INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples, Neo-liberal Regimes, and Varieties of Civil Society in Latin America

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Abstract: Emerging from the convergence of neo-liberal reforms, democratic openings, and an increase of interest in indigenous issues among international organizations, the growth of civil society in recent years has dramatically altered the political-economic landscape of Latin America. For a number of Latin American indigenous causes, civil society's surge in importance has been empowering, allowing access to funds, national and international attention, and in some cases increases in de facto and de jure autonomy. At the same time, the rise in the importance of civil society goes hand in hand with the rise of neo-liberal political and economic reforms that threaten the material bases of indigenous culture and expose populations to the vagaries of private funding. In this way, civil society also serves as an arena for neo-liberal forms of governmentality.

Keywords: citizenship, civil society, ethnic movements, governmentality, identity politics, indigenous rights, Latin America, neo-liberalism

Civil society is a slippery concept, and therein lies much of its appeal. By meaning many things to many people, it is one of those frequently invoked yet strategically ambiguous ideas that have real traction, not only in the rarefied world of professional journals, but also in the arena of public policy and political practice. Much of the recent literature on civil society has come from political science. But anthropology (ethnography in particular) has a lot to offer by documenting the on-the-ground diversity of civil society. The leitmotif that emerges from the essays in this special issue is that civil society takes many forms, with multiple, sometimes contradictory, social and political valences. Focusing on its complexities and vernacular forms moves us toward a more nuanced view of the potentials and pitfalls of civil society.

The allure of the concept of civil society also stems from its triangulation of traditionally progressive and traditionally conservative stances. It invokes the noble empowerment of marginalized peoples as well as the retraction of government obligations. It conjures possibilities for voluntary associations and grass-roots organizations as well as increased power of unelected officials and economic interests. Civil society's surge in importance has allowed Latin American indigenous communities access to funding, national and international awareness, and in some cases increases in de facto and de jure autonomy. At the same time, the rise in the importance of civil society goes hand in hand with the rise of neo-liberal political and economic reforms that threaten the material bases of indigenous culture and expose populations to the fickle fashions of First World funding and constraints on time and energy.

To what extent, then, does civil society serve as a space for what Foucault (1991) calls governmentality? Civil society allows the expression of will, of hopes and aspirations for the future, along with a sense of choice, self-determination, and empowerment. But this space of expression and agitation also fits into social and political relations in a way that buttresses claims of inclusion and representativeness while still upholding a particular status quo. Working through what Fischer and Benson (2006) have termed "limit points," civil society can co-opt and corrupt movements of resistance and utopian narratives by providing a fore-shortened yet feasible alternative. At the same time, trying to co-opt resistance is a risky business: as Giddens (1984) observes, such elements may begin to structure the system itself in ways not foreseen. In this light, civil society also provides a radically democratic position from which marginalized peoples can exert influence on policies and practices. This is not an either-or proposition. The complexity of civil society resides in its quantum-mechanical aspect: simultaneously a point of resistance and of hegemonic collusion, civil society is formed from a contradiction that cannot be reconciled. The ethnographic challenge, then, is to represent this complexity without trying to force a synthesis of the thesis and antithesis.

In recent years, the concept of civil society has received a lot of attention from political scientists, economists, and sociologists but less from anthropologists. To be sure, ethnographers have observed and analyzed the impacts of civil society institutions on the communities they study, but they often do so outside of the paradigm of civil society studies. If we conceive of ethnography not just as a methodology but as epistemology—as the dialectic construction of knowledge through an engagement with 'the field'—then it is all the more necessary for the study of paradigm-bending vernacular forms of civil society. Kapferer (2000: 189) sees fieldwork as "an attitude and a means to break the resistance of the anthropologist's own assumptions, prejudices and theories, wherever the site of origin, concerning the nature and reason of lived realities." Indeed, herein resides the power of ethnography—a means of breaking down preconceptions and forcing an engagement with the lived reality of practice. And it is through such an approach that we sometimes come to unsettling conclusions about social forms that we are apt to celebrate.

The contributors to this issue all employ an ethnographic approach that challenges received wisdom about civil society by showing the complex and

variable outcomes of vernacular civil society in countries across Latin America. Addressing the multiple potentialities of civil society growth and critically assessing its potential for sustained change, these contributions speak not only to Latin American anthropology but also to the changing shape of global systems of political economy.

