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# Intercultural Dialogue: Discourse and Realities of Indigenous and Mestizos in Ecuador and Guatemala

**Magdalena Herdoíza-Estévez**
Indiana University - Southeast

**Sonia Lenk**
Western Kentucky University

**Abstract:**

This study adds to an in-depth understanding of the approaches taken by indigenous peoples in intercultural struggles vis-à-vis governments, language-related policies and mainstream societies in Latin America, specifically in Guatemala and Ecuador. The paper traces the ways in which indigenous peoples have subverted hegemony, contesting and redefining the imagery of Latin American societies, and creating new paradigms for their role in society. It also addresses the assimilation strategies used by the dominant sectors, globally and nationally, aimed at disempowering interculturality as a means of questioning the exclusionary and discriminatory status quo.

From a comparative perspective, Ecuador and Guatemala exemplify two different approaches to interculturality, with different emphases and outcomes. In an effort to add current voices from the field to this discussion, the study brings up-to-date contributions from scholars and social agents involved in the intercultural discussion and struggles in both countries. These contributions add an in-depth reflection about the processes emerging today in defense of individual and collective rights to difference. This analysis contributes to a broader dialogue that aims to explore models of coexistence between socially and culturally diverse peoples, while addressing the intrinsic tension present in cross-cultural relationships.

The imagery of Latin American society has been crafted by the elite since the day Christopher Columbus recorded his first impressions of *Abya-Yala*.[1] Throughout history, this imagery has been used to rationalize hegemony and create a social binary that excludes subordinate groups from mainstream society. Eurocentrism still prevails today in a recondite, yet hegemonic ideology, which interprets realities and social relationships from the perspective of dominant sectors of society.

In an attempt to put an end to social exclusion, subordinate groups are currently contesting and redefining the dominant imagery and power structures of Latin American societies. The notion of interculturality has become the centerpiece of an argument leading to what Catherine Walsh (2009) calls the "re-founding" of the state as an expression of pluralism, thereby questioning and redefining the structural and institutional articulation of race, culture, and power. Guatemala and Ecuador present important aspects of the debates that are taking place as part of the social agenda led by indigenous peoples of both countries. Each national experience elucidates different approaches to interpreting and building interculturality, and each shows how the dominance of a particular "intercultural" paradigm affects related social,

political, educational, and linguistic realms. In this article, we compare and contrast how the discursive and ideological elements that surround the indigenous movements in these two countries shape their respective educational realities. Literature reviews of scholarly work on each country, interviews of relevant social actors, and our own experience in both countries allow us to address critical components of the on-going debate, particularly the "neoliberal multiculturalist" trend--an expression of pragmatic assimilationism by dominant social sectors--and the arguments and processes that defy this trend. We analyze the counter-hegemonic character of a self-defined indigenous political agenda in Ecuador, as well as the implications of what seems to be an "exclusivist" approach applied not only to the governance arena, but also to education. We also discuss how the Guatemalan Mayan intelligentsia, through cultural research and the promotion of intercultural education, has opened new spaces for the development of a different sort of collective imagery among the indigenous, and beyond. Furthermore, we analyze the potential risks associated with the co-opting of the intercultural approach by the dominant ladino[2] society. Contrasting these two different national movements for interculturality, their impact and their limitations, may bring light to a complex debate and its possible outcomes as Latin American peoples search for alternatives to a history of exclusion and discrimination.

**Guatemala and the Birth of a New Paradigm**

In the last decade of the 20th century, Guatemalan indigenous peoples ceased to conceive of themselves as "peasants" and began to think of themselves as "Mayans." This terminological shift reflected a progressive paradigmatic change in the collective ethnic identity imagery of indigenous peoples in Latin America. This in turn was mirrored in the social, political, and educational processes of Guatemala. A brief tour through the genesis of today's state of affairs surrounding interculturality is essential to understanding these processes.

During the 1960s, progressive activists grew more assertive in Latin America. Students, teachers, and other intellectuals led the uprisings, joined by urban labor organizations, which by the 1970s were frequently at the forefront of the broader social movements that had emerged. In rural areas, peasant movements grew and also played notable roles in advancing the cause of popular movements. These movements confronted the intransigence of economic elites and harassment, intimidation, and violent repression from both public and private security forces. In El Salvador and especially in Guatemala, the growth of the popular struggle was accompanied by violent state terrorism (See Brockett, 2005; Seligson and McElhinny, 1996; and Spense, 2005 for more in-depth accounts).

In her book *Political and Agrarian Development in Guatemala*, Susan A. Berger (1992) shows how state agrarian policy after 1931 prioritized export production at the expense of the peasantry, polarized politics, altered the structure of the state, and led to regime changes. The state's agrarian policies contributed directly to the decomposition of the peasant economy and to the impoverishment of rural masses, leading to social unrest and to a repressive response through the militarization of the state after 1963.

During the 1960s, the army consolidated its control over the government, and minor confrontations with newly formed ladino guerilla groups soon began. The guerillas gradually gained the trust of the indigenous population, involving many of them in the insurgency. On May 29, 1978, 500 to 700 Kekchí, an indigenous Mayan

group from Guatemala's highlands, gathered in Panzós to protest their expulsion from their land. The repression that followed marks the end of an era and a profound transformation in the political struggle of the indigenous peoples in Guatemala and beyond. After the ladinos dramatically failed to assert the interests of indigenous peoples as peasants, indigenous peasants sought their own avenue of advocacy, asserting themselves as *Mayans*.

Greg Grandin (2004), author of *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, distinguishes the killings of May 1978 from the subsequent genocide against the guerillas and the Mayan population:

> The Panzós massacre [1978] …marked a turn in Guatemala's then fifteen-year-old civil war. Before Panzós, government repression was directed mostly at urban, non-indigenous activists. Afterward, the government security forces increasingly targeted rural Mayan peasants, culminating in the scorched-earth campaign of 1981–83. (…) While the Panzós massacre was mostly a local affair, the 1981–83 genocide was a centrally planned national campaign. Soldiers swept through the countryside, committing over six hundred massacres and razing hundreds of communities. (…) The military also destroyed sacred Mayan sites and turned churches into torture chambers." (Grandin, 2004, p. 5)

This large-scale genocide began with the election in 1981 of General Efrain Ríos Montt, who "did everything possible to wipe the Mayans off the planet Earth" (Stokes, 2006). Soon, much of the civilian population was forced to seek refuge in the forests, mountains, and jungles. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced in refugee camps set up along the Mexico/Guatemala border, and many were eventually relocated throughout Mexico.

According to historians and other social scientists that conduct research on Guatemala, the atrocities committed throughout the western highlands were regarded as a "scientific" means of systematically eradicating communism and establishing national (ladino-led) identity and integration. Grandin concluded that the "1981–83 genocidal campaign was designed to counter what strategists deemed the 'closed', caste-like isolation of indigenous communities, which allegedly made the Mayans susceptible to communism" (Grandin, 2004). A peace treaty was finally signed in 1996, putting an end to 36 years of civil war, and opening the doors to peace accords that engendered a vibrant intercultural discourse within Guatemala and provided the Mayan movement with the foundations it needed to define its role within the national state. The Accord on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1997) defined the government's obligations with respect to the education system and multiculturalism. Indigenous and Socio-Economic Accords (1994 and 1995) provided a framework for the democratization of Guatemala. However, this framework was expected not to contradict the 1985 Constitution and international treaty obligations, which ultimately limited the scope of the democratization agenda. The former Vice-Minister of Education (2000-2004), Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil, states that discrimination and prejudice persist, and that the mainstream society continues to resist the possibility of indigenous people making decisions on matters of national policy affecting the non-indigenous population. In spite of this, the Mayan peoples "have been tenacious in pursuing their linguistic and cultural needs via the educational reform" (Cojtí, 2002, p. 125).

