A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

http://eprints.sussex.ac.uk/

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

DOCTORAL THESIS

Indigenous Universities and the construction of interculturality: the case of the Peasant and Indigenous University Network in Yucatan, Mexico

Genner de Jesús Llanes Ortiz

Doctor of Philosophy of Social Anthropology

University of Sussex at Brighton

October of 2009

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES iv

LIST OF FIGURES iv

LIST OF MAPS v

LIST OF PICTURES v

LIST OF ACRONYMS vi

SUMMARY xi

DEDICATIONS xiii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS xiv

INTRODUCTION 1

Initial questions and theoretical assumptions 2

Chapter structure 5

CHAPTER 1. INTERCULTURALITY AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY AND AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE 9

Measuring up the terrain of “interculturality” 9

Understanding culture and identity in relation to social actors 13

Politics of difference and knowledge interfaces in development encounters 16

Intercultural challenges for Indigenous peoples and for anthropology 19

CHAPTER 2. COLLABORATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY AS A FORM OF INTERCULTURAL RESEARCH 24

E’esajil as a method for collaborative research 24

Ethical-political implications of case study selection 25

Collaborations in [analysing] theory and practice 28

Retrospective ethnography: familiar gaze and relatorías 32

CHAPTER 3. INTERCULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITIES IN LATIN AMERICA 37

Introduction and general background 37

Actors, discourses and strategies....47
a) The actors....47
b) The discourses....51
c) Educational strategies and modalities....55
Reflections, questions and challenges....58
CHAPTER 4. NEGOTIATING INTERCULTURALITY AND EDUCATION: THE INTELLECTUAL TRAJECTORIES OF UCI-RED....62
UCI-Red in the Peninsula of Yucatan: General context....63
Peninsular UCI-Red: main actors....65
Other Indigenous and Mayan education projects in the region....67
Participatory appraisal and complex designs....70
Convergent trajectories and methodologies....74
Characteristics of the UCI-Red's Educational Model and Cycles....77
a) First cycle of UCI-Red education projects....78
b) Second cycle of UCI-Red education projects....79
c) The mechanisms of education in alternation....83
CHAPTER 5. INTERCULTURALITY IN UCI-RED'S THEORY AND PRACTICE 85
"Culture" and "identity" in UCI-Red....85
Principles of interculturality in UCI-Red....89
Interactive educational dynamics....91
Interpretation of terms....95
Critical analysis of UCI-Red practices....97
CHAPTER 6. CONTRASTING LEARNING MODELS IN THE UCI-RED....100
Local participants' trajectories in relation with UCI-Red promoters....100
General characteristics of local participants....102
The shift from informal training to "education in alternation"....105
Learning and cognitive development for NGO promoters....108

How do Yucatec Mayan peasants learn what they know? 117

a) Don Luis: Hard work and opportunities to learn 118

b) Doña Isabel: Learning by doing and observing 121

CHAPTER 7. EXPLORING MAYAN VIEWS OF LEARNING AND IDEALS OF PERSONHOOD 125

Legitimate peripheral participation and Mayan development 125

The grammar of personhood among the Yucatec Maya 131

“Learning” and “educating”: etymological roots and symbols 133

Knowing: transformed self and memory 138

Metaphors of the human being as a plant 145

CONCLUSIONS 153

From anxiety to method: recapitulating 154

Collaborative research: lessons and challenges for an Indigenous anthropologist 156

Hybrid and negotiated: the future of Indigenous knowledge in universities 158

Interculturality as dialogue in diverse spheres 160

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. General characterisation of Indigenous Universities and other Educational projects in Latin America 42

Table 2. General characterisation of Indigenous and Intercultural Universities, and other Educational projects in Mexico 44

Table 3. Curriculum development methodology 73

Table 4. Summary of UCI-Red Diplomas (2nd Cycle) 81

Table 5. Thematic maps of UCI-Red Diplomas (2nd Cycle) 82

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Educational projects constructed around Indigenous needs and demands 51

Figure 2. Approaches and dimensions in the construction of interculturality 60

Figure 3. UCI-Red genealogy and regional context 69

Figure 4. Methodology for the construction of an educational base model 72

Figure 5. UCI-Red as a knowledge production community 74

Figure 6. Cognitive map of the concepts of “Culture” and “Identity” among UCI-Red organisers 87

Figure 7 . Cognitive functions and emotional states involving the óol 146

Figure 8. Cognitive processes and elements symbolised in the Jéets Méek’ 151

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1. Indigenous Universities and intercultural projects in Latin America 41

Map 2. Intercultural and Indigenous Universities in Mexico 41

Map 3. UCI-Red in Mexico 63

Map 4. Geographical distribution of Yucatec Mayan communities in the Peninsula of Yucatan (CDI, and PNUD, 2006) 64

Map 5. Location of UCI-Red micro-regions in the Peninsula of Yucatan..... 66

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1. Los Chenes' Micro-Regional development promoters' group, Múuch' Kambal (Learning together) 100

Picture 2. Don Luis during our conversation 118

Picture 3. Doña Isabel during our conversation 121

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	MEANING
BICAP	Bachillerato Integral Comunitario Ayuujk Polivalente; Eng. *Comprehensive Multipurpose Ayuujk High School*
CDI	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indigenas; Eng. *Government National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples*
CEA-UII Ayuuk	Centro de Estudios Ayuuk, Universidad Indígena Intercultural Ayuuk; Eng. *Centre of Ayuuk Studies, Indigenous Intercultural University*
CECIDIC – ACIN	Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca; Eng. *Education, Training and Research Centre for Integral Community Development – Indigenous Authorities Association of Northern Cauca*
CELAFIN	Centro Latinoamericano de Filosofía para Niños; Eng. *Latin American Centre for the Philosophy for Children*
CESDER	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Sustentable; Eng. *Centre of Studies for Sustainable Development*
CESDER/PRODESC	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Sustentable/Promoción y Desarrollo Social; Eng. *Centre of Studies for Rural Development/Social Development and Promotion*
CESIK	Centro de Estudios Superiores Indígenas Kgoyom; Eng. *Indigenous Higher Studies Centre* Kgoyom
CGEIB	Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe; Eng. *Government General Coordination for Intercultural and Bilingual Education*
CIDECI-Unitierra	Centro Indígena de Capacitación Integral – Universidad de la Tierra; Eng. *Indigenous Centre for Comprehensive Training – University of the Earth*
CIDOB	Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia; Eng. *Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia*
COMPAS	Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development
CONAIE	Confederación de Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas del Ecuador; Eng. *Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador*
CONIVE	Consejo Nacional Indio de Venezuela; *National Indian Council of Venezuela*

CRIC	Consejo Regional Indigena del Cauca; Eng. *Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca*
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia; *Single Union Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia*
DGDLS	Diplomado en Gestión del Desarrollo Local Sustentable; Eng. *Diploma on Management of Sustainable Local Development*
DVV	Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes; Eng. *German Association for Adult Education*
DWI	Development with identity
EAE-UYK	Escuela de Agricultura Ecológica "U Yits Ka'an"; Eng. *School for Ecological Agriculture "U Yits Ka'an"*
EDUCE	Educación, Cultura y Ecología A.C.; Eng. *Education, Culture and Ecology A.C.*
EIGPP	Escuela Intercultural de Gobierno y Políticas Publicas (formerly PFLICAN); Eng. *Intercultural School for Governance and Public Policy*
FF	Ford Foundation
FI	Fondo Indígena; Eng. *Indigenous Peoples Fund*; also, *Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*
FORMABIAP – AIDESEP	Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonia – Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana; Eng. *Training Programme for Bilingual Teachers of the Amazon – Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest*
FUNDHEY	Fundación para el Desarrollo Humano de Yucatán; Eng. *Foundation for the Human Development of Yucatan*
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit; Eng. *German Technical Cooperation*
Guaquitepec	Secundaria y Bachillerato Bivalente, Guaquitepec; Eng. *Bivalent Secundary and High Schools of Guaquitepec*
HSD	Human Scale Development
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Centre, Canada
IEPAAC	Investigación y Educación Popular Autogestiva, A.C.; Eng. *Research and Self-Managed Popular Education A.C.*
IIU	Indigenous and Intercultural Universities

IK	Indigenous knowledge
INAH	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia; Eng. *National Institute of Anthropology and History*
INEA	Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos; Eng. *National Institute for Adult Education*
INI	Instituto Nacional Indigenista; Eng. *National Indigenista Institute*
LPAD	Learning Potential Assessment Device
LPP	Legitimate peripheral participation
MAC	Misioneros A.C. ; Eng. *Missionaries A.C.*
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
Núcleo Insikiran-UFRR	Núcleo Insikiran de Formação Superior Indígena – Universidade Federal de Roraima; Eng. *Insikiran Centre for Indigenous Higher Education – Federal University of Roraima*
ONIC	Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia; Eng. *Indigenous National Organisation of Colombia*
P4C	Philosophy for Children
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PPDP	Proyecto Peninsular de Desarrollo Participativo; Eng. *Peninsular Participatory Development Project*
PR	Pedagogical relations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRATEC	Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas; Eng. *Andean Project for Peasant Technologies*
PRODESS	Promotores del Desarrollo Sustentable; Eng. *Promoters of Sustainable Social Development*
PROEIB Andes	Programa de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, Universidad Mayor de San Simón; Eng. *Intercultural and Bilingual Education Programme, National University of San Simon*
PROESI-UNEMAT	Programa de Educação Superior Indígena Intercultural – Universidades Estatal de Mato Grosso; Eng. *Indigenous Intercultural Higher Education Programme – State University of Mato Grosso*
REDUI	Red de Universidades Interculturales; Eng. *Intercultural Universities Network*

ROSDESAC	Red de Organizaciones del Sureste para el Desarrollo Sustentable; Eng. *Mexican South Eastern Organisations Network for Sustainable Development*
SER-Mixe	Servicios del Pueblo Mixe; Eng. *Mixe (Ayuuk) People's Service*
STI-CR	Secundaria Técnica Intercultural "Cruz Raramuri" ; Eng. *Technical Secundary School "Raramuri Cross"*
UADY	Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán; Eng. *Autonomous University of Yucatan*
UAII-CRIC	Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural –Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca; Eng. *Indigenous Intercultural Autonomous University – Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca*
UAIM	Universidad Autónoma Indígena de México; Eng. *Autonomous Indigenous University of Mexico*
UC of San Luis Potosí	Universidad Comunitaria de San Luis Potosí; Eng. *Community University of San Luis Potosi*
UI Internacional	Universidad Indígena Internacional; Eng. *Indigenous International University*
UIEG	Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Guerrero; Eng. *Intercultural University of Guerrero*
UIEM	Universidad Intercultural de Estado de Mexico; Eng. *Intercultural University of the State of Mexico*
UIEP	Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla; Eng. *Intercultural University of Puebla*
UIET	Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Tabasco; Eng. *Intercultural University of Tabasco*
UII-FI	Universidad Indigena Intercultural – Fondo Indigena; Eng. *Indigenous Intercultural University – Indigenous Peoples' Fund*
UIIM	Universidad Indigena Intercultural de Michoacan; Eng. *Indigenous Intercultural University of Michoacan*
UIL	Universidad Indígena Latinoamericana (soon to become the U Intercultural del Grijalva); Eng. *Latin American Indigenous University*
UIMQROO	Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo; Eng. *Intercultural Mayan University of Quintana Roo*
UINPI-AW	Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas - Amawtay Wasi; Eng. *Intercultural University of the Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador – Amawtay Wasi*
UITK	Universidad Indígena Tupak Katari; Eng. *Indigenous University Tupak Katari*

UIV	Universidad Indígena de Venezuela (formerly U Indigena de Tauca); Eng. *Indigenous University of Venezuela*
U-Mapuche	Universidad Mapuche; Eng. *Mapuche University*
U-Maya Popol Wuj	Universidad Maya; Eng. *Mayan University*
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIAP	Universidad Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonía Peruana; Eng. *Intercultural National University of the Peruvian Amazon*
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICH	Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas; Eng. *Intercultural University of Chiapas*
UNIDAE	Universidad de las Nacionalidades Indigenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana; Eng. *University of the Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon*
UNIK	Universidad Intercultural Indígena Originaria Kawsay; Eng. *Intercultural Indigenous Native University Kawsay*
Unisur	Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos del Sur*; Eng. Intercultural University of the Peoples of the South*
Unitierra	Universidad de la Tierra; Eng. *University of the Earth*
URACCAN	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe; Eng. *University of Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast*
UV-I	Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural; Eng. *Intercultural University of Veracruz*
WB	World Bank
WIC	Wixárika Intercultural Centres
Wixarika Centres	Centro Tatusi Maxakwaxi; Eng.*Wixarika Secondary and High School*

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITIES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERCULTURALITY: THE CASE OF THE PEASANT AND INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITY NETWORK IN YUCATAN, MEXICO

SUMMARY

"Interculturality" has become a key concept in the conceptualising and struggling for new relationships between dominant and subordinated identities and knowledges in Latin America. My research is based on a collaborative effort to document and examine how "interculturality" is realised as a "dialogue between equal actors and knowledges" in the creation of Indigenous and Intercultural Universities. It follows a multi-level analysis that begins by interrogating the diverse ways in which different education projects formulate and negotiate their "interculturality" in the Latin American region. It pays particular attention to the political dimensions of "dialogue" by examining the diverse engagements between social actors, discourses and agendas. Secondly, it focuses on the specific design and development of the Peasant and Indigenous University Network (**UCI-Red** for its Spanish acronym) as a case study.

UCI-Red promotes and supports endogenous and sustainable development processes in different micro-regions of the Peninsula of Yucatan, Mexico. This is a collective project where Mexican Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) have become engaged and allied with Yucatec Mayan peasants. "Interculturality" has become one of the main principles of their definition of sustainable development and it has been assimilated into their practice of development promotion. After examining the intellectual trajectories and the perspectives on "culture", "identity" and "learning" of the organisations involved in UCI-Red, I argue that a deeper understanding of cultural difference that goes beyond discursive and objectifying definitions of identity and knowledge is needed. Indigenous knowledge is a notion that involves not only concepts and principles but most importantly embodied forms of knowing, social and symbolic practices, and a particular ideal of personhood. Hybrid forms of learning can and must be constructed in continuity with these overlooked epistemologies if education projects want to commit to a true "dialogue between knowledges".

EPIGRAPHE

Wolis t’aan

Ch’e’ene’ ma’ uts tu t’aan a pulik tuunich ti’i’.
Ka ch’amik u **ch’e’eneknakil**.
Júumpuli’ ma’ uts tu t’aan báaxal beyo’.
Wa taak a báaxal tu yéetele’
woliskut a t’aane’
ka jalk’esti’,
bin a wil bix ken u ka’a sutil ti’ teech.

Pelota de voz

Al **pozo** no le gusta que le tires piedras.
Lastimas su **quietud**.
Ese juego no le agrada.
Si quieres jugar con él,
haz de tu voz una pelota,
arrójala,
verás que te la devuelve.

Voice ball

The **well** doesn’t like being thrown stones at
You hurt its **tranquillity**
It doesn’t like to play this game
If you want to play with it
Make your voice into a ball
Throw it at the well
You’re going to see it’ll return it to you

Briceida Cuevas Cob
Yucatec Mayan writer
Ti’ u billil in nook’; Del dobladillo de mi ropa (2008)
Translated by me into English

DEDICATIONS

To Cynthia, my wife and friend, for all her support and understanding. She is the biggest tree in my life. Her leaves and fruits have always been with me to give shade and nurture. Thank you for all your patience, forgiveness and love

To all my families

To the first one:

To my mother Justina, for having taken care of, and making my *óol* grow straight when I was rising

To my sister and brothers, Georgina, Julian and Ricardo, for sharing their fruits and flowers with me

To my nephews and niece, Alejandro, Jorge and Montserrat, new buds of a very large *milpa*

To the second one:

To all my friends and *láak'o'ob* for having accepted me, and made me their companion; for all things shared (thoughts, pains, smiles, food, beer and wine); for having shared with me on this course to becoming a, more or less, straight stalk of maize

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has travelled a long road that is now somehow complete – although the lights of the town where I was born for the second time barely appear in the distance like a promise shining in the middle of the rainforest. I would not have been able to complete this road were it not for the support of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), the government agency that provides financial support for the education and development of scientists and technologists in Mexico. Their financial support (between 2003 and 2009) gave me the opportunity to improve my English language skills by studying and working next to – and eventually becoming part of – a community of social scientists and practitioners in the United Kingdom.

My most heartfelt gratitude goes to the organisers of, and participants in, the UCI-Red, the Peasant and Indigenous University Network. Their trust and friendship made my work as a collaborative researcher a truly exciting and enriching step in my formation as a Mayan anthropologist. I particularly like to thank my *comadre* Alejandra, the "Margaritas" (Magoz and Magui), Juan, Lupita, Paty, Miguel, Beatriz, Carmen, Reina, for their time and their talk, and their commitment and awareness, and their constant quest of being better companions in the construction of good life with the Yucatec Mayan communities and regions where they work. I also thank all the men and women that I met while travelling through towns, fields and towns in the *Mayab*, my homeland. My Mayan brothers and sisters, my extended family; those who taught me to speak, to watch and to walk like a Mayan person again: Dino, Conich, Beto, *Don* Gil, *Don* Valentín, *Doña* Irma, *Doña* Juliana, Leidi, Leonor, Andrea, *Don* Justino, *Don* Martiniano, Pepe, Andy, Gelmer, *Don* Severiano, *Don* Juan, Ofelia, and many other extraordinary people, *in láak'o'ob Maaya wíiniko'ob*. It is because they always opened to me their arms and their *óolo'ob* that I am the person that I am today.

On this side of the pound I have always had the support and friendship of the Mexican community in Brighton. We have been together through many rough patches, and always tried to make life less miserable for each other in this land of green wind and grey sea. In particular I would like to thank Ana Ortiz; Toño, Rosy, Claudia and Aldo; David, Lolis and Carmen; Benjamín, Cecilia, Dante and Atzin; Gioconda, Mark and Natasha; Julián, Karla, Andrea and Mateo; Héctor, Mariana and Alexis; Guillermo, Gabriel, Josefina; Ashish, Susana and Rohan; Juan and Ana; Flor, Mariana and Mike;

Anel and Mike; Javier, Carolina and Paula; Estela and Fred; Curro, Carolina and Diego, and many others that have always been like a family “in exile” for me and my wife.

Sussex University is one of the best places where I could ever have arrived to continue growing as an anthropologist. Here I have met the most interesting people in the world. People who are committed not only to understanding the world better but to making it right too. I particularly appreciate their patient and encouraging words, and their highly educational conversations. In particular I would like to thank Samantha, Caroline, Nick, Arjun, Anja, Wanjiku, Maryam, Sheila, Babatunde, Ines and Joao, Kathy, Elizabeth and Roy, Loch and Caroline, Yuki and Woody, Juan Camilo, Maria and Martina, Yoshihiro, Miguel, the Julies (Billaud and Jenkins), Simone, Barbara, Cherine, Deniz, Jose Manuel, Vessy, Larissa, Kate, Becky, Verena, Evie, Dimitrios, Bhabhani, Natalie, Gavin, Esther, Jonathan and many others whose names now escape me.

I would also like to acknowledge the administrative support and friendship of Clare Rogers and Julie Carr, for they were always attentive and friendly. The academic staff of the Anthropology Department always felt like an authentic network of knowledge and expertise. I always had something to learn from Prof. Jane Cowan, Dr. Jon Mitchell, Prof. Katy Gardner, Dr. Peter Luetchford, and Prof. Simon Coleman. In terms of academic support and encouragement, I could always count on the enthusiastic feedback and trust of my two supervisors, Dr. Valentina Napolitano and Prof. James Fairhead. Although Valentina did not finish this intellectual journey with me, I will nevertheless appreciate the good advice she constantly offered me. Prof. James Fairhead has always been more excited about my research that I myself ever was. I want to express my gratitude to him for having been there along the road, letting me flourish in my own time and battle my own demons.

I wanted to mention all these names for they represent the faces and voices that have kept me moving upwardly and opening like a maize plant. They however have no responsibility with respect to any mistake and misconception that this thesis may contain. Those are all mine.

INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of the term “interculturality” as a subject under construction in the title of this thesis refers to two different and at the same time interconnected considerations. “Interculturality” is a term and principle explicitly adopted by virtually all initiatives which go under the name of “indigenous university”. But on the other hand, it also stresses my own intention of making space for “interculturality” in the epistemological and political agenda of anthropology as a global discipline. Acknowledging that anthropologists and other types of scientists are actively involved in the construction of their “objects” and “fields” of study, I intend to introduce “interculturality” in my research both as an object being constructed by both the research subjects and myself as a researcher. In this, I follow a continuous tradition of critical and engaged anthropology, but also new developments in the field of philosophy and political action.

Despite their varied political and academic agendas Intercultural and Indigenous Universities (IIU) in Latin America share a common feature: the revaluation of indigenous knowledge and its incorporation into higher education curricula and/or training programs. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is nowadays recognised by developers, investors, and consultants – among them anthropologists – as an important input and area of study in environmental, productive, and social development projects. But what makes these education initiatives different is that they often claim to incorporate IK not merely as one more element of the process of social transformation but as the matrix which orders, organises and gives meaning to such changes.

