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NEW INDIGENOUS ELITE AND THE FORMATION OF ETHNONATIONALISM: THE CASE OF THE ANDEAN COUNTRIES

Abstract

One of the core elements of the contemporary Latin American indigenous activism is postcolonial ethnonationalism, oriented towards ethnic, cultural, social, and civic emancipation. It has been developed to facilitate the struggle for the native rights, the defence of the ethnic territory, to maintain identity and protect own heritage. The inventors and disseminators of the concept are representatives of the emerging indigenous elite, usually controlling many ethnic organizations. That new social group, referred to sometimes as neo-Indians, is very heterogeneous and composed of the grass-roots leaders, experienced activists, educated professionals, rebellious youth, and intellectuals. There are among them ethnic leaders, politicians, journalists, artists, writers, scientists, teachers, students, lawyers, small entrepreneurs, and many other influential people. All of them have contributed to the formation of emancipative ideas, shaping the syncretic world outlook of the contemporary native peoples, which is an important factor underpinning their modern ethnic identity. The ideology of ethnonationalism, based on the concept of 'indianismo' (indigenous interests expressed and safeguarded by the native people themselves) is a creative combination of traits of different origins. Among them, four components are of special significance: (i) transmuted ethnic ideas but rooted in the native culture; (ii) original features invented in the course of the ethnic mobilization; (iii) concepts borrowed from the international and global discourse, and adapted to the local needs; and (iv) ideas taken directly from

the contemporary political, social, and judicial thought. Different combinations of these traits are present both in indigenous ethnonationalism and in the ethnic activism associated therewith. They serve as a building material for the native political projects and their symbolism, help to reinterpret the vision of the native past, facilitate the development of intercultural education, inspire the aboriginal concepts of ecology, enable the revival of ancient religion, lead to the restitution of social justice, and strengthen the formation of modern ethnicity. Reflections on the development of that process, where all these different elements have been put together, and on the role of the native elite in the formation of ethnonationalism, are at the centre of this study. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological research carried out in four Andean countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile), where indigenous mobilization has been a significant factor in the social and political life since the second half of the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS

indigenous peoples, Latin America, Andean countries, new native elite, indigenous leaders, ethnonationalism, ethnic movements, ethnicity

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

ludy tubylcze, Ameryka Łacińska, kraje andyjskie, nowa elita tubylcza, liderzy tubylczy, etnonacjonalizm, etniczne ruchy, etniczność

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on indigenous movements in Latin America, particularly in countries with the significant percentage of native population, have been carried out since at least the 1990s, and resulted from the necessity to understand the process of growing activism of the *pueblos indígenas* (indigenous peoples) or *pueblos originarios* (first peoples). The majority of these studies are interdisciplinary and have been conducted mostly by social anthropologists and political scientists, who share similar interests and adopt similar approaches rooted in two closely inter-related subdisciplines: anthropology of politics and political anthropology. The main topics usually examined in this field are relationships between the nation/state and native peoples, current social and ethnic activism of the new indigenous organizations, the formation of a new generation of aboriginal leaders (native elites), and their strategies of ethnic emancipation.¹

¹ J. Jackson, K. Warren, *Indigenous Movements in Latin America: 1994–2004: Controversies, Ironies, New Directions*, 'Annual Review of Anthropology' 2005, Vol. 34(1), pp. 549–573.

This essay centres mostly on the two latter topics, which have been chosen to stress the importance of a new indigenous elite in the formation of the native nationalism in the western part of South America.² On the basis of my ethnographical fieldwork carried out for many years in four Andean countries, and then followed by comparative studies on many forms of Latin American indigenous activism, I am going to discuss three important questions related directly to the aboriginal leadership. The first task is to describe the role of new ethnic leaders, as representatives of the present indigenous elite, in the transformation of asymmetric power relationships established still in colonial times, and separating the marginalized native people from the mainstream society, composed of *creole* and *mestizo* people. Without the impact of the indigenous leaders on their own society as well as their pressure on the state administration, the return of the *indios* on the main (or sometimes only regional) political scene would be impossible. Therefore, in fact the indigenous activism, as a very important new social movement, can be considered a product of the intellectual, political and organizational endeavour of the emerging group of new ethnic leaders.

The second aim of the paper, which to some degree has a general scope and mostly points out some most important tendencies, is to present the new ethnic elite as a diversified social group. I would like also to stress the presence of the influential leaders at many different levels of the native society, from the local up to the top scene of pan-indigenous organizations and state legislation. There is no doubt that their activities have been changing in the course of time, and their ethnic consciousness has been adapted to the evolving interethnic situation. It is obvious that all of them have not only activated the ethnic feeling of their compatriots, but they also have had some impact on the changing attitude of the mainstream society toward the aboriginal citizens. As a result of all activities undertaken by the leaders, the native people started to reformulate their past, looking for elements of ethnic pride, rejected the postcolonial, unequal relations responsible for marginalization of minority groups, and have realized that now is time to gain empowerment and secure their own position as a separate political, social and ethnic subject. I attempt to argue that the local leaders as well as other influential personalities have made a significant contribution to the process of emancipation of indigenous people, and initiated changes in the interethnic relations in Latin American countries.

Finally, the third purpose of my paper is to show the impact of the new native leadership on the formation of complex ideas which can be closely associated with postcolonial ethnonationalism. Instead of the integration of all the social strata, ethnic groups and racial segments of the national society, usually promoted by the postcolonial and post-totalitarian states, in some countries tendencies toward

² The preliminary draft of the paper was presented at the World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in Florianópolis, Brazil, in July 2018.

strengthening of indigenous ethnicity are quite strong. The leaders of minority groups try to introduce concepts of multinationality, interculturalism and ethnic pluralism to the political agenda, referring directly to the international conventions and human rights. In majority of cases, the Andean ethnonationalism is not combined with separatist ideas, but rather it is rooted in the nativist ideas of the indigenous 'nations' having a millennial tradition and the right to develop according to own rules, without losing close ties with values inherited from ancestors. In light of these assumptions, I am going to highlight the importance of the native elite considering three interrelated phenomena: indigenous activism, pursuit of emancipation, and ethnonationalist ideas.

The conclusions regarding the general characteristics of the new native elite have been based mostly on my ethnographic fieldwork, personal experiences, and many research visits to Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile undertaken over the last two decades.³ Thanks to such considerable opportunity, I was able to establish close contacts with different groups of indigenous population, and had a chance not only to interview the ethnic leaders but also to observe their regular activities and their tactics during the time of protests. The spectrum of my informants was quite broad and reflected the majority of positions occupied usually by the native leaders. They included activists (of both sexes) of indigenous organizations, native officials representing local governments and state administration, ethnic politicians, party members and parliament members, teachers and university professors, students, intellectuals, writers, journalists, artists, union leaders, professionals (like lawyers, engineers, small entrepreneurs), and many other very influential people. All of them devoted their time and attention to share with me their opinions, ideas and reflections, for which I am very grateful. All those fruitful encounters helped me to understand the aims and strategies of indigenous activism and the importance of leading ethnic personalities in the empowerment of the native people. All the data gathered during the fieldwork have been confronted with many supplementary sources, like published documents and interviews, pamphlets, websites, ethnic journals, as well as memoirs written by some indigenous leaders. Thanks to such diversified collections of data relating to the four Andean countries, my task of categorizing indigenous leaders (elite members) and describing their involvement in the formation of ethnonationalism turned out to be possible.

The case area under the analysis is the Andean region covering the Cordillera range of four South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile) where I have carried out ethnographical fieldwork and anthropological studies since

³ All my subsequent research projects and fieldwork trips to South America were possible thanks to the funding provided by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Polish National Science Centre (NCN), the Polish Academy of Sciences, and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

the turn of the century.⁴ The Amazonian territories of the four above-mentioned states were not of special interest in my research and, therefore, the commentary presented in the paper is based mostly on data reflecting the situation of the Andean people. However, many identified tendencies and features observed among *serranos* (highlanders) could be also applied to native activism of the small Indian groups living in the jungle (*selva*). The whole Andean region, examined mostly through the ecogeographical prism as a zone with high mountains (popularly called *sierra*), forms in fact a single very homogenous cultural area, shaped by ancient indigenous civilisations, then Spanish colonial times, and is distinguished by the strong presence of native population sharing many common characteristics. Its division into a few countries, each one with their own political and social history, cannot certainly be ignored, but the obvious differences, especially in relation to the current situation of the native people, largely have still a secondary meaning. One more element is also important for the treatment of the Andean area as one topic, namely the strong ties and intensive exchange of ideas across the state borders between particular native movements and their activists. The concepts developed in one country are usually accepted relatively fast and in a slightly modified way in the neighbouring states. Therefore, the general view of the Andean ethnic activism presented here seems fully justified as a common approach in Latin American studies. In such a way it is quite easy to find out some general features and similarities as well as identify important differences in each country. Some comments related directly to the latter question are included in the final part of this paper.