The Guatemalan process broadly reflects the changes occurring in Latin America, where intercultural discourse and debate have emerged with force. Charles Hale (2002) critiques "neoliberal multiculturalism" as an expression of a pragmatic modernizing capitalism. He contends that this development has merely substituted a superficial multicultural discourse for the open assimilationism of the past. But he also alerts against the romanticized tendency to assume that indigenous politics are by nature counter-hegemonic. He asks if subjugated knowledge and practices are necessarily neutralized if articulated with dominant ones, or if they can occupy the space opened from above while resisting its built-in logic, thereby connecting with other subalterns towards transformative cultural-political alternatives that still cannot be fully imagined (Hale, 2002, p. 499). At this point in history, there are certainly more questions than definite answers.

**Ecuador and the Ethnicization of Democracy**

The Ecuadorian CONAIE (National Council of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador), formed in 1986 as a national umbrella for several indigenous organizations, has emerged as a powerful autonomous force for securing political participation and contesting the hegemonic norms and practices inherited from colonial times. For CONAIE, interculturality is one of the nine ideological principles undergirding their demands on the mono-cultural and hegemonic state; its aim is to transform present structures, institutions, and power relations for the building of a different society, a plurinational state (Walsh, 2009, p. 53). The application of the concept has tangible implications for the domains of governance, law, economics, education, and virtually all social life.

From the perspective of today's indigenous Ecuadorian leaders, the roots of the movement can be traced back to indigenous resistance during the Spanish conquest.[3] According to Luis Macas, the first President of CONAIE and a prominent indigenous leader in the country, one of the most valued attributes of indigenous peoples to this day is their capacity to withstand the various adversities thrust upon them by European colonization (in Selverston-Scher, 2001, p. xi).

However, although indigenous peoples played a role in important events throughout modern history (e.g., the Independence Movement and the Liberal Revolution in 1895, and the July Revolution of 1925[4]), their participation was always subordinated to the mestizos' agenda. Van Cott (1994) notes that modern social movements composed primarily of and representing indigenous peoples have only emerged within the past sixty years. Well into the 1960s, the social, political, and economic structures that historically had kept indigenous peoples impoverished remained largely unchanged. The economic marginalization of this group resulted from land ownership laws that guaranteed the *latifundios* (large, individually owned farms) a supply of extremely cheap labor by subjecting rural indigenous peoples to slavery-like conditions. Thus, agrarian reform became the focus of the indigenous struggle, especially from the 1960s to the early 1980s. The leaders of CONAIE now see the results of their 40-year fight: the building of their organization and the definition of an indigenous agenda. In this process, the movement's demands evolved from land-ownership, to the right to vote for illiterate people (most of whom are indigenous), to education and health care, to the present quest for full autonomous political recognition

as a movement, and the right to re-define ("re-found") the state according to the indigenous worldview.

In the new indigenous agenda, all particular demands are included within the idea that indigenous peoples are entitled to equal participation in the political domain as "nations" in their own right—thus, the concept of the "plurinational" state. CONAIE also aims to show broader leadership by including in its agenda key issues affecting the country as a whole (both indigenous and non-indigenous). Lately, however, the approach to the resolution of such issues appears to be framed exclusively by the "ancestral worldview," reflected predominantly in collective and participatory indigenous governing practices. This, for example, applies to issues such as the management of the country's natural resources, or the complex realm of legal decision-making where indigenous views compete with those of the mestizo-led state. As we shall see, however, the Ecuadorian CONAIE's concept of "ancestral worldview" contrasts with the Mayans' approach, in that it is not directed or applied to the education reform agenda.

Ximena Cruz, Ecuadorian documentary filmmaker, notes that the first two phases of the struggle took place in the context of the building of the nation-state (personal communication, November 27, 2008). Indigenous peoples were perceived as *productive agents* by the state, as *campesinos* (peasants), with their demands reflecting the rural conditions of marginalization and exclusion. To drive modernization, the state implemented policies to include the indigenous in the labor market. New indigenous organizations such as the Shuar Federation, FENOC (*Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas*), FENOCIN (*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas y Negras*), and FEI (*Federación Ecuatoriana de Indígenas*) brought about land reform and produced changes in education and labor laws. Cultural and language demands emerged as the movement developed, and so did the debate on indigenous identity and cultural rights. This change in vision has led to the third phase, in which the indigenous movement, represented by CONAIE, led the decisive mass mobilizations of the 1990s and pushed for the acceptance of the plurinational state as part of the broader indigenous political agenda. This point is crucial to the understanding of Ecuador´s present political context, where the most recent and critical debate centers on governance and the tensions between conflicting and competing legal systems: the "national" and the "ancestral" (or customary). The debate is complex, and it challenges traditional approaches to governance and citizenship in a "plurinational society."[5]

Luz de la Torre, member of the Ecuadorian indigenous intelligentsia, stresses the importance of the increased self-esteem the indigenous gradually acquired as they began to "[imagine] themselves through their own eyes." (personal communication, December 2008). In her view, previous phases of the indigenous struggle set the stage for a new era that began in 1990. She identifies the following major phases: 1) the 1940s construction of a discourse about the indigenous by *alien eyes* (mestizos); 2) the 1960s struggle for land and the exodus from the *latifundios*, following the agrarian reform, which freed the rural Indigenous peoples to pursue their own subsistence agriculture; 3) the 1970s construction of new political discussions on the reality of the indigenous peoples, but mediated by the Catholic church or the political left; 4) the 1980s re-democratization of the country following dictatorial governments, which permitted the constitution of the indigenous movement, and the launching of literacy programs such as the CIEI-PUCE (*Centro de*

*Investigaciones Educativas Indígenas de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador*), which promoted self-awareness and inspired intercultural and bilingual education; 5) 1990, year of the first political indigenous uprising and first rupture and direct challenge by an organized indigenous movement to the prevailing racism and exclusion; 6) 1996, marking the conquest of a new space in public life for the indigenous peoples with the first indigenous elected officials; 7) the 1998 demands for collective rights; 8) the 2000s: active participation of indigenous peoples in various positions of public life, including academic, cultural, and economic realms; and 9) 2008, the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational and multicultural state in the Constitution.

The evolution of CONAIE's mottos sums up the paradigmatic changes that have occurred: "The people's fight: without us, never again!" has recently been changed to "The construction of the Motherland: without us, never again!" This goes hand in hand with the notion of Pachakutik (renaissance of the Earth and of indigenous empire), and the symbolic return to the Motherland of the peoples living in the four cardinal directions (Cruz, personal communication, November 27, 2008). This is the powerful cry from the oppressed, shaping the political life of Ecuador and the new indigenous imaginary of the continent.

