Chapter 2

Visions of Change in the Study of Latin American Indígenas

A brief history of ideas.

Although this dissertation is concerned with indigenous identity and change, with what it means to be indigenous, my own interventions into the field are shaped by what has come before. Just as the Tacana of Bolivia have a history that has shaped their current life-ways and beliefs, so too does the discipline of anthropology. Therefore, before turning to the enumeration and interpretation of my field data, it is instructive to look deeper at the history of anthropology to understand the key questions, assumptions, and debates that have driven studies of indigenous peoples, and more particularly, Latin American indigenous peoples.

There are numerous ways to locate the study of Latin American indigenous peoples in the rise of anthropology. Theoretical orientation, historical situation, political and personal motivations, and internal disciplinary debates all play a part in influencing research questions, sites, and findings. Area studies themselves can be linked to state interests, changes in anthropological reactions to political processes (Nader 1997a); the idea of a “Latin America” is itself the result of long-term and deeply historical processes. Ideas of change have informed anthropological treatments of indigenous populations in Latin America. While my interest is primarily in anthropological accounts, work by others, particularly historians, enters at several strategic points. Highlighting key theoretical and political orientations as they arise in various places, times, and circumstances, I address the changing foci of these
studies. Thus, I situate my own study of indigenous Tacana living in northern Bolivia firmly within academic conversations that have contributed to its form.

My theoretical frame is one in which identities, including Tacananess, are intrinsically dynamic and responsive to power. Identities and life-ways change as circumstances change. Anthropologists have long been attentive to processes of cultural change and have refined understandings of them as anthropological knowledge accumulated. In spite of this, ideas of cultures as static have often been the inadvertent consequence of the discipline’s emphasis on documenting cultural difference. It is to the ways in which differences have been theorized and written about, particularly in reference to Latin American indigenous peoples, to which I now turn.

**Academic questions.**

Classification was an important preoccupation of early scholars working in Latin America, with practical consequences. Work in the late forties and early fifties by US anthropologists in Latin America included schemes of classification of culture by Alfred Kroeber’s culture-area approach (e.g. Murdock 1985) or evolutionary types (e.g. Steward 1985). The ambitious collection found in the *Handbook of South American Indians*, edited by Julian Steward (1945-1959) reflected this preoccupation. Classificatory schemes, however, suffered from oversimplification, collapsing data from distinct time periods into an imagined ethnographic present (Lyon 1985: 3, 21), as well as a lack of attention to the extreme diversity of native cultures, a critique which was offered as early as 1953 (Rowe 1985). Creating a theory of why cultural complexity developed was the goal of some work (e.g. Carneiro 1985[1961]), uniting archaeological and ethnological endeavors. Others tried to explain why some
communities were more “progressive” than others, sometimes discarding the question as impossible to answer as a result of their research (e.g. Adams 1959).

In line with Steward’s “cultural ecology” approach, which looked at cultures as harmoniously adapted to their environments, a portion of work was concerned with how indigenous peoples exploited their environment, with emphasis on products, technologies, and methods. Some general, continent-wide treatment was attempted (Schmidt 1985[1951]), but controlled comparison within more homogeneous ecological areas (Meggers 1971) or case-studies based on ethnographic work or the reports of informants were more common (e.g. Carneiro 1985[1961], Carneiro 1985[1970], Denevan 1985[1971], Nimeundajú 1985[1946]).

Claude Levi-Strauss' influence was especially strong in South American ethnography, with an extensive literature in the structuralist tradition, emphasizing the importance of binary oppositions underlying cultural phenomena. In some cases, symbolic systems were joined with materialist concerns, making it hard to distinguish who was more influential in the work at hand, Levi-Strauss or Steward. The diversity of kinship systems has been a concern from early on, moving, in the 1960s, from models based on descent to models privileging marriage as exchange between groups (Hill 1996) and reflecting Levi-Strauss’s impact on Latin American ethnology.

Marriage practices were often a special focus of Amazonian ethnography, which is all well and good, except that what results from such descriptions is a kind of stasis. David Maybury-Lewis’s Harvard-Central Brazil Research Project examined Gê social organization, the importance of which revolved around the “uxorilocal process” whereby men were
systematically separated from their birth families and integrated into the kin and residence group of the wife (Hill 1996). Another Amazonian marriage practice which drew the attention of ethnographers was the Eastern Tukanoan custom of women marrying into another tribe and language group to avoid incest (see, for example, Goldman 1963; Hugh-Jones 1979; Hugh-Jones 1979; Chernela 1993; Sorensen 1985[1967]). The diversity of marriage practices in Amazonia is highlighted in a book that grew out of a 1973 AAA symposium (Kensinger 1984).