In all the above-mentioned countries, despite of differences in the size of native population, politics of identity, ethnic background, and social context, indigenous activism has been very strong for decades, changing the official status of *indigenas* and transforming the state regulations concerning native people. There is no doubt that the Andean indigenous activism can serve as a very useful case facilitating the understanding of similar ethnic processes taking place in many other New World regions (like Amazonia, Middle and North America), as well as worldwide in all areas populated by native groups. It must be added that the Andean aboriginal revival, quite noticeable also on the international arena, is in fact an important part of the 'Fourth World Movement' – a typical postmodern global network, sharing ideas and coordinating activities of all indigenous organizations, regardless of their geographical setting.

According to the current interpretation of indigenous activism, this type of ethnic revival should be categorized as a form of reaction against endocolonial

⁴ A. Posern-Zieliński, *Indigenous Organizations as 'New Tribes' and their Ethnopolitical Strategies. The South American Context*, (in:) L. Mróz, A. Posern-Zieliński (eds), *Exploring Home, Neighbouring and Distant Cultures*, Warsaw: DiG 2008, pp.189–208; A. Posern-Zieliński, *The State and the Indigenous Peoples in Latin America*, (in:) R. Stemplowski (ed.), *On the State of Latin American States*, Kraków 2009, pp. 301–384.

situation of the native peoples and the domination of nation/state (run by the Mestizo-Creole mainstream) over aboriginal groups.⁵ The current clash between organized native minorities and mainstream powers controlling politics and economy of the country is directly related to the early process of indigenous emancipation taking place in the 1980s and the 1990s. The idea behind it was to change the subaltern status of *indígenas*, inherited from the colonial past and consequently maintained by all republican governments, in order to abolish marginal position of the native peoples and achieve for them the status of active subject in the civic space.

There is no doubt that contemporary ethnic activism of the indigenous people has many features characteristic of ethnonationalism (ethnic nationalism). This ethnopolitical ideology is, in fact, a variant of regular nationalism, wherein the ethnic group, nationality or the whole nation is defined in terms of ethnicity, with strong emphasis placed on an ethnocentric approach to various social and political issues. Such broad definition of ethnonationalism is usually counterpointed by civic nationalism, which should be applied to a political community composed of civic members, regardless of their ethnicity and cultural background. Ethnic nationalism is present in many geopolitical settings and appears in different contextual settings. We can observe it within the nation/state, in the federal plural states, and also in states formed by immigration, or sometimes as a main feature of the unitary and ethnically homogenous states. In many plural states, composed of different racial, cultural, religious and ethnic groups, 'minority ethnonationalism' appears as a response to the unequal power relationship in the sphere of economy, politics, social justice and culture. In the postcolonial context, especially in countries with significant groups of native people, we should speak of 'indigenous ethnonationalism'. Indigenous Latin America, and particularly its two areas: Mesoamerica and the Andes, is a good example of the manifestation of these political ideas, which can be observed and analysed in their different phases of formation. The emerging new type of the native leaders and the influential personalities (mostly intellectuals) have played an important role in the development of ethnic politics of identity as an effective tool diminishing the pressure of assimilation, strengthening ethnicity, and reducing marginalization of the aboriginal peoples. The elite members are, in fact, inventors of the new emancipatory ideology, which is responsible for the radical changes in the consciousness of their plain compatriots. They try to construct a new sense of identity and build a solid feeling of ethnic solidarity; however, the basic material used by them is a creative combination of native cultural features and political patterns borrowed from the global discourse.⁶ Incidentally, this combination of two different sources

⁵ W. Assies, H. Gudermann (eds), *Movimientos indígenas y gobiernos locales en América Latina*, Universidad Católica del Norte, San Pedro de Atacama 2007.

⁶ D. Conversi (ed.), *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, London: Routledge 2002; Sh. Hennayake, *Interactive Ethnonationalism*:

of ethnicity should serve as a good example, which could diminish some tensions existing between partisans of two contradictory approaches regarding the formation of nationalism: the followers of constructivism versus advocates of primordial ideas. In many cases, and not only in Latin America, both categories of these ethnic ideas (invented and reactivated) frequently appear together as a core material of the ethnic nationalism. Some additional questions associated with ethnonationalism, along with the discussion of the role played by the native elite in its formation, will be dealt with in more detail in the following parts of the essay.

In the course of many interethnic clashes (sometimes violent but largely manifested in peaceful forms), two kinds of ethnic ideologies have been constantly confronted. On the one hand, there is the assimilationist policy of the nation/state, which wants to implement an integrational project of the incorporation of the *indígenas* into the neutral and social category of peasantry (*campesinos*), and thanks to this strategy to deprive them of their indigenous identity. On the other hand, we observe the indigenous revival, which has appeared as a natural effect of ethnic activities undertaken by the growing number of native organizations and their influential leaders.⁷

Two global events have had a very strong impact on the development of indigenous activism. The first one was a climate created in 1992, when the whole world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the ‘discovery’ of America, which provoked a lot of protests among the Indians against apotheosis of the colonization of the New World. Another factor was related to the important document known as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations Organization in 2007, after many years of difficult negotiations. This unprecedented legal act of worldwide significance has given to all native peoples a set of standardized regulations, norms and recommendations, which should be recognized by any state administration and all institutions (including businesses) of the dominant society.

Many ideas included in the Declaration had been previously elaborated on by the native leaders and included as basic proposals of the indigenous associations. One of the core elements of all these movements was an ideology of emancipation, developed as a kind of weapon necessary in the constant struggle for political rights, defence of native territories, protection of endangered heritage and recognition of a fair status for native people. The inventors of the new ethno-political ideas were mostly members of the emerging indigenous elite who were responsible not only for social and political changes but also for the transformation of the world outlook of their native followers, including their perception of social and ethnic justice.

An Alternative Explanation of Minority Ethnonationalism, ‘Political Geography’ 1992, Vol. 11(6), pp. 526–549.

⁷ P. Faudree, *Singing for the Dead: The Politics of Indigenous Revival in Mexico*, Durham: Duke University Press 2013.

The indigenous elite present in the Andean countries is not, in fact, a completely new phenomenon. It is worth mentioning that already in the time of the prequest Inca empire powerful aristocracy, nobility, clergy, administration clerks, and influential regional chiefs (*caciques*) led the local groups as parts of the indigenous multiethnic state. During the colonial time, some of that indigenous elite continued to be active in the new political order and were recognized by Spanish authorities as a privileged social group within the 'indirect rule'. In the course of time, they were gradually assimilated into the Mestizo society. The end of this social group was the second half of the eighteenth century, directly after the failure of the famous Túpac Amaru rebellion against colonial exploitation.⁸ From that period on, they were almost totally eliminated from the public scene, and regarded as potential enemies of Spaniards and strong defenders of the royal indigenous tradition.⁹ Consequently, at the moment of the formation of Andean independent states, the native people were completely deprived of their own elite and became a kind of 'ethnaclass' limited to peasantry only. That marginal social status has been strengthened by all republican (Creole and Mestizo) governments. The native population reduced to the marginal social and economic positions was not capable of manifesting their own ideas and demands, except in the form of spontaneous riots and rebellions, which quite frequently took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Without smart leadership, they were not able to change their situation and act effectively as the aware civic subjects. The emergence of the new elite by the end of the twentieth century improved significantly the interethnic situation of native peoples. They have now their own representations that are able to organize people and negotiate all important issues with dominant ruling authorities.¹⁰

Undoubtedly, the basis for those changes was the democratization process taking place in the majority of Latin American countries since the turn of the century.¹¹ Those transformations have allowed Indians to become a potential social, political and ethnic actor on the state arena. Referring only to the Andean context, two important political events should be mentioned, which effectively triggered the process of native emancipation. Firstly, it was the Indian uprising of 1990, which for many days paralysed whole Ecuador. That great protest changed completely the position of the native people in the country and additionally had a strong impact on the whole indigenous section of the Andean region.¹² Secondly,

⁸ S. J. Stern, (ed.), *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World: 18th to 20th Centuries*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1987.

⁹ G. Ramos, Y. Yannakakis, *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes*, Durham: Duke University Press 2014.

¹⁰ J. Bengoa, *La emergencia indígena en América Latina*, Fondo de la Cultura Económica, México 2000.

¹¹ R. Montoya Rojas, *Cuando la cultura se convierte en política*, 'Revista Andaluza de Antropología' 2011, No. 1, pp. 41–62.

