipanes*, the *Bar Jardín* or similar establishments might include Israel Vicente, who displayed his innovative paintings on stone slabs in an art show in San Francisco, California; Víctor Orozco, a talented wood sculptor and painter whose works are sold in a gallery in Mexico City's exclusive *Zona Rosa*; or Miguel Angel Toledo, a student of Francisco Toledo, who paints brightly colored, surrealistic canvases of Isthmus animals and erotica. Until he was murdered in 1987 by PRI thugs, Alejandro Cruz, a poet who captured Zapotec folk customs and the rhythms and idiosyncrasies of everyday Isthmus life in his romantic and politically-engaged verses, was also a fixture of local cafe society.

For Zapotec intellectuals cantinas have become places to test their political ideas, read poems, give musical performances, learn about local history, create or recite folklore, and celebrate their ethnic identity. Not only is Juchiteco culture passed on and reproduced in cantinas, but, at times, new songs, folklore, poems, and other artistic products are created there. Thus, along with the *Casa de la Cultura* and the workshops of local artists, cantinas have become key settings for radical intellectuals who have created their own dynamic cultural movement.

### **XEAP: Radio Ayuntamiento Popular**

Perhaps the most daring cultural project of COCEI's first government was the formation of a radio station, XEAP or *Radio Ayuntamiento Popular*, which (in January 1983) became the only station controlled by the left in Mexico, and the only one to broadcast full-time in both Spanish and an indigenous language (Alfaro Sánchez 1984; Bailón 1987:16). Although the Mexican Communications Ministry (SCT) denied XEAP permission to broadcast--despite the radio station's compliance with existing regulations--COCEI defied the ban and put its station on the air anyway (López Mateos 1988:18). On a clear day, XEAP could be heard in all major Isthmus towns.

XEAP's schedule consisted of 15 hours per day of programming, much of it in Zapotec and directed toward the poor and the peasantry (who also participated as announcers). Key programs included *Igudxa* (fertile land) also known as "the peasant hour", which gave technical advice about fertilizers and planting and discussed COCEI's agrarian struggles; "Minimum Wage," an hour devoted to matters of relevance to rural and urban workers; and an innovative children's program run by children (López Mateos 1988:18; Alfaro Sánchez 1984:171). The *Casa de la Cultura* also played a role in XEAP with Zapotec language classes, readings from *Guchachi' Reza*, poetry, news, and music. By featuring indigenous cultural programming and COCEI propaganda, XEAP presented an alternative to radio stations run by the Zapotec multimillionaire, Humberto López Lena, that specialized in the denatured pop music of Menudo and the pro-government news of the Televisa network. COCEI used its radio to broadcast not only the political business of its neighborhood committees and allied nearby villages, but to call *Cocelistas* to City Hall to protect it from assault by police and soldiers after the government impeached COCEI's administration in 1983.

Due to high rates of illiteracy, the continuing importance of oral tradition, relatively few televisions, and poor circulation of newspapers, radio is the key mass medium in the Isthmus (although television will eventually surpass radio). COCEI's shrewd use of radio communication paid dividends as it attracted many listeners and further legitimized the leftist government. However, program subject matter coupled with the inflammatory Marxist rhetoric of several announcers, quickly annoyed powerful local and state-level interests who lobbied for the closing of XEAP (Alfaro Sánchez 1984). Using the station's lack of federal permission to broadcast as justification, the SCT began jamming XEAP transmissions. COCEI responded by moving its transmitters from place to place to avoid interference and conducting sit-ins, marches, hunger strikes, and other protests in Mexico City and elsewhere (Alfaro Sánchez 1984:174-179). These actions were ultimately to no avail as XEAP was totally drowned out by government static in November, 1983 and the station's equipment confiscated in December (Alfaro Sánchez

1984:211). Despite opposition from PRI and the Mexican government, the Juchitán People's Government became a wide-ranging cultural movement. In addition to the cultural programs mentioned above, COCEI established a high school (Prepa Popular) and a teacher's college (*Escuela Normal Superior del Istmo*), and conducted a two-year literacy campaign begun simultaneously with one run by the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua (Santana 1988:54). Perhaps even more important than any specific program of the administration was the interest and pride in Isthmus Zapotec culture that COCEI and the *Casa de la Cultura* sparked among the general population. Consequently, large numbers of Juchitecos began to compose ballads and poems (many in honor of COCEI martyrs), revive disappearing arts and crafts, collect oral histories, write their memoirs, photograph local sites, and improve their ability to speak Zapotec. Additionally, Juchitán became a town where 19-year old indigenous youths discussed political philosophy and new trends in the art world as well as fine points of their own historical and cultural traditions. Although the political urgency of the cultural movement's activities have declined since the days of COCEI's People's Government, Juchiteco intellectuals continue to produce a rich variety of paintings, poems, songs, books, and periodicals.

### **Zapotec Intellectuals in the 1990s**

COCEI and the Juchiteco cultural movement attracted attention in urban Mexico and among foreign social scientists and art aficionados as Zapotec intellectuals gained access to new forums to present their work. Now not only has Toledo shown his work in New York and European cities but so too have many other Juchitán painters. For example, from March to May 1992, the Zapotec painters (including Toledo) presented their work in a Oaxacan exhibition at the Centennial Museum of the University of Texas at El Paso. Also in March 1992, Toledo opened the Oaxaca Museum of Contemporary Art which featured an exhibit of photographs by the Juchiteco photographer Sotero Jiménez.

Juchiteco writers have been equally successful. Víctor de la Cruz has travelled to Europe, the United States, and the Caribbean to discuss his ideas about the Zapotecs and Latin American indigenous people. De la Cruz's poems have also been published in translation by the *Taos Review* and several of his essays and poems have appeared along with writings by other Juchiteco intellectuals in a book I co-edited for the Smithsonian Institution Press (Campbell et al 1993). In 1991, a short story written by Alejandro Cruz was published in English by a small press in San Francisco (Cruz 1991). Additionally, three Juchiteca writers presented their views recently in Berlin in a conference on Mexican women.

Zapotec musicians have gained less notice outside of Mexico, although the guitarists Heber Rasgado and Israel Vicente played their own compositions in Spanish and Zapotec at the inauguration of the Juchitan painters' exhibition in El Paso (March 1992). Additionally, the songs of Juchiteco musicians have been recorded on a series of records and cassettes and Juchiteco composer Mario López won first prizes in national competitions for his Isthmus folk songs in 1985 and 1986. Finally, a potentially valuable development for Zapotec intellectual production is the formation of the Binniza Zapotec Research and Cultural Center in Juchitán in 1990 (de la Cruz 1990).

## Conclusions

This paper has discussed a sophisticated four generation intellectual movement in rural Oaxaca, Mexico. Given this rich history of local intellectual production it is clear that anthropological labels like "folk historian," "peasant intellectual," "invention of tradition" and the like do not capture the dynamism and creativity of Juchitán. Here is a group of poets, painters, and composers whose work is both commercially successful in foreign countries and critically acclaimed in urban Mexico. While intensely interested in their own history and customs, the Zapotec intellectuals are very familiar with intellectual and artistic trends in Mexico City, Europe, and the United States and they incorporate what they have learned into their own artistic expressions.

More than informants for anthropologists and other outside observers, the Zapotec intellectuals have also done their own archival research, oral history recordings, and library searches. I argue that we need to take such people more seriously as intellectuals, instead of the hypenated or qualified labels "we" attach to "them" to establish our own intellectual and scientific authority. Unless anthropologists truly become more rigorous in critiquing our own constructions, essentialisms, and inventions we need to be careful about how we use such terms and disguised put-downs to refer to the ideas of the locally-based intellectuals we study. All too frequently anthropologists have mined and purloined the ideas of indigenous intellectuals while giving them little credit other than the occasional perfunctory one sentence acknowledgement. Yet, in many instances during my reading of Isthmus Zapotec writers I have found the analyses of local observers more illuminating, and certainly more entertaining, than the dry tomes written by many non-Zapotec social scientists who have studied the area.

Part of appreciating more fully the work of local intellectuals must be the recognition that they have histories of their own which involve the ongoing testing and refinement of ideas, reflecting and building on the past, and innovating in the present (cf. Feierman 1990:3). We also need to recognize that our intellectual interlocutors are not trapped in indigenous cultural boxes, but have always been influenced by outside ideas which enter the streams of knowledge that operate at the local level.

In a recent column summarizing important new work on the topic of "Culture and Memory," Connorton (1991:18) cogently summarizes anthropological thinking on the issue of indigenous interpretations of the past and its relationship to the present:

Mayas in Guatemala see the issue as being how to live in the modern world without renouncing memory; remembering a Maya past, something dismissed as unimportant by many Mayas less than a quarter of a century ago is now seen by them as uniquely valuable; they evince a growing concern with who authors the past; they want a memory independent of the definitions of the dominant culture; they seek ethnic continuities and whatever their current significance see them as the Mayan culture core. In effect they say: give us back, not cultural identity as montage, but essentialism, because we want to be essential. The encounter between North American anthropologists and Mayan anthropologists is an ironical one, therefore, because the former are turning to constructivist interpretations of identity at the moment when the latter are rediscovering essentialism.

In short, "they" construct essentialism, whereas "we" deconstruct it and replace it with science, fact, truth, hermeneutic enlightenment or, at least, sophisticated post-modern irony. In

any case, the built-in assumption is that, however angst-ridden our reflexivity or dialogical method may be, ultimately "our" representations of "them" must be taken more seriously than their own self-representations in the academic hierarchy of knowledge.

I feel it is time to bury the anthropologist as intellectual versus native as informant dichotomy which establishes "their" ideas as data and "ours" as science or knowledge. By deconstructing this construction of our own intellectual authority we can begin to better appreciate the intellectual production of people in Juchitán, Maya land, or wherever anthropologists may wander next. <sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. This paper is concerned primarily with "intellectuals" in the normal use of the term. By intellectuals, I mean people whose vocation or life's work is concerned with writing books, creating art, making music, or other activities whose main purpose is the production of knowledge or aesthetic forms.

At a more general level, however, I argue that we need to recognize that all of our informants are intellectuals also, in the sense that their ideas and explanations of social reality may be as valid as those of professional anthropologists (if not more so).

2. Portions of this article originally appeared in my Ph.D. thesis (Campbell 1990).

3. For more information on COCEI see Campbell (1989, 1990), Campbell et al (1993), and Rubin (1987).

4. In the prologue to his book (1899), Molina notes "Anxious to be helpful to the Oaxacans (but not as much as I would like), I gladly offer you my little book, the fruit of many years of incessant work, written using a very strange method that seemed to me to be the best for learning a foreign language..."

5. My information on Henestrosa comes from several of his writings ([1929] 1987a, 1969, 1987b) as well as an interview I conducted with him in Mexico City on January 9, 1988.

6. See de la Cruz (1983:68-9) for the original poem in Spanish. Here I have reproduced only the last stanza of the English translation by Nathaniel Tarn (the whole translated poem is contained in Campbell et al 1993).