Without rejecting the uses and importance of Western knowledge or sciences, IIU however challenge these to engage in an inclusive *intercultural dialogue*. The philosophical and political consequences of such dialogue would allow Indigenous Peoples to re-humanise and re-constitute themselves, and strengthen their agency beyond instrumental claims of cultural rights. What is at stake is the re-cognition of Indigenous epistemologies, philosophies and sciences as necessary inputs for the construction of the future from a distinctly Indigenous perspective.

This thesis intends – following the insights of scholars working within the field of “anthropology of development” – to explore the political, social and cultural contexts where Intercultural and Indigenous Universities strive to create spaces for “intercultural dialogue to happen”. I pay close attention and characterise the wide variety of actors

coming together to promote and support these educational projects in three general levels that I perceive directly related: the sub-continental, namely, Latin American level, the national level (Mexico), and the regional level (the Peninsula of Yucatan). This work seeks to investigate and discuss some of the political strategies and methodological contributions to the construction of "interculturality" developed by these universities.

As constructivist theories continue gaining ground within the social sciences, some attention must be paid also to the implicit position of power that researchers assume when ascertaining the constructed nature of social and ethnic identities of underprivileged, subaltern groups. If social actors are more and more consciously utilising cultural symbols and knowledge to create renewed and differential identities it does not follow that they manipulate these symbols instrumentally in order to obtain material gains. We require other approaches that consider the relational and historical character of the cultural agency of these groups. We need to understand that different intellectual traditions and epistemologies are striving to carve out their own way in a global environment dominated by "unique thought" doctrines and the inevitability of capitalism.

If anthropology is to contribute to the deconstruction of power relationships, a different, more intercultural attitude is demanded from the discipline. As heir to the pair colonialism/modernity, anthropology needs a genuinely dialogic and, above all, humble approach to the thinking and practice of other social groups. This is especially so since "natives" and other subaltern groups are scholars who read, write, and theorise from quite different positions and contexts to those of the "metropolitan" anthropology.

From this perspective, and according to my own commitment as an "Indigenous anthropologist", my research proposal is based on a collaborative and dialogic approach whereby I intend to establish open, constructive, and honest "conversations" with those who, like myself, have other views, other traditions, and other "knowledges".

Initial questions and theoretical assumptions

My anthropological objective was from the onset to know more about how "interculturality" —as a socio-political and epistemological project involving ideas, practices, and strategies—, was being constructed within the educational projects called "Intercultural and Indigenous Universities" (IIU). An emphasis was made on reporting

how this “interculturality” was negotiated at different levels from both within and without the Indigenous peoples, communities and organisations.

In order to reach this level of understanding, I itemised this general objective to distinguish three specific areas where this construction of “interculturality” was more likely to have “consequences”: how knowledge was treated and defined in these projects, what identities were being created and re-created, and what forms of development were implicated in the conceptualisation and implementation of these institutions. Some of these questions will be answered partially or in full as this thesis unfolds. It has to be acknowledged, however, that many original, literal questions that I had at the beginning were transformed as the focus of my fieldwork shifted, occasionally in response to the demands of the other research subjects involved. This is an admission of my own limitations of time and ability as a researcher, and yet it can be said that it responds also to an inherent tension in any research in this area.

My unit of analysis in this study was defined in function of shared theoretical assumptions with the other research subjects. With them I was convinced that it was possible to look at Intercultural and Indigenous Universities as *communities of knowledge production*. This is a concept that I re-created by borrowing the term “communities” from the operational documents of some of these universities. The Peasant and Indigenous University Network (or, **UCI-Red** in its Spanish acronym) often talked about their projects as efforts to create “learning communities” or “learning environments”. I was influenced too by the notion “epistemic communities” used by Dumoulin to describe international environmental NGO networks. In his definition, an “epistemic community” is made up of a small number of individuals with a shared particular view who join forces in order to influence policy and practice in international arenas (2003). I see Indigenous universities playing this role, as I will show in Chapter 3, although the “community” in this case is constructed in the process of *producing* new knowledge not only in theory – as many international NGOs tend to concentrate on – but most importantly in practice. This does not imply that these education projects are not producing theory, because they quite actively do. What I intend to highlight is that one can understand their practice as being in itself a form of theorisation. Here I am emphasizing the aspect of “production” as in Bourdieu’s view on the theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977). They are “communities” also in another way; for they aspire to reconvert the negotiation and collaboration of knowledges that characterise the

everyday processes of social reproduction at the rural community level (Pottier, et al., 2003).

Yet, just as in these "real" communities, there are also different actors and interests at stake in these universities. In this work I have tried to record these differences and discuss them by paying particular attention to the interfaces, or "dialogues". These would be the spaces where the practices and representations of different actors come to be negotiated, understood and accepted using – allegedly – intercultural ideas and methods.

In these communities of knowledge, there are people who work and participate in community projects at the local level. Others negotiate and plan seminars and workshops conceived from a regional perspective, while yet others may be presenting projects and negotiating resources in national and international arenas. At each level, people interact with, and receive influences from, others who belong to different "communities". "Interculturality" becomes in this sense another "ideoscape" (Appadurai, 1996) just like "democracy", and "welfare", among other tropes. This work has considered it important to undertake the analysis of "interculturality" as a trope constructed by very different actors sometimes in separate and distant contexts that are nonetheless imagined as connected by their participation in the larger "community". Some of these processes are implicit in the description of how the international Latin American "community" has implemented the idea of "interculturality", as discussed in Chapter 3. It is possible to identify this too by looking at how "interculturality" and associated characteristics determine the ways in which UCI-Red has constructed its own image in relation to its development work and the communities it intends to serve, as it is shown in Chapters 4 and 5.

Because these "communities" are geographically and socially dispersed across different settings I initially thought that this thesis could be framed as a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995). What has emerged is a multi-layered exploration describing several processes that converge on the construction and deconstruction of "dialogues" in a given practice and context; i.e., those of the UCI-Red project in the Peninsula of Yucatan. Rather than as a multi-sited ethnography, I choose to describe this approach as a multi-layered analysis since direct observation was not possible at least at the level of international constructions of "interculturality". A project which could explore these phenomena in a wider context is currently underway these days (cf.

Mato, 2008), an effort to which I hope this work would contribute. In the meanwhile, I have to acknowledge that the multi-sited nature of my study has to do more with the diversity of communities and micro-regions involved in the UCI-Red project than with actual "sites" of research. These "sites" would have to be defined by their inner logic and conceptual separation from each other, rather than by their geographical diversity.

With Crapanzano, I believe that: "Dialogue is a culturally and historically specific way of conceiving of certain verbal transactions and as such has considerable rhetorical force" (1990: 270). That is why the focus of my investigation shifted slightly towards the importance of "dialogue" as the privileged form that "interculturality" takes as a process of common construction. Following Arce and Long (1992), particular attention was paid to the way actors presented their life-world and contrasted their cultural orientations in knowledge interfaces. Therefore, face-to-face encounters and "dialogues" between different actors within the "community" and of these with other actors were followed. Other "dialogues" that I wanted to follow featured in documentation, reports, and exchanges which took place in cyberspace or through other media, like newspapers. These are also instances where views, and knowledges are negotiated, yet are better understood perhaps as 'shadow dialogues" (Crapanzano, 1990).

In-depth interview and life stories have been collected in order to reach the particular interpretation of the processes that local participants may be experiencing. These deep encounters also explored their personal learning experiences in the spheres of work, family and community.

Chapter structure

This thesis consists of seven different chapters that touch on different aspects of "interculturality" and Indigenous universities. These chapters move from the general to the particular, and then again, to a more general view of epistemological processes among the Maya-speaking population of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. In the first chapter, I intend to characterize the complex conceptual terrain where "interculturality" has emerged. The political implications of this notion are highly charged and give way to differential definitions and theoretical approaches. The term is used by social movements, government officials, philosophers, communication theorists, psychologists, art historians, literary critics, among others. Rather than concentrating on

crafting an all-encompassing definition of “interculturality” I propose to look at the conjunctures where understanding is sought. Assuming that what is more important about cultural encounters is whether they qualify as “dialogues” I highlight the importance of looking at the qualities and attributions of those interfaces that pose as “intercultural dialogues”. One of the main theoretical problems that some scholars have pointed out in relation to “interculturality” consists of the definitions of “culture” that social actors and decision makers use to characterise the participants of “intercultural encounters”. Consequently, in this same chapter I explore possible ways of understanding key concepts like “culture” and “identity”, particularly in contexts where more and more Indigenous scholars and “native” anthropologists are active agents in the shaping and formulation of these ideas. I end this section with a general reflection about what these challenges tell us about the struggles of Indigenous movements for recognition, and for anthropology as a discipline that still claims to have some authoritative say about these topics.

Chapter 2 discusses certain methodological considerations that I have adopted in relation to the object of study. If “interculturality” can be adopted as an anthropological perspective, as I contend in the previous chapter, it follows that it has to influence the ways in which we do anthropology. In this section I present my position about how collaborative research can be seen as a form of intercultural anthropology. I had originally placed too much emphasis on the Mayan notion of *tsikbal* (conversation) as a culturally appropriate way of engaging with other research subjects on the field. I have now come to the conclusion that the best way to understand collaboration in Mayan research is by paying attention to the practices of *e’esajil* (demonstration, sharing, making somebody else your equal/companion). In this study of “interculturality”, I have pursued an open research agenda in which the other research participants, those directly involved in my case study, have had an important say. This does not come without difficulties and in this chapter I comment on the challenge of having to overcome what I call the “familiar gaze and self”. Familiarity with the organisational and methodological “cultures” of my case study made critical distance a very difficult task. In this section I discuss as well the uses of “native” semi-ethnographic material, and the possibilities of developing a kind of “retrospective ethnography” based on one’s own memories as a long-term collaborator and participant.

It is in the third chapter where I start applying the insights presented here to the analysis of Intercultural and Indigenous Universities. I begin by locating these projects in their geographical, historical and political context. The variety of projects that have come under these banners ("intercultural" and "Indigenous") configures an outstanding phenomenon of Latin America in the 21st Century. Using a threefold strategy I identify the main actors, discourses and strategies that justify and promote the construction of these institutions. The scope and main characteristics of these projects are presented, and the convenience of including within this broad category other projects which do not call themselves "universities" is argued. Within this global characterization of Intercultural and Indigenous Universities I start drawing out some interesting connections and recurrent topics. By the end of this section I will be advancing some ideas about complexity, power, negotiation, participation, and trends identified among these varied institutions.

Chapter 4 turns these same methodological devices to bear on my case study, the Peasant and Indigenous University Network, or UCI-Red. By following the organisational histories of the different groups involved in the design and running of the UCI-Red, I will show that, at least in this case, the emergence of "interculturality" as a working concept is not related to the rise of multiculturalism in other parts of the world. In fact, UCI-Red can presume to have its own "endogenous" brand of "interculturality" based on their own theoretical traditions like "participatory action research" (PAR), "popular education", and "Inculturation theology", among others. In this presentation and discussion of the context in which UCI-Red emerges, I point out the tensions between the development goals of some of these NGOs and the ideal of "interculturality". Later, in Chapter 5, I look closer at the diverse and, at times, contradictory understandings that the NGOs within UCI-Red have about key concepts for "intercultural dialogue", like "culture" and "identity". In this section I intend to contrast the definitions offered by UCI-Red promoters about "interculturality" with their common educational practices. By doing so, I discover important limitations for "intercultural dialogue", at least in the ways in which the educational spaces were created for the two cycles of educational programmes of UCI-Red under analysis.

The critical inspection that I started by looking at the pedagogical relations established between "facilitators" and "local participants" in the Diplomas of UCI-Red continues in Chapter 6 with the examination of the profiles and trajectories of the latter.

I also critically interrogate the universalistic assumptions that UCI-Red promoters have developed in relation to the development of cognitive skills among rural Maya-speaking peasants. I show how these presumptions have seriously limited the possibilities for intercultural learning in the interaction between NGOs and local participants. Prompted by my frustration with the ethnocentric understandings on learning and education demonstrated by even the most "interculturally" concerned promoters of UCI-Red, I embark in Chapter 7 on an exploration of Mayan epistemologies.

This attempt to articulate what can be deemed to be "Mayan views about learning" is an extension of some insights obtained in the analysis of local participants' testimonies. Here I enter the territory of socio-linguistic analysis and cognitive anthropology. While examining the linguistic repertoire of the Yucatec Maya for processes of "learning", "educating", "memorising", "participating", among other important cultural expressions, I come across what I consider the potential basis for a cognitive theory of personhood and agency among the Yucatec Maya of Yucatan. With these digressions into what may seem a completely separate set of theories and concepts what I aim to show is that there are still areas of study that interculturalist scholars should be concerned with. I also attempt with this to demonstrate that learning and education are notions that cannot simply be taken at face value.

Overall, this thesis intends to problematise conventional ideas about "dialogue", "knowledge", "culture", and "learning", while exploring the many possible incarnations of the contentious notion of "interculturality". I trust that interested readers of this work will find in it something that would shed a different light on their own practice and view of the world in relation to the permanent challenge of intercultural dialogues.

CHAPTER 1. INTERCULTURALITY AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY AND AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Measuring up the terrain of "interculturality"

The emergence of interculturality as a new concept to describe the aspirations and utopias of different agents of globalisation has created a discursive and political space where renewed forms of State intervention and social movements' resistance take place.

The term "interculturality" itself lacks precise borders or definition and it is therefore open to debate and contestation. Deployed very often as a buzzword, interculturality is usually construed in opposition to assimilationist and integrationist strategies championed in previous moments by transnational and national agents. These strategies are currently seen as colonialist means for dealing with cultural difference. They are increasingly perceived as well as responsible for maintaining the unequal and marginalised conditions in which cultural minorities and other excluded groups live.

On the other hand, "interculturality" is also presented as an alternative to the flaws and dangers that increasing criticism has revealed within the tenets of different brands of multiculturalism (Turner, 1993; Dietz, 2002). Growing concerns about the highly conflictive and divisive consequences of some multiculturalist approaches have prompted the search for a third way to deal with cultural difference and its political effects in society. In this fashion, interculturality is presented as the crucial feature of a new form of humanism.

Local stories and disciplinary accounts of interculturality are often at odds with any attempt to clarify the question of what defines a proper intercultural relationship, dialogue, approach or even a "thing". Philosopher Fornet-Betancourt even calls into question the value of such effort although he is still willing to enlist the different meanings that interculturality or the Intercultural (*lo intercultural*) could have for different groups: "a methodology that allows us to study, to describe and to analyse the dynamics of interaction among different cultures"; "an actual life process, a conscious way of living wherein an ethical standpoint in favour of the conviviality of differences is forged"; "an alternative political project for reorganizing the international relations currently in force"; "the space which is created through dialogue and communication between cultures"; "a shared *cultural project* which seeks the recreation of cultures on

the basis of enacting the principle of mutual recognition"; [original italics] (Fornet-Betancourt, 2002: 160) among many other possibilities.

These variations on the possible meanings of "interculturality" are a reflection of its political potential. Other incarnations of the notion have spread in the field of education and expanded in Latin America, North America and Europe. For Gundara, "intercultural" is a rather European expression for "multicultural" (2000: 121). Aikman finds that "interculturality" has been adopted by indigenous intellectuals and social movements in Latin America to describe a type of education that enhances the skills and competence of indigenous students for fuller participation in wider society (1999: 19). However, in a different article the same author stresses how this notion has a recurrent set of attributes in educational debates like "dialogue between social actors, positive recognition of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, the selfdevelopment of different cultural traditions which co-exist within national boundaries, the construction of just and equal relations through social negotiation, the dissolution of dichotomies and stereotypes, and the strengthening of democracy" (Aikman, 1998: 199)

German anthropologist Gunther Dietz (2003) has developed a painstaking examination of the trajectories of multiculturalist approaches which emerged as part of important social movements in the 1960s. For Dietz, "interculturality" as we know it today can be traced back to the moment when multiculturalist theoreticians faced the challenge of having to create their own academic spaces –what he calls the "pedagogization of multiculturalism". The field of "intercultural studies" then emerged as an attempt to provide some answers to the challenge posed by the demands for the recognition of cultural diversity. This emerging field would deal with several trans-disciplinary concerns about the contacts and relationships that take place between individuals and groups in contexts of cultural diversity and heterogeneity. The emergence of "intercultural studies" reflects the convergence of different transformations both from within and without the academia, among them: the attempt by ethnic studies to overcome their isolation, the re-engagement of cultural studies with social conflicts in contemporary society, growing concern within social sciences about the relationship between ethnic minorities and host societies, projects coming from pedagogy, psychology, linguistics and philosophy that have given birth to "intercultural" sub-disciplines, and realization of the potential of "interculturality" for

the internationalisation of their respective fields by disciplines like economy and business management.

Dietz identifies one of the reasons for this phenomenon in the "polyphonic and multi-faceted character" of phenomena considered as "multicultural" or "intercultural" which makes impossible any attempt to address them from a mono-disciplinary perspective (2003: 69). His review of most of what has been written within this emergent field leads him to a classification of perspectives that he names in the following manner:

Reified interculturality: He discusses this perspective in reference to the work of Hofstede (1984). About this he says that his followers present and work around intercultural communication using definitions of "culture" similar to those of anthropological functionalism of the mid-20th century, i.e. "cultures" as bounded entities with a particular function. Although Hofstede's models of intercultural interaction are fundamentally used by economists and other business managers, Dietz recognizes his influence on the field of intercultural education too.

Personalized interculturality: Dietz perceives this tendency as coming out of the long-term and rich exchanges among psychology, linguistics and pedagogy. The focus here is the study of experiences of estrangement, understanding and identification that occur when individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds meet. This approach highlights the need for the development of "intercultural" abilities that go beyond the need for knowledge about the "Other" and on to the need for empathy, sociability and mediation between different contexts. These abilities can only be developed through "interaction". While acknowledging the important contribution of this approach, Dietz is very critical of the utopian aura of some positions within this field, for they tend to overlook the asymmetric nature of the relationships between participants in the "communicative act".

Rationalized interculturality: This perspective fundamentally concerns the field of "intercultural philosophy" from where Fournet-Betancourt and other authors that I shall review later emerge. This form of "interculturality" bases its claims on the need to overcome the ethnocentric legacy of Western science and philosophy through the "progressive interculturalization of the philosophical work". Theoreticians concerned with this approach follow different conceptual roads in order to achieve this objective, among them: a comparative science of philosophy, a new "inculturated" philosophy, a

diatopic hermeneutics, to mention a few. Dietz recognises the contributions that these philosophers are making to the development of an "intercultural rationality", and yet he criticises them as well for they continue to present a static, mentalist idea of "culture" that excludes hybrid cultural agents.

Since what seems to be present in every incarnation of the term is the idea of dialogue, after having reviewed all these different ways of talking about "interculturality", it seems that more clarity can be obtained by approaching this subject as "intercultural dialogue". As a starting point to consider this question, let us begin with a definition of "dialogue".

Maranhão offers this double definition of "dialogue" in his introduction to the collection "The interpretation of dialogue":

> "In the descriptive model dialogue is represented as communication between two individuals (subjects) who share a common background of sociocultural tradition and immediate interests (dwelling), who talk to one another by means of a common language, and whose conversation sometimes presupposes and at other times, in addition to that, aims at consensual understanding of meaning. In dialogue as an ideal the subject's identity is disclosed when he expresses himself, and consequently it cannot precede dialogue as it is assumed in the descriptive model: the dwelling itself is built in the process (it is the outcome of dialogue); language is a mode of expression very broadly defined; and meaning cannot be understood apart from happiness and satisfaction" (Maranhão, 1990: 5-6).

The basic points of dialogue marked by this dual condition of the notion are: subjects, common (back)ground, common language, and consensual understanding of meaning. Maranhão highlights other two elements that are necessary for an ethical realization of "dialogue": symmetry of participation and goodwill. Of the latter, he warns that "the goodwill is not that of the good Samaritan, but that of the listener" (Ibid: 8). Consequently, and as Fornet-Betancourt aptly puts it:

> "Intercultural dialogue […] implies a special ethical quality that characterizes it as a form of life or fundamental theoretico-practical attitude whose exercise goes beyond tolerance and respect to ground the reception of the other as a subject who, in order to participate, does not first have to pay customs and apply for a work permit" (Fornet-Betancourt, 2000).

This idealized view of "intercultural dialogue" is far from what we sometimes come to witness particularly in the practice of powerfully construed actors. What one can often encounter is a certain tendency to reproduce old practices of colonisation/subordination of the "Other" that do nothing but contradict the various ideals of the interculturality, like the ones aforementioned. Maranhão notices that

anthropology has made its mission to spot these contradictions since “cultural description is always conditioned by the spiral effects of the encounter between two dwellings (two cultural traditions), underscored by conflicting political interests, two subjects (ethnographer and native), and two languages” (1990: 6).

After this brief measuring of the unstable terrain of “interculturality” we are left with the impression that “interculturality” and “intercultural practices” are often framed by the particular, collective or individual, political, social and cultural background of the actors involved in the construction of given intentional interactions or projects. Yet, as noticed by Dietz and Maranhão, important means for evaluating different forms of “interculturality” are the definitions of “culture” and the practices of “dialogue” that one can find among them.