Indigenous Civil Society and New Social Movements

There was a moment in the 1980s and 1990s when there was great optimism about the potential of 'new social movements'—movements that were based on issues of identity rather than class and that stressed plurality of identity over unity of ideology (Laclau and Mouffe 1988; see also Buechler 1999; Escobar and Alvarez 1992). In the present collection, we too are concerned with identity politics and ethnic activism while also seeking to emphasize the importance of material conditions and macro-political economic contexts. Whereas the new social movements of Europe and the United States are in many ways post-materialistic (or anti-materialistic), the indigenous movements of Latin America are clearly rooted in conditions of material poverty and exploitation (even if many of their leaders are the more affluent among a marginalized population). Nonetheless, globalized new social movements in the North have deftly focused on human rights—specifically, the right to have rights, which opens the door to ethnic rights and indigenous identity politics.

In focusing on cultural aspects, the literature on new social movements sometimes neglects the political-economic structure that conditions new forms of organization and activism. The rise of indigenous civil society in Latin America must be understood as situated in a particular political-economic context: the debt crisis of the 1980s leading to neo-liberal reforms, and neo-liberal reforms opening up new spaces and creating conditions for new forms of activism.

Political-economic changes and the rise of indigenous consciousness over the last 20 or so years have invigorated civil society. Just as many governmental economic protections have been dismantled, civil society institutions (especially those focused on indigenous and environmental issues) have taken on increasing power in influencing state policies. This is a sort of proxy populism, allowing (or forcing) elected representatives to respond to constituent demands. While superior to benign disregard or active disdain for public opinion, it can be the case that the most vocal and the most media savvy—and not necessarily the most needy—get the attention, a point to which I return below.

Indigenous civil society organizations in Latin America have been especially effective in forging international alliances that help pressure the state from without, just as grass-roots action applies pressure from within. In many ways, the international left legitimates indigenous civil society even as it seeks to be legitimated by an association with authentic indigenous protest. At their best, such alliances strengthen indigenous civil society in Latin America by mobilizing the material resources and media access of international networks. Yet there can also be a heavy-handedness of good intentions that can become

oppressive, even racist, in visions of indigenous futures built on distant moral projects and romanticized dreams.

Civil Society and the State

Civil society is often defined by what it is not: not of the government, not of the private sector. While at its broadest it can encompass everything from knitting circles to the Catholic Church, in practice it most often refers to organized NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Keane (1998: 45) provides what I find to be a particularly useful definition of civil society as the "non-legislative, extra-judicial, public space in which societal differences, social problems, public policy, government action, and matters of community and cultural identity are developed and debated." Whereas we generally think of civil society in terms of 'institutions', which is to say formal organization, there is also a fertile realm of spontaneous, non-organized civil society.

Theorizations of civil society often draw heavily from the literature on social capital.[1] Social capital, as outlined by Bourdieu (1984), includes the resources (actual and symbolic) that an individual or group attains through networks of relations. Social capital is intimately linked to cultural capital, and both are convertible—in ways at times explicit and at times hidden—into economic capital (Marx's 'productive capital'). Civil society provides a structure through which social capital can be converted to economic and political ends vis-à-vis the state.

Civil society's relation to the state is complex, for while it is separate from the state, it is the state that guarantees its autonomy. Mamdani (1996: 15) argues that "the constellation of social forces organized in and through civil society" can operate only "by ensuring a form of the state and a corresponding legal regime to undergird the autonomy of civil society."

Early considerations did not draw the stark line between civil society and the state that is now fundamental to our understanding. Aristotle's thoughts on what he termed 'political community' (which, significantly, was translated into Latin as *societas civilis*) described an ideal in which civil society was the state. The state was based on individuals agreeing to live together by certain principles derived from community values—and, of course, a bit of coercion.

In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel ([1821] 2006) views civil society as distinct from the state but not from the private economic sector. He saw civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, which might also be translated as 'bourgeois society') as including the economic sphere (ibid.: § 182):

> In civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him. But except in contact with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends, and therefore these others are means to the end of the particular member. A particular end, however, assumes the form of universality through this relation to other people, and it is attained in the simultaneous attainment of the welfare of others. Since particularity is inevitably conditioned by universality, the whole sphere of

> civil Society is the territory of mediation where there is free play for every idiosyncrasy, every talent, every accident of birth and fortune, and where waves of every passion gush forth, regulated only by reason glinting through them.

Hegel saw England, with its flourishing capitalist enterprises, as the embodiment of a civil society based on rational self-interests and utilitarianism and the breakdown of family and community ties bound by tradition. This sort of civil society eroded traditional political society, and it was to be the role of the state to mediate these drives by expressing a unified, rational collective will through politics. Capitalist civil society destroyed ancient traditionalism but could not replace it with the collective morality of the state. Eventually, civil society would become subsumed to the state. Hegel argued that the state of nature (needs, narrow egoistic self-interest) must be mediated through civil society (including the economy) before becoming political. Civil society thus educates and tames self-interest. In this way, Hegel sees civil society as molding the convergence of individual and collective will through the state.