7. The object of *mentiras* ("lies") is not to trick the listener, who knows not to take these "lies" literally, but to impress him or her with the audacity and humor of the teller's poetic exaggerations (de la Cruz 1983:23).

8. Cenobio was so successful that he was invited to play a concert at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City, the maximum center of "high" cultural life in Mexico.

9. The primary sources for this discussion of the Neza Cubi generation are numbers 1-14 of

the magazine (1968-1970) and extensive interviews with Macario Matus, Víctor de la Cruz and other Isthmus intellectuals.

10. An indication of the quality of the *Casa de la Cultura's* collection is the fact that, in a rare turnabout, it was loaned for an exposition in Mexico City. Normally, "high culture" in Mexico emanates out from the capital to the provinces. Of course, none of this would have been possible without Toledo's connections with world famous artists in New York, Paris, Mexico City, etc.

11. *Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes.*

12. COCEI members squatted on government lands and, after considerable political conflict and negotiations, established two neighborhoods, the Colonia Rodrigo Carrasco and the Colonia Gustavo Pineda, that are a source of pride for the movement. Houses in these neighborhoods are often painted with murals and slogans indicating their importance in COCEI history.

13. Examples of avant-garde material in Guchachi' Reza, include drawings by José Luis Cuevas of stylized "bourgeois" men masturbating, urinating, etc., drawings and paintings of inter-species erotica, translations of Neruda and Brecht into Zapotec, surrealist poems, and so forth.

14. A large number of people in Juchitán provided me with information and companionship which helped make this article possible. In particular I would like to thank the following people: Macario Matus, Víctor de la Cruz, Manuel Matus, Vicente Marcial, Sabino Lopez, Julio Bustillo, Miguel Angel Toledo, Delfino Marcial, Oscar Martínez, Polo de Gyves, Daniel López Nelio, Mario López, and Omar Luis.

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## VI

### THE CREATION AND RECREATION OF ETHNICITY: LESSONS FROM THE ZAPOTEC AND MIXTEC OF OAXACA

Lynn Stephen

It is generally accepted by anthropological theorists that ethnicity is a subjective, dynamic concept through which groups of people determine their own distinct identities by creating boundaries between themselves and other groups through interaction (Barth 1969; Stephen 1991).<sup>1</sup> The most vibrant areas of intellectual debate concerning indigenous identity in Latin America are centered around the relationship between class and ethnicity (H. Campbell 1990a; Roseberry 1989; Stephen 1991), the relationship between indigenous ethnic identity and grassroots political movements (Bonfil Batalla 1987; Stavenhagen 1991, Kearney and Nagengast 1990; Nagengast and Kearney 1990; Mejía Piñero and Sarmiento Silva 1987; Varese 1988, 1991; Wright 1988) and the validity of ethnicity as a category in postmodern discourse (Stephen 1989; Clifford 1988; Roseberry 1989). In this paper I will use three specific examples of varying expressions of Zapotec and Mixtec ethnic identities in Mexico and in the United States to illustrate three general points about the construction and use of indigenous identity that contribute to these debates.

First, the form, content and boundaries of ethnicity are created and recreated in response to specific political, economic and social contexts--both past and present. Ethnic identities should be seen as a reflection and embodiment of a series of past identities and conflicts, not simply the establishment of a new transformative form of identity (Rubin 1991:9). This suggests that we give a strong priority to the role of history in the creation and use of ethnic identities. We must also remember the difference between the meaning of categories and symbols when they were created from their meaning when they are used at a later point in time (Alonso 1988; H Campbell 1990a: 446-468; Rubin 1991:9).

Second, assertions of ethnic identity usually take place in situations of conflict and competition. Conflict and competition imply that indigenous ethnicity is part of a continual process of negotiation with other ethnic groups and with those who hold political and economic power. As stated by Varese:

Culture...is a field of contention, a contested domain where constant renegotiations occur between individuals and social sectors of the same ethnic group, and between the latter and the external dominant society. Therefore, ethnicity, cultural identity, and the struggle to maintain socio-political and ethnic autonomy or self-determination can be comprehended more in terms of flexible horizons than rigid boundaries. Indian ethnicity, in-as-much as it is increasingly a situational phenomenon, is socially constructed and reconstructed in a permanent process of dialectical negotiation (1991:9).

An assertion of common ethnicity is more common as people move from a context of relative homogeneity to more heterogeneity. Mexican indigenous migrants in southern California, for example, face perhaps one of the most conflictive and heterogeneous

situations they are likely to live in, heightening the necessity to assert ethnic difference and identity.

Thirdly, although ethnicity is an on-going negotiated dialectical process, this does not mean that it is unattached to very real dimensions of political and economic power relations or that its assertion does not have very real consequences for its bearers (H. Campbell 1990a; Stephen 1989). The material and political consequences attached to the expression of ethnicity suggest that it is a legitimate category of analysis and that we cannot divorce it from relationships that are the basis of class and political power.

These three points are illustrated below by three comparative ethnographic examples. The first example is of Zapotec from Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca and several surrounding towns who have responded to international commercialization of their textiles and subsequent class differentiation by producing a multi-dimensional ethnic identity which projects different images to different audiences. These audiences are broadly differentiated between non-local ethnic groups and interests (American tourists and importers and Mexican bureaucrats and those outside the community who purchase the cultural commodities of textiles from the community or whose goal is to woo the community into the Mexican political system) and people from inside the community who are divided between merchants and producers. Projections of ethnicity to people from surrounding communities can vary depending on the relationship between those involved and the purpose of the interaction. I have been conducting fieldwork among several Zapotec weaving communities for the past seven years, in Oaxaca, Mexico, and for a period of several months in the Tijuana border area and in Los Angeles (Stephen 1991).

The second example is the double-edged role of Juchiteco Zapotec ethnicity in building and sustaining a grassroots political movement. On the one hand, a vibrant Juchiteco Zapotec identity allowed COCEI (Coalición Obrera, Campesina e Estudiantil del Istmo) to survive repression in the 1970s and mid-1980s. On the other hand, however, Juchiteco ethnic identity may also have inhibited the coalition-building possibilities of the COCEI because of extreme localism. A history of political and economic domination of other ethnic groups by Juchitán Zapotecs, and wider factors in the Mexican political system were also crucial in limiting the success of the COCEI to expand beyond the Juchitán region. I have spent several months in the Isthmus over the past seven years. Most of my insights for the discussion which follows, however, are drawn from the work of Jeffrey Rubin (1987, 1990, 1991) and Howard Campbell (1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b).

The third ethnographic example focuses on the formation of Mixtec political organizations in the Los Angeles area where a pan-Mixtec identity has been created and used as a bargaining chip with PRI officials in Mexico, to challenge human rights violations in Mexico and in the United States, and to organize Mixtecos on a variety of issues. A neighborhood association in Tijuana and a Mixtec-dominated section of the CIOAC (Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos) in northern Mexico have demonstrated similar patterns of creating a pan-Mixtec ethnic identity that serves as a basis for political organizing and consciousness. Here I draw on the extensive fieldwork of Michael Kearney and Carol Nagengast (Kearney 1986a, 1986b, 1988; Kearney and Nagengast 1990; Nagengast and Kearney 1990).

## Indigenous Ethnicity in Mexico: Dualism and Extreme Localism

As discussed by Nagengast and Kearney (1990) and Stephen (1991), indigenous ethnicity in Mexico has been constructed in two primary forms. On the one hand is the *indio/mestizo* paradigm which suggests two large racial/ethnic groups in Mexico. Created in the minds of geographically confused conquerors who sought to distinguish themselves from the "others" they encountered in the Caribbean, this dichotomy has been used historically to invoke the consistent subordinate position of indigenous peoples (Bonfil Batalla 1981; Smith 1985). It has also been used to create a reified and homogenized glorious Indian past which forms part of Mexico's unique cultural heritage (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:64-65). The glorified Indian is held up as a bastion of tradition, pure communal social forms, and as a master artisan who can still fabricate authenticity on looms and potters wheels (Stephen 1992). The monolingual, "traditional" Indian is also projected as an explanation for why so many of Mexico's indigenous population are impoverished, illiterate, and unemployed. Zapotecos and Mixtecos have claimed and appropriated both of these images in relation to economic and political agendas, as seen below.

The second form in which indigenous identity has been constructed is in terms of extreme localism. Both anthropological analyses, historical accounts, and Zapotecs and Mixtecs themselves have emphasized the community-based orientation of ethnic identity, albeit for different reasons and from different perspectives. In the Oaxaca region, with the decline of Monte Albán after 700 A.D., the "Balkanization of Oaxaca" from 950 - 1500 A.D. resulted in the division of the area into numerous small states that were hostile to one another (Flannery and Marcus 1983:184-185). Fray de Francisco Burgoa's descriptions of the Oaxaca central valley area also suggest a political situation of small city-states warring with one another (1934). The relocation of what was left of the indigenous population into Spanish-planned nucleated settlements consolidated communities as separate and isolated entities. "Each community was given semi-autonomy and was in fact enjoined from interacting with other communes to prevent banding together and resisting Spanish rule" (Spores 1967, 1984, cited in Nagengast and Kearney 1990:71). Municipal archives suggest ongoing competition for land as documented in legal land disputes which pitted one community against the other, sometimes for more than one hundred years (see Chance 1978; Dennis 1987; Stephen 1987; Taylor 1972, 1979). Today Oaxaca has 570 municipal seats, almost half of all those that exist in Mexico, resulting in further political fragmentation. Through the continued colonial and postcolonial actions of the state, the political atomization of Oaxaca probably contributed to a high level of very localized allegiance and sense of ethnic identity. This finding is confirmed by Spores (this volume) who suggests, for example, that the Mixtec have failed to overcome local factionalism to form a regional coalition during the 20th century.

Beyond the political and economic divisions of community imposed by the state and church, many who have analyzed Mixtec and Zapotec political organization view the "closed-corporateness" of communities as a "result of a political structure literally forced on indigenous peoples combined with their own resistance (albeit passive) to outside force." (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:74). In the discussion that follows, the outside forces suggested by Nagengast and Kearney (1990) can also be seen to foster new and broader forms of ethnic expression. Among the Mixtec these forces centered on labor migration to northern Mexico and the United States

and further integration of the United States and Mexican economies. Among the Zapotec of Teotitlán and surrounding communities, redefinition of localized ethnic identity is tied to commercialization of wool textiles for sale in the United States coupled with a major migration wave to the United States. For the Zapotec of the COCEI in Juchitán, contemporary ethnic identity is tied to contact with national and international cultural elites and a political confrontation stemming from the inability of the PRI to ever establish total control in the area, contradicting the corporatist model of Mexican politics since the revolution (Rubin 1990).