¹² K. Lucas, *La rebelión de los indios*, Quito: Abya-Yala 2000.

one should remember about the mass protest movement initiated by indigenous peasants, miners, and *cocaleros* (coca leaf growers), which brought about a radical change in the Bolivian political system, and after years of social and political turbulences, helping Evo Morales, a prominent union leader of Aymara ancestry, raise to power (in 2006) and become the first aboriginal president in any South American country.¹³ Both of these important events, as well as many others, prove a new political potential of the indigenous people and mark the important position of the native population in the present-day Andean countries.

2. INDIGENOUS ELITE AND ITS DIVERSITY

The indigenous elite of today is very heterogeneous and its current presence on the political scene is associated mostly with two basic factors: (i) formation of the grass-roots leaders in the course of numerous protests, organized for the cause of *indigenas*, and (ii) expansion of education among aboriginal youth, leading to the emergence of native professionals and intellectuals. As the result of all those transformation processes, a new type of indigenous elite has been formed, replacing or marginalizing the already existing traditional authorities. There are among them political leaders, ethnic and social activists, journalists, artists, writers, scientists, teachers, lawyers, etc. Many of them play a very important role in the social, ethnic and political life, both at local and state level, acting as official representatives of indigenous people in negotiations with the state administration and other agencies, and disseminating new ideas among the plains natives. It should be mentioned that from the beginning of the organized ethnic movement, important positions among the group of new leaders and social activists have been occupied also by indigenous women.

From the anthropological point of view, members of the indigenous elite should be regarded as a kind of 'cultural brokers', because they act efficiently in the typical 'middle ground' between two different societies, cultures, and policies. Such a position allows understanding of the non-Indian (Creole/Mestizo) ideas but also helps those leaders to communicate many different phenomena to their compatriots.¹⁴ As a matter of fact, the native (political and intellectual) elite contributes substantially to the formation of the modern indigenous society, aware of its rights, proud of its heritage and ready to compete with the dominant (Mestizo) mainstream environment.

¹³ X. Albó, *Pueblos indios en la política*, La Paz: Plural 2002; X. Albó, *Movimientos y poder indígena en Bolivia, Ecuador y Perú*, La Paz: CIPCA 2008.

¹⁴ C. Zapata Silva, *Intelectuales indígenas en Ecuador, Bolivia y Chile*, Quito: Abya-Yala 2013.

The elite members act as official representatives of the native groups in the negotiations with state agencies, local administration, industrial corporations and NGO officers, they lead and manage their native groups and associations, they develop also new ethnic ideas combining the indigenous traditional worldview with some Western concepts like democracy, autonomy, human and minority rights, and multiculturalism.¹⁵ They also frequently represent their people on the international scene, speaking on behalf of native peoples at various summits and world meetings, seeking financial aid and moral support, building the transnational network of indigenous movements, and participating in the development of the international law protecting indigenous peoples. They rearrange the existing structure of native authorities (*caciques, presidentes de las comunidades*) by building a parallel modern ladder of ethnic leadership, based mostly on personal achievements, effectiveness, and popularity. Some of them have gained very influential positions by acquiring professional experience in negotiations, mastering good knowledge of law and demonstrating the ability to obtain financial aid.

The new elite is also a trigger facilitating the empowerment of indigenous peoples, changing the nature of existing interethnic relations.¹⁶ The leaders of native associations are definitely against the paternalistic ideology of *indigenismo* (state/mainstream ideas and ethnic policy toward Indians) and they propose instead their own ideology labelled *indianismo* (Indianism), which should be regarded as an important instrument in the ethnic struggles and the formation of 'new natives'. However, the indigenous elite in Latin America does not belong to the governing elite. It is composed of leaders and intellectuals who, in fact, occupy the position of only 'subaltern elite'. Looking for some similar examples, one might notice that the situation of the native elite could be somewhat compared to the role played by the Polish elite (the intelligentsia) in the nineteenth century (and at the time of the partition of the state by the neighbouring powers), when there were made enormous efforts to maintain identity and assert ethnic rights on the civic arena.¹⁷ Members of the indigenous elite belong to the group of 'new Indians' who are the leaders of the 'new tribes' (indigenous associations) and act as intellectual guides influencing the native mind.¹⁸ Many of them, having roots in rural communities, are present mostly in urban centres, where the access to the state administration offices and important agencies dealing with indigenous issues is much easier. They constantly travel between countryside and capitals of the state or provinces, participate in meetings with other leaders, consult a number of aid programmes with NGO officers and negotiate important problems with

¹⁵ R. Stavenhagen, *Los pueblos indígenas y sus derechos*, UNESCO, México 2008.

¹⁶ A. Posern-Zieliński, *Los líderes indígenas en los países andinos y su rol en la consolidación del movimiento nativo*, 'Estudios Latinoamericanos' 2002, Vol. 22, pp. 69–86.

¹⁷ W. Molik, *Inteligencja polska w Poznańskim w XIX w. i początkach XX wieku*, Poznań 2009.

¹⁸ A. Posern-Zieliński, 2008, *op. cit.*

the government representatives. Considering that some of them travel frequently abroad to take part in a variety of international meetings, organized by such institutions as the UNO, the UNESCO, the OAS, the ILO and many other top agencies and foundations, it can be concluded that indigenous elites include leaders relatively distanced from their ethnic background, usually in the country's interior. Those activists could be labelled ironically 'professional Indians', but in fact their impact on decision-making and fundraising is really important. As a consequence of all those actions taken, new regulations, institutions, and projects have been introduced step by step to eliminate the marginal position of the native people.¹⁹

When analysing the indigenous elite, it is necessary to recognize this social group as a diversified collectivity. The gender aspect is in that case also quite important and is manifested mostly by two parallel branches of native associations. The main organizations, representing regional and professional groups of *indigenas*, are usually run by men, but simultaneously there are plenty of women associations specialized in family and household matters.²⁰ Another distinctive feature of the native leadership consists in the juxtaposition of rural and urban activists. The former are rooted in their peasant communities (*comunidades*) and remain in constant contact with them. The majority of them are leaders of those local units (*presidentes de las comunidades*) and act as elected heads of village self-governments; they are also recognized by the state as its official representatives at the lowest level of administration. Usually, the pace of changes taking place in the life of native villagers depends on their leaders' abilities to secure external aid and on their entrepreneurial spirit to activate local societies.²¹

On the other hand, there are indigenous leaders, usually educated and well-acquainted with matters of law, economy and politics, whose typical area of activity is the urban environment. They act at the top level of indigenous organizations, and spend most of their time on conferences, workshops, and negotiations with state officials. The next category of native leaders is made up by unionists, representing the interest of farmers, pastoralists, miners, and artisans. In the Andean countries, many unions have a clearly native profile, and their leaders operate both as social activists fighting for better working and living conditions, and as ethnic authorities defending the indigenous rights. Peasant union activists have been quite significant on the civic scene. In those regions where the majority of natives live in *comunidades campesinas* or are owners of small family farms (*minifundios*), the peasants' union organizations have usually an ethnic character, and their activities include social and economic issues combined with the ideas related to maintaining their identity and protection of tradition. Such leaders are

¹⁹ M. Paredes, *Representación política indígena: Un análisis comparativo subnacional*, Lima: Jurado Nacional de Elecciones 2015.

²⁰ M. Śniadecka-Kotarska, *Antropología de la mujer andina*, Quito: Abya-Yala 2005; M. Śniadecka-Kotarska, *Ser mujer en el Perú: 1980–2005*, CESLA, Varsovia 2008.

²¹ R. Choque Canqui, C. Quisbert Quispe, *Líderes Indígenas Aymaras*, La Paz: Ibis 2010.

active primarily in Bolivia and Peru. They fight there environmental pollution, caused mostly by the mining companies, they defend small coca plantations as the basic resource of *cocaleros* families, and organize local self-defence forces (*rondas campesinas*) protecting villages against robbery of stocks. During the civil war in Peru (in the 1980s) they served very well as squads fighting against communist guerrillas (*Sendero Luminoso*).²²

One of the most important categories of leaders, and very well assessed by the public, is a group of natives who have strong political ambitions. They participate in the forming of indigenous parties, act as members of mainstream parties, and sometimes represent native interests as elected members of parliament. There are among them many former activists of the grass-roots background with a lot of experience in organization of indigenous protests, who finally have decided to enter the world of the state politics. Still, besides them there are also university graduates, usually familiar with matters of law and ethnic issues, and quickly mastering the rules behind the political machine. The emergence of a new generation of indigenous politicians should be, without doubt, evaluated quite positively, however, their low efficiency and poor contact with the plain native people is a common problem. The rural natives, due to their lower level of education, are more likely to adopt populist and leftist slogans disseminated by Mestizo politicians, rather than to follow the emancipatory, reformative and sometimes even utopian ideas proposed by the top indigenous leaders. The exaggerated ambitions of many native leaders are another obstacle to achieve success in politics and take effective actions, which would be acceptable by different indigenous factions that usually have contradictory interests.²³

Still another elite group consists of natives occupying important positions in local administration, state departments, and NGO agencies. The majority of them represent a new generation of native professionals with an established economic status. Their prestige and competency recognized both by the natives and mainstream society help them to perform responsible duties and act for the benefit of all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. Some of them occupy the posts of *alcalde* (city mayor), work as chiefs of the local police units, chair professional associations, or act as counsellors to the *ayuntamiento* (town hall).²⁴

The native successful people include also 'self-proclaimed' leaders; they belong to the category identified by anthropologists as 'big men', which means individuals who have achieved their high status thanks to their clever actions, contacts with influential authorities, and persuasion skills. The majority of them

²² S. J. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980–1995*, Durham – London: Duke University Press 1998.

