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AMERICAN INDIAN ETHNIC RENEWAL: POLITICS AND THE RESURGENCE OF IDENTITY[*]

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Ethnic renewal is the reconstruction of one's ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, replacing or amending an identity in an existing ethnic identity repertoire, or filling a personal ethnic void. Between 1960 and 1990, the number of Americans reporting an American Indian race in the U.S. Census more than tripled. This increase cannot be accounted for by simple population growth (increased births, decreased deaths, immigration), or by changing enumeration definitions or techniques. Researchers have concluded that much of this growth in the American Indian population results from "ethnic switching," where individuals who previously identified themselves as "non-Indian" changed their race to "Indian" in a later census. The question posed here is: Why does such ethnic switching occur? Drawing on historical analyses and interview data, I argue that this growth in the American Indian population is one instance of ethnic renewal. I identify three factors promoting individual ethnic renewal: (1) federal Indian policy, (2) American ethnic politics, and (3) American Indian political activism. These three political factors raised American Indian ethnic consciousness and encouraged individuals to claim or reclaim their Native American ancestry, contributing to the observed Indian census population increase. American Indian ethnic renewal contributes to our general understanding of how ethnicity is socially constructed.

his paper examines the phenomenon of ethnic identity change and the role of politics in prompting the reconstruction of individual ethnicity. Specifically, I examine recent demographic trends in the American Indian population to understand the conditions and factors that lead individuals to change their racial identity.[1] Between 1960 and 1990, the number of Americans reporting American Indian as their race in the U.S. Census more than tripled, growing from 523,591 to 1,878,285. This increase cannot be accounted for by the usual explanations of population growth (e.g., increased births, decreased deaths). Researchers have concluded that much of this population growth

[1] Consistent with the usage of native and non-native scholars, I use the terms "American Indian," "Indian," "Native American" and "native" interchangeably to refer to the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of North America. I also use the terms "race" and "ethnicity" somewhat interchangeably, although I view ethnicity as the broader concept subsuming race, which generally refers to visible (often skin color) distinctions among populations. Ethnicity can refer not only to somatic or physical differences, but also to differences in language, religion, or culture. I acknowledge the importance, some would say preeminence, of race in historical and contemporary American ethnic relations.

must have resulted from "ethnic switching," where individuals who identified their race as non-Indian (e.g., White) in an earlier census, switched to "Indian" race in a later census. Why are more and more Americans reporting their race as American Indian?

My research draws on historical analyses and interview data, and combines a social constructionist model of ethnic identity with a social structural approach to ethnic change. I argue that the increase in American Indian ethnic identification reflected in the U.S. Census is an instance of "ethnic renewal." Ethnic renewal refers to both individual and collective processes. *Individual ethnic renewal* occurs when an individual acquires or asserts a new ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, replacing or amending an identity in an existing ethnic repertoire, or filling a personal ethnic void. Reclaiming a discarded identity might entail resuming religious observances or "retraditionalization" (e.g., the return to orthodoxy by American Jews). Replacing an identity in an existing ethnic repertoire might involve religious conversion (e.g., the conversion to Islam by Christian African Americans); amending an existing ethnic repertoire might involve exploring a new side of one's family tree and including that nationality or ethnicity among one's working ethnic identities (e.g., the taking on of Armenian ethnicity by an Irish Armenian American already involved in Irish American ethnic life). Filling a personal ethnic void might entail adopting a new ethnic identity for the first time (e.g., Americans reconnecting with their ethnic "roots" and joining ethnic social, political, or religious organizations). *Collective ethnic renewal* involves the reconstruction of an ethnic community by current or new community members who build or rebuild institutions, culture, history, and traditions (Nagel 1994, forthcoming).

My thesis is that ethnic renewal among the American Indian population has been brought about by three political forces: (1) federal Indian policy, (2) American ethnic politics, and (3) American Indian political activism. Federal Indian policies have contributed to the creation of an urban, intermarried, bicultural American Indian population that lives outside traditional American Indian geographic and cultural regions. For these

individuals, American Indian ethnicity has been more optional than for those living on reservations. Changes in American political culture brought about by the ethnic politics of the civil rights movement created an atmosphere that increased ethnic consciousness, ethnic pride, and ethnic mobilization among all ethnic groups, including American Indians. The resulting "Red Power" Indian political activist movement of the 1960s and 1970s started a tidal wave of ethnic renewal that surged across reservation and urban Indian communities, instilling ethnic pride and encouraging individuals to claim and assert their "Indianness."

Below I provide a constructionist conceptual framework for interpreting ethnic identity generally; review the demographic evidence and explanations for increases in the American Indian population; outline the role of structural factors, such as political policies, ethnic politics, and ethnic political activism in prompting or strengthening Indian ethnic identification; and explore the meaning and consequences of activism for American Indian ethnic renewal.

BACKGROUND

Negotiating and Changing Individual and Collective Identities

In the past 30 years, our understanding of ethnicity has increasingly stressed the socially constructed character of ethnicity. The pioneering work of Fredrik Barth (1969), shows ethnicity to be situational and variable. Many studies have followed that have found ethnicity to be more emergent than primordial, ethnic group boundaries to be more fluid than fixed, ethnic conflicts to arise more from clashes of contemporary interests than from ancient animosities, ethnic history and culture to be routinely revised and even invented, and the central essence of ethnicity—ethnic identity—to be multifaceted, negotiable, and changeable (see Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, and Vecoli 1992; Sollors 1989).

It is this last assertion—that one ethnic identity can be exchanged for another—that runs most against the grain of common wisdom. Sociologists have long identified forms of ethnic change associated with intergroup

contact, such as assimilation, accommodation, and acculturation (Park 1928; Gordon 1961; Glazer and Moynihan 1963). These processes have been seen as long-term, often intergenerational, frequently involving the dissolution or blending of immigrant or minority ethnicities into a larger dominant ethnicity or nationality (e.g., from "Indian" to "White" or from "Irish" to "American"). In the case of ethnic renewal, however, individuals adopt a *non*dominant ethnic identity, and thus move from membership in a dominant group to become part of a minority or subnational group (e.g., from "White" to "Indian" or from "American" to "Irish American" or "Jewish American"). This resurgence of nondominant ethnic identity does not fit clearly into traditional models of ethnic change which carry a heavy presumption that ethnic change invariably moves in the direction of assimilation (i.e., from minority to majority).