Related to close examination of marriage practices were gender relations, including extramarital sexual practices (Crocker 1985[1964]) as well as social controls enforcing cultural ideals of womanhood and manhood (Murphy 1985[1961], Murphy 1985[1962]. Redressing gender issues within the discipline of anthropology, *Women of the Forest* was a critical intervention into male-biased ethnography as well as an account of the separate world which women inhabited among the Mundurucú (Murphy and Murphy 1985[1974].

**The Indian is dead. Long live the Indian.**

In general, ethnographic studies of indigenous peoples in Latin America conducted before the 1970s were seen by the authors as capturing for posterity the remnants of “traditional” cultures that were rapidly being acculturated (e.g. Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971), a motivating force that continues in modified form through the present, although notions of “tradition” have been heavily critiqued. Some early accounts were more interested in using indigenous peoples as negative cases with which to test assumptions of Western thought (e.g. Holmberg 1969), but even those were self-consciously battling the rapid disappearance, physically and culturally, of these “different” peoples. “Salvage ethnography” was the order of the day, and
the disappearance of diversity was taken as inevitable as “civilization” rapidly assimilated “Stone Age” and “primitive” cultures. Variants of this salvage mentality appeared. “Salvage ecology,” for example, would document indigenous knowledge about living in harmony with local environments (Denevan 1985). Studies were therefore oriented towards documenting cultures and remnants of cultures, with cultures understood as systems of meanings and practices that were integrated and bounded, as what Eric Wolf has called, critically, “billiard balls” (1982). Most attention was devoted to patterns, structure, and continuity, as opposed to individual intention, agency, and change.

Allan Holmberg (1969), for example, conducted his fieldwork for *Nomads of the Long Bow* in eastern Bolivia among the Siriono in the early 1940s. With this "Paleolithic people," Holmberg attempted to debunk psychoanalytic theory that claimed that the sex drive was the dominant drive of humankind. He provided a classic anthropological "negative case." According to Holmberg, not only was the sex drive much less important among the Siriono, but much more behavior was driven by hunger than sex. Holmberg’s book was extremely descriptive, showing the diversity of human cultures. However, in spite of his attention to colonial encroachment, he managed to portray the Siriono as a “Stone-Age” people who had managed to (barely) survive into the present. Although he mentions that the Siriono were relegated to marginal land, discussed the rubber boom in the text as well as the footnotes, and talked about exploitation of Indians by whites, his knowledge of the impact of colonialism never made it into his analysis or informed the theory underlying his take on Siriono culture, a weakness typical of early anthropological accounts. In the end, Holmberg captured the details of surviving “contemporary ancestors” of modern civilized people, relegating yet another indigenous group to inferior status in an implicit social hierarchy.
Acculturation, modernization, and development.

In addition to salvage ethnography, which documents difference before it is lost, scholars have focused on documenting and theorizing the change process itself. Key debates in this area grew up, in part, as a result of different theorists differently locating the causes of change and the agents of change. In work focusing on acculturation, modernization, and development, natives were rarely seen as having a say in their future, except in the possibility of slowing down its arrival; the inevitability of homogenization and loss of cultural difference as groups became “Westernized” were assumed. Early scholars concerned with studies of these processes considered these changes “natural” processes of evolution, or at least sadly unavoidable. Classification was a key element to analyzing change, because one must know what something is before one can analyze what it is becoming. Thus, typology played an important role in this type of work.