²³ D. J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*, Cambridge University Press 2005.

²⁴ A. Posern-Zieliński, *Miedzy indygenizmem a indianizmem. Andyjscy Indianie na drodze etnorozwoju*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM 2005, pp. 151–168.

have advanced to the upper social class through their close cooperation with the internationally based NGO agencies, operating aid funds and implementing the modernization projects in the countryside. The indigenous collaborators and advisers of foreign agencies act as intermediaries between local people, the state administration and NGO officers, and thanks to this they usually are able to monopolize contacts with the developmental agencies, and control the flow of commodities, money and information. They easily gain prestige and become influential having the opportunity to participate directly in all decision-making regarding the distribution of financial aid. Additionally, they can also improve their own economic situation, owing to the material and financial benefits related to their unique status.²⁵

Moreover, the indigenous elite brings together people performing important roles in religious life. If one looks at the Catholic clergy, there are not many priests of Indian origin just yet, but this situation is gradually changing. The present intention is to promote the formation of native priests and the trend is related partially to the idea of inculturation (adaptation of Christianity to the indigenous culture) and the Church strategy to replace foreign missionaries with priests of indigenous background. However, due to the great expansion of Protestant religions in all Latin American countries, and above all, the growing popularity of the most successful denominations such as Adventism, Pentecostalism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, numerous new religious communities have been established among the indigenous people. Their influence on the native mind is often quite significant and not limited to the religious matters only, changing also the patterns of everyday life and promoting the developmental projects.²⁶ The local leaders are quite active in those new religious groups, usually recruited from among those indigenous converts who have better knowledge of the principles of the new faith. There is also one more category of religious authorities, namely the 'neo-shamans' and medicine men (*curanderos*), who are today more and more active in the urban environment, playing an important role of spiritual advisers, psychological counsellors and popular healers. They combine traditional native beliefs, magic techniques and therapeutic knowledge with sacral ideas and practices taken from the Western world. Their growing popularity and professionalization make them widely known and appreciated also by the non-indigenous society.

Finally, an influential group that should be mentioned are native intellectuals, active in the fields of culture (writers, poets, painters, sculptors, musicians), media (journalists, bloggers), education (teachers, university professors, scientists), and

²⁵ A. Posern-Zieliński, *Europeans and the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America*, (in:) R. Stemplowski (ed.), *Europe and Latin America – Looking at Each Other?* Warsaw: PISM 2010, pp. 79–114.

²⁶ M. Marzal, *Rostros indios de Dios. Los amerindios cristianos*, Quito: Abya-Yala 1991; H.-J. Prien, *Christianity in Latin America*, Leiden: Brill 2013.

a few other prestigious professions (physicians, lawyers). There is no doubt that they can be counted as the 'symbolic elite' who have no real power but still have a significant influence on people's mindset and opinions. The majority of them represent the first generation of educated *indigenas* who, despite their elevated social position as the middle-class members and incorporation into the national society, still maintain their ethnic identity and openly express their attachment to the native heritage. They support the indigenous struggle for justice and cultural autonomy, they spread among aboriginal people new emancipatory ideas, and contribute to challenging the pejorative Indian stereotypes still present among the mainstream society.²⁷ The influence of the intellectuals has been growing especially among the educated indigenous youth, and their impact on the development of the modern native identity free from the subaltern complex is quite essential and strengthens the feeling of ethnic pride.²⁸

3. INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP AND THE EMANCIPATION PROCESS

The influential role of the new native elite is closely linked to the exceptional abundance and significance of indigenous associations. As a matter of fact, the number of indigenous organizations is really impressive. They operate today as a kind of 'new tribes' and have ambitions to supervise all aspects of indigenous life. On the one hand, these organizations promote new leaders and underpin their authority, but on the other, some recognized figures are able to transform native organizations into powerful social and ethnic machines. The wide spectrum of native organizations is a reflection of a large range of their activities, goals, ethnic and regional backgrounds, gender profiles and political affiliations. It is also the result of diversified leadership due to the ideological divisions, personal ambitions and ethnic interests. However, in spite of all those differences, they all have one common goal, which is the struggle for indigenous rights and maintenance of identity, combined with social and economic development. The new native associations, liberated from the endocolonial subordination and pursuing a modern strategy of social action, have initiated significant changes in the lives of aboriginal people.

Referring to some of my previous research on the indigenous activism, it is possible to identify three main types of ideological profiles present among the

²⁷ A. Waskar, *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia's Indigenous Intellectuals*, Durham: Duke University Press 2014.

²⁸ J. Rappaport, *Intelectuales públicos indígenas en América Latina: Una aproximación comparativa*, 'Revista Iberoamericana' 2007, Vol. 73(220), pp. 615–630.

native elite of today.²⁹ The first category, definitely oriented toward the idealized past and attached to some elements of nativist thinking, could be named the 'neo-traditional' elite. Their representatives operate still within the 'cargo' system (i.e. rotary obligations to perform necessary duties for the benefit of a community) and try to strengthen their threatened authority by combining the traditional style of governance with modernizing changes. Sometimes, they are even able to form regional and even pan-regional associations to increase their prestige and influence. A good example of that trend is the case of the CONAMAQ organization (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu) in Bolivia. It is an important umbrella association creating a new hierarchy of leaders capable of participating in key negotiations with the local administration and central government.³⁰

For the representatives of the second type the most important are such ideas as native autonomy, restitution of lost land properties and community well-being. Members of that group act mostly on the local and regional scale and try to establish good and effective relationships with provincial state authorities. Another tendency is present among the third category of leaders who are mostly oriented toward the future. They promote modernization projects but without compromising ethnic roots, and develop ideas of indigenous participation in all fields of the national civic life. It is obvious that the classification proposed above has only a limited value like any simplified typology, because in the real life all different tendencies are frequently combined together in various ways, and sometimes are composed of evidently contradictory concepts.

As this brief overview of the native leaders already shows, they have acquired their privileged position in a great variety of ways. In the majority of cases, they represent the first generation of educated people and, indeed, the number of young leaders among them is relatively high, what stands in sharp contrast to the indigenous traditional pattern of recognizing older people as those by nature endowed with power. The modern leaders situate their ambitions both at the local level – where they still have to compete with the traditional authorities – and at the regional and state levels, where they could gain significant positions thanks to their contacts with the central administration, government, and international agencies. The abundance of various indigenous associations, organizations, unions, and umbrella federations means that the number of leaders is increasingly high. They are the real core of the native elite and the main promoters of the emancipation movement, struggle for indigenous rights, social and economic ethnodevelopment, and rejection of the subaltern status.

However, that leadership elite has also some weaknesses, which sometimes contributes to the inefficiency of many actions. Internal disputes, tensions, exaggerated ambitions, and competition for access to prestigious titles and attractive

²⁹ A. Posern-Zieliński, 2002, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–86.

³⁰ E. Ticona, *Organización y liderazgo ayмара: La experiencia indígena en la política boliviana*, La Paz: Universidad de la Cordillera 2000.

cargos (posts) are all common features, which frequently lead to the lack of unanimity, wrong decisions and even to the disband of organizations. It may be also noted that in some cases leaders of higher level follow a policy not always understandable and adequate to the current needs of the indigenous people. Against this background, the phenomenon known as *caudillismo* (charismatic and autocratic chieftainship), quite typical for the Latin American political tradition, can be distinguished. This mainstream pattern adopted by some indigenous activists, evidently contrary to the native idea of the democratic rotation of posts, consequently leads to the emergence of leaders having unquestionable authority and unchallengeable power. Nevertheless, such autocratic tendencies are strongly obstructed by the popular pattern of conducting comprehensive discussions and multilateral consultations, leading finally, according to the tradition, to the preferable unanimity of decisions. An important feature of the customary politics is to consult first all important issues with the leaders of a lower level, then with elected members of the regional indigenous council and, finally, to reach the consensus among representatives of the umbrella organizational unit. Another weak point is the tendency to promote those public actions which have a spectacular character and can serve to strengthen the position of the leaders only.

