

Getting over the Andes: The Geo-Eco-Politics of Indigenous Movements in Peru's Twenty-First Century Inca Empire*

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Abstract. This article examines how President Alejandro Toledo's self-professed Andean identity and efforts to establish a state-led indigenous rights framework conflicted with a growing eco-ethno alliance of Andean and Amazonian representatives in Peru. Existing scholarly accounts declare the indigenous movement to be unimportant or, indeed, entirely absent in Peru. Yet, they do so by emphasising the centrality of the historical dynamic between the Andean region, where until recently local peoples have desisted from making explicit indigenous claims, and the urbanised coastal region, where the elite's power is most clearly concentrated. This obscures the Amazon as a site of historical events and eco-ethno-politics of national and global scope. The recent emergence of a debate on indigenous issues shows that the Amazonians' longer engagement in the global sphere of indigenous and environmental politics now places them in the position of exemplifying indigeneity for the Andeans and Peruvians at large. This shift challenges in fundamental ways the historical image of Peru the nation as inextricably implicated in the post-colonial fantasies of what I term the 'Inca slot'.

Introduction

Alejandro Toledo's election to the Peruvian presidency in 2001 brought ethnic politics to the fore of public debate in a national context that many believe lacked an indigenous movement of any significance at the time. The emergence of a widespread discussion on ethnic politics is due in part to the neo-Incaic protest model employed by Toledo to gain access to office.¹

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¹ Shane Greene, 'Incas, *Indios*, and Indigenism in Peru,' *Nacla Report on the Americas*, vol. 38, no. 4 (2005), pp. 34–9.

Toledo led massive protests against the corrupt Fujimori regime while adopting imagery of the Inca as his own political patrimony, and he later took office by means of a highly symbolic visit to Cusco, the heart of the Incan empire. The leader of the revolt was even popularly crowned as Peru's new Pachacútec, a recent version of an ancient Incan emperor. In short, Toledo slipped himself into what might be called Peru's 'Inca slot', a formulation I find useful because it reflects the way one might combine two very different critics of colonially constructed utopias: a Michel-Rolph Trouillot with an Alberto Flores Galindo.² However, Toledo's image is made more complex by his popular representation as 'el cholo', an ethnic term that indicates a status as a socially mobile and educated migrant to the coast, less provincial and yet still clearly connected to rural Andean roots.³

Toledo's victory constituted a triumph for Peru's indigenous population according to press writers the world over.⁴ However, his neo-Incaic *indigenismo* has often proved to be more romantic than realistic and provoked as much controversy as praise. This reflects a more general crisis of authority, and over the course of his term his approval ratings have dropped to inconceivable new lows – reaching single digits in 2004.⁵ The current administration struggles in the middle of significant controversy to maintain its profile as a multicultural government. The famed foreign first lady, undergraduate anthropologist and student of Quechua, emerged as a key player in this respect. Eliane Karp founded the Comisión Nacional de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afro-Peruanos (CONAPA) in late 2001, a state-led initiative that aimed to represent the interests of Peru's highland and lowland indigenous peoples as well as black Peruvians. CONAPA got off to an ambitious start by working on a constitutional reform agenda, but later suffered from widely publicised scandals in 2003 that led to a year-long stand-off between the administration and Peru's various indigenous movement actors.⁶ In 2004 Toledo acknowledged indigenous criticisms, disbanded

² Michel-Rolph Trouillot 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot,' in R. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology* (Santa Fe, 1991); Alberto Flores Galindo, *Buscando un Inca* (Lima, 1987).

³ Cecilia Méndez (personal communication) pointed out that prior presidents like Alan García and Alberto Fujimori occasionally adopted indigenous garb. There does seem to be a significant degree of difference in terms of Toledo's popularly recognised 'indigenous' roots and physical features. The nicknames of Fujimori and Toledo (el chino vs. el cholo) are an indication of a popular recognition of this difference.

⁴ Clifford Krauss, 'Man in the News: Peru's New Leader, an "Indian Rebel with a Cause",' *New York Times*, 5 June 2001, p. A3. 'Peruvians Elect Inca Ancestor; President Wins Anti-Spanish Racial Vote,' *Toronto Star*, 5 June 2001, p. D5.

⁵ 'Peru President's Popularity Hits Low of 6 Percent in Poll of Capital,' *Associated Press Worldstream*, 16 May 2004.

⁶ The decision to incorporate Afro-Peruvians into CONAPA's agenda will not be directly addressed here, although I hope to investigate this further in a future special issue of the *Journal for Latin American Anthropology*. It is important to note that the main

CONAPA, and called for a new and improved Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afro-Peruanos (INDEPA), the creation of which was approved on 16 December. In what may come as a surprise to many scholars, the various social movement actors involved in this confrontation with the state represent a nascent – and still rapidly evolving – alliance between Andean and Amazonian community representatives under an explicitly ‘indigenous’ banner.

The emergence of a prominent public debate about indigenous rights in the Peruvian context raises new questions. When and where did an Andean-Amazonian alliance, often said not to exist in the Peruvian context, emerge? How and why did some of the spokespersons of Andean ‘peasant’ communities move from being agrarian leaders to re-indigenised, which is to say explicitly and outwardly ethno-political, agents? Is this development merely a product of top-down state ideology by Toledo’s pro-*indígena* government and local forms of counter-ideology by civil society actors that vie for a space in an emergent sphere of multicultural Peruvian politics? Or is there a longer historical and more global dimension to Peruvian indigenous politics worth considering?

The commonly-held idea that Peru has an insignificant indigenous movement is flawed in two fundamental respects. First, many scholars declare this to be the case based primarily on an analysis of internal ‘national’ dynamics. That raises the question of whether or not Peru’s ethno-political ‘insignificance’ should only be measured in national terms, to the exclusion of other possible scales and scopes of significance. In the rest of this paper I shall argue that there is an important global dimension to consider, visible in Peru’s Amazonian movement and its historical linkages to international environmental advocacy. These eco-ethnic alliances not only predate the recent explosion of indigenous politics under Toledo, they represent the very ideological elements that now shape the terms of debate between the state, the international community, and indigenous movement actors – Andean and Amazonian alike.

In this context, we would do well to think through Charles Hale’s recent suggestion that indigenous politics reveal a deep collusion between neoliberal and multicultural agendas since many Latin American states now promote cultural/ethnic recognition, backed by the very global institutions of neoliberal development.⁷ From this perspective the institutions of authority use

Afro-Peruvian participant in CONAPA did not join indigenous organisations in their protests, and it is clear that Afro and indigenous organisations do not work closely together in the Peruvian context.

⁷ Charles Hale, ‘Does Multiculturalism Menace?: Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala,’ *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2002), pp. 485–524.

neoliberal multiculturalism to deem certain forms of indigenous struggle acceptable and others, notably those that seek to question the very structures of asymmetry associated with neoliberalism, as ‘radical’ and thus unacceptable. However, there is also a proliferation of global environmental policies that coalesce with neoliberal multiculturalism. To Hale’s emphasis on the politics of culture we must add a politics of nature. Increasingly, indigenous activists claim rights to ‘culture’ and ‘ethnic identity’ as part of an integrated package with rights to ‘nature’, as witnessed in global struggles over traditional biodiversity knowledge, ownership and management of natural resources, and territorial claims.⁸ Indigenous activists, particularly in environmental hotspots like Amazonia, are increasingly viewed as essential partners in, and even dependent on, contemporary green activism. Noticeably, such indigenous politicking is taking place in an era in which ‘nature’ is no longer simply to be conserved but rather ‘sustainably developed’ and ‘ecologically marketed’: in other words, where environmentalism is itself also neoliberalised. And Peru has been a primary context for the development of such eco-ethno-political linkages at the global level for decades – a fact systematically overlooked by several prominent social movement observers.

The second problem with analyses of the Peruvian situation is the tendency to rely on an assumption defined by a geographically limited imaginary of the Peruvian ‘nation’, one that is wrapped up in Peru’s continual fascination with its Incaic patrimony. This assumption is that the historical dynamic between the Andean highlands, representing Inca tradition and the contemporary indigenous peasantry, and the urban coast, representing a modernised (that is, Europeanised) space, explain all that is of ‘national’ importance. Indeed, it is this bi-regional dynamic between the Andes and the coast that historically *stands in for* the ‘nation’, a circumscription predicated on an obscuration of the Amazonian region from ‘national’ thought and history (as the Peruvian anthropologist, Stefano Varese, noted long ago).⁹ Many ‘Andeanist’ scholars in particular portray ‘Peru’ as an *essentially* Andean nation and thus ‘indigenous Peru’ (‘deep Peru’ as Basadre once called it) as an entirely Andean phenomenon, constantly in dialogue with the internal post-colonial utopia that leads Peruvians inevitably ‘buscando un Inca’ as Flores Galindo so aptly put it.¹⁰ Peru’s overly Andean view of itself is due in no small part to the living legacy of the Inca, the centrality of Cusco as its enduring symbol and, ultimately, to what I refer to as Peru’s historical

⁸ Arturo Escobar’s work on rural black movements in Colombia demonstrates that this is not exclusive to indigenous struggles. See ‘Cultural Politics and Biological Diversity: State, Capital, and Social Movements in the Pacific Coast of Colombia,’ in R. Fox and O. Starn (eds.), *Between Resistance and Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1997).