Opportunities for individual ethnic change vary. Certainly some people, for instance, American Whites, have a wide menu of "ethnic options" from which they are free to choose (Waters 1990). It is more difficult for members of other racial or ethnic groups to change their ethnicity, particularly communities of color. This is because in the United States such groups confront a world of "hypodescent," where one drop of particular blood (African, Asian) dictates a specific ethnic group membership, leaving limited options for individual members (see Harris 1964; Davis 1991). European Americans and African Americans represent two ends of an ethnic ascription continuum, in which Whites are always free to remember their ancestry and Blacks are never free to forget theirs. These ethnic boundaries are maintained and policed by both Blacks and Whites, although their content and location can change over time (see Collas 1994 for a discussion of "transgressing racial boundaries").

Despite such strict racial regimes, and perhaps because of their constructed character, there is constant flux at the edges of individual ethnic identity and ethnic group boundaries. For instance, despite the "one drop rule," Davis (1991) describes centuries of defining and redefining "Blackness" in the United States (also see Stein 1989), and dis-

cusses divisions among Americans of African descent based on national origin and skin tone (also see Keith and Herring 1991; Waters 1994). Similarly, many studies describe the shifting and emerging identities of Latinos (Pedraza 1994; Padilla 1985, 1986; Gimenez, Lopez, and Munoz 1992), Asian Americans (Espiritu 1992; Wei 1993), Native Americans (Cornell 1988; McBeth 1989; Forbes 1990), and European Americans (Alba 1990; Waters 1990; Lieberson and Waters 1988; Bakalian 1993; Kelly 1994).

While historical shifts do indeed occur in ethnic boundaries and definitions, is it really possible to change one's *individual* ethnicity? The answer, of course, is yes. Individuals change their ethnic identity often, singly and *en masse*. Perhaps the most common form of ethnic switching is religious conversion. This sort of ethnic change is most likely to occur when a particular religion-based ethnicity is especially stigmatizing. Schermerhorn (1978) reports a common form of ethnic switching in India, where Hindu Untouchables convert to Islam to escape untouchability. Another instance of mass ethnic change occurred in the former Yugoslavia during Ottoman rule, when Christian conversions to Islam created a permanent ethnic boundary; contemporary conflicts between the descendants of these Muslims and the Christian Croat and Serb populations illustrate the resurgent power of ethnicity and nationalism, as these conflicts involve communities marked by varying degrees of intermarriage, residential integration, and religious tolerance (Hodson, Sekulic, and Massey 1994). Another type of ethnic change is "passing"—hiding or camouflaging a disadvantageous ethnicity while adopting the dress or behavior of a more advantaged group. Nayar (1966) notes that in India many instances of passing were motivated by the British colonial preference for Sikh military recruits: Hindus and others identified themselves as Sikhs to qualify for army posts. Sometimes ethnic switching is pursued bureaucratically. Lelyveld (1985) describes how individuals petitioned the South African government to change officially their own or others' racial designations under *apartheid* regulations. Similar challenges to racial designations on birth certificates have been mounted in the United States (Davis 1991).

American Indian Ethnicity: Opting for an Indian Identity

American Indians reside at the intersection of two racial regimes: hypodescent and self-identification. In some portions of the United States Indianness is strongly socially ascribed and often mandatory (e.g., in the Southwest or the Northern Plains). In these settings Indian ethnicity is regulated in two ways. The first is informal and external to Indian communities, and involves ascription mainly, though not exclusively, by non-Indians. In this instance of classic hypodescent, any visible "Indianness" labels an individual as "Indian." The second, more formal way American Indian ethnicity is regulated can be both internal and external to native communities, and involves official membership in Indian tribes. In this case, tribal, state, and/or federal governments recognize an individual as an "enrolled" member or not.

In much of the United States, however, American Indian ethnicity is largely a matter of individual choice; "Indian" ethnicity is an ethnic option that an individual can choose or not. This is *not* to say that *anyone* can choose to be an Indian or that all observers will unanimously confirm the validity of that choice. Indeed, there is enormous controversy among native people about who should be considered an Indian for purposes of receiving tribal services, federal benefits, affirmative action consideration, or rights to participate in tribal governments (Larimore and Waters 1993; Reynolds 1993; Snipp 1993).

An important point to make here about supratribal "American Indian" ethnicity is that it is purely a social construction. That is, the Native American population is comprised of many linguistic, cultural, and religious groups, more than 300 of which are separately recognized by federal or state governments in the lower 48 states (with many more in Alaska and Hawaii); each group has its own political, legal, and police system, economy, land base, and sovereign authority. Around two-thirds of American Indians identified in the U.S. Censuses are official members of these recognized communities (Snipp 1989). Thus, when we speak of an "American Indian" race or ethnicity, we are of necessity referring to a group of individuals from various tribal backgrounds, some of whom speak native languages, most of whom converse in English, some of whom live on or regularly visit reservation "homelands," most of whom live off-reservation, some of whom participate in tribal community life, most of whom live in urban areas.

Despite this diversity, researchers assert that, indeed, there are "Indians," and this all-encompassing category can be seen as an "ethnic group."[2] For instance, Deloria (1992a) argues that as American Indians became increasingly involved in off-reservation political and economic life after World War II, they came to see themselves as minority group members and as part of the larger American ethnic mosaic. In fact, many Native Americans carry within their portfolio of ethnic identities (which may include identities based on kin or clan lineage, tribe, reservation, language, and religion) a supratribal or pan-Indian "Indian" identity, which is often reserved for use when interacting with non-Indians. Finally, as further evidence of the existence of an "American Indian" ethnic group, in recent decades increasing percentages of Americans who identify their race as "Indian" fail to specify a tribal affiliation, suggesting that their primary ethnic identity is supratribal or "Indian" (Masumura and Berman 1987).[3]

Patterns of American Indian Identification, 1960–1990

The U.S. Census provides data for examining both ethnic choice and ethnic ascription in American society. Beginning in 1960, the Census Bureau moved from a system where enumerators assigned each person a race to a system that permitted individual racial self-identification. This move from ascription to racial choice opened the door to individual racial "switching," especially for those ethnic categories not strongly governed by so-

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[2] Some native scholars and commentators have taken offense at the notion that Indians are a "mere" ethnic group, arguing that they are instead, sovereign nations (Trask 1990, 1991; Morris 1989; Deloria and Lytle 1984; Stiffarm and Lane 1992).

