Education for Intercultural Citizenship: The Maya Teachers of Chiapas in the Construction of Alternate Citizenships from below

Plurinationality and citizenship in Bolivia: an examination of a long process of change and the current situation

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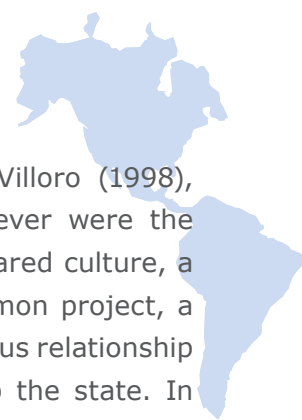
Abstract:

This article is the result of a co-participative investigation into legal pluralism and education for intercultural citizenship carried out with teachers of ethnic Maya origin in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. It offers general hypotheses leading to a critical analysis of the relation between education, citizenship and interculturalism, and suggests the need to assume a clear ethical, political and philosophical position with regard to the demands of indigenous peoples and the negative effects of territorial uprootedness. From the point of view of a citizenship model constructed *from below*, the report proposes that both indigenous and non-indigenous people should participate in shared learning spaces where lived, face-to-face intercultural experience becomes indispensable. The results of the research show the limits of *superficial* and *contemplative* anthropological perspectives inspired by personal and academic concerns, in contrast with the potential citizen who is implicated in *deep and decolonizing* intercultural experiences which, without ignoring those concerns, are articulated with the demands of indigenous peoples and other silenced social groups.

During the final years of the 20th century, the crisis of the model of liberal democracy in various Latin American countries has provoked the resurgence of indigenous peoples' old demands for recognition, autonomy and the right to diversity. These demands are legally supported by the 169th Convention of the International Labor Organization (ILO) which, with regard to indigenous and tribal rights, has intensified debates in the field of official education policy, among other areas. The current legal status of this process, which impacts not only the pedagogical realm, but also political and philosophical realms, is expressed in the current situations of various indigenous and tribal peoples, who are in dialogue or confrontation with state-level institutional policies and practices, and/or with the regulation and implementation of official regulations. The current situation has inspired debates concerning the monocultural, intercultural, multicultural, and/or plurinational character of the state and, consequentially, the importance of discussions regarding alternate citizenships and legal pluralism.

This article brings together a variety of contributions derived from the focal-México project developed in Mexico under the name *Intercultural Conflict, education and active democracy in Mexico. Citizenship and indigenous rights in the intercultural and bilingual pedagogical movement of Los Altos, the Región Norte and the Selva Lacandona of Chiapas*[1]. The project is inspired in the philosophical, political and pedagogical perspective of Jorge Gasché (2009a), which sustains that in Latin American education systems, concepts related to the exercise of differentiated citizenship and, in particular, with indigenous peoples' cultural and linguistic rights —as expressed by academics,

technocrats and some indigenous leaders—are characterized by an idealistic, generic and abstract nature. This perspective has replaced words and good intentions with the co-participation of indigenous and non-indigenous people in the design of an intercultural citizenship education founded in a pragmatic, active and relevant conception of culture.

The first part of this article presents a short historical review of the individual as a citizen and the current situation regarding the government's application of indigenous rights in Mexico, including a brief section outlining the political context of the development of the indigenous organization that collaborated in this project. The second and third parts, meanwhile, illustrate a series of methodological contributions derived from this co-participatory experience; they also show some contrasts between two different ethnographic perspectives: superficial and contemplative perspectives, which exist in function with their ethical and political involvement in the educational demands of the studied population, and perspectives focused on the decolonization of intercultural relationships.

Part One

A short historical analysis of the rights of indigenous peoples in Mexico, and an examination of the current state of affairs.

From the beginning, it is necessary to present a short historical summary of what it has meant to indigenous people to be treated as citizens in nation-states which, as in the case of Mexico, are constructed on the liberal model instituted in the 19th century. At this time, two centuries later, this model of citizenship sharply contrasts with the autonomy-based project that fights for the inclusion of indigenous peoples in pluricultural nations (Díaz-Polanco, 2006).

In accordance with Luis Villoro (1998), the old national state —if this ever were the case— no longer represents a shared culture, a conscience of pertinence, a common project, a collective history and a homogenous relationship with the territory that makes up the state. In the 19th century sense, the nation-state model contributed to social and political cohesion in the deeply fragmented and divided country that is Mexico, creating the foundation of a democracy in which citizenship is expressed in the equal rights of individuals under the law. This type of equality does not permit categorical differences, and as a result, indigenous people were assimilated into the category of citizens. Social, cultural and collective rights were not contemplated in the 19th century thought process. The most that could be hoped for in the 19th century with respect to indigenous issues was the integration of diversity into an invented national tradition (Hosbawm, 1993) and an imagined national community (Anderson, 1983).

One way of analyzing the gradual transformations in the relationship between citizenship, education and indigenous peoples that have taken place from the 19th century to today is to develop an archaeological approach to the concept of *indigenous* in the national projects and official educational mechanisms that were generated during the 20th century. But beyond the prompt analysis of indigenous people's place in the history of education (Bertely, 1998a), it is possible to state that over the course of the century, there were two transitions: one from a conception of citizenship related to mestizaje to one of citizenship based in corporative inclusion; and another, in the second half of the 20th century, that went from a citizenship based in ethnicity, understood in the creation of the General Directorate of Indigenous Education as the conflict between two languages and two cultures, to a citizenship that seeks to respond

to the demands presented by multiculturalism. While the first two models of citizenship sought in mestizaje the incorporation and integration of indigenous people via institutional action into a shared national project, the ethnic and multicultural models built bridges toward legal pluralism, weakening little by little the false disjunction between indigenous person and Mexican citizen.

Molded by these transformations, Mexico currently recognizes itself on the constitutional level as a "pluricultural" nation with an indigenous population that reaches 12.7 million people. These people live in distinct federative entities (CONAPO, 2000), pertain to 62 ethnolinguistic entities, and are characterized by their biodiversity and cultural riches.

Presently, the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples' Development (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, or CDI)[2] is responsible for attending to indigenous rights in Mexico. Its mission is to fortify a new relationship between the state, society and indigenous peoples, characterized by an environment of national and international openness that permits these peoples to develop their autonomous capacities in concordance with the current legal framework and with respect for their fundamental rights and liberties[3].

Notwithstanding the importance of initiatives carried out by the CDI, and despite arguments over the role that indigenous peoples themselves play in the application of its policies, this entity administers federal funds from the top down, used in the development of programs in education, health and nutrition, as well as programs of cultural, legal and economic advancement. These programs seek to address the integral development of people, communities

and families; the generation of jobs and income; and the local and regional development of indigenous peoples.

The operational mode of the CDI constitutes a clear example of the treatment of indigenous people as subjects of the public interest in other institutional devices. As a public agency, the CDI mentions in its web page (www.cdi.gob.mx) that the commission "is interested in," and "attends to" subjects who live in indigenous municipalities with high or very high levels of marginalization, lacking basic services and the minimal material conditions necessary to promote their own development projects. To counteract the social, ethnic and geographic exclusion suffered by indigenous peoples, the CDI considers the expansion of markets for indigenous producers to be "desirable" and "advantageous," and recognizes the necessity of funds and actions that favor production, commercialization, communitary life and the improvement of standards of living among the population.

The CDI reports the transmission of financial resources to civic organizations, as well as the participation of the private sector in support of its programs. For example, the Coca-Cola Company contributes important resources for the construction of shelters in the state of México and, to a lesser degree, in the state of Chiapas. Federal, state and local governments, as well as the beneficiaries themselves, work in collaboration with private companies in serving indigenous people.

Through these measures it is believed that indigenous people are treated as citizens with the same rights as the national population, although it is important to recognize that with regard to productive, educational and cultural projects in the rural sector —developed with

multilateral and intersectoral support—, the operating rules make it difficult for indigenous peoples to directly access financial resources. Prerequisites to the access of resources include the official endorsement, administration and intermediation of non-indigenous persons affiliated with civil, institutional, academic or religious institutions.

The lack of confidence in the honesty and self-management capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations is even expressed in projects that report having impact, success and continuity. This manifests the existence of discriminatory and exclusive political views, as well as an important control of resources by non-indigenous agents.