If the leadership of the indigenous movement in the transformative process taking place in Ecuador is salient, so too is the status of the related struggle for inclusion of Afro-Ecuadorians in the latest "multicultural citizenship" reforms of the new plurinational state. Ecuador's 1998 constitution recognized some rights of Afro-Ecuadorians as an extension of those granted to the indigenous peoples; among these were the rights to develop and strengthen their identity and spiritual, cultural, and linguistic traditions, as well as to collective ownership of communal lands (Hooker, 2005, p. 286). Both blacks and the indigenous suffer from racial discrimination, but, according to Hooker, three elements may explain the subordinate status of the Afro-Ecuadorian political presence: a) lack of political mobilization around collective rights, b) cultural group identity being assumed as the criterion used to determine collective rights, and c) low levels of black group-identity. So it seems that dismissing political exclusion or racial discrimination as key criteria for democratizing a plural society has undermined the rights of Afro-Ecuadorians. This is another challenge in the construction of the Ecuadorian plurinational state.

**Rights, Language, and Identity**

Having laid out the recent political histories and the contexts for the emergence of intercultural discourses in both Guatemala and Ecuador, we now turn to a comparison of key aspects of intercultural discourse and reality between them.

Two important advancements in the domain of international legislation that bear on this discussion are the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 for the protection of indigenous and tribal peoples, as well as key terminology changes introduced in 1989: the 1957 "indigenous populations" term is replaced with the collective rights of "indigenous peoples" in 1989. The Convention also recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples to *indigenous* education and language. Ecuador ratified ILO Convention 169 in 1998; Guatemala did so in 1996.

In 1992, the Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.[6] As many countries commemorated the 500th anniversary of the European incursion into America, the prize served as a reminder of the long struggle that indigenous peoples have endured in those 500 years to survive as ethnic groups and to maintain their culture. In 1993, the United Nations declared the International Year for Indigenous Populations, and the World Conference on Human Rights established a permanent forum for indigenous peoples.[7] Other international events have drawn global attention to issues of indigenous rights as they relate to language, culture, identity, and education.[8] Meanwhile, the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, drafted in 1981, was only approved in 2007, and still faces opposition from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. According to Rodolfo Stavenhagen (as cited in Barnach-Calbó, 1997), its ratification will become a powerful moral and political force that may favor the adoption of international binding agreements; it would stress the ideological transition from "individual universal rights" to "collective rights" currently taking place in many places around the globe.

According to Diego Iturralde (as cited in Barnach-Calbó, 1997, pp. 18-19), indigenous movements in the continent are articulating their demands around: a) the political statutes, tending to levels of autonomy and to their recognition as *peoples*, *nations*, and *nationalities*; b) social organization, entailing increased participation in public matters and the recognition of ancestral customary and self-governing practices; c) autonomous economic and social development, founded on the traditional collective property rights over territories, land, and natural resources; and d) cultural and linguistic development, an area in which the last years have seen significant accomplishments.

In recent years, the plight of indigenous peoples has also increasingly captured the attention of both academia and the non-profit sector. This phenomenon is reflected in a growing body of research and literature by indigenous and non-indigenous intellectuals. The technical support provided by cooperation agencies, such as UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization), GTZ (*Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*, German Cooperation Agency) and USAID (United States Agency for International Development), has significantly contributed to the development of bilingual and intercultural education in Guatemala and in Ecuador by sponsoring the design of programs, the creation of resources and materials in native languages, and more.

De la Torre (personal communication, December 20, 2008) acknowledges the positive influence of international pressure, intellectuals opening new spaces for reflection, progressive Catholic priests and their pioneering efforts in "bilingual education," Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and foreign cooperation agencies, which have contributed technical and financial resources. De la Torre also emphasizes as a decisive factor the "awakening" of the peoples themselves as subjects of their own history. In the case of Guatemala, this has given way to the development of a remarkable indigenous *intelligentsia*, which has produced numerous quality studies[9] on a variety of topics, including the Mayan world-view.

Still, the interventions of external agencies do not go without criticism. Changes in policies and programmatic initiatives on multiculturalism[10] by multilateral or bilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, USAID, and even UNESCO, are regarded by some with suspicion. The agendas promoting "social inclusion" are challenged and seen as part of a

merely *functional interculturality*, which pursues inclusion (and interculturality) as a limited goal and an end in itself, rather than as a logical step toward new structural relations within societies (Walsh, 2009, pp. 142-143).[11] Hale (2002, p. 508) discusses the changes happening within international organizations and recognizes that these, too, seem to reflect competing visions around newly recognized indigenous cultural and social rights. Such debates will undoubtedly continue to mark the non-linear and uneven process of change that is taking place.

The Guatemalan Commission for the Officialization of Indigenous Languages (1997) cites linguistic autonomy as the principal criterion used to determine the existence of a language. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights defines a linguistic community as any society established historically in a given space (with or without official recognition), self-identified as a people, and which has developed a common language as a means of communication and cultural cohesion. The Declaration is based on the principle that linguistic rights are at the same time individual and collective (Salazar Tetzagüic, 2001).

As a group, indigenous peoples have long fought to preserve their identity, defined by Meisch as "the ancestral [knowledge and] cosmovision expressed in the spirituality, the language, arts and technologies, productivity and forms of social organization" (as cited in Lenk, 2007, p. 112). From this perspective, losing any of these essential elements of an "indigenous" ethnic identity represents a step toward becoming culturally mestizo. According to Lenk's research (2007), some indigenous urban dwellers in Ecuador have recently gained a stronger sense of group identity than rural dwellers, and this has stimulated their determination to revitalize their language and culture. Indigenous social identity and a newly acquired self-esteem have also fueled their conviction to pressure the state and the mainstream to commit to a true intercultural project.

The indigenous population, which represents about 41% of the population in Guatemala and 43% in Ecuador (Bowen, 2006, and Van Cott, 2004; data based on self-defined indigenous identity) is not a homogenous group,[12] which adds complexity to the demands around language maintenance. In spite of its diversity, 90% of the indigenous population in Ecuador and 99.5% in Guatemala belong to the same linguistic family, the Quichua and Mayan language groups, respectively (Haboud, 1998; Guatemala The World Factbook, 2008).

From the standpoint of the indigenous movement, the preservation of an ethnic language is essential to the protection of cultural identity, self-esteem, self-respect, and traditional knowledge. From a mainstream (dominant) perspective, however, multiple languages, cultures, and ethnicities appear to undermine national unity. They are also seen as a regression to the past, and thus antithetical to progress. In the discursive conflicts arising from these opposing viewpoints, the indigenous position has recently gained ground in the realm of public opinion.

In 1996, as the indigenous movement began to emerge and quickly gain momentum in the political arena, the Ecuadorian government was moved to incorporate into the constitution the right of indigenous peoples to use their language for official purposes. A greater victory was achieved in July 2008 when the constitutional assembly approved the inclusion of the indigenous languages Quichua and Shuar into the new constitution "as official languages of intercultural relations," together with Spanish,

the official language of the country (Art. 2 of the 2008 Constitution). The Ecuadorian case deserves close attention. It may lead the way to profound changes, but it is unlikely that the state will opt for a robust interpretation (and consequent enforcement) of the new legislation, as doing so would require the erosion of long-established ideological foundations. However, the political influence of the indigenous movement may go a long way toward shaking those foundations.