[3] In 1980, about one-fifth of U.S. Census respondents who identified their race as "American Indian" did not report a tribe (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1981).

Table 1. American Indian Population, 1900–1990

Census Year	Population Size	Percent Change from Previous Year
1900	237,196	—
1910	276,927	17
1920	244,437	–13
1930	343,352	40
1940	345,252	1
1950	357,499	4
1960	523,591	46
1970	792,730	51
1980	1,364,033	72
1990	1,878,285	38

Sources: For 1900–1970, Thornton (1987:160); for 1980 and 1990, U.S. Bureau of the Census (1991, table 1).

cial conventions of hypodescent. Table 1 shows the growth in the American Indian Census population from 1900 to 1990.

Between 1970 and 1980, the American Indian population increased the most: The population grew from 792,730 in 1970 to 1,364,033 in 1980, an increase of 72 percent. Researchers wondered what accounted for this growth. They searched for the usual explanations: increased birthrates, decreased death rates, immigration, changes in census coding procedures.[4] As these explanations were examined one by one and each failed to account for Indian population growth, researchers looked to alternative, more sociological explanations. For instance, Passel and Berman (1986) and Deloria (1986) argue that the unexplained percentage of Indian population growth is the result of "'recruitment,' i.e., changes in self-definition" by individuals from non-Indian in one census to Indian in the next (Passel and Berman 1986:164). Thornton (1987) suggests that such increases are the result of "'biological migration': the migration of non-Indian genes into the

American Indian population" (p. 174), the offspring of whom identify themselves as Indian. Steiner (1967) characterizes individuals likely to be included in the ranks of the unaccounted for Indian population as "new Indians"—urban, educated, and multicultural—people whom Snipp (1989) describes as "individuals who in an earlier era of American history would have 'passed' unrecognized into white society" (p. 57). Eschbach (1992) depicts the Indian population explosion as the result of "new identification" by Americans of varying degrees of Indian ancestry who formerly reported a non-Indian race, but who changed their race to "Indian" in a later census. And, finally, there is the somewhat unkind, informal description of newly identified census Indians as "wannabes," non-Indian individuals who want to be American Indian and thus identify themselves as such (Deloria 1981:140; Giago 1991; Taliman 1993:10).

DESCRIBING THE "NEW" INDIAN POPULATION

Although researchers seem to agree that individual ethnic change is an important factor in the recent growth of the American Indian population, the reasons remain unclear. Phrased as research questions, we might ask: Who are these "new" Indians? And, what motivates them to change their ethnicity?

A survey of U.S. Census data and demographic research on the characteristics of the American Indian population provides some answers to the first question. Demographers calculate "natural increases" in the population by subtracting deaths from births; when population growth exceeds this number, the difference is referred to as the "error of closure" (Passel and Berman 1986:164; Harris 1994).[5] The largest growing segments of the

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[4] Researchers believe that the racial self-reporting introduced by the U.S. Census in 1960 contributed to the 46 percent increase from 1950 to 1960. After 1960, however, census coding procedures were no longer a major explanation for American Indian population growth (see Snipp 1989; Thornton 1987, 1990; Stiffarm and Lane 1992; Eschbach 1992; Passel and Berman 1986; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1988).

[5] Errors of closure in the Indian population were estimated to be 9.2 percent for the 1960–1970 decade, 25.2 percent for the 1970–1980 decade, and 9.2 percent for the 1980–1990 decade (Passel and Berman 1986; Harris 1994). In 1980, the year of largest Indian population growth, the error of closure translated into more than 350,000 "new" Indians (Passel and Berman 1986:164); many of these new identifiers most likely identified their tribe as "Cherokee" (Thornton, Snipp, and Breen 1990:200).

Table 2. Selected Characteristics of the American Indian Population, 1960–1990

Year	Percent Living in Urban Areas[a]	Percent Intermarried[b]	Children Given Indian Race[c]	Indian Language at Home[d]
1960	27.9	15.0	—[e]	—[e]
1970	44.5	33.0	—[e]	—[e]
1980	54.6	48.0	47.4	26.1
1990	56.2	59.0	46.7	23.0

[a] For 1960 and 1970, Sorkin (1978:10); for 1980, U.S. Bureau of the Census (1989:150); for 1990, U.S. Bureau of the Census (1992).

[b] For 1960 and 1970, Sandefur and McKinnell (1986:348); for 1980, Snipp (1989:157); for 1990, Eschbach (1995, table 1).

[c] For 1980, Eschbach (1992:150); for 1990, Eschbach (1995, table 2).

[d] For 1980, U.S. Bureau of the Census (1989:203); for 1990, U.S. Bureau of the Census (1992:66).

[e] Data not available.

population are those likely to have the highest "errors of closure," and hence the most likely influx of new members. Thus, by examining the fastest growing segments of the Indian population we can infer some of the social characteristics of the "new" Indians.

Table 2 summarizes several social characteristics of the American Indian population for the period from 1960 to 1990. Column 1 of Table 2 shows the percentage of the American Indian population living in cities from 1960 to 1990. The Indian population became increasingly urbanized during these three decades, with the proportion of urban Indians growing from 27.9 percent of the total Indian population in 1960 to 56.2 percent in 1990. As a result, the urban Indian population has grown three times faster than the rural population. During the 1960–1990 period, the urban Indian population increased 720 percent compared to a 218 percent increase in rural areas (Sorkin 1978:10; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:150, 1992). Thus, the "new" Indians are much more likely to live in urban areas than rural areas.

There are also regional differences in Indian population growth. Passel and Berman (1986) compared 1970–1980 population growth rates in "Indian states" with those in "non-Indian states,"[6] and found that the In-

dian population was growing twice as fast in non-Indian states: A 114 percent increase occurred in non-Indian states compared to only a 56 percent increase in Indian states. Eschbach (1995:103) examined population growth rates in regions of the country with states containing historically small Indian populations similar to Passel and Berman's "non-Indian states."[7] He found that population growth in these regions during the period from 1960 to 1990 was six times greater than in the regions containing states with historical Indian populations. These two studies strongly suggest that the "new" Indians are much more likely to be from states with historically small Indian populations.

Researchers have also found that Indian population growth is associated with racial intermarriage. American Indians have very high intermarriage rates compared to other racial groups. For instance, Snipp (1989:157) compared rates of intermarriage of Blacks, Whites, and Indians in the 1980 Census and

[6] Indian states are those states with a native population of 3000 or more in 1950: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and

Wyoming; California was excluded because it "behaved demographically over the last three decades much like a typical 'non-Indian' state" (Passel and Berman 1986:171).