### **Zapotec Ethnicity I: Teotitlán del Valle, Humble People Working at Their Simple Looms**

Once some of the poorest communities in the Oaxaca valleys, Teotitlán, followed by its poorer cousins Santa Ana del Valle, San Miguel del Valle, and Díaz Ordaz are now the center of a wool textile producing operation that reaches from Oaxaca to the United States. Zapotec textiles funneled through the marketing center of Teotitlán can be found from craft fairs to Filene's Boston department store in a variety of forms including blankets, pillows, director's chairs, handbags, rugs, and wall hangings. Located 38 kilometers from Oaxaca off the Pan American highway, Teotitlán currently has about 5,000 residents. Zapotec continues to be the primary language of the community with Spanish only being spoken in the schools. Teotitecos can be found in large numbers in Tijuana (150), Mexico and in Santa Ana (250), Moore Park, Santa Barbara and other communities in California and throughout the southwest.

Human migration and the spread of textiles both have their roots in the dynamics of international capitalist development that has increasingly bound together Mexico and the United States during this century. The first Teotitlán migrants left the community in 1944 to work in the United States as legally contracted workers under the second Bracero program. Feeling the pinch of laborers who had abandoned their field for higher paying work in the defense industry, American growers persuaded their government to act as labor contractors. Since 1944, there has been a steady stream of migration from the community to the United States. More than 65% of men over age 25 have spent time working in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in the 1970s significant numbers of women began to migrate as well, often stopping first in Tijuana before crossing the border (Stephen 1992, see also general stats from Chavez 1989, 1990).

During the 1950s as Mexican industrialization began, the growth of the polyester industry marked a decrease in the consumption of hand-loom blankets as use objects. Zapotec weavers from Teotitlán, Santa Ana, and Díaz Ordaz had been producing hand-loomed blankets for an indigenous and working class mestizo market that stretched north to Mexico City and South to Chiapas. (Stephen 1991). This distribution network was at its zenith in the 1920s and 1930s. The development of the tourism industry in Mexico began in the 1930s and came into full swing in the 1950s providing Zapotec textile producers with an alternative market as their working class and indigenous markets dried up. In order to create a "need" for indigenously produced textiles and other crafts, however, Mexican indigenous ethnicity had to be commoditized and converted into a scarce good desirable to those who lived in a world full of machine-produced objects (Novelo 1976, García Canclini 1982).

Following the revolution, "*Arte Popular*" (popular or people's art) was recognized officially in 1921 for the first time when the 10th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution was

celebrated with a national artisanry exhibit inaugurated by Alvaro Obregón in Mexico City (García Canclini 1982:102). In the 1930s, intellectuals and artists declared *arte popular* to be an important part of Mexican heritage, suggesting that articles such as straw dolls, clay toys, and multi-colored *sarapes* were giving Mexicans "an elevated sense of race and a national conscience that was previously missing" (Novo 1932: 56-cited in Novelo 1976). A program that came out of the 1940 International Indigenous Congress in Patzcuaro focused on the topic of *arte popular* and called for the protection of indigenous arts, the organization of expositions of indigenous arts, and national contests (Marroquin 1977:39-40).

Mexican "folk art" became one of the best marketing techniques for selling colorful "Indian" Mexico to tourists. As early as the 1920s, people began to collect Teotiteco textiles. (Atl 1922:10). Archival work I have done in the community suggests that the Teotiteco elite who occupied positions of power in the local city hall were aware of the dynamics of international trade and marketing. They had foresight and acted to protect their interests. Beginning in the 1920s they systematically denied that they had merchant enterprises (which they did) and in official correspondence portrayed themselves as simple artisans producing important cultural artifacts (Stephen 1989, 1992). The beautifully preserved municipal archives of Teotitlán offer textual examples of the ways in which community leaders consciously articulated their identity to government officials. Words like *artesanía culture*, *historía*, *costumbre*, which are now a part of everyday Teotiteco Zapotec vocabulary were used in municipal documents as early as the 1930s, indicating an interest in these terms and experimentation in their use. My favorite example of this textual evidence is a letter written in 1938 to Lázaro Cárdenas, a president who was radically overhauling the Mexican state by attempting to integrate all sectors of Mexican society into the government apparatus (Hamilton 1982). The president of Teotitlán wrote directly to Cárdenas to ask him to intervene internationally to prevent the Japanese from producing imitations of Zapotec textiles.

...we have become aware of the fact that in the country of Japan they are producing Mexican articles with the intent of passing them off as Mexican. Among these articles...are found those from the small industry of Oaxacan blankets, adorned with designs and idols which signify the history of Mitla and Monte Albán and Zapotec and Toltec figures. We understand for certain that among other things, Japan is producing articles which imitate the Oaxacan blanket to which we dedicate ourselves as humble people working in simple home looms. This notice has caused us great alarm because at the moment we are in a precarious economic situation and it has therefore occurred to us to request that you dictate measures which will protect our small weaving industry here in Oaxaca--also international measures which will take care of this phenomenon which has come to our notice...

(Archivo Municipal de Teotitlán del Valle 1938, my translation).

The letter indicates a clear ability to coopt and use the vocabulary for marketing Indian "crafts" to defend local economic interests. The letter documents the claim which the Zapotec have on rights of original production as "people working in simple home looms."

Critical to an understanding of Teotiteco ethnic identity is the way in which the different dimensions of its construction work in different contexts. The version of Teotiteco identity projected to those outside of the community emphasizes community solidarity, particularly in laying claim to the fruits of Zapotec weaving. An important piece of the current Teotiteco claim on textiles is a continuous link to the past as the originators of treadle loom weaving in Oaxaca.

This claim is validated by people from other indigenous communities in the Oaxaca valleys. It is irrelevant to Teotitecos that the technology and materials which they used to produce the first weavings were brought by the Spaniards. Those who penned the official correspondence for Teotitlán in this century worked self-consciously to maintain an aura of mystique over the community, reproducing stereotypes of indigenous artisans and protecting the interests of merchants by deemphasizing their activities. They created and recreated a picture of simple precapitalist relations of production. This matches quite closely with expectations of handicraft consumers who believe producers to live in a static pre-Colombian world. This image is reproduced by tourists, importers and even reporters who visit the community. A 1988 newspaper article on Teotitlán states

The weavers...practice a craft that arrived in Mexico with their sheep in the 16th century. Their heavy wooden floor looms have barely changed since then. Neither has their life style (Watson 1988).

The image of consistency with a pre-Colombian life is reproduced again and again in brochures, advertisements, and even in a newsletter which is circulated among a group of 30 American importers who work in the community. The following excerpt from the newsletter indicates a concern for preserving "cultural tradition" on the part of importers. Business for them, like the Zapotecs of Teotitlán, is tied to a strong ethnic identity.

Many of our 60s' counter cultural values have been part of their stable base for centuries; a holistic relationship to the earth; a humanistic spiritual life not based on religious dogma, but on a participatory community formed with service, respect, and trust and a "Small is Beautiful" industry that allows a lot of individual choice, pride, and creativity. It's this way of living that is part of the authenticity of what we sell. Sure we market an embellished story but I fear the rugs would lose credibility if this cultural background were lost (Roth 1988).

While the commercial version of their identity which Teotitecos maintain for outsiders emphasizes a united community of kin producing unique textiles and participating in an elaborate and important ceremonial life, internal representations of that same identity are more contradictory. Today Teotitlán is characterized by class divisions between merchants who contract laborers on a piecework basis and resell textiles at a profit to U.S. and European importers and a majority of weavers who either labor on a piecework basis or sell finished goods to local merchants. A small and ever-changing group of independent producers also exists. About 10 percent of the community's population self-identifies as merchants, 10 percent as full-time farmers, and the remaining 80 percent as weavers. More than half of the community is landless. These divisions are related to changes in the socio-economic base of the community

in this century, characterized by a switch from merchant capital to commercial capital beginning in the late 1930s (see Stephen 1992; Young 1978).

Today these divisions in the community permeate dialogues of kinship, culture, and local identity within Teotitlán. Because everyone in the community is strongly linked to many individuals and families through ties of kinship and ritual kinship or *compadrazgo*, the relations of weaving production are permeated by these relations as well. A merchant contracting a weaver to produce a textile may simultaneously be a godfather relating to his godson. In such a case, Teotitecos may use the language of kinship and solidarity to manipulate each other towards specific ends. For example, merchants use the language of kinship and *compadrazgo* to recruit their godchildren as pieceworkers. Merchant women may use the same language and its implication of equal social status in order to leave early from a ritual commitment. Weaver women use the same language to pressure a ritually superior *comadre* to purchase some clothing for a child's school graduation. The words *b :n(i) lo'gets* (we the people of the town) or *b :n(i) sxía* (we the people below the rock, referring to a local mountain charged with mythic meaning) invoked when negotiating labor contracts are used to ease conflictive economic relations through a unified, common past. The language of *compadrazgo* is used in a similar manner.

During the 1980s, Teotitlán merchants managed to cut out Mexican middlemen from their export transactions and now deal directly with American importers. According to the 60 Zapotec merchants I interviewed, this was a concerted effort. Part of this process was also convincing Americans that it was better for them to deal with the real producers of textiles, and not non-indian intermediaries. Teotitlán merchants successfully used their ethnic identity to gain further control of their ethnic product. While this is certainly more to their advantage than to the rest of the community, it has also resulted in a higher level of profits remaining in the community than otherwise might be the case. Significant amounts of this money have been invested in local cultural and public works projects as well as being spent on houses, cars, trucks, and electronic goods (Stephen 1992). The local fiesta complex has also prospered with the influx of cash (Stephen 1990).

Thus in Teotitlán, the commoditization of ethnicity through textiles resulted in a localized ethnic revival. A further example of this is seen in the textile production of Chimayo, New Mexico as discussed by Whitecotton (this volume). Chimayo, like Teotitlán, currently has an extensive cottage industry which operates as a putting-out system. The community has also been able to literally cash in on its ethnic image and upgrade community infrastructure. In both communities, local symbols have been successfully used to reinforce ethnic identity and subsequent economic claims.

### **Zapotec Ethnicity II: Juchitán, The First to Rebel Against Colonialism<sup>3</sup>**

A different brand of Zapotec ethnicity has been brewing in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, most prominently projected and claimed by members of the COCEI in the city of Juchitán. Although it has a population of 90,000, Juchitán is a city that most visitors experience as a village that just increased in size. A regional commercial and political center, 98.5% of the population in the municipality of Juchitán speak Zapotec according to the 1980 Mexican Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 1984).

Romanticized by writers such as Miguel Covarubias (1946), artists such as Frida Kahlo, and a long line of left intellectuals, Juchitán activists have used the myth of a glorious, rebellious past, a continuity of tradition, and vibrant Zapotec culture as a basis for building a grassroots political movement (see H. Campbell 1990a:199-202, 368-386 on Juchitán culture).

Juchitán is a branch of the great tree which is the Zapotec race...and as such inherits rebelliousness and detests subjection...That is, the Zapotec race has always been free...The struggle of the COCEI has been congruent with the history of physical and intellectual battles of its predecessors...The victory of the COCEI is the history of a people...(Matus 1981, cited in H. Campbell 1990a:33).