It is this Hegelian view that gives rise both to contemporary conservative and to liberal views of civil society. There is the tradition that started with the conservative Hegelians and continues through modern neo-conservative views. The Cato Institute, a libertarian research foundation headquartered in Washington, DC, defines civil society as a way of "fundamentally reducing the role of politics in society by expanding free markets and individual liberty" (quoted in Edwards 2004: 2). Conservative authors such as Don Eberly (2000: 17) note that "civil society not only mediates on behalf of the individual, and works to curb atomization; it inculcates core democratic values." These in turn are 'seedbeds of virtue' of the sort Tocqueville described, fertile ground for the pursuit of enlightened self-interest. Eberly maintains that while many conservatives see civil society as a replacement for government, many liberals view it as a mechanism for making government work better and connect more firmly with the populace. In this sense, they are more closely aligned with the young Hegelians, whose more progressive views of change inform the so-called New Left.

Such genealogies lead Partha Chatterjee (2004) to argue that civil society is a product of Western modernity that is meant to replicate Western modernity. Those who do not "conform to the (Western bourgeois, secularized Christian) principles of modern civil society" are excluded and relegated to the realm of the traditional (ibid.: 61). He proposes "political society" to discuss that space wherein political (electoral) mobilization not grounded in Western civil society exercises power. Such political society allows the poor, both rural and urban, to come together to shape the state and its responses through various means, legal and extra-legal.

Chaterjee's inclusive, libratory vision builds on, while critically challenging, the Gramscian tradition of civil society studies. Gramsci (1971: 208) reintroduced civil society debates into twentieth-century social science, and, unlike Hegel, clearly defined it as neither of the state nor of the private market sector: "[B]etween the economic structure and the state with its legislation and coercion stands civil society." While Gramsci is often remembered for viewing

civil society as potentially disruptive and anti-hegemonic (see Hardt 1995), he placed great weight on its use as a mechanism through which hegemonies were constructed (particularly in public spheres such as schools and the media).

Gramsci's views on civil society see in it the multiple potentials we focus on here. While he regards civil society as the socio-cultural sphere through which state power is legitimated and buttressed, the site of hegemonic formation, he also highlights the more radically democratic potential of civil society—the disruptive potential of organic intellectuals to critique the state of things—and its capacity as a site of resistance against the state. This multi-faceted view is especially useful in understanding civil society as a political space and institutional framework with the capability to resist as well as reify state-sanctioned relations. The articles in this issue speak to the range of potentialities realized through indigenous civil society organizations in the varied contexts of Latin American countries.

Civil Society and Governmentality

While civil society promotes association, it is ecumenical with regard to the content and aims of those associations. Civil society can fractionalize as well as unify—or do both simultaneously. Indeed, associations of ideologically like-minded individuals provide a context in which extremism can easily flourish. The middle ground can become easily skewed, allowing ideas and discourses to move to an extreme without disturbing unspoken assumptions. Civil society can promote racism and sexism and exclusion as easily as inclusion. It can also provide a venue for despots and criminals to pursue their aims (Keane 1998).

Gramsci saw civil society as supporting the powers that be while providing a venue for resistance to power structures. A Foucauldian perspective focuses on the former rather than the latter possibility, while extending the concept of power beyond the formal apparatuses of the state and into the fluid relations between individuals. Foucault (1991) argues that civil society underwrites the state; indeed, he denies the separation of civil society and political society. Like Hegel and Gramsci, Foucault sees civil society institutions serving an educating function, but where Hegel celebrates this as moving natural subjects in line with idealized and mutually beneficial goals of the state (Hegel's enlightened, benevolent state), Foucault shows how the education that Hegel celebrated creates and fixes identities—all the better to govern with.

For Foucault, the enclosures of civil society produce disciplined subjects, exerting more subtle control than out-and-out subjugation. Here civil society feeds into Foucault's (1991) theories of governmentality, or the mentalities of government (in the particular sense of governing individuals' conduct as well as the expansive sense of political governance). In Foucault's view, government is the "conduct of conduct" and involves governing the self as well as governing others (see Dean 1999). He perceptively argues that governing (*gouverner*) is most effective when it colonizes modes of thought (*mentalité*). In this way, individuals are led to govern the self, internalizing mechanism of self-governance, or rather choosing of their own 'free' will identities that lend themselves to

governance. Such 'political rationality' operates outside of state institutions and can come to permeate private relations as well as public ones. Indeed, in its economic guise, political rationality thrives on the contraction of the state, as is the case in neo-liberal regimes in which market forces are invested with the qualities of natural law and the decentralized power outsources much of the state's disciplinary work to the governed themselves. Such governmentality works through mechanisms that shape our wants and aspirations, for which, especially as responsibilities devolve back to individuals, we are held to be self-responsible.