⁹ Stefano Varese, ‘Inter-ethnic Relations in the Selva of Peru,’ in Walter Dostal (ed.), *The Situation of the Indian in South America* (Geneva, 1972). ¹⁰ Flores Galindo, *Buscando un Inca*.

fascination with and inevitable return to the Inca slot: the forever-lost-but-somehow-always-returning Incaic figure. But the problem is not just a problem of Peru – the nation. It is also an essential problem of Peruvianology, which seems to have as much trouble moving past ‘Inca slot’ studies as anthropology has moving past ‘savage slot’ studies according to Trouillot.¹¹ In short, I argue that seeing Peru as the Andes, and studying Peruvian indigeneity as a constant dialogue with Inca slot ideologies, often implies not seeing the Peruvian Amazon and ignoring indigenous Amazonians.

I show below how this ethno-geographic blindness has been thrown into question in recent years. Ironically, the eco-ethno-political form of globalised indigeneity that Amazonians have been practising for decades, once historically overshadowed by the Peruvian understanding of ‘indigeneity’ as an essentially Incaic phenomenon, has now become critical to understanding how indigenous politics are practised in the Peruvian nation at large. The model of eco-ethnic politics exemplified in Amazonian struggles now serves both as a template for some recently re-indigenising Andeans and as leverage against Toledo’s romantic twenty-first century Inca empire.

Global Indigenism and Peru (often meaning the Andes) as Latin American Anomaly

Scholars commonly explain the prominence of indigenous rights agendas in terms of much broader global trends. They cite multicultural and environmental ideologies, globalisation, democratisation, neoliberalisation, the expansion of international advocacy networks and the correlated waning of class politics with expanding ‘identity’ based movements.¹² Various studies document the regional effects of these trends in the Latin American context.¹³

For peoples of agrarian background with identifiable ethnic or cultural ‘traits’ (that is, non-European languages, customs, claims to territory, etc.) this has meant an opportunity to rethink their classification as part of a rural peasantry. Processes of re-indigenisation of the agrarian peasantry are found all over Latin America, from rebellious protest in Chiapas, Mexico to revolutionary upheaval in the streets of La Paz, Bolivia. Noticeably, this

¹¹ Trouillot, ‘Anthropology and the Savage Slot’.

¹² See Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998). Terence Turner, ‘Class Projects, Social Consciousness and the Contradictions of “Globalisation”,’ in J. Friedman (ed.), *Globalisation, the State, and Violence* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2003) pp. 35–66.

¹³ See Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar, *Culture of Politics/Politics of Cultures* (Boulder, 1998). Alison Brysk, *From Tribal Village to Global Village* (Stanford, 2000). Kay Warren and Jean Jackson, *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State in Latin America* (Austin, 2002).

dynamic of re-ethnification is not present merely in *el campo* but also in *la ciudad*, challenging common assumptions about the way indigeneity and class line up with rural and urban spaces. Historically, native peoples from tropical hunting-gathering societies have always been defined by the racial categories of European colonialism, never to be temporarily ‘promoted’ to a class in Marxist modernisation terms. Highly decentralised forms of political organisation, forested environments, an often greater detachment from the colonising/modernising frontier, and the occasional presence of visual signs of ‘Indianness’ (nakedness, body paint, adornments, etc.) made them the obvious targets for the ‘civilised’ world’s racial scorn.

The longer history of *indigenista* ideologies in twentieth-century Latin America is much more extensive than can be elaborated on here. However, the recent globalisation of indigenous movements stems from some identifiable antecedents in the latter half of the twentieth century. Agrarian reforms throughout Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s play a significant role. So too do certain catalysing events that refocused attention on the ethnic status of Indians in the Americas, in particular the 1971 Barbados Conference and the 1980 Russel Tribunal.¹⁴ More recently, international agreements and activities associated with the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Work Group on Indigenous Peoples, and the Organization of American States have dramatically heightened the world’s awareness of indigenous issues. Ethnic and cultural pluralist language is reshaping many Latin American constitutions and national legislation.¹⁵ Another central factor in today’s global indigenism is the rapid pace at which indigenous peoples and their civil society advocates have formed and expanded transnational networks of support, seeking international leverage that forces governments to move on domestic problems.¹⁶ One advocacy issue that has successfully captured the world’s imagination and effectively converges with indigenous activism nowadays is global environmentalism. In Latin America Amazonian Indians have been at the centre of this eco-alliance since the 1980s.¹⁷

Interestingly, while scholars see many national and regional arenas (e.g. Chiapas, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala) in Latin America as

¹⁴ Brysk, *From Tribal Village*.

¹⁵ See Donna Lee Van Cott, *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past: The Politics of Diversity in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, 2000). ¹⁶ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*.

¹⁷ Beth Conklin and Laura Graham, ‘The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics,’ *American Anthropologist*, vol. 97, no. 4 (1995), pp. 695–710. Richard Smith, ‘Las políticas de la diversidad: COICA y las federaciones étnicas de la Amazonia’ in Stefano Varese (ed.), *Pueblos Indios, Soberanía y Globalismo* (Quito, 1996), pp. 81–125. Andrew Gray, ‘Development Policy-Development Protest: The World Bank, Indigenous Peoples, and NGOs,’ in Jonathon Fox and L. David Brown (eds.), *The Struggle for Accountability* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).

significant and globally articulated sites of indigenous activism, they portray others as anomalously insignificant. Peru, in particular, has repeatedly fallen into the latter category. Indeed, as García and Lucero demonstrate, Peru is ironically represented as ‘un país sin indígenas’ despite its ethnic demographics due to the ostensible ‘absence’ of a strong indigenous movement.¹⁸ Broadly comparative studies characterise Peru’s indigenous movement as ‘weak’ or as ‘barely exist[ing]’.¹⁹ Warren and Jackson see Peru’s movement as ‘relatively [im]mature’ compared to Guatemala, Brazil and Colombia.²⁰ For Albó Peru warrants exclusion from the otherwise widespread ‘indigenous awakening’ spreading across the entire Latin American region.²¹

Many of these studies cite the absence of any explicitly ‘indigenous’, meaning consciously and publicly articulated ethno-political, activity among Peruvian Andeans. Scholars argue that Andeans continue to articulate explicit political interests in class terms, as highland peasants rather than ethnic agents. On the other hand, the Amazonian peoples of Peru are engaged in an ethnic movement that is around thirty-five years old. Ironically, although Amazonian movement leaders operating out of Lima since the 1980s routinely refer to themselves as ‘national’ indigenous representatives, scholars apparently disagree and routinely portray the movement as merely ‘local’ or ‘regional’ in scope.²² In a recent, and otherwise extremely insightful, book

¹⁸ See María Elena García and José Antonio Lucero, “‘Un País Sin Indígenas’?: Rethinking Indigenous Politics in Peru,” in Nancy Postero and León Zamosc (eds.), *The Struggle for Indian Rights in Latin America* (Sussex, 2004). The recent work of García and Lucero represents one of the first serious attempts to critically question the notion of an ‘absence’ of indigenous movements in Peru.

¹⁹ Brysk, *From Tribal Village*, p. 269; D. Yashar, ‘Democracy, Indigenous Movements, and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America,’ *World Politics*, vol. 52, no. 1 (1999), pp. 76–104; and D. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 26.

²⁰ K. Warren and J. Jackson, ‘Introduction’ in *Indigenous Movements*, p. 6. During a presentation of an early version of this article at the annual AAA meetings in 2003, Jean Jackson clarified that what she (and Warren) meant by this statement is that Peru’s indigenous movements have historically been confined to the Amazonian region. She, however, conceded the point about the global importance of Peru’s apparently ‘regional’ Amazonian movement.

²¹ Xavier Albó, ‘Ethnic Identity and Politics in the Central Andes,’ in J. Burt and P. Mauerci (eds.), *Politics in the Andes* (Pittsburgh, 2004), p. 28.

²² See Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship*. There are several important works by ‘Amazonianist’ scholars (rarely cited in ‘Andeanist’ literature) that do detail the global linkages of the Amazonian movement in Peru but none squarely addresses the issue of Andean/Amazonian geo-political relations at the national level. See Stefano Varese, ‘The New Environmentalist Movement of Latin American Indigenous People,’ in S. Brush and D. Stabinsky (eds.), *Valuing Local Knowledge* (Washington, DC, 1996); Alberto Chirif, Pedro García and Richard Smith, *El indígena y su territorio son uno solo* (Lima, 1991); R. Smith, ‘Las políticas de la diversidad’; Bartholomew Dean, ‘State Power and Indigenous Peoples in Peruvian Amazonia: A Lost Decade, 1990–2000,’ in D. Maybury-Lewis (ed.), *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 199–238;

Marisol de la Cadena takes the idea to its logical extreme. In the concluding chapter, overlooking the Amazonian movement altogether, she states categorically, ‘no indigenous social movement exists currently in Peru that rallies around ethnic identities’.²³ It is this apparent insignificance of the Peruvian movement – and the ostensibly ‘local’ and occasionally absolutely invisible status of the Amazonian movement in particular – that I wish to examine further.

