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Making Indigenous Citizens: Identity, Development and Multicultural Activism in Peru

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attention to Amerindian cosmologies and ontologies. With its broad temporal and geographical scope, its recourse to a variety of sources of information, and its theoretical underpinnings, *Latin American Indigenous Warfare and Ritual Violence* is certain to become an indispensable reference for anyone interested in warfare in general, and in Amerindian warfare in particular. It is also bound to generate much welcomed and hopefully constructive discussion.

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García has produced a good and very readable book. Let there be no doubt about it! Through six brief chapters and an introduction she traces contemporary negotiations of (ethnic) identity among speakers of Quechua in Highland Peru centered on bilingual education and interculturality (*interculturalidad*). She perceives the struggles as a new mode of indigenous activism that merits specific attention. In the (Amazonian) experience of this reviewer, *interculturalidad* appears a sort of new buzz-word widely used in Peru; yet, few people have seemed to have a clear perception of what exactly it means. García explains it

as a concept similar to the concept of multiculturalism in the United States; however, she says, we may understand the distinction between them in the sense that "multiculturalism" refers to the recognition of a reality while *interculturalidad* reflects the *practices* based on this recognition where citizens reach across cultural and linguistic differences in an effort to imagine a democratic community (p. 3).

Emerging from teacher training workshops in Cuzco and from the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program for Andean Countries (PROEIB Andes) in Cochabamba across the border in Bolivia, García's activist subjects promote *interculturalidad* by promoting the adoption of a program of bilingual intercultural education in public schools throughout local communities in Peru's Andean highlands. In doing so, the activists are not voicing the subjective interests of the rural grassroots vis-à-vis a negligent state. On the contrary, the activists have the state as an ally and Highland parents as their adversaries. García does not offer much in terms of an explanation of why or how the Peruvian state has come to emerge as the bedfellow of this sort of activism. What she does offer is a perspective on the opposition to bilingual intercultural education on the part of Highland parents. These parents are not welcoming the idea that their children will be taught in Quechua rather than in Spanish. To them, Quechua is associated with poverty and lack of possibilities of ever improving the social, economic and political marginalization in which they find themselves trapped. As far as they are concerned, pride in Quechua identity is not something they need to develop, and they certainly do not see intercultural bilingual education as a positive enhancement of their chances for socio-economic mobility. Rather, they perceive it as a backwards move. What they want for their children is education in Spanish as a necessary first step on a track that may eventually allow their children to escape the poverty that has characterized their own lives as well as those of their parents and grandparents many generations back in time. Facing such opposition, activists need to either persuade or coerce the people in rural villages to accept this new form of public education. When it comes to actually implementing bilingual intercultural education, the activists—properly drilled into idealistic believers in the long-term benefits of their mission—have no problems with coercion. In this they simply follow centuries of Peruvian colonial tradition, making Andean villagers comply with the programs outsiders define as being in the villagers' own best interest.

In the eyes of García as well as the activists themselves, the legitimacy of the new bilingual intercultural education program is sustained by the fact that most of the activists share a Quechua ancestry and like the villagers, they are themselves native speakers of Quechua. The activists, in other words, are seen by themselves as well as by outsiders sympathetic to the project as the educated representatives of the marginalized Andean natives, with the activists acting on their behalf and, indeed, in the best interest of those who have still not come to

realize what their own best interests truly are. The irony and the déjà-vu of the situation do not escape García's attention. Yet, she perceives parent resistance and ongoing negotiations of bilingual intercultural education in the Highlands as a mode of creating new local spaces for collective action and greater local participation in development and politics—even if this participation comes about in terms of parent opposition to the project and in ways that are very different from what activists had expected (p. 3).

García is very clear about the fact that she sees the activists as friends; they are the ones with whom she did the more enjoyable part of her fieldwork spending many happy hours in exciting conversation. She *did* do fieldwork among rural parents; not for very long, however, and not as something she actually enjoyed or felt comfortable doing. Yet she felt she *had to* do it. García is wonderfully honest about actually detesting this part of her fieldwork. Given her bias in favor of her age-mates among the activists, it may be no wonder that this is also where her sympathies lie. The advantage in this is the fact that her fieldwork comes to be centered on the particular sort of activism promoted by the bilingual teachers and their directors rather than of the plight of the rural villagers. Hers might be labeled innovative fieldwork in an unconventional setting as opposed to conventional ethnographic fieldwork among exotic "others.'" Referring to George Marcus, García rightly claims her space among the researchers whose works qualify as "multisided ethnographic analysis," a strategy that indeed is critical for understanding broader local and global policies and representations of indigenous activism and development (p. 3).

In the context of contemporary research concerns with the (re-)emergence of indigenous peoples as political actors in Latin America, García's study is important in that it highlights the fact that within the terrain of indigenous mobilization, self-other oppositions are anything but fixed. Rather, they are constantly reworked within contexts of shifting alliances and rethinking of authority. These aspects of indigenous politics García shows to be at work in the conscious manipulations of ethnic labels by Quechua Highlanders, in the organization of mothers for literacy training, in the demand for greater community control of rural schools, and in the professionalization of indigenous intellectuals. Her study reveals the fact that indigenous mobilization in highland Peru is very much alive and kicking—quite contrary to the image of Peru held by other scholars and observers who have tended to characterize Peru as *the* one Latin American country where the indigenous movement has been largely nonexistent, indeed making Peru a curious anomaly as compared to neighboring Ecuador and Bolivia where nation-wide indigenous movements have been effervescent and very capable of attracting global public attention.