Other institutions, such as the Secretariat of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, or SEP), the National Council of Educational Development (Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, or CONAFE), and the state-level Secretariats of Education, are also concerned with and serve the sons and daughters of indigenous people who work as agricultural day laborers in large agro-industrial companies. These institutions offer access to education to children in precarious situations, helping them prepare as well as possible for the needs of the international and national job markets. They also help these children —through an imperfect process of proletarianization— to cope with life in their hometowns and communities, where they experience difficulties associated with seasonal unemployment, as well as the agricultural crisis and the deterioration of small farms.

The indigenous population registered in states experiencing an influx of workers, such as the agro-industrial centers of Baja California, Jalisco and Sinaloa, reflects the highest percentages of persons whose families are originally from other parts. States such as Chiapas and Guerrero, on the other hand, report greater stability among inhabitants who were born and reside in these states. This data indicates the importance of internal, fluctuating, pendular and unstable migration in the economic output of indigenous families, who occupy niches in the labor market where the workforce is only utilized in specific moments of the productive process. The rest of the time, these indigenous people return to their places of origin, reincorporating themselves in the migratory process when their labor is needed by agricultural producers, who employ hiring practices that do not come close to respecting their fundamental human rights. These are some of the current conditions that characterize indigenous Mexican citizens.

In order to improve these conditions, as well as governmental response to citizens' needs, Mexicans have the right to reelect their representatives in accordance to the rules that govern a democratic country. With respect to this right, the Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, or IFE) operates with the objective of promoting the *culture of the vote*. In a manner similar to the CDI, which exhibits some problems in the enforcement of indigenous peoples' rights, the IFE is based in a minimal conception of democracy that serves the liberal, party-based and legalist order, and which, consequentially, defines citizenship as "the sum of individuals who are rational, free (autonomous) and equal under the law, where the citizen is a subject who knows his or her rights and has the possibility and capacity to defend and enjoy these rights" (Olvera, 2001, p. 32).

How do indigenous peoples defend and enjoy these rights? The IFE does not seek to answer this question, but nonetheless sees itself obligated to recognize the debates that exist

between liberal (Dworking, 1993; Rawls, 1993) and communitary (MacIntyre, 1992; Taylor, 1994; Walzer, 1994) stances.

> In the liberal tradition, democracy is expressed on a basic level in the body of institutions and mechanisms that guarantee individuals the exercise of their rights and the possibility to forward their interests with a minimal degree of interference, under a conception of community constituted in cooperation toward the obtainment of mutual benefits. Therefore, the public good is constituted in the maximum sum of individual interests selected and aggregated in accordance with a justifiable principle, such as the principle of the majority. Liberal citizenship education, then, regards the motivation for individual participation as being more closely tied to the promotion of individual self-interest than the achievement of common interests. Thus, motivated by individual interests, citizens will seek to manifest their desires, coordinating them with the desires of others and presenting them as a part of the decision-making process. In this way, the promotion of self-interest assures the incentive for the minimal level of participation required in a democracy (Águila Tejerina, in Conde, 2004, p. 14).
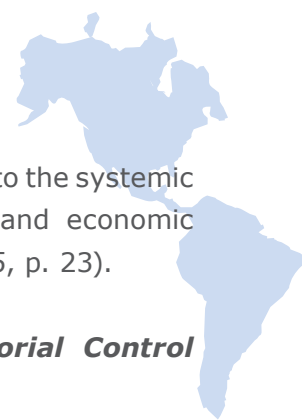
Unlike in liberal democracy, where the citizens are defined as individuals and the ideal leadership model is representative and party-based, social participation represents the supreme value in communitary democracy, because:

> […] it creates interactive habits and arenas of public deliberation, which become essential to the creation of autonomous individuals; it causes the

people to take democratic and collective responsibility for decisions and activities that require the exercise of a form of control directed at self-government as well as the establishment of stability and governability; participation also tends toward the creation of a civil society with strong and ingrained community ties which lead to the creation of collective identity. That is to say, these ties generate a way of life specifically constructed around categories such as common good and plurality […] (Águila Tejerina, in Conde, 2004, p. 15).

In this definition we find citizens who, despite their autonomy, submit themselves to collective and communitary control and rule. We also find a type of social leadership exercised by the people and founded in self-government, which furthermore strengthens civil society and collective identities.

Without resolving this debate, the IFE sustains that in parochial political culture, which is natural to "simple and undifferentiated societies" (whose definition is not given by the IFE because, it appears, the IFE is not familiar with the mechanisms of internal differentiation that occur in indigenous communities), individuals manifest little or no interest in the political system. This institute assumes that in a political culture founded in subordination, individuals adopt a passive position with regard to the system; whereas, in a political culture based in what is defined as active participation, people know the system and its workings. The desirable traits of the officially active citizenry, which contrast with the traits that motivate the investigation that will be detailed in the second part of this article, have to do with the following: level of information and political judgment; knowledge and respect for laws; capacity for

election, organization and dialogue; degree of identification with the democratic regime and civic responsibility; capacity to influence local and national issues; and confidence in the institutions and values of the democratic ethic. In this type of democracy, leadership is subordinated to the interest, judgment, participation, respect and identification of individuals with the political system as a whole.

Moreover, the IFE sustains that a legalist, uncritical, ritualistic perspective on civic education was maintained in Mexico until the 1990s. In its place, the IFE proposes eleven *individual* competencies related to knowledge, compromise, respect, coexistence, communication, participation, critical attitudes, and the assignation of values. These competencies are linked to personal, community, national and global environments, and exist with consideration to diversity, human rights, democracy, justice and the culture of legality[4.]

Considering these debates and the current state of indigenous peoples' rights in Mexico, which have always been considered through individual citizenship competencies, Sergio Zermeño (2005) examines the necessity of reconsidering the failure of the *top-down, institutional* transition to democracy, in order to instead work in opposition to the individualism, the fragmentation, the rupture of the social fabric and the legal and material inequality that characterize the lives of los de *abajo (the underdogs).*

Conceptions of progress, volition, development, and growth slowly lose their meaning if they are not associated with and subordinated to notions of equilibrium, sustainability, sedimentation and densification in the social realm, in order to preserve quality of life and the

environment in opposition to the systemic forces of political power and economic capital […] (Zermeño, 2005, p. 23).

Alternate citizenships, *Territorial Control and Rootedness*

Notwithstanding the frailty of the social fabric, poverty, the agricultural crisis, and the intense process of migration to large industrial centers and cities, the tenacious resistance shown by indigenous peoples, not only in Chiapas and other Mexican states but in other Latin American countries as well, seeks to counteract the negative effects of more than 500 years of exclusionary policies and imposed ethnocides. *Control and vitalization of territorial rootedness* represents one of many different manners of resistance. During the second half of the 20th century, indigenous organizations began to take advantage of the spaces created by the process of institutionalization of indigenism and later, in a paradoxical way, by the progressive weakening of government actions. Particularly in the past fifty years, indigenous peoples have progressed from passive resistance to action and social mobilization, and for this reason have brought demands for the recognition of these peoples' rights to autonomy and self-determination, as well as the necessity of transforming national constitutions, to the highest levels of international discussion.

Without a doubt, many advances took place not only in Mexico but in all of Latin America, beginning with the implementation of policies of bilingualism, and continuing in various models of differentiated education, health and autonomy statutes, to finally arrive at the constitutional recognition of "pluricultural" (Mexico) and "multiethnic" (Nicaragua) nations. In the international sphere, these advances were expressed in the signing of the 169th Convention

of the ILO, the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the World (1994), chapter 26 of the United Nations' Agenda 21 (Morales, 1994), and, in 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, signed by the United Nations General Assembly.

In these and other legal instruments, the rights of indigenous peoples are recognized in equality of conditions to those of the national population. Some of the particular expressions of indigenous rights include recognition of their preexistence and internal self-determination, and respect for their ethnic and linguistic particularities. Also recognized is indigenous peoples' right to participate in the definition of their own forms and models of education and development, as well as their ownership of territories and the natural resources contained within[5].
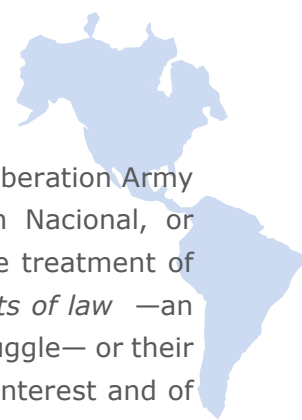
Despite these examples of recognition, at the beginning of the 1990s, article 27 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States introduced a modification that dissatisfied many indigenous peoples. This is because, despite the article's protection of the ownership and legal personality of communal and *ejidal* territories, including the integrity of indigenous groups and their land, it established that:

> The law, with respect to the will of members of communes and cooperatives to adopt the conditions that best suit them with respect to the exploitation of their productive resources, will regulate the exercise of commune members' rights over the land and of each cooperative member's rights over his or her parcel of land. At the same time, it will establish the procedures through which commune and ejido members may associate among themselves, with the state or with third

parties, and decide on the use of their lands [...] (Article 27, Political Constitution of the United Mexican States. In Carbonell, 2004, p. 37).