Detailed explanations for the Peruvian anomaly range considerably. Political scientists typically concentrate on ‘politics proper’. They often see Peru’s years of crisis and political violence from 1980 to the early 1990s as a primary explanation for the lack of an indigenous movement, since it is widely known that the Maoist insurgency, Sendero Luminoso, actively disdained indigenous ideologies.²⁴ In terms of national policy the legislative reforms of the revolutionary 1960s and 1970s Velasco era are clearly responsible for the state’s official rhetorical switch from the term *indígena* to *campesino*, a switch that reflected the rise of a hegemonic class discourse in reference specifically to Andean communities.²⁵ As part of the agrarian reform in 1969 the Velasco regime renamed the *Comunidad Indígena*, an essentially neo-colonial institution constitutionally recognised in the 1920s by President Leguía, the *Comunidad Campesina*. The state justified the name change by citing the pejorative connotations associated with the term *indígena*. Yet, in the state’s geographically circumscribed imagination, this ostensible ‘promotion’ from subordinate racial status to class position was only applicable to the Andeans. The 1974 *Ley de Comunidades Nativas* formalised an ethnic state discourse that was only applicable to the tropical lowlanders whose newly titled *comunidades nativas* became the elemental units in the expansive network of ethnic federations that compose the Amazonian movement (discussed below). Furthermore, the work of de la Cadena (2000) suggests that a mutually exclusive dichotomy between ethnicity and class is oversimplified since the Peruvian understanding of *campesino* directly implies indigeneity (meaning Andeans in her framework).

Fernando Santos-Granero and Frederica Barclay, *Tamed Frontiers: Economy, Society, and Civil Rights in Upper Amazonia* (Boulder, 2000); and Shane Greene, ‘Paths to a Visionary Politics,’ unpubl. PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2004.

²³ Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919–1991* (Durham, NC, 2000), p. 323; my emphasis.

²⁴ Brysk, *From Tribal Village*, p. 72; Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship*, p. 26. After years of Sendero violence and state counter violence local communities responded to the civil war by forming *rondas campesinas*, or self-defence militias, whose primary objective was to restore local security to destabilised communities. See Orin Starn, *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes* (Durham, NC, 1999).

²⁵ Brysk, *From Tribal Village*; Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship*.

Other explanations concentrate on the Fujimori decade. During the 1990s Fujimori's government represented a strange mix of authoritarian alliances with the military, the strategy used to halt the political violence and construct more favourable congressional alliances, with a policy of compliance with structural adjustment plans and economic shock treatments.²⁶ Fujimori's policies entailed widespread privatisation of state industry and proved especially beneficial to foreign companies invested in natural resource extraction.²⁷ One particularly alarming legal loss for both 'native' and 'peasant' communities was the approval of the reformed 1993 Constitution. This rescinded the previously 'inalienable' status of their communal lands, leaving them open to the threat of expropriation by the state or private interests. And yet the 1993 Constitution also contains rhetorical multicultural recognition of Andean and Amazonian communities and languages, which might be further testament to Charles Hale's argument that neoliberalism and multiculturalism go hand in hand.²⁸ In fact, Amazonian movement leaders answered Fujimori's neoliberal 1993 Constitution with a petition containing 55,000 signatures. And by the end of the 1990s Andean 'peasant community' organisers began constructing a nation-wide anti-mining initiative to contest the large increase in mining claims in the Andean provinces as a result of Fujimori's natural resource plan. The same Andean organisers now seek to contest Toledo's *indigenismo* and consolidate an alliance with Amazonian actors under an explicitly indigenous banner.²⁹

Other more anthropological interpretations of Peru's indigenous politics add several interdependent geographic, cultural, and historical factors. According to multiple accounts by Peruvian Andeanist scholars, Velasco's official ethnic erasure of the Andean 'indigenous community' in the late 1960s was in reality merely the culminating moment in a more complicated cultural history of indigenous/elite relations unique to Peru. Degregori describes this relationship as one in which Peruvian elites have historically appropriated the symbolic capital represented by the 'essence' of Andean indigeneity, namely the Inca patrimony.³⁰ Cecilia Mendez' work suggests that this phenomenon is virtually as old as the

²⁶ See Carol Wise, *Reinventing the State: Economic Strategy and Institutional Change in Peru* (Ann Arbor, 2003). ²⁷ Dean, 'State Power.'

²⁸ Hale, 'Does Multiculturalism Menace?'

²⁹ Manuel Marzal, 'Perception of the State Among Peruvian Indians,' in L. Giordani and M. Snipes (eds.), *Indigenous Perceptions of the Nation-State in Latin America, Studies in Third World Societies*, vol. 56, August, pp. 61–81. S. Greene, 'Incas, *Indios*, and Indigenism.'

³⁰ Carlos Degregori, 'Movimientos étnicos, democracia y nación en Perú y Bolivia,' in C. Dary (ed.), *La construcción de la nación y la representación ciudadana en México, Guatemala, Perú, Ecuador y Bolivia* (Guatemala, 1998), pp. 159–226.

Peruvian republic itself and constitutes the basis of the country's racist nationalism.³¹

In terms of the more immediate historical influences on Velasco's classist legislation, Marisol de la Cadena identifies several elements: the steady depoliticisation of Peruvian indigenismo and the leftist cooptation of Andean organisers into an explicitly class-based 'peasant' paradigm of sindicato politics.³² To the common emphasis on politics proper, de la Cadena adds that there is an important cultural politics of everyday life characterised by what she calls 'indigenous mestizaje' in her book.³³ Basing her study on a mostly urbanised *cusqueño* population, she sees Peru's (Andean) indigeneity as encompassing *mestizaje*, unlike other Latin American contexts where the two are ideologically opposed. In effect, she sees Peru's twentieth-century history as a unique dynamic between Cusco and Lima (enduring symbols of the dynamic between *la sierra* and *la costa*), defined by the state's disuse of the *mestizaje* assimilation myth, a recurring romanticisation of the Inca past by elites and *cusqueños* appropriation of hybrid indigenous-mestizo identities to challenge dominant associations of indigeneity with backwardness, illiteracy, rural life and so on. This explains what she describes as a complete absence of 'ethnic movements' based on 'anti-*mestizaje*' (meaning anti-assimilation) indigenous politics, that which characterises indigenous movements in many other Latin American contexts.

While these various explanations do reveal the complexity of class and ethnic politics in Peru, they also suffer from two major shortcomings. The first and most obvious problem is that many of them are almost exclusively bound to Peru's national context. The various political events, legislation, geographic, and cultural-historical dynamics they identify are described as specific, internal, and often unique to the Peruvian nation-state. This leaves us with the impression that Peru is peculiarly isolated from or impervious to global and regional trends taking hold elsewhere – a portrayal I intend to subvert with a description of the global-local linkages that have characterised the Amazonian movement for decades.

Second, several of these studies of 'Peru' – and I do not hesitate to label them Andean-centric – systematically reproduce the very geo-politically

³¹ Cecilia Mendez, 'Incas sí, indios no: Notes on Peruvian Creole Nationalism and its Contemporary Crisis,' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 28 (1996), pp. 197–225.

³² See Marisol de la Cadena, 'From Race to Class: Insurgent Intellectuals de provincia in Peru, 1910–1970,' in S. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths* (Durham, NC, 1998) pp. 22–59. One possible exception to this non-ethnic trend is the organisation *Consejo Indio Sur America* (CISA) which operated throughout the 1980s. However, as Smith points out CISA's activities were almost entirely disconnected from a community base and represent precisely the kind of intellectualist/artistic discourse de la Cadena describes as the norm among late twentieth century Andean indigenistas. See R. Smith, 'Las políticas de la diversidad.'