As discussed by H. Campbell (1990a:33), the words of Matus, leftist Juchiteco poet and journalist, emphasize the Zapotec's links to a past struggle in which they overcame colonial subjection. A selective vision of the past has been packaged by the COCEI in a local version and used to link together a multi-class constituency for the purposes of political control of the municipio. This insight is the focal point of H. Campbell's work on the COCEI (1990a).

Formed during Echeverría's democratic opening in the 1970s, the COCEI established a grassroots movement that "succeeded in defending claims to land, credit, wages, benefits, and municipal services" (Rubin 1990:250). In the 1980s, the COCEI was the first leftist opposition group to succeed in getting its victory recognized by the PRI in municipal elections. It was the first and only city in Mexico with a leftist government. During a two and a half year reign of *ayuntamiento popular* (people's government) the COCEI embarked on an ambitious cultural program centered on the Zapotec language, attempted to regain land lost by peasants to large landholders, to formally organize the peasantry, and to develop public works projects that would benefit the city's poor majority. In 1983 the COCEI was thrown out of office by the state legislature and the military. In 1986, the COCEI entered municipal elections and joined a coalition municipal government. By 1989, the COCEI was the winner of municipal elections and governed jointly with the PRI, but in a majority role (Rubin 1990: 250). During the 1980s the COCEI withstood major political pressure and military repression to emerge firmly entrenched in the municipal government. In 1990, the COCEI mayor Héctor Sánchez welcomed President Salinas to Juchitán with a speech highlighting dialogue, conciliation, and cooperation (H. Campbell 1990a:426).

How did this successful political movement emerge and survive? And how important was the factor of ethnic identity? As seen in the case of the COCEI, strong local ethnic identity doesn't necessarily translate into an ability to link up with other communities and broaden a political movement solely on the basis of shared ethnicity. While cultural projects and tactics focused on ethnic identity were critical in building the COCEI's base of support in Juchitán, their extreme localism in the practice of representing ethnicity as well as larger national political factors limited the COCEI's ability to build a broader regional coalition outside of the immediate Juchitán area. A regional organization is one that involves intermediary and articulated instances of power and organization sustained through time. Its structure is not dominated by one community nor does its leadership consistently come from one community. The COCEI does not fit this definition of a regional organization. It has been very successful in the large locality of

Juchitán, but it has not been successfully generalized to other Zapotec areas. It has been influential in helping to organize other groups, but has not expanded into other Zapotec regions in its Juchitán form.

According to Rubin's (1990) analysis of the political context from which the COCEI emerged, the PRI, Mexico's dominant political party for over sixty years, never gained a strong foothold in the Isthmus between 1930 and 1960. Local political activists called themselves Charistas after General Heliodoro Charis, a revolutionary who succeeded in establishing a cacique rule that lasted through the end of the 1950s. Charis' regime was challenged several times in the 1940s and 1950s, but these efforts did not succeed in unseating him. What these efforts did nourish, however, was the FRD (Front for Democratic Renovation), an organization that emphasized corruption and anti-machine politics. During the 1950s, a system of shared municipal councils emerged in Juchitán, where Charistas and members of the FRD were included. As Rubin (1990:253) points out, the presence of shared municipal power and the importance of political negotiation based on unfair elections and closed candidate selection processes are not new in the 1970s. In Juchitán they existed previously. Rubin (1990, 1991) argues that the early pattern of bargaining and autonomy among president Cárdenas, the governor of Oaxaca, and General Charis are not acknowledged in the usual corporatist picture. Thus Juchitán had a political history that must be strongly considered in trying to understand the success of the COCEI as a grassroots movement in relation to Zapotec ethnicity.

The COCEI had two political centerpieces with which it built a constituency--land/labor rights and a reappropriation of Zapotec culture from Juchitán's elite for the poor majority (H. Campbell 1990a). While land struggles and the violent confrontations they resulted in were critical in building the COCEI as a political organization, the discussion here will focus on the COCEI's use of Zapotec ethnicity to build a political movement locally and beyond (see H. Campbell 1990a:389-410 for discussion of land and labor issues, also Rubin 1987, 1990).

Anya Peterson Royce, who did ethnographic fieldwork in Juchitán in the 1970s, describes Juchiteco cultural life as largely confined to the upper classes. The extensive *vela* system of cult celebrations for neighborhood saints has been largely dominated by the wealthy and the middle class (as sponsors). According to Peterson Royce (1975:78) and H. Campbell (1990a:359) Zapotec monolingualism was viewed as a sign of backwardness and marginality. Only the well-off could afford the lavish costumes and gold jewelry associated with ritual occasions, although they could be rented by the less fortunate. In general, before the birth of the COCEI, claims of Zapotec ethnicity and assertions of ethnic pride were strongly tied to upper-class status (H. Campbell 1990a:358-359).

In the 1970s, COCEI articulated a vision that held that working class and peasant Zapotecs are the "legitimate" Zapotecs, not the elite. The Casa de Cultura began to promote cultural programs based in the popular classes (H. Campbell 1990a:292-300). The COCEI had to emphasize the local and the particular to confront the local elite. To fight a very specific class battle within Juchitán the COCEI had to use ethnicity--class-based ethnicity.<sup>4</sup>

As documented by H. Campbell (1990a), during the COCEI people's government from 1981-1983 and after, Juchiteco Zapotec ethnicity was strongly promoted and almost required in all political, judicial, and social activities.

The celebration and embellishment on Zapotec ethnic style and custom are no longer the sole province of the Juchiteco elite. Instead, lower- and lower-middle class Zapotecs have taken the lead in redefining local culture. ...The Center of COCEI public events, large political rallies and marches, are modelled on aspects of Isthmus *velas* and processions with the express purpose of using Zapotec culture to bolster COCEI's political project...Likewise COCEI has revived the *tequio* (communal labor participation) and endowed it with the connotation of ethnic reciprocity at the same time that it is used to promote overtly political programs (H. Campbell 1990a:506).

Both Rubin (1991) and H. Campbell (1990a) note the critical importance of female Juchiteco ethnic culture for the COCEI.

...the economic and social role of women in family courtyards, neighborhood businesses, and central marketing networks provided the means for *concientización*, mobilization, and day-to-day communication for the COCEI...it was in the interest of women in preserving various forms of autonomy provided by Zapotec ethnicity--in spheres of economy, social life, and sexuality--that accounts for the perseverance and strength of that ethnicity, and its role as a catalyst and support for political action (Rubin 1991:9).

Women were critical in the grassroots mobilizations of the COCEI and a very small number assumed local leadership positions. Both Rubin and Campbell point out, however, that the myth of Juchitán as a matriarchy run by women is far from true. H. Campbell provides an interesting and much-needed discussion of discrimination against women in COCEI political culture and in Juchitán, most evident in language (1990:477-491, see also O. Campbell 1993).

The Zapotec language was actively promoted in all public activities by the COCEI. Through examining the use of Juchiteco Zapotec in texts, radio, and public speaking by the COCEI we can perhaps best see how the Zapotec ethnicity recreated by the COCEI had somewhat contradictory results for the COCEI as a political movement. The state of Oaxaca has approximately 300,000 Zapotec speakers. Zapotec is divided by linguists into six (Radin 1936) to nine main branches; for some linguists even each branch is a separate language as different as the distinct Romance languages (Whitecotton 1985:28). One of these branches is Isthmus Zapotec. Each of these branches or languages is then divided into a smaller number of dialects, the exact number of which varies with the particular analysis being employed. Among Zapotec speakers in the state of Oaxaca there is an ingrained cultural belief that while the different branches of Zapotec are somewhat mutually intelligible, they are really different. Monaghan (1991) describes the same syndrome on the part of the Mixtec. I have observed hundreds of transactions made in the cyclical markets of Oaxaca between Zapotec speakers from different "branches" of the language, demonstrating mutual intelligibility. Intimate conversations, however, are deemed difficult. Several times after returning to Teotitlán from extended visits to Juchitán, I received sympathy for the difficulty I had in speaking Juchiteco Zapotec and was told to be careful not to tinge my Teotitlán Zapotec with Juchiteco words or endings, because it is "really different." While central valley and Isthmus Zapotec are not in fact structurally

different, differences in vocabulary, and in verb and noun endings result in a great deal of cultural distance as perceived by Zapotec speakers in the two areas. To bridge this culturally-perceived gap would require using non-local vocabulary and paying close attention to one's pronunciation of words, particularly endings.

As suggested by H. Campbell (1990a:477), the specific forms of the COCEI's use of Zapotec in political events and its focus on local issues helped to consolidate the COCEI within Juchitán, but limited its cultural and ethnic transferability to other regions where Zapotec is also spoken. This linguistic use of ethnic identity might in fact have counteracted the general claims the COCEI made of their tie to a glorious Zapotec past--claiming Juchitecos as representatives of the "Zapotec race" as seen above.

H. Campbell (1990a) offers a few specific examples of the COCEI's use of Zapotec in politics. Most COCEI political leaders developed considerable oratory skill in Zapotec. Few political speeches were given in Spanish, and Juchiteco Zapotec became the official language of city hall.

The young [COCEI] administrators begin to feel that the pressure of Zapotec is much stronger when they have municipal power. Up in City Hall, they yell, tell jokes, collect taxes, and administer justice in Zapotec. Those who cannot speak Zapotec are unsuitable for public office (de la Cruz 1984:23, cited in H. Campbell 1990a:356).

Thus speaking Zapotec, and specifically Juchiteco Zapotec, became an unofficial requirement for political participation. The COCEI and its supporters produced a wide variety of materials written in Juchiteco Zapotec. At one time there were up to 15 publications available. The orthographic system developed was specific to Juchitán Zapotec, although it could be applied to other branches as well.

One of the clearest points H. Campbell (1990a) makes in his analysis of Juchiteco's use of Zapotec in their political campaigning and organizing is the use of local humor. Joking was used by COCEI leaders to relieve tension, engage locals, and to create a sense of local solidarity. According to H. Campbell (1990a:365) those who were not from Juchitán would not be likely to understand COCEI jokes.

The micro-specific local references and Zapotec idioms contained in the speeches are incomprehensible to mestizo outsiders who are excluded defacto from the COCEI discourse.

While mestizos might be excluded, "micro-specific local references" would most likely also exclude other Zapotec speakers from other areas.

An additional element of COCEI humor is a reinforcement of its historical dominance over other indigenous ethnic groups. This suggests another way in which Zapotec itself and overt ridiculing of peoples such as the Huave may have limited the COCEI's ability to extend the political culture of their organization outside of Juchitán. H. Campbell cites one exemplary joke which acts as a historical sign laden with the long-term marginality of the Mixe. The joke makes an analogy between the pubic hair of Mixe women and the Juchitán PRI which was divided

throughout much of the 1980s. The joke states that the local PRI resembled the "sparse pubic hair of Mixe women: one going this way, one going another." In addition to the negative female gender connotations associated with the joke, comparing the PRI to the pubic hair of Oaxaca's poorest ethnic group provides the COCEI with a "different from and better than" position from another "Indian" ethnic group and also permits them to use historical relations of ethnic stratification to assert their opposition to the PRI. H. Campbell (1990a:474) documents a series of common jokes about the Huave as well, a group the Zapotec have dominated culturally and economically since they pushed them off of their territory in the mid-14th century. Of Juchiteco inter-ethnic relations, H. Campbell summarizes:

*Cocéistas* likewise see the Mixe, southern Zapotec, and Chontal as meek and unrebelling, hence poor raw material for their radical movement...*Cocéistas* claim the Mixes are instantly identifiable because they do not respond to verbal challenges but instead cower in silence, something they say a Juchiteco would never do. (1990a:476-477).