Constitutional modifications such as this, which specifically permit members of communes and ejidos access to previously nonexistent rights, provide justification for the governmental impulse of initiatives that stimulate the sale and parceling of communal and ejidal lands. These modifications and programs, despite the high indexes of marginalization, poverty and dispersion reported in indigenous regions, incentivize the rental and sale of parcels that —in their non-transferrable condition— had softened social crisis and conflicts, and also guaranteed the continuity and integrity of the distinct indigenous peoples who inhabit the national territory. Although private parceling is incentivized in exchange for loans and new regulations concerning land ownership, the indigenous people of Chiapas and other parts of Mexico felt that this measure represented the exhaustion of the minimal conditions of inclusion of indigenous peoples in the political community.

The exhaustion of the model of inclusion, expressed in a crisis of legitimacy on the part of the state, also affected academia. New theories and concepts were developed that stimulated discussions with regard to the exercise of citizenship and territorial and indigenous rights in the much-desired plural state, and, for the same motives, some scholars began to ask themselves if "ethnic citizenships" and "differentiated citizenships" rank the rights of citizens into categories of first and second class, or if "expanded citizenships" and "cultural citizenships" produce "alienated diversities" or "hybridizations" that could mask the uniform

integration of different people into the demands of the global market (Bertely, 2009a; De la Peña, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Díaz-Polanco, 2006).

The concept of interculturality also enters in this debate. On the one hand, perspectives were developed that pointed to the promotion of attitudes of tolerance and non-exclusion, and of differences and dialogues between cultures whose diverse expressions should be respected —in relative, not relational terms— with the end of guaranteeing the peaceful coexistence that plural and multicultural societies promise (Kymlicka, 1995; Olivé, 1999). On the other hand, other perspectives emphasize the exercise of power and the conflict between cultures. From the viewpoint of these latter perspectives, this article will expose some elements that guided a project carried out in Chiapas, where the concept of interculturality is different than those defined by Jorge Gasché (2009a) as "angelical." This case is far from sustaining a cultural relativism that "may be a formidable adversary to diversity" (Díaz-Polanco, 2006, p. 30) because it doesn't question the relations of domination and submission that may exist between diverse groups and, in the case of the indigenous peoples, affect their integrity. It instead opts for a concept of interculturality of a conflictive nature which helped to construct —in collaboration with educators from an indigenous organization— a model of active and solidary citizenship that can contribute to the construction of a more fully democratic life, and to the *buen vivir (good life)* of not only indigenous peoples but the whole planet.

Furthermore, this concept, in considering the ethical, territorial and legal dimensions of the conflict between the nation-state and indigenous peoples, relates to one of the most important debates regarding indigenous rights, which was expressed in the rupture of the dialogue between the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or EZLN) and the Mexican state: the treatment of the indigenous peoples as *subjects of law* —an aspiration of the EZLN in their struggle— or their treatments as subjects of public interest and of the neo-indigenist public policies promoted by the state.

The Teachers' Union of the New Education for Mexico

With the goal of presenting an outline of the context in which this project has been developed, which has been illustrated with greater detail in other books and articles (Bertely, 2007a; Bertely and Gutiérrez, 2007), I want to look back to 1995, when a group of Maya educators —the majority of whom were at that time associated with the Zapatista group— who had met at a course of the Indigenous Communitary Educator Program (Programa del Educador Comunitario Indígena, or PECI), voiced the necessity of forming an alternate proposal for education in indigenous communities of the state of Chiapas. The educators, commissioned by the assemblies of their respective communities, came together to form an organization, the Teachers' Union of the New Education for Mexico (La Unión de Maestros de la Nueva Educación para México, or UNEM), with the objective of "[…] implementing a profound reform of the basic educational process, combining theory and practice under the control of the indigenous communities of Chiapas […]" (UNEM, 1999, p. 4). From then on, they received the support of various organizations and institutions, such as the Center for Research and Post-Secondary Studies in Social Anthropology (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, or CIESAS), DANA A.C, and Pluriethnic Autonomous Regions (Regiones Autónomas Pluriétnicas, or RAP), among others.

Between 1995 and 1996, the UNEM participated in initial courses concerning the use of organic agriculture in school gardens in the Los Altos, Norte and Selva de Chiapas zones, under the direction of Dr. Ronald Nigh of the CIESAS. With actions such as this, an alternate pedagogical movement was developed that anticipated the autonomous educational projects that Zapatismo later began to implement as a result of the non-fulfillment of the San Andrés Accords on the part of the government. The initiatives of the UNEM have been developed in a context of constant political tension generated by the manner in which they have been implemented in the educational field. Indigenous educators, inspired by the important social and communitary movement sustained by the Zapatista struggle, directed their initial efforts toward autonomous education, although after the non-fulfillment of the accords, they continued their fight for official recognition of their pedagogical model. The ambiguous positioning of the UNEM between the state, NGOs and the EZLN, has permitted the union to maintain a certain degree of autonomy and become an organization in the vanguard of educational policy, given that from that time to the present day, it has utilized different types of financial, political, symbolic and academic support. Because they are not tied to a formal structure and do not receive a permanent income as a result of their work, the members of the UNEM participate in the productive and social life of their communities, which has converted them in *rural educators* and enriched their work as teachers. This project includes the participation of Jorge Gasché (IIAP/Amazonía peruana) and the Peruvians Jessica Martínez and Carmen Gallegos, along with other academics. The UNEM has shared its experiences with other educational projects, such as the program of Communitary Indigenous Education for Autonomous Development (Educación Comunitaria Indígena para el Desarrollo Autónomo, or ECIDEA), Las Abejas, and various networks and organizations.

At present, the importance of the UNEM lies in its capacity to bring together a variety of parties in the construction of this new model: other educators; Zapatista, independent, and even official supporters of the indigenous cause; as well as a growing number of non-indigenous academics. Together, in a permanent living laboratory of shared learnings, and in co-authorship, these people are facing the challenges implicit to the design of a program of intercultural education *from below*, sustained in self-government, indigenous rootedness and active communitary participation. Successful projects worthy of note include: the series of *Individual learning cards (Tarjetas de Autoaprendizaje)* (Bertely, 2004), with a printing of 6,000 copies; the workbook *The Men and Women of Corn. Democracy and indigenous rights for the world (Los Hombres y Mujeres de Maíz. Democracia y derecho indígena para el mundo)* (Bertely, 2008), which was selected by the Secretariat of Public Education to be included in secondary classroom libraries, with a printing of 32,500 copies; as well as the collection *Planting the seeds for our own intercultural education as a right (Sembrando nuestra propia educación intercultural como derecho)* (Bertely, 2009), with a printing of 1,000 copies. This last collection of texts represents, among other things, the formalization of the curricular model at the primary level.

Citizenship and intercultural conflict

After illustrating the trajectory and context of this project, in this section I will refer to the close relationship that exists between intercultural studies and the exercise of citizenship.

Research carried out not only in Mexico, but in various Latin American countries, such as Peru (Alfaro, Chinchayán and Mujica, 2007), Nicaragua (Castillo and McLean, 2007), Ecuador (Martínez and Granda, 2007), Bolivia (Machaca and López, 2007) and Brazil (Almeida, Fonseca and Repetto, 2007), among others, examines legislative, constitutional and educational questions that enter in the struggle to transform the ethnic relationships between indigenous peoples and national states (Bertely, 2003; Tirzo, 2005; Vigil and Zariquiey, 2003). It is beyond the scope of this article to include all of the debates derived from the issue in function of the distinct national realities of the various countries. What is, however, worth mentioning is that in Mexico there have been very few research investigations that analyze the place that indigenous movements and organizations occupy in the modification of such relationships, especially when these relationships affect the control of indigenous territories and natural resources.

As a consequence, in order to analyze the relationship between education, interculturality and citizenship, the project that is examined here established lines of inquiry with the purpose of clarifying the ethical and political meanings of our academic task, considering that this task is often supported by multiple intentions and *loci of enunciation*.