In what follows I shall drawn from different currents and theories to look at the ways in which knowledge is recovered, transformed, and re-presented in the relations between social groups with historical and structural unbalances of power. I recognise a good deal of influence from Indigenous scholars and activists in the selection of theoretical ways of looking at “intercultural dialogue”, since being Indigenous it is a *locus of enunciation* (Mignolo, 1995) that I claim as my own. However, I have also taken into account the contributions of post-colonial theory, subaltern studies, post-modern critique, Liberation theology, African and intercultural philosophy, and the anthropology of development to try to reflect and unravel the most crucial circumstances and challenges that “intercultural dialogue” and Indigenous universities face in order to accomplish their best promises.

Understanding culture and identity in relation to social actors

In relation to Intercultural and Indigenous Universities (IIU), one of the first ways for approaching them theoretically in Latin America is to look at them as one of the most important tools of the “newest” social movements in the region (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Hale, 1997; Alvarez, et al., 1998; Zibechi, 2003). The resurgence of ethnic identities and identity-based movements in the global context has posed social scientists with important and urgent questions. The innovation and creativity that so-called “new social movements” brought to the international and national arenas were received with fascination and hope when the phenomenon started in the 1980s and the 1990s (Papadakis, 1993; Buechler, 1995; Castells, 1997). But the conflictive and violent

nature of some “ethnic” affiliations and movements has called more and more into question the extent to which ethnic mobilisation and cultural rights can still be considered the best way to advance more egalitarian forms of conviviality among social groups (Turner, 1993; Žižek, 1997; Parekh, 2000; Kuper, 2003).

In Latin America, Indigenous, environmental and feminist movements have been growing in influence and organisational capability, above all during the last quarter of the 20th Century, and pushing their way through in the new scenario of the post-Cold War wave of democratisation and neo-liberalism (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Alvarez, et al., 1998; Yashar, 1999). Among them, the gains and impact of Indigenous movements cannot be denied, particularly in advancing an agenda that re-address issues of internal colonialism and re-examine the foundations of Mestizo nationalist ideologies (Mallon, 1992; Radcliffe, 1996; Yashar, 1998; González C., 2003).

“Ethnopolitics” (Varese, 1996) and “ethnogenesis” (Dietz, 1999a) have become the new expressions and concepts employed to analyse and explain these social movements and their demands from without. However, the position and own theory developed from a “native” point of view prefer to view these same processes as the “reconstitution of peoples”, or “cultural regeneration” (SER-Mixe, 1996; Apffel-Marglin and PRATEC, 1998; CONAIE, 1999; Regino, 1999).

While the study of ethnic identities had in Latin America looked traditionally either to romantic, and essentialist explanations of cultural continuity (see Starn, 1991 on 'Andeanism'; and Watanabe, 1994 on the Maya; Hostettler, 2004), or to historical and structural relations of power expressed in symbolic terms (Cardoso, 1992; Bartolomé, 1997; among others), the tendency now is to look at ethnic identities as fields of struggle and representation where people involved consciously re-create, and re-invent identities based on their historical cultural reservoir (Wilson, 1995; Wade, 1997; Dietz, 1999a; Koonings and Silva, 1999). This move has come at the same time that increasing attention and research on the way “globalisation” processes are affecting local cultures reveals the growing hybridism which nowadays characterises all social groups (Appadurai, 1996; García Canclini, 1997; Bermúdez, 2002).

Two aspects of this recent shift in the theoretical conceptualisation deserve attention vis-à-vis the current emergence of IIU. The first aspect has to do with the way the new emphasis in “hybridism” and “constructivism” is affecting the struggles of Indigenous peoples for the recognition of their collective rights. The second aspect has

to do with the geopolitics of knowledge production, another battlefield where “native” representations and epistemologies are positioning themselves, which we will examine in the third part of this chapter.

Fischer (1999) has noted that it seems paradoxical that when Indigenous movements in the world are growing in influence and reversing historical marginality and discrimination, new anthropological theories seem to undermine their arguments by questioning the “real” nature of the difference they claim a right for. As Wilson correctly points out: “Discourses on identity swing like a pendulum between closure and openness, between an absolutist sense of difference and an awareness of double consciousness” (1995: 5). However, this interplay does not make identities less real. The problem of essentialism in Indigenous and other social movements actually stem from the use of an old-fashioned idea of “culture” as a “bounded entity”. This was coined and shared by anthropologists, not such a long time ago, and that was passed on to activists, journalists, politicians, and indirectly to Indigenous peoples, too.

Terence Turner proposes a new way to understand “culture” that may help to untangle this paradox. He says that we must understand it as the immanent human potential for collective self-creation and self-production, that is, “capacity for culture”. This might prevent social movements from identifying too rigidly with particular “cultures” and “identities”, and rather take advantage of the appropriation of the achievements of all cultures for the benefit of collective empowerment and ongoing cultural self-production (Turner, 1993). Although similar to the same notion of “constructivism”, this way of defining of “culture” allows us to focus on two interesting aspects: the notion of “appropriation”, and the idea of ‘self-production”.

The first aspect demands us to pay attention to the importance of “cultural control” in the continuous process of social change (Bonfil Batalla, 1996). Individuals and collectives do not change indiscriminately but according to the cognitive map that limits cultural choices and renders them meaningful. This is something that Edward Fischer calls “cultural logic” and defines as “generative principles expressed through cognitive schemas that promote inter-subjective continuity and are conditioned by social, political, and economic contingencies” (Fischer, 1999). “Cultural logic” allows cultural change through individual and collective agency in the face of changing circumstances, while also gives a sense of continuity since any change is consistently integrated into previous cognitive schemas.

The second aspect locates us in the field of social practice and reproduction that are also intimately related with the previous idea. It corresponds with theories of social and cultural reproduction through the realisation and modification of a distinctive *habitus*, or culturally signified practices (Bourdieu, 1977). But it also draws attention to the issue of political struggle and negotiation which again situates us in the field where representations of difference and rights are constantly at stake.

As Peter Wade warns regarding "constructivist" approaches to identity: "The danger lies in submerging oneself in discourse alone and the politics of competing representations. […] The aim […] is to see, —and this can only be done through ethnographic fieldwork— that the discursive construct of blackness [and indigenousness] is constantly recreated in social practices […], to see that blackness, whiteness and mixedness [and indigenousness] are values in their own right that form goals and enter into people's social interactions […]" (1997: 113). In a way, this calls for an actor-oriented approach (an insight that Wilson, 1995; shares, too) which has been incorporated into the study of knowledge interfaces in the anthropology of development, an approach that we discuss in the next section.

Politics of difference and knowledge interfaces in development encounters

The importance of this debate is not minimal given the increasing influence that "ethnopolitics", or the politics of difference, plays in the global context, not the least in the development field. The successes of identity politics in Latin America are evident in the gradual introduction of the discourse of difference in the policy implementation of national and development agencies. From constitutional re-arrangements that introduced the notion of "pluriculturalism" and the formal recognition of Indigenous rights in some countries (Yashar, 1999; Van Cott, 2000b) to the increasing visibility of Indigenous culture and expectations in the design of development policies (Kleymeyer, 1994; Radcliffe, et al., 2002; Walsh, 2002b) the question of identity and knowledge representation is drawing increasing attention.

However, formal recognition of "cultural difference and rights" does not always guarantee the realisation of social justice. Given the rigid nature of the concept of "culture" that both Indigenous movements and governmental agents generally hold the

negotiation of these rights continues to be problematic in practice. Here the problem is that the fixation of cultural differences facilitates the manipulation of these communities and the denial of their autonomy (Wade, 1997; Speed and Collier, 2000; Sieder and Witchell, 2001). This apparently renders true the fear of some cultural theorists that "the Subaltern would not be able to speak", since every time s/he does, s/he runs the risk of being misrepresented (Spivak, 1988; Beverley, 1999).

I contend that in this situation as in other examples of the "normalisation" of Indigenous demands —that is, their incorporation into "governmentality" technologies of development (Foucault, 1991) like the discourses of "development with identity" (Radcliffe, et al., 2002), and even of "interculturality" (Dietz, 2002; Walsh, 2002a)—, one has to pay more attention to how these demands are negotiated and enacted in collective practices of social reproduction and knowledge production.

A very good example of this is to be found in the so-called "Indigenous Knowledge (IK) perspectives in development". Resembling the path followed by "ethnic identity studies", initial IK perspectives tended to take for granted the essentially different nature of "local or Non-Western knowledge". In many of these studies IK was defined like the *common-sense*-originated, context-based, localised, practical skills and techniques that non-Western societies maintain and that sustain their livelihoods (see for example Brokensha, et al., 1980; Chambers, et al., 1989; Warren, et al., 1995). However "local" and "contextual" the IK were to be, a central tenet of this approach was that IK worked better than 'scientific" knowledge did as an input for development projects.

The notion that "an understanding and appreciation of local ideas and practices will further development work" (Sillitoe, 1998: 224) has become a principle shared nowadays by development practitioners. But an important anthropological critique has also pointed out that the divide between IK and "scientific" knowledge is indeed ill-based and that it worked against the interests of local and Indigenous farmers. It turns out that ultimately both forms of knowledge share similar potentialities and limitations. For instance, both of them aspire in a way to be universal. Both of them are shaped by internal and external influences; develop often in contradictory and experimental ways; and respond at the same time to general and particular interests among other similarities (Agrawal, 1995). The articulation of further critiques have also called into question

initial views of IK as systems, a criticism that is also attributable to 'scientific" knowledge (Nader, 1996; Pottier, 2003).

What we are left with, however, is the issue of power. For even if 'science", or "technoscience" (Nader, 1996) is as unarticulated as IK it still retains the same authority and can be seen operating in the appropriation of the Other's knowledge as it has historically done (Harding, 1994; Ellen and Harris, 2000), i.e. in the patenting of life forms (Pottier, 2003), or in the design of environmental policies (Fairhead and Leach, 2003). Of course, the question of power involves more than two actors, and it is not only external to IK but also intrinsic to it (Long and Long, 1992; Sillitoe, 1998).

The new way of understanding IK now is as one where this knowledge "does not exist in isolation but interacts in a variety of ways with the science and practices of development agencies […]. Consequently, [this new approach] highlight[s] how local people regularly experiment with exogenous elements to strengthen their own knowledge repertoires" (Pottier, 2003: 5). If we are to adopt this view, it would be more relevant to explore the forms in which people gain understanding of their context and implement innovation that the "knowledge" (content, system) that they use or deploy. What is more important is the form of knowing, and not the "knowledge" itself.

Here the actor-oriented approach and the study of knowledge interfaces are methodological tools that allow an understanding of these processes of knowledge production, transformation, and negotiation:

> "Interface conveys the idea of some kind of face-to-face encounter between individuals with differing interests, resources and power. Studies of interface encounters aim to bring out the types of discontinuities that exist and the dynamic and emergent character of the struggles and interactions that take place, showing how actors" goals, perceptions, values, interests and relationships are reinforced or reshaped by this process (Long and Long, 1992).

Problems of representation and power are recognisable in the way IK is generally studied; namely, through positivist models which separate culturally embedded knowledges from the symbols and values that make them successful (Scoones and Thompson, 1994; Sillitoe, 1998; Ellen and Harris, 2000). As pointed out before, what is needed is "an empirically grounded understanding of how knowledge(s) is (are) produced through the mediation of unequal power relations and processes of translation" (Pottier, 2003).

But if "conventional" IK research have contributed only to the accumulation of pieces of exotic knowledge more easily appropriated by Eurocentric academia, global

scientific institutions and international development agencies (Sillitoe, 1998; Agrawal, 2002; Morgan, 2003), the actor-oriented approach has not completely restored the cultural agency of politically engaged participants. This is because the actor-oriented approaches, like "constructivism" in ethnicity studies, need to re-engage with people's own views and theories if they are to help in the processes of re-appropriation of their humanity and knowledge denied by colonialism and modernity (Smith, 1999; Mignolo, 2000). This is the terrain where I think that post-colonial critique and intercultural philosophy may help us understand better the political and epistemological challenges of intercultural dialogue.

Intercultural challenges for Indigenous peoples and for anthropology

Anthropology —as heiress of the North Atlantic colonial and modernist mind— despite all its transformations still needs to change more in order not only to effectively nurture understanding of other life-worlds, but to help the alternative cultural worlds of these "Others" to be able to exist and grow with justice and dignity. In different quarters one finds now efforts to challenge what can be called the indelible "colonial stain" of anthropology (Scott, 1992; Smith, 2000a). Some examples of this are the debates around the possibility and validity of "indigenous", "native", or "world anthropologies" (Fahim and Helmer, 1980; Fox and Obbink, 2003; Kuwayama, 2003). And one good example of the extent to which the anthropological "metropolitan" attitude is still alive is the way Indigenous rights and "indigeneity" are questioned and dismissed by Kuper in a polemic recent article (2003). For all the good intentions this author may have had, the carelessness and authoritativeness with which he presented his arguments have only contributed to the undermining of Indigenous rights' claims (Kenrick and Lewis, 2004), and hence to the discomfort and distrust that Indigenous peoples feel towards anthropological research (Smith, 1999; Battiste, 2000).

If the "geopolitics of knowledge" (Mignolo, 2000) affects in such way the construction of knowledge within anthropology what can be expected when Indigenous peoples themselves try to move from the recuperation of their political subjectivity (Walsh, 2002b) to the reconstruction of their "epistemological agency"? That is precisely the sort of challenges that IIU pose to anthropology.

It may be time for anthropology to combine its "constructivist" and "actor-oriented" approaches with a more "cosmopolitan" attitude (Kahn, 2003) recognizing and critically engaging in a genuine "intercultural" dialogue with other peoples" attempts to reconstruct their humanity and epistemologies. The fact that these knowledges and identities are, as we have seen, hybrid does not mean that they are not different, or alternative. They can be interpreted as "border epistemologies" or "thinking", as Walter Mignolo put it, and they represent, indeed, a new loci of enunciation emerging from the re-articulation of forms of knowing long denied during the North Atlantic colonisation and modernisation of the world (Mignolo, 2000: 12-13). "Border epistemologies" are hybrid almost by definition because they come out of the absorption of hegemonic forms of knowledge that are then replaced into the perspective of the subaltern —according to their own "cultural logic", with Fischer (1999). They are part of the creative and diversified response of the subaltern to the homogenising globalisation. This is the way in which local subordinated histories are enacting, adapting, adopting, transforming and rearticulating global designs (Mignolo, 2000).

The notion of "border thinking" has some connections with the quest for an African philosophy (Karp and Masolo, 2000) and has encountered with Liberation theology, critical theory, and subaltern studies in Latin America (Castro-Gómez and Mendieta, 1998; Dussel, 2000; Quijano, 2000). "Border thinking" is being used to describe research and knowledge projects such as the IIU (Mignolo, 2003), the oral histories workshops in Bolivia (Mignolo, 2002), and the rising of Indigenous video production (Schiwy, 2002), among other ongoing projects in Latin America. Its contribution to the understanding of the way these epistemologies can flourish and prosper is undeniable, and yet, it has the danger of getting caught up in the same sort of meta-narrative that tries to deconstruct, something that also happens with post-structuralist approaches to development, and the notion of "post-development" (Agrawal, 1996).

Indigenous scholars in other contexts —mostly English-speaking contexts— have also articulated their own criticisms on the "cognitive imperialism" underpinning the denial of Indigenous rights and knowledge (Battiste, 2000). These scholars have strongly criticised this epistemological underpinning by revealing its naïve empiricism, its underlying assumptions about natural world and human nature, and its constant need of univocal definitions. They question the assumption that IK can be "benignly

translated" into "culture" or any other concept coined in Eurocentric languages (Battiste and Henderson, 2000). And recognizing that IK is not unitary they can be however seen as a structured "way of living within contexts of flux, paradox, and tension, respecting the pull of dualism and reconciling opposing forces" (Ibid: 42). They defend the right to call their knowledge a 'science" with their own rules of evidence and schools, in agreement with what other philosophers and anthropologists have asserted; namely, that 'scientific" methods and attitude is not restricted to the Western cognoscente (Harding, 1994; Nader, 1996; Ellen and Harris, 2000). The difference between this "techno-science" and, at least, some "ethno-sciences" is that the latter are more able to accept different, even contradictory, forms of truth without calling into question its own philosophical foundations (Morgan, 2003).

"Border epistemologies" and "ethno-sciences" are forms of approaching IK from a highly political and active position. But in contexts where the Subaltern is once more disarticulated and fragmented a better position to understand the possibilities and limitations of intercultural dialogue may be by looking at the "cultural logic" (Fischer) and ethno-epistemologies[1] (Maffie, 2006) that sustain and maintain certain ways to engage with the world.

If the urgent dialogue between cultural knowledges (science and IK) is to have any suitable outcome —for both parties, that is—, it needs a new philosophical attitude. Here is where "interculturality" as a method and not an object of study enters the scenario. Proponents of "intercultural philosophy" see it as a way of going beyond multiculturalism and essentialism. It is a project for a new humanism where differences communicate and enrich each other in the understanding that the truth is anywhere and everywhere. What it aspires to achieve is the construction of a "binding pluralism" (Mall, 2000), or a "plural universalism" (Walsh, 2002a) that counters the risks of atomisation and confrontation hidden in some "multicultural" approaches.

Thus, "intercultural philosophy rejects the idea of a hermeneutics of identity that is intolerant of difference. In our attempt to understand others, we meet to differ and

[1] As a philosophical approach etnoepistemology works on the basis of a "thin" conception of epistemology and rejects "thick", veritistic notions of knowledge, and epistemology, since the latter excludes a wide range of cultural ways of knowing. By embracing a definition of epistemology that accepts different forms of reflecting about the nature, sources and limits of knowledge, this new approach is able to discuss from a non-ethnocentric point of view pre-Han Dynasty Taoist and Confucian epistemologies, and Native American philosophies.

differ to meet. The other is also experienced by us through its resistance to our attempt to assimilate it fully. [However, this philosophy also] approves of overlapping centres, searches for them, finds them, and cultivates them" (Mall, 2000: 6). One of its methods is "analogous hermeneutics", which is based in epistemological modesty and in the paradigm of the "likeness of relation among unlike things" (Ibid). "Analogous hermeneutics" then seek to move beyond the two fictions of total identity and radical difference.

Although "intercultural philosophy" implicitly rests on the idea that there exists such a thing like "culture", some representative theoreticians of this approach have sought to keep the model updated, by incorporating the ongoing debate about "culture" in anthropology. Van Binsbergen is one of these theoreticians who has proposed to consider as "cultural orientations" the 'specific forms of programming of human representations and behaviour, — a programming that is specific in space and time, that has an internal systematics, that is not idiosyncratic and limited to just one human being but on the contrary is shared — by virtue of learning processes — by a number of people, yet remains limited to a relatively small sub-set of humanity" (Van Binsbergen, 1999: 54). He prefers to call them "cultural orientations", as a way to prevent the suggestion that they are totalising entities ordering the entire life of individuals and communities.

In this view there are different "cultural orientations" and these co-exist, interact and confront with each other, not only within particular communities but also inside particular individuals. While recognizing that anthropologists have been engaged ever since in the production of "intercultural knowledge", Van Binsbergen recalls how different theories and institutions, not least Eurocentric naïve empiricism, have hindered the success of this enterprise. However, in his perspective, there is now no other way to advance than to embrace the relativity of the empirical method —that is, as a philosophical choice among others— and carry on doing ethnographic fieldwork but re-interpreted as a form of "communicative action": "This requires not only that (along *emic* lines) the participants' representations and evaluations are, to the ethnographer's personal conviction, mediated faithfully and with integrity, but also *that the participants have a decisive say in this process of mediation*. Only on that basis can ethnographic mediation become a form of self-reflexive taking-consciousness that is in line with the participants' own local cultural orientation, and that enables the underlying

epistemological principles of that orientation to effectively fertilise, or transcend, North Atlantic empirical epistemology" (1999: 78).

Intercultural philosophy can then be used as a "medium" for ethnographic transformation. "Medium" is understood here as a method of transformation, as a process of apprenticeship and resituating "from a philosophical position that is reflectively conscious of the cultural origins of its presuppositions" (Fornet-Betancourt, 2000: 44). Van Binsbergen's plea for a re-interpretation of ethnographic work resembles the similar bid by Joel Kahn (2003) for a more "cosmopolitan" anthropology that allows the voices, interests, and disagreements of the research subjects to have a place in what we research and study. I find this to be an inspiring platform to undertake my own research on the practices and constructs of "interculturality" in Latin America, and in the following section of this proposal I am going to try to articulate all these thoughts into a reflection of my own practice as a collaborative researcher.

CHAPTER 2. COLLABORATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY AS A FORM OF INTERCULTURAL RESEARCH

E'esajil as a method for collaborative research.