³³ De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*.

circumscribed national imaginary they should seek to unveil. The historical shadow of the Andes and the ideological effects of the Inca slot still loom large in various 'Andeanist' accounts where discussions of the Peruvian Amazon are noticeably absent. The prevailing assumption is that the bi-regional dynamic between the Europeanised urban centre on the coast and the cultural-historical centre of Incaic 'indigeneity' in the Andean mountains (primarily the Cusco region) fully account for Peruvian history *up to the present*. In reality, I am merely restating the relevance of observations made by Stefano Varese three decades ago. He commented that the tropical lowlands hold a peculiarly invisible status in the country's social, academic, and national thought. When not ignored altogether, the *selva* and its indigenous inhabitants have historically been tacked on as a mere 'appendix' to the nation.³⁴

Whether consciously or unconsciously, many Peruvian 'Andean' experts disembark from their own 'regionalist' assumptions in order to arrive at 'nationalist' conclusions. It is not the Peruvian Andes as a region but 'Peru' – as a nation – that they portray as lacking an indigenous movement. Degregori reveals in a footnote that his discussion on the 'absence' of 'ethnic movements' in 'Peru' only 'tangentially' mentions Amazonian peoples, despite the fact that these are precisely the most 'ethnically' active political agents in Peru's context.³⁵ In a similarly contradictory manner, Remy begins an essay with the categorical statement, 'it appears impossible to speak of indigenous movements in Peru', an impossibility based on their conspicuous absence in the Andes.³⁶ She later goes on to detail (minimally) the birth of various ethnic federations in the Peruvian Amazon, which we must assume from the framing statement do not constitute an 'indigenous movement.' Likewise, when de la Cadena says, 'no indigenous social movement exists currently in Peru', based solely on an analysis of a *cusqueño* form of indigenous *mestizaje*, we have to understand her differently.³⁷ The only indigenous region she addresses is Cusco and so by implication of her

³⁴ This obscurity is evidenced in the ways the state has historically ceded the Amazonian region to foreign capital interests rather than construct it as a strategic national interest and delivered its inhabitants over to competing bands of foreign missionaries rather than subject them to the state's highland indigenous policy. Until Varese's work launched a Peruvian Amazonian anthropology in the 1960s, there was almost no domestic social thought, including the great tradition of early twentieth-century Andean indigenistas, that contemplated Amazonia. Varese, 'Inter-ethnic Relations' p. 118.

³⁵ Degregori, 'Movimientos étnicos,' p. 162, n. 5, p. 183, n. 23.

³⁶ Maria Remy, 'The Indigenous Population and the Construction of Democracy in Peru,' in D. Van Cott (ed.), *Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America* (New York, 1994), p. 108.

³⁷ De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 323.

concluding statement this is *the only* indigenous region she recognises as having national importance.

The geo-ethno-logic is clear. In Peru, Andean indigeneity represents ethnic politics even when such politics are declared officially silent. Amazonian indigeneity is rendered as silent even when Amazonians are officially speaking of ethnic politics. Neighbouring national contexts possess similar geographies but are without comparable claims to or obsessions with the grandiose Inca patrimony, which is to say not so directly influenced by the persistent effects of Inca slot ideologies. By contrast, in Peru it is only Andean indigeneity that historically speaks *for the nation*, even when ‘diluted’ with ideologies of class and complicated by the hybrid identities of indigenous-mestizos. And we are left with the impression that the Peruvian Amazon is a margin of the third order: marginal to the Peruvian Andes, which is marginal to the Peruvian coast, which is marginal to the great world power to the north.

In reality, the official peasantisation and everyday indigenous *mestizaje* of the Peruvian Andes is radically contradicted by the expansive indigenisation of the Amazon in the last several decades. These divergent paths have – until recent years – resulted in a noticeable absence of alliances between highland and lowland, Andean and Amazonian, community organisers. However, this situation is now subject to significant historical transformations brought about by the articulation of Toledo’s neo-Incaic indigenism within the global arena of indigenous multicultural and eco-politics.

To be fair, most of the scholars cited here make no specific claims about the future of ethnic politics in Peru. For instance, de la Cadena does ‘not consider that the absence of indigenous ethnic movements in Peru is irreversible’.³⁸ Unlike more recent accounts, the views expressed about Peru at the end of the 1990s simply did not have the same post-2001 election vantage point from which to evaluate the growing significance of the country’s indigenous movements.³⁹ However, the very developments in global-national articulation necessary for the emergence of a national level movement in Peru that includes Andean and Amazonian actors were in fact already well underway while researchers sought to explain the Peruvian ‘anomaly’. The point is that the significant events in indigenous organising were happening primarily as a result of Amazonian efforts, representing precisely the ethno-geographic blindspot that Andeanist scholars frequently fail to check.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ In this sense the recent work of Albó (*‘Ethnic Identity’*) is particularly short-sighted since it contemplates the impact of Toledo’s government and yet continues to overlook the emergence of pan-indigenous organising.

*A Short Eco-Ethno-Political History of Amazonian Peru*⁴⁰

Like other indigenous efforts in Latin America the local dimensions of Peru's Amazonian movement were globally influenced from the start. The movement was a product of articulations with international actors and advocacy networks despite its apparent insignificance and invisibility in the 'national' scene. The influences on the contemporary Amazonian movement stretch back to mid-century and range from missionary organisations and the US Peace Corps to foreign researchers and non-governmental organisations. In the last two decades Peru's Amazonian movement played a crucial role in forming a transnational Amazonian coalition on the South American continent, secured its place within UN indigenous legal initiatives, and constructed a global alliance between indigenous peoples and environmentalists. These various initiatives have not only produced tangible effects on the ground in Peru but also played a central role in *designing* – not merely occupying – the curious neoliberal-multicultural 'openings' within international development institutions and agendas that Hale describes.⁴¹

Most scholars of Latin America recognise the formation of the Shuar Federation in Ecuador in 1964 as the first major landmark in the trend toward organised ethnic struggle.⁴² The next significant milestone in the region came in 1969 when native peoples in the central Peruvian jungle formed the Congreso Amuesha, assisted by the US Peace Corps worker Richard Chase Smith.⁴³ By the 1970s emergent native leaders from all the major ethnic groups in the Peruvian Amazon (Aguaruna, Huambisa, Shipibo-Conibo, Ashaninka and Cocama-Cocamilla) formed their own local ethnic federations, each with their own complicated histories.⁴⁴ In several cases the prior presence of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a North American missionary and bilingual education organisation, served as a direct catalyst. The SIL's educational and civic programmes among Amazonians, operative since the mid 1950s, both inspired ethnic organisational activity and local discussion about the impact of this foreign ideological element in Amazonian communities.

The influence of SIL is particularly clear on the original Aguaruna organisers. Many of them self-consciously articulate the importance of SIL in

⁴⁰ This account is too short due to space constraints and is largely based on my own fieldwork with the Aguaruna. While they have unquestionably been at the centre of the Amazonian movement there are also other important ethnic actors to consider (in particular the Amuesha, Ashaninka and Shipibo-Conibo peoples).

⁴¹ Hale, 'Does Multiculturalism Menace?.' ⁴² Brysk, 'From Tribal Village,' p. 68.

⁴³ Smith, 'Las políticas de la diversidad.'

⁴⁴ A few historic examples: 1975, Organización Central de Comunidades Aguarunas del Alto Marañón; 1977, Consejo Aguaruna Huambisa; 1980, Federación de Comunidades Cocama Cocamilla; late 1970s, Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali; 1978, Central de Comunidades Nativas de la Selva Central.

terms of a transformation from a 'customary' male-gendered politics of warfare and visionary prestige to a 'modern' version of peaceful institutional politics (that are nonetheless still understood in terms of male visionary and war-like leadership).⁴⁵ For example, Adolfo Juep, a native of the Marañón River, and co-founder of two of the oldest Aguaruna organisations, sees a direct relationship between the religious-educational mandate of SIL and the development of the idea for indigenous organising:

Pero en los años más o menos '48, '50, ya venía trabajando ILV [SIL] ... ILV en Marañón coge a jóvenes o a los Aguarunas que habían estudiado en esta escuela Nazareno, en esta escuela de los gringos ... Ellos son los que han sido primeros profesores que ya han hablado sobre ... hay que dejar la matanza porque no es bueno ... Desde ahí pierde la organización Aguaruna la lucha organizada entre Aguarunas [i.e. inter-tribal warfare and feuding] y pierde también una lucha organizada contra mestizos [i.e. violent resistance to non-native colonists] ... Bueno, perdido este, con ya la masiva ingreso de los colonos hacia Marañón solamente queda una idea, ya no levantarse con armas sino levantarse con otro tipo de estrategia ... Organizándose. ¿No? En este sentido se empieza, el diálogo se empieza en Yarinacocha [site of SIL's pedagogical institute] con todos los profesores bilingües en '68. Se dialoga de que más bien a nivel de Perú se llevaría una organización indígena. ¿No? Una gran organización indígena. ¿Pero, cómo? Empezándose de la base ... Pero estas cosas se materializa el año '75, se llevó la primera organización Aguaruna en Marañón [Organización Central de Comunidades Aguarunas del Alto Marañón] (Adolfo Juep, interview, 7 December 1998).

In virtually every case Amazonian federations emerged with concerns over the impact of state-led colonisation on indigenous territories. This widespread concern was articulated through the state's promulgation of the 1974 *Ley de Comunidades Nativas*, the first significant Peruvian legislation to grant Amazonians collective land titles. General Juan Velasco's radical military government approved 'Native Community' land rights legislation specifically for Peru's tropical lowland peoples who had been almost completely absent from the state's legislative purview up to that point.