The term *locus of enunciation* is defined here as the intelligibility standpoint: the perspective and/or the position from which knowledge is acquired in a field of study. As an expression of this concept, the results of the state of knowledge in the field of education, social rights and equality in the last decade of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century (Bertely, 2003), are based in various hypotheses and questions with respect to the concept of citizenship[6].

As a contribution to the debate on this subject[7], the lines of inquiry and research questions that inspired this project are taken from a *locus of enunciation* whose objective is directed at the full exercise of a citizenship supported by the national and international rights of indigenous people. These rights are expressed at a national level in the San Andrés Accords, signed but not fulfilled by the Mexican state, and in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States. On the international level, they are related to the 169th Convention of the ILO and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, among other legal frameworks that may be applied on a global level. But, in educational terms, the project also seeks to contribute to a*n intercultural citizenship education for everyone* that, beyond the realm of simple pedagogical prescriptions, would offer both indigenous and non-indigenous people the opportunity to participate in spaces of inter-learning that would help them to decide —in a context of full liberty— between territorial rootedness or abandonment and, in consequence, between alternate models of society and democracy.

This new education, not only as a comprehensive act but also as a practical experience, entailed the explicit illustration of the reasons of *historic conflict* between historically subordinated peoples and the hegemonic powers' social project. Also, in contrast with an education that prepares students "in and for social life" (without considering the relationship between social life and one's natural environment), it also sought to reconsider the equilibrium between Society and Nature as a positive aspect of indigenous societies. Furthermore, through ethical dilemmas, the new education defined as one of its aspirations the control of egoistic power from a humanistic and alter-worldist perspective. Egoistic power, natural to any human being, is defined here as the indiscriminate search for and

achievement of interests, satisfactions and gains of personal benefit, which does not consider the affectations that this power can provoke in others' full exercise of individual and collective rights. Control of this egoistic power, in part, allows for the construction of an *Alternate-World* that stands in contrast to the dominant world, which in the humanistic sense is based in the *good life* achieved through the equilibrium and integrity of Society and Nature.

Parting from this *locus of enunciation*, a research question that became central to this project was: how can we educate ourselves for the exercise in practical life of an active citizenship with full rights to autonomy and self-determination, which at the same time implies the construction of a more human and democratic society, not only for indigenous peoples, but for the entire world? To respond to this and other questions, some lines of inquiry were established whose foundational arguments were, among others, the following:

In Latin American countries, subjected to policies that show different degrees of openness to the demands of the global market and neoliberal governments, the definition of the concept of citizenship and its relation with intercultural education merits particular attention. This is especially important when one considers that the official educational focus in support of differences and the recognition of linguistic and sociocultural diversity may be favoring a process of citizenization that encourages the abandonment of originary territories inhabited by indigenous peoples, and also stimulates national and transnational migration to large urban and industrial centers in search of jobs and satisfaction.

With respect to the design of a global and alternative political project, the design of a model of citizenship founded in *territorial control and rootedness*, self-sustainable development, care for the environment, the exercise of reciprocity and solidarity, as well as the strengthening of communities, languages and cultures —in care of the most advanced national and international legal instruments in the field of Indigenous rights—, calls for the strengthening of a model of society that is more human, not only for indigenous peoples but for the entire population of the planet, concerned with the design of alternate projects of democracy.

In regions characterized by poverty and political and social-structural exclusion, the relationship between citizenship and intercultural education finds itself in the dilemma of contributing to the design of compensatory policies designed *from the top down*, which seek to help indigenous people adapt to the requirements of the global market; or, contrarily, the construction of an active, solidary and participatory democracy *from the bottom up*, through which the state would recognize the exercise of rights-based autonomy, sustained by the public mandate, the social comptroller, and the most advanced national and international legislations in the field.

Beyond clearly defining the lines of inquiry, the research team[8] designed the methodologies most pertinent to testing —in the scope of intercultural education— the validity and consistency of these arguments in practical life.

Part Two

Methodological options
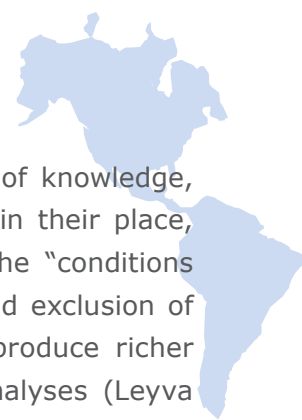
Many different anthropological methodologies were also considered because, despite the fact that the ethnographic study of schools located in culturally diverse contexts transforms the ethnocentric perspectives of scholars who study these realities, the important thing in this case was —in the words of Jorge Gasché (2009b)— to participate actively in spaces of intercultural shared learning.

One condition to constructing spaces of intercultural shared learning is that non-indigenous people, carriers of dominant perspectives, must be ready to participate in the daily lives of their indigenous collaborators. In this sense, the project also considered that the indigenous people themselves had much to learn and discover, having been subjected to a type of domination both objective and subjective. Together, indigenous and non-indigenous people must co-participate *in situ* in the everyday activities of commune members in order to together confront many different dilemmas. Without a doubt, shared learning is a mode that puts in question the experiences, beliefs and knowledge that indigenous and non-indigenous people actively carry.

The results of this co-participatory process, which lasted four years, contributed situational and experiential content relatable to the 169th Convention of the ILO, the last United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the San Andrés Accords, the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (still not reformed after the non-fulfillment of the previously mentioned Accords), and other legal instruments in the field of citizenship and indigenous rights.

In general terms, the project contributed experiential content pertinent to Article 27 of the 169th Convention of the ILO, which establishes to the letter the right to: "Develop educational programs and services in cooperation with different peoples, addressing their particular needs, their history, their knowledge and methods, their system of values and their additional social, economic and cultural aspirations." More specifically, though, this content was generated through the direct documentation of diverse experiences and situations where the Indigenous Tzotzils, Tzeltals and Ch'ols —represented in the UNEM— exercised active and alternate citizenship expressed in everyday activities.

In methodological terms, this project contributed to the differentiation of two strategies for approaching the study of intercultural processes. On the one hand, alternate methodological strategies based in *profound and de-colonizing* human experiences were identified. These strategies are distinguishable from other approaches by their interest in the construction of an *Alternate World.* On the other hand, without seeking to detract from the quality and scientific pertinence of other studies, are approaches denominated as *superficial* and *contemplative.* These approaches, which I myself know in a direct manner, are characterized by their emphasis on the rigorous description and interpretation of the contexts, settings and behaviors of the persons being studied, and furthermore, by the use of techniques that, although they correspond to the rigors of participant observation and result in the profound interpretation of culture, may be defined as superficial with respect to the commitment, implication and collaboration that is required with respect to the political demands of their counterparts, in this case indigenous people. Another characteristic of these approaches is the act of contemplation, which is derived from a rigorous description of

cultural processes. This act, although it may take place in situations of manifest violation of human, social and cultural rights, subordinates the demands of the indigenous peoples being studied to the relevance of the anthropological knowledge produced.

In contrast, alternate strategies re-take previous approaches such as liberation pedagogy (Freire, 1970), participatory action research (Fals Borda, 1979), the criticism of the relationship between central and peripheral anthropologies (Cardoso de Oliveira), as well as anti-colonial approaches (Fanón, 1963). Some of these perspectives also postulate the crisis of the hegemonic social science and the arrival of new narrative genres, as in the case of postmodern anthropology (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) and other approaches that seek to overcome interpretive subjectivism, relativity and other individualistic excesses that result from these innovations. I will not attempt to make reference here to a good number of anthropological studies where solidarity, coexistence and commitment to the direct protagonists are practiced, some of which may also be considered superficial in analytical terms. I am conscious that some of these have been documented with all due rigor and detail, by Xochitl Leyva, Araceli Buruete and Shannon Speed (2008), among other authors.
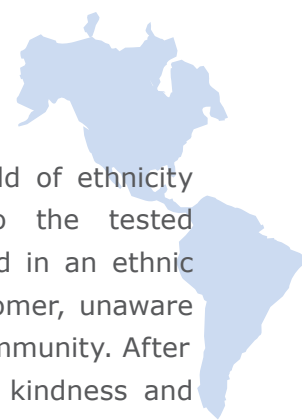
What interests me in this article is to recuperate from these authors their notion of "co-labor," as one of the most important traits of these new epistemic approaches. Referring to the contributions in a chapter by Leyva and Speed in the aforementioned work (Leyva, Burguete and Speed, 2008), co-labor is defined as the joint work carried out by indigenous and non-indigenous people to produce a work where "the survival of the colonial influence and the neocolonial nature of scientific research," "academic arrogance," as well as the conventional

policy applied to the production of knowledge, are all transformed in order to, in their place, focus on the decolonization of the "conditions of oppression, marginalization and exclusion of the people being studied" and produce richer and more profound academic analyses (Leyva and Speed, 2008, p. 67). Beyond contributing to social emancipation, co-labor can contribute to the sedimentation of social life (Zermeño, 2005) because it promotes and in some cases implies a process of co-theorization and co-authorship between indigenous and non-indigenous people, as reported in projects carried out in Colombia, Brazil and Mexico (Bertely, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Lindenberg, 1996; Podestá, 2002, 2007; Rappaport, 2006; Rappaport and Ramos, 2005). In a way, active political and civic participation derived from this *praxis* is directly related with the transformation of the principles and ethical and disciplinary codes that govern conventional anthropological studies[9].