There is a term in the Yucatec Maya language that I started to reflect on while exploring everyday learning and teaching practices among Mayan peasants. This is the stem *e'es* which derives from the Colonial Mayan **ez**, that in turn corresponded to the contracted form of the transitive variation (**etez**) of the verb root **et**. This, according to Bolles (2001), is the root for "to show, to exhibit", but it alternatively means: with, and // stem which denotes similarity, company // to carry // in noun formation: partner, similar // in verb formation: jointly, in company of // sometimes, a particle denoting comparison // varied, other, similar, alike, same. From these multiple meanings of the basic stem, it follows that the transitive form *e'esaj* "to show, to signal, to demonstrate, to teach (something)" can be alternatively interpreted as "to make someone companion, similar". Disclosing the inner workings of what one does in relation to other people, which is often a form of teaching or educating among Mayan peasants, becomes a way for collaborating and working together. *E'esajil*, "the act of showing, signalling, demonstrating and teaching", has been an important element of my method and approach to the study of interculturality in the context of the UCI-Red's project. E'esajil expresses not only collaboration but most accurately the ways in which a space for showing and sharing potential meaning and alternative forms of imagining education can be constructed. In this section I will describe and discuss the diverse approaches and methods that I employed in the construction of this thesis. By being open about my role and collaboration with the group of people behind the educational project that constitutes my case study, I hope to show some of the possibilities that are available for anthropological engagements with research subjects and how these can contribute to make a different and possibly better research practice.

As a token of reflexivity – which reflects concerns about the construction of fields of study in anthropology (see Davis, 1999; Ch. 3), additional words are necessary about the selection of the research topic and its construction as an area of study within anthropology. This choice has been crucially influenced by my own professional and personal trajectory as anthropologist and Indigenous scholar of Yucatec Maya origin.

My point of departure in this study is therefore my own involvement in applied anthropology and development initiatives. A key component of these projects was the building up of educational projects to provide organisations and community leaders with the necessary skills to cope with external institutions and changing global conditions. In these projects we were deeply engaged in reflections on how to depart from, and include, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in the design and application of these educational models in what we called the Peasant and Indigenous University Network, or UCI-Red.

Since I returned to the academic field (after many years of development promotion and practice), one of my interests was to continue with the exploration of these complex and contradictory processes of IK systematisation and incorporation in development projects. It was then that I realised that what I thought to be just a regional project in Southern Mexico could be considered to be part of a more general trend. From Canada to Chile in the Americas, and in regions as distant as New Zealand and Australia in the South Pacific, diverse organisations and scholars were also engaged in promoting creative ways for recovering and reconstituting Indigenous philosophies and sciences in the education initiatives.

Ethical-political implications of case study selection

Looking at the intersection of different cultural orientations and allowing for other voices to be heard are very important tasks in the agenda of an "intercultural anthropology". My aim in this thesis is, however, more modest since methodologically I will only pay attention to that which is articulated in the practices of knowledge production of specific organisations and projects. On the other hand, I will also try to draw attention to some of the limitations of anthropological research, in the hope of making my modest contribution to the rise of this "intercultural anthropology".

Indigenous peoples have felt in the colonial past, and are experiencing in the "post-colonial" present that research in general and anthropology in particular are just other means to the same ends which are determined by dominant groups. There are several justifications for this distrust (cf. Smith, 1999). One of them is that social and anthropological research is generally designed according to debates and interests other than those of Indigenous communities and organisations. And, even when social scientists seek to make their contribution to the objectives of social movements, they

tend to try to enlighten those agents they were trying to learn from in the first place (Papadakis, 1993).

Anthropology has always been a site for the production of intercultural knowledge. But this knowledge has usually been wrapped in the self-evident delusion of Eurocentric naïve empiricism which has impeded anthropology's capacity for a fruitful interaction and communication with the "Others" (Van Binsbergen, 1999). The high command of objectivity in social research has demanded in the past a detachment from the political concerns of the social actors with whom one works and interacts (Smith, 1999; Latour, 2005). This is no longer the case and yet the shift towards a more open and interactive relationship between with the anthropologist and other research participants does not come without challenges (Warren and Jackson, 2002; Mutua and Swadener, 2004). While assuming the challenge of reflexivity and critical realism in ethnography (Davis, 1999; Van Binsbergen, 1999; Karp and Masolo, 2000), my own approach to research in this context has embraced the main tenets of "interculturality" as a method which commands dialogue and collaboration. This consideration comes from the realisation that:

> [The] strict meaning of intercultural dialogue as a method for a better knowledge of the other as well as of oneself is misunderstood […] if "knowledge" is understood in the sense of a simple "taking note" or "making known." Rather, it concerns a process of information in which we inform ourselves (communicate) and allow ourselves to be informed (in the sense of given form) by what [and who] we know" (Fornet-Betancourt, 2000).

This will only be possible if as researchers we confront critically the "hubris" of authorship (Watanabe, 1994), and close the artificial spatial and temporal distances that researchers have always constructed to protect their authority (Fabian, 1983; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). Dialogue and collaboration with other research subjects demands the participation of these in the lay-out and development of the research. By assuming this challenge I thought that this would add up to the advantages of "participant observation" as an ethnographic method.

Without seeing the own self-constructed nature of social sciences, intercultural dialogue and intercultural research will not be possible. In this study I assumed a commitment to the pursuit of just intercultural relations between social groups and life-

worlds without renouncing the possibility to be critical of the actual constructions of this ideal.

The decisions taken in the design and development of this research project tried to build on these thoughts and intuitions to a very large extent. My research tasks and participation on the field came to be determined by the possibilities of engaging in a collaborative and critical exploration of the topics and problems that were important for the organisations, communities and people involved in the UCI-Red project. In the following lines, I will detail how these decisions led to some forms of collaboration, and what difficulties emerged from the challenging task of doing anthropology at home (Jackson, 1987).

Despite being conceptually connected within a wider theoretical project, case studies unfold and are interpreted according to their context and specificity. In this work, the pertinence of UCI-Red as a case study was ultimately determined by the possibility of establishing collaborative relations with the people involved in this initiative. This, on the other hand, was due to my previous relation and involvement in this same project which made the familiarity with the context and actors an advantage as well as a limitation for my intervention as a researcher (concerns that are shared with other anthropologists like Hastrup (1983) and Peirano (1998)). This involvement consisted of direct participation in the design and first steps of the original Diploma, as external collaborator and consultant. Previous contacts entailed working for two of the three organisations in research and participatory planning.

While I consider it relevant for this study of IIU that the selected case was "representative" of other processes I am clearly privileging other types of considerations too. According with Flyvberg (2004), case studies do not need to show only regularities to be credible in a, rather, positivist fashion. They can also be used to reflect the complex and controversial aspects of social reality by providing information on the significance of diverse circumstances affecting essentially similar cases. My privileged access to UCI-Red as well as the significant array of connections that this project has in relation to other Intercultural and Indigenous Universities (as I will demonstrate later) widely correspond with these concerns.

Originally the research plan proposed to undertake the analysis of two education projects: UCI-Red in Mexico and Amawtay Wasi in Ecuador. However, the second project had to be excluded in the end; despite previous contacts and agreements that

resulted from my first approximation to Amawtay Wasi's educational designs (cf. Llanes Ortiz, 2003). The main reason for this change was the interruption in the communication between the organisers and me because of the important political events which unfolded in Ecuador between the 13th and 20th of April, 2005. This has become part of Ecuadorian contemporary history, and is generally known as the "rebellion of the *forajidos* (outlaws)". Around mid April of 2005 serious political unrest overtook the political scene in Ecuador. Thousands of peoples on the streets were demanding the removal of the president in office. This social movement was able to bring about the exile of President Lucio Gutierrez and the reshuffle of the whole national government by the end of April. The promoters of the Indigenous University of Ecuador were deeply involved in these political events and, even after the "rebellion" I could not re-establish my contacts with them and their project – so many things were occurring in Ecuador at this time. After analysing this situation and in close conversations with my supervisors I decided to postpone indefinitely the pursuit of this second case study and concentrate in the UCI-Red project instead.

Collaborations in [analysing] theory and practice

As I have made clear in the previous sections, from the beginning of this research I was determined to engage in collaborative research and a form of "conversational" anthropology with the other subjects involved in my research. Following other anthropologists that have problematised their own relationships with their research subjects like Tedlock (1983), I decided to call this approach "dialogic observation". This idea was conceived as a personal view on other strategies implemented by Indigenous scholars for the construction of a decolonised research agenda, like Kaupapa Maori research in New Zealand. This Maori-centred research is characterised as a form of research that attempts to satisfy the conventional, extended standards of research, while following at the same time its own, culturally sound, working principles. These are: *(tino) rangatiratanga* (the principle of relative autonomy), *taonga tuku iho* (the principle of cultural aspirations), *ako Maori* (culturally preferred pedagogy), *kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga* (the principle of the mediation of socio-economic and home difficulties), *whanau* (the principle of the extended family structure), and *kaupapa* (the principle of collective vision) (Smith, 2000b: 234). Inspired by these ideas (but knowing that my capacity to create a methodological framework of the same depth and

soundness was very limited) my approach was conceived as a series of observational practices but also as different and complex forms of "conversation" that I shall describe in the following lines.

On November of 2004, after having obtained all due academic permissions from the Department of Anthropology in Sussex University, I arrived in Merida, the capital of the state of Yucatan, from where I was going to be based during my fieldwork. Once established, I began contacting the different actors involved in the UCI-Red project. Top of the list were the Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) of Mexican Mestizo development promoters or *asesores* engaged with the UCI-Red. They had been holding regular meetings as the Peninsular Group (or, *Colectivo Peninsular*) on agreed dates and for different coordinating purposes. So I started up with the presentation of the project, its theoretical background and its research objectives. Due to irregular attendance to the Group's meetings I had to separately contact some of its members. In general, my research proposal was well received. I also learnt in these meetings about their progress in carrying out different educational initiatives in four different micro-regions of the Peninsula. It was a disappointment, in relation to my research proposal, to realise that many of these educational processes were soon to be concluded.

The participants in this *Colectivo* did not directly criticise or question my research design. They did express however concern about some of the concepts I was using like "negotiation". They also asked me to structure the conversations that I was to have with them and other participants in a way that would improve their understanding of "interculturality". There was, however, a strong background of collaborations between me and most of them that was based on trust and friendship. This was due to the fact that I had been involved in the first stages of planning and design of the UCI-Red project in 1999. Therefore, they had great expectations about the potential contributions of my research for the improvement of their educational project. In accordance with my decision to carry out a collaborative research, I decided to work out their expectations within my plans and to prepare alongside some of them a critical route for the analysis of their latest cycle of educational processes.

My ethnographic work had to deal with the problem that, by the time I arrived in the Yucatan Peninsula, many of the educational programmes had already taken place. I was still able to attend some of the educational sessions or "workshops" that were part of different courses or Diplomas in four micro-regions of the Peninsula. In these

sessions I briefly presented my research and sought the consent of local participants. I asked them permission to be with them in their workshops, to take notes about them, and to record them in audio and in video. I committed myself to respect their wish in this matter and to stop recording them at any time if they asked me to do so. In general terms, people participating in these sessions accepted me in my role of researcher, particularly since I promised them to return the information. I also told them that the intention of this research was to make better educational projects so that other people, or they themselves, could benefit more from these projects. Some of the processes had been on their way for less than a year while others had been running more than one year. At the beginning I was in the difficult position of trying to digest the bulk of written information in order to understand the implications of these educational courses. At the same time, I found myself with the problem of having little time to do ethnographic work on the educational sessions at the community level. I found, however, an interesting source of information that would prove important, to solve the mismatch between the time of my arrival and the unfolding of the programmes.

Coming back to my involvement in the organisation of the analysis of UCI-Red's educational processes, at some point during the process *el Colectivo* started to rely more and more on this collaboration to fulfil their own agenda. The full-time dedication I had been devoting to the reading and commenting of their material and to the planning and recording of the regular meetings were seen more in terms of the Group's work program than as part of a research. I started to see myself more as a coordinator of *el Colectivo* than as an external observer. They even came to see me as their "facilitator" in the solving of inter-personal and professional differences among them. With time, I had to set some limits to this latter kind of involvement. [N your reflexivity is interesting (and noble) here – I almost wonder whether you could say explicitly that your role changed to active participant, action researcher, practitioner/academic – it kinds of fits in a congruent way to what you later say about the nature of mayan knowledge learning as well]

I became however more and more implicated in the reflection and discussion about interculturality inside *el Colectivo*. At some point they asked me to present again my theoretical background about the topic along with that of one of the members who is the most interested in the theorisation and inclusion of intercultural concerns. I worked with the group's expert for a very long time and even though I shared with him some

expectations about the direction that UCI-Red's educational projects should take, I had otherwise important differences with his theoretical and practical stance which will be discussed later in this work.

My research was organised around the educational sessions that I could observe and analyse first hand by travelling from one micro-region to another (see Map 5), and the collective analysis sessions with NGO organisers that tended to happen mostly in Merida, where the majority of them lived. In this I assumed the role of a critical collaborator, which was easy given my previous relation and participation in the project. Another element that favoured this role may have been the open agenda I pursued from the beginning in relation to "interculturality". This was something that people in *el Colectivo* were interested in improving and studying. However, it was difficult sometimes to follow up on the effects that my criticisms had among the members of this "community". In particular I was asked sometimes to prove my assertions with the help of my field notes which on the other hand were perceived occasionally as 'spying" on them.

At the grassroots level my presence and interactions were set against a background of friendship and NGO practice with local participants in particular regions, i.e. the South of Yucatan, and Los Chenes in Campeche. However, many of the participants in the Diplomas were part of a group of people with whom I had little interaction in the past. Given my deep involvement with UCI-Red NGO members I had little contact with the local participants outside the educational sessions, since I had to travel constantly in order to be able to witness and record these sessions where they were happening. This would sometimes take me from one corner of the Peninsula to another, jumping on a bus for hours between Merida, Hopelchén, Chacsinkín, Motul and Chetumal (again, see Map 5). When coming into contact with local participants I tried always to keep a casual approach to their everyday life, except when I presented them with the idea of having "recorded conversations" or interviews. Language was an important element of these interactions since speaking in Yucatec Maya always opened up rich conversations. Nevertheless, I could not always use this approach since my fluency in the language was not good enough sometimes, because of regional accents, background noise, or tiredness. Whenever I conversed with people in Maya I always tried to record these conversations if allowed.

In some micro-regions I tried to get involved with the local participants' work but it proved difficult since I could not always organise my stays for longer periods in their towns and villages. When I was able to do this my role as researcher had to be explained at every step of the way; particularly, during the recorded conversations. In these I always offered them the chance to interrogate me about the objectives of my research in such a way that they could get to know me better and understand what I was doing. In the particular case of the participants of the Western Bacalar's micro-region they apparently assumed from the very beginning that I was there to help their training and every time I was with them they asked me to answer their questions and to transmit their opinions to the UCI-Red's local team.

As I hope to have shown my collaborative research with the people involved in the UCI-Red's processes has made me assume different roles. One of the most difficult positions I have had to play was as a spokesperson of UCI-Red in a meeting with other organisations and government representatives. In this collaboration I have gained important insights about what is possible and what is not and it helped me understand the complexities of engaged anthropology. Collaborative endeavours are forms of intercultural dialogue, a dialogue that implies negotiation and change, the shifting of research agendas and the acceptance of criticism and diversity.

Retrospective ethnography: familiar gaze and relatorías

A generally overlooked fact in social sciences and in anthropology in particular, is that the researcher's self is his/her main research tool. Apart from a serious commitment to reflexivity, the centrality of this idea of self in social research presents us with a series of embodied challenges, in particular when using "participant observation" as a research method. Being one of the privileged tools for ethnography, conducting "participant observation" means for anthropologists and other potential ethnographers that the way we see and the way we remember should be highly efficient.

"Participant observation" as a technique of the body requires the training of sight and memory and the development of a disposition of the self to be attentive to the speech, movement and environment of their research subjects. The emergence of a "native" anthropology, that is, the type of research conducted by individuals that belong to the studied community or society complicates even more the use of sight and memory in "participant observation". The practice of "native" researchers demands of

them an effort to develop new “forms of motivated and stylized dislocation” by becoming self-styled “foreigners” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 37).

The role of anthropologists has always been to translate the cultural knowledge and values, the life-world of a specific society, in order to make them available to others. Yet one of the methodological challenges has always been how to encapsulate such view of the world in order not to misrepresent it. Ethnography as a literary representation of other peoples’ cultures has been under heavy criticism since the 1970s (see, Geertz, 1973; Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

Socially transformative methodologies like Participatory Action Research (PAR) – which was developed in Latin America by scholars like Orlando Fals-Borda (with Rahman, 1991) and Ezequiel Ander-Egg (1980) – have been very influential in the practice of NGOs, and provide us in this particular case, with interesting contrasting and complementary practices with respect to anthropological research.

PAR and ethnography, despite being two different forms of approaching reality, appear to share a similar principle: they both privilege “lived experience” (*vivencia*, in Spanish) or “participant observation” as the main form of engaging with the social world. However and as Wright and Nelson (1995) have noticed, participatory research’s principles involve “people [becoming] agents rather than objects of research”. This in PAR, and increasingly in “popular education” – at least in the way it is practiced in Latin America (Kane, 2001)–, requires reflection about one’s own practice. One of the key tools that PAR practitioners use for this is what they call ‘systematisation” which consists in keeping written records of their own practices that are later organised and analysed in order to identify the possible effects that these have in attaining their goals of social transformation.

Collaborative research implies that, as an ethnographer, one has to undergo a process of negotiation with the other research subjects in order to close the gap between external and internal participant. This has the effect of making the ethnographer’s gaze closer to that of a “native” or “insider”. Since I consider myself to be both a “native” of the organisational culture of UCI-Red, as well as a “collaborative researcher”, this double condition has presented me with the difficult task of having to style me as a “foreigner” in order to being able to critically examine the discourses and practices of my “native” community.

The challenge can be also expressed as that of overcoming the “familiar gaze and selves”. By “familiar gaze” I mean that, given the long history of contacts and collaboration between the researcher and their research subjects, s/he may not necessary be ready to look at the events and processes in the critical and inquisitive way in which another observer would be able to do so. S/he becomes a familiar self too for the group of research subjects who no longer see him/her as a “foreigner”.

As we can see here becoming “familiar”, or “familiarised”, with the other research subjects and their “culture” has both its advantages and disadvantages. For some external researchers to turn into familiar selves of what they are studying is an aspiration and a choice. For me, it was a given even before I started my doctoral research.

One of the ways in which I have tried to address and problematise this condition in this thesis has been by re-cycling and complementing previous records kept by this group of NGOs as part of their systematisation processes, and which I have come to see as important tools in the development of a “retrospective ethnography”. Another way in which these records helped me was in the reconstruction of stages of the UCI-Red process that I could not observe directly – either because they happened during a previous period to my fieldwork, or because they happened at the same time, when I was observing other events.

The record keeping of work sessions, participatory workshops, talks, training sessions, cooperative meetings, among other important events in an NGO life and work often yields an impressive amount of written words that are kept by its members for systematisation and reflection purposes. Among the UCI-Red’s backing organisations this has rarely been the case, however. The majority of these records fill up personal and corporative computers without being paid any further attention, except when an external researcher comes along and requests permission to inspect these.

Disappointment is what this hypothetical researcher – especially if s/he happens to be an anthropologist – generally experiences since the recording quality of these accounts tends to be sketchy and of little use for the purposes of a social scientist. What this researcher needs to be aware of is the discursive quality of these records and to treat them less as sources of “hard information” to reconstruct social processes and more as insights into the flow of ideas, images and motivations that underpin the work of NGOs.

Among these NGOs these records are called generically "*relatorías*" and I shall respect this denomination when referring to the texts on which I will base parts of my analysis. The word "*relatoría*" seems particularly apt to encapsulate the different narrative qualities of these records for they are, on the one hand, semi-neutral (even mechanical, sometimes) accounts by external observers of the dynamics and encounters between NGOs and other groups or communities. On the other hand, these are stories or tales (*relatos*) that sometimes are edited and re-told in an attempt to explain the intended effect of NGO methods and techniques. The specific charge of particular *relatorías* will depend on the observer's vocation and profile, which may be that of an NGO bureaucrat, a popular educator, an action-research practitioner, or an anthropology-trained activist like me.

Some of the *relatorías* on which I will base my analysis of the complex trajectories and negotiations within the UCI-Red were elaborated by me in a previous stage to my doctoral research. They can be seen therefore as belonging to a prior "ethnographic stratum" which I have had to dig out with a different set of questions and emphasis in mind. The limited scope of the information they provide should be understood in this context. In fact, these *relatorías* were recorded in a rather mechanical, mirror-like state of mind by me when I first joined the workings of the project that later became the UCI-Red.

My bodily training as a "participant observer" prepared me to become a sharp-sighted "*relator*". That is, as a recorder of events and narrator of social dynamics in the work of NGOs, and as an anthropologist, I would write these accounts in extended detail, taking particular care in identifying meaningful relationships between messages, voices and actions. This peculiar way of approaching the task of writing a "*relatoría*" caught many times the attention of NGO members who asked me to develop a series of guidelines for future "*relatores*" so that they would perhaps be able to register only the most meaningful details of the interaction occurring during workshops and other training events. The expectation was that with the material thus gathered the factors that affected favourably "sustainable development" strategies would be more easily identified. This has had the effect that some "*relatorías*" produced by NGO members themselves, even if partial and incomplete in their description of processes as units, can also be deemed to be examples of NGO-produced ethnographical material.