In Guatemala, by contrast, the 1985 Constitution (last amended in 1993) does not provide the Mayan language official status at the regional or national level, although "the State recognizes, respects and promotes [the various ethnic groups', including the Mayan descendants'] ways of life, customs, traditions, forms of social organization … languages and dialects" (Article 66).

Language loss is not an isolated event; it is strongly related to government policies (among other factors). For this reason, language rights are key to the prevention of language loss. Tove Skutnabb--Kangas (2000) has tackled some of the most common problems minority languages face, examining how these lead to language shift to the majority language. Some of those factors -- which do not work in isolation, but feed into each other -- include:

- The prevalent idea that a choice must be made between the minority and the majority languages, thereby favoring the dominant language
- (Perceived) subordinate status of a language
- The prevalence of the dominant language in the labor market, the commercial world, and mass media.
- The disintegration of linguistic communities due to migration, triggered by industrialization and urbanization

In Lenk's field research in Ecuador (2007), the rural and urban dwellers of Imbabura province perceived a strong vitality of Quichua in their region. The emergence of urban dwellers in regional and national politics might play a leading factor in promoting language-use as an important identity marker. This study also indicated that in the areas with strong Quichua presence, the Quichua language was not taught in the schools; however, the use of Quichua in conversations between teachers and students outside the classroom was correlated with a higher incidence of Quichua use in daily life. This is a remarkable finding, which brings our analysis to the fascinating sphere of formal education. In this particular case, the use of Spanish in schools seems to be closer to what in the U.S.A. is formulated as a "language immersion" education model, rather than "bilingual" education (implying two "equal" languages) or a typically "monolingual" education (implying the use of the "dominant" language with exclusion of all other language interaction in school). Overall, these results show the great importance that valorization of the ethnic language has in language maintenance.

Language extinction does not happen in a vacuum. There are many factors involved, including government policies, planning, and financial resources addressing the protection of language rights of the indigenous peoples. But formal education may be the most critical area where the debate and praxis of language rights materializes.

**Intercultural Bilingual Education: Paradigms and Trends**

There is no question that there have been significant steps forward in the laws and regulations in favor of indigenous groups in Latin America, moving from blunt assimilationism (pinpointed now as ethnocidal, in Stavenhagen's terms, 2002) towards multiculturalism. The assimilationist orientation was crystallized in an earlier form of bicultural/bilingual education, where the mother tongue was used exclusively as a stepping-stone to the mainstream culture and language. Now, a more pluralistic, or "multicultural" orientation is crystallized in the concept of intercultural education. In broad terms, intercultural education embodies the "recognition, valorization, and strengthening of the [ethnic group's] own identity," and emphasizes "diversity (historical, cultural, linguistic, ecological), not anymore as a 'barrier' but as a 'resource,' [in other words] 'unity within the diversity'" (Moya, 1998, p.5). In such a model, subordinate groups add to their linguistic and cultural repertoires instead of subtracting from them. The newest critics to this seemingly progressive vision argue that multiculturalism is still inspired by a liberal-democratic tolerance, which recognizes "the other" so long as he or she remains insular within the context of "the state." From this perspective, multiculturalism is seen as a way to recognize and "accept" cultural and linguistic particularities, but always within the logic of the national (dominant) state (Walsh, 2009, pp. 198-199). A review of the recent history of programs of "Intercultural Bilingual Education" (IBE) may allow us to better situate our two case studies, as well as to identify what Guatemala and Ecuador have to offer to future developments in the domain of intercultural education.

The concept and policy of Intercultural Bilingual Education that emerged in the 1980s was adopted by several states, among them Ecuador and Guatemala, where directorates were created within the ministries of education. In 2003, Guatemala went one step further by creating the Vice-Ministry of IBE. To establish the new IBE, the ministry first had to accept the concurrent use of two languages of instruction: Spanish and a native language. This, in turn, required the rejection of a pervasive resistance to child-bilingualism, fueled by psychologists, who during the first half of the 20th century had criticized bilingualism from a linguistic and pedagogical perspective. It would be the 1962 Lambert and Peal research on Canadian bilingual children that questioned the former school of thought and propelled new studies that transcended linguistic considerations, giving due weight to social, economic, and psychological variables (Barnach-Calbó, 1997).

Precursors to IBE had already emerged in the form of self-managed programs in rural areas, such as the Escuelas Radiofónicas del Chimborazo, sponsored by the Catholic priest Monseñor Proaño, in Ecuador. These projects developed in concurrence with a process of revalorization of mother tongues, whose instructional (pedagogical) value was highlighted by the 1953 UNESCO Declaration. Early official IBE programs were encumbered by a dearth of financial and operating resources, a scarcity of competent bilingual teachers and administrators, and the challenge posed by the variety of dialects of the main languages (Mayan, in Guatemala and Quichua, in Ecuador), not to mention other minority languages. With the state concentrating exclusively on the most widely spoken indigenous languages, both countries have seen their lesser-spoken indigenous languages threatened. In the case of Guatemala, "efforts have focused on the four most-used Maya languages –Kaqchikel,

Mam, Qeqchi and Quiche – to the detriment of the other 19 linguistic communities" (Lopez, 2006). In the case of Ecuador, the state has focused on Quichua and Shuar, to the detriment of 10 other indigenous languages. Further difficulties lay in language standardization, the development of written codes and grammar, and the production of pedagogical materials in native languages. In some cases, this systematization causes a rift between the standardized written version learned in schools and the overall spoken version, thereby distancing the indigenous school children from older generations.

In response to these challenges, indigenous intellectuals within government agencies have collaborated with external technical agencies, local universities, and NGOs to develop research and pedagogical agendas that have revalorized and incorporated native languages and other cultural elements into the IBE curriculum. The government also established Institutos Pedagógicos Superiores Bilingües to train bilingual teachers.

Early programs focused on helping children transition to the official language, using their native language as a basis. This "transitional" model gradually developed into the intercultural bilingual model, which theoretically gives equal weight to both languages. Yet, until very recently, IBE has been exclusively directed at the indigenous population. Mainstream students today are still not required to learn indigenous languages or study indigenous cultures. This fact calls into question the integrity of the intercultural project: is there a real effort from mainstream society to build bridges toward indigenous peoples, or is this a unilateral project, meant exclusively to bring indigenous peoples toward the mainstream? If so, does this not keep the essence of subordination intact?

According to Massimo Amadio (as cited in Barnach-Calbó, 1997, p. 27), there are two main conceptualizations of interculturality in IBE. In the first, education is geared toward teaching the capability of using two or more cultural codes. In the second, IBE facilitates the expansion of the reference codes—the harmonic and integral articulation of "what is new," but always working from the basis of one's own culture. While these two approaches have tended to concentrate on indigenous education, their relevance is strongest in the design of intercultural education strategies for the whole population. Such strategies are emerging in some Latin American countries, especially Bolivia.[13] Guatemala's steps in that direction, propelled primarily by the Mayan *intelligentsia*, may still be limited, but they at least express a more dialogical approach to education.