The following portion of the article contains an exercise of self-critique where I will I briefly describe two superficial and *contemplative* experiences in which I myself participated, with the end of fostering a reflection that will permit the reader to contrast these experiences with the potential of the *profound* and *decolonizing* perspective that I will present later.

Contemplating the Mazahuas

To some extent, dominant ideas and ethnocentric prejudices undergo modifications during the ethnographic process. This was the result seen in a study performed from sociolinguistic and cultural-historical perspectives in a Mazahua community of the state of México (Bertely, 2000b). An initial profound discovery on the interpretive level consisted in the recognition that the power of official educational policies finds itself limited by an alternate power,

constructed *from below* as a result of distinct sociocultural learning styles. In this case, which deals with an example that serves as an input for the self-critical exercise mentioned above— for which I am not including the ethnographic body of work that led me to such conclusions—, I discovered that the educational institution was adapting to these styles and as a result was becoming *Mazahuized*. This appeared to take place in other educational institutions as well, because schools for the sons and daughters of day laborers of the agricultural fields of Sinaloa are *day laborized* in the same way that those schools located in the Mexico City neighborhood of Tepito are *Tepitized*[10].

Beyond the academic interest that may motivate these findings, the full exercise of legal autonomy by the "studied" Mazahuas would have opened the possibility for the indigenous and non-indigenous people involved in the project to generate a high-quality and pertinent educational model of a co-participatory nature. This is especially true when personal experience demonstrated that it was possible to formalize a culturally adequate curricular model based in *what the people do for the school*, and *not what the school does for the people*. Nonetheless, ethical distancing, political neutrality, as well as the objectivity required by the reported *superficial* and *contemplative* perspective impeded, as in other similar studies, the possibility of intervening, collaborating with and committing to the indigenous people[11].
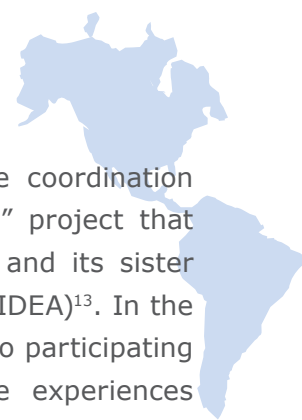
Contemplating the Zapotecs

Another experience that was *superficial* and *contemplative* in the ethical and political sense is also reported in my study of the social history of schooling in a Zapotec community of the northern highlands of Oaxaca, which was inspired by anthropological history and constructivist theories in the field of ethnicity (Bertely, 1998b). Recurring to the tested methodological process, I arrived in an ethnic community where I was a newcomer, unaware of the specific interests of the community. After a time, thanks to the patience, kindness and openness of local families, I was able to derive some findings from my stay.

One of these findings consisted in showing that, in contexts such as the one I was studying, the school is not only the space where knowledge and learnings circulate, but also a mechanism for the exercise *of de facto autonomy* and the control of local power by native residents. Furthermore, the idyllic image of the solidary and harmonious indigenous community was transformed to reveal instead that literate and "educated" indigenous families had consolidated their power not only in the school, but also in political, religious and economic networks, which facilitated their imposition on the illiterate and uneducated members of the community of measures that only benefitted them, such as the *tequio*, defined as the obligation of natives to offer free and obligatory work for the common good at specific moments of the year.

Considering that one effect of the contemplative perspective lies in the denaturalization of the studied processes, I showed that the cultural chiefdoms, the despotism within communities and the fight for the control of power among educated and professionalized indigenous people were conditions for the historic exercise of *de facto autonomy.* The academic pertinence of this investigation demonstrated, without any doubt, that ethnic vitality depended not so much on the unity and moral cohesion of the group, but instead on the irreconcilable conflicts between different factions. Communitary divisions, envy between local residents, personal interest and

egoism, as well as the concentration of local power and decision-making in the hands of the most educated and wealthy native families, were all necessary conditions for the exercise of autonomy and the establishment of successful negotiations with the diverse agents, institutions and levels of government[12].

The process of denaturalization described above led me in the end to a conformism disguised by valorative neutrality. In this way, I ended up naturalizing not only the concentration of intra-communitary power as a condition for the exercise of autonomy, but also the process of "open" and "flexible" insertion shown by migrant Zapotecs who participate in multiple niches of social identification in local, national and transnational scopes. I then asked myself if, in educational terms, there was anything to do with respect to this concentration of power in the hands of some local residents —which would imply educating individuals for the exercise of autonomy—, or with respect to the degree that the open and flexible insertion of migrants in everyday life and the global market would effectively impact the full exercise of a multiple and amplified citizenship when young indigenous city dwellers find more and more difficulties in entering the labor market.

Part Three
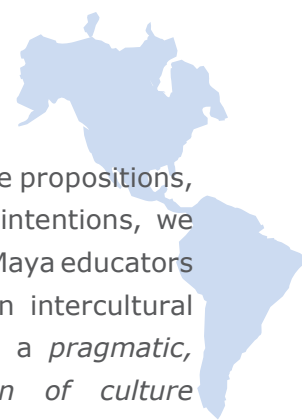
The *profound* and *decolonizing* human project constructed in Chiapas

After swearing to myself that I would never again investigate something from the perspective of "a fly on the wall," I arrived in Chiapas not only motivated by academic interests, but explicitly invited by Ronald Nigh, Lourdes de León and other colleagues of the CIESAS, and by Jorge Gasché, whom I already knew as a result of the coordination of the "Individual learning cards" project that was carried out with the UNEM and its sister organizations (Las Abejas and ECIDEA)[13]. In the beginning, as I was accustomed to participating in superficial and contemplative experiences founded in the interpretation of theoretical problems that often interest anthropologists, I cautiously approached my direct intervention in the project, although I was surprised by what I discovered almost immediately: the considerable intercultural potential derived from the shared learning experienced on the one hand by the Tzotzil, Tzeltal and Ch'ol educators who designed the cards, and on the other hand by Carmen Gallegos and Jessica Martínez, their non-indigenous counterparts, experts in the implementation of the approaches of Jorge Gasché in the Peruvian Amazon (Bertely, 2004).

From that moment, I began to complement academic contemplation with political commitment, and during more than two years I dedicated myself to the gestation of this project in the role of intermediary between Maya educators, the academics who supported them, the Intercultural Bilingual Education Liaison of the SEP, and the Organization of Ibero-American States, which was the agency that administered the funds initially contributed by Don Miguel León Portilla and later by the Kellogg Foundation.

In 2004, I participated, in a direct manner for the first time, in a shared learning experience, submerging myself in a *profound* and *decolonizing* human experience alongside the educators of the UNEM. This occurred in the mold of the project that we have been discussing, entitled *Intercultural conflict, education and active democracy in Mexico. Citizenship and indigenous rights in the intercultural bilingual pedagogical movement in Los Altos, the Región Norte and the Selva Lacandona of Chiapas.*
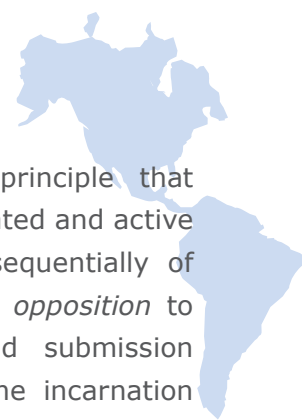
The theoretical and methodological concerns established in the first and second parts of this article found fertile terrain for the shared development of a new citizenship education, constructed through co-participation and *from below*, because the questions that inspired this project related both to academic concerns and to the political, civic and pedagogical demands of the indigenous organization involved in the project.