I am aware that this strategy cannot solely count for the overcoming of the limitations that excess of familiarity represent for a critical analysis of interculturality in the UCI-Red project. But insofar as it helped me have a distanced and long-term perspective of the events leading to the conformation and functioning of the project I think that it conferred in me a sense of dislocation that has ultimately been important for the analysis that I present here.

One final remark in relation to reflexivity and methodology is that while this research aims to contribute to the self-understanding of people and institutions engaged in the construction of more equal relationships between different life-worlds, it also aims to join in the reflection and to contribute to the opening up of the field of social research to allow other forms of constructing and representing the world.

CHAPTER 3. INTERCULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Introduction and general background

Looking at the number of experiences that call themselves Indigenous or Intercultural Universities in Latin America, one discovers that despite their diverse, sometimes even disparate, academic objectives and political agendas they all express a widely shared aspiration: the re-appreciation of indigenous knowledge as a form of knowledge that deserves a place in higher education programmes and institutions. There are however important differences in the ways in which all these institutions realise their commitments with Indigenous peoples and their cultural values and knowledge. This chapter will introduce the political and intellectual milieu in which these institutions are emerging and growing. With the help of tables and maps I will present a general view of the vitality of these institutions pointing at their most salient characteristics, their main supporters, key concepts and areas of formation.

The challenges that these educational projects face are manifold. However, in my view there are two distinctly crucial issues and these are concerned with the representation of Indigenous actors and the possibilities for the recognition (and re-cognition) of Indigenous epistemologies within these universities. By representation I mean to interrogate the modalities of participation and representation that Indigenous communities and peoples via their organisations and movements have in these spaces of public policy. Are all people concerned really represented and having their voice heard in the decision-making and design processes that lead to the creation of these higher education institutions? By recognition and re-cognition I enquire about the processes whereby different forms of knowledge and learning are acknowledged, and then incorporated not only as content but as valid strategies to apprehend the complexity of the world. In the process of being integrated to higher and alternative education models these epistemologies undergo a necessary re-cognition, this is, they become known again and get transformed and re-ordered in the process. How does this happen and how far do these universities go to really engage with these epistemological “Otherness” beyond discourses of acceptance and tolerance?

These elements of the design and policy formation processes are particularly relevant since what makes these universities different from other institutes is that they allegedly place the needs and concerns of Indigenous peoples, communities and individuals at the centre of their educational programmes. In some of these universities, Indigenous knowledge is considered not just an important element of the process of social transformation but the matrix which orders, organises and gives meaning to such changes.

These projects constitute exemplars where new ideas about the nature of the nation-state and the respect for cultural diversity are being articulated, often expressed under the umbrella of "interculturality". Interculturality is often deployed as method, as attitude, and ultimately as one of the key conceptual tools by the majority of university projects. This notion has become predominant and has had an important effect in the way governments and international agencies continue dealing with Indigenous and Afro-American peoples in the region (Walsh, 2001; 2002a). A second aim of this chapter is to discuss in some detail what we can learn from this data about their approach to the construction of interculturality.

In this new battlefield of ideas, Indigenous universities (and knowledges) are often being created, negotiated, animated, and at times disputed by several social actors—including Indigenous movements and scholars, non-Indigenous intellectuals and NGOs, regional and national governments, and international agencies. In the final section I will try to highlight some general tendencies and possible ways in which we can continue to reflect, learn and engage with these projects for the achievement of the goals determined by Indigenous organisations, communities and peoples in Latin America.

Indigenous Universities and other higher education institutions interested in Indigenous knowledge have appeared in Latin America mainly during the late 1990s (Barreno, 2002; Muñoz, 2006). One of the antecedents of these institutions has definitely been the struggle of Indigenous peoples for their rights which grew in strength and scope during the 1980s. As a result of this continental mobilisation, changes in the constitutions recognizing cultural and political rights for Indigenous peoples were registered in many countries of the region throughout the 1990s (Wearne, 1996; Yashar, 1999; Stavenhagen, 2000; Van Cott, 2000a). Changes in the national law

allowed the transformation and creation of governmental institutions to address the specific needs of Indigenous populations.

One of the most important demands of Indigenous organisations has always been the rights to culturally pertinent education and to equal access for their children. The demand for "intercultural education" can itself be seen as an important element of Indigenous struggles for democratisation (Yashar, 1998). It is in this field where the notion of "interculturality" initially appeared (Mato, 2007). The introduction of the idea of an "intercultural education" was an important change in the way diversity was perceived in education, now seen rather as an opportunity than as a problem (Aikman, 1997; Moya, 1998; López and Küper, 1999). In the case of Mexico, these changes resulted in the creation of the National Coordinating Body for Intercultural and Bilingual Education (CGEIB), the institution behind one of the models of "intercultural universities".

Another clear antecedent of these institutions can be found in the long intellectual tradition of critical thinking in Latin America symbolised, among others, by Paulo Freire. An important feature of education promoted by Freire and his followers is that the culture of popular subjects and their political aspirations are important elements of the pedagogical process (see also Cadart, 2000; Kane, 2001; and Dávalos, 2002). Social analyst Raul Zibechi points out how the so-called "new social movements" of the 1990s have showed a keen interest in educating their own intellectuals. He sees this as a remarkable difference vis-à-vis class-based movements which were more concerned with the indoctrination of the "masses". Concerning the Indigenous movement he notices that:

> "The struggle for education has allowed the Indians to handle [academic] tools that were before only in the hands of the elite. This resulted in the formation of professional people from the Indigenous and popular classes, a few of whom are still culturally, socially and politically linked to the social groups they originated from. […] In this way, among the popular classes, people with new knowledge and capacities emerge to facilitate their self-organisation and self-affirmation" (Zibechi, 2003: 186).

He advances the idea that Indigenous and other Latin American movements — i.e., the Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil (Cadart, 2000) and the Mothers of the "Plaza de Mayo" in Argentina (Basile, 2002)— have been remarkably successful at the formation of "organic intellectuals" in Gramsci's sense.

As a third element in this general background we find the influence of international networks that Indigenous organisations have established both with trans-

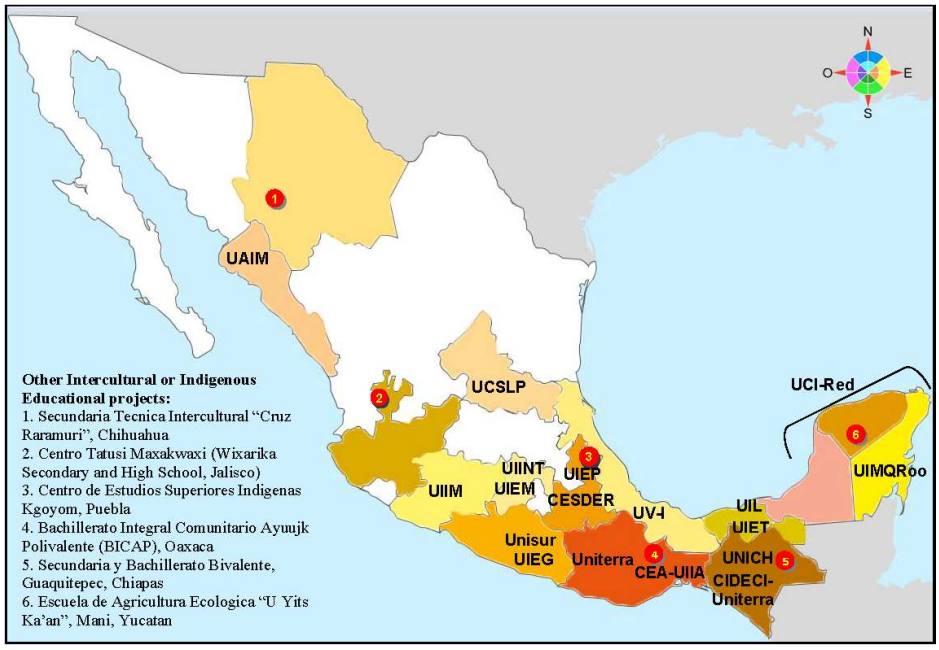
national advocacy groups (Brysk, 1996) and with other Indigenous movements in the English-speaking context (Barreno, 2002). We have here again the presence of Indigenous intellectuals that have succeeded in obtaining higher education qualifications in institutions like the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now the First Nations University), and that have then returned to their countries of origin to promote their own university initiatives.

Indigenous and Intercultural Universities have appeared with an incredible rapidity in the last five or eight years in Latin America. There are now one or more university initiatives or projects in every country with important Indigenous population in the region[2]. There is a higher concentration in Mexico and the Andean region. The following maps and tables provide a general picture of the diversity that these universities show in Latin America.

This general panoramic of the diversity and complexity of educational projects that call themselves Indigenous and/or Intercultural universities is certainly overwhelming and requires more of analysis. What I have tried to achieve here is to convey in a few pages some of the different configurations of power, knowledge and transformation embedded in these innovative projects. What we have here is a field of experimentation where different representations of what is needed in terms of compensatory policies and/or self-determination strategies for Indigenous populations are expressed. More than analysing every case in particular I will try to bring to the forefront some of the issues at stake exemplified by some of the experiences of Indigenous and/or Intercultural universities.

[2] My main source of information in following the sudden appearance of these initiatives has been so far the internet. An important aspect of this exploratory research has been however the triangulation of data obtained from the internet with academic analysis of these same reported experiences and official policy documents by the main institutions that are backing them.

Map 1. Indigenous Universities and intercultural projects in Latin America



Map 2. Intercultural and Indigenous Universities in Mexico

Table 1. General characterisation of Indigenous Universities and other Educational projects in Latin America

NAME	LOCATION	SUPPORTERS	KEY TERMS	FORMATION AREAS
UNIK – U Intercultural Indígena Originaria Kawsay	Bolivia	Indigenous organisations, NGOs, social movement	Interculturality	Indigenous rights, Intercultural pedagogy, Community government, Community eco-production,
UITK – U. Indígena Tupak Katari	Bolivia	Indigenous organisations, unions (CSUTCB)	"Intígena" (ayllu) education, interculturality	Agriculture and Livestock Engineering (Agronomists) with a Comprehensive Ecologic and Industrial View
PROEIB Andes – Programa de Educacion Intercultural Bilingue, Universidad Mayor de San Simon	Bolivia	Established universities, academias, Indigenous intellectuals	Intercultural and Bilingual Education	Intercultural and Bilingual Education
PROESI-UNEMAT (Programa de Educação Superior Indígena Intercultural – Universidades Estatal de Mato Grosso)	Brazil	Regional universities, Indigenous intellectuals	Indigenous education	Indigenous Education, with specialities in Language, Arts and Literature; Mathematics and Natural Sciences; and Social Sciences
N. Insikiran-UFR (Núcleo Insikiran de Formação Superior Indígena – Universidade Federal de Roraima)	Brazil	Regional universities, Indigenous Bilingual teachers and intellectuals	Indigenous education	Intercultural Indigenous Education
U-Mapuche	Chile	Indigenous NGO, intellectuals, foreign universities	Cultural revitalisation	Indigenous Rights, Indigenous Languages
UAII-CRIC (U. Autónoma Indígena Intercultural – Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca)	Colombia	Indigenous organisations	Interculturality, "development with identity".	Community Pedagogy, Indigenous Management and Negotiation, Indigenous Law, Community Development, Community Health, Intercultural and Ethno-Education Management
CECIDIC – ACIN (Centro de Educacion, Capacitacion e Investigacion para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – Asociacion de Cabildos Indigenas del Norte del Cauca	Colombia	Regional Indigenous organisations, Indigenous "cabildos"	Interculturality, ethno-education	Economic, Political and Cultural Research, Education and Training
UINPI-AW (U. Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas - Amawtay Wasi)	Ecuador	Indigenous movement, international NGOs, intellectuals	Interculturality, pluri-nationality, "development with identity"	Agro-Ecology Technical and Engineering, Intercultural Pedagogy, Ancestral Architecture, Intercultural Research

NAME	LOCATION	SUPPORTERS	KEY TERMS	FORMATION AREAS
UNIDAE – U. de las Nacionalidades Indigenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana	Ecuador	Indigenous organisations, international NGOs	Interculturality, environmental conservation	Amazon Development Studies (Environmental Management and Tourism, Community Health, and Business Administration, Indigenous Technology, Indigenous Philosophy)
U-Maya Popol Wuj	Guatemala	Indigenous movement, international NGOs, intellectuals	Maya education, "development with identity".	N/A
URACCAN – U. de las Regiones Autonomas de la Costa Caribe	Nicaragua	NGOs, regional intellectuals	Autonomy, "development with identity", interculturality.	Agro-forestry Engineering, Sociology with mention in Autonomy, Business Administration, Intercultural and Bilingual Education, Intercultural Communication, Traditional Medicine, HIV/AIDS Medical Treatment and Prevention in Multicultural Contexts, Local Development, Eco-Tourism
UNIAP – U. Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonía Peruana	Peru	Governmental institutions	Cultural preservation, sustainable development, professional formation	Agro-forestry and Aquaculture Engineering, Agro-Industrial Engineering, Bilingual Early Education, Bilingual Primary Education
FORMABIAP – AIDESEP (Programa de Formacion de Maestros Bilingues de la Amazonia – Asociacion Interetnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana)	Peru	Indigenous movement, bilingual teachers	Interculturality, autonomy and self-determination, sustainable development	Indigenous Education
PRATEC – Proyecto Andino de Tecnologias Campesinas	Peru	NGOs, intellectuals	Cultural regeneration.	Andean Peasant Agriculture Courses
UIV – U. Indigena de Venezuela (formerly U Indigena de Tauca)	Venezuela	Religious organisations, Indigenous organisations	Interculturality.	Community Leadership, Indigenous Law, History, Indigenous Ecology and Subsistence, Ethnology, Indigenous Languages, Indigenous Art, Sustainable Production
UII-FI (U. Indigena Intercultural – Fondo Indigena)	Latin America	International development agencies (FI), established universities, Indigenous organisations	Interculturality, "development with identity", Indigenous governance, Indigenous Spirituality and Cosmology	Intercultural Bilingual Education, Intercultural Health, Indigenous Rights, Indigenous Governance, International Cooperation, Human Rights
EIGPP – Escuela Intercultural de Gobierno y Politicas Publicas (formerly PFLICAN)	South and Central America	International development agencies (FI, WB, UN), Indigenous organisations	"Development with identity", interculturality, Indigenous governance	Indigenous Rights and Development with Identity

Table 2. General characterisation of Indigenous and Intercultural Universities, and other Educational projects in Mexico

NAME	STATE	SUPPORTERS	KEY TERMS	FORMATION AREAS
CIDECI-Unitierra (Centro Indigena de Capacitacion Integral – Universidad de la Tierra)	Chiapas	Religious activists, Indigenous organisations	Resistance, self-teaching, interculturality, radical democracy, grassroots development	Philosophy, Indigenous rights, Education, Administration, Theology, Agro-ecology, Worl-system theories
UIINT – U. Indígena Internacional	Estado de Mexico	Indigenous organisations, Indigenous spirituality groups	Self-sufficiency, Self-management, Cosmic harmony, Unity in Diversity	Spirituality and cosmology, Medicine and health, Languages and literature, Indigenous arts, Ancestral philosophy and sciences, Indigenous rights, Mother Earth sciences
Unisur – U. Intercultural de los Pueblos del Sur	Guerrero	Political parties, bilingual teachers, social movements, Indigenous organisations	Interculturality, ethical subjects, transformative learning, development needs	Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, Language and Communication for Diversity, Government and Territorial Administration
CEA-UIIA (Centro de Estudios Ayuuk, Universidad Indigena Intercultural Ayuuk)	Oaxaca	Indigenous organisations, intellectuals, NGOs, religious groups, private universities	Interculturality, community development, "comunalidad"	Sustainable Development and Management, Communication for Social Development,
Unitierra – Universidad de la Tierra	Oaxaca	"Grassroots" organisations, intellectuals	Self-teaching, post-development, grassroots autonomy, radical democracy, "gestion"	Several courses on Indigenous rights, Appropriate Technologies
CESDER (Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Sustentable)	Puebla	NGOs, intellectuals, local organisations, public and private universities	"Collective Projects of Happiness", formation of collective social actors, rural development, alternation education, "auto-gestion"	Rural Development Planning, Rural Education, Alternatives for Agriculture and Livestock Production, Rural Community Health, Promotion and Management of Small Businesses, and Human Rights and Citizenship
UCSLP – U. Comunitaria de San Luis Potosi	San Luis Potosi	State government, Indigenista institutions, established universities	Interculturality, human capital formation	Managerial informatics, Law orientated to Indigenous affairs, Regional Economic Development, Sustainable Tourism, Municipal Public Administration
UIL – U. Indígena Latinoamericana (soon to become the U Intercultural del Grijalva)	Tabasco	Political parties, social organisations, social movements	Humanism, access to education for the popular and Indigenous classes, populism	Law, Business Administration, IT Engineering

NAME	STATE	SUPPORTERS	KEY TERMS	FORMATION AREAS
UCI-Red – U. Campesina Indígena en Red	Yucatan Peninsula (Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan)	NGOs, Indigenous local organisations, research institutions	"Auto-gestion", social and moral autonomy, sustainable development, identity and dignity, alternation education	Negotiation and Management of Local Sustainable Development, Management of Local Organisations for Regional Development, Formation of Mayan Development Promoters,
Red de Universidades Interculturales				
UAIM – U. Autónoma Indígena de México	Sinaloa	State government, established universities, academics (anthropologists)	Knowledge exchange, Interculturality, competitiveness, community development, ethnic re-animation	Accountancy, Law, Community Socio-Psychology, Etno-psychology, Rural Sociology, Entrepreneurial Tourism, IT Engineering, Forestry Engineering, Sustainable Development Engineering, Quality Systems Engineering
UV-I – U. Veracruzana Intercultural	Veracruz	Established universities, federal and state governments, academics (anthropologists)	Interculturality, appropriate education, comprehensive education, intercultural development	Intercultural management for development with 5 orientations: Language, Communication, Sustainability, Rights and Health; Intercultural education
UIIM – U. Indigena Intercultural de Michoacan	Michoacán	State government, academias (sociologists), political parties, Indigenous intellectuals	Community learning needs, sustainable development, multicultural and pluri-lingual education	Sustainable development, Indigenous language, Legal pluralism and interculturality, Traditional medicine, Arts and knowledge and Environmental development
UIEM – U. Intercultural de Estado de Mexico	Estado de Mexico	Federal and state governments, academics (anthropologists)	Indigenous professionalisation, revitalisation and development of Indigenous languages and culture, interculturality	Language and Culture, Sustainable Development, Intercultural Communication
UIEG – U. Intercultural del Estado de Guerrero	Guerrero	State and federal government		Sustainable Development, Language and Culture
UIET – U. Intercultural del Estado de Tabasco	Tabasco	State and federal government	Human development, auto-gestion, Indigenous professionalisation, revitalisation and development of Indigenous languages and culture	Tourism development, Rural development, Language and Culture
UNICH –U. Intercultural de Chiapas	Chiapas	State and federal government, academics (anthropologists)	Interculturality, community development, Indigenous professionalisation	Intercultural Communication, Sustainable Development, Language and Culture, Alternative Tourism

NAME	STATE	SUPPORTERS	KEY TERMS	FORMATION AREAS
UIMQROO – U. Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo	Quintana Roo	State and federal government, established universities	Socio-economic development, Indigenous professionalisation, multilingual and intercultural education	Agro-ecological Engineering, Alternative Tourism, Language and Culture
UIEP –U. Intercultural del Estado de Puebla	Puebla	State and federal government	Interculturality, sustainability, human development, Indigenous professionalisation	Sustainable development, Language and culture
Other intercultural projects in Secondary and High School education:				
Secundaria Tecnica Intercultural "Cruz Raramuri"	Chihuahua	NGOS, academias	Interculturality, "good life", education for peace, identity, autonomy and freedom	N/A
Centro Tatusi Maxakwaxi (Wixarika Secondary and High School)	Jalisco	Indigenous communities, NGOs, religious groups, private universities	Interculturality, autonomy	Verbal Expression, Sustainable Development, Logics, Social Analysis, Production, Research
Centro de Estudios Superiores Indigenas Kgoyom	Puebla	Indigenous organisations and movements, political parties, NGOs	Appropriate education, education for work, community education, cultural reappreciation	Ethno-agriculture
Bachillerato Integral Comunitario Ayuujk Polivalente (BICAP)	Oaxaca	Indigenous communities and professionals	Comprehensive education, "comunalidad", duality	Natural Resources, Livestock and Agriculture Activities, Community Health
Secundaria y Bachillerato Bivalente, Guaquitepec	Chiapas	NGOs, Indigenous communities	Appropriate education, Indigenous education, Interculturality	Health, Ecology, Education, Human Rights, Indigenous Languages
Escuela de Agricultura Ecologica "U Yits Ka'an"	Yucatan	Religious groups, established universities, NGOs, local organisations	Sustainable development, community development, Indian theology	Eco-agricultural technologies, Spirituality of the Earth, Mayan language, Traditional Medicine, Participatory Appraisal, History, Popular Communication, Rural Development

A note should be made with regard to the presence in this of educational projects that do not identify themselves as “universities”. The rationale behind their inclusion is that they are directly or indirectly related to some of the “universities” either as platform for students to get into these further education institutions (BICAP, Guaquitepec, CESIK) or as pilot projects where intercultural educational methods are tried out before going onto the next level (i.e. BICAP and the Wixarika Centres in Mexico, CECIDIC-ACIN in Colombia). CESDER is another case in point since as an institutional project it has never claimed to be either “Indigenous”, “intercultural” or a “university”. Nevertheless, CESDER has exerted an important influence from the UCI-Red to the CEA-UII Ayuuk, Unisur, CESIK, Guaquitepec, WIC, STI-CR, and even the Intercultural Universities promoted by the State. CESDER has also been involved with the UIIA-CRIC and CECIDIC-ACIN in Colombia and with UNIDAE in Ecuador. The focus and long experience of CESDER in formal higher education for Indigenous and peasant peoples is what has allowed them to become one of the major players in the construction of intercultural educational programmes in the region (Márquez and Berlanga, 1995; Valenzuela, 2000). Another warning note should be made with regard to the inclusion of educational programmes such as FORMABIAP-AIDESEP in Peru, PROEIB-Andes in Bolivia, Núcleo Insikiran-UFRR, and PROESI-UNEMAT in Brazil. These programmes do not claim to be part of an “Indigenous university” but they are expressions of the capabilities shown by Indigenous organisations to impact on established universities that have opened up and created programmes that address the claim for an appropriate education. Finally, a note on the inclusion of PRATEC which cannot be classified as a “university” but nevertheless has links with other projects in Mexico, of a post-developmental nature like Uniterra and CIDECI-Uniterra. As such it has been included as an example of the presence of this approach to education and Indigenous knowledge in the Southern part of the region.