It is instructive to examine in closer detail one of these typologies and its claims of similarity and difference between “Indians” and other "backward folk.” One of the earliest ethnographers working in Mexico, Robert Redfield, contrasted “folk peoples” and “primitive peoples” with “modern” people. To Redfield, folk and primitive people could be distinguished from modern people as non-literate, country people possessing a “habitat” and homogeneous “attitudes and interests” who were “carriers of a culture” which is “local” (1930: 2). Redfield further distinguished between “truly primitive” tribes and peasant peoples. Peasant peoples are those who have “long reached an adjustment with Western civilization,” and who are integrated into the “modern social and economic order.” For Redfield, who worked in such communities in Mexico in the 1920s and later, acculturation was over. The problem of the day was, rather, the change from rural to urban. He writes,
The Mexican folk are not necessarily Indian. The folk culture is a fusion of Indian and Spanish elements. The acculturation which gave rise to this mixed culture took place three hundred years ago, largely within the first few generations after the Conquest. The analysis of the Mexican folk culture into Spanish and Indian elements is one problem—a historical problem. The description of changes occurring in that folk culture due to the spread of city ways is another problem—study of a contemporary change. (Redfield 1930: 13)

Thus, to Redfield, the question of what was “Indian” was a question about the past while the question about contemporary change (in the 1920s and 30s) was a question of urbanization. Redfield was interested in both and portrayed the Tepoztecans as a mix of Indian and Spanish elements. Neither “aboriginal” nor Spanish, Tepoztecans were “Mexican”—read mestizo (see, for example, Redfield 1930: 30).

Redfield explained reform programs as conflicts between the folk who live “in the same single mental world of the folk culture” and citified “intelligentsia” who are bicultural and therefore unhappy (1930: 209). The simultaneous idealization and depreciation of home communities by the intelligentsia resulted in reform programs aimed at sophisticating home communities. Attempts by members of the intelligentsia to revitalize and, importantly, purify the native Nahuatl was an example of how these two seemingly contradictory ways of thinking about the folk (idealizing and degrading) play out in practice (1930: 212). According to Redfield, “The culture of Tepoztlán appears to represent a type intermediate between the primitive tribe and the modern city” (1930: 217). To him, the difference between “tribes” and Tepoztlán is that the latter is integrated into the world and the former isolated from it (1930: 218).
Underlying this classificatory system of tribal – folk – urbanite are assumptions that reoccur often in later typologies and ethnographic work. Rodolfo Stavenhagen critiques them effectively in “Seven Fallacies about Latin America” (Stavenhagen 1974[1968]). Redfield’s folk-urban continuum is an example of the “dual-society” fallacy. According to Stavenhagen, “feudalism” / ”capitalism” is a sophisticated application of an “archaic” / ”modern” (or folk / urban) dichotomy. He criticizes this model for its assumption that the “feudal” or “archaic” or “folk” is in the way of progress and development and must therefore be eliminated, a belief that is just as salient when applied to those that identify as indigenous and as well as “folk” or “peasant.” This fallacy is exemplified by Redfield but is common in the work of other scholars, including contemporary “development” theory, and has been critiqued elsewhere (e.g. Escobar 1995). What is ignored when this fallacy is accepted, as Stavenhagen and others point out, is that both types are within the same society (Stavenhagen 1974[1968]) or world system (Wolf 1982) and that the two developed together, symbiotically. A cheap labor pool (supplied through migration) and raw materials are top of the list of what the “backward” areas provide. Stavenhagen goes further:

In Middle America, Indian communities that are now closed, isolated, and self-sufficient were not always like that. On the one hand, the colonists displaced the Indian populations who were removed into inhospitable and isolated zones, in which their living standards were reduced to a miserable subsistence level….

(Stavenhagen 1974[1968]: 25)

This claim turns evolutionary tendencies on their heads; “the West” brought “backwardness,” not just “progress.”
The importance of history, underscored in the ironic title of Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People without History* (1982) was a radical contextualization of community studies, whether they were concerned with “peasants” or “indigenous peoples.” These critiques apply to various typologies, including that of Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris which appears in the same volume as Stavenhagen’s article and distinguishes between Tribal Indian, Modern Indian, Peasant (also called mestizo, cholo, ladino, caboclo, etc.), Engenho Plantation, Ursina Plantation, Town, Metropolitan Upper Class, Metropolitan Middle Class, and Urban Proletariat (Wagley and Harris 1974). Useful analytic distinctions, perhaps, but even the order in which they are introduced could be read as evolutionary.

In addition to typologies of people, early studies attempted to classify traits as pre-colonial and therefore authentically "Indian” or alternatively introduced by Europeans (e.g. Parsons 1936, Redfield 1930). Redfield, for example, devoted a book chapter to sorting out pre-Columbian, indigenous traits from those of “European transport,” and from the vast majority which were “fused” with both types of elements (Redfield 1930: 31-53). Conscious of diversity within the town of Tepoztlán, Redfield saw the semi-autonomy of barrios (each with its own culture and personality – two terms that he equated) as a continuation of the organization of the pre-Columbian pueblo (Redfield 1930: 82).