How do people educate themselves for the exercise in practical life of an active citizenship sustained in the full exercise of their right to self-determination and autonomy, which implies the construction of a more human society not only for indigenous peoples but for the entire world? In the context of the Zapatista movement, this exercise in and of itself represented a challenge. As we saw in the Zapotec example mentioned earlier, the practice of de *facto autonomy* implies the concentration of power in specific sectors of indigenous societies —as is also showed in Olivia Pineda's study of the bilingual professors of Chiapas (2003), who act as cultural chiefs— and, based on this evidence, I was sure that self-education for the exercise of self-determination and autonomy as a right constituted in and of itself a wholly necessary political and civic proposition. Furthermore, educating for territorial control and rootedness appeared to me to also be an important proposition, above all when the modification of socioeconomic, occupational, socio-demographic and socio-educational structures, as well as high rates of rural-urban, national and transnational migration, indicate that schools, far from encouraging the continued residence of children and young indigenous and rural residents in their communities, promoted the abandonment of originary territories and the introduction of new generations into the open and flexible demands generated by a context of generalized poverty.

In order to respond to these propositions, in the place of words and good intentions, we decided to co-participate with the Maya educators of the UNEM in the design of an intercultural citizenship education founded in a *pragmatic, situated and active conception of culture* (Gasché, 2009b), which is consequentially also founded in an alternate democratic culture that is expressed in four principles.

First principle: Types of society, types of democracy

In agreement with Jorge Gasché, there exist different *types of society* and, as a consequence, different types of democracy —in the style of "ideal types" (Weber, 1999)— that share generic and specific traits. In the case of indigenous and subordinate societies, the principle that frames these traits is that these societies find themselves subjected to a domination that is disguised as democracy. This posture stands in opposition to a harmonious and angelical vision of society, through which the exercise of democracy is related to tolerance and dialogue between cultures. *Positive* generic traits of indigenous societies and their model of democracy are derived from relationships of domination and subordination. These traits are defined as active forms of resistance, subversion and control of such relationships. In this way, it is not enough to guarantee indigenous people access to sectors subordinated to the real power structure, which is characteristic of society and the liberal democratic model. It is necessary to investigate, make explicit and transmit, on the local, national and international level, the manner by which indigenous peoples, unlike the dominant society, *practice* egalitarianism and control of the exercise of egoistic power (and their regulation of this power within themselves)

in *situations* of daily life, in order to construct the foundation for a political project of liberation founded in an active and solidary citizenship.

Second principle: Active democracy and densification of the social fabric

Even if it is true that in all societies there are ties of reciprocity, solidarity, kinship and friendship, in urban and industrialized societies subjected to liberal democratic principles and to the predominance of secondary and tertiary activities, such ties often do not intervene in the densification of the social fabric. This is true even when this densification is a condition for the exercise of a full and active citizenship (Zermeño, 2005). When the social fabric is weak and easily torn apart, civic responses are often passive, scarce and poorly coordinated. In large cities, activities of individual enrichment do not depend on resources found in nature and their transformation through reciprocal and solidary labor carried out by all members of the family, as is the case in rural and indigenous societies; they instead depend on the salaries received by independent workers in exchange for repetitive, fragmented and specialized activities, working under contracts that respond to the city's labor structure. The liberal democratic culture that answers to this socioeconomic fragmentation, and also to private and individual interests, is characterized, among other aspects, by public policies and forms of political representation and authority that depend on decisions made from within the parliamentary system. The problem is that the supposed representatives often become corrupt and distance themselves from the people they represent. The weakening of the social fabric is further deepened by neoliberalism, where globalization occurs, not of individual benefits, but of poverty (Gledhill, 2004).

In contrast, a second principle that characterizes the pragmatic, situated and active conception of culture, and consequentially of alternate democracy, consists of *opposition* to relationships of domination and submission through practices that permit the incarnation of a positive vision of justice and equality in everyday situations. This process does not deny the divisions and conflicts within indigenous societies, but instead aspires to surpass them by way of an education that promotes: i) control of egoistic power, ii) specific types of solidarity based in reciprocity, iii) the exercise of forms of justice, authority and government that facilitate agreement and the active participation of individuals, iv) respect for the "integrity" of indigenous peoples as alluded to in the 169th Convention of the ILO; and, of course, v) the possibility of exercising a "praxis of resistance" in everyday life (Gasché, 2009) that transforms democratic life and the state *from below*.

Third principle: Solidarity, values and communitary social norms

With respect to types of solidarity, which is the first generic trait identified by Jorge Gasché, the project recognizes the exercise of a *distributive solidarity*, because in indigenous societies people share goods and foods; an *occupational solidarity*, because these people cooperate in the cultivation of lands and the fabrication of goods; and a *ceremonial solidarity*, expressed through communitary parties and celebrations. The foundation of these types of solidarity is formed in the reciprocity of goods, aid and responsibility between people. This foundation presupposes the existence of values and social norms that award or sanction certain behaviors. The "happy heart" or the "meanness and envy" associated with sharing, cooperating and shared celebrations expresses the attachment that people feel or don't feel

to such systems. Economic life —the exchange of materials and labor— combines with social life —the pleasing relationships between relatives and friends— and also with cultural life —the practices of production and consumption according to the style of life and methods of indigenous peoples—.

Fourth principle: Sustainable equilibrium and communitary forms of authority

The specific exercise of particular principles of authority, as the second generic trait of indigenous societies, far from being characterized solely as authority exercised between human beings in competition for power, presupposes the indissoluble relationship between Society and Nature. In this way, however, the existence of despotic authority, held by the cultural chieftains that are able to enter into non-indigenous structures and mechanisms of government (Pineda, 1993), and exercised through the efficient and non-egoistic exercise of control over the forces of nature —as seen in processes of natural healing, for example—, still depends on the prestige and the political power of the traditional authorities and "the principals." This reflects a type of society where political factions and divisions created by the dominant economic and parliamentary system coexist with other spaces of subaltern social and political participation, such as the communal or ejidal assembly, where commune members identify themselves and come together according to the practices of reciprocity and solidarity necessary for a healthy relationship between Society and Nature.

The alternative model of ethics and citizenship education
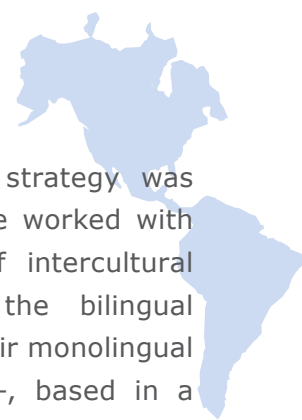
Using these principles as a base, we seek to contribute pragmatic, experiential and active content to an alternative model of ethics and citizenship education that, without ignoring the national political pact, demonstrates to the *World* the instructive and reformative potential implicit to the exercise of citizenship in the very heart of indigenous communities. This model validates the Zapatista tenet: "*Never again a Mexico without us*."

In general terms, we investigated and made explicit the indigenous political discourse and the implicit practical content found in the everyday conduct, routines and activities of community members, in order to derive three types of literacy expressed in ethical, territorial and legal lessons. These lessons were derived from the positive traits of indigenous societies, present in the previously-expressed principles, and were made explicit by way of the intercultural inductive method.

The intercultural inductive method

The intercultural inductive method makes explicit the knowledge and values that are implicit to the actions and conducts of everyday life in indigenous societies, employs categories and notions that correspond to their linguistic, cognitive and cultural universe, and makes possible the systematization of observable facts. This method, as has been mentioned, is founded in the shared learning, collaboration and active participation of indigenous and non-indigenous people in the everyday activities carried out in the social and natural environments unique to their communities (Gasché, 2009b). With this method, Maya educators organized assemblies in their own communities, in both the indigenous language and in Spanish, which included the support and participation of leaders, catechists, promoters of human rights and education, parents, auxiliary agents, elderly people and principals, as well as the children, young people and other adults of their community.