Actors, discourses and strategies

a) The actors.

The variety of actors involved in these projects reveals the difficulty in classifying them together under a discrete number of categories. Figure 1 attempts to map out this diversity and outline the different alliances that shape these projects.

To begin with, these include the specialised organisations of national states (i.e. CGEIB in Mexico) and international agencies (the “Indigenous Peoples Fund”) that posses the financial and institutional resources necessary to promote the creation and implementation of these programmes. In some instances these governmental bodies work in tandem or at odds with formal and informal representatives of Indigenous peoples. These can be Indigenous regional or local organisations, intellectuals (organised in NGOS) or community authorities (Chávez Alonzo, 2003; Subcomandante Marcos, 2003; Schmelkes, 2004; Dimas Huacuz, 2006). These same actors have in many cases created their own educational programmes and projects that are sometimes named “intercultural universities” but that mostly identified themselves as “Indigenous universities”. Among the most remarkable examples of these initiatives there are URACCAN in Nicaragua (Dennis and Herlihy, 2003), UINPI-AW in Ecuador (Llanes Ortiz, 2003), U-Maya in Guatemala (Tucux, 2001), UITK in Bolivia, U-Mapuche in Chile (U-Mapuche, n.d.), and CEA-UII Ayuuk (Petrich, 2004; SER-Mixe, 2004) in Mexico, among others.

Whether institutionally driven or more autonomously built, these initiatives tend to ally themselves with other social actors that contribute to the pool of resources with their methodological expertise, their own financial and institutional resources, or their political capacity to negotiate the attainment of these means. Among them we find non-Indigenous NGOs, other identity-based social movements, religious groups (notably the Catholic order of the Jesuits), or academics and intellectuals. It is not strange to find that some public and private universities have taken in their hands the creation of intercultural programmes, inspired either by their engagement with Indigenous communities and organisations (i.e. the WIC in Mexico (Corona Berkin, 2004; Hernández, 2004; Ramos, 2006), or by the diffusion of academic brands of multi- and interculturalism developed in other countries like Spain, France or Germany (notably UV-I but also to some extent UAIM, both of them in Mexico (Mateos Cortés, 2008), (UAIM, 2006).

The case of public universities and research institutions in Latin America as actors with a particular stake in these initiatives is worth noticing. In many cases these educational institutions created by the State have grown more and more autonomous in their political orientations and activities. This autonomy in their intellectual and institutional conduction has rendered them in some cases crucial allies to Indigenous

educational programmes of a more radical and anti-establishment nature. Some examples of these links between public and Indigenous universities are to be found in the experiences of CECIDIC-ACIN in Colombia (Rappaport, 2005; Collective Author, ND), UNIDAE in Ecuador, UI de Venezuela (Boccalon Acosta, 2006), Uniterra (Esteva, 2003), CIDECI-Uniterra (Paget-Clarke, 2005), CESDER, CESIK, BICAP, EAE-UYK (Macossay Vallado, et al., 2005), and UCI-Red in Mexico, among others. Given this particular trajectory they have now to be considered as actors different from the State.

We have already noted that CESDER –a local Mexican NGO that started its work in 1982 in the central Mexican state of Puebla, has played an important role in the formation of different initiatives in Latin America. Other actors that have exerted ideological inspiration as well as technical influence deserve to be highlighted here too. The Zapatista both as an organisation and as a movement have played an important role in the creation of specific projects, most importantly the Autonomous Zapatista Schools in different localities in Chiapas (Aboites, 2006). They have been taken as a reference and source of inspiration by Indigenous university projects like Uniterra, CIDECI-Uniterra, and UIL.

Another crucial actor that has been noted is the Catholic Company of Jesus, or the Jesuits. One of the factors that explain such involvement has to do with a decision taken in the 1970s by the leaders of this religious Order to make “a preferential option for the Poor”, which is an important trait of the Jesuit identity. In Mexico this is even noticeable in the involvement and support that Jesuit private universities have given to Indigenous initiatives like the CEA-UII Ayuuk, the WIC, some of CESDER projects and the UCI-Red. Another good example is the UI de Venezuela, a project that started in the Amazon town of Tauca as a programme of the Jesuit NGO Amerindian Cause Kiwxi (Boccalon Acosta, 2006; Alcalá Baillie, 2008).

It is finally necessary to stress the role of international agencies and NGOs. One of them is the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, commonly known as the “Indigenous Peoples Fund” (FI by its Spanish acronym). The Fund was created in 1992 by an agreement of governments gathered at the Second Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in Madrid, Spain. One of its most important characteristics is that Indigenous peoples have equal representation vis-à-vis governments in the governing and decision-making structures of

this multi-lateral institution (Mato, 1998). Its Directive Council is constituted by 12 members of whom 6 are designated by Indigenous regional organisations, such as CONAIE, CONIVE, ONIC, CIDOB, among others. Since its creation two prominent Indigenous representatives have presided over the FI (Luis Maldonado Ruiz, former President of CONAIE in Ecuador, and Marcos Matias Alonso, Nahua anthropologist from Mexico). Since 2004, the FI has been at the forefront of a project to create and develop a network of academic institutions specialised in areas of knowledge and research important for the Indigenous peoples' organisations and representatives. This project has come to be known as the Intercultural Indigenous University (UII-FI) and has attracted the collaboration of public and private universities (FI, 2007).

The U.S. charity Ford Foundation (FF) has played an important role too in the diffusion of the intercultural idiom, as well as their German counterparts, the Association for Adult Education and the Society for Technical Cooperation (DVV and GTZ, respectively by its German acronym). The FF has created and supported the consolidation of compensatory programmes for Indigenous students in conventional universities and at the same time has provided funds necessary for the realisation of intercultural educational experiences like the WIC and the CEA-UII Ayuuk (Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione, 2006). On its side, DVV has also supported and partnered with NGOs and Indigenous organisations to strengthen alternative educational projects like UCI-Red, CESDER and the aforementioned. It has also created spaces for the exchange of these experiences and to discuss the philosophical and methodological foundations of interculturality, i.e. Workshops of Pedagogical Mediation for the Construction of Intercultural Competencies. GTZ has played a key role in the promotion of intercultural education among the Andean countries, most importantly in Bolivia where it has provided funding and consulting advice to PROEIB-Andes and other similar projects (López, 2004)

Further analyses and ethnographies are necessary to understand exactly how the relationships that these actors establish with each other contribute to shape and re-shape the ways in which interculturality is constructed. Suffice to say for the moment that despite their diversity, some common themes and approaches can be distinguished of which I shall talk in the next section. In Figure 1, I present an image of the diverse actors and their position with regard to those universities identified as either Indigenous, or Intercultural, or Indigenous and Intercultural. Here I try to differentiate the relative

weight that these groups, institutions and identities play in the making of these projects. One can notice how the governmental institutions remain exclusively in the field of "intercultural universities" whereas Indigenous actors and movements participate in all different endeavours. The field is divided for analytical purposes in two: on the one hand there are projects that strive to create "formal" or officially recognised educational institutions, while other initiatives aim at providing educational training from an unconventional and non-formal approach. These latter examples are the majority of projects that I have identified and in Figure 1 we can see how actors with similar characteristics are to be found promoting both "formal" and non-formal educational processes. I shall come back later to discuss the complexity of strategies followed by specific projects.

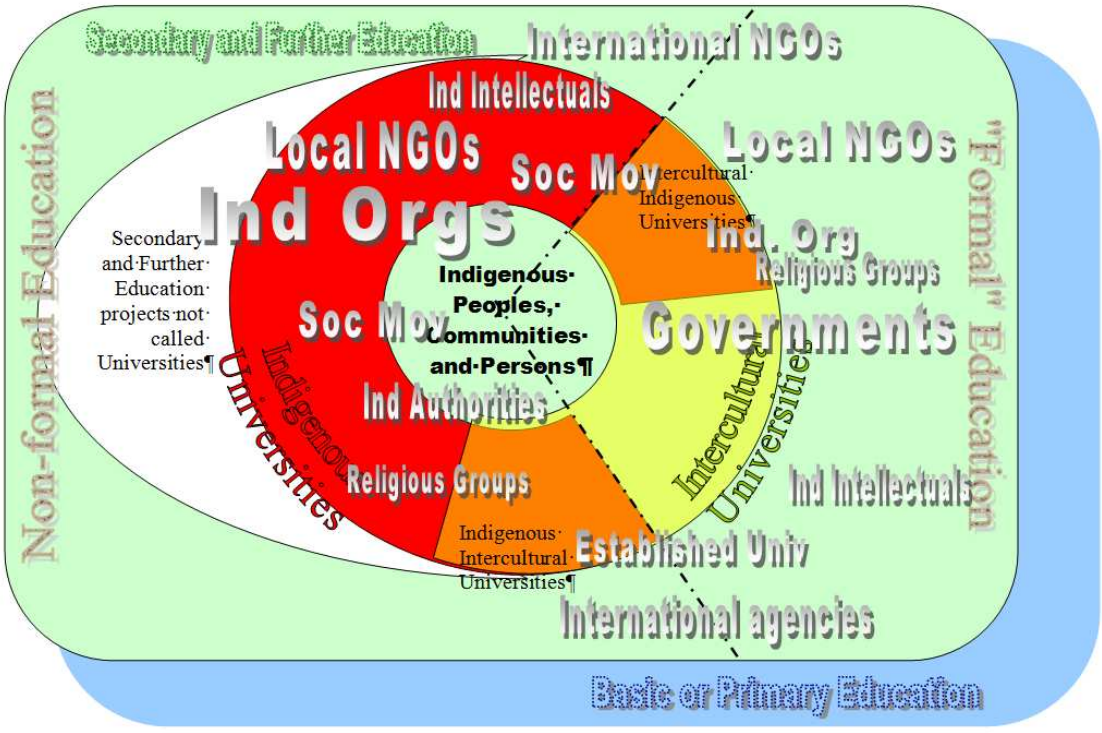


Figure 1. Educational projects constructed around Indigenous needs and demands

b) The discourses

There are significant differences in the way these projects describe themselves, their raison d'être and their objectives in relation to Indigenous peoples, communities and persons. The discourses used by them are relevant for our analysis for they speak not

only about the different approaches followed but of the political projects embedded in their practice, too.

In the case of most of the governmental institutions, like CGEIB in Mexico, the common terminology deployed in their policy documents touches mostly on issues of appropriateness and compensatory measures to guarantee the access of Indigenous individuals to higher education institutions (Casillas Muñoz and Santini Villar, 2006; Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione, 2006; Muñoz, 2006). The diagnosis from which they depart consists in the realisation that Indigenous students rarely get into university and that when they do these institutions suppress the cultural identity of such individuals. On the other hand, it has been observed that the Indigenous knowledge and language have been never considered important as areas of development by "classic" universities. Access is also thought to be encouraged by the fact that these universities are created in areas that are mainly Indigenous. By means of all these different operations the "university" is "brought closer" to the Indigenous peoples.

One distinctive element in the discourse of the promoters of these type of "universities" is that they prefer to talk of "intercultural" rather than "indigenous" universities, for they see "indigenous" as a term that is exclusive and that has been used in the past to separate Indigenous peoples from the rest of the population (Herrera Beltrán, 2003; Casillas Muñoz and Santini Villar, 2006). This is a direct reference and criticism to previous "Indigenous" schools that aimed at the assimilation of these peoples (Dietz, 1999b; López and Küper, 1999). Specifically in Mexico, "Indigenous" education is often seen as a lower form of education that is directed only to those hetero-identified as Indigenous.

Yet the decision to not identify themselves as "Indigenous" exempts these projects from the obligation to be accountable to any formal representation of the Indigenous communities or peoples except for those they choose to engage with. The need to be "intercultural" thus becomes a sound justification not to engage in "politics". This is coupled with the emphasis of providing a "quality" education that is not to be permeated by interests of political factions or groups (Herrera Beltrán, 2003; Llanes Ortiz, 2008). After all, the innovative educational institutions that constitute the Network of Intercultural Universities (REDUI) in Mexico have been created by either one (federal or state) governmental office or by a previously established university, like

the University of Occident in Sinaloa or the University of Veracruz (that are behind UAIM and UV-I, respectively).

An additional element in the discourse of these universities is "the formation of professional Indigenous leaders" that are expected to play an important role in the transformation of the life conditions of their communities. The idea of "quality" education again goes in tandem with the "professionalisation" of individuals in these educational institutions. An extreme version of this emphasis is the description of the UC of San Luis Potosi as an institution for the "formation of human capital". In general, this terminology reinforces the idea that a "university" should concentrate in making the Indigenous knowledge available to future generations by means of schooling[3]. This marks a second divide between the "Indigenous" and/or "intercultural" universities as we will see later.

In high contrast with these "formal" universities, other projects present themselves as a means to increase the capabilities of Indigenous peoples, communities and individuals to "resist" (Unitierra, CIDECI-Unitierra), to strengthen "communality" (CEA-UAII Ayuuk, BICAP), to increase 'self-sufficiency" (UI Internacional), to recreate "collective projects of happiness" or "good life" (CESDER, UCI-Red), to recover "Intigena" education (an education rooted in the values of the children of Inti, the sun in Aymara and Quechua languages, UITK), to promote "development with identity" (UAII-CRIC, UINPI-AW, U-Maya), to assert the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous peoples (URACCAN, Unisur, UIL, FORMABIAP-AIDESEP), or to guarantee the respect and recognition of Indigenous rights (UII-FI).

In the majority of these projects, the adjectives "intercultural" and "Indigenous" go hand in hand. These are projects that sometimes seem to have incorporated the "intercultural" buzzword in a strategic bid to rally support from potential allies and institutions. They present themselves, however, essentially as "Indigenous" projects. This claim is considered to be legitimised by the explicit support and involvement of a regional or national Indigenous organisation. Even if there is no mention of the necessity of "quality" education in these institutions, a demand for educational

[3] This tendency to consider only those institutions that have set up "formal" education programmes has reduced the scope of many analyses on this matter (see Barreno, 2002, Munoz, 2006, Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione, 2006). In my view, more than a divide between formal and non-formal education what in fact needs to be taken into consideration is whether these initiatives have formal recognition by the educational authorities of the State or not. This recognition is generally achieved via other allied and formalized universities.

programmes that are appropriate and pertinent for the interests of Indigenous organisations and communities is constantly expressed (Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione, 2006; Muñoz, 2006).

The idea of "development with identity" (DWI) is of particular relevance as an example of how different the elaboration of discourses has been from an Indigenous perspective. This notion has appeared in the world of international agencies working with the criticisms of Indigenous movements and intellectuals in the South American region; particularly around the challenges presented to the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank by Indigenous organisations of the Amazon and Andean region (Deruyttere, 2001; Maldonado, 2004). Although it is continuously reworked and revised one can loosely define DWI as a form of development that is based on the uttermost importance of the community, different forms of exchange and the extra-economic elements surrounding it –such as reciprocity, non-accumulative logics, collective work, ritualisation (*la fiesta*) –, and the political mobilisation of the Indigenous communities and their forms of authority and representation (Maldonado, 2004).

DWI can be seen as a policy reworking or variation of the principles present in other university experiences, such as autonomy, resistance, grassroots development, and the like. It has become part of the language and strategies of international financial institutions (IDB, WB) and governments (CDI in Mexico) which carries with it the risk of normalisation within neo-liberal development approaches (Radcliffe 2005). By contrast, other discourse elements retain a stronger anti-establishment flavour that distinguishes them, in particular the notion of *autonomy* which is associated with the Zapatista and the so-called *altermundista* movement. Whereas the idea of autonomy per-se is not one that necessarily excludes relations or dealings with the instated powers, it has tended to be interpreted like that given the particular conditions of political negotiation and struggle of some Indigenous organisations and the State. The discourse of strengthening autonomy is mostly present in Mexico, and can be traced for example, from Uniterra to BICAP and to a lesser extent to CEA-UII Ayuuk, or from CIDECI-Uniterra to UCI-Red and to a lesser extent to CESDER. Other universities with similar inspirations are Unisur and UIL in Mexico. In a related manner, in the southernmost regions some Indigenous organisations still insist in a "development of their own" that

has not been yet translated into DWI. Among them we can find CECIDIC-ACIN, UAII-CRIC, UITK and U-Mapuche.

c) Educational strategies and modalities

Among the different examples that we have reviewed so far the most evident divide is between those that focus on the construction of "formal" universities and those that insist in following non-formal approaches to education (as I explained before this differentiation is represented in Figure 1). There are however other elements that qualify this first appreciation.

On the one hand, the most "formal" initiatives such as those of the Mexican "intercultural universities" contain features that intend to make the academic structure more flexible than other conventional universities, such as the inclusion of a levelling stage for students with unequal levels of instruction, the figure of academic tutorship, and the option of a halfway exit for students who cannot conclude their careers for any reason (Casillas Muñoz and Santini Villar, 2006; Schmelkes, 2008). Something that CGEIB officers have stressed about this model is that the student performance would be measured differently in these universities, acknowledging the deficiencies in academic training that many Indigenous youth have and that are explainable by the historical marginalisation of their communities (Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione, 2006). It is said that an important component of this model will be its close relationship with the community although it is not clear how this comes into realisation given the lack of clarity of the links between these universities and Indigenous authorities or organisations[4].

On the other hand, even some of the non-formal educational projects seek formal support and validation from conventional established universities, like CIDECI-Uniterra (Paget-Clarke, 2005). This does not mean however that more emphasis is placed in the schooling of students in these projects. In fact, what characterises and differentiates these from the "intercultural" and other type of universities is a more hands-on approach to knowledge and education. Generally this means academic

[4] In a recent document the former CGEIB director recognizes that the petition to create these universities came from the regional governments and that Indigenous organizations did not participate in all the cases in the design of the academic structure. It does not say in which cases they did participate. When referring to the links with the community, the reference is always vague and expressed as being with the "real and moral authorities of the region" (Schmelkes 2008).

reflection on the practices conducted in autonomic or ethno-development enterprises, such as alternative forms of production, Indigenous rights promotion, advocacy work, grassroots economy, Indian theology and so on.

The differentiation between "formal" and non-formal education is therefore not an easy one since the mere idea of an Indigenous and intercultural university calls into question any presupposition about the organisation and construction of knowledge. Among the innovations that some projects have strived to consolidate we can distinguish the experiences in "alternation education" followed by several projects, notably CESDER and UCI-Red in Mexico, and the complex grassroots inter-learning model advanced by UINPI-AW in Ecuador. The first approach consists in the alternation of periods of academic formation with the application of this knowledge in more practical endeavours related to the work of individuals in organisations. It was developed as a way to strengthen the social, ethical and political capabilities of local agents of development departing from "collective projects of happiness" or "good life". These consist on the view –constructed by participatory means– of the desired future based on the aspirations of Indigenous and peasant men and women. It draws also from the learning communities approach and tries to articulate the efforts and experiences of diverse local organisations with the knowledge produced by academics and other professionals (Berlanga, 2000; Llanes Ortiz, 2005).