By the late 1970s native federation leaders from the Amazon began working closely with a handful of domestic and international allies. Some of them were Peruvian collaborators in (or even students of) Stefano Varese's relatively young Peruvian Amazonian anthropology. Several others were foreign researchers and development workers.⁴⁶ Working with this group of advocates native leaders set into motion a pan-Amazonian political agenda that gave rise to a national-level organisation in Lima, the Asociación

⁴⁵ See Greene, 'Paths to a Visionary Politics.'

⁴⁶ By the mid-1970s Varese had left Peru, eventually to end up at an academic post in the US. Some of the more important actors who took up the work of helping Amazonian leaders organise include: Alberto Chirif, Carlos Mora, Richard Smith, Frederica Barclay, Fernando Santos, Thomas Moore, Dominique Temple, Margarita Benavides, Kathe Meentzen and Pedro García.

Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDSESEP), founded in 1980 and legally inscribed as a non-profit in 1985. An Aguaruna organiser named Evaristo Nugkuag was one of the initial founders of AIDSESEP and its multiple term president throughout the 1980s. He remembers the birth of AIDSESEP as an ethnically self-conscious manoeuvre to critically distance the native agenda from the influence of the Centro de Investigación y Promoción Amazónica (CIPA), the NGO that several of the Amazonian advocates created in 1978 to 'attend' to Amazonian needs:

Al ver que esta es una necesidad grande entonces ellos [non-indigenous Amazonian advocates] ya anticipadamente a partir de eso para atender mejor conforman su ONG y consiguen plata de ... Holanda. Y compran su local propio y compran su carro. Tenían sueldos, tenían préstamos para hacer [i.e. get title for] las comunidades ... Y despues decíamos de que, que nos permiten que un indígena también trabaja ahí para aprender ... No quisieron. Decían que no ... CIPA y cooperantes internacionales se entienden, además no es de los indígenas para tener ahí indígena. Se puso. Entonces ahí es, nosotros dijimos – aha! – entonces si es así como nosotros vamos a seguir trabajando con CIPA. Y ahí surge y hicimos AIDSESEP. (Evaristo Nugkuag, interview, 4 August 2000)

During the late 1980s the Peruvian Amazonian movement splintered. A certain sector of Amazonians, disgruntled over the direction of Evaristo Nugkuag in AIDSESEP, took advantage of Alan García's presidential and populist tour of the Peruvian provinces in 1986 to formulate plans for a rival Amazonian organisation. In the middle of one of García's famous town-hall style 'Rimanakuy' meetings in the city of Pucallpa several native leaders made plans to found a rival national level organisation.⁴⁷ José Lirio (interview, 11 December 2000), one of the main Aguaruna protagonists at the meeting, attributes the decision in part to 'recelos dirigenciales' and in part to the fact that several local level leaders believed it 'necesario crear una organización representativa mejor que AIDSESEP'. The following year Lirio became the vice-president of a new organisation, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Amazónicas del Perú (CONAP). CONAP's creation was made possible by the not entirely disinterested support of two internationally funded NGOs, including CIPA which by that point sought to find a more friendly indigenous partner after years of sour relations with AIDSESEP. This initially fractious relationship between CONAP and AIDSESEP produced a long-standing (and occasionally still recurring) argument about which organisation legitimately represents Amazonian interests in Peru, although clearly AIDSESEP's base and historical influence remains substantially broader. Some 37 years after the first effort by the Amuesha, Peru's Amazonian movement now boasts of at least 60 different local ethnic

⁴⁷ *Rimanakuy* is from the Quechua meaning 'to talk to each other' or perhaps (approximately) in this context a 'negotiation'. Thanks to Alan Durston for linguistic help.

federations that group native communities together and typically affiliate to one of the two competing national level organisations.

With funding from OXFAM America, AIDSESEP hosted a meeting in Lima in 1984 to which nascent indigenous organisations from four other Amazonian countries were invited. The result of this meeting was the creation of the Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), the transnational indigenous organisation that now represents Amazonian peoples in nine South American countries. As Richard Smith observes, the 1984 meeting also led to the Amazonians' initial forays into the arenas of international indigenous rights law, particularly within the context of the UN's then recent Work Group on Indigenous Populations, and global environmental politics.⁴⁸ In fact, the meeting served as an initial point of dissemination of the now internationally recognised legal terminology, 'indigenous peoples', used in the UN and other international agreements (the ILO's Convention 169 for example). In Peru *indígena* historically refers primarily to Andean peoples. Its use was largely absent in Amazonia where the Velasco state adopted the term *nativo* into official usage in order to replace the colonial Spanish and Quechua vulgarisms used to refer to the lowlanders (*salvajes*, *chunchos*, *jívaros*, and so on). The impact of the dissemination of this international legal terminology is now evident in everyday forms. While older Amazonian federations typically adopted the term 'native' into their organisational rhetoric, the newer ones frequently substitute the term 'indigenous' for it.

Furthermore, scholars routinely cite other Amazonians for broadening the world's awareness of the connection between environmental and indigenous advocacy, particularly the Brazilian Kayapo for their famous staging of protests that forced the World Bank to reconsider the impact of dam projects on indigenous peoples.⁴⁹ Yet, the work of AIDSESEP and COICA in the early phases, particularly under the leadership of Evaristo Nugkuag in Peru, contributed significantly to create this eco-indigenous 'opening' in the world's premier development institutions. Nugkuag's visibility as an Amazonian icon steadily increased throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s with the award of two major international prizes that recognised his institution's contribution to indigenous and environmental activism.⁵⁰ In 1990, at a time

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Las políticas de la diversidad.'

⁴⁹ See Gray, 'Development Policy'; and Terence Turner, 'The Role of Indigenous Peoples in the Environmental Crisis: The Example of the Kayapó of the Brazilian Amazon,' *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1993), pp. 526–45.

⁵⁰ Nugkuag received the Right Livelihood award in 1986 on behalf of AIDSESEP and the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1991 for his organisational efforts. The prizes brought with them a series of questions about who actually was or should be recognised (the individual or the organisation) and the destination of prize monies that continue to colour

when Nugkuag headed the organisation, COICA invited every major international environmental and indigenous advocacy organisation to Peru to sign the 'Iquitos Declaration', the document that most clearly articulates an organisational starting point for what since became a strategic, if also contested, alliance between indigenous Amazonians and conservationist NGOs.⁵¹

Although clearly proud of his individual contributions, Nugkuag is never shy about emphasising the importance of his exposure to the global advocacy scene. He emphasises for example his first trip abroad in the late 1970s to an indigenous rights conference at the University of Wisconsin (interview, August 2000). And, following AIDSESP's receipt of the Right Livelihood award in 1986, he recalls the importance of having led a group of indigenous activists on a world tour to Europe and then the USA to meet with Barber Conable, then president of the World Bank. Speaking about how this trip was an attempt to overcome the stereotypes of the incapable Indian, always dependent on others, he remarked:

Porque dicen [el indígena] no sabe hablar. No puede desarrollar, lo que piensa no puede hablar en público etc. etc. etc. ¿No? Un poco dependiente a nosotros [i.e. missionaries, the state, development institutions, etc.]. Entonces yo quería romper eso, demostrar de que no es así. También somos tan capaces y humanos, que si sabemos y podemos saber desarrollar frente cualquier hombre importante en el mundo ... Fui también por primera vez en la historia en el año '86, 17 de diciembre, en Washington. Yo me entrevisté con el presidente del Banco Mundial en su despacho – tengo fotos, tengo grabaciones – presentando de la preocupación de la naturaleza, presentando también la inquietud de los en Brasil que los proyectos en Banco se ha perjudicado con la represa. Y es por eso que yo planteé de que está bien el apoyo económico, es necesario, pero ... el Banco mismo tiene que ir directamente al lugar de hechos y no delegar a nadie a fin de poder evitar cualquier tipo de críticas contra el Banco. Entonces el hombre [Conable] me felicitó porque por primera vez que había escuchado un indígena a su planteamiento así. (Evaristo Nugkuag, interview, 4 August 2000).

By the late 1980s the Amazonian movement in Peru faced a series of complicated internal politics, in part over accusations of too much centralisation of the leadership in the hands of Evaristo Nugkuag. This provoked a decision to move COICA's headquarters to Quito, Ecuador in the early

perceptions about Nugkuag's leadership. See Smith, 'Las políticas de la diversidad,' and S. Greene, 'Paths to a Visionary Politics,' Ch. 9.

⁵¹ See Chirif, García and Smith, *El indígena*, p. 175. Some of the more prominent NGOs in attendance included Conservation International, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund, Oxfam, Cultural Survival, Survival International and others. Recently, Mac Chapin questioned the status of this eco-indigenous alliance within the biggest and most influential environmental NGOs. See 'A Challenge to Conservationists,' *WorldWatch*, November/December (2004), pp. 17–31.

1990s.⁵² It also played a significant role in the foundation of the rival Amazonian organisation CONAP at the end of the 1980s. CONAP suffered from a severe case of marginality in its early stages. However, by the mid 1990s it had left an impressive – indeed a globally unprecedented – mark on environmental-indigenous agendas that came to the fore in that decade, specifically the concern over the recognition and potential compensation of traditional knowledge of biodiversity in bioprospection ventures. This occurred in the context of a surge of efforts to apply neoliberal market principles to environmental and indigenous concerns and it is testament to the fact that while neoliberal multiculturalism may be menacing for indigenous agendas in some respects, as Hale argues, it is also potentially profitable in others.