In this way, the educators developed their initial investigations, as well as introspective exercises, inspired in their own practical experiences, which were intertwined with everyday life in their communities. This experience generated an initial, relatively well-informed native version concerning territory, resources, and their organization of society and labor; the election of authorities, the system of appointment and the principles of authority; the concepts of democracy, peace, justice, dignity, liberty and respect; as well as the contrasts between the official education system and "the new education for Mexico."[14]
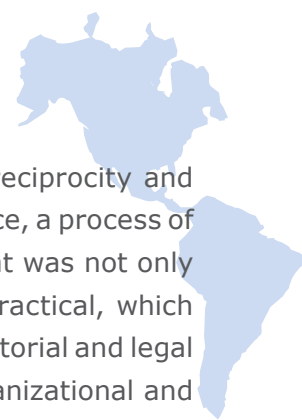
Supported by the ethnography, the educators designed and utilized guides for interviews and observations with respect to the social and educational projects, forms of organization and government, and the everyday activities that doubtlessly characterize some of the forms of indigenous and non-indigenous life. These forms, despite their permeability and articulation, in some cases contrast with each other and even come to represent dichotomies. As an example it is sufficient to mention that to the Maya communities that collaborated in this project, rocks and mountains have life while, in the non-indigenous conception, these objects are considered abiotic resources. A Ch'ol educator in this regard said: "in our indigenous philosophy everything has life, including rocks, and this contradicts occidental science, where there are living and non-living beings."

After the conclusion of the research, indigenous and non-indigenous people commenced our adventure together with respect to the design of a *methodological bricolage* that would support us in our research, elucidation and systematization of the indigenous ethical and political discourse. With this objective, we worked together to construct diverse strategies

for shared learning. The first strategy was utilized in a workshop where we worked with *words*. We generated forms of intercultural inter-comprehension between the bilingual educators and ourselves —as their monolingual Spanish-speaking collaborators—, based in a *back-and-forth* process between oral speech and writing, between the indigenous language and Spanish. For example, to elucidate what the term "democracy" means to them, they referred to various terms in Maya languages that, in the case of the Ch'ol language, mean: "gathered in assembly," "people, men or women," "everyone," "united in assembly," "we have chosen it together," or "the assembly chooses, by popular election."

In this respect, we agreed that we should seek what Antonio Pauli defined as *spheres of meaning* behind the words, and their relationship with *values* expressed in specific social norms of conduct. Consequentially, although we used as a starting point some Spanish terms that are usually related with the exercise of indigenous rights, such as "peace," "justice," "dignity" and "respect," we avoided transferring their meaning from Spanish to the Maya languages; we also avoided the mechanical and literal reproduction of legal terminology in order to in its place solicit the educators' elucidation in indigenous language of the spheres of meaning that the words evoked. For example, the term "paz" (peace) –in Spanish—, was expressed in the Tzeltal language as: "the silence of nature, learned through our walking along trails and pathways."

Because the non-indigenous participants did not know the Maya languages, we converted our communicative challenge into an opportunity for the educators to express the meanings evoked by words, first in Maya languages and later in Spanish.
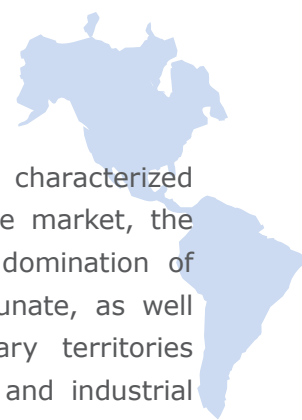
The second strategy was utilized in another workshop where we focused on acts of *doing*. Together we investigated the conducts, routines and actions of everyday life that are implicit in the words we use. To this end the Maya educators utilized plastic, graphic, oral, gestural and narrative languages. Through the first two styles of expression, they sketched everyday situations and cognitive maps (De Castro, 1999; Macho, 2005; Maldonado, 2004); they used narrative language to tell the stories evoked by the drawings and maps; and they used oral and gestural languages to speak to us about their productions, first in Maya languages and later in Spanish. The situations and histories that they narrated were accompanied by visits by the non-indigenous participants to indigenous communities and important places, where we were able to collaborate in various activities carried out by community members in their own social and natural environments.

In contrast with participant observation, this co-labor took place in an experiential manner over the course of four years, in shared learning workshops and eventual visits to the Chiapas communities of Los Altos, Selva Lacandona and Región Norte, where we discovered that these indigenous societies were in fact different from our own society. In ethical terms, for example, we discovered the value in practical life of councils, collaborative and pleasurable labor, and the true word. We were also witnesses to the respect given to the elderly and to sacred places, including watering holes and mountains. We understood the importance of sharing food and goods, as well as the indigenous meaning attributed to reciprocity between people, and between all people and Mother Earth. This *Alternate World* was expressed in cooperative assemblies, work done in the corn fields, the organization of community parties, stewardship of nature, and also the very relationships between

people, which also required our reciprocity and shared work. During this experience, a process of shared learning was produced that was not only verbal, but also situational and practical, which led us to formalize the ethical, territorial and legal content implicit to the social, organizational and political practices of community members, which contrasted with those of the non-indigenous world.

In this way, we began to see the initial emergent themes related to our proposed design of materials for intercultural citizenship, and also, in an inductive manner, the characteristics of these materials: i) a bilingual and multilingual instrument, ii) an educational support for the work carried out in schools, iii) a resource for ethical, territorial and legal literacy, iv) a resource that leads to the evocation of situations experienced in practical life, supported by the integration of graphic, plastic, oral, gestural and narrative modes of expression.

In a third workshop, the strategy consisted of relating the emergent themes to official civic and ethical contexts. The selection of these contexts, as well as the selection of specific lessons from the free textbooks of the SEP, was useful in recognizing the *potential* value of the intercultural ethics and citizenship education being constructed, in terms of the effective articulation of indigenous, school and universal knowledge. Despite this potential, having already recognized the possibility of involving all community members in the research process, we decided to produce, instead of a material for specific use in schools, a practical booklet that could be utilized by any person or group in formal or informal educational spaces. Our decision was based on the fact that, beyond the learnings derived from its reading and use, this resource's main contribution to intercultural ethics and citizenship education lies in the collaborative, practical, situated and

active processes themselves that led to its production. The important aspects of this process can be replicated in other projects that favor emancipation, based in the transformation and subversion of any form of power and domination.

The fourth strategy consisted in illustrating, through experiential content, the fundamental, economic, social and cultural rights that justify and give meaning to the postulates of the 169th Convention of the ILO. This workshop was led by Jorge Gasché, who alongside Maya educators faced the challenges of situationally, practically and contextually illustrating the legally established rights of indigenous people. At the same time, they had to conciliate the identification of generic traits of their type of society as seen in everyday life. With this context and material, we were able to add new didactic definitions to the structure of the booklet, which considered the wide educational potential of this proposal, not only for ethic and citizenship education in schools and communities, but also for the education of new indigenous leaders, based in the principle of *commanding while obeying* and in participatory and solidary management.
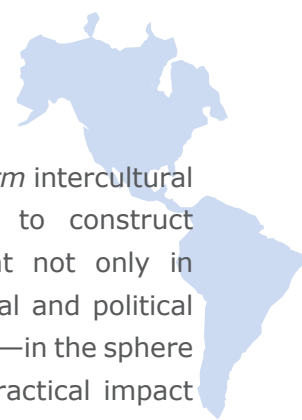
It was then that the educators identified the context of some generic and positive traits of their own society: "the pulse" as an indicator of a state that respects ties of solidarity in intertwined relationships; "envy" as a mechanism that regulates distributive solidarity and economic equality between people; "satisfaction" as an expression of work-related solidarity and reciprocity; and "the advice of the elders" as an orienting and corrective mechanism for socially accepted conducts and behaviors.

The educators were also able to identify contrasts between the positive values of their own society and those that preside over national,

urban and globalized society, characterized by submission to the laws of the market, the egoistic exercise of power, the domination of the privileged over the less-fortunate, as well as the abandonment of originary territories due to migration to large cities and industrial emporiums, incited by the global mirage. As we have mentioned, the integrity between Society and Nature —as a trait of indigenous society— and the fragmentation that results from the social exploitation of the natural world —as a trait of urban and occidental society— were contrasted in a non-essential sense, from the point of view of the impact that these traits have in the *good life* of all the men and women that inhabit the planet.

Many other strategies were constructed in these workshops of shared learning, where co-authorship, collaboration, and co-participation formed the principal notes. Briefly stated, the generic relationship between domination and submission, the active resistance to this relationship, the recognition of power as a universal human phenomenon, the utilization of mechanisms that control the exercise of egoistic power, and, above all, the validity of ties between family, friends and neighbors that guarantee *distributive, occupational and ceremonial solidarity* in indigenous societies, defined the ethical and political meaning of this project: to construct the foundation for a liberating, reforming and democratic pedagogical model, brought to life in an active and solidary citizenship that serves as an example to indigenous and non-indigenous societies.