NGOs and civil society organizations bring economic thought and market forces to bear on governance and governmentalities. By concentrating energies on the feasible and fundable alternatives of realpolitik, they structure realms of possibility and condition and foreshorten dreams of possible futures. Here ethnography provides a crucial complement to Foucault's abstracted, top-down oriented model by showing the nuanced and disruptive permutations that civil society organizations may take on the ground.

Many have argued that social capital breaks down with the hyper-individualization of post-Fordist consumer societies (Putman 2000). But following Skocpol (2003), we may also see civil society not so much as the spontaneous eruption of grass-roots sentiment but as the product of institutional structures that condition participation. With the neo-liberal contraction of the state, the role of civil society has changed to advocacy and championing special interests, often played out in the courts rather than the legislature. By professionalizing advocacy through lobbying, there is no need for participation. And this civil society marketplace has produced a whole new way to articulate with the government.

Hardt (1995: 27) argues against the late-twentieth-century celebratory literature on civil society: "[W]hile recognizing the democratic functions that the concept and reality of civil society have made possible, it is also important to be aware of the functions of discipline and exploitation that are inherent in and inseparable from these same structures." Drawing on observations by Gilles Deleuze that in the postmodern era we have moved from a disciplinary society to a society of control, Hardt contends that as the logic of capitalism has permeated ever more spheres of daily life, civil society has withered away. He claims (ibid.) that the era in which we live is best characterized not as postmodern but as a "postcivil society." Whereas Fordist regimes defined roles that were based on fixed relations, in this age of flexibility there are no fixed identities or roles. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) note, the spread of post-Fordist capitalism results in the hyper-segmentation of social segments while also smoothing over the divides by infiltrating all social spheres, both public and private. Where capital achieves a true subsumption of labor, "instead of disciplining the citizen as a fixed social identity, the new social regime seeks to control the citizen as a whatever identity, or rather as an infinitely flexible placeholder for identity" (Hardt 1995: 31).

Applying these ideas to the circumstances of Latin America, Yúdice (1995: 17) looks to the tension between neo-liberal reforms and the rise of grass-roots movements, which are opposed to each other "yet contribute to the relinquishing by the state of the obligations to provide citizenship rights." Neo-liberal reforms can open new spaces for indigenous politics (Fischer 2001), but to

what extent is this just a diversionary tactic of governmentality? Gustafson (2006: 374) suggests that the problem is in the framing of such questions. Looking at how civic regionalism is variously mapped in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, he concludes that the projects were "neither wholly that of the hegemonic state operating against resistant locals nor entirely the one of neo-liberal governmentality flowing out of transnational nowhere."

In looking at the emergence of "neoliberal multiculturalism," Hale (2004) writes of the *indio permitido* (or 'authorized' Indian), a pernicious situation in which indigenous groups are allowed some realm of expression that is confined to areas deemed non-threatening to state power. Those 'authorized' Indian groups that play along are praised and held up as examples of the inclusiveness of the state; those that do not are excluded and branded as divisive, even terrorists. While Hale's view of state power is decidedly Gramscian, his understanding of the motivations of the *indio permitido* resonates with Foucault's writings on governmentality and the ways in which power relations are defined with respect to enumerated populations.

In shaping desires, such internalizations of power relations become intertwined with notions of self-determination. At the same time, a concern with what is feasible and within reach often focuses efforts on 'limit points': goals that foreshorten the possibilities of radical change by concentrating attention and energy on what is viewed as attainable (see Fischer and Benson 2006). Indigenous leaders who seek radical reform are often marginalized for being idealistic and unrealistic—racist, even. And in these circumstances, the contours of civil society governmentality are especially stark.

Civil Society in Transnational Space

At the international level, a new breed of NGOs emerged in the 1990s to form what has been termed a 'global civil society'. There are about 40,000 international NGOs and 20,000 international NGO networks, 90 percent of them formed since 1970 (Edwards 2004: 23). Holly Cullen and Karen Murrow (2001) point out the role of NGOs in implementing and monitoring international accords in the absence of other mechanisms, which in turn raises questions about NGO accountability. We often assume that NGOs represent the people, that they are democratic by nature, but in fact they can be elitist. Cullen and Murrow conclude that many NGOs do have credibility and work hard to strengthen grassroots support—a form of legitimacy—but that this is a constant struggle.

It is often assumed that NGOs have the power to confer democratic legitimacy in situations where there is not much to be found (international law, Latin American governments, etc.). However, a Ford Foundation study of civil society and governance "found that associational life does contribute democracy and state accountability, but not as much as was thought, and only when certain conditions are met—alliances and coalitions between associations, for example, inclusive membership, and independence, including as much domestic funding as possible" (Edwards 2004: 84). In addition, Bebbington and Thiele (1993) show how NGOs

become vehicles for the political aims of both the international Left and Right and how such funding influences the direction that these organizations take.