CONAP became a global figure in terms of promoting indigenous cultural property protection of traditional medicinal knowledge in the context of a controversial and high-profile ethnopharmaceutical bioprospection programme with million dollar funding from the National Institutes of Health and Monsanto-Searle.⁵³ Following a controversial set of first round negotiations, a consortium of Aguaruna organisations, led by the Amazonian leader César Sarasara, effectively formed an indigenous corporation. The Aguaruna corporation negotiated a deal with Searle to recognise a claim to Aguaruna traditional medicinal knowledge through a ‘know-how’ licence, the only agreement of its kind worldwide. While Searle eventually withdrew from the project and only short-term licensing benefits materialised, causing quite a bit of local disgruntlement about false promises, CONAP continues to negotiate the Aguaruna’s intellectual property on the international bioprospecting market. Working with academic researchers from Washington University in charge of the ethnobotanical project, CONAP is now included as a co-author on a US patent application for a potential malaria cure and searching for a new corporate partner.

At the Amazonia-wide level in Peru, the ‘Native Community’ unit continues to be the basis for local land struggles and federation politics. Hypothetically, according to Native Community legislation, the state makes territorial allocations on local settlement patterns and resource use, taking into consideration local subsistence and migratory practices. Historically, there has been a continual pattern of inconsistency in applying these criteria to determine local territorial needs.⁵⁴ The inconsistency is in effect part of an

⁵² Smith, ‘Las políticas de la diversidad.’

⁵³ See Shane Greene ‘Indigenous People Incorporated? Culture as Politics, Culture as Property in Contemporary Bioprospecting,’ *Current Anthropology*, vol. 45, no. 2 (2004), pp. 211–37.

⁵⁴ See Luis Uriarte, ‘Los nativos y su territorio,’ *Amazonía Peruana*, vol. 6, no. 11 (1985), pp. 39–64.

ambivalent state policy that has left many native communities floating like titled islands in a sea of other, typically more market-oriented, actors with their own interests in the territory. Even while officially recognising Amazonian land claims, successive administrations continued to encourage colonisation of the *selva* as the solution to the needs of poor migrant agriculturalists. This situation has led to a series of intractable and occasionally explosive land conflicts with impoverished agricultural migrants in search of land as well as with natural resource prospectors from mostly foreign corporations.

Amazonian land struggles proved remarkably difficult after the initial revolutionary fervour of the Velasco era in which most of the initial native community titles were granted. Native Community land titling came to a virtual standstill by the 1980s. During the initial two years after the promotion of the 1974 Velasco law the state granted 244 titles for potentially at least one thousand native settlements with legitimate claims. For the entire six years following the state granted only 128 more.⁵⁵ There was a noticeable downward trend with the return of President Belaunde in 1980 and his strictly extractive vision for national development.

Ironically, the state's reluctance to title Amazonians' land changed dramatically during the Fujimori decade despite the impression held by some that his authoritarian and neoliberal tendencies effectively suppressed indigenous interests.⁵⁶ During his second term Fujimori sought to compensate for his neoliberal shock policies and authoritarian image by investing part of the state privatisation profits in various executive-controlled social and infrastructural development programmes.⁵⁷ According to some observers this allowed the president to co-opt key sectors of the popular classes in clientelist fashion, another strategy to reduce the space for alternative forms of civil social and political action. However, that interpretation must be weighed against the fact that among these popular sectors, the Amazonian movement exhibited some of its most significant successes during Fujimori's reign in terms of the way global environmental policy began to provide leverage for indigenous territorial and resource claims on the state. Examining Peru's national environmental policy context during the 1990s, Carlos Soria makes several important observations about the new, globally articulated and neoliberal, environmentalism of the Fujimori era.⁵⁸ The liberalisation of the economy swung the door wide open to foreign oil,

⁵⁵ See Carlos Mora, 'Reflexiones acerca del problema territorial de las comunidades indígenas de la Amazonía,' *América Indígena*, vol. XLIII, no. 3, pp. 580–1.

⁵⁶ Albó, 'Ethnic Identity.'

⁵⁷ C. Wise, *Reinventing the State*.

⁵⁸ Carlos Soria, 'Avances en el derecho ambiental en el Perú,' Paper presented at the Seminario de Abertura do Curso de Doutorado em Direito, Universidade Federal de Pará, October 24 (2003).

forestry, and particularly mining interests. Fujimori also stacked the deck by naming a mining company official to a newly created Consejo Nacional del Ambiente (CONAM) in 1994. Yet, according to Soria, however compromised by extractive interests, the creation of CONAM is one sign among many that demonstrate the impact that global environmental activism in the international ‘sustainable development’ arena has had on Peru’s policy context. Among other notable legislative events are Fujimori’s 1993 Constitution, which redefined national environment policy in terms of globalised environmental rhetoric of ‘sustainable development’, and a host of laws from the late 1990s that further expand the state’s ‘sustainability’ rhetoric.

In this context it is not surprising that it was during the Fujimori era that Amazonian natives achieved their most tangible territorial victories since the Velasco era, both in terms of number of Native Community titles and gains in indigenous territory. Thus, in 1997 a national level Amazonian leader announced that the recent efforts to gain more native community titles resulted in as many as four million new hectares.⁵⁹ And several advocacy participants attribute this directly to the impact of the global eco-indigenous alliance with international funders, NGOs, and development institutions that Peruvian Amazonians, through institutions like AIDSESEP and COICA, helped build.⁶⁰

A good example of such legal territorial gains is found among the Aguaruna of the northern *selva*. After more than a decade of deliberate inattention from prior governments the Fujimori administration effectively doubled the total amount of native community titles to this ethnic constituency. Of the 186 Native Communities the Aguaruna held title to in 1999 80 were granted during the initial three years after the 1974 Velasco law, and 90 were granted between 1991 and 1999 during Fujimori’s two terms (the vast majority in 1998 and 1999). Remarkably, the state only granted 16 titles to the Aguaruna between 1978 and 1990 before Fujimori entered office.⁶¹

The Aguaruna’s recent titling efforts took place thanks to cooperation between various indigenous organisations, an environmentally oriented NGO funded by the Catholic Church, and a sustainable development project of the German government in conjunction with the Proyecto Especial de Titulación de Tierras (PETT) of the Ministry of Agriculture. While territorial

⁵⁹ Gil Inoach, ‘Perspectivas generales de la situación indígena amazónica,’ in *Desarrollo y participación de las comunidades nativas* (Lima, 1997), p. 71.

⁶⁰ See Richard Chase Smith, Margarita Benavides, Mario Pariona and Ermeto Tuesta, ‘Mapping the Past and the Future: Geomatics and Indigenous Territories in the Peruvian Amazon,’ *Human Organisation*, vol. 62, no. 4, (2003), pp. 357–68.

⁶¹ I compiled this data from Proyecto Especial Titulación de Tierras (PETT), ‘Directorio de Comunidades Nativas del Perú, 1999’ (Lima, 2000) as well as titling data collected from the Ministerio de Agricultura, PETT, in Tarapoto, Department of San Martín in late 1998.

fragmentation and land conflicts are still common in some Aguaruna areas, these titling efforts have allowed the Aguaruna to create de facto territorial blocks of contiguous Native Community land in others. Indeed, in several cases I witnessed in the field state officials from the Ministry of Agriculture which oversaw Aguaruna titling projects even occasionally encouraged such territorial consolidation by citing the now global eco-indigenous idea of the natives as natural conservationists. 'The natives protect the forest better than the colonists', one PETT official answered in response to my question about the reason for the new titling efforts.

If the global neoliberal ideology that pushes forward the privatisation of natural resources became hegemonic in Fujimori's Peru, so too did the global environmental discourse of 'sustainability', the same one implicated in the linkage of environmental and indigenous activist agendas, eco- and ethno-politics, and the Amazonian forest with its native inhabitants' territorial claims. An important point here is that this contradictory situation is hardly unique to Peru. These are the global contradictions inherent in the way neoliberal economics, multicultural recognition, environmental concern, and indigenous activism coalesce. Peru in this respect is only one nation among nations struggling to chart a course in the face of such global contradictions. The idea that the Fujimori government was somehow singularly hostile to indigenous movements, or worse still that Peru is somehow peculiarly impervious to these broader global trends, overlooks the ways in which the Amazonian movement successfully vied for more political and territorial space by their engagement in global eco-ethno politics during precisely this period. It is in this historical context of the last three decades that Peru's Amazonian movement – whatever its perceived national insignificance – proves itself to be of truly global proportions.