Klaus Zimmermann (1997) identifies the Guatemalan experience as an exceptional case that potentially transcends the limitations of unilateral intercultural projects. In spite of its 22 ethnic groups, there is a supra-ethnic cohesion among Mayans who, in addition, express a firmer ethnic and cultural identity than that of any other indigenous peoples in Latin America. The Mayan peoples may still show high levels of subordination, but the mere fact that they recognize themselves collectively as "Mayans" is an important symbolic and organizational asset, as intercultural relations are debated in education and beyond. The self-recognition as "Mayans" is a significant shift, which may be contextualized as part of what Hale (1997) calls "the rise of identity politics" in Latin America. The presence of Rigoberta Menchú and the strong Mayan *intelligentsia* has contributed to building collective self-esteem and stronger stances.

The 1996 Peace Accords between the Government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, URNG) were a pivotal moment in the country's history. They recognized for the first time the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual reality of Guatemala, as well as the legal status of its indigenous peoples as cultural and linguistic entities and nations. According to del Valle (personal communication, November 15, 2008), this historic achievement will bear most heavily on the Mayan movement's IBE strategies, to be advanced by the National Council of Mayan Education (Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya, CNEM). Point 3 of the 1995 Accord on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (preceding the Peace Accords) had already established the need for educational reform, specifically calling for IBE. Part of the reform's specifications were that education be regionalized and decentralized, with the aim of adapting it to local needs and linguistic and cultural specificities; that communities and families be given a decisive role in defining the curriculum and school calendar; that the educational concepts of the Maya and other indigenous peoples be integrated into the areas of philosophy, science, art, and pedagogy; that bilingual, intercultural education should be promoted; that the study and knowledge of indigenous languages be valued at all levels; and that experiments, such as the Mayan schools, be promoted (Cojtí, 2002, p. 105).

These political developments have prompted various projects: PRONEBI (*Proyecto Nacional de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural, 1986-1993*), sponsored by USAID; PEMBI (*Educación Maya Bilingüe Intercultural*), sponsored by GTZ; and PROMEM (*Proyecto de Mobilización de la Educación Maya*), sponsored by UNESCO and the Government of the Netherlands. Powerful intellectual contributions have come from the Linguistic Institute of the Rafael Landívar University, the newly created Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages (Academia Guatemalteca de Lenguas Mayas), and dozens of research groups and NGOs. These have aggressively tackled a variety of complex topics, including the use of the four main Mayan languages (Kaqchikel, Mam, Qeqchí and Quiché) and curriculum content.

The most important elements of the Mayan experience can be summarized as follows[14]:

1. A vision that focuses on the recognition of the indigenous peoples' cultures as the basis for building national identity and education.

2. The clear purpose of constructing a multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic nation as a requisite for a strong democracy and lasting peace.

3. An approach that overcomes the isolationist paradigm of "Mayan education for the Mayan people," in favor of an intercultural paradigm of: "Mayan and universal education for the Mayan people; and Mayan culture for all Guatemalans." (PROMEM-UNESCO, 2002)

4. The organized presence and voice of the Mayan intelligentsia in the educational arena.

5. The emphasis on quality cultural research to be widely diffused and "translated" into curriculum design and materials.

6. The successful implementation of the Mayan Bilingual and Intercultural Schools, embraced by local

communities and led by Mayan teachers, prepared through special professional development and new-teacher education programs.

7. The participation of Mayan educators and researchers in the design of the new national curriculum, which has made it possible to incorporate some components of Mayan culture, now recognized as one of the key foundations of the Guatemalan nation.

This is an accomplishment of gargantuan proportions in a country where exclusion and racism have reigned for centuries, where the indigenous movement is not politically powerful, and where just a few years ago the "climate" in the state and civil society was adverse to the very concept of Mayan education.

One of the current Mayan demands of the "ladino nation-state" is the teaching of the Mayan world-view and spirituality to all Guatemalans (Del Valle personal communication, November 15, 2008).[15] No such efforts are yet taking place in Ecuador, where the indigenous culture is included exclusively in the IBE curriculum. A partial explanation for this contrast may lay in the fact that the Mayan *intelligentsia* has devoted significant efforts to cultural research, allowing for clearer content propositions at the curriculum level. Curriculum interventions will potentially help shape social identities.

In general terms, nation-states are the prevailing political units: they extend/restrict political citizenship, define national projects, and institutionalize and privilege certain national political identities. In this regard, states try to shape, coordinate, and channel public identities. In analyzing identity politics, it is therefore logical to use the state as the point of departure, examining the ways that states have attempted to structure society – its identities, interests, and preferences – by shaping citizenship (Yashar, 2005). Therefore, state and citizenship are interconnected, as are the concepts of a plurinational state and an intercultural education and society.

The concept of the "nation-state" is thus critical to an understanding of the paradigmatic differences between the indigenous movements in Guatemala and Ecuador and the different forms that IBE have taken: while in Guatemala the nation-state is still the recognized political construct, in Ecuador, as we shall see, the concept of the plurinational state is what leads the movement. For one of today's most distinguished Mayan thinkers, Manuel Salazar Tetzagüic (2001), "Each one of [our] cultures is the foundation, the identity and self-esteem frame of the communities and, together, they build the plural identity of Guatemala." For him, as for most of the Mayan *intelligentsia*, "a multicultural nation, under a legal frame of national unity, will be able to build its intercultural coexistence from the recognition, respect and voluntary acceptance of the cultures of the peoples that are part of it … The educational community is a social, pedagogical, environmental and physical… space where, based on the holistic development of each person, it is possible to articulate… individual cultural identity with the culture of interculturality at the communal and national levels" (Salazar, 2001, p. 10).

The following principles sum up the Mayan vision on interculturality: 1) "[The] construction of the national curriculum in the context of the community culture and its inter-relationships with other cultures in the nation and in the world." 2) "[Education as] a dynamic process constantly being enriched and oriented toward the common good and a fraternal behavior of all human

beings." 3) "Dialogue between Guatemalans as a means for their harmonious coexistence, and their national identity in face of globalization." 4) "The environment [as] what provides human beings with their material and spiritual food; [as] the inspiration for new knowledge and values to be shared with all of humanity; [as] our source of energy for the strengthening of the culture of peace" (Salazar, 2001, p. 11).

The Mayan vision is broadly shared by non-Mayan intellectuals as well. Addressing the challenges of IBE, Santiago-PRODESSA Development Project Director Oscar Azmieta (2005) explains what interculturality in education should be about: "a) the acknowledgement that no culture is complete in itself; cultures need one another; b) the acknowledgement that it is indispensable for different cultures to learn to live together and learn from one another; and c) a certain level of critical distance from one's own culture, without jeopardizing the ethnic or cultural identification of each person" (Azmieta, 2005, p.1).

In contrast with the Guatemalan experience, intercultural dialogue in education has not been the priority of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, where efforts have centered on capturing power in the political sphere. In the early stages of IBE, advances focused mainly on the language of instruction, and the preparation of indigenous teachers, resources, and pedagogical techniques. Most of the advances in IBE have taken place at the local level. IBE experiences like those of the Saraguros[16] are particularly interesting, and illustrate what Kendall King (2004) presents as a recent development in Latin America: locally-managed IBE. For King, this model represents the greatest hope for language survival in the face of globalization.