Increasingly, NGOs and other civil society actors operate in a world order dominated by what Kapferer (2005) characterizes as "wild sovereignty." Realigned political and economic interests in the globalized world have unleashed virulent, wild forms of corporate and political-military sovereignty. While opening up space for civil society–based resistance, this situation also insidiously promotes forms of governmentality as a survival strategy.

Appadurai (2002) argues that transnational relations can actually work to deepen local democracies. Local forms of organization may produce a sort of counter-governance from below, with justifications based on the kinds of censuses, ancestral claims, and other population-defining technologies that are so central to the more nefarious forms of governmentality. Such forms of civil society organization may be viewed as a sort of "countergovernmentality … governmentality turned against itself" (ibid.: 36; see also Hanson 2007 on forms of counter-governmentality).

Focusing on the "transnational apparatus of governmentality," Ferguson and Gupta (2002) take on the supposition of verticality that envisions the state atop civil society. They argue that in this current age of "transnational governmentality" states may still claim a superior position in relation to civil society, but that the horizontal, transnational linkages of NGOs effectively challenge such claims. And while governmentality works through the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the WTO (World Trade Organization), and other such international non-state mechanisms, it also allows the disruptive potential of transnational grass-roots organization.

Neo-liberal Forms of Citizenship

The forces of globalization have certainly eroded traditional state authority, especially through communications and transportation technologies, and this has allowed indigenous groups and their advocate NGOs to tap directly into international networks. The Zapatistas of Chiapas have effectively circumvented state controls by appealing directly to the international community, arguably playing to the international audience as much as, and at times more than, the national audience. A significant extent of their Mexican national support has come from left-leaning young urbanites—the same demographic in many ways as their supporters in Italy and Sweden.

Ramos (2002: 272) contends that as indigenous groups have "allied with entrepreneurial NGOs," their aims have shifted from collectively advancing a unified native front to pursuing more local and more economic issues, such as community development. She goes on to note that the international stage has provided indigenist groups (the product of "an Americas-style, amplified form of Orientalism") with an effective forum to agitate for change in discriminatory structures of national societies: "[E]thnic groups have found the most comfortable alliance to be not with social classes, not with the state, not with the church, but

with supranational powers and private managers of ethnicity" (ibid.: 275). Ramos concludes that "suprastate organisms like the U.N. and extranational entities like NGOs" are providing indigenous peoples with the tools they need to change their circumstances and change themselves (ibid.: 276).

This points to the post-liberal (or neo-liberal) challenge of identity politics. As Sieder (2005), Yashar (2004), Ong (1999, 2006), and others have noted, neo-liberal regimes create new sorts of citizens and new sorts of citizenships. Rather than packaged as a whole, rights and responsibilities of neo-liberal citizenship are divvied up and differentially distributed (a process with a long history, as Baud shows in his contribution to this issue). The goal of such structural changes is to produce newly flexible neo-liberal subjects who have to shoulder more risks.

Yashar (2004) looks at Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru (with some reference to Guatemala and Mexico), focusing on citizenship regimes (the institutional factors that organize political involvement) and corporatist political structures that allowed for a large degree of indigenous autonomy at the local level. With the shift to neo-liberal regimes, which challenged indigenous autonomy, some actors were galvanized into action. Yashar concludes that some movements were more successful at mobilization than others because of the confluence of (1) changing citizenship regimes due to neo-liberal reforms, (2) the presence of political space for association (freedom of association, etc.), and (3) the presence of regional or national NGOs or other groups or networks that allowed mobilization to scale up effectively.

Gywnne and Kay (2004: 17) argue that there is a strong link between neo-liberal policies and democratic governance in Latin American countries. This does not, however, reveal causality; in fact, the international pressures on Latin American countries to liberalize their economies have also advocated democratic reform as part of the same package. This may thus be a case of self-fulfilling prophesies. In any event, democratic openings have allowed an important space for indigenous actors to agitate for governmental reform. In this way, neo-liberal citizenship regimes open up spaces for, and indeed demand, greater civil society participation.