CONAPA's Multicultural Fiasco and the Birth of INDEPA

The recent and emerging alliance between Andean and Amazonian leaderships actually predates Toledo's rise to power. In 1997 Andean and Amazonian community organisers participated in a human rights conference in Cusco that addressed the issue of indigenous rights. Following the meeting participants established a new initiative that evolved into the Coordinadora Permanente de Pueblos Indígenas del Perú (COPPIP), a framework that seeks to unite Andean 'peasant' communities with Amazonian 'native' communities under an explicitly indigenous banner.⁶² Originally, AIDSESP

⁶² There is some discussion over who can claim ownership of the name and acronym however. For more on the factionalised history of COPPIP see María Elena García, *Making Indigenous Citizens: Identities, Education, and Multicultural Development in Peru* (Stanford, 2005), pp. 60–1.

housed COPPIP in its Lima offices and Gil Inoach, from the Aguaruna peoples, served as COPPIP's first president during his second period of leadership in AIDSESEP.

COPPIP's leadership is supposed to rotate between acting representatives of its affiliating Amazonian and Andean organisations, which include a mix of professionally-run NGOs and other organisations with more direct representational ties to provincial Andean and Amazonian communities.⁶³ And it has served as a space for reflection about the 'problem' of indigenous peasant identity in the Andes. COPPIP's declaration from its Second National Congress in 2001 highlights the effect of the Velasco government's terminological switch: 'Se borró del lenguaje jurídico y político la denominación de Comunidades Indígenas sustituyéndolo por el de Comunidades Campesinas, quitándonos por consiguiente el único término de identidad con el que nos habían motejado los colonialistas.'

The declaration goes on to declare, 'Es nuestro interés retomar esta identidad como un derecho inalienable para usar un estatus jurídico internacional, que hoy se reconoce.'⁶⁴

COPPIP's closest connection to an Andean base is found in its current Andean leadership at the Coordinadora Nacional de Comunidades Afectadas por la Minería (CONACAMI). CONACAMI works to highlight the socio-environmental impact of mining operations in various Andean provinces and propose other, more ecologically friendly, forms of market activity like ecologically sustainable agriculture and eco-tourism. CONACAMI was born an essentially 'peasant community' initiative in the late 1990s to answer Fujimori's neoliberal natural resource policy. Although it was without any explicit ethnic content initially, as it has taken over leadership of COPPIP in the context of Karp's multicultural commission, CONACAMI increasingly deploys its own eco-ethno-political *indigenous* stance. I asked Miguel Palacín, founder of CONACAMI and recent president of COPPIP, about indigenous movements and identity in the Peruvian Andes. He acknowledged the notion of their absence and described CONCACAMI as a young organisation, still very much 'en proceso'. His optimism about the future, however, was clear. 'El movimiento indígena o el pensamiento de los andinos en el Perú no ha muerto. Está dormida y va a despertar' (interview, 18 May 2005).

⁶³ The main connection to Amazonian communities is still through the organisation AIDSESEP. Some of the affiliating Andean organisations include: Asociación de Defensa y Desarrollo de las Comunidades Andinas del Perú (ADECAP), Unión Nacional de Comunidades Aymara (UNCA), Organización Nacional Aymara (ONA), Coordinadora Nacional de Comunidades Campesinas e Indígenas del Perú (CONACCIP), Federación de Mujeres Campesinas del Distrito de Yauli (FEMUCAY), Federación Agraria Departamental de Ayacucho (FADA).

⁶⁴ COPPIP, 'II Congreso Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas del Perú' (2001), www.rcp.net.pe/ashaninka/coppip/Py_Consulta.htm, Accessed 2/13/03, p. 8.

Like many scholars, Palacín attributes the Andeans' 'sleeping' ethnic status to the effects of Sendero's dirty war and to the ways in which Andeans have been pulled to the left and right by political parties and peasant organisations. But, tellingly, he attributes the recent rise of CONACAMI as an ethnically minded organisation to its refusal to play into such traditional Peruvian politics and instead to look for alliances with Amazonians based on their longer history of institutional presence. 'We saw their success', he says in reference to AIDSESEP, the organisation with which CONACAMI has discovered it is most 'compatible'. CONCACAMI leaders now cite indigenous rights instruments like the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 as global leverage in order to demand recognition of an Andean indigenous status from the state. Their platform statement demands that the Peruvian Constitution understand "'pueblo indígena" como sinónimo de comunidades campesinas'.⁶⁵

It is in the context of this nascent Andean-Amazonian alliance that the Peruvian first lady attempted to translate Toledo's neo-Incaic image into policy in 2001 by establishing the Comisión Nacional de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicas y Afroperuanos (CONAPA). Prior developments along these lines were already in motion during Valentín Paniagua's brief government following Fujimori's escape to Japan in late 2000. Remarkably, Paniagua attended to a series of demands presented by Amazonian leaders from the *selva central* by instituting a Comisión Especial Multisectorial para las Comunidades Nativas and setting up 'mesas de diálogo' with both Amazonian organisations (AIDSESEP and CONAP) and with various Amazonian oriented NGOs. The outcome of the commission's 'diálogo' was a comprehensive 'Priority Action Plan' with which the state promised to address Amazonian needs. Elaine Karp took this multi-sectorial Amazonian initiative in a more explicitly multicultural direction and expanded the state's attention to all of Peru's ethnic minorities and geo-regions once Toledo was ushered into office.

CONAPA modelled its initial constitutional reform proposal on Colombia's 1991 Constitution, which is heavily influenced by global legal currents in multicultural democratisation.⁶⁶ The participatory agenda, which included Amazonian leaders like Gil Inoach of AIDSESEP and Miguel Palacín of CONACAMI in the early phases, was seriously compromised in 2003 by a series of scandals that left indigenous organisation leaders disgruntled and the congress eager to investigate. The initial controversy resulted from Elaine Karp's poorly managed resignation from the commission. In early July 2003 she stated publicly that it was time for the

⁶⁵ CONACAMI, 'Plataforma Nacional,' <http://www.conacami.org/plataforma.htm>, accessed 1 January 2005.

⁶⁶ D. Van Cott, *The Friendly Liquidation*.

entity to be under the direction of a person representing one of Peru's ethnic minorities. In fact, in a previous meeting in the presidential palace, Toledo and Karp had already offered the job to Gil Inoach behind closed doors on the basis of his active participation in CONAPA and prior to it in the Paniagua 'mesas'. However, according to Inoach the presidential couple later retracted the job offer because he refused to accept a pre-packaged list of persons they planned to name to the commission:

Lamentablemente mi nombramiento estaba condicionada. Me presentaron una lista de personas que conformarían a CONAPA, a lo que observé y presenté como contrapropuesta otra lista, sosteniendo que si CONAPA apostaba por un cambio por un Estado inclusivo, en la composición de CONAPA sería aconsejable que fueran integrados por representantes indígenas autorizados y representativos. (Gil Inoach, personal communication, 12 December 2003)

Instead, the position went temporarily to Miguel Hilario, a member of the Amazonian Shipibo-Conibo peoples, who is a graduate student at Stanford University and has lived outside Peru for many years. Because Toledo and Karp failed to consult indigenous organisations on either candidate's nomination, most indigenous organisation leaders interpreted their actions as a clear instance of top-down politics, not 'participatory' democratisation.

Other public accusations added fuel to the fire.⁶⁷ It soon became public knowledge that Karp had accepted a privately-funded research project on indigenous movements just before she resigned from her ad honorem work in CONAPA. Congress members immediately raised questions about her ethics in trying to navigate around this conflict of interest. Second, serious allegations surfaced about gross mismanagement of a \$5 million World Bank indigenous development fund for Peru that the Fujimori government had ignored and CONAPA successfully recovered. Public criticism from indigenous movement actors led to a congressional investigation and the call for an audit by the World Bank.⁶⁸ The congress eventually revealed serious irregularities in the way top members of CONAPA, particularly the executive secretary, had managed the fund.⁶⁹ Finally, one sector of indigenous leaders (from AIDSESEP, COPPIP, and CONACAMI) criticised Toledo and ranking members of CONAPA for their associations with consultants that gave a green light to the Pluspetrol consortium that operates the Camisea gas project in the central jungle.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ See Greene, 'Incas, *Indios*, and Indigenism.'

⁶⁸ 'En el Banco Mundial Consideran Apropiado Auditar la Conapa.' *El Comercio*, 23 April 2004, www.elcomerciooperu.com.pe, accessed 25 June 2004.

⁶⁹ 'Comisión de Fiscalización Encuentra Irregularidades en la Conapa' *El Comercio* 24, June 2004, www.elcomerciooperu.com.pe, accessed 25 June 2004.

⁷⁰ The Camisea project has recently come under heavy fire from North American and Peruvian NGOs for its potential impact on isolated native peoples living in the

The conflict came to the boil on 14 August 2003 when 36 signatories from all of Peru's major indigenous organisations publicly declared their refusal to recognise CONAPA as representative of their interests. This declaration launched a series of sharp criticisms about CONAPA's bureaucratic inefficiency, its lack of an official legal status, and its increasing tendency to 'act behind the backs of indigenous organisations' with which it was ostensibly in dialogue.⁷¹ The level of discontent with the state's indigenous agenda was made even more significant by the fact that the declaration served to unite not only Andean and Amazonian leaderships but also some competing factions among the Amazonians that have historically had some long-standing disagreements (namely AIDSESEP and CONAP, not to be confused with CONAPA).