[7] The correspondence between Passel and Berman (1986) and Eschbach (1995) is close, but not perfect. For instance, Passel and Berman's "Indian" states of Michigan, Nebraska, and New York are contained in Eschbach's six non-Indian regions, and unlike Passel and Berman, Eschbach includes California as an Indian region. I follow Passel and Berman in excluding California from Indian regions.

found that nearly half of Indians were inter-married (48 percent) compared to only 2 per-cent of Blacks and 1 percent of Whites. Sandefur and McKinnell (1986:348) report that Indian intermarriage has been increas-ing, rising from approximately 15 percent in 1960 to 33 percent in 1970, and Eschbach (1995:93) reported that in 1990, 59 percent of married Indians had a non-Indian spouse. These findings are summarized in column 2 of Table 2. Indian intermarriage is related to region and rates of population growth. Sandefur and McKinnell (1986:356) com-pared rates of intermarriage in "Indian states" and "non-Indian states" (as defined by Passel and Berman 1986) in the 1980 Census. They found that the intermarriage rate in non-Indian states (nearly 70 percent) was nearly twice that in Indian states (40 per-cent). Eschbach (1995:95) also found that rates of intermarriage varied by the "Indianness" of a region, with intermarriage ranging from 16 to 64 percent in Indian re-gions, and from 72 to 82 percent in non-In-dian regions. Eschbach also noted that popu-lation growth was greatest in those regions with the highest intermarriage rates, increas-ing from approximately 151,000 in 1960 to 928,000 in 1990—a 500 percent increase (1995:103). The implication of this research on Indian intermarriage is that the "new" In-dians in the 1970, 1980, and 1990 Censuses are more likely to be intermarried.

The race assigned to children in mixed marriages provides another important piece of information about the characteristics of the fastest growing segment of the American Indian population. Where hypodescent does not dictate the race of mixed race children, parents may choose their child's race. In 1980 and 1990, mixed Indian-non-Indian couples assigned the race of the Indian par-ent to only about half of their offspring (see column 3, Table 2). Eschbach (1992, 1995) reported that in the 1980 Census, 47.4 per-cent of children from Indian-non-Indian par-ents were assigned an Indian race (1992: 150); that proportion fell slightly in 1990 to 46.7 percent (Eschbach 1995:97). Region mattered in such racial decision-making. Eschbach (1995:97) found that in non-Indian regions the proportion of children given an Indian race in 1990 ranged from 33 to 45 per-cent; in comparison, in historically Indian re-gions, 36 to 73 percent of mixed race chil-dren were assigned an Indian race. Further, those regions with the greatest Indian popu-lation growth were areas where children of mixed marriages were less likely to be clas-sified by their parents as Indians. These find-ings suggest that the "new" Indians are more likely to assign a non-Indian race to their mixed offspring.

Finally, we come to that major indicator of assimilation—native language loss. In-dian language usage has declined dramati-cally in the past century. As shown in col-umn 4 of Table 2, in 1980, 74 percent of American Indians spoke only English in their homes (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:203); by 1990, the percentage had risen to 77 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Cen-sus 1992:66). Snipp (1989) found, not sur-prisingly, that native language usage varies by region, with Native Americans from re-gions with historically large Indian popula-tions much more likely to speak an Indian language than are those from historically non-Indian regions.[8] As Indian population growth is highest in these non-Indian re-gions, we can conclude that the "new" Indi-ans are quite likely to speak only English.

Adding the above data together, a picture emerges of the fastest growing segment of the Native American population: Compared to the total American Indian population, these Indians are more urban, more concen-trated in non-Indian states without reserva-tion communities, more often intermarried, less likely to assign their mixed offspring an Indian race, and more likely to speak only English. These characteristics are all de-scriptive of a population more "blended" into the American demographic and cultural mainstream than their reservation co-ethnics, more likely to have more flexible conceptions of self, residing in parts of the country that permit a wide range of ethnic options. In other words, under the proper conditions, the fastest growing portions of the American Indian population are avail-able for ethnic renewal.

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[8] For instance, Snipp (1989:175–76) reports that in the Mountain states 62.0 percent of Indi-ans report speaking a native language at home, compared to only 3.6 percent in the South Atlan-tic states.

ACCOUNTING FOR AMERICAN INDIAN ETHNIC RENEWAL

What *are* the conditions that promote American Indian ethnic renewal? Restated, what has motivated these new Indians to change their ethnicity? The answers to this question can be found in policy and politics: federal Indian policy, American ethnic politics, and Native American political activism.

Federal Indian Policy

Beginning in the nineteenth century, federal Indian policy was designed to assimilate American Indians into the Euro-American cultural mainstream (e.g., through forced English language acquisition, Anglo-centric education in Indian boarding and day schools, and reservation land reduction programs). Despite a brief pause in federal assimilation programs during the "New Deal" era,[9] the net result of decades of federal Indian policy was the creation of an English-speaking, bicultural, multi-tribal American Indian population living in U.S. cities. World War II also spurred the urbanization and acculturation of the Native American population, as Indians volunteered and were drafted into the military and non-enlisted native workers left reservations for wartime industrial jobs in urban areas. Many of these Indian veterans and workers never returned to the reservation (Nash 1985; Bernstein 1986). Post-World War II programs for job training and urban relocation were specifically designed to reduce reservation populations during the "termination" era of federal Indian policy, and provided a further push in the reservation-urban Indian population stream.[10] For instance, Sorkin (1978) esti-

mates that from 1952 to 1972, federal programs relocated more than 100,000 American Indians to a number of targeted cities, including Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Oakland, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, and Tulsa (Sorkin 1978:chap. 3). By 1970, nearly half of American Indians lived in cities as a result of relocation programs and other general urbanization processes. The combined result of decades of these federal Indian policies was the creation of an urbane, educated, English-speaking Indian constituency that was available for mobilization when the civil rights era arrived in the 1960s.

Not only did federal Indian policy help urbanize the Indian population, many programs had a major impact on the organizational fabric of urban Indian life. For instance, relocation programs directly funded the creation and operation of a number of Indian centers in both relocation target cities and cities near large reservation populations (Ablon 1965). These centers were established to provide services and meeting places for burgeoning urban Indian populations. Further, as an indirect consequence of relocation efforts, other urban Indian organizations blossomed: intertribal clubs, bars, athletic leagues, beauty contests, powwows, and dance groups, as well as Indian newspapers and newsletters, social service agencies, political organizations, and Christian churches (Hertzberg 1971; Guillemin 1975; Steele 1975; Mucha 1983; Weibel-Orlando 1991).