While the COCEI's use of Juchiteco ethnicity may have been an important fact in the limited ability of the COCEI to form broader alliances, severe government repression in the 1970s and again in the 1980s is also a critical factor. Between 1975 and 1977 approximately 25 supporters of the COCEI were killed; there were repeated military occupations of the city and harassment and arrest of COCEI leaders and their families (Rubin 1990:250). In 1983, COCEI was forced out of office and the city was occupied by the army. Following a virtual state of siege, COCEI members were arrested and tortured, their houses raided, and demonstrations broken up (Amnesty International 1986; H. Campbell 1990a:410-411).

As in many parts of Mexico, application of police and army repression results in a weakened political opposition. During the first stage of COCEI alliance building in the late 1970s with Oaxaca university students, COCEO (Coalicón Obrera Campesino Estudiantil de Oaxaca), and other groups created a severe challenge to hard-line governor Manuel Zárate Aquino that resulted in violent oppression (Rubin 1991). During 1981-1983 when the COCEI was in power in Juchitán, they began to make short-term inroads in other areas, offering concrete organizing benefits, particularly in relation to local land and labor battles (Rubin 1991). When the army came in, COCEI fell apart and retreated to Juchitán. According to Rubin (1991), outside alliances quickly fell apart and the COCEI was only able to shield the innermost core of the organization. From 1983 to 1986 the COCEI retreated deep within local Juchitán political circles and culture.

In 1986, the division of the local PRI into MIPRI (a professional and business group who refused to support the local PRI candidate) <sup>5</sup> and PRI, provided an opportunity for the COCEI to emerge in a reorganized form. They were given partial recognition of electoral victory and governed jointly with the PRI for three years. Since 1989 the COCEI has governed alone and been a target of Salinas de Gortari's policy of social concertation whereby established opposition organizations are courted and offered resources and political capital for allying themselves with the government. Salinas' visit to Juchitán in 1990 and Juchitán's receipt of almost three million dollars in federal aid through a government program known as PRONASOL suggests that the COCEI is taking on a less militant position via the PRI-run government (H. Campbell

1990a:425-428). Juchitán is slated to receive more in municipal aid than 21 other PRI-dominated municipal governments (Schultz 1990). The COCEI appears to exhibit a common characteristic of many social movements in Mexico--it is simultaneously striving for autonomy yet also achieving integration with the state. This is also true of the democratic tendency within the teacher's union that used a state institution to launch a challenge to the state's indigenous policy.

Municipal president-elect Sanchez's speech when Salinas' visited sums up the present position of the COCEI in relation to the government--a balancing act between a unique history of rebellious Juchiteco ethnic pride and a political dialogue cloaked in the language of democracy emphasizing equality and similarity.

We are a people who over the generations have defended with pride, passion, and bravery our ethnic identity [and] our right as Juchitecos to democratically elect our communal and municipal authorities. ...Our history Mr. President has always focused on democracy and the right to land...Mr. President this ceremony ...required that we treat each other as equals, with mutual ideological respect, toward a path of concord [*concertación*] and plural coexistence (COCEI 1990:2, cited in H. Campbell 1990a:426).

This balancing act suggests again that while Juchiteco ethnicity worked in sustaining the COCEI as a local organization through periods of intense repression, it alone cannot serve as a basis for building broader political coalitions (H. Campbell 1990a).

### **Mixtec Ethnicity: Translating Multiple Marginality into a Coherent Identity**

The fluid political situation in Mexico that has resulted in the PRI's willingness to negotiate with groups such as the largely Zapotec COCEI has also had repercussions outside of Mexico. As documented by Michael Kearney and Carol Nagengast, during the later 1970s and 1980s Mixtec migrant laborers in the San Quintín valley of Baja California Norte and in southern California have formed labor, civic, and human rights organizations built around a pan-Mixtec ethnic identity and have been able to use their organizations to negotiate with PRI officials, including the governor of Oaxaca, Heladio Ramírez. Unheard of in their home communities, this level of political negotiation and ethnic solidarity can be clearly related to a set of economic and political circumstances that have given rise to new organizational forms built largely on a redefinition of Mixtec ethnicity in combination with a shared marginal economic status.

The striking transformation in the representation of Mixtec ethnicity represented by groups such as CCPM (Comité Cívico Popular Mixteco, ACBJ (Asociación Cívica Benito Juárez, and OPEO (Organización del Pueblo Explotado y Oprimido) is discussed by Nagengast and Kearney (1990) in relation to historical forces that acted to reduce Mixtec ethnic identity to a very localized level. They focus specifically on Mixtecs from the community of San Jerónimo that to the outside eye appears to conform to the notion of a closed corporate community. San Jerónimo has a population of two thousand individuals. People marry within the community, communal *tequio* labor is obligatory, all land is communally held, and a lively civil-religious cargo system is in operation. San Jerónimo has been engaged in boundary disputes with

neighboring villages. All these factors have contributed to a strong sense of community-based identity.

Thus within the Mixteca, individuals identify themselves as being from a given village. The primary political opposition emerges between villages, and ethnicity is only occasionally salient (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:69).

This cozy picture of tradition is deceiving, however, as pointed out by Nagengast and Kearney. Boundary disputes between communities that all suffer population pressure, soil erosion and land grabs, emphasize singularity and direct their hostility at other communities instead of at the politically and economically powerful (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:72). This same ecological and economic pressure has also resulted in migration by the people of San Jerónimo to northern Mexico and to the United States in search of a livelihood. Stuart and Kearney (1981) calculated that collectively the village can raise no more than 20 percent of the corn and beans necessary to feed its population, a figure confirmed by my own work among the Zapotec (Stephen 1991). Families must find another source of income. With few or no cash-generating possibilities save the production of unfinished straw palm hats which nets producers the sterling wage of \$US .20 per day, labor migration has become the major economic base of the community.

Remittances sent home from other parts of Mexico and from the United States are vital to maintaining the local economy in San Jerónimo. The remittances sent by migrants to the Mixteca as a whole exceeds the total value of all agricultural production there, according to one study (Ortíz Gabriel n.d.:28, cited in Nagengast and Kearney 1990:76). Another estimate was that remittances from Oaxacan migrants in the United States were greater than the entire state budget for Oaxaca.<sup>6</sup> Since the late 1960s, migrants from San Jerónimo have established themselves in the border cities of Tijuana, Nogales and Mexico and since 1978-1979 in the San Quintín Valley (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:76). There is also a large network now of San Jerónimo residents who regularly work in California and Oregon agriculture.

Living and working conditions for Mixtec migrants in both North Mexico and the United States are harsh. In the San Quintín Valley laborers are subject to major health hazards resulting from the heavy use of pesticides, and housing standards fall off the low end of the scale. A labor camp that is part of a Los Pinos tomato exporting ranch features "long sheds of corrugated sheet-metal that has been divided into some 250 windowless, dirt-floored rooms about sixteen feet square. One central faucet serves the needs of the entire camp and the sanitary facilities consist of half a dozen holes in the ground enclosed with plastic sheeting" (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:65-75). Similar descriptions can be found for other parts of Mexico and even in the United States. In the United States, illegal Mixtec laborers are being subjected to extensive labor exploitation and human rights abuses (Nagengast, Stavenhagen, and Kearney n.d., Nagengast and Kearney 1990). These abuses are reflective of the multiple marginalization of the Mixtec in the United States with the added identity of "illegal alien" on top of being poor, Mexican, and "Indian."

Beginning in the 1980s in San Quintín Valley where up to forty thousand Mixtecs have migrated to work in export agriculture, Mixtec leaders began to participate in CIOAC (Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos), an independent national labor and peasant

union. COIAC is one of the few national opposition unions that is organizing peasant and rural workers outside of the CNC (Confederación Nacional Campesina) and the CTM (Confederación de Trabajadores de Mexico), both formed under the Cárdenas government in the 1930s.<sup>7</sup> Since joining CIOAC, Mixteco leaders have faced harassment and death threats, and they have been the victims of hit and run accidents (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:81). Because of the ethnic composition of the work force, the confrontation between CIOAC, growers, and the state has become an ethnic confrontation.

Unlike the Mixteca, where there is not direct non-Mixtec political opposition against which to define Mixtec identity, in San Quintín the growers are confronting labor unrest and workers not as workers but as Mixtecs. Thus ethnicity has emerged as a noticeable theme of political consciousness and political action on both sides (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:82).

The different class and ethnic boundaries that have resulted in rearticulating conflict at the level of a pan-Mixtec ethnic identity in Northern Mexico are also emerging in California. In the Los Angeles area three pan-Mixtec civic and political organizations have emerged. They include the CCPM (Comité Civico Popular Mixteco, ACBJ (Asociación Civica Benito Juárez), and OPEO (Organización del Pueblo Explotado y Oprimido). As described by Kearney and Nagengast (1990), these groups are characterized by a new style of political negotiation in that they attempt to settle Mixteco affairs outside of Oaxaca in a traditional way in an untraditional context. Kearney and Nagengast provide an example of a Mixtec leader who directly discusses police harassment of Mixteco families living in Nogales, Sonora while at a champaign brunch atop the Fresno Hilton with the visiting Governor of Oaxaca. The Governor responds by saying he will take care of the problem by calling the governor of Sonora who is a friend (Kearney and Nagengast 1990:5-6). They describe other negotiations with the governor in which representatives from the three Mixteco organizations named above make demands related both to harassment on the border, problems with the telegraph office in Oaxaca, harassment and assassination of Mixtec laborers in Baja California Norte, and issues of human rights, medical and legal services, and exploitation by contractors in the United States (1990:7-8). They presented a three level political agenda--Mixtec problems in the governor's own state, in other parts of Mexico and in the United States.

The precarious political position of the PRI after the 1988 presidential elections that it "officially won" but was widely perceived as having lost to the Democratic Front Coalition of Cuahetemoc Cárdenas has resulted in an important source of bargaining power for organized opposition. Just as the COCEI was courted and listened to by Salinas in Juchitán, organized Mixtec groups have been given political legitimacy and recognition by the governor of Oaxaca. However, one of the important differences between the COCEI and the California-based Mixteco organizations is the fact that the COCEI is now part of the Mexican government through Juchitán's city hall. While the broad-based Mixteco organizations in California have ties to opposition political parties and a wide range of NGOs, they are not yet incorporated into state structures. They have a more autonomous and therefore precarious political existence.