For almost an entire year following this indigenous vote of no confidence there was a complete stalemate. As late as April 2004 President Toledo was still restating his faith in CONAPA, and Miguel Hilario, the Amazonian representative who stepped in to preside over the commission, was spending most of his time 'en apagar incendios', to use his words.⁷² In July 2004, during his annual Independence Day message to the nation, Toledo finally conceded some of the contested political space. He proposed to disband CONAPA and accept an entirely new institutional framework. Soon after the press quoted the president acknowledging the state's evident failure to meet indigenous expectations.⁷³ 'Los resultados no han sido los esperados', Toledo said, 'causándose de esta manera cierta desazón en quienes son su razón de ser.'⁷⁴ By the end of 2004 the Congress passed a law to create the Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperuano (INDEPA), which will include four Andean, three Amazonian and two Afro-Peruvian delegates and whose statute is still under construction at the time of this writing. Following this series of events it seems clear that one is forced to consider the 'insignificance' of indigenous movements and the Amazonian-Andean divide in Peru in a decidedly different light.

Nahua-Kugapakori reserve (see www.amazonwatch.org). However, AIDSESEP's rival Amazonian organisation, CONAP, maintains its support for the project.

⁷¹ 'Declaración Pública de los Pueblos Indígenas del Perú ante la Crisis Institucional de CONAPA' Document signed by 36 representatives from indigenous organisations including COPPIP, AIDSESEP, CONACAMI, CONAP and others, 14 August 2003, p. 2.

⁷² 'Alta Voz: "Se perdió mucho tiempo en apagar incendios"', *El Comercio*, 22 August 2004, www.elcomerciope.com.pe, accessed 3 November 2004.

⁷³ I say 'indigenous' expectations because Afro-Peruvian actors remained largely removed from the dispute between indigenous movement actors and CONAPA.

⁷⁴ 'Toledo despidió la Conapa y da luz verde al Indepa,' *El Comercio*, 10 August 2004, www.elcomerciope.com.pe, accessed 3 November 2004.

Conclusion

There is no question that in the Peruvian Andes ‘indigenous’ remains a decidedly complicated and ambivalent term, in the Cusco area as at the ‘peasant community’ level. Rhetorically class-based and other provincially meaningful forms of self-definition are still commonly part of people’s everyday lives and political aspirations. Yet, the circulation of a renewed form of Andean indigeneity among emergent and explicitly ethnicised organisations is clearly on the rise.

Toledo’s romantic identification with ‘deep Peru’ and the creation of CONAPA/INDEPA, despite all its complications, have certainly served to heighten awareness of the political potential of being, or perhaps re-becoming, self-consciously indigenous. Such politics even affect Peru’s most historic and nationally prominent peasant agrarian unions, although their support for an explicitly ‘indigenous’ cause is ambivalent at best. Following Toledo’s recent message to the nation, community leaders from both regions – including explicitly ethnic organisations and older, more established, peasant unions – responded by setting out to work on their own multi-cultural proposal for constitutional reforms. In October 2004 they submitted the proposal to congress and held a press conference in Lima in which they jointly and publicly ‘reaffirmed’ their identity as *pueblos indígenas*.⁷⁵ However, in early December 2004 CONACAMI, COPPIP and AIDSESEP convoked a large meeting of highland and lowland representatives to the Andean town of Huancavelica under the title ‘Cumbre de Pueblos Indígenas/Originarios’ to ‘debate and clarify [their] alternatives in the face of a national crisis from the point of view of their reality and future as indigenous/first peoples.’⁷⁶ Although invited, Peru’s peasant unions abstained from participation.

It would, however, be a mistake to isolate Toledo’s neo-Incaism as the national catalyst for Peru’s contemporary surge in self-conscious indigenous organising – not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of the substance of the politics at hand. To subscribe to such an explanation would also be to re-subscribe to Peru’s overly Andean-centric view of itself; to fall prey to the Inca slot yet again.⁷⁷ Worse still, this would be to overlook yet again the unquestionable global importance of the Peruvian Amazon as a site of indigenous struggle that has now come visibly to shape the nation’s politics and history after decades (if not centuries) of relative obscurity. In this sense

⁷⁵ ‘Indígenas y campesinos demandan cambios legislativos’ *Servindi Actualidad Indígena*, vol. 1 no. 6, 29 October 2004. The participant organisations included not only the various ethnically defined organisations mentioned throughout the article but also the *Confederación Nacional Agraria* and the *Confederación Campesina del Perú*, the two most historic peasant unions.

⁷⁶ ‘Cumbre Huancavelica 3–5 diciembre,’ *Actualidad Indígena Servindi*, vol. 1, no. 25 (2004).

⁷⁷ And this is precisely what Xavier Albó does; see ‘Ethnic Identity.’

I see Toledo's Incaic public politics not as the *catalyst* for but rather as part of an historically contingent and globalised *context* within which indigenous alliances between Andeans and Amazonians have emerged. These are geographic alliances that are characterised as much by an eco-politics of nature as they are by an ethnic politics of culture. And, most importantly, they represent a dramatic historical inversion in terms of what the national vision of indigeneity looks like for the Peruvian future. Contextualising recent state/indigenous politics in terms of the past several decades of Amazonian organising, one cannot help but conclude that the emerging eco-ethnic politics of the Peruvian Andes owes much of its contemporary shape, form and substance to the struggles that indigenous Amazonia has known for many years.

If I am right about the importance of the Amazonian movement in these developments, there are a series of important paradoxes here. The increasing *national* prominence of indigenous politics in Toledo's Peru is in significant part the result of *global* eco-ethnic ideologies that have been present primarily in Peru's nationally *insignificant* Amazonian region for decades. The regional Amazonian movement's global scope is now rearticulated within Peru as *nationally important* after being made repeatedly *nationally invisible*. One notices, for example, that in the case of CONAPA the symbolic transference of state power from Karp's evidently non-indigenous (not to mention foreign-born) hands to an indigenous person's hands both the representatives selected were Amazonian, not Andean. While there is much contingency involved in Toledo's succession to the 'Inca throne' as Peru's new president (starting with Fujimori's flight to Japan and flowing straight through to Toledo's minimal four point victory over Alan García), there is considerably less in the naming of Amazonian leaders to symbolise this extraordinary act of state recognition of Peru's indigenous peoples.

At one level, this served to recognise the prior participation of Amazonian actors with the Paniagua government and in the process of setting up the Commission, neither of which is surprising in light of the decades old Amazonian movement that was already in the making. But at a deeper level, this also marks a real shift in Peru's own understanding of itself. Ethnic template and national symbol, Andean indigeneity historically represents the 'Indian question' for the nation as a whole, but it is also Andean indigeneity that has historically been thrown into question. By contrast, Amazonian indigeneity, once made visible by its global impact, is apparently undeniable. In a final irony, it is this emerging eco-ethnic global context – combined contingently with Toledo's neo-Incaic nationalist moment – that makes it possible for the Peruvian Amazonians to finally step into the *national* spotlight after living so long in the nation's blind spot. Under these circumstances they are finally afforded the opportunity to stand in not merely for their own

‘regional’ interests but also at some level *for the nation*, a fate which the Inca slot has alternately cursed and blessed the Andeans with for quite a long time.

Much like de la Cadena, I hesitate to make any definitive predictions about Peru’s future.⁷⁸ But I will venture to guess that the steady rise of indigenous politics, in which the Amazonians have taken to setting the eco-ethno-political model for the Andeans, might fundamentally realign the way scholars think about ‘indigenous’ Peru.⁷⁹ Our old and extraordinarily narrow vision of the *sierra* and *selva* as separate (but unequal) domains is in acute need of reevaluation. I hope this paper may be seen as a step in that direction. If we are to rethink the importance of Varese’s observation that the Peruvian Amazon has served as national appendix, we must also rethink how the Peruvian Amazon has served as an academic afterthought to the many scholars who view ‘Peru’ as a product of the Andean-coastal dynamic. Logically, this suggests there is still plenty of room to challenge these terribly entrenched and profoundly limiting self-identifications as ‘Andean’ *or* (but rarely *and*) ‘Amazonian’ scholars of Peru. If today’s Peru is willing to look beyond the historical shadow of the Andes, a Peruvianology must find ways around the effects of the Inca slot. The present demands we look deeper than the ‘deep Peru’ of the past.

⁷⁸ De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 323.

⁷⁹ Indeed, I would argue that the recent publication of García’s important book, *Making Indigenous Citizens*, represents part of this horizon. While still largely Andeanist in focus, she does clearly express an awareness of the role of Amazonian activism in Peru. More fundamentally, her book demonstrates that even in the Andean context there are problems with the notion of Peru’s ‘absent’ indigenous movements.