Neo-liberal reforms also shift the risk and responsibility associated with societal change to individuals and associations. Yet neo-liberal privatizing puts the most stress on those who earn the least, sapping them of the time and energy that could otherwise be committed to making their circumstances better. Thus, while neo-liberal citizenship regimes allow for greater participation in the political process and the possibility of grass-roots forms of action, they also place the risks of failure on civil society. Along with this 'civil society heal thyself' attitude has emerged a new discourse of culpability aimed at those deemed incapable or unworthy of the responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

Thus, if neo-liberal reforms have created new spaces for indigenous politics, perhaps this is a case of governmentalities at work, of Hale's *indio permitido*. Are indigenous civil society actors co-opted and corrupted? Even if the goals they achieve are centered around compromised ends, are these not still important improvements? Should not these groups take what they can get? Such questions are asked, Peter Benson (personal communication) points out, against a notion of a real, authentic, fully Indian position. This, in turn, feeds into Foucault's observations about the histories of identities and the ways that

populations are defined and governed—except in this case it is defined and governed from below (or at least from an intermediate position) and not from above. From this perspective, one is led to concur with Chaterjee's skepticism toward civil society as a binary between identity-less modern subjects and identity-heavy traditional ones. Indigenous identities articulate differently with the neo-liberal goal of flexible subjects who shoulder risk: being indigenous already entails taking on a great deal of risk.

Part of this risk resides in the fact that in civil society certain types of actors are recognized as legitimate while others are not. Such are the insidious ways, Nancy Postero (2006: 7) asserts, in which "state-sponsored multiculturalism" acts to confine diversity to manageable categories. This confined multiculturalism has flourished under neo-liberalism in Bolivia and other countries. Yet Postero goes on to show that Guaraní leaders were able to use these manageable categories to make further demands and redefine the terms of relations between the state and civil society and indigenous peoples. This may be the exception rather than the rule, but it is important to recognize that in certain circumstances indigenous groups can find tools and resources in neo-liberal programs.

In this vein, Warren and Jackson (2002b) outline how indigenous peoples have translated their own social practices into the idiom of civil society in order to make demands on the state. "The neoliberal project," they write, "relies on a cultural project, which is concerned with packaging these reforms in a palatable manner through appeals to solidarity and a celebration of civil society" (ibid.: 33). In this way, the cultural project of neo-liberalism actually needs the opposition of civil society to give it legitimacy bestowed by open dissent. As Don Kalb (2005: 177) observes, the third-way, neo-liberal alliance of the 1990s "claimed the cumulative convergence of the projects of market-making, democracy-making, the strengthening of civil society and the provision of prosperity for many into one mutually reinforcing set of forces." And just as decentralization can help indigenous NGOs, it can also reinforce local power structures (Sieder 2002, 2005; see also Fischer and Benson 2006)

Yet this leads us to another problem with perceptions of civil society in an international context. While the participation of NGOs in certain settings might suggest that democratic legitimacy has been accorded, the authority to represent is often contested, and the democratic workings of the grass-roots base are frequently problematic (see Cullen and Murrow 2001; Jackson 2002; as well as the articles in this issue by Colloredo-Mansfeld, Pitarch, Rappaport, and Sawyer). Furthermore, indigenous vernacular modernities that emphasize collective action contest the very bedrock of Western frameworks of individualistic liberalism (see Gow and Rappaport 2002).

The Latin American Context

Latin America has long been a laboratory for economic experimentation (and social engineering, as Pitarch notes in this issue). In the post–World War II era, there was import substitution industrialization, an earlier inverse version of the

Washington consensus, which was much more costly in terms of international debt. Crushing debt ignited financial crises in the 1980s and 1990s, and a neo-liberal agenda of market-driven reforms was widely promoted as the solution. While the region still had large populations on the brink of severe poverty at the end of the 1970s, the years of heavy borrowing to support import substitution actually had showed modest but healthy rates of GNP per capita growth. In contrast, the neo-liberal turn saw tight restriction on macro-economic policy and a push for reducing deficits and debts—austerity programs that weighed most heavily on the poor (Gwynne and Kay 2004). It is in this economic context that civil society in Latin America has flourished out of opportunity as well as need.

Politically, neo-liberal reforms challenged the corporatist structure of Latin American political systems, pushing for decentralization and deregulation and opening up venues for new kinds of public-private and public-NGO collaborations. Thus, NGOs began to offer new outlets for popular organization—outlets that were less combative and more focused on incremental change within the system. As a field of governmentality, civil society effectively channels discontent toward manageable ends of the *indio permitido* sort.

At the same time, given the 'shallow' democracy characteristic of Latin American reforms, civil society organizations face great challenges working within a system that does not function as it is supposed to. Increasingly, we recognize the necessity of institutional frameworks to spur economic development (see, e.g., de Soto 2000) and to create social capital, one of the primary assets of civil society. Seligson (2005) reveals the need for such an institutional framework, pointing out that social capital it is not a natural given of a population, yet he goes on to note that broad democracy-building programs have had only a very limited impact. In countries such as Guatemala, democracy building must contend with institutionalized policies and perceptions of racism (see Casaús Arzú, this issue). One effective route for indigenous civil society organizations has been to turn to international law. For example, governments signing on to Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), including those of Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia, are obligated to halt various sorts of assimilationist policies and respect the rights of indigenous peoples. Using the provisions of ILO 169, indigenous sectors of civil society in Latin America have been able to apply pressure effectively from outside the normal channels of national politics as well as from within. The results have been varied. Sieder (2002) shows that Mexico's adoption of multicultural discourse (albeit in what she terms a form of "inclusive authoritarianism") stands in contrast to the rejection of such discourses and practices in places such as Guatemala. Indigenous organizations have also made strategic alliances with supporters and NGOs in other countries and, as Sawyer shows in her contribution to this issue, may also use foreign national law to further local agendas.