A critical intervention into such concerns occurred in 1975 when Judith Friedlander’s *Being Indian in Hueyapan: A Study of Forced Identity in Contemporary Mexico* was published. In this book, Friedlander suggests “so-called Indian identity” is not about continuity with an essentialized past; rather, “Indianness” reflects the low socioeconomic status of Hueyapeños. “Indian” is a relational, not present-or-absent, characteristic. Friedlander explains,
To be Indian in Hueyapan is to have a primarily negative identity. Indian-ness is more a measure of what the villagers are not or do not have vis-à-vis the hispanic elite than it is of what they are or have. To complicate matters, the standard by which the Hueyapeños are evaluated is always changing...As the elite redefines its own identity, it demotes characteristics previously associated with its prestigious high status to the low level of nonculture or Indian-ness. Consequently, despite the fact that the 'content' of Hueyapan culture is always changing, the 'structural' relationship of Indian to Hispanic remains the same. The villagers are still Indians by virtue of the fact that they continue to lack what the elite continues to acquire. (Friedlander 1975: 71)

Thus, to Friedlander, attempts to document continuity with the past were futile as were discussions of Indians on their own terms.

Kay Warren, in line with Friedlander's argument, also locates action on the part of colonialists and reaction on the part of Indians, depicting Indian identity in Guatemala as a response to colonialism (Warren 1978). She writes,

Indian identity is not a set of beliefs, social forms, and technoeconomic adaptations that are autochthonous and, thus, prehispanic. Rather, Indian identity is a response to the colonial society that introduced Catholicism, resettled and reorganized Indian communities, and used Indians as a source of labor for plantation agriculture. Consequently, this analysis will shed very little light on ancient Maya society, although it examines the postconquest descendents of a Mayan group. Instead, I will stress the colonial aspect of Indian identity by concentrating on the ways in which
Indians have created a social philosophy to make sense of subordination to non-Indians.

Warren goes on to read relations of domination in the symbolism of the mythology of Trixanos (the Indians with whom she lives). For both of these anthropologists, indigenous identity is a reactive response to domination.

Many critiques of early work argue against the essentialization of “Indianness” in models of culture change. Key controversies include: (1) the extent and nature of integration of indigenous peoples into the “modern world” or capitalist world-system and (2) the role of identity in negotiating this integration. Regardless, culture loss is assumed. Similarly, contemporary critics of development argue that bringing indigenous peoples further into the capitalist world-system as wage laborers or capitalists results in culture loss – acculturation. This top-down model of power is contested by those who argue that change in such projects is a two-way street – transculturation (see, for example, Stronza 1999). “Transculturation,” a term coined by Fernando Ortiz ([1947]1995), refers to a two-directional process where not only the colonized, but also colonizers are changed by encountering each other. Thus, the question becomes one of mutual culture change, not only imposed culture loss. This position is useful, but one must be careful not to lose sight of the existence of domination when employing it.

One might think about anthropological work on indigenous peoples in Latin America as beginning to address history, power, and context with political economic perspectives in the 1960s; this led to an effort to factor back in agency and power on the part of indigenous peoples in the 1970s and 80s, with emphasis on the heterogeneity and struggle within
groups. Most recently, possibly due to the intensification of transnational flows and processes, concentrated attention attends to the process of creating, erasing, and invoking boundaries, such as the creation of the “myth of mestizaje,” which denied the continued existence of indigenous peoples (e.g. Bonfil Batalla 1996, Hale 1996, Gould 1998, Nelson 1999). Alternatively or additionally, one might consider changing work on and with indigenous peoples as the result of a “loss of innocence” and politicization of scholarly work during times of social unrest at home and abroad, as both critics within the discipline and the “natives” themselves questioned the intentions and potential uses of ethnographic work. Arguably, the end of the “age of innocence” of anthropology in the United States occurred during the social unrest of the 60s and early 70s, when the activities of social cultural anthropologists as such were politicized, resulting in increasing difficulty in claiming “disinterested science” as motivation for fieldwork. The next sections take a closer look at these trends in the anthropological study of they dynamics of culture change and its relation to domination in Latin America.