According to Luis Enrique López (1997), any analysis of the status of education in indigenous communities must go beyond questions of pedagogy, culture, and language. IBE must be placed in the context of indigenous suffering and the struggles against racism, discrimination, and social and economic exclusion. Citing Paulo Freire (1973), López stresses that education is not "neutral": it responds to political orientations, which project the older vision of the European liberal nation-state, promoting one national culture and denying cultural and ethnic differences. This is the vision that the Ecuadorian indigenous movement radically contests; through this contestation, the movement integrates intercultural debate into the political fight for the full recognition of the plurinational nature of Ecuador (Art. No.1, 2008 Constitution).

Luis Enrique López (2008, p. 49), drawing from periodic reviews and observations, also lays out the discrepancies that surface between the state and indigenous peoples with regard to intercultural education. First and foremost is the fact that the state has relegated the importance of intercultural education and presented it merely as an option for indigenous people, implicitly excluding the non-indigenous. Indigenous peoples, and their allies, on the contrary, would like the state to push intercultural education forward so that it may transcend indigenous settings and reach the mainstream population. This will allow the latter to be "aware of the multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual nature of the society in which they live [and] the importance Indigenous issues have now taken on" (López, p. 50). Second, the state has centered the "IBE discussion solely on pedagogical issues, within (its agenda of) higher quality of education and higher enrollment growth and internal efficiency" (López, p. 51). Although indigenous peoples share these objectives, they also look

for a greater emphasis on ethnic and political substance. This is the case of Ecuador, where one can observe the parallel between the reform in education and the reform of the state. Article 66 of the 1998 Constitution assigns to education the role of promoting interculturality, while the 1996 educational reform incorporates interculturality as a vertical theme infused throughout the various curriculum areas. However, as Aurolyn Luykx (2003) points out, the current reforms seldom examine the relation between "bilingual" and "intercultural" education, which impedes a more specific analysis of the goals underlying both concepts.

At the macro level, new spaces are being created for the introduction of content reflective of the particular cultures and languages of students, and "traditional wisdom" as well; however, these are still presented as foreign to the prevailing linguistic and cultural norms of the uni-national realm (Walsh, 2009, pp.198-199). Ways of thinking, organization, and praxis in the education system have not changed fundamentally, so, in spite of the important advances of IBE at the state level, these are still questioned by some for remaining within the *functional intercultural* perspective.

Although new laws show accomplishments as a result of the pressure and initiatives of ethnic movements and social mobilization (Moya, 1998), the process is still uneven and unclear for social agents, including indigenous peoples. For example, Humberto Cotacachi, former Regional Director of DINEIIB in Imbabura-Ecuador, stated that parents are not always supportive of IBE (personal communication, 2002). Some see IBE as a "second class" education (cf. Garcia, 2005). Luis Enrique López, too, alludes to increasing skepticism from the indigenous parents' side with regards to IBE. In apparent contradiction, according to de la Torre, more whites and mestizos are supporting intercultural education than the indigenous themselves (personal communication, 2009). Interestingly enough, de la Torre also thinks there has been progress in the way the indigenous are perceived by the mestizos, and believes there is less racism.

In contrast to the recent violent past of Guatemala, Ecuador's political history has been somewhat more subdued, and the restoration of democracy in 1979 has provided more ample space for different agents to develop social agendas. However, in general terms, it is safe to say that the superordinate groups in both countries have taken somewhat of a *laissez faire* approach about intercultural education. Based on their dominant status, mestizos/ladinos have continued to hold an ambiguous position with regard to indigenous peoples, somewhere between a romanticized image of the ancestral indigenous civilizations and a hopeful attitude that the indigenous will become westernized. Mestizos/ladinos still see the indigenous and the Afro-descendents as "the other," and subordinate groups have the same perception of mestizo/ladinos. The latter tend to remain oblivious about intercultural education, which they see as something "for the subordinate group," not as something pertinent to them. Only when a real intercultural dialogue takes place "between or among" different social, racial, and ethnic groups, will "critical" intercultural education and robust intercultural societies develop.

**Conflicts, Trends, and Scope of Intercultural Paradigms**

Development for whom, and by whom, is a broad framing question that indigenous movements in both countries are currently addressing. "So far, [development] has been for capitalism and for inequality," declares an Ecuadorian ECUARUNARI-CONAIE representative.

"It is time for the State to take into account the proposals derived from the indigenous tradition of community-economy, which is based on the principle of solidarity" (personal communication, November 26, 2008). Conveying an indigenous perspective, the Ecuadorian José Muñica, indigenous leader and Vice- President of the Federación Indígena y Campesina de Imbabura, asserts that prosperity in the indigenous world is valued in human rather than economic terms. He argues that family support is what will guarantee indigenous prosperity and well being. This is an alien perspective in the Western world, which tends to assess prosperity in economic terms only (Lenk, 2007, p. 259).

Key points of contention for indigenous movements now include land and territory, natural resources,[17] economic and social inequality, and access to public services. The privatization of indigenous lands and assets has threatened the economic survival and the organizational structure of indigenous peoples. Recently, indigenous groups have made demands for collective property rights over territories; these are crucial for the preservation of their ancestral organizational structure, their productive way of life and, by extension, their livelihoods (Griffiths, 2004). In general terms, indigenous peoples have borne the brunt of neoliberal policies, which have accentuated pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities. These disparities are amply captured by social, health, and education indicators.

The Ecuadorian indigenous movement has responded to these socioeconomic challenges by pursuing the political power necessary to implement more democratic policies. Ximena Cruz (personal communication, November 27, 2008) illustrates the significance of the Ecuadorian experience in the political and governmental domain: "The indigenous movement has gradually gained powerful political offices in local governments, such as municipalities, provinces, and particularly the *parroquial* (county) governing bodies." In "From Opposition and Confrontation to Dialogue and Alliances: the Experience of CONAIE and MICC in Ecuador," the intercultural research team of Lourdes Tibán and Fernando García (2008) provides a wealth of information and thorough analysis of this process, focusing on the case of the Province of Cotopaxi and the City of Saquisilí. These authors use the leadership experiences of indigenous officials elected to the directorship of the Province (César Umaniaga in 2000) and the Mayor's Office (Antonio Llumitasig in 2004) to elucidate the complex problematics that indigenous leaders encounter when governing an ethnically diverse constituency. The study describes strategic lines of action in health, hygiene, education, environment, sustainable development, and urban development. It explains the adoption and adaptation of ancestral organizational forms, such as *alli kawsay* (a new, bottom-up development model for the local government), open assemblies, consensus-based decision-making, and procedures to hold officials accountable to the community. Tibán and García provide data on the 2004 electoral success by the indigenous politicians in Cotopaxi, but place these indicators in the frame of the political agenda of CONAIE and its political party, Pachakutik. The precursor of these local-government experiences was Auki Tituaña, elected as Mayor of Cotacachi in 1996. His implementation of UN-inspired "best practices" along with ancestral indigenous practices has profoundly democratized the local government, added transparency, and improved the economic conditions of the community.

Indigenous elected officials have governed in accordance with CONAIE's agenda for: a) "a participatory democracy that would be broad, based on dialogue, consensus, accountability,

and the power of the people to revoke authority and supervise officials" (as cited in Tibán & García, 2008, p. 276-277: Macas, 2005), b) the restructuring of the economic system by eliminating exploitation, intertwining alternative economic principles with the dominant ones; c) and the construction of an intercultural society founded on the premise of recognizing diversity and "the Other," but above all, the respect of the cultures and the historical development of each social actor within the state, within a nation (in Tibán & García, 2008, p. 276-277: Macas, 2005). Indigenous autonomy proposals are also developing in Ecuador, but these are still tentative, and insufficiently defined. Meanwhile, some examples of governance led by indigenous Maya also exist in Guatemala, where decentralization policies have been implemented. Hale (2004) addresses the limitations of these experiences that, nevertheless, suggest important openings to democratization.