Van Cott (1994, 2000) points to the historical importance of indigenous autonomies in creating the conditions for effective indigenous political organization. Similarly, Bebbington and Thiele (1993) highlight the importance of local networks of social capital and the national-level institutional framework they must articulate with. Yet such localized bases have faced

difficulties translating their concerns into national projects. Colloredo-Mansfeld (this issue) shows how local agendas can hinder the formation of national cohesion. Latin American indigenous movements depend on civil society and NGO associations because their interests are not adequately represented by political parties. (Although one could say that this has changed given the turn to the Left in recent elections in several countries; Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and others are experimenting with new roles for the state and civil society actors and working out the larger balance between public obligations and non-governmental capacities.) Now that indigenous leaders have had some success, they are at times being adopted and co-opted by political parties or, as Cojtí Cuxil (this issue) argues, are effecting significant incremental changes within the system.

In countries such as Guatemala, recent histories of state-sponsored violence had the effect of galvanizing human rights concerns through civil society organizations (Brett 2006; Fischer 2001; Warren 1998). Perhaps as a result of the persecution suffered by such groups, indigenous organizations in Guatemala have taken pains to distance themselves from explicitly class-based politics and to focus on issues of culture and language (Dickins's contribution to this issue shows how some indigenous groups have adopted the class-neutral language of development projects). In this context, it is significant that the lack of violence in Ecuador and Bolivia has led to crucial alliances between indigenous, peasant, and other civil society organizations and to exceptionally strong national indigenous movements that are working through robust civil society institutions (Zamosc 2004; see also Postero 2006).

This Issue

The contributors to this issue show civil society in its many vernacular guises. No single model emerges from these case studies; rather, the lesson we glean is that civil society not only has ambiguous potential but often contradictory results, simultaneously channeling resistance and conditioning governmentalities. Indigenous movements in Latin America have been able to use the space of civil society to agitate for very real changes—not revolutionary but incremental. At the same time, civil society structures promote compromise and working within a system that rewards good (not too revolutionary) behavior. And let us not forget that civil society's associations of like-minded individuals provide a setting in which extremism can thrive. The middle ground in such a context can easily become distorted, with ideas and discourses resulting in exclusion just as easily as inclusion.

Michiel Baud begins by cautioning us to consider the historical context of the recent emergence of indigenous organizations and civil society structures. He points out the paradox that indigenous movements, which are often celebrated for their resistance to the state, usually take for granted (and even embrace) the set of citizenship rights bestowed by the state. Baud argues that "the quest for indigenous rights has become a discursive shorthand for citizenship rights in

general." He observes that where indigenous movements have been successful, they have allied themselves with non-indigenous interests. But this balance will be difficult to maintain as indigenous movements become concerned as much with material demands as with identity.

Daniel Goldstein, writing with Gloria Achá, Eric Hinojosa, and Theo Roncken, maintains not only that vigilante violence is growing in lockstep with neo-liberal reforms in Bolivia, but that civil society itself includes violent as well as peaceful forms. The authors show how civil society associations arise to combat the insecurity of situations with unstable economic bases and diminishing state presence. They contend that the way that certain sectors of the population are stereotyped influences the sorts of rights and privileges of citizenship that they can access. For the most marginalized, even violent forms of civil organization are aimed at deepening and extending the rights of citizens in a democratic society.

Suzana Sawyer looks at the formation of civil society institutions, focusing on the dramatic case of an international class-action lawsuit brought (in the United States) by indigenous and other Ecuadorian leaders against ChevronTexaco. She finds that "subaltern subjects were not born resisting." Rather, the creation of a "class" of resistance was a dialectic process that emerged from the engagement of a variety of systems (US law, international law, environmental advocacy). Sawyer's study points us toward a theory of articulation that eschews simple, romantic views of resistance.

Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld's contribution shows how local-level, grass-roots civil society organizations of indigenous peoples in Ecuador have challenged the formulation of a coherent national project. Writing of the uses of "vernacular statecraft," he reveals that effectiveness at the local level can actually inhibit the creation of a national institutional framework for more systemic change. He writes that "for indigenous peoples, a shared cultural identity is a thin political resource, offering few transcendent values." Mechanisms of community justice, as well as communal work parties, provide the basis for organizing around immediate problems while larger associational memberships tend to stress resistance to outside threats over internal cohesion.