**Indigenism and the role of the state.**

Domination, in this case arising from ideologically-driven practices, is addressed in monographs analyzing the role of the state in pushing projects of acculturation, modernization, and development, linking these to nation-building projects and “indigenism” (e.g. Urban and Sherzer 1991, Ramos 1998). In his contribution to Urban and Sherzer’s volume, Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima expanded Margarita Nolasco Armas’ 1981 definition of “indigenism” from a historical category referring specifically to Mexico to an analytic category that can be applied cross-culturally (Souza Lima 1991). He defines indigenism as “…a set of ideas (and ideals) concerning the incorporation of Indian peoples into nation-
Referring to Pierre Bourdieu’s attention to struggle, Souza Lima lists different positions that those contributing to debates on indigenist policies could occupy, including ethnographer, politician, jurist, journalist, propagandist, and military engineer, arguing that all of the indigenist projects operated from the “evolutionist paradigm” (Souza Lima 1991: 242). The key debate, according to Souza Lima, centered around whether or not Indians could evolve further (Souza Lima 1991: 243). Regardless, indigenist projects aimed to pacify Indians to allow colonization of lands, eradicate “savagery”, and provide a role for Indians as members of the nation-state (with slippage between the concepts of nation and state intended) (Souza Lima 1991: 244). That is, the conflation of ideas of a homogeneous, “identity”-based nation and the political unit of the state contributed to indigenism by making the eradication of difference especially important.

Related to indigenist projects is the “Myth of Mestizaje.” A number of scholars argue that “mestizaje” (the cultural and/or biological “whitening” of Latin American populations) is a myth put forward to serve powerful interests, especially those of the state (Bonfil Batalla 1996, Gould 1998, Hale 1996, Nelson 1999). These scholars argue that this myth erases the fact that indigenous peoples and ways of life continue to exist. Some versions of this argument challenge the work of Friedlander and Warren examined in the previous section, claiming more continuity of “Indianness” than their relational models would allow. “Indianness,” to them, is not simply relational, a contention that is perhaps partially explained by remembering the profoundly historical and specific nature of any actual use of terms like “indio,” “Indian,” “indigenous,” “native,” as well as local group names.
Resistance, revolution and strategic accommodation.

Like Friedlander, Warren and those studying relations between indigenous peoples and state-building, anthropologists have long been interested in how indigenous peoples reacted to encroachment by outsiders, documenting strategies of survival and resistance as well as devastation. In this endeavor, history has played an important role, both in terms of rethinking synchronic theories and in crossing over disciplinary boundaries, with anthropologists writing history alongside historians. The overlap between the two disciplines is especially evident in historical treatments of resistance and accommodation to colonialism to explain the survival of indigenous peoples as distinct entities until the present. In an early example of this type of work, Robert Padden argues that the Araucanians of Chile survived by changing, by organizing to become more warlike and continually adapting their strategies to more effectively keep the Spaniards at bay ([1957]1985).

Padden’s article is an early example of an entire body of literature that valorizes Indian agency within structures of domination. That is, the actions and agency of indigenous peoples are celebrated and documented while trying to draw attention to the domination and inequality. Some of this literature examines in detail the ways that indigenous peoples accommodate and resist colonial and neocolonial domination. Other scholars critique what they see as an anthropological tendency to paint over difference and see cultural practices, especially the “traditions” of those labeled as “indigenous,” as more rigid than they are or have been (e.g. Da Matta 1982), thus underestimating the role of indigenous peoples in shaping their own futures. Some of this body of literature engages Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “counterhegemony,” most often filtered through the work of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, or Pierre Bourdieu’s attention to struggle (Bourdieu 1977), all of whom are
concerned with resistance. This literature may also be productively considered as a more nuanced asking of questions concerning why and how some things change and some things stay the same, beyond “traditional” and “progressive” dichotomies that lacked articulated theories of power. Whether resistance and accommodation was conscious and intentional is often left unstated and under-theorized. Sometimes this question would be seen as missing the point.

James Scott’s book *Weapons of the Weak* reflected an interest in how oppressed people (indigenous or otherwise) resist domination (Scott 1990). Scott suggests that the small, uncooperative acts like foot-dragging, so often documented by anthropologists (e.g. Casagrande 1974: 99, Friedlander 1975: 37) and observed by overseers and employers, are potentially as revolutionary as violent revolution – an observation in line with Michel Foucault’s attention to the power of micro-changes, as well as Gramscian articulations of hegemony and counterhegemony which Scott engages with directly for much of the conclusion. While Scott was addressing “peasant studies,” his explanation of stereotypical “lazy” behavior inspired studies of indigenous peoples as well.