A factor that additionally inhibits the mutual cooperation between leaders is related to their different political approaches. Some of them are more conciliatory towards the state authorities, while others choose to be totally oppositional or even endeavour to start a rebellion in a situation of political crisis. There are leaders influenced by a leftist ideology, and others who seek inspiration in ecology, nativism, sustainable development, communitarianism, and traditional religion; some emphasize political neutrality, while others support mainstream political parties, conclude alliances with them or build own party-type organizations. One can encounter leaders who are rather class-oriented, stressing solidarity with other exploited groups of the national society (peasants, miners, urban workers), while others are very attached to the ideas of ethnic identity and native heritage. The prevailing tendency of common ethnic interests, expressed by solidarity and pan-indigenous spirit, not always leads to actual cooperation between different indigenous groups. Instead, some tension builds up from time to time, especially between different ethnic groups in one country (e.g. the Quechua versus the Aymara in Bolivia and Peru) or regional native units (e.g. the Saraguro people versus the Otavalo natives in Ecuador, or indigenous peasants from the Andean mountains versus native 'tribes' from Amazonia). However, all these controversies are not significant and when the situation is critical they can usually be overcome.

When assessing some positive and negative features of the indigenous leadership, one should note that the new elite plays an important role in the empowerment of the native peoples. It goes without saying that the development of new ethnic organizations and their emancipatory initiatives are directly associated

with the gradual formation of a new type of indigenous elite. Members of that group, free both from the pressures of endocolonial subordination and the control of traditional native authorities, make conscious use of their newly acquired competencies as regards ethnic issues, civic ideals, rule of law, and politics. As a result, they contribute significantly to the qualitative changes, affecting the situation of not only the Indian people but also of the mainstream society in each of the Andean nations.

The evolution of the native leaders' profile (from traditional to modern one) should be considered in the context of three basic transformation stages of indigenous activism. The first stage of the emancipation process is characterized by decolonization of the existing ethnic and social structures, leading to the formation of a new native organizational network, which in the course of time marginalizes and replaces the traditional institutions. The main goal of this process is to transform the indigenous society and adapt it to modern conditions. At this stage, the native society is consequently influenced and managed by new associations and leaders who act mostly within their own ethnic environment but gradually gain prestige as the only recognized representation of indigenous people.

The second stage is associated with the decolonization of ethnic activities, which is supposed to lead to the return of native people to the political scene as a real civic subject, to the transformation of interethnic relations with the dominant society, to the organization of effective forms of protest, and generally to the empowerment of the indigenous minorities. The main task expressed at this phase is to transform the nation/state both top-down (through constitutional reforms securing indigenous rights) and also bottom-up (through guaranteed traditional forms of property relations based on community lands and territories, protection of cultural autonomy and heritage, the right of decision-making at the local level regarding all issues relating to economic development, infrastructure, ecology, etc.).

The third stage of emancipation is connected with the decolonization of the native mind. The main goal should be achieved by erasing the still present traces of colonial mentality, the eradication of epistemological violence resulting from the Western values affecting the indigenous perception, the revival of endangered native ideas, restoring ethnic pride and establishing a new aboriginal identity. A new world outlook, based on the combination of native values and modern ideas, is shaped and widely disseminated by indigenous leaders and intellectuals on the sound foundation of native associations. The leaders try to create a kind of 'subaltern culture of resistance', which should be an effective ideological instrument to overcome epistemological domination of the Western thought.³¹ The final goal, in that case, would be the replacement of the 'culture of resistance' with the

³¹ G. Ch. Spivak, *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, London: Routledge 1990, pp. 50–59.

‘culture of agency’, followed by transformation of the subaltern consciousness of *indígenas* into a revitalized native world outlook based mostly on aboriginal values but adapted to the contemporary situation. Part of this modernized *cosmovisión* is a set of ideas characteristic of indigenous nationalism.

At all three stages of emancipation, which should be regarded as a kind of theoretical concept only, the native elite plays an essential role but in each phase in a slightly different way. At the first one, the leaders act mostly as grass-roots reformers, ethnic activists, and social innovators. In turn, at the second stage, they appear primarily as organizers of protests, negotiators, and politicians. In the last phase, representatives of the indigenous elite are basically ideologists, thinkers, and intellectuals.

4. ANDEAN ETHNONATIONALISM AND INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM

As I mentioned before, many ideas formed, developed and promoted by the indigenous elite fall into the category of ethnonationalism.³² This political concept, known also as ethnic nationalism is, in fact, a special kind of exclusive ideology based on common culture, tradition, heritage, kinship, and descent. Ethnic groups expressing their identity in such a way prefer being treated as autonomous entities with the right to self-determination.³³ The concept of ethnonationalism was framed mostly as an instrument to facilitate the interpretation of nation-building processes taking place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, but in the course of time it has been applied also to the studies of postcolonial societies.³⁴ In this new context, ethnonationalism is identified with the resurgence of ethnicity observed among indigenous and minority groups (nationalities) that are subordinated to the dominant society having control over the ethnically plural state. The revival of ethnic awareness, related to ethnonationalism, takes usually many forms and can evolve under some circumstances from a soft model, based on the culture maintenance and social advance, to a more radical trend, combining ethnic rights with political issues. When the native activism is connected with ethnic demands, such tendency can be described properly as ‘indigenous ethnonationalism’. Its formation is based at least on two social factors: (i) increased communication between different local communities but belonging to one ethnic

³² W. Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton University Press 1994.

³³ J. Nash, *Mayan Visions. The Quest for Autonomy in an Age of Globalization*, New York: Routledge 2001.

³⁴ A. Lecours, *Ethnonationalism in the West: A Theoretical Exploration*, ‘Nationalism and Ethnic Politics’ 2000, Vol. 6(1), pp. 103–124.

group, and (ii) a strong impact of emerging leaders on the ethnic society. Their direct activities and ideological influence facilitate the development of the sense of subjective self-awareness and ethnopolitical identity of the plain members of the ethnic unit. One of the central themes of indigenous ethnonationalism is the idea of self-determination, which can be conceptualized in mild forms as the right to ethnodevelopment at the local level, and recognition of ethnic differences, ethnic territories and native representatives by the nation/state.³⁵

That idea can be manifested also more distinctly as a demand to create an autonomous unit in the areas populated entirely by a particular ethnic group, which is a case of some native groups from the Amazon jungle, where they live in the *reservas indígenas*, recognized and officially protected by the state. However, self-determination sometimes has a more radical form leading to the formation of almost independent ethnic regions (like in the case of the revolutionary clusters of the Maya communities in Chiapas, Mexico) or even to separatist tendencies (present among some rebellious groups of the Mapuche in Chile). It should be noted that such phenomena can be quite rarely noted in Latin America, where the ideas of social advance, ethnic recognition and civic representation of indigenous groups within a democratic multicultural state are prevailing.

In general, indigenous ethnonationalism is manifested in such features as ethnic activism, the idea of autonomy, struggle against domination of the majority, revival of native culture, development of ethnic pride based on the mythicized past, and the feeling of solidarity tying together different native groups for the sake of common interest. In spite of regional differences, all forms of native ethnonationalism have many similar characteristics present in native activities, demands, and ideology. Its general goal is at least fourfold: rejection of (endo)colonial oppression, restitution and recognition of indigenous rights, revival of native culture, and maintenance of ethnic identity. The combination of all these factors depends on the historical background and ethnic relationships in a given area. However, the general trend is quite obvious: at the initial stage, social and economic demands predominate, subsequently ethnic and cultural postulates become more important, and finally, civic and political ideas are strongly emphasized.

The Andean ethnonationalism, despite its own specificity, is governed by similar rules. Ideas of native ethnonationalism are developed as a result of the activities of indigenous organizations, their leaders, and intellectuals. They are manifested primarily in different mobilizations (negotiations, conferences, meetings, parades, marches of protest, strikes, roadblocks, occupation of buildings, demonstrations, celebrations of feasts, public rituals, etc.) and additionally take the form of more sophisticated concepts contained in official documents, ethnic

³⁵ M. E. Andersen, *Peoples of the Earth: Ethnonationalism, Democracy, and the Indigenous Challenge in 'Latin' America*, Plymouth: Lexington Books 2010, pp. 165–193.

press, interviews, books, and online publications. The last aspect of the indigenous nationalism can be identified as a creative intellectual product of the native elite, who are capable of formulating ethnic ideas composed of features of usually different origin. There are among them elements rooted in the native culture, tradition, heritage, and history but cleverly adapted to the current needs. Another group of ideas includes features that have actually been invented by the native leaders but with time considered mostly inherited directly from the ancestors.³⁶ The third category consists of attractive and fashionable ideas borrowed from the Western thought and adapted to the Andean reality, like an ecological approach to the environment, principles of intercultural education, the value of intellectual property and significance of sustainable economy. Finally, there is a set of concepts that embraces many ideas taken directly from the global discourse, like references made to the rights of indigenous people and universal human rights or the principles of democracy and social justice, incorporated without any essential changes into native ethnonationalism.