In her case study of Colombia's Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), Joanne Rappaport looks at the way this indigenous organization has reconfigured itself in the context of changing civil society relations. In Colombia, the indigenous population is small in size but has played a key role in defining civil society in relation to the state and to armed non-state combatants. Rappaport traces how the movement began with a generic discourse of indigeneity that became ever more specific as member ethnic groups began to assert their local and linguistic distinctiveness. This has led to CRIC having to redefine itself as a source of traditional authority even as it became somewhat removed from its local bases of support.

Three articles on Guatemala present very different perspectives on the role of indigenous peoples, civil society, and the state. Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil, a leading Maya public intellectual in Guatemala, argues that the Guatemalan state effectively uses the population-defining technologies of governance to engineer

the statistical, if not actual, extermination (through assimilation) of Maya peoples. He shows that the state has ostentatiously promoted a few indigenous officials but contends that this simply hides deep-seated neo-colonialist attitudes that have prevented more profound inclusion. Cojtí concludes that the Guatemalan state continues to promote racist policies of ethnic unity and assimilation and that until this gives way to policies that value diversity, Maya civil society organizations will be limited in their impact.

Marta Casaús Arzú looks at how Guatemala's indigenous elites (including Cojtí) form part of a Gramscian political society. She employs an innovative methodology of discursive analysis that solicits essays from various political actors, which are then coded for opinions toward the Guatemalan state. She finds that the concepts of state, racism, and discrimination are highly correlated, leading to "a tendency to exculpate all social actors and focus on the state as the sole responsible party in charge of defeating these problems." This rings true, given Cojtí's argument, although Cojtí makes a clear distinction between the state and actors working through the state. Here the contradictions encompassed by civil society come to the fore: it can be a sanctioned outlet of acceptable resistance, as Cojtí points out, and it can simultaneously allow Maya elites to take on increasing real power within the state that threatens to overturn the ethnic status quo, as Casaús describes.

Avery Dickins's contribution turns to the local effects of development projects on civil society in a Q'eqchi' Maya community in Guatemala. She paints a vivid picture of *el otro lado*, the far side of the river that runs through town and where outside NGOs have built up an eco-tourism infrastructure. Dickins finds that residents focus their attention on improving the tourist areas while neglecting basic infrastructural development on the lived side of the river. This appears at first glance to be a perverse extreme of governmentality, but Dickins also shows the affective side of the allure of the cosmopolitan Other and the desire to participate in the global economy. She determines, ultimately, that residents are in fact dedicated to their own development projects as well, and that they are able to work within civil society structures to promote their competing visions of the future.

Pedro Pitarch concludes with a provocative analysis of the ways in which indigenous medicine has become a nexus of activism in Chiapas, Mexico. In comparing three indigenous NGOs, he shows how the organizational structure influences the ends as well as the means of activism. Indeed, it turns out that some groups make what Pitarch terms "uncivil" use of civil society organizations. Pitarch documents a case in which non-indigenous advisers reorient a group's goals to support a divergent larger political project. The "ventriloquism" effect that Pitarch describes emerges when non-indigenous leaders adopt an indigenous voice to bolster the legitimacy of their positions.

Taken together, these articles present a rich and complex view of indigenous politics, civil society, and state policy in the early twenty-first century. The essays are all striking in both their ethnographic depth and their profound, and often contrarian, analyses. While there is no single story line that unites them, the essays clearly speak to the formation of civil society, illustrating how civil society

institutions (and the historical memory and cultural bonds that underlie them) emerge through the process of articulating with local, national, and international actors. Civil society, it is shown, has multiple potentials—it may even serve uncivil ends. Yet it also provides a space for grass-roots activism and the inclusion of marginalized voices in national dialogues.

Acknowledgments

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Note

1. Edwards (2004) gives an associational view of civil society as including that part of society in between the family and the state that is not the domain of the government or of private firms. He envisions it as a means whereby people can come together to advance common interests through collective action. He writes (ibid: 76) that these forms of civil society "provide societies with sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity (by creating expectations that favours will be returned), channels of communication through which trust is developed (by being tested and verified by groups and individuals), templates for cooperation (that can be used in wider settings), and a clear sense of the risks of acting opportunistically (that is, outside networks of civic engagement, thereby reinforcing cooperative behavior, or at least conformity with 'civic values')." Edwards identifies three areas of civil society: economic, political, and social. Economically, civil society organizations can build up the trust and networks necessary for market cooperation; this is especially important in regions where the regulation of markets is weak. Politically, civil society organizations act as an important balance to corporatist governmental power. Finally, civil society can be an important source of social capital for marginalized peoples.

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