The vision of UINPI-AW can be characterised as an attempt to "indiscipline" the university. Its design places the Indigenous rationality at the centre and builds up the educational model accordingly by structuring their methods and goals in function of community undertakings. Learning processes respond to questions and principles that relate to Indigenous concepts like *Kawsay* (Life), *Munay* (Love), *Yachay* (Knowledge, Epistemology), *Ruray* (Capacity to Make, to Build), *Ushay* (Power, Energy) and *Runa* (individual and collective person). The fields of knowledge are combined to respond to a specific situation or challenge such as the development of techno-sciences for Life, or the construction of an intercultural society (Llanes Ortiz, 2003). To some extent this latter experience resembles other attempts by Indigenous groups to build their educational models based on the values that are important to them like music or spirituality (like the original design for the CEA-UAII Ayuuk (SER-Mixe, 2004) or the U-Maya (Tucux, 2001).

In both cases, these projects have had to negotiate their formal validation by the established educational authorities, either by associating with other universities or by taking up to mobilizing politically and negotiating the official backing of the educational proposal. This has sometimes forced them to keep their innovations under some form of institutional restrain. Other interesting educational modalities contemplate an Indigenous Travelling Professorship (*Catedra Indígena Itinerante*) that visits and links different learning groups across the region (UII-FI), or the use of novel technologies for distance learning like video-conferencing (EIGPP) (FI, 2007).

Very little has been said about the processes of negotiation or policy-making that take place when building or creating these universities. One can still identify two major strategies among the different experiences under study. On the one hand, we have a combination of "expert knowledge" on the situation and state of Indigenous culture combined with the input of educational designers and teachers that use the information and opinion generated by those experts to create learning models. Indigenous communities and individuals are considered and incorporated but only at specific stages of the design processes and merely to confirm ideas that have already been modelled (via sampling and short-term consultation exercises). An example of this type of policy making strategy is to be found in CGEIB positioning papers (see in particular, Casillas Muñoz and Santini Villar, 2006: 134-144).

A different set of practices consists of long processes of consultation and common construction of educational models where social actors from different (Indigenous, non-Indigenous, academic, practitioner) backgrounds engage in prolonged dialogues and diagnostic exercises with community groups and authorities, regional organisations of different nature in order to define those areas in which ancient and new knowledge are more necessary (examples of this can be found in Llanes Ortiz, 2003; Rappaport, 2003).

Although the consequences of taking one or the other path are still to be witnessed and measured, what we can already identify is that there is a stronger sense of legitimacy and innovation in projects that have followed a long term strategy of negotiation and common construction than in the "expert knowledge" oriented approach.

Reflections, questions and challenges

The emergence of Indigenous and Intercultural Universities in Latin America shows an impressive wealth of innovative approaches and tendencies that deserve a close study which given the lack of space I cannot undertake in this work. I have tried however to show how the most consolidated initiatives are trying to contribute to the recognition of cultural diversity and the advancement of Indigenous ways of life. Despite their relative novelty, we can already identify some important achievements among the many that are still to be documented:

- Increasing re-appreciation by young Indigenous people of the languages and cultural values, knowledges and practices of their communities (Bolpress, 2008; Schmelkes, 2008)
- Consolidation of fields of Indigenous knowledge and expertise such as Indigenous governance and leadership, Indigenous rights, intercultural education, intercultural health, among others (Hooker Blandford, 2004; FI, 2007).
- Development of new areas of knowledge such as intercultural architecture, intercultural research, community pedagogy and Indigenous management, among others (Bolaños, 2004; UINPI-AW, 2008b).
- Dissemination of Indigenous expertise in the defence of Indigenous rights and the advancement of a Latin American Indigenous agenda, notably with schemes like the Travelling Professorship (*Catedra Itinerante*) (FI, 2007; Bolpress, 2008).
- Empowerment of Indigenous organisations through the emergence of new leaderships encouraged by processes of mutual learning from other experiences in the region, like the Network of Indigenous Universities of Abya Yala (UINPI-AW, 2008a) or the very UII-FI.

As I hope to have showed in this general view of Intercultural and Indigenous Universities, what all these projects have in common can be said to be:

a) An interest in generating appropriate and pertinent educational programmes oriented to meet the learning needs of Indigenous individuals and/or their communities and organisations.

b) A desire to advance intercultural dialogue and interculturality not only as methods and concepts that apply to education but to society as a whole too.

c) A vision that puts Indigenous culture and knowledge at the centre of educational processes and development initiatives, and that is expressed in notions of DWI, cultural regeneration, or ethno-development.

It is in the ways in which these university projects try to build on these ideals that they take divergent paths. It seems to me that their differences have mainly to do with the aspects of political agency, epistemological emphasis and ideological positions.

By *political agency* I refer here to the issue of who are the privileged actors and participants in the design and construction of university projects. Here there is a remarkable difference between initiatives that are inclined to privilege an idea or construction of Indigenous subjects as individuals (young people with deficient instruction and little access to higher education institutions) and those that have based their educational models on an idea of the Indigenous subject as a collective entity or on ideas of "communality". In this tendency, the main actors tend to be Indigenous organisations and community authorities. And even if some forms of expertise are called on for help, the main interests that are considered are those expressed by the formal representations built by Indigenous communities via their recognised authorities and organisations.

By *epistemological emphasis* I point to the uses of Indigenous knowledges and values as either "contents" or "matrix" for the educational programmes. Indigenous knowledge in development has long been used to increase the effectiveness of interventions and policies in the world and in Latin America in particular. This incorporation has been made however sometimes at the expense of fixing "Indigenous knowledge" as a system, as an object, or as a thing that can be passed from one subject to next regardless of the forms in which it is produced. This approach is better defined by the aspirations to 'systematise" Indigenous knowledges, languages and cultural practices. Yet, as many anthropologists of development have noted, Indigenous knowledges tend to be dynamic, unstructured and based on social practices and interactions, and cannot be contained or represented in a different setting without their losing their original nature and strength (Sillitoe, 1998; Pottier, 2003). This has been problematised by some of these universities that have defined learning spaces and practices based on the perceived values of Indigenous cultures and knowledges, like the community voluntary work, the assembly, the festivals, among others. In contrast and

prompted by the values of "quality" and "professionalisation", other university initiatives follow on a more conventional view of schooled instruction and education.

Finally, by *ideological positions* here I talk about the power relations that are expressed in an open or hidden agenda within these initiatives. Thus we have on the one hand, projects that are conceived as interventions to "bring university education closer" to Indigenous populations in order to solve the problems of marginalisation and poverty. This positioning can be characterised essentially as neo-Indigenista since it leaves aside the core demands of Indigenous organisations and movements that are more concerned with political and economic change (Dietz, 1999c; Hernandez, et al., 2004; Llanes Ortiz, 2008). Other projects pursue an agenda founded on the political and economic transformation of the relationships not only between Indigenous peoples and the State but between other subaltern groups and the instated powers. In these examples, Indigenous demands and ideologies such as autonomy, self-determination, communality, reciprocity and spirituality are located on a higher ground than in those of neo-Indigenista inclinations. Complex forms of structuring educational processes are advanced and the breaking up of disciplinary divisions are attempted and imagined as reflections of the holistic nature of Indigenous culture and life experiences.

These differences in the way of approaching intercultural dialogues and encounters in these particular experiences are represented in Figure 2.

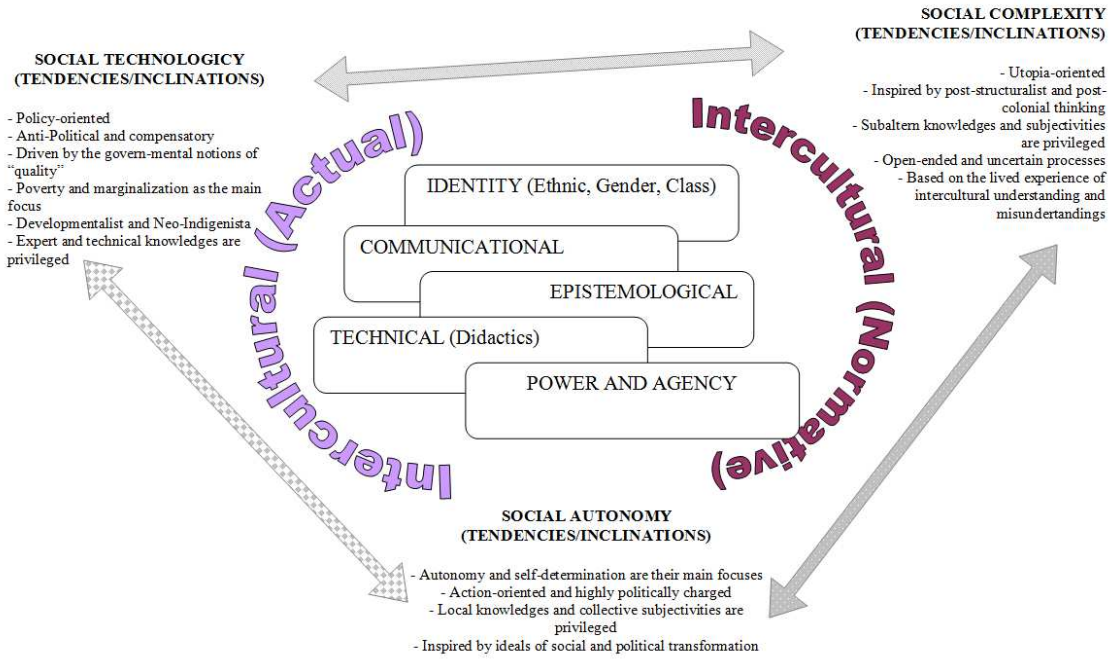


Figure 2. Approaches and dimensions in the construction of interculturality

Far for presenting a dichotomy what I intend to show here is that there are different ways to approximate the challenge of interculturality. They represent however recognizable tendencies or inclinations that are not mutually exclusive. Even within more institutionalised or neo-Indigenista projects we can still identify some elements corresponding to the other tendencies. There are important differences too in the way that Indigenous organisations and collectives approach the construction of these forms of interculturality, either with a strategist, action-oriented view, or from a more complex and open-ended processes of decolonisation. Interculturality is thus defined differently whether this is done by an Indigenous organisation like CRIC ("to start from our own knowledge in order to integrate other knowledges", Rappaport, 2003: 262) or by governmental officers like those from CGEIB in Mexico ("the relationship between cultures from positions of equality" (Schmelkes, 2004). What Figure 2 also tries to advance is a model to understand these constructions of interculturality as they come into place not only amidst these different and contradictory tendencies but in the tension between actual and normative intercultural encounters, what French scholar Jacques Demorgon (2003) calls *l'intercultural factuel* and *l'interculturel volontariste*. In my view, what most scholars of intercultural education are still concentrated on is either the communicational (contents and languages for the interaction across cultures) or the technical (techniques and methods to learn from each culture) dimensions leaving aside important elements of identity, episteme, power and agency that are interrelated and that affect the intended consequences of these encounters.

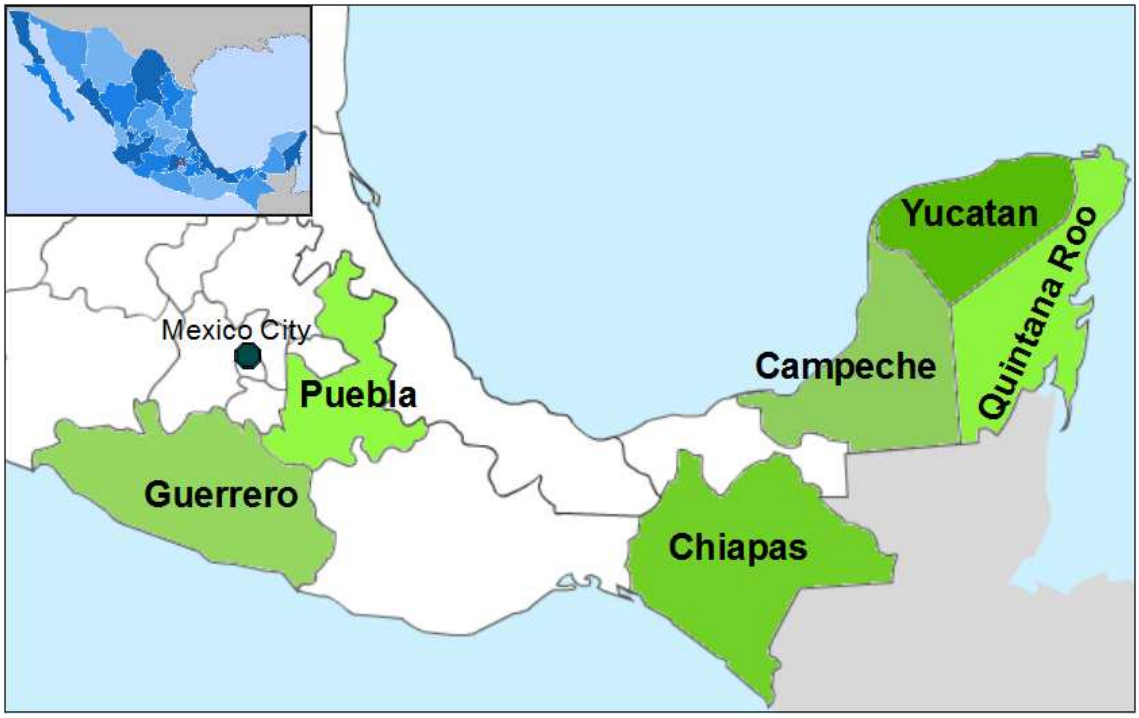
CHAPTER 4. NEGOTIATING INTERCULTURALITY AND EDUCATION: THE INTELLECTUAL TRAJECTORIES OF UCI-RED

In the previous chapter, I have tried to characterise how different educational initiatives in Latin America understand and represent the challenges concerned with the idea of intercultural dialogue. In this section I will start unravelling the specific trajectories and discourses that shape my case study. The main point I will try to make in this chapter is that interculturality as an aspiring state or principle is in itself something that is constantly negotiated and constructed, not only among different social agents in the public space, but within specific projects, too. In my case study, interculturality has emerged as a central tenet of the educational discourses and practices in part as a result of many years of work in the promotion of development. In this sense, it has surfaced alongside other equally important notions, or principles for action, and in indirect competition with them, as I hope I will be able to show. In this case, interculturality has come to be seen at times as one criterion among many others, like sustainable and endogenous development, gender equality, children rights, among others. While NGOs and other social actors involved in this experience have embraced "interculturality" as a new challenge and opportunity, they appear to have difficulties to translate this principle into practice. This can be explained by simply looking at the multiple and sometimes opposite ideas they have about crucial concepts, like "culture" or "ethnic identity". This diversity in the way of understanding and dealing with cultural aspects of their development work has given way to a continuous process of knowledge construction and negotiation. In what follows I present a general description of the different trajectories and views on intercultural dialogue that the people and organisations involved in this Indigenous university have. Later, I will interrogate the ways in which these ideas are translated into educational practices, and whether these represent a contribution or a limitation for actual intercultural dialogue. In this presentation I will enquire whether the difficulties of translating intercultural principles into practice can be also related to the practical organisation of educational encounters and the power relations that are reproduced by an uncritical performance of "dialogue".

UCI-Red in the Peninsula of Yucatan: General context

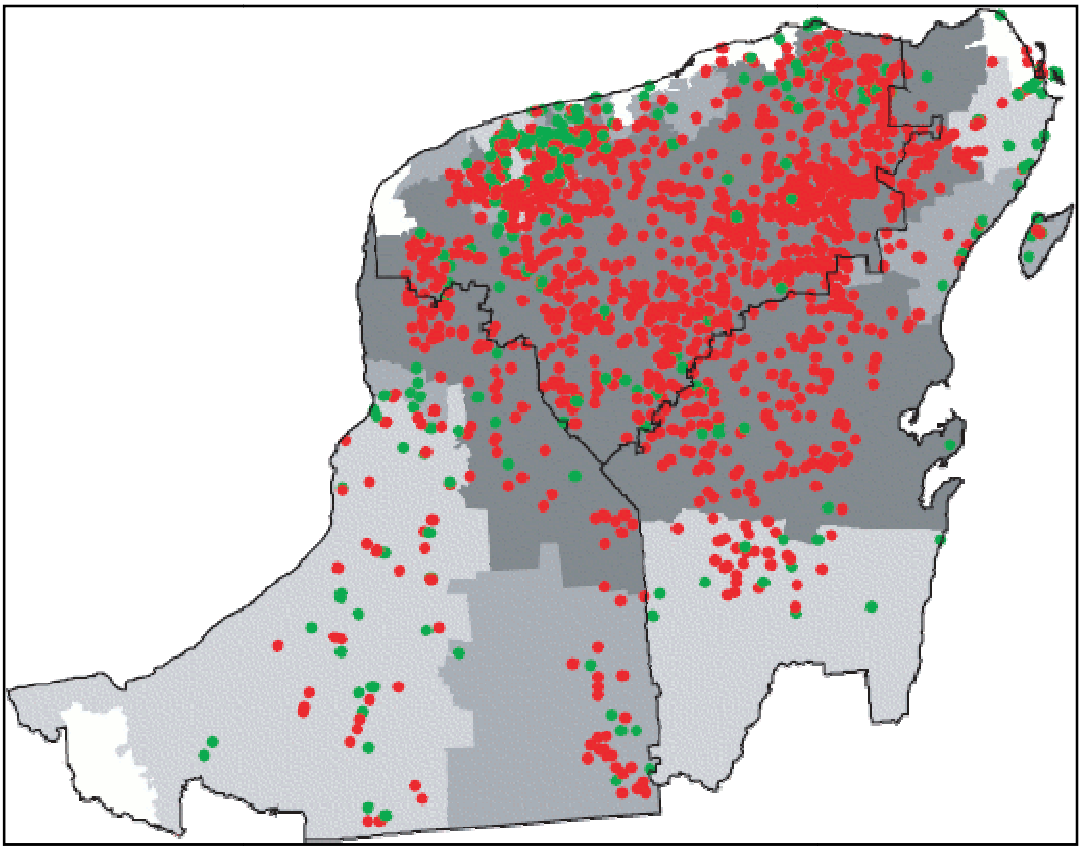
The Peasant and Indigenous University Network is the name of a joint educational project promoted by several local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other social organisations and educational institutions in different regions of Mexico since 1999. It is generally known by its acronym **UCI-Red** which stands for the Spanish "*Universidad Campesina Indígena en Red*" and from now on it is how I shall refer to the project.

The NGOs involved in UCI-Red are similarly but separately engaged in different development projects in collaboration with, either, small or large organised groups of peasant and Indigenous peoples in the Mexican states of Puebla, Guerrero, Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan. The location of these states in relation to the country is shown in Map 3. UCI-Red in Mexico. My analysis will be however focused only on the processes developed in the region known as the Peninsula of Yucatan. This encompasses the federal states of Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo. The peninsular region has been constructed by different historical and geopolitical processes as a peculiar part of Mexico, often imagined as "a world apart" (Moseley and Terry, 1980) – this is, as a region with a strong regional culture, which is considered notably different to that of the rest of the country.



Map 3. UCI-Red in Mexico

A defining characteristic of the Peninsula of Yucatan is the presence of an important Indigenous population, formed mainly by Yucatec Mayan peasants living in small rural towns and villages. In the case of the Yucatan state, the Mayan population amounts to almost 60% of the total population. The number of Mayan people in the other two states is smaller: nearly 35% in Campeche and 40% in Quintana Roo (CDI and PNUD, 2006: 139). However, their geographical proximity and population density in some micro-regions of the Peninsula make their presence and cultural dynamics a very important component of the regional life.



Map 4. Geographical distribution of Yucatec Mayan communities in the Peninsula of Yucatan (CDI, and PNUD, 2006)

Definitions of "indigeneity" in the region are varied and highly complex (on the different interpretations of the structure and history of ethnicity in the Yucatan, see Gabbert, 2001; Castañeda, 2004; Kray, 2005; Loewe, 2007). On the one hand, many rural towns and villages in the Peninsula share distinctive cultural traits that make them different to the rest of the regional society. The main defining feature of these communities is the dominant presence and use of the Yucatec Mayan language, or *maaya t'aan*. Map 4 shows the distribution in the region of towns and villages where

Yucatec Maya is the predominant language (red dots) and those where Yucatec Maya speakers represent between 40 and 70% of the total number of inhabitants (green dots). People's perception about their own ethnic identity is however far from being simplistically defined by their language. The Yucatec Maya speakers in the Peninsula lack clearly defined political or social institutions. Many of these communities differ from each other on issues like traditional forms of governance, social organisations and institutions. Furthermore, even within those considered as "indisputably" Mayan communities there are important differences regarding political or religious affiliation, economic activity and level of Spanish-Maya bilingualism. Predominantly Yucatec Maya-speaking towns and villages are generally conceived and talked about as if they were part of one *people* (in the nationalist or ethnic sense), something that is strongly and continuously debated by Mexican and foreign anthropologists (notably, Hervik, 1999; Bartolomé, 2001; Krotz, 2005).