The combination of all those characteristics (inherited, invented, borrowed, adapted) is used to build an ethnic ideology, which in each Andean country has a slightly different profile, depending on the local interethnic situation, previous experience of native movements, and the power of indigenous activism. One feature, however, is common to the different mutations of indigenous nationalism, namely a very strong emphasis placed on the meaning of a symbolic ethnic border (metaphorically understood, in line with the concept introduced by Fredrik Barth),³⁷ existing between the indigenous peoples and the world of the Others (Creoles, Mestizos and Whites). This sharp dual division is outlined in every aspect of the native existence, from everyday life, social patterns and economic activities, to the perception of the past, rituals, beliefs (*cosmovisión*) and world outlook.

In connection with these comments, let me draw attention to selected aspects of the indigenous activities and ethnic ideas which are characterised by the above-mentioned features, although obviously this topic is too broad and should be discussed separately in detail and with great accuracy. It is worth stressing only that the analysed phenomena are closely related to the revival of ethnicity and the desire of leaders to raise new indigenous consciousness, based on ethnic pride and the conviction that the process of destruction of indigenous culture and identity erosion must be stopped. The natives should be aware that they have valuable culture of their own, that they can be proud of their heroic history, that they have their religion which should not be treated as heathen, and that they have the right to build their own modern life, adapted to current civilizational conditions but based on local values and heritage.

³⁶ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso 1991.

³⁷ F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Long Grove: Waveland Press 1998.

The ideas related to ethnic nationalism can be found in many areas of indigenous activities and thought. One of them is the political arena in the strict sense of the word. An important concept there is autonomy, realized at least in three versions: (i) as real cultural autonomy understood as the right to maintain own identity and tradition, despite the dispersion of native people throughout the country, (ii) as micro-territorial autonomy, applying to the areas that under law belong to the indigenous people only (*comunidades campesinas*), and finally (iii) as regional autonomy, a concept of exclusive indigenous zones in areas almost entirely populated by the Indians.³⁸ The idea of autonomy is closely related to the recognition of indigenous rights. It means also the approval of 'special' laws and rules applying only to the native people, including the acceptance of legal pluralism, based on acknowledgment of the traditional principles of native justice. Another significant indigenous claim is the aspiration to have their own recognized representatives in the public space: from the local administration offices to the upper level of state authorities. Political symbolism of ethnicity is also quite important. This category covers, among others, such phenomena as frequent public display of the indigenous flag (known in Bolivia as *whipala*), which highlights the presence and power of native people in the civic arena, or the use of some ethnic ornaments and designs attached to the official attire of many indigenous politicians (the former president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, regularly followed that trend, even when travelling abroad).

Contemporary indigenous collective identity can be seen as the expression of ethnonationalism. Native activism brings about change and strengthens ethnic consciousness of the Indians, who face gradual assimilation, acculturation, and miscegenation. Hence, the conscious efforts of activists to influence, especially young people, also those living in the cities, and to encourage them to maintain their tradition and develop ethnic pride. In the Andean countries, a four-level identity scale is becoming increasingly popular. It starts from the affiliation to the local group (the cases of the Otavalo and Saraguro Indians of the Kichwa stock in Ecuador, and Q'ero communities of the Quechua people in Peru). Then, there is the ethnolinguistic and cultural identity of the natives living in one or several countries (the Quechua from Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, the Aymara from Peru, Bolivia and Chile, the Mapuche from Chile and Argentina), and next one could distinguish the state-indigenous identity, which includes all natives, regardless of their ethnic affiliation but living in one country (Ecuador, Bolivia or Peru). The latter level corresponds to the pan-Indian ethnicity (when the native population perceive themselves as indigenous peoples of all the Andean countries, of the whole Latin American area, or even as the original people of Abya Yala (it means both Americas, according to the current Indian terminology). From the period when the

³⁸ H. Díaz-Polanco, *Autonomía regional. La autodeterminación de los pueblos indios*, México: Siglo XXI 1999; S. Velazco Cruz, *El movimiento indígena y la autonomía en México*, México: UNAM 2003.

natives appeared on the public scene, their dual civic identity has also been clearly emphasized: firstly, as *indígenas* having special constitutional rights, and secondly as Ecuadorians, Peruvians, and Bolivians, or in the opposite order depending of the context. The situation is slightly different only in the case of Chile, because not all the Mapuche regard themselves as Chileans, seeing the state as oppressive and still treating native people as a kind of colonized second-class citizens.

The native history, its reinterpretation and application in indigenous politics and education, is also an important factor shaping the ethnic identity. Indian leaders have made considerable efforts to decolonize the vision of the past, and ultimately to present it from the indigenous perspective. Hence, there are many initiatives to remove the monuments of Spanish conquistadors and discoverers from the prestigious public settings, and to replace them with monuments commemorating famous Indian chiefs who struggled against alien invaders; as well as plenty of pageants and semi-traditional events in the form of ‘artificial reconstructions’ of the ancient celebrations and holidays (such as the popular Inca festival, *Inti Raymi*, taking place annually in Cuzco, Peru) that are organized throughout the year. The progressive glorification of the Inca past as the time of native imperial power is also noticeable, as are many popular references to the precolonial Andean civilizations, which are to prove exceptional achievements of the ancestors of today’s Indians.³⁹ A tendency has also been observed in the last decades, quite similar to that already present in North America, to take control over the ancient sites and monuments, museums dedicated to precolonial civilizations, sacral objects displayed on exhibitions, and archaeological excavations.

Ecological themes form an important part of the indigenous ideology and are used to present the Indians as the people living always in harmony with nature, defending it against the ruthless exploitation by the expanding industrial civilization. A special version of this romantic ecological concept, which additionally relates to ethnic nativism, is observed in Bolivia, where it is known as *pachamamismo* (a word derived from *Pacha Mama*, indigenous Mother Earth).⁴⁰ It is believed that the natives should control their natural resources (water in the rivers and lakes, mineral deposits, plants, and animals) because it is only them who will be able to apply the principles of *sumak kawsay* (*buen vivir* in Spanish). This concept is a kind of native idea of ‘well-being’, which is considered an alternative to the Western developmental projects of continuous progress. It promotes such a way of life which secures the equilibrium between necessary human needs and the surrounding nature, treated always with respect as a vital source of all

³⁹ K. Pacheco Medrano, *Incas, indios y fiestas*, Cusco: INC 2007; J. Galinier, A. Molinié, *The Neo-Indians: A Religion for the Third Millennium*, Boulder: University Press of Colorado 2013.

⁴⁰ G. Omar, *El discurso moderno frente al ‘pachamamismo’: La metáfora de la naturaleza como recurso y de la Tierra como madre*, ‘Polis. Revista Latinoamericana’ 2012, No. 33, pp. 219–233.

human and non-human beings. The idea is composed of many features rooted in the social, economic, and religious tradition of the Andean people but cleverly adapted to the Western concepts of sustainable development and the philosophy of deep ecology.⁴¹ Basing on such ideological assumptions, the experimental proposals of the obvious nativist character have been frequently implemented to return to the old agricultural techniques and traditional crops as a proven way of land cultivation in the Andes.

Issues of native education belong also to the important factors shaping a modern mind but without compromising the ethnic identity. In accordance with the principles of intercultural education, promoted by national and international regulations, ethnic leaders advocate the establishment of bilingual schools, where native students, besides mastering Spanish, could be also taught in their ethnic languages (Quechua, Aymara, and Mapudungun – the language of the Mapuche). Unfortunately, such schools do not enjoy much popularity among Indians, and their role is rather symbolic, serving more as a political proof that the idea of bilingual education is successfully implemented and that the state fulfils its obligation.⁴² Much greater prestige is accorded to intercultural universities, which educate new native leaders, professionals, and future intellectuals.⁴³ The curricula developed at those universities combine basic Western knowledge with subjects based on cultural experiences of the Andean people and issues related to the important indigenous needs. Numerous topics of instruction programmes include: traditional medicine, native techniques of soil cultivation and pastoralism, customary law, ancient civilizations of the Andes, history of Indian resistance, indigenous philosophy, native languages, and also questions of native rights and law regulating the situation of the Indians. There are also many courses and workshops organized by different institutions (indigenous and NGOs), especially for the rural population. They are of great importance in the dissemination of modern knowledge and revival of values handed down by the ancestors. On the other hand, native young people actively use the ethnic press and websites, run by many indigenous organizations, and articles published there cover a range of issues that also contribute to awakening ethnonationalism. The main purpose of them is to revive the endangered identity and initiate the debate on the proper strategy for indigenous emancipation.