Killian and de la Torre (2008) warn about the risk of bureaucratization among some indigenous leaders. They are not alone. In their chapter, "Reparation and Reconstitution of the Mayan People in Guatemala," Santiago Bastos, Domingo Hernández Ixcoy and Leopoldo Méndez (2008), an intercultural team of researchers working on the Guatemalan experience, speak of the *Maya autorizado* as one who no longer questions the system, and is accepted by the state as a valid negotiator and proxy. In broader terms, these analysts examine the danger of appropriation of the indigenous discourse by neoliberal states. On the other side of the spectrum, prominent Mayan leaders, such as Demetrio Cojtí, and CONAIE leaders in Ecuador are often labeled as "extremists" by the mainstream society. Maya-centric organizations provoke fears of polarization and conflict (Hale, 2004). At the heart of this debate is the structural re-articulation of dominant and subordinate groups in each country.

In summary, the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Guatemala are guided by strikingly different intercultural paradigms: while the Ecuadorian movement has been built around the quest for political representation and power based on the ancestral world-view, Guatemala's movement has instead focused on the development of philosophical and theoretical foundations, and strategies for the preservation of Mayan culture through intercultural education. Such strong ideological foundations have been important, but not the focus of attention in Ecuador's movement. By the same token, the Mayan movement has yet to develop the politically transformative goals and powerful institutions that characterize the Ecuadorian movement. One could conclude that articulating these two visions in a way that recognizes the inseparability and interdependence of, on the one hand, interculturality as a program of cultural recognition, and on the other hand, the struggle for equal economic and political rights, might give way to a new, integrated paradigm for Latin American indigenous movements.

It is crucial to acknowledge the on-going tension between what Walsh (2009) calls "functional interculturality"[9] [or what Hale (2002) calls "neo-liberal multiculturalism"] and "critical interculturality." The first type of interculturality appears to be a means of assimilation by global and national dominant sectors, while the second expresses a kind of "anti-colonial praxis." We recognize the value of the critiques of the present intercultural discourse; at the same time, we argue that, ultimately, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, and many other Latin American countries are creating new openings for plural power within their states. The work of Mayan

intellectuals and the NGOs that support them is progressively transforming the imagery of Mayans and Guatemalan society as a whole, even as the unjust nature of the "ladino nation-state" is still not seriously questioned. In contrast, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement is gaining significant political leadership beyond its ethnic boundaries, and has achieved transformations affecting the essence of the mestizo state, but is just now refining its intercultural discourse in policy areas, such as education. Mayan leaders propose the building of a plural society with respect for all cultures; the Ecuadorian indigenous leaders propose the building of a plurinational state based on the indigenous world-view. Overall, this is an uneven, but potentially transformative process in the making.

The collective ideology of indigenous peoples has evolved in tandem with their successive experiences in the struggle for survival and for equal part taking in the broader society. They have not been alone in this struggle or in the creation of the interpretative framework through which it is understood; progressive mestizo allies have joined the indigenous *intelligentsia*, and international organizations have contributed to the debate and supported indigenous rights through declarations, fora, and legislation, which have profoundly changed the international landscape in favor of native peoples around the globe. According to Barnach-Calbó (1997), this progress has been encouraged by an increasing presence of indigenous intellectuals in international bodies.

**A Prospective View on the Immediate Future: Voices of the Indigenous Intelligentsia**

> "Governments promote multiculturalism and grant limited cultural rights to indigenous peoples in order to facilitate neoliberal policy-making. According to this view, indigenous rights granted in recent years are hollow victories that only relieve pressure from indigenous social movements, instead of protecting the collective rights of indigenous peoples in Latin America." (Wyrod, 2003, p. 2).

This statement by Christopher Wyrod (2003) is skeptical of the indigenous peoples' gains and the concessions made by governments still operating under neoliberal policies. It speaks of the risk that indigenous movements and intercultural discourse will be appropriated and debilitated by the dominant sectors of local and global society. Wyrod's article acknowledges that neoliberalism has only increased economic disparities, to the disadvantage of indigenous peoples, thereby propelling a mounting opposition to neoliberalism on the indigenous agenda.

The indigenous *intelligentsia* and movements have indeed taken advantage of international pressure and global networks to advance a transition to a new paradigm, in which "living" indigenous cultures are providing the vision for new policies, new strategies, and new programs of action at all levels of social, economic, and political life. This shift will unavoidably be accompanied by conflict, and its outcomes will depend on the strategic clarity and strength of the indigenous agenda and the capacity of the movement to include all non-dominant sectors in the construction of intercultural societies.

The following are some of the pending challenges for the indigenous movement, as identified by some Ecuadorian and Guatemalan social agents:

Killian (personal communication, November 29, 2008) sees the need to more clearly define the jurisdiction over communal areas in

the Amazonian rainforest, to improve the content and pedagogy of IBE, and to reinforce national intercultural health programs; but above all, he points to the need for the movement to define itself by choosing either indigenous autonomy or interculturality as its ultimate political end.

Cruz (personal communication, November 27, 2008) underlines the main challenge, which is providing the building blocks for the construction of a plurinational state by: 1) developing and implementing specific sets of policies and interventions that duly reflect the vision of indigenous peoples; 2) creating "structural and organic spaces" for administering the intercultural governing bodies that have already emerged; 3) paying special attention to the construction of a "popular economy based on solidarity, indispensable to *buen vivir* (well-being)", and to the collective property rights of indigenous communities over their territories. Cruz also mentions the need for openness to dialogue with non-indigenous sectors.

Luz Maria de la Torre (personal communication, December 20, 2008) values the recent political and legislative gains, but agrees with Killian and Cruz about the urgency of "re-engineering" the process by translating laws into coherent actions. De la Torre calls for the participation of all indigenous nationalities, Afro-descendents, and *montubios* (rural mestizos from the Coast). According to her, another pending issue is racism, which has been "modernized," but not yet eliminated, and which contributes to the prevalence of low self-esteem among the indigenous population. The defense of cultures vis-à-vis globalization is another concern. For de la Torre, the challenge is to value the local in the midst of globalization, without denying intercultural dialogue, but assuring that such dialogue is not imposed by the culture industries of the First World. In the context of globalization, language is rendered extremely vulnerable. She states: "Why is it that, after 20 years of defending bilingual education and the native languages, language- and culture-loss have accelerated?" De la Torre believes that a critical analysis and "rethinking" must take place around this issue, and states the need for true intercultural education for the entire country and the promotion of new notions of coexistence; in other words, "to promote a process of interculturality for society as a whole, starting with education and culture." Interculturality has been mentioned as a principle, but now must be applied to all aspects of social life. "We ought to remember that, until now, this has been a one-way process, by which the indigenous peoples have had to learn a different language and participate in alien ways of life; this should change," de la Torre states.