The product of this experience is the workbook *Los Hombres y las mujeres del maíz. Democracia y Derecho Indígena para el Mundo* (Bertely, 2008), which, as mentioned during the explanation of the history of the UNEM, was selected by the SEP for inclusion in Classroom Libraries at the secondary level with a printing of 32,500 copies. In its pages we find narrations

of real situations experienced by community members, organized in three sections: *Our Territory; Organizational Experiences and Good Governance; and The True Person.*

Conclusions

This article sought to encourage critical analysis of the relationship between education, citizenship and interculturality and, without obviating the necessity of elaborating a knowledge base regarding this subject, the results of this research suggest the necessity of opting for theories and methods that are most adequate for the choosing of a clear ethical, political and philosophical stance with respect to the demands of indigenous peoples. These demands, in the case of the UNEM, are mentioned in the brief explanation of the trajectory of this project.

To find more solid and consistent arguments on the subject of alternate citizenships, it is necessary to investigate the manner that educational programs favoring diversity contribute to the territorial rootedness or uprootedness of indigenous children and young people, to the improvement of their living and working conditions, and to their full access to differentiated rights of citizenship.

To resist the effects of a form of domination disguised as democracy, by way of citizenship actions constructed *from below*, the in situ collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous people, as well as shared intercultural experiences, appear to be necessary. If the intention of anthropologists is not only to understand but to *live* and *transform* intercultural relationships, they should dare to construct methodologies that are pertinent not only in academic terms, but also in ethical and political terms, which lead them to validate —in the sphere of intercultural education— the practical impact of their motivations and arguments.

The results of this experience suggest two methodological options: the *superficial* and *contemplative* option that is inspired by personal and academic concerns, and the *profound* and *decolonizing* option that, without ignoring these concerns, is organically articulated through the demands of indigenous peoples and other silenced social groups.

The control and appropriation of initiatives, along with local connection to projects, is more lasting and effective when indigenous and non-indigenous people participate in the process of shared learning reported here. This process, far from submitting to an ensemble of spontaneous actions, requires clear theoretical definitions and methodologies.

The learnings derived from this project indicate that, in terms of citizenship, the "historic nation" is moving toward a "projected nation," under the control and initiative of indigenous people and the non-indigenous people that accompany them (Villoro, 1998). For the research project that is reported here, the projected nation is founded in active resistance to the historic nation, as well as in the desire of indigenous and non-indigenous people to construct —actively, solidarily and *from below*— a project of alternate citizenship.
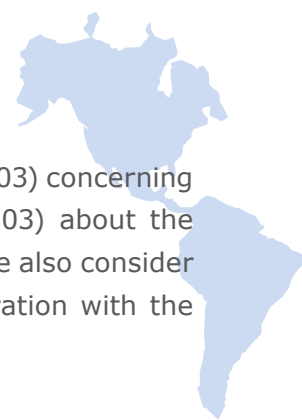
Endnotes

1. The focal-México project is integrated in the general project "Intercultural Citizenship Education for the indigenous Peoples of Latin America in Contexts of Poverty," financed from 2004 on by the Ford Foundation. The general project is coordinated by Fidel Tubito and Jean-Marie Ansion of the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Perú, and takes place in six Latin American countries: Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Mexico.

2. The CDI replaces the National Indigenist Institute (Instituto Nacional Indigenista, or INI), and in the year 2006 modifies the rules applied to programs under its responsibility. From then on, it is the entity responsible —in its substantive role— for guaranteeing respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, in supposed attention to the demands of these peoples and their organizations.

3. The CDI supports school hostels for indigenous students, allocates regional indigenous funds, stimulates alternative tourism in these regions, develops programs that support productivity with initiatives especially directed to Indigenous women, fosters and develops indigenous cultures, and establishes conventions with respect to justice and basic infrastructure for this sector of the population.

4. The Comprehensive Program for Civic and Ethics education for Primary School of the Secretariat of Public Education, which was introduced in schools during the 2005-06 school year, deals with many of these principles and competencies.

5. Although the political weight and content that the different constitutions attribute to these rights is variable (Morales, 1994), the majority of cases have established the inalienable, indispensible and essential —Brazil, Constitution of 1989—, and non-lapsable, not subject to seizure and non-transferrable characters of the communal or ejidal indigenous lands, as well as other rural lands.

6. A great deal of research responds to the concerns of the planners of intercultural bilingual policies, who are interested in the educational attention given to "indigenous people in general." In contrast, other studies are dedicate to the documentation of the "perspectives of the actors" or of the "indigenous peoples in particular" with the goal of constructing intercultural educational policies "with them" and/or "from below." Finally, others focus on the study of "other population categories" where the amalgams between the indigenous, migrant, urban worker and/or community resident appear to answer to the new constructivist and multicultural paradigms, interested in the hybridization and cultural bricolage that is part of the globalized world. "Emic" and "etic" perspectives also have a differential emphasis, because planners' concerns about citizenship and Indigenous rights lead them to conceive indigenous people as subjects of public interest, while authors interested in the actors tend more toward the study of indigenous peoples as subjects of law.

7. The trajectories and political motivations that explain the ambiguity reported in the concepts applied in characterizing the distinct national contexts, politics and realities as "pluricultural," "intercultural," "multicultural" or "plurinational," have not been sufficiently investigated. This ambiguity —apparently

terminological— demands that theoretical and political discussions motivated by the subject be taken into account (Dietz, 2003). It is also necessary to study both the historic trajectory of these concepts, developed in each country in accordance with many references, and operated in practical terms by various social agents during the twentieth century, as well as the politically, academically and legally derived positions, all with the end of analyzing their actual effects with regard to rights and ethnic citizenship (De la Peña, 1999b).

8. Along with the sixteen Maya constituents of the UNEM, the following people also participated in the research: Jorge Gasché, as international advisor; Jessica Martínez, as pedagogical advisor; Raúl de Jesús Gutiérrez Narváes, as research associate; Arturo Lomelí González, in the review and editing of the writing of Maya languages; and Ronald Nigh Nielsen, in the sphere of agro-ecological knowledge.

9. In the field of collaborative, critical and decolonizing ethnographies, we would also like to mention the contributions of Deloria (1969), De Sousa Santos (2005, 2007), Mignolo (2001 and 2006), Schiwy and Maldonado (2006), Hale (2004), Hernández (2006), Leyva and Speed (2008), Leyva, Burguete and Speed (2008), and Casas-Cortés, Osterweil and Powell (2007).

10. In care of the studies completed by Ruth Paradise (1985), the manner in which Mazahua mothers socialize their young children does not allow them to behave in an appropriate manner at school. Due to the presence of certain sociocultural styles of learning, the Mazahua children have an expanded sense of autonomy, respect and free capacity for movement and experimentation, and they grow in spaces of interaction founded in autonomous and practical learning. Due to these factors, they do not perform adequately in "Taylorist" and "teacher-centered" heteronymous educational environments.

11. In states of the Mexican republic with a high indigenous composition —such as Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas— these findings could have been significant in pedagogical terms. Many indigenous peoples, distributed throughout large regions and in places where families, elderly people, commune members, young adults and children live together in day-to-day life, sharing a set of knowledge and practices that are like "living libraries," and which are derived from ties of family, friendship and proximity that acquire meaning through the completion of productive, labor and ritual activities, where available natural resources are transformed for specific goals.

12. Furthermore, in the final decades of the 20th century, many highland Zapotec families emigrated en masse to Mexico City and Los Angeles (California), in manifestation of a gradually increasing introduction into schools and the workplace that fueled in young people an intense desire to definitively abandon their native lands and rural life, seeking to find new satisfiers.

13. The results of the "Individual Learning Flash Cards" project have been published in various forms of media and forums, leading to other projects, besides the project regarding intercultural citizenship reported here, in the areas of teacher training for the indigenous perspective and the design of alternative curricular models.

14. We recur in this moment to the reading of the magnificent works of Andrés Aubry (2003) concerning the San Andrés Accords, expressed in Maya languages, and of Antonio Paoli (2003) about the education, autonomy and knowledge of the Tzeltal, among other important works. We also consider Jorge Gasché's analysis of the 169th convention of the ILO, developed in collaboration with the indigenous educators of the UNEM (Bertely, 2009).

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