The trend toward the revitalization of native culture emphasizes also the values of the Andean religion and sacral tradition, treated as an important element

⁴¹ Ph. Altmann, 'Good life' as a Social Movement Proposal for Natural Resource Use: *The Indigenous Movement in Ecuador*, 'Consilience. The Journal of Sustainable Development' 2013, Vol. 10(1), pp. 59–71.

⁴² R. Cortina, *The Education of Indigenous Citizens in Latin America*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters 2013.

⁴³ J. Rappaport, *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*, Durham: Duke University Press 2005.

of the indigenous identity. There are many attempts at reactivating ancient rituals and ceremonies; sometimes, they are even granted the official status of state celebrations, for instance, at the initiation of presidency or at the opening of important national meetings (e.g. in Bolivia or Peru). The Andean traditional world outlook (*cosmovisión*) is considered a native philosophy based on the millennial intellectual achievement, with its own original system of cognitive values and ethical principles, which should be appreciated and are worth continuing. The Catholic Church is also trying to indigenize its rites and learning, mostly according to the principles of the new evangelization movement and its core 'inculturation' strategy, which postulates the translation of Christianity to the native cognitive system and respective ritual patterns.⁴⁴ An interesting product of that adaptation is *teología india* (Indian theology), a current development by the Latin American clergy attempting to combine harmoniously the Andean religious concepts with Christian basic ideals, and searching for the common ground of both religious systems.⁴⁵ The great revival affects also all kinds of shamanic and healer (*curanderos*) activities, linking the traditional way of treatment with practices borrowed from different trends of the 'new age' ideology.⁴⁶ Neo-shamans, very popular today also outside of their native society, provide healing and magical services frequently in a professional modern way, seeing their clients in special consulting offices (*consultorios*). Some of them are even recognized officially by the local and state administration as useful medical specialists (*médicos tradicionales*), who can support the existing healthcare system (e.g. in Chile, Ecuador). This very positive attitude toward indigenous religion, medicine, and knowledge of herbs is mainly the effect of the *interculturalidad* doctrine enshrined in the constitutions of the Andean states and then disseminated among the national societies.

5. ETHNIC REVIVAL IN FOUR ANDEAN COUNTRIES

Despite many common elements of the indigenous activism in the whole Andean region, the native movement in each country has its own specifics. The differences are quite clear, especially when we compare ethnopolitical strategies and ethnonationalist profiles. The distinctive features observed in the four Andean countries have been influenced by many objective factors, both rooted in the past and caused by the recent social and ethnic situation. However, three of

⁴⁴ J. Espeja (ed.), *Inculturación y teología indígena*, Salamanca: San Estaban 1993.

⁴⁵ N. Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, *Caminos de la teología india*, Cochabamba: Verbo Divino 2000.

⁴⁶ J. Scuro, *De religión y salud a espiritualidad y cura. El neochamanismo como vehículo del cambio*, 'Ciencias Sociales y Religión' 2015, Vol. 17(22), pp. 167–187.

them seem to me of special significance: primarily, demographic strength of the aboriginal people in the total country population; secondly, the type of current interethnic relations, once provoking tensions, then again leading to a compromise; the last factor being the historical background of relations between natives and the dominating society since the colonial times until recent decades.

Therefore, let us start with Chile, where the percentage of indigenous people is not so high as in the other Andean countries. The native population accounts for between 8% and 11% of all citizens, which is equivalent to 1.2 million to 1.7 million people. They are dispersed throughout the whole country, but the biggest ethnic group, the Mapuche, lives in the southern provinces, historically known as Araucania. However, as a consequence of migration, they live also in great numbers in the capital: Santiago de Chile. The whole history of the Mapuche has been marked by constant struggle against conquest and colonization of their native territories. Under the leadership of their brave warlords, the Mapuche were able to maintain successfully control over their homeland until the second half of the nineteenth century. The heroic ethnic history marked by bloody battles, clever treaties signed with the enemies, and new institutions invented to strengthen the Mapuche federation of tribes are today a core element of the native consciousness, education and pride, inspiring also patriotic imagination of the young generation. The current interethnic situation of the Mapuche people is characterized by frequently violent confrontations with state forces, in the form of strikes, road blockades, occupations of industrial installations or even property damage. The main reason of their protests is all the time the same: defence of native lands, threatened by the neoliberal policy of development, leading to gradual degradation caused by pollution and an ever greater scarcity of water. Such circumstances can explain why the Mapuche ethnonationalism has a frequently rebellious character and, in some extreme groups, evinces even separatist tendencies. The idea of autonomy is also present, especially among those leaders who are under the ideological influence of Basque and Catalan nationalists, or follow the concepts disseminated by the Mapuche political emigrants in North America and Western Europe. The Mapuche elite members belong to many political factions and such situation goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, there are rebellious young leaders organizing radical forms of protest, but at the same time many Mapuche authorities are quite active in the state administration and local government, choosing a more conciliatory way to improve native life. A very influential role in Mapuche ethnonationalism is played by indigenous artists, especially poets and sculptors, as well as many intellectuals (university professors, teachers, and journalists).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ J. A. Marimán, *Autodeterminación. Ideas políticas mapuche en el árbol del siglo XXI*, Santiago de Chile: LOM 2012; J. Bengoa et al., *Mapuche. Procesos, políticas y culturas en el Chile del Bicentenario*, Santiago de Chile: Catalonia 2012; I. Hernández, *Autonomía o ciudadanía incompleta. El pueblo Mapuche en Chile y Argentina*, Santiago de Chile: Pehuén 2003.

The pattern of interethnic relations in Bolivia is definitely different. The country has the largest percentage of the aboriginal population in the entire South America. According to various data, based mostly on estimates, the native group ranges between 40.5% and 56% of the total population. The discrepancies arise from the difficulties in ethnic identification. The dilemma of who should be counted to the category of the native people usually depends on the applied criteria (according to language use, place of living, or attachment to tradition), the current political situation, and changing ethnic self-awareness. Nevertheless, it means that the size of the Indian population ranges from 2.8 million up to 4.5 million people. The majority of them belong to two important nationalities: the Quechua and the Aymara, whose ancestors were among the founders of ancient Andean civilizations and used to live in the preconquest time in the Inca empire. Both groups of these Indians also take pride in a very long tradition of anticolonial uprisings, followed by a series of riots against economic exploitation in the modern times. In the middle of the twentieth century, they already started to organize themselves in a typical modern way, building ethnopolitical associations and forming nativist ideas characteristic of ethnonationalism (expressed especially in the ideology of *catarismo*) and mixed with indigenous socialism, based on the principles of peasant economy and community cooperation. The constant growth of the sociopolitical movements, present in different factions of the native people, changed dramatically the traditional scene of the Bolivian power relationship, which finally allowed Evo Morales – the leader of the *cocaleros* union – to rise to power and take office as president in 2006. As the first indigenous president in the country's history, he headed the government supported by his team of devoted followers (a cluster of grass-roots native leaders, neo-Marxist intellectuals, and urban socialists) until 2019. His government, officially representing the interests of native people, was in fact rather populist and innovative, searching for an anti-capitalist 'third way' of the country's development. However, ethnonationalist symbolism and nativist references to the Indian past were also frequently used for the political mobilization of native supporters of the regime. As a result of radical political changes, contemporary Bolivia is considered officially a multiethnic country, with the indigenous peoples (as the majority) playing an important role. Indian cultural heritage is protected and treated as a valuable part of the whole national tradition.