Scott was not the first scholar to document such “weapons of the weak,” but he granted more importance to it than prior scholars. Friedlander, ten years earlier, commented on the use of language as a mechanism of boundary patrol and resistance. She writes, "...they have cultivated a few mechanisms to manipulate and close out their oppressors,” the use of the Nahuatl language, for example (Friedlander 1975: 87). Not only individual actions, but ideologies, including ideologies of harmony, also a manner of excluding outsiders, could be counterhegemonic, as Laura Nader argues (1990). In this case, the Zapotec of Mexico used
the ideology of harmony, brought by colonizers, against the same colonizers, as a way to maintain control over community affairs.

In “Strategies for Survival: The Indians of Highland Ecuador,” Joseph Casagrande links differing “adaptive strategies” of native groups (read manners of resistance and accommodation) to control over resources (1974). Three of the six communities he describes were relatively free from dependence on non-Indians, controlling their own land, water, fuel, and pasture. Thus, they weren’t reduced to engaging in begging, patron-client relations, or the small acts of resistance that Scott details. Casagrande’s comparison suggests that the strategy of the native rights organization Cultural Survival, which makes similar links with an activist agenda by working to secure indigenous control over their own lands, is right on target.

Michael Taussig’s Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man is a creative treatment of indigenous responses to atrocity and domination. Taussig was interested in the interactions between colonizers and colonized Putumayo Indians in Colombia -- interactions mediated by images each had/has of the other (Taussig 1987). Concerned with particular forms and effects of capitalism, Taussig argues that contrary to economically reasonable behavior, dual images of indigenous people as wild savages and naive children (tied to images of the jungle as wild and fearful) justified a "culture of terror" during the rubber boom of the late 1800s and early 1900s. These same images were necessary for the type of Shamanistic healing which was commonplace in the years of Taussig’s fieldwork. The images that earlier justified terror, now made healing possible, and indigenous people gained power through their appropriation – a form of resistance or agency.
What can be called “instrumental ethnicity” can be a strategy of resistance in some cases and accommodation in others. Anthropologists have documented individuals changing ethnicity identifications: “becoming white” (Casagrande 1974, van den Berghe 1974[1968]) and “becoming Indian” (van den Berghe 1974[1968]). When ethnic identity becomes instrumental, actors choose ethnic identification for a variety of reasons, including economic, social, psychological, and political. This is distinct from “passing,” where access to economic resources requires that an Indian pass as non-Indian, as it leaves the direction of change to be seen: Indians may “become” white, whites may “become Indian,” and so on. Recent scholars working in the realm of “indigenous politics” address the issue of “instrumental ethnicity” in an effort to come to grips with powerful processes of boundary-making, as well as to avoid the easy critique that some scholars of resistance overlook the impositions and limits (material and ideological) within which resistance takes place.

**Indigenous politics.**

One approach to the anthropological analysis of indigenous peoples rejects neo-liberal models of acculturation and modernization as well as orthodox Marxist models of “class struggle,” both of which depend on the eventual disappearance of indigenous cultures (Stavenhagen 1994: 79). This approach emphasizes “internal colonialism,” the relationship between a white and mestizo controlled nation-state and subordinate indigenous peoples (Stavenhagen 1994: 79). This analysis is key in “ethno-development” as well as “self-determination” trends and movements, and recognizes indigenous identity as a key factor in social struggle (Stavenhagen 1994: 79). According to Stavenhagen, claims of Indian rights have emerged systematically in response to economic liberalism that has intensified assault on native lands, resources, and cultures (1994: 79). Meanwhile, international networks, facilitated by technologies such as the internet, have been established, linking indigenous peoples throughout the world to each other and to other “interest groups,” especially environmental and human rights organizations. Additionally, according to Stavenhagen, it is more common then ever for indigenous elites to self-consciously assert their ethnic identity and participate in community decision-making, challenging older forms of community leadership based on “passive resistance and retrenchment” (1994: 79). Two prominent examples include Evo Morales, Aymara, who came in second in the 2002 presidential elections in Bolivia, and Winona LaDuke, Ojibwa, an environmental activist and Vice Presidential candidate in the United States elections of 1996 and 2000. Both Morales and LaDuke present themselves as having interventions to make in the political arena that stem from their indigenous identities.
As indigenous peoples create organizations and transnational linkages, certain types of linkages win out over others. In her 1994 review article, political scientist Alison Brysk examines the rise of transnational native rights movements that use international pressure, especially linked to environmentalism, to change national policies (1994). Faye Ginsburg writes about indigenous media, which provides a place for indigenous authorship and the challenging of dominant representations of what it means to be indigenous (1997). These and other scholars interested in indigenous politics focus on strategies indigenous actors are choosing and the limitations these choices entail.