## Comparative Conclusions

Anthropologists have gone from trying to provide rigid definitions of ethnicity tied to discrete groups characterized by a particular language, common ceremonies, material artifacts and residential territories to opting for subjective definitions tied to specific historical, political, and social contexts. Today ethnicity is no longer viewed as something that can be even generally defined, but as one form of identity usually linked to culture, common history, and territory that is expressed in situations of conflict--material, political, social, or symbolic (see Stephen 1991; Stern 1987:15; Sider 1986). Ethnicity is an identity that will be used in different ways by different people in different situations, usually to stake a particular claim.

The three cases of the historical creation and subsequent recreation of Zapotec and Mixtec ethnic identity described above illustrate both the present and past importance of context in how people define and use ethnicity as a component of their identity. In all three cases, the historically inherited form of indigenous ethnic identity emphasized localism, community-based institutions, and conflict between neighboring towns based on land and resource competition. This localism was punctuated by general economic and political marginalization as "Indians" in a country historically run by Spaniards and then mestizos. The Zapotec of Teotitlán del Valle and surrounding communities, particularly of the merchant class, have embraced and redefined this localism and used it as a way to defend their claim as being the original and authentic producers of wool textiles now exported in large numbers to the United States. There, a conscious projection of the "humble people working in simple looms" version of Indian identity has been used to generate a vision of Zapotec ethnicity that matches consumer expectations of pre-Colombian times. Within the community, the class, gender, and age distinctions that can be the cause of divisions are managed through a different projection of local ethnicity that emphasizes kinship and shared cultural institutions.

For COCEI activists in Juchitán, localism has been partly embraced as a way of building a cultural identity for political activities. In part it has also served as a way for Juchitecos to promote their own self-identity and combat hegemonic constructions of the Mexican Indian.<sup>8</sup> While localism has allowed the COCEI to survive extreme repression, it has not been able to directly extend its organization to other Zapotec areas of Oaxaca. The government's invitation to the COCEI to "concertar" or harmonize with a broad social and economic coalition in exchange for municipal resources has put pressure on the COCEI to emphasize their similarity to other democratic organizations and focus on their democratic heritage, not their unique rebellious Juchiteco nature. The question to ask here is whether or not in fact ethnicity will recede somewhat in the profile of the COCEI as it continues to negotiate with the PRI and become a part of national social welfare program.

The Mixtec in northern Mexico and in California have largely abandoned historical constructions of local ethnicity and have recreated their identity as a pan-ethnic category. The "transnationalization" of Mixtec identity matches the transnational nature of Mixteco labor relations and as a result of these, their place in the Mexican political system. This case shows quite clearly that when Mexican relations of production stretch across 3,000 miles of territory into the United States and the Mexican state is engaged in long-term economic and political negotiations (i.e. North American Free Trade Act), indigenous identity will be readjusted by its bearers to meet this new economic and political reality. The localist nature of Mixtec ethnic

identity has not been completely abandoned in this new context. Rather, the notion of community and the style of political negotiation associated with community has been transferred to an international political arena. In this way the meaning that being Mixtec from a particular town in Oaxaca had in the 1800s is clearly different from what it means now, but certain features of that local meaning, particularly the style of political negotiation and allegiance to a community are transferrable to the 1990s in California as Kearney and Nagengast document (1990). Past identities and meanings are important to consider in all of these cases in understanding current constructions of ethnic identity.

In all three cases examined, competition and conflict were key to the ways that ethnic identity was defined and used, particularly in relation to economic and political relations of power. Among the Teotitlán Zapotec, competition was most clearly seen with regard to control over profits from textiles, control over the production system, and cultural legitimacy. As early as 1938, community leaders from Teotitlán indicated an awareness of outside economic competition. Since then and perhaps before, leaders and merchants in particular have been active in promoting an indigenous identity that establishes Teotitecos as the legitimate and authentic producers of wool textiles and emphasizes an egalitarian community based on a pre-Hispanic lifestyle. This outwardly projected image of ethnicity has also served to ward off government bureaucrats curious about the development of business enterprises in the community.

For the COCEI, competition came first in terms of resource bases and land as they organized peasants to occupy land, among other things, and then later as competition for political power with Mexico's ruling party. The COCEI invoked an ethnic claim to establish their right to hold political power mostly based on popular Juchiteco ethnic identity emphasizing localism and occasionally invoking the Zapotec as representative of a glorious past. As the COCEI moves into national negotiations with the PRI, it appears to be again remodeling its ethnic image in light of calls to harmonize and blend with other Mexican political constituencies.

Pan-Mixtec ethnic identity revolves around naked relations of economic power and exploitation that appear to be important in the creation of Mixtec political and civic groups in Northern Mexico and the United States. Unable to negotiate directly with the bearers of economic power in the packing houses in Northern Mexico and the commercial agricultural farms in California, these groups have chosen to use traditional Mexican political forms to apply pressure to improve their economic situation.

All three of these cases validate the importance of ethnicity and its relationship to class and political power. Directly or indirectly, relations of production and consumption, control over land, labor, resources, and symbolic inheritance as well as ability to control and participate in political processes are tied to ethnicity. International migration, displacement, commercialization of craft goods and agriculture, national and international political policy and the reconstitution of political parties and labor forces are major factors in how ethnicity is created and recreated here. In simpler terms, you can't take the class and politics out of ethnicity or ethnicity out of class and politics (H. Campbell 1990a:10-11; Sacks 1990; Sider 1986:7; Stephen 1990).

Analyzing the reality and validity of ethnicity as a category through an anthropological lens is different, of course, than how it is experienced and created in context by indigenous peoples (Nagengast and Kearney 1990:62; Comaroff 1987). Ethnicity is not experienced as a textbook category with consistent manifestations. It is refracted through the multiple social, political, and historical relations it is embedded in. A postmodern perspective might propose

ethnicity as one of many dimensions of identity found in social actors constituted of "multiple subjectivities" in which no one aspect of identity dominates another in a hierarchy of oppressions (Laclau 1985).

This raises a basic question about how we move from the fragmented, differentiated subject that postmodernism proposes to political action. Postmodernism and political activism begin with some similar goals--redefining dominant systems of power, discourse, economy and culture and bringing out the voices of the disempowered. As George Yudice (1991:21) points out, however, the strategy of postmodernism leaves us with immobilization as a result. In postmodernism, the other, the alterity--what we have called here peasant, Indian, Mixteco, Zapotec, alien, etc.--has no existence beyond the absence of what is the dominant subject of discourse--the is not. Since there is no unified subject in post-modernism, there can be no unified other either. It disappears. Likewise if we accept the tenants of an unmodified postmodernism in looking at ethnically fragmented political subjects how can we explain mobilization such as the COCEI and Mixtec organizations in California? If the movements themselves don't deliver a reconstituted subject back into history then political activity is impossible or improbable.

The analysis of ethnic culture as the production of symbolic capital as Kearney proposes (1991)--struggles over the sign--is something found in both the COCEI and the Mixtec social movement organizations in California. It is a strategy in which influence is not just simply tied to numbers, but to the taking of political space through symbolic means. The circumstances that brought people together and allowed for the symbolic production of culture and its deployment as a strategic weapon in political struggles are tied to concrete situations of economic, racial, and political conflict, experienced by people in material and physical ways. Somehow we cannot divorce the higher levels of mobilization we find tied to instances of resource competition, labor exploitation, and political disenfranchisement from the movements and organizations they engender. Such action does not come out of any old cultural pastiche. If it did, there would be ethnically-linked movements and organizations all over southern Mexico.

#### NOTES

1. Perhaps the most recent validation of this perspective is the First Continental Meeting of Indigenous Peoples--500 years of Indian Resistance Conference which brought together 120 Indian nations in Quito Ecuador in July 1990. The Declaration of Quito opened with the words "We the Indians of the Americas have never abandoned our struggle against the oppression, the discrimination, and the exploitation that were imposed upon us by the European invasion of our lands." (Varese 1991:14).
2. Taken from a random sample survey done of 154 households in 1986.
3. Taken from a speech by Hector Sánchez cited in H. Campbell 1990b:20.
4. I would like to thank Jeffrey Rubin for this insight which came in a conversation concerning the COCEI's use of Juchitan ethnicity.
5. After a progressive PRI governor of Oaxaca, Heladio Ramírez, chose a young member of the reformist wing of the Juchitán PRI as candidate for municipal president, local PRI leaders

removed him and replaced him with their own candidate. MIPRI was formed by those who refused to support the new candidate and were aligned with Ramírez (Rubin 1990:251).

6. Personal communication, Nacho Sarmiento, July, 1988.

7. See Flores Lúa, Paré, and Sarmiento 1988 for more on the work of independent peasant organizations and unions.

8. I would like to thank Howard Campbell for this observation.

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## VII

### COMMUNAL LAND AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY IN OTAVALO, ECUADOR

Les Field

In presenting the following overview of my work, I draw attention to the issues discussed in this volume from a perspective geographically far afield from Oaxaca. My work addresses the complex relations between indigenous identity in the Otavalo region of northern Ecuador and the institution, or better said, the re-institution of communal land. The re-creation of communal land, a form of property explicitly undermined and disassembled by the Spanish conquistadors and successive republican governments of independent Ecuador, takes place under particular circumstances in Otavalo. The various contemporary political, cultural and economic processes underlying the reappearance of communal land in Otavalo and elsewhere in Ecuador are all part and parcel of a vigorous national indigenous movement and its coalescing ideology of indigenous economic development. (Indigenism in Ecuadorian nationalism is a very different phenomenon, described recently by Crain 1990).

The struggle to recreate communal land constitutes and is constituted by the ideology whose goal is reclaiming lost territory and simultaneously re-asserting indigenous identity; indigenous intellectuals have synthesized these goals in an ideology advocating a uniquely indigenous form of economic development on reclaimed indigenous communal land. In other words, it is precisely the recreated communal lands which provide both the conceptual and actual space on which the indigenous intellectuals propose to explore a new form of economic development for indigenous communities, a form of development which by its very nature will sustain indigenous ethnicity. Thus the example of Otavalo re-plays familiar themes of ethnicity, tradition, and the production of new ideological frameworks by indigenous intellectuals. In my analysis thus far, class surfaces only obliquely in the relationship between capital accumulation in the textile industry and the purchase of land. Informed by the work of authors in this volume, I intend to pursue the relationships between class, ethnicity and ideology in future work in Otavalo.

To analyze the Otavaleño struggle to recreate communal land, I have addressed complex relationships between two different axes of indigenous society and culture, in the village of San Luis de Agualongo, which lies approximately ten kilometers north of the market town of Otavalo. One axis is the agricultural knowledge system, with its attending practices, which has enabled indigenous farmers to draw a reliable sustenance from the soil for generations without the use of the inputs upon which modern, or "Western" agriculture depends so heavily. In Otavaleño villages like Agualongo, farming is the sine qua non of indigenous identity, and the elaborate system of agricultural knowledge and practices forms an integral if not seminal part of the total indigenous world-view. The other axis of the Otavaleño sociocultural system is the phenomenally successful textile industry, which since the 1920s has provided an expanding source of cash earnings for Indians who weave as well as farm. This income has become capital in the hands of the enterprising Otavaleños, capital which has both transformed the technology of weaving as well as been invested in the purchase of farmland in and around Otavaleño villages. Through the success of their textile industry, Otavaleños have been integrated as viable players into the capitalist world economy, perhaps more thoroughly than any other

indigenous group in South America.