In a few urban areas, some of these organizations had a specific tribal character and were frequented only by members of a particular tribe (Hodge 1971). However, the vast majority of urban Indian organizations were intertribal and had names reflecting their inclusionary character: the Cleveland American Indian Center, the *Inter-Tribal Tribune* (newsletter of the Heart of America Indian

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[9] For instance, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA) reaffirmed tribal rights. Many critics maintain that the IRA was also an acculturation program of sorts, because it created tribal "councils" with "chairmen" linked to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Deloria and Lytle 1984; Champagne 1986).

[10] The "termination" era in federal Indian policy began in 1946 with the creation of the Indian Claims Commission, which was designed to settle all Indian land claims, and so to begin a process of ending (terminating) the federal-Indian trust relationship. Termination policies were un-

officially suspended when the Kennedy administration took office in 1961, although a number of tribes were terminated after that date. A 1970 statement by President Richard M. Nixon that embraced Indian "self-determination" marked the official turning point in federal Indian policy, shifting it from "termination" to "self-determination" (see Cohen [1982] for a summary of federal Indian policy).

Center, Kansas City), the Los Angeles American Indian Bowling League, the Many Trails Indian Club, the First Southern Baptist Indian Church (Weibel-Orlando 1991). In such intertribal organizations, many urban Indians "sought refuge from the terrible loss of identity that marked modern urban existence" (Clark 1988:289). The diverse organizations that populated the urban Indian organizational landscape formed the core of an intertribal network and informal communication system in urban Indian communities. They were important building blocks in the development of a supratribal level of Indian identity and the emergence of a pan-Indian culture, both of which were essential ingredients in the Red Power political mobilization of the 1960s.

American Ethnic Politics

Two forces converged in the 1960s to end the assimilationist thrust of federal Indian policy and to set in motion the contemporary period of American Indian ethnic renewal. One was the civil rights movement and the shifts in American social and political culture that followed in its wake. The other was President Lyndon Johnson's solution to the problem of race in America—the Great Society, the War on Poverty, and the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. The fluctuating currents of cultural change and reform politics that marked the 1960s were responded to by increasingly cosmopolitan and sophisticated American Indians who lobbied successfully to send federal War on Poverty and community development resources into impoverished urban and reservation communities (Witt 1968:68; Deloria 1978:88).

This mix of volatile ethnic politics and an explosion of federal resources, many earmarked for minority programs, combined with earlier federal Indian policies, which had concentrated large numbers of tribally diverse, educated, acculturated, and organizationally connected Indians in American cities. The result: a large-scale mobilization of urban Indians marked by a rapid growth of political organizations, newspapers, and community programs. To grasp fully these dynamic changes in many American communities, Indian and non-Indian, it is important to recall the atmosphere of the 1960s. As

Hugh Davis Graham (1990) writes in the Introduction to *The Civil Rights Era*:

> This is a story about a rare event in America: a radical shift in national social policy. Its precondition was a broader social revolution, the black civil rights movement that surged up from the South, followed by the nationwide rebirth of the feminist movement. (P. 3)

The demographic changes that underlay the rise of Black militancy in American cities, namely, the "great Black migration" from the rural south to the urban north (Cloward and Piven 1975; Edsall and Edsall 1991; Lemann 1991), were paralleled by the movement of American Indians off the reservations. The federal response to Black protest—civil rights legislation and the War on Poverty—spilled over into other minority communities, including American Indian communities, which were quickly mobilizing in the wake of Black insurgency. The ethnic militancy of the 1960s redefined mainstream America as "White" and exposed and challenged its racial hegemony. For America's ethnic minorities it was a time to cast off negative stereotypes, to reinvent ethnic and racial social meanings and self-definitions, and to embrace ethnic pride. For American Indians it marked the emergence of supratribal identification, the rise of Indian activism, and a period of increased Indian ethnic pride. Despite their often brutal treatment by United States' authorities and citizens throughout American history, American Indians have ironically, but consistently occupied a romanticized niche in the American popular media and imagination (Berkhofer 1978). The durable symbolic value of the American Indian as a cultural icon was further enhanced by the increased ethnic pride characterizing the civil rights era. The result increased the appeal of Indian ethnicity for many individuals, and no doubt contributed to the resurgence of Indian self-identification.

In addition to the symbolic allure of Indian ethnicity, there were also material incentives. Castile (1992) notes the connection between these ideational and material realms, commenting that American Indians were able "to manipulate their symbolic position [in American history and society] in ways that grant[ed] them a political leverage far greater than their numbers justif[ied]. By

keeping a sharp eye on the political waves of ethnicity, which they [could] not raise themselves, shrewd timing . . . allow[ed] them to ride those waves and maximize their impact in positive ways" (p. 183). American Indians indeed were able to navigate the changing currents of American ethnic politics, and their successes resulted in increased federal spending on Indian affairs, making American Indian identification a more attractive ethnic option for many Americans of Indian descent. The settlement of land claims by the Indian Claims Commission and the U.S. federal court system during the 1970s and 1980s was another important source of funds for Indian communities. Churchill (1992) reports that more than $128 million in Indian land claims awards were disbursed between 1946 and 1970, and by 1978 the total amount of claims awards exceeded $657 million (also see Lurie 1978:101). In addition, a number of major land claims were settled during the early 1980s, some of which involved large controversial settlements. Most notable are the claims of Maine's Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes, who in 1980 recovered 300,000 acres of land and received a payment of $27 million (see Jaimes 1992).

Increased federal spending in general and land claim awards in particular, along with the inclusion of Indians in many affirmative action and minority set-aside programs, contributed to the American Indian ethnic resurgence in part because they increased both the symbolic and the potential material value of Indian ethnicity. Individuals of Indian ancestry became more willing to identify themselves as Indians, whether or not such identification was a strategy to acquire a share of real or putative land claims awards or other possible ethnically-allocated rewards (such as scholarships, mineral royalties, employment preference). It was in this atmosphere of increased resources, ethnic grievances, ethnic pride, and civil rights activism that Red Power burst on the scene in the late 1960s and galvanized a generation of Native Americans. The rest of the country watched as the media covered such events as the occupation of Alcatraz Island, the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the siege at Wounded Knee.