Contrasting the Ecuadorian experience with Guatemala, de la Torre highlights the power of the Mayan demands on the state, but also recognizes that fuller representation of the indigenous nations in social and public spheres has yet to occur. Del Valle (personal communication, November 15, 2008), however, underscores the Mayan political visibility, the new Mayan imagery, the creative role of intellectuals, and their participation in the government. By the same token, he admits that intercultural education is still marginalized and underfunded, has not yet been implemented in urban areas, and has encountered resistance from the ladino population. This, he proposes, should be addressed urgently to counter the ladino tendency to "close the door on indigenous knowledge."

Summing up, the CONAIE representative makes a key point: only within a plurinational state can interculturality develop its fuller promise of human solidarity and respect for

differences. Only as a robust state policy can interculturality transcend the level of mere tolerance and permeate thought and practices in education, health, communication, the economy, and the management of natural resources. Cruz adds: "We have to look back at history and acknowledge that the paths we have walked bring us to the same beginning: the need to survive and learn how to resist the aggression of the powerful" (personal communication, November 26, 2008).

A new path seems to be emerging in the Americas: the path of transition from incipient intercultural dialogue to the theoretical and practical construction of societies that recognize, embrace, and celebrate their plurinational, pluricultural, and multilingual realities, and wholeheartedly live out their rich diversity (Herdoíza-Estévez, 2005). Only time and history will tell how the current "dialogical" and "autonomic" approaches eventually shape the discourse and the building of Guatemalan and Ecuadorian societies in the years to come.

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## Notes

1. *Abya-Yala*, "land in its full maturity," originates from the Kuna language. This term is used in the official declarations of indigenous peoples to refer to the American continent; they argue that "placing foreign names on our villages, our cities, and our continents is equivalent to subjecting our identity to the will of our invaders and their heirs." http://abyayala.nativeweb.org/about.html

2. In Central America the term *ladino* is used rather than *mestizo.*

3. Extensive literature from CONAIE and its ideologues is easily accessible. For this study, the most current information on the perspectives of CONAIE leaders comes from a notable indigenous woman from ECUARUNARI (one of the CONAIE organizations) who agreed to participate in an interview for this chapter, but requested that her name not be cited as a precondition for granting the interview.

4. The 1895 Liberal Revolution marked the first steps toward democracy and liberalism in Ecuadorian history. This experiment lasted until the 1925 July Revolution, staged by young military officers

with the purpose of curtailing the privileges of the economic elite. Incidentally, the July Revolution represented the first major attempt by an Ecuadorian government to organize and incorporate peasants and indigenous communities (Bowen, 2002).

5. Anthropologists Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004) emphasize the complex nature of the relationships of governance and citizenship that develop between a state and its people: "One could treat the state, for certain purposes, as lying on the margins of the citizen-body… Without romanticizing the creativity of the margins, there seems to be room for changes that express the political and governance-related stands of social movements…"(pp. 22-23). The Ecuadorian indigenous movement is actively using this debate as a space for the questioning of dominant approaches and visions of governance from its own social imaginaries.

6. Menchú is recognized as a symbol "of the struggle for peace, for human rights and for the rights of the indigenous peoples who, during all these 500 years, have been split, fragmented, fallen victim to genocides, repression and discrimination." (Menchú-Tum, 1992).

7. The same year, the UN declared 1995 to 2004 the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. In 1995, August 9th was declared the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

8. Among them, the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, Sweden, 1998), and the creation of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Nations within the Ibero-American Summit, whose governing body includes equal representation from the indigenous peoples and the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean (Barnach-Calbó, 1997).

9. A few samples of the Mayan intellectuals' research and publications applied to education are: *Ajlab, Matemática Vigesimal Maya*, by José Mucía Batz (1996) and *Kojajilan, Guía Didáctica de la Matemática Maya*, by the same author (1999); *Cholq'ij pa Tijpnem, Calendario Sagrado en la Educación,* by Saqb'e, Audelino Sac Covoy (1999); *Valores Mayas*, by Manuel Salazar Tezaguic and Vicenta Telón Sajcabún (1998); the PROMEM-UNESCO collections of Mayan literature by the Group Jootaay, Tz'utujiil (1998) and Juan Patal (1998). These are just a few of the collections sponsored mainly by UNESCO. Proposals from the Mayan intelligentsia include among others, the *Propuesta Maya de Reforma Curricular*, Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya –CNEM- (1996), *Kamul Iyom, Comunidades Educativas Bilingues Interculturales*, by Manuel Salazar Tetzaguic (1999), and *Mayab' K'Aslemal, Vida Comunitaria y Educación Maya*, from the PROMEM UNESCO team (2000). Collaborative proposals with international organizations are, for example, the *Lineamientos Curriculares para la Educación Primaria Bilingüe Intercultural* (1998), *and Universidad Maya de Guatemala: Diseño Curricular* (*Propuesta*) (1995).

10. Further discussion of these critiques can be found in Charles Hale's body of work about multiculturalism, governance and cultural rights in Guatemala, and the politics of cultural identity in Latin America; and in Catherine Walsh's publications on Ecuador's social "de-colonizing" movements around interculturality, governability, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian plights, and education.

11. Citing Fidel Turbino (2005), Catherine Walsh (2009) clarifies that functional interculturality tries to promote dialogue and tolerance without questioning the causes for the present social and cultural asymmetrical relations; in contrast, critical interculturality aims at eliminating these asymmetrical relations with non-violent means because they inevitably make the intercultural dialogue impossible.

12. In Ecuador, the indigenous population is comprised of 13 nations, each with its own language. In Guatemala there are 23 linguistic communities: 21 languages of Mayan origin, the Garífuna language, the Xinka language, and one *lingua franca*, Spanish, which belongs to the international Ibero-America linguistic community (Salazar, 2001).

13. Bolivia is the first Latin American country to adopt a radical state policy to mandate an intercultural and participatory education system, with access for all Bolivians without discrimination. This implies the integration of a native language as part of the curriculum for monolingual Spanish speakers.

14. The summary is founded on the external evaluation of PROMEM/UNESCO/Netherlands, carried out by Herdoíza-Estévez in April-May of 2002. The study included an analysis of paradigms; the evaluation of Mayan schools, their curriculum, pedagogical approaches, participation of the community and formation of human resources; as well as the evaluation of the impact of the Mayan proposal on the curriculum at national, regional, and local levels.

15. This is exemplified by experiences such as the "*Franja de Lengua y Cultura Maya*", supported by UNICEF and applied in Chimaltenango. This includes daily class periods in which Mayan content and language are being taught to Spanish speaking students (Moya, 1998, p.12).

16. King's 2000 case study on local language planning decisions by the Saraguro community is particularly interesting to the understanding of the complexities and challenges IBE faces in the field. This is a community of about 22,000 members made of approximately 60 rural communities scattered around the township, with about 200 elementary schools and 40 high schools. These are part of Ecuador's national system of bilingual education.

17. The *Información sobre los Pueblos Indígenas de Guatemala como insumo para el Proyecto Regional de Manejo Integrado de Ecosistemas por Pueblos Indígenas y Comunidades de Centroamérica*, produced by Marvin David Chirix Sotz, Juan Cusanero Elías and Juan José Noj Pablo in 2003 (Cooperación Técnica ATN-JF-7695-BID), provides an exceptional example of the application of the Mayan worldview to the management of natural resources.

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