To describe these two axes, I will first provide an historical description of the Otavalo region, with particular attention to communal land and the relationship between agriculture and the textile industry. Then I will recount the chain of events surrounding agricultural experiments with new technologies in Agualongo that I participated in as a post-doctoral fellow affiliated with CIAT (Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical), a large Green Revolution research institution based in Colombia. I entered Agualongo in 1989 with the intention of acting as both a "practical anthropologist" and a "critical anthropologist," by making agricultural technologies available to the farmers and their leadership to experiment with as they saw fit - - needless to say such an opportunity seldom occurs in indigenous Latin America, and probably never on terms of their own choosing. Recreated communal land in Agualongo, purchased with capital accumulated from the sale of textiles, provided the site for agricultural experiments that formed part of the Indians' strategy for economic development in their community, a strategy which is of great significance for the national indigenous movement.

I found that new agricultural technology, while acting as a potent tool for legitimating the indigenous struggle to regain land, and demonstrating the desire of indigenous people to utilize communal land for development, may come into full contradiction with the indigenous agricultural system. This proposition is made as a trusted collaborator who knowingly made resources available to these communities to aid their struggles for ethnic and territorial defense. In this sense, I present here a collaborative work which aims to draw out the implications of what occurred and propose analysis meaningful to the Otavaleño people. Throughout this paper, I employ important information and commentary provided by two key individuals from Agualongo: Juan Díaz Picuasi and Marcelo de la Torre (President of ATASLA, the activist village organization) with whom I worked extensively and who should be considered intellectuals within their own community and co-authors of the analysis presented here.

Notwithstanding the "progressive" nature of the Otavaleño textile industry, as far as the Ecuadorian government, the estate-owning oligarchs (hacendados), and CIAT's own agronomists are concerned, Otavaleño agriculture is traditional, i.e. subsistence oriented, and technologically backward. The concept of "tradition" is an important one in addressing communal land-owning institutions and agricultural knowledge systems among indigenous peoples of the Americas. On the one hand, the tendency to view communal land, for example, as an age-old, timeless and unchanging tradition is a romance embodying the persistent desire in the West to idealize non-capitalist property-owning institutions that supposedly provided the foundation for egalitarian, environmentally benign societies. In recent literature, on the other hand the concept of tradition as timeless and unchanging has been challenged from many quarters, not least of which by those peoples who have been labelled "traditional" by Western scholars, and who have suffered the political and economic consequences of such a characterization (cf. Deloria 1973 for an excellent parody of anthropologists from a Native North American; also Said 1978, Asad 1973, Barrios de Chungara 1978, and Menchú 1984 offer a variety of views on this topic). Eric Hobsbawm (1983) distinguishes "tradition" from "custom." The latter he assigns to "traditional societies", writing that "[custom] does not preclude innovation and change... custom cannot afford to be invariant, because even in 'traditional' societies life is not so." (Hobsbawm 1983, p.2) Eugenia Shanklin writes that "(t)radition cannot simply be understood as a collection of old customs," but is rather "an active force used in situations in which ethnic identity must be stressed in the

face of outside threats." (Shanklin 1981, cited in Rappaport 1982: p. 8) James Clifford has asked if "any part of tradition 'lost'... can be remembered, even generations later, caught up in a present dynamism and made to symbolize a possible future" (Clifford 1988, p. 342) I will use the word tradition, like the authors of this volume, to signify a dynamic force underlying particular groups' identities, which is composed of concepts and practices rooted in the past but strategically framed by the requirements of ethnic survival and the opportunities and dangers presented by modern technologies.

### **Historical Renderings**

The Otavaleño Indians are a Quichua-speaking people who inhabit a ring of small villages encircling the thriving market town of Otavalo, located in the northern Ecuadorian highlands province of Imbabura. At least seventy-five percent of Imbabura's people are indigenous Quichua-speakers ("runa"), and the Otavaleños compose the largest single group among this majority. The village of San Luis de Agualongo, numbers some 3,500 Otavaleños who cultivate small plots on the slopes of the volcano Imbabura where their village is located. At some 2,600 meters above sea level, the village covers slight to moderate grades of steepness as it ascends the slopes. Both the houses and the fields lie within the village center. Looking at farmland in Agualongo, one is struck by the myriad of different crops grown in relatively small spaces. Looking at Agualongo's climbing beans, the crop that I worked with here, one is amazed that Otavaleños plant, harvest and eat extraordinarily beautiful mixtures of different colored, sized and shaped bean varieties. The presence of such varietal diversity, extensive crop association, and other sustainable practices justified my presence in Agualongo, in the eyes of the CIAT administration, which like much of the agronomic community is concerned to study sustainable agricultural systems.

The ethnic group from whom the modern Otavaleños descend, called the Cara or Caranqui, moved into northern Ecuador at least a thousand years ago. (Meisch 1987) When the Cara arrived, they already practiced an agriculture centered around the cultivation of corn, had developed advanced textile production technologies, and were accustomed to living in densely populated, socially stratified regions, that did not resemble the towns and cities of either the colonial or modern eras. The farmers, who composed the majority of these regions, were required to labor collectively on the cacique's fields under his authority, operating in the same fashion as mingas, the traditional Peruvian collective labor group. Following the Inca conquest of the Otavalo region and since that time, labor collectives in Andean Ecuador have been referred to by the Inca term, the minga. The center of Sarance appears to have consisted of a large, communally owned and cultivated field, upon which the extended household of the cacique lived in relatively sumptuous conditions. Archaeological evidence indicates that farmers' homes and fields, also situated on communal land to which the caciques distributed usufruct rights, radiated outward from the central areas where the cacique's household and the priests lived.

The Spanish conquest of 1534 invoked an era of far-reaching domination and the complete transformation of land tenure. The Sarance region became a single, enormous land-grant commanded by an infamously violent conquistador, Rodrigo de Salazar, who controlled the indigenous population through the colonial labor-draft system, or *encomienda*, and forcibly

resettled the Indians in colonial villages and towns. Salazar exploited Indian labor and land to grow food for colonial Quito, and under his rule the old Cara nobility was severed from the social structure by the abolition of the interlocking systems of communal land tenure and collective labor. Without communal lands, without the leadership provided by the nobility, the cabildos, indigenous municipal councils created by the Spanish crown in new villages like Agualongo, had little power and the collective labor institutions dwindled. (Salomon 1986, Díaz 1990)

After two generations, the Salazar encomienda terminated and the region became a "crown tributary area" or royal encomienda, due to the colonial bureaucracy's realization of the tremendous potential of the local textile industry. Enormous, primitive factories were built in the new colonial town of Otavalo which mercilessly exploited the labor of Indian men, women and children, providing clothing for the huge labor forces toiling in the mines of Peru and Bolivia. This system was, at times, mitigated by decrees of the Spanish crown, which provided that small plots and houses be given to the Otavaleños. These plots were diminished and often seized outright during the 1600s, when the crown abolished the encomienda system and colonial elites responded by carving out vast haciendas, at the expense of indigenous communities. The Otavaleños continued to work in the factories under conditions of forced labor, but were now also obliged to cultivate the lands of the hacienda-owner, under a new system of debt-peonage called *huasipungo*.

The haciendas expanded their holdings for the next two centuries, and the Otavaleños responded by clearing land higher and higher up the slopes of the volcanoes ringing their region. In Agualongo, the Indians climbed the fertile slopes of the Imbabura volcano. On these tiny subsistence plots, owned by individual families and split into ever smaller parcels with the passing of each generation, the Otavaleños maintained a complex agricultural system. This system, undoubtedly derived from longstanding agricultural knowledge and practices from the Cara civilization, enabled the Otavaleños to obtain from the land a sustainable yield of a great variety of crops for many generations. (Given conditions of much less soil fertility, indigenous adaptation to colonialism differed markedly, as Weismantel (1988) has described). Individual Otavaleño families somehow managed to farm their own plots and produce textiles in their homes for independent sale at the same time they endured the textile factories and the haciendas.

Independence did not greatly affect the land situation in Otavalo. Under free-trade policies instituted by the Liberal government, an influx of machine-made cloth from England flooded Ecuador in the 1830s, which destroyed the export potential of Otavaleño textiles, and weakened the internal market. By the end of the 19th century, however, the Otavaleños found that they could imitate the styles of the foreign imports and produce them cheaply for Quito and other urban areas because the combined cost of their primitive technology and underpaid labor competed favorably with the costs of industrial production in Europe. Starting in this century, the weavers began investing their modest profits in new, inexpensive, synthetic dyes, as well as any machinery they could afford. Most crucially, as Salomon (1981) has shown, successful weavers began a long-term policy of investing profits obtained from selling textiles in the purchase of farmland in their villages. This trend, singular among indigenous Ecuadorians, has accelerated in the last twenty-five years under conditions of both increasing parcelization of already small plots, and vastly improved revenue from the sale of textiles to foreign tourists in the expanded market in the town of Otavalo. The weavers of Agualongo participated in the

expansion of production and sales in their industry, and in the drive to regain lost lands.

The Agrarian Reform Law of 1964, enacted by the military government of that time, gave the Otavaleños hope that more land would be made available. The law abolished the huasipungo system and mandated the division of the haciendas into five hectare plots for distribution among the former huasipungeros (peons). The first reform mostly affected textile production by allowing the Otavaleños to devote much more time to weaving. The second reform was not carried out in a systematic or complete fashion. In Agualongo, only two haciendas were broken up and the former huasipungeros received lots of only 2.5 hectares or less. Two large haciendas remained in the village, even as textile revenues generated in the weekly market in Otavalo soared, and Agualongo's merchants travelled to sell their wares in Quito, Colombia, and even the United States. In the early 1980s, influential persons in Agualongo organized ATASLA (Association of Agricultural Laborers of San Luis de Agualongo), a group collectively dedicated to buying up hacienda lands, converting them into common property and cultivating them with mingas. The lifeless cabildo gave its blessing to the new group, which allied itself to local, provincial, regional, and national indigenous federations.

Thus nearly five hundred years after the Spanish conquest, after a lengthy process that nearly destroyed collective labor and transformed communally owned land into individualized property, the Otavaleños of Agualongo are struggling to re-establish communal land and the minga. The provincial indigenous federation, INRUJTA-FICI (Imbabura Runacunapac Jatun Tantanacui-Federation of Indigenous Peasants of Imbabura) has called for a program of recuperating land in a "communal form, subject to community administration" (CONAIE 1989, p.140) and opposes government sponsored cooperatives which "do not resemble our communal traditions," (Ibid) all as part of defending indigenous identity. Communal land in Agualongo and elsewhere in Andean Ecuador, embodies "tradition" in the most dynamic, strategic sense of this word.