The native elite has a quite important position on the diversified indigenous scene. At least three categories of native authorities deserve to be mentioned. The most influential leaders include usually activists of different unions, representing interests of indigenous miners, peasants, coca growers, and small urban merchants. From the ideological point of view, the majority of them follow a trend which combines the ideas of social justice with selected traditional ethnic characteristics. The leaders more attached to the traditional values control the associations of *comunidades campesinas*, known also as *marcas* and *ayllus* (peasant

communities). Their indigenous members (*comuneros*) still follow many ancient ways, considered by them essential to keep the community alive, and try only to adapt traditional features to the modern conditions. The native intellectuals (scientists, philosophers, writers), as the third group of authorities, have only a limited impact on the current political matters, but their influence on the native way of thinking is significant. They contribute to the debate on ethnicity, reinterpret the indigenous history, and lead the discussion on the vision of Bolivia's future as the country governed by the native people. In their concept of ethnonationalism, such themes like nativist ideas, glorification of the indigenous past, appreciation of traditional patterns, and critique of the Western values are present and very strongly emphasized. All these attractive ethnic ideas are combined creatively, to some extent, with the leftist socio-economic proposals as well as with ecological slogans that today are popular worldwide.⁴⁸

When moving further north, to Peru, one encounters an entirely different situation. The indigenous activism is relatively weak, despite the real size of the aboriginal population. According to some exaggerated estimations, the native group accounts for close to 44% or 45.5% of all citizens, which gives about 14 million to 15 million people. But according to the census of 2017, the percentage of the indigenous people was only about 26%, giving only 8.3 million people. According to the same source, the majority of the Peruvian population (60%) is made up of Mestizos. As we can see, the discrepancy between estimates and the 'objective' census is really great. The explanation can be found not in statistics but rather has to do mostly with cultural miscegenation (*mestizaje*) and constant acculturation of the natives, who aspire to be considered Mestizos. In this context, the crucial question is the ambiguous issue of self-identification and unclear criteria applied to assessment of the ethnic origin by census officials. Many decades of strong assimilation and the state integration policy towards the *indígenas* of the *sierra* (mountainous region) have transformed ethnic Indians, mostly the Quechua and to a lesser extent the Aymara nationalities, into the plain *campesinos* (peasants) and *comuneros* (members of a traditional rural community). Hence, the local countrymen of native background, still attached to traditional customs and their ethnic language, prefer to be identified according to their social position, instead of being seen (based on a common stereotype) as primitive 'Indios', that is people associated usually with the lowest prestige. The interethnic situation in Peru is gradually changing, mostly as a result of increased migration from the rural areas to the outskirts of big cities. The former *indígenas* gradually turning into peasants, when they settle down in shanty

⁴⁸ B. Gustafson, *New Languages of the State. Indigenous Resurgence and the Politics of Knowledge in Bolivia*, Durham: Duke University Press 2009; R. Gutiérrez Aguilar, *Los ritmos del Pachacuti. Movilización y levantamiento indígena – popular en Bolivia*, Buenos Aires: Tinta Limon 2008; L. E. López, P. Regalsky, *Movimientos indígenas y Estado en Bolivia*, La Paz: Plural 2005.

towns, become the first generation urban Mestizos maintaining only some symbolic attachment to their traditional ways.

Despite this, in the course of the last two decades, a gradual revival of the indigenous identity has been also observed in Peru. This process is partly stimulated and facilitated by the international law providing indigenous peoples with special protection. Achievements of the native activism in the neighbouring countries (Ecuador and Bolivia) and their potential influence on the situation in Peru cannot be ignored, either. And finally, there is one more factor: the urgent need to form efficient organizations, which could oppose the activities of industrial (mainly mining) companies responsible for serious damages to the environment and water pollution. Such associations of peasants have pretty soon discovered that it is much easier for them to attain their goal if they act as *indigenas*, whose territories should be protected in accordance with their special status of native people, guaranteed by the state and the international recommendations. Therefore, a new type of leaders has appeared who are involved in actions combining the ecological, social and ethnic issues in the interest of *campesinos-indigenas* (indigenous peasantry). In the southern part of Peru (Cusco and Titicaca areas), the ethnonationalist ideas are more significant than in the other regions of the country. They are manifested primarily in the symbolic sphere through references to the Inca heritage and traditional indigenous customs. It is worth mentioning that some forms of ethnonationalism, having its roots in native culture, can also be observed from time to time in the mainstream political life. This tendency has been mostly expressed by mestizo populist movements or parties, which incorporate selected indigenous features into their own manifests and symbolism. The purpose of this is to emphasize, by means of culture appropriation, their attractive political position, firstly, as a unique representation of all groups of the society, including people of indigenous ancestry, and secondly, as a manifestation of the ethnohistorical roots of the Peruvian nation, going back to the imperial time of the Incas.⁴⁹

In sharp contrast to the situation in Peru, the indigenous people in Ecuador, mostly the Kichwa (the branch of the Quechua family) have a long-lasting tradition of organized social and ethnic movements, and the majority of them have maintained their native identity, despite the progress in education, modernization of their everyday life, and formation of the aboriginal middle class. Like in the other Andean countries, the size of the indigenous population is a question of debate, because the statistical discrepancies of published data are really significant, due to ambiguous criteria of ethnic identification and estimates based on various methods. According to the data provided by the state authorities,

⁴⁹ C. I. Degregori, P. Sandoval (eds), *Saberes periféricos. Ensayos sobre la antropología en América Latina*, Lima: IEP 2008; L. Abad Gonzáles, *Resistencia india organizada: el caso de Perú*, Quito: Abya-Yala 2006; R. Thorp, M. Paredes (eds), *La etnicidad y la persistencia de la desigualdad. El caso peruano*, Lima: IEP 2011.

the Indians constitute around 8% of the total population, which equals around 1.4 million people. Meanwhile, indigenous sources estimate the size of the native group as close to 39% of all citizens, which increases the number of natives to 6 million. Even if their number is assumed at somewhere between 3 million and 4.6 million (18% or 25%, according to more realistic data), it shows clearly how important position this group must have not only in terms of demographics but also in social and ethnic relations.

As a matter of fact, the Ecuadorian indigenous organizations and their very smart leaders started to conquest the country's political scene in the last decade of the twentieth century. Their successful ethnic activism was gradually transformed into the political machine facilitating control over many local administration offices, and simultaneously promoting some of the indigenous leaders to the top positions of the state government. They were able to unite almost all native forces of the country and build one strong federative organization (CONAIE), which could negotiate with the government on equal terms. The unique success of the Ecuadorian natives became a good example to follow for many other aboriginal movements across the whole Latin America, and even outside the continent. The leaders from Ecuador participated in many conferences, encounters and meetings abroad and contributed a lot to the official debate on the shape of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Another important feature which characterizes the situation of the native people in Ecuador is very well-established indigenous identity, observed both among rural population and in the emerging native, urban middle class, and even among emigrants to the US and Spain. Many years of interethnic conflicts, followed by cooperation with the state authorities led to the situation, in which ethnic ideas developed by the indigenous leaders did not function in opposition to the central government. The most important of them are such concepts as *pluriculturalidad* (cultural pluralism) and *multiethnicidad* (multiethnicity), considered two important pillars of interethnic relations. The idea of *plurinacionalidad* (national pluralism), proposed by the Ecuadorian native elite as the third basic element of the ethnic equality, was not accepted by the state authorities, due to the risk of potential decomposition of the country.⁵⁰

Comparing the four above-discussed examples of indigenous activity, it is quite easy to identify some main differences between these ethnic movements. The position of Chilean natives is definitely rebellious, anti-state, and even has some features of ethnic separatism. The indigenous people of Bolivia represent a strong socio-political trend, mixed with nativist ideas, and participate directly in the state politics. In Peru, the priorities are cultural and ecological issues dealt with by people of indigenous origin without questioning the integrational drive of

⁵⁰ J. Sánchez-Parga, *El movimiento indígena ecuatoriano. La larga ruta de la comunidad al partido*, Quito: Abya-Yala 2010; M. Becker, *Indians and Leftists in the Making of Ecuador's Modern Indigenous Movements*, Durham: Duke University Press 2008; M. Viatori, *One State, Many Nations: Indigenous Rights Struggles in Ecuador*, Santa Fe: SAR Press 2009.

the nation/state. And last but not least, Ecuadorian Indians form a well-integrated native group, who is very active politically, strongly attached to their heritage and ethnicity, and has developed a successful model of cooperation with the mainstream society and the central government.

6. CONCLUSION

The general overview of indigenous activism allows one to identify many common and similar features for native movements in the Andean countries, but also to define particular distinguishing features of the individual cases. However, regardless of the obvious differences, there is no doubt that in all of the analysed examples, new indigenous leaders and intellectuals play an important role in the organized ethnic mobilization, just as proponents of the 'indianismo' ideology (the model of an Indian society designed by the indigenous themselves). A set of native emancipatory ideas, formed in opposition to the concept of 'indigenismo' (paternalistic and integration policy of the nation/state towards indigenous people), facilitates the development of ethnonationalism.⁵¹

The modern indigenous elite has contributed to the improvement of living conditions of the native people, promoted the education of aboriginal youth (*educación intercultural*), and participated in forming of the incipient native middle class. The leaders have spread many emancipatory ideas, contributed to the recognition of indigenous cultural heritage and encouraged the natives to participate in the democratic changes taking place in the whole Andean region. This way, the principles of interculturalism, multiethnicity, linguistic plurality and recognition of indigenous rights have gradually begun to shape social and political reality of the Andean part of Latin America. Despite all these reforms, for now carried out primarily in the legal sphere, the real emancipation process is still far from completion; however, the general trend of changes, once started, seems to be potentially favourable to the indigenous peoples.

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⁵¹ A. Posern-Zieliński, 2005, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–200; R. Andolina, N. Laurie, S. A. Radcliffe, *Indigenous Developments in the Andes: Culture, Power, and Transnationalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 53–79.

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