Literature analyzing indigenous movements can often be found under the rubric of, or at least in conversation with, New Social Movements. Maya organizing, in particular, has received scholarly attention, with two recent book-length accounts (Warren 1998, Nelson 1999). Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez have edited two volumes, the second with Evelina Dagnino, on Latin American Social Movements (Escobar and Alvarez 1992, Alvarez et al. 1998). Escobar and Alvarez are concerned with mobilized resistance and social change evidenced in collective movements in Latin America in the 1980s and 90s. They describe the perceived “newness” of these movements as one that emerges from both reality and analytical assumptions. The old is equated with modernization and dependency, with politics defined as struggle for control of the state, and with rigid social structures that only dramatic rupture could change (Escobar and Alvarez 1992: 3). The new is equated with attention to multiplicity, fragmentation, contestation, and struggle; gaining control over “the State” isn’t necessarily what politics are about (Escobar and Alvarez 1992: 3). Identity and strategy are key emphases in their analyses, and indigenous politics is only one in a large range of identities addressed in the volume. In the second volume, they revisit themes
addressed in the first volume surrounding the intersection of culture and politics but with increased attention to globalization and “civil society” (Alvarez et al 1998).

Richard Fox and Orin Starn's volume *Between Resistance and Revolution* addresses issues like those of Stavenhagen and “New Social Movements” theorists (Fox and Starn 1997). In their introduction, Fox and Starn explain that in 1960s and 1970s, attention to political change was largely on violent revolution, especially on "peasant wars" (e.g. Wolf 1969), where groups (based on class) strove to gain control of the state. In the 1980s, small, individuated actors resisted domination (economic and otherwise) through small acts without an articulated aim or agenda. In the 1990s and today, attention has shifted among some scholars to mobilization, or what Fox and Starn call "Social Protest 'In Between,'" (Fox and Starn 1997:2). Fox and Starn reject the discontinuity with the past implied in calling these movements "New Social Movements" although they "cut across class lines to organize around issues of autonomy and identity", like the feminist, gay, and other types of "identity politics" that are subsumed under this title (Fox and Starn 1997:5), “identity politics” being political movements that are based upon collective claims about individual identities. These authors argue that the complexity addressed by New Social Movement theorists was always there, even if it was missed by theorists, a point also made by Charles Hale (1997).

**Conclusion.**

By the end of a century of anthropological study of indigenous peoples in Latin America, several key themes arise: the role of indigenous agency in shaping their experiences, the relegation of difference to the past or present, and the political purposes served by differing answers to these questions in different historical moments and locales, all questions that
necessitate attention to differing models of power. Contemporary scholars work through these questions with an evident preoccupation with the possibility of their own participation, albeit unintentional, in the exploitation of indigenous peoples. However, the researchers are not the only ones concerned, for the nature of the field (in terms of research sites) has changed. The “subjects” of research often control access to their cultural knowledge in ways unimagined by earlier anthropologists. In northern Bolivia where I work, for example, one indigenous group charges researchers a fixed weekly rate. Members of another community informed me that I could only collect certain types of data. This situation is becoming more common throughout Latin America, Canada, the United States, and much of the world.

These changes in the field (i.e. research sites) accompany the changes in the field (i.e. academic discipline) discussed above. The dramatic speeding up of global flows of people, things, and ideas is evident in changing theories of the indigenous. It is no longer possible for anthropologists to represent native communities as the possessors of homogeneous, pure, isolated, bounded cultures – not even in an idealized past. Scholars have responded to this real breaking down of borders by reading onto the past as well as the present a much more fragmented and complex social reality. My research, contextualized by the theories and approaches considered above, can be seen as building on this accumulated knowledge through the consideration of the dynamics of identity in a particular case – that of the Tacana of the Amazon Basin of northern Bolivia.