By 1990, two pieces of communal land had been created in the village of Agualongo. Three large haciendas remain in the village, owned by the Pinsaqui family, the Imbaquingo family, and by Captain Martínez of the Ecuadorian Customs. One communal plot, three hectares of fertile, semi-level farm-land, was donated by the Imbaquingos to the cabildo in 1988, under extreme pressure from ATASLA. ATASLA demanded that the Imbaquingos sell their entire 40 hectare hacienda, to be converted into communal property. The family instead simply gave three hectares, hoping to thereby evade the more radical demands. In 1989, with undiminished pressure to the cabildo, the family offered 16 hectares for sale at approximately US\$2000 per hectare. This outrageous sum prompted ATASLA's leadership, particularly de la Torre, to propose a new ideologically charged term: "social price", i.e. a price, as opposed to "market price," which is figured by assessing what an indigenous community is capable of paying for any given parcel of land. Social price incorporates the acknowledgement that indigenous communities have first claim to land within their communities. The conflict embodied by the difference between social and market prices came to a head in 1990, when Agualongo participated in the nationwide indigenous uprising of 27 May - 8 June. (Field 1990) The Imbaquingo hacienda dispute has still not been settled, and ATASLA's stated intention to create a 40 hectare communal plot worked by mingas on the Imbaquingo land is itself contentious.

The three hectare plot of communal land has been mostly neglected since 1988. School children have used about a third of it for school-sponsored farm projects. When the agricultural

experiments were first proposed, ATASLA intended to use about half of the plot for this purpose, and Marcelo de la Torre planned to organize a weekly minga to plant, supervise and harvest the experiment. But during a very well attended cabildo meeting in September 1990, the community rejected this idea. De la Torre admitted that while the idea of a minga sounded attractive to people in Agualongo, they simply had no experience with the institution and did not, in any event, want to "risk their time or this land for something unknown." (De la Torre 1990)

The experiments were actually carried out on the other piece of communal land, which belongs to ATASLA in the name of the community. A large (25 ha.) area was purchased from Captain Martínez during the mid-1980s, with funds accumulated from the sale of textiles and amassed through activities organized by ATASLA. Most of it was parcelized, except for ATASLA's one hectare, which it co-owns with the cabildo, but which it seemingly can dispose of with more liberty than the other communal plot. To plant, monitor, and harvest the experiments, ATASLA simply marshalled a committee of five members and charged them with this responsibility. From what I saw, ATASLA, a "modern" organization as opposed to the "traditional" cabildo, can apparently organize collective labor through the institution of membership, whereas the cabildo has yet to discover the mechanism for reviving the minga. ATASLA therefore seems more likely to succeed in creating a social framework for implanting communal land within the community than the cabildo. Participating in the agricultural experiments composed one strategy ATASLA decided to favor as part of creating social frameworks for recreated communal land.

### **Agricultural Experimentation and "Traditional" Agriculture**

I first entered the village of Agualongo in September 1989 as a friend of Juan Díaz. After discussing the idea with Díaz, I planned to offer Agualongo's farmers the opportunity to experiment with both CIAT bean varieties and seed technologies. Marcelo de la Torre was immediately interested on behalf of ATASLA, and proposed to plant a large experimental plot on communal land in October. The idea of improving the supply of high-quality bean seed and even selling bean as seed in the Otavalo market appealed to ATASLA members, who are ever mindful of new commercial possibilities for their artisanal products, and were intrigued by the idea of embarking on a commercial agricultural venture. ATASLA, according to de la Torre, was attracted to the possibilities of CIAT-sponsored experiments and their "advanced" technologies. By participating, he saw a way of showing concretely that the Otavaleños are not backward or resistant to innovation in their farming techniques, and that moreover, Otavaleño farmers might be interested in commercialized farming on communal land, challenging conventional bureaucratic wisdom that indigenous agriculture is necessarily subsistence oriented. Like the leadership of the national indigenous confederation, CONAIE, and its allied regional and provincial federations, ATASLA leaders hope to combine modern technologies with indigenous social organization, such as communal land and collective labor. The CIAT experiments, in de la Torre's view, promised to put Agualongo "on the map" with respect to technological innovation as well as ATASLA's own communal land agenda.

Agualongo's farmers grow diverse mixtures of climbing beans (called *misturiado*), comprised of up to twenty-five different visually identifiable varieties, distinguished by shape, size and color. According to the farmers, some of the varieties have been grown for generations, while

others have been introduced more recently. One is impressed by the farmers' openness to new varieties, and that this attitude seems intrinsic to their "traditional" agricultural system. Indian farmers plant, harvest and also eat climbing beans as mixtures, unlike the mestizos who eat beans as single varieties. Growing mixtures, it is clear, ensures that insects will not wipe out an entire bean crop, but that at least a few varieties will survive. Pesticides are not used. Climbing beans are always grown in association with other crops. Typically, bean plants climb on corn plants, which are also planted in mixtures of varieties. Between each pair of bean and corn plants, potatoes, fava beans, and peas can usually be found, and small thickets of tall, purple quinoa, the high protein native grain, and Andean root crops such as ullucos, ocas, and mashua thrive without apparent symmetry between and among the disorderly "rows." All of these crops are planted according to a set and well-understood timing schedule, that takes advantage of variant growth cycles, weather, and other indicators. By the middle of the growing season, squash plants have extended stems and leaves everywhere, so that little if any soil lies exposed. The farmers utilize an elaborate system of composting vegetable matter and animal dung to fertilize their fields on a continuous basis. The system mandates what kinds of compost can be used for what crop; the reasoning behind these rules was only alluded to in my presence. In composting, avoiding some materials and using others in different contexts relates to the necessity to avoid "offending the Pachamama", the complex space-time-Earth entity conceptualized in indigenous Andean societies from Ecuador to Bolivia. (cf Nash 1979 for a case-study of the complexities of the Pachamama in a very different context; Harrison (1989) has assessed the whole project of translating and understanding complex concepts from Quichua like the Pachamama).

By August of 1990, the Ecuadorian National Agricultural Research Institute (INIAP) and CIAT had agreed to carry out a large experiment in Agualongo, and two INIAP agronomists gave a presentation to that effect to a meeting of the *cabildo*, sponsored by ATASLA. The agronomists were obliged to listen to numerous and lengthy stories concerning the neglect and enforced backwardness indigenous people have had to endure under a succession of governments and their respective agricultural bureaucracies. Openly perplexed by the proposed communal nature of the planting and of the land where the planting was to take place, the agronomists agreed to go along with these provisions. But they insisted that the farmers both severely curtail the association of other crops with the experimental beans, as well as use chemical pesticides and fertilizers on the plants. INIAP promised to provide these materials.

The experimental planting occurred in early October. Predictably, it was a disaster. Without the ground cover provided by other crop plants, especially squash, the soil dried out and resembled cracked concrete. Insects attacked the rows of single variety beans, and only three varieties appeared to resist the onslaught. INIAP did not deliver the promised chemicals. Fortunately, the farmers had siphoned off part of the experimental seeds to plant in their own fields, in association with other crops and mixed with other beans. The agronomists had warned that mixing the experimental varieties together and with other beans would result in a loss of the particular characteristics bred into each variety in CIAT's laboratories. Juan Díaz told me that he thought that a new variety was only useful if it could adapt to local farm conditions. For Díaz and other farmers in Agualongo, adaptation necessarily encompassed the entire indigenous agricultural system, as well as the ideologically defined criteria of land and identity.

Speaking with Díaz and de la Torre in November, 1990, I listened to their reflections upon

the agricultural experiments and the struggle for land. They acknowledged that growing single bean varieties for commercial seed could negatively impact the indigenous agricultural system. While indigenous farmers evaluate a field of associated crops for its overall productivity, Western-trained agronomists who focused only on beans saw low yields that could be improved by switching to mono-crop cultivation. Losing the protection offered against pests by varietal diversity probably meant dependence on chemicals. Our discussions also offered the possibility of producing improved bean mixtures, as food or seed, for the sizeable, growing, but still limited indigenous farmers' market. Improved CIAT seed technologies could conceivably be used for bean mixtures. Would bean productivity be sufficient, however, for marketing mixtures if farmers continued their complex crop associations? Without crop association, soil erosion would increase, and the use of chemical fertilizers would probably substitute for the loss of nutrient replenishment crop association provides. By the same token, we realized that the legitimacy ATASLA was seeking by experimenting with and possibly adopting CIAT varieties and technologies was unlikely to impress INIAP and the Ecuadorian government unless the indigenous farmers began growing for the urban market, where people eat beans as single varieties. The legitimacy issue is essential to the overall goals of the indigenous struggle to re-create communal land, because the Ecuadorian government is still convinced that any lands returned to indigenous communities necessarily revert to subsistence production; this widespread belief among bureaucrats justifies their resistance to the indigenous struggle to regain land. De la Torre admitted that individual Indian farmers have almost always tended to cultivate subsistence crops on lands they have recently obtained. Taking the larger political and economic goals of the indigenous movement into account, the distinct possibility thus emerges that reinvented communal lands may become the nuclei for forms of commercial agriculture that will require abandoning at least some of the indigenous agricultural practices that have sustained indigenous people for so long.

### **Conclusion**

There is a pressing need for anthropologists to evaluate such contradictory scenarios as the one described above carefully and with regard for the process of building contemporary indigenous movement in Ecuador and elsewhere, i.e. as a "practical anthropologist." Following Campbell (this volume), recounting the historical processes of indigenous intellectual production and political struggle means balancing the academic predilection for asserting our own analytic competence with critical assessment as part of a discourse that includes both anthropologists and indigenous intellectuals. For example, we should emphasize that the form of sustainable agriculture practiced by the Otavaleños of Agualongo and other villages for generations corresponds to a political, economic and cultural disempowerment that indigenous peoples resisted partly through the application of their knowledge about farming on the land. This kind of sustainable agriculture may well dwindle as indigenous peoples struggle to regain lost land, re-create the communal property form and develop the economic potential of their communities. Mourning the passing of a sustainable agriculture with roots in the profound inequality that indigenous Ecuadorians have endured, a sentiment which is fashionable in certain anthropological and environmentalist circles, seems inappropriate to me.

The key perspective concerning indigenous ethnicity and tradition, as I read it, must be

recognized as the perspective of those who are living and actively transforming indigenous ethnicity and tradition. Is this not a commonplace of interpretive anthropology? In a sense perhaps, but, as the authors of this volume so well demonstrate, the political and intellectual conditions for a discourse about indigenous ethnicity have been turned upside down by the appearance of activist indigenous intellectuals. The analytic parameters and concerns of indigenous intellectuals, in concert with anthropologists like the authors of this volume, will remake interpretive anthropology into a knowledge-producing system unlike any that has heretofore appeared in anthropology, because it will be based upon power relations which are still precariously coming into existence.

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