American Indian Activism: Red Power

The shifting political culture and protest climate of the 1960s and 1970s spawned many Indian activist organizations, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the National Indian Youth Council, and produced a number of Indian protest actions: the 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island which began in 1969; the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties which culminated in a week-long occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.; the 71-day siege at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1973; the 1975 shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota which resulted in the imprisonment of Leonard Peltier; and numerous protest events in cities and on reservations around the United States, concluding with the 1978 Longest Walk to Washington, D.C. These events and this era stand out boldly in the publications and accounts of Native Americans living at that time, particularly native youth (see Fortunate Eagle 1992; Crow Dog and Erdoes 1990). Red Power played an important symbolic role in motivating individual ethnic renewal on the part of Indian participants and observers; this ethnic renewal took two forms, and both forms are relevant to the argument I present here.

The first type of individual ethnic renewal involves individuals who most likely would have identified themselves as Indians in earlier censuses, and thus is best summarized as a resurgence in ethnic pride which did not involve taking on a new ethnic identity (e.g., does not involve racial switching). Instead, this type of individual ethnic renewal involved a reaffirmation, reconstruction, or redefinition of an individual's ethnicity. For example, the slogan, "I'm Black and I'm proud" reflected such a redefinition of "Negro" in the U.S. in the 1960s. These individuals did not change their race, rather they changed the *meaning* of their race. This parallels the resurgence of Native American ethnic pride among individuals who already identified themselves as "Indian."

The second type of individual ethnic renewal involves individuals who would *not* have identified themselves as Indian in earlier censuses, but rather would have "passed" into the non-Indian race categories. For these individuals, a resurgence of ethnic pride

meant not only redefining the worth and meaning of their ancestry, but also involved laying a new claim to that ancestry by switching their race on the census form from non-Indian to Indian. This type of individual ethnic renewal is, I believe, reflected in census data; but currently the data do not exist for evaluating directly the influences of federal Indian policy, the ethnic politics of the civil rights era, or the rise of Indian activism on this kind of ethnic renewal. Such an evaluation would require examining the backgrounds and beliefs of those individuals who changed their race from non-Indian to Indian in the 1970, 1980, and 1990 Censuses. As Sandefur and McKinnell (1986) state, "it is not possible to know from census data who has changed his or her racial identification since a previous census" (p. 348). Indeed, researchers are awaiting such a definitive study. Snipp (1993) notes, while it is plausible that census increases reflect the fact that "more mixed ancestry persons are identifying themselves as American Indians than in the past, . . . [it] is virtually impossible to prove" (p. 16; also see Thornton, Sandefur and Snipp 1991:365; Harris 1994:592).

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNIC POLITICS AND RED POWER ACTIVISM

To begin to understand the role of politics and Red Power activism in promoting increased American Indian ethnic pride and awareness, I interviewed and corresponded with 25 Native Americans who participated in or observed the activist events of the 1970s (or, in the case of the 2 youngest respondents, who had heard accounts of the Red Power period from their parents). Of the 25, 11 were women and 14 were men; on average they were in their mid-40s (the youngest was 21, the oldest 79); 5 resided mainly in reservation communities, 9 were urban Indians, and 11 had lived in both settings for significant portions of their lives; 15 were activists during the 1960s and mid-1970s at the height of Red Power, another 5 became activists in the late 1970s and 1980s, and 5 described themselves as nonactivists. I asked each of the 25 whether the movement had any effect on them or their communities, and if so, what its impact was.

In addition to these interviews, I surveyed a large and growing body of oral histories and published personal accounts of recent Indian history. The responses in the archival material, the published literature, and in my interviews were quite similar: The activist period raised individual ethnic consciousness and prompted dialogues about the meaning of Indianness. These various sources also reflected some interesting regional and generational differences in assessments of the meaning and consequences of Red Power. The remainder of this paper provides an interpretive context for these native voices speaking about their ethnic identity and how it was influenced by the decade of American Indian activism that began with the occupation of Alcatraz Island.

Activism and Identity: Reversing the Causal Connection

The traditionally understood relationship between identity and activism is that identity precedes activism, making particular individuals more likely than others to engage in protest activities (for a review of this literature see McAdam 1988 and Tarrow 1992). Much recent research on social movements questions this assumption, exploring more fully the interrelationships among activism, identity, and culture. Fantasia (1988) points out the capacity of both spontaneous and planned protest action to reshape conceptions of personal and collective identity, redefine notions of fairness and justice, and build community consensus and solidarity. Benford and Hunt (1992), Hunt and Benford (1994), and Snow and Anderson (1993) document the emergence of collective ideologies and identities in social movement organizations and movements, and the interplay between movement-sited interpretative frames and rhetoric and larger political and cultural themes in the emergence of collective identity. Taylor and Whittier (1992) and Groch (1994) focus on the importance of group boundaries and collectively negotiated and defined meaning systems in the emergence of oppositional consciousness among movement participants and constituents.

The resurgence of American Indian ethnic identity in the 1970s and 1980s is consistent with these findings and illustrates the power

of activism to inspire individual and collective ethnic pride and to raise ethnic consciousness. My interviews most strongly support the notion that activism has its biggest impact on individuals who themselves personally witness or become directly involved in protest action. The narrative accounts of both activists and nonactivists, however, also suggest that social movements exert a wider impact, affecting the attitudes of nonparticipants as well, though to a lesser extent.

Alcatraz, Red Power, and the Resurgence of Indian Ethnic Pride

The 1960s were characterized by increasing levels of American Indian protest activism, much of which tended to be regional and associated with specific tribal groups and grievances (e.g., the "fish-ins" of the mid-1960s in the Pacific Northwest). The national Red Power movement got fully underway in November 1969, when Richard Oakes led a group of fellow Indian students from San Francisco State University and landed on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. Calling themselves "Indians of All Tribes," they claimed the island by "right of discovery." The takeover caught the attention of a nation already engrossed in the escalating protest and conflict of the civil rights movement, and the rhetoric and demands of the Alcatraz occupiers captured the imagination of many Native Americans. Indians of All Tribes issued the following proclamation which reflected their supratribal roots and agenda:

> We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians . . . .Since the San Francisco Indian Center burned down, there is no place for Indians to assemble . . . .Therefore we plan to develop on this island several Indian institutions: 1. A CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES. . . . 2. AN AMERICAN INDIAN SPIRITUAL CENTER. . . . 3. AN INDIAN CENTER OF ECOLOGY. . . . 4. A GREAT INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL . . . [and] an AMERICAN INDIAN MUSEUM. . . . In the name of all Indians, therefore, we reclaim this island for our Indian nations. . . . We feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers shall run and the sun shall shine.