From the perspective of Peru's Amazonian lowlands, making up more than half of the country's territory, the image of Peru as lacking in indigenous activism certainly reflects the strong Andean bias widely subscribed to not only by observers involved in Andean studies but also by many Latin American

and international scholars in general. This bias has fostered a lack of attention to the vibrant mobilization among Peru's indigenous Amazonians from the 1970s onwards. García is aware of this bias and briefly notes that Peru's oldest and most active indigenous organizations developed among the Amazonian peoples, a fact that speaks against another scholarly argument drawing on social-movement-research to explain the absence of indigenous mobilization in Peru's Highlands as due to the violence during the long war against the Sendero Luminoso. Yet, political violence was always endemic in the lowlands and has not stopped indigenous leaders and activists from building supra-communal organizations, says García, noting furthermore that bilingual intercultural education has always been welcome, indeed actively demanded, by indigenous parents in the lowlands. From this comparative perspective García makes it very clear that the opposition to the new educations programs she encountered in the Highlands is a phenomenon that is not nation-wide but very much exclusive to Peru's rural Andes. Here, she also observes that a structural view of political opportunity and capacity tends to assume a rather static notion of indigenous identity politics and hence fails to recognize the cultural dynamics of identity formation as an important part of collective action. In this sense she writes against the tendency to gloss over different histories and asymmetries in order to form a united subaltern subject. García eschews a more detailed discussion of social movement scholarship and typology. Following Charles Tilly, she merely takes the Andean local communities, or more specifically their schoolhouses, as the prototypical sites of political performance by the state, NGO actors and Quechua families. From within this setting, García seeks to capture the imbrications of the local and the global, perceiving bilingual intercultural education programs as an extension of the enterprise of grassroots development and human rights advocacy (p. 12).

García's talent is not in reporting detailed ethnographic data or offering interpretive analysis of cultures or cosmologies. Her skill is in highlighting interconnections and identifying zones of engagement in which indigenous parents, state officials, and activists construct and disrupt, negotiate and contest the means and ends of not only education, but also at the same time of identity, citizenship and representation. From this perspective, the process consists in no more and no less than the articulation of *practices* of multiculturalism. García indeed takes bilingual intercultural education to be the mechanism par excellence used to foster intercultural unity out of multicultural difference. Whether her optimism on behalf of this project is premature, only time may tell; yet, she certainly has a point in noting that the field of Peruvian indigenous movements and politics has remained under-explored. Her study contributes to opening up this field in fascinating ways.

This book reads like a sort of crime story where the plot is uncovered slowly and step-by-step, keeping the reader's curiosity suspended in never-ending longing to find out what new machinations are to be found around the next

corner, in turning the next page, or starting a new chapter. For all the niceties about the book, however, I missed a tracing of the hands, minds and purse-strings behind the training of activists for the bilingual intercultural education project and a follow-up on the role of the state in the plot, seeking answers to the question why, for instance, the Peruvian state is currently emerging as a pro- rather than contra-force in fostering this politics of ethnic difference, apparently pushing aside the ideology of *mestizaje* that has been the hallmark of official national Peruvian identity since the days of independence nearly two centuries ago. Yet postmodern mystery tales seldom reveal the entire plot or let us in on the whole range of possible motives or actual parts played by all the parties to a crime or deed of heroism. It usually leaves some questions suspended in blue air, allowing subtle traces to point to areas yet unexplored, things yet to be detected by new investigators, unfinished deeds to be accomplished by new heroes or villains.

Those not concerned with bilingual intercultural education and the representations related to this policy but holding a general interest in indigenous politics, politics of language, or the history of *indigenismo* may still benefit from reading the introduction, conclusions (Chapter 6) and Part I of the book (Chapters 1 and 2). Here García provides exemplary reviews of relations between Peru's indigenous peoples and the State in the shadows of terror during the 1980-2002 period, as well as of the development of public discourse from one of *indigenismo* in the 1920s to one of *interculturalidad* in the 1990s. The book offers little in terms of presentations of ethnographic data in a conventional sense. It opens a discussion of heretofore under-explored fields of relations between indigenous peoples and the state within the context of encompassing global connections. García's work is innovative in more than one way and her book is recommended reading for researchers as well as for classroom teaching.

Paisajes Sonoros de un Mundo Coherente. Prácticas Musicales y Religión en la Sociedad Wichí. **Miguel A. García. Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Musicología, 2005. 254 pp., 2 mapas, 7 transcripciones musicales, 3 diagramas, 1 CD de audio con 7 tracks, bibliografía, índice. ISBN 950-9726-10-9. [www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects/chaco/wichi]**

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Estructurado en nueve capítulos, el libro de Miguel Ángel García aborda las prácticas musicales vigentes antes y durante los primeros momentos de integración sistemática de la sociedad *wichí* con la sociedad "blanca" y en particular, las actuales prácticas musicales ligadas a la conversión religiosa al evangelismo pentecostal.