> Signed, INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES
> (Blue Cloud 1972:40–42)

During the next 19 months the Alcatraz occupiers negotiated unsuccessfully with local and federal authorities and eventually were removed from the island in June 1971. Despite the failure to achieve their demands, as Hauptman (1986) notes, "the events at Alcatraz were a major turning point in the history of Indian activism . . . [and] became the symbol to many young, disillusioned Indians, . . . stimulating a rash of similar protests" (p. 227). The occupation highlighted Indian grievances and promoted Indian pride. Deloria (1974) summarizes its importance: "Alcatraz was the master stroke of Indian activism" (pp. 184–85). Writing at the height of Red Power activism in the early 1970s, he recognized the immediate impact of the movement on American Indian ethnicity:

> "Indianness" was judged on whether or not one was present at Alcatraz, Fort Lawson, Mt. Rushmore, Detroit, Sheep Mountain, Plymouth Rock, or Pitt River. . . . The activists controlled the language, the issues, and the attention. (Deloria 1974:184–85) [11]

The much publicized Alcatraz takeover and the first months of the occupation constituted a powerful symbolic moment both for those Native Americans involved in the protest and for those who witnessed it from more distant points around the country (see Johnson 1993; also see "Alcatraz Revisited: The 25th Anniversary of the Occupation," a special issue of *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* [vol. 18, no.4, 1994]). Just as the civil rights movement challenged prevailing racial hegemony by reframing Black ethnicity through the assertion of Black pride and Black power, Red Power, in the form of the Alcatraz occupation and the decade of Indian activist events that followed, challenged cultural depictions of Indians as victims of history, as living relics, powerless and subjugated. As a result, the Alcatraz occupation stimulated Indian ethnic pride and prompted

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[11] In written correspondence with Deloria in the summer of 1993, I asked him about the longer-term impact of the Red Power movement. He wrote: "This era will probably always be dominated by the images and slogans of the AIM people. The real accomplishments in land restoration, however, were made by quiet determined tribal leaders" (Deloria 1993, personal communication).

a resurgence in American Indian ethnic consciousness. LaNada Means, one of the participants in the occupation, comments:

> The protest movement at Alcatraz had positive results. Many individuals were not ashamed to be Indian anymore. People who had relocated in the cities were reidentifying themselves as Indians. (Philp 1986:230; also see Means Boyer 1994)

Wilma Mankiller, who went on to become the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, visited the island many times during the 19-month occupation. She describes the personal impact of the event as "an awakening that ultimately changed the course of her life" (Johnson 1993:125).

> I'd never heard anyone actually tell the world that we needed somebody to pay attention to our treaty rights, that our people had given up an entire continent, and many lives, in return for basic services like health care and education, but nobody was honoring these agreements. For the first time, people were saying things I felt but hadn't known how to articulate. It was very liberating. (Mankiller quoted in Johnson 1993:125)

My interviews with Native Americans who participated in or observed the events on Alcatraz and later protest events and who were young adults at the time, showed similar reactions. Their reactions affirmed the powerful symbolic meaning of the Alcatraz occupation and its importance in raising ethnic consciousness:

> Alcatraz was a major turning point in my life. For the first time in my life I was proud to be an Indian and an Indian woman. I grew up in an all white area. It was very difficult. You were constantly struggling to maintain any kind of positive feeling, any kind of dignity. Alcatraz changed all that. (Telephone interview with Frances Wise, Oklahoma City, OK, August 24, 1993)

> The movement gave me back my dignity and gave Indian people back their dignity. It started with Alcatraz, we got back our worth, our pride, our dignity, our humanity. If you have your dignity and your spirituality and you can pray, then you can wear a tie, carry a briefcase, work a job. If you don't have those things, then you are lost. (Telephone interview with Len Foster, Ft. Defiance, AZ, September 5, 1993)

> When Alcatraz came, suddenly they bloomed—all the Metis said they were French,

now suddenly they said they were Indian. Those with Indian blood hid it, saying they were Turks or Mexicans or Armenians. Now Indians were coming out of the woodwork. (Anonymous interview, summer, 1993)

> Every once in a while something happens that can alter the whole shape of a people's history. This only happens once in a generation or lifetime. The big one was Alcatraz. (Telephone interview with George Horse Capture, Fort Belknap, MT, May 24, 1993)

These quotes communicate a resurgence of ethnic pride and an increased willingness to claim and assert Indian ethnicity. I have argued that assimilation and relocation policies created the population base for a resurgence of Indian ethnicity in cities. Implicit in these policies was also the not-so-subtle subtext of assimilation—that Indianness was something to be discarded, inferior to the larger Anglo culture. While some argue that termination policy was successful in repressing Indian identity in many older native individuals (for instance Baird-Olson [1994] refers to those over 30 at the time as the "lost generation"), it seems clearly to have backfired among the younger generation of urban Indians caught up in the youth culture of the 1960s. It was on this mostly younger group that Red Power had its strongest impact.

Mary Crow Dog (Crow Dog and Erdoes 1990) describes the response of young people on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota as AIM swept through on the Trail of Broken Treaties, a nationwide caravan en route to Washington, D.C. in 1972:

> The American Indian Movement hit our reservation like a tornado, like a new wind blowing out of nowhere, a drumbeat from far off getting louder and louder. It was almost like the Ghost Dance fever that had hit the tribes in 1890. . . . I could feel this new thing, almost hear it, smell it, touch it. Meeting up with AIM for the first time loosened a sort of earthquake inside me. (Pp. 73–74)

Frances Wise was on the Trail of Broken Treaties:

> Many of the people with us were like me before Alcatraz. They didn't quite understand what was going on, but they were interested. A lot of people joined us [in the auto caravan from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C.]. I remember driving around a freeway cloverleaf

outside of Columbus, Ohio. All I could see were cars in front of us and behind us, their lights on, red banners flying from their antennas. It was hard to believe, really. We were that strong. We were really doing something. It was exciting and fulfilling. It's like someone who's been in bondage. Indian country knew that Indians were on the move. (Telephone interview with Frances Wise, Oklahoma City, OK, August·24, 1993)

Despite the power of the times, the actions of Red Power activists were not easily or enthusiastically embraced by all Native Americans. Generational differences were evident in attitudes toward the movement:

My parents did not want me to get involved [in activism], they weren't active. They were just struggling to live. When they got involved it was out of dire need. Their generation was almost at the point of being beaten into passivity. They would say, "There's nothing we can do; government's too powerful." The defeatism was very strong. One reason things changed then was that the children of those in power were resisting. (Telephone interview with Leonard Peltier, Leavenworth, KS, June 1, 1993)

Most of the older generation was forced to assimilate and are still in the mode of assimilation. Their attitude toward activism is "don't rock the boat." (Interview with Loretta Flores, Lawrence, KS, May 12, 1993)

The tendency of the younger generation of Native Americans to recapture a fading or suppressed Indian heritage and to reaffirm Indian identity stood in contrast to the skepticism of their elders. The different reactions to Red Power paralleled the "generation gap" so often used to depict 1960s' America, and these differences are consistent with one trend in the 1980 Census data reported by Passel and Berman (1986:173). They observe that "the 'new' American Indians [those from traditionally non-Indian states] are generally young adults" (p. 173)—precisely the generation that participated in and witnessed Red Power.

Activism as a Crucible for Ethnic Pride and Identity

The occupation of Alcatraz Island was followed by dozens of protest actions around the country throughout most of the 1970s. During this and the following decade, many individuals of native ancestry were motivated to reconnect with their ethnic roots. For Z. G. Standing Bear, the events on Alcatraz and his own participation in protests during the 1970s represented a counterpoint to other aspects of his biography, a tension that took him years to resolve, but one that he settled in favor of his native ancestry:

I was in Vietnam when I heard about Alcatraz. I thought "Right on! That's great what those guys are doing." . . . It was years later, after hearing Russell Means talk at Florida State University in 1981, that there was a major turning point in my life. I had been on a personal journey to come to terms with my service in the army during the Vietnam War, and Means's talk made me finally decide to go back to my grandfather's culture. (Telephone interview with Z. G. Standing Bear, Valdosta, GA, June 25, 1993) [12]

Standing Bear's reference to his "personal journey" is a theme that runs through many oral and written accounts of Red Power and of the individual ethnic renewal that has taken place since that time. The personal journeys described by many Native Americans involve a seeming contradiction: they go forward by going back; or as one native person characterized it to me, "We become what we were." This process of becoming often involves a spiritual component that for many Indians, perhaps for most, represents the symbolic core of Indianness and is a central part of the ethnic renewal process. Deloria (1992b) acknowledges the cardinal importance of spiritual matters in native life and identifies an underlying spiritual agenda in Indian activism. Indeed, activist Frances Wise noted the direct importance of Red Power activism in changing policies and creating a climate that permitted and supported individual ethnic renewal through traditional dress and spiritual practices. In the early 1970s she was involved in organizing a successful challenge to an Oklahoma school board's restriction on men's hair length. She noted the changes that resulted:

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[12] To affirm this change, Z. G. reclaimed his family name of Standing Bear. His family's reaction revealed the continuing generation gap: "'What are you trying to prove?' one said, 'all that stuff is over and done with'" (Standing Bear 1988).

It had a big impact. People now wear long hair, people who said back then, "Are you sure you know what you're doing with this [protest]?" Now they can wear their hair long—and they do. . . . Another outcome is we have greater numbers of people who have both traditional Indian educations and are also educated in white ways. (Telephone interview with Frances Wise, Oklahoma City, OK, August 25, 1993)

During and since the Red Power period, the religious and spiritual dimension of tribal life has become a focal concern among many of the Indian people with whom I spoke. Many reported becoming Sun Dancers for the first time as adults, many spent time with tribal elders seeking instruction in tribal history and traditions, many learned more of their tribal language, many abandoned Christian religions and turned to native spiritual traditions,[13] and some have returned to their home reservations. In recounting his decision to return to the reservation, Horse Capture (1991) believes that he is not the only one embarked on such a journey back to what he was:

> Originally I thought I was alone on this quest. But as time has passed, a whole generation and more were influenced by these same forces, and we traveled the same course. (P. 203)

CONCLUSION

The rise in American Indian ethnic identification during the last three decades has resulted from a combination of factors in American politics. Assimilationist federal Indian policies helped to create a bicultural, intermarried, mixed race, urban Indian population living in regions of the country where ethnic options were most numerous; this was a group "poised" for individual ethnic renewal. The ethnic politics of the civil rights era encouraged ethnic identification, the return to ethnic roots, ethnic activism, and provided resources for mobilizing ethnic communities; thus, the climate and policies of

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[13] This return to traditional spirituality has been particularly evident in prisons, where there has been a legal battle over Native American prisoners' rights to engage in particular spiritual practices (e.g., the building of sweatlodges on prison grounds or the wearing of braids and medicine bundles). These disputes led to the introduction in 1993 of Senate Bill 1021, the Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act (see Reed 1990).

civil rights provided individuals of native ancestry (and others as well) symbolic and material incentives to claim or reclaim Indian ethnicity. Red Power activism during the 1960s and 1970s further raised Indian ethnic consciousness by dramatizing long held grievances, communicating an empowered and empowering image of Indianness, and providing Native Americans, particularly native youth, opportunities for action and participation in the larger Indian cause. Together then, federal Indian policies, ethnic politics, and American Indian activism provided the rationale and motivation for individual ethnic renewal.

The overall explanation of the resurgence of American Indian ethnicity I offer here can be seen as part of a general model of ethnic renewal. The impact of federal Indian policies on American Indian ethnic renewal represents an instance of the political construction of ethnicity (i.e., the ways in which political policy, the structure of political opportunity, and patterns of political culture shape ethnic boundaries in society). The impact of events in this larger political arena on Indian ethnic activism and identity illustrates the role of politics and political culture in ethnic mobilization (i.e., the power of political *zeitgeist* and shifting political definitions to open windows of opportunity for ethnic activists and to affirm and render meaningful their grievances and claims). The impact of Red Power on American Indian ethnic consciousness reveals the role of human agency in individual and collective redefinition and empowerment (i.e., the power of activism to challenge prevailing policies, to encourage ethnic awareness, and to foster ethnic community-building). This model of ethnic renewal suggests that, given the capacity of individuals to reinvent themselves and their communities, ethnicity occupies an enduring place in modern societies.

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