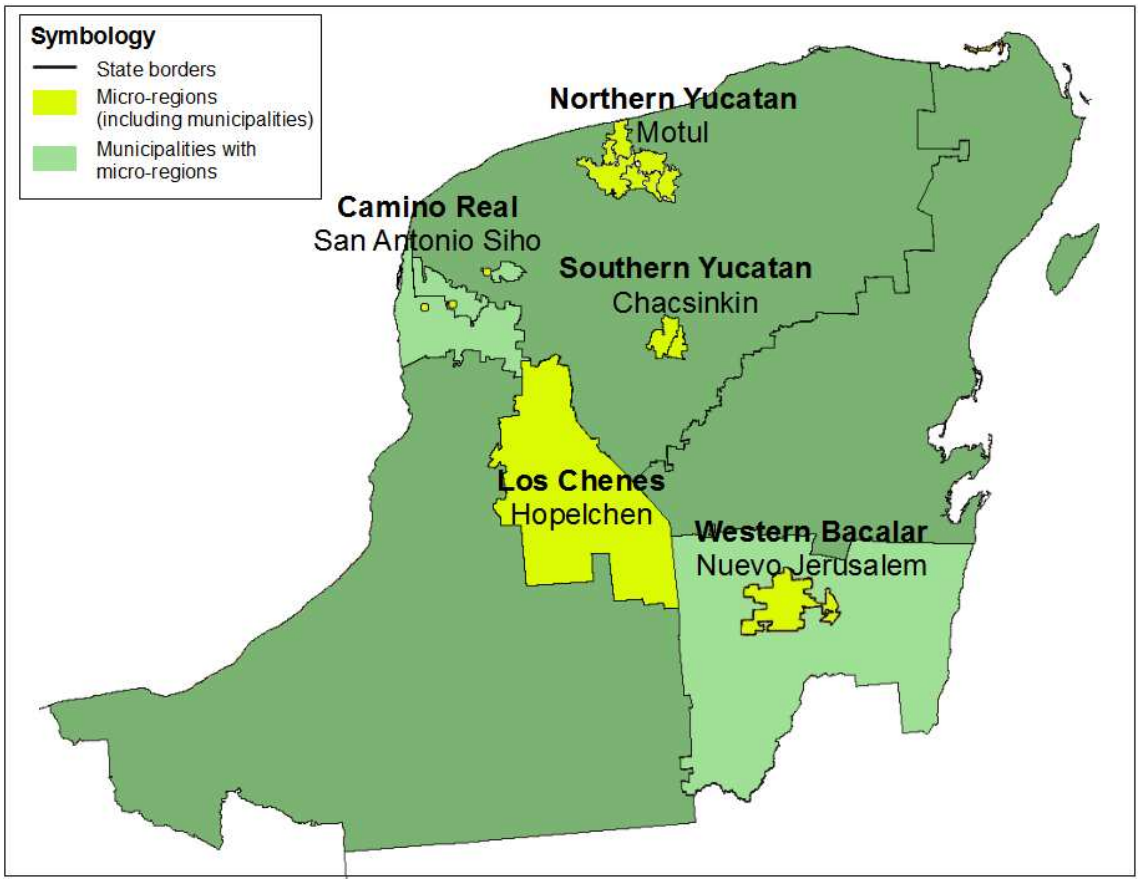
Peninsular UCI-Red: main actors

The main social actors behind the UCI-Red in the Peninsula of Yucatan are fundamentally the non-governmental organisations Missionaries A.C. (MAC), Education, Culture and Ecology A.C. (EDUCE); and Research and Self-Managed Popular Education A.C. (IEPAAC)[5]. MAC is the youngest NGO of them all and is a Liberation Theology-inspired group that has based its work in the southern corner of the Yucatan state. MAC's educational and training centre is found in the municipality of Chacsinkin (see Map 5). It was formally constituted in 1994, and has been mainly devoted to Inculturation theology (of which I will talk about later), organic agriculture, cooperative promotion, and raising political and Indigenous rights awareness. Its members are predominantly Yucatec Non-Maya speaking university professionals. Initially among them were several anthropologists and a priest.

EDUCE is a regional organisation with work teams in Los Chenes micro-region in the state of Campeche and the Western Bacalar micro-region in Quintana Roo. The

[5] NGOs in Mexico often legalize and formalize their constitution as Asociaciones Civiles, or A.C. (Civil Associations). This is the legal figure that they must assume if they want to bid for public funding and to receive donations from private entities or international agencies. This figure is equivalent to the Non-for-profit status of many NGOs in the English-speaking world. The suffix AC is sometimes attached to the acronym of the organization –like in MAC and IEPAAC, but this is not the rule for in other cases they decide not to include it –like EDUCE.

first region corresponds with the municipality of Hopelchen, whereas the latter consists of a number of marginalized *ejidos* located in the municipality of Othon P. Blanco (again see Map 5). EDUCE's founding members were professional lay people supporting the development work of the Jesuit Company among Guatemalan refugees. Their presence in the region began during the late 1980s. They separated from the Jesuits and started working with Yucatec Maya-speaking communities after formally registering their NGO in 1992. EDUCE's activities revolve mainly around honey production and beekeeping, agro-forestry initiatives, and small production of marmalades and preserves. Its members are also concerned with the promotion of local organisations, gender equality, women rights, cultural animation with groups of young people, community video, among others. EDUCE members are mainly from outside the region, Mexican Mestizo university professional men and women. Among them were economists, pedagogues, engineers and mostly agronomists.



Map 5. Location of UCI-Red micro-regions in the Peninsula of Yucatan

IEPAAC is the oldest among these NGOs and it was inspired by Freire's Popular Education and the Participatory Action-Research approach. It was formally

constituted in 1989 with the participation of popular theatre's artists and independent researchers, among them some anthropologists, mainly from Yucatan. IEPAAC work is based in specific Yucatec Maya-speaking communities in municipalities located in the micro-region known as *Camino Real*, or Royal Road (again see Map 5). Its main educational centre is found in the town of San Antonio Sihó. In these communities their promotional work revolves around popular and community education, children and youth rights, organisational training, alternative forms of production, and cultural animation. Their experience however is well acknowledged in the state and the region and they have extended the frame of their development activities by providing consultancy work to other NGOs, governmental institutions and international agencies such as UNICEF. Their areas of expertise in this latter capacity are organisational development, strategic planning and popular communication.

In recent years, these three NGOs were joined in the UCI-Red project by a fourth one, Foundation for the Human Development of Yucatan, A.C. (FUNDEHY). They were invited by IEPAAC due to some network activities they were undertaking together in the promotion of children and youth rights in the North Centre region of Yucatan (see Map 5). FUNDEHY started as a sustainable development project set up by a group of researchers from UADY, the regional state university. They decided to form an independent organisation and founded an NGO in 1999. Among the activities they promote in nearly 7 municipalities in the micro-region are backyard production improvement groups, cooperative saving systems, youth rights, handcraft production groups, literacy groups, reproductive health campaigns, community radio, and cultural animation, among others. This NGO is formed by local young people, some of them with university and pre-university degrees like social work and accountancy.

This group of four organisations has become known internally and externally as the Peninsular Group, or simply *el Colectivo* (The Group). It is this collective entity that I will be referring to when talking about the UCI-Red project, despite this being a larger project involving other organisations.

Other Indigenous and Mayan education projects in the region

The UCI-Red is one among many other projects in the region attempting to incorporate the "Mayan culture" into educational projects in relation to specific development views. It also forms part of a context where discussions about interculturality and

multiculturalism are starting to gain ground within policy-making and academic institutions. Among these different and competing discourses and practices of interculturality the UCI-Red stands out because of the complexity of its educational model, the diverse set of problems it addresses and the long experience that the promoting NGOs have in dealing with issues like popular education, alternative economy, environmentally friendly productive activities, participatory development, human rights, cultural promotion, and sustainable development, among others.

Figure 3 shows some of the other projects that have created spaces where Indigenous knowledge comes to be part of educational programmes. Among them, we find the School of Ecologic Agriculture of Mani, also known as *U Yits Ka'an* (Celestial Dew), founded in 1995. *U Yits Ka'an* is a project initiated by Yucatec Catholic priests who are followers of a variant of Liberation Theology known as Theology of Earth. They follow the idea that the knowledge of Mayan peasants can be combined and improved with the learning of ecological techniques. Some UCI-Red promoters, tutors and participants have been involved at certain points with *U Yits Ka'an*, either because they participated in a workshop, went for some training or worked as a trainer there. There have been however important personality clashes between the main promoters of the two initiatives that have prevented a bigger collaboration and communication between them.

Another project of interest is the School of High Mayan Culture, promoted and financed by the regional office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the main town where IEPAAC's work is based, San Antonio Sihó. This school was structured around a series of lectures given by archaeologists, anthropologists and historians about Classic and colonial Mayan history. This knowledge was called "High Mayan Culture" because local participants in this project came to acknowledge that their own contemporary knowledge of the religion, arts and science of the "Mayan civilisation" was imperfect and incomplete, therefore a lower form of Mayan culture. Although IEPAAC initially supported the school and allowed it to work in the Community Centre they co-managed with other local organisations in Sihó, they did not get involved in the educational methodology. The pedagogical dynamics was based on talks given by university lecturers to the bilingual inhabitants of San Antonio Sihó and surrounding villages. After some months, the school's activities came to a halt as a result of strong disagreements between university and local people for reasons that I

have not been able to clarify. Participants in the project that later became the basis for UCI-Red (PPDP, of which we will talk later in more detail) were involved in this education scheme.

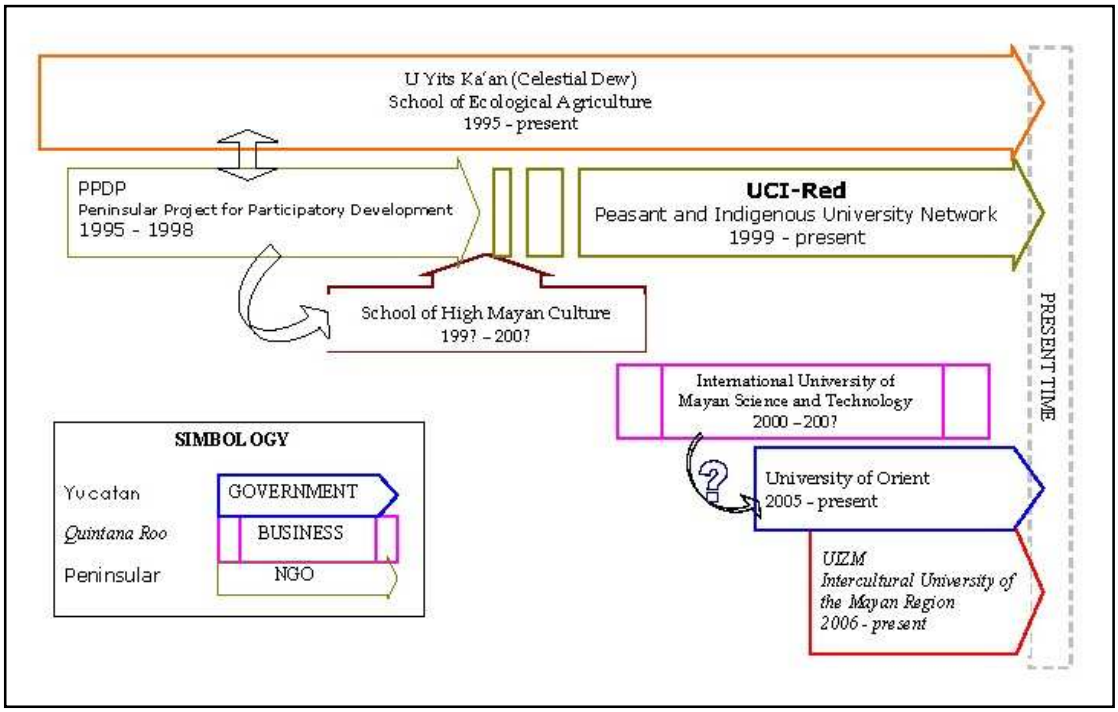


Figure 3. UCI-Red genealogy and regional context

The other three projects in the region with an interest in Indigenous knowledge were one private education initiative and two public universities. The first one had the pompous name of "International University of Mayan Science and Technology" and was financed and promoted by one controversial Yucatecan businessman whose family has for many years claimed ownership of the archaeological site of Chichen Itza. He was an elderly man whose idea of promoting Mayan culture was, on the one hand, to teach traditional medicine and naturopathy, and on the other hand, dressmaking and hairdressing to Yucatec Mayan women. The project lasted six years approximately (between 2002 and 2006) and ended when its founder died. The other two universities were created by the state governments of Yucatan and Quintana Roo. The University of Orient was originally planned as a higher education institution that would only offer professional training in business management, gastronomy and tourism in a marginalized and poor region. Its creation sparked an interesting and intense negotiation between CGEIB and the state government to make it "intercultural" according to the federal agency's design (on this, see Llanes Ortiz, 2008). This forced the university planners to include the career of Mayan Culture and Language which has become an

interesting education project within an otherwise conventional university. The Intercultural University of the Mayan Region was indeed created by a more fruitful negotiation between the government of Quintana Roo, CGEIB and local university authorities. These two universities have more or less conventional approaches to education except that the latter claims to have a closer relation to Mayan communities although it is unclear from reading its documents what the mechanism for this engagement might be.

UCI-Red promoters have been and are aware of the presence of these institutions. They have however taken a detached position in relation to them, particularly with regard to government universities. There have only been circumstantial contacts and exchanges with individuals involved in these other projects. They have been seen as parallel efforts but their methods or experiences have had little impact in the way UCI-Red conceives its own mission and work.

Participatory appraisal and complex designs

The UCI-Red in Yucatan can be seen as a continuation of the collaborative training processes that the three main organisations started in the mid-1990s (again see Figure 3). Their first collective project was called the Peninsular Participatory Development Project (PPDP) which was under way between 1995 and 1998 approximately. Two research institutions participated in this project too, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the Autonomous University of Yucatan (UADY). The PPDP's main objective was to train local people in the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques and community development planning. The idea was that they would later apply these techniques in their own towns and villages. It involved around 40 local men and women, known to the project as "community promoters", from 20 predominantly Yucatec Maya-speaking towns in the same five micro-regions where UCI-Red is now working (again see Map 5). The resulting community appraisals were to be integrated into micro-regional development plans which idealistically would be funded by national and international agencies (for more on this project see Moya García and Way, 2003). This final product never came to realisation for different reasons.

The importance of PPDP however resides, on the one hand, in that many of the "promoters" trained in this process later participated and were even incorporated as facilitators, tutors and counsellors of the UCI-Red's own educational programmes. On the other hand, this project registered the first attempts by these three NGOs to address the issue of interculturality. Here there is an important difference in relation to what other researchers have said about the incorporation of "interculturality" as a key concept of educational projects. Whereas other projects came to adopt the concept inspired by Anglo-Saxon multiculturalist theories and policies (see Dietz and Mendoza, 2008), the organisations involved with the UCI-Red came to understand the need of "interculturalizing" their practices inspired by the ethical principles of PAR (Ander-Egg, 1980; Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991), popular education (Freire, 2000; Kane, 2001) and Indian theology (Suess, et al., 1998; Garrard-Burnett, 2004; Norget, 2007).

This incipient "interculturalization" was expressed by serious yet discontinuous efforts to interpret into the local language, Yucatec Maya, the most common terms in the development world such as "planning", "appraisal", "project", etc.. The interpretation of concepts has become one of the main strategies conceived by NGO members as part of their intercultural methodology, as will be later described. Participatory development approaches developed outside the Latin American tradition of PAR (i.e., Chambers, et al., 1989) started to be incorporated to the work of these NGOs later during this project. The new techniques coming from "participatory rural appraisal" (PRA) were seen as reinforcing this interest in local forms of knowledge and graphic representation (Rosales, n.d.).

With this previous collaboration in the background these NGOs sought to continue sharing methodologies and combining financial and human resources for the training of local agents for development (Rosales and Zarco, 2004). It was then that the three NGOs started contacts with members of the Centre of Studies for Rural Development/Social Development and Promotion (CESDER/PRODESC).

The educational work of CESDER-PRODESC had started in 1982 in the central Mexican state of Puebla (see Map 3). They began as a group of professional people working in the mountainous Zautla region as external advisers of the local tele-secondary schools (Márquez and Nava, 1995; Berlanga, 2000). With time their scope extended and integrated diverse projects of formal education, community education, teacher advisory work and research towards the strengthening of educational systems.

The main objective of CESDER-PRODESC was to build appropriate and quality educational programmes in the perspective of development initiatives (CESDER-PRODESC, 1998).

Their experience in this field helped them to "validate" educational models for technical secondary education, rural pre-university schools, rural professional training and finally university programmes. Among the degrees they have been able to develop to this day we find Rural Education, Alternatives for Agricultural and Livestock Production, Rural Community Health, Promotion and Management of Small Businesses, and Human Rights and Citizenship. Each of these degrees have been planned and designed bearing in mind the context and situations of literate, rural young people of Indigenous descent.

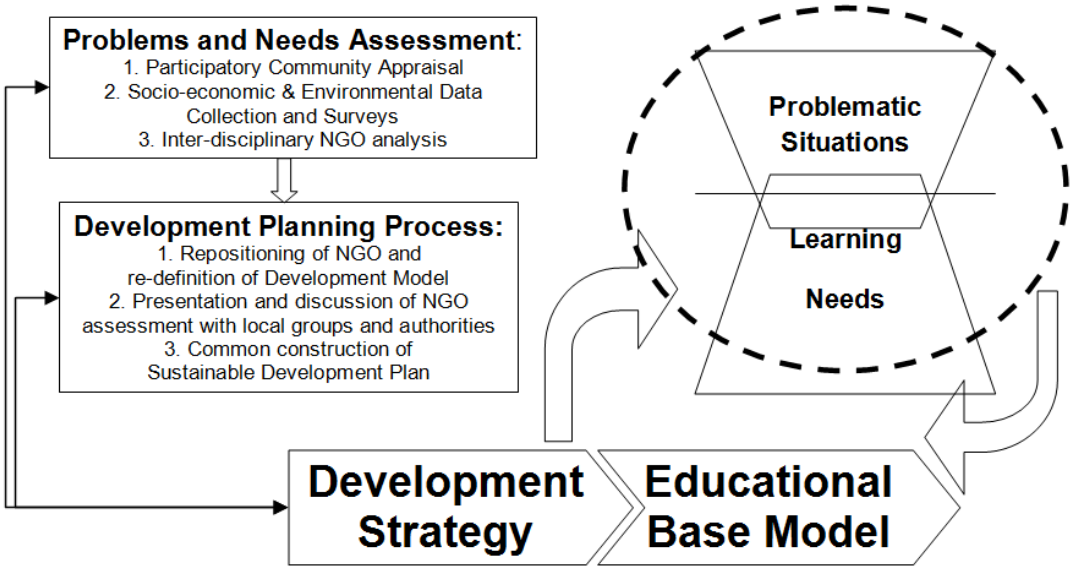


Figure 4. Methodology for the construction of an educational base model

However, the methodology for the construction of educational projects has developed into a model that is considered applicable to any region of the world. It departs from the idea that an appropriate educational model must respond to the problematic situations found in a particular community and/or region. Consequently the first step in developing a particular educational programme is the diagnosis of the critical problems that a certain population faces in a certain area. This is done in a complex way by looking at the problematic situations in their mutual interrelation. With this input the educational team must then interpret and translate the problems into educational needs and themes which will then be the raw material for the design of

particular programmes and modalities (Figure 4 and Table 3 provide a simplified image of the methodology).

Table 3. Curriculum development methodology

CURRICULUM DESIGN		
DEFINITION OF BASE MODEL Elements: 1. Characterisation of problematic situations. 2. Identification of *learning needs* and definition of necessary capabilities for development. 3. Definition of the type of education necessary.	**CURRICULUM DESIGN** Elements: 1. Characterisation of the social subjects 2. Definition of the educational modality. 3. Definition of student profile. Definition of thematic universe. 4. Curriculum structure. 5. Integration of studies plan. Definition of student profile at the end of educational process.	**PROPOSAL FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT** Elements: 1. Learning experiences. 2. Pedagogic mediations. 3. Mediating resources. 4. System for the follow-up and assessment.

The development of this rather complex methodology entailed regular meetings where the three NGOs presented their progress on the required tasks and discussed their main interests and definitions. During this same period, CESDER/PRODES members were advising other NGOs and grassroots organisations in different regions of Mexico and Latin America, i.e. Guerrero, Chiapas and Chihuahua in the former, and Colombia in the latter. It was out of this that the creation of the Peasant and Indigenous University Network (UCI-Red) was decided. CESDER and the three NGOs integrated in what has become known as “the Peninsular Group” or *el Colectivo* and started to promote the creation of the UCI-Red with other NGOs like the Mexican *Patronato* Pro-Education in Chiapas, and the Promoters of Sustainable Social Development (PRODESS) in Guerrero (again, see Map 3). All the joint work and discussions lasted between 1999 and 2001. By the end of the process in the Peninsula of Yucatan, the creation of an educational joint model for the three NGOs had contributed even more to shape the identity of *el Colectivo*.

Convergent trajectories and methodologies

The reconstruction of the intellectual trajectories of these NGOs and their particular ideas of "culture" and "identity" help us understand and explain directly or indirectly their models of intercultural interaction and educational strategies. In the process of configuration of a common ground for the UCI-Red project there has been however important dynamics of displacement and substitution of analysis categories and ideological principles that are represented in Figure 5. This characterises the history of the UCI-Red as one of continuous and successive re-positioning moments. "Re-positioning" is a term that UCI-Red promoters, at least, in the Peninsula of Yucatan like to use and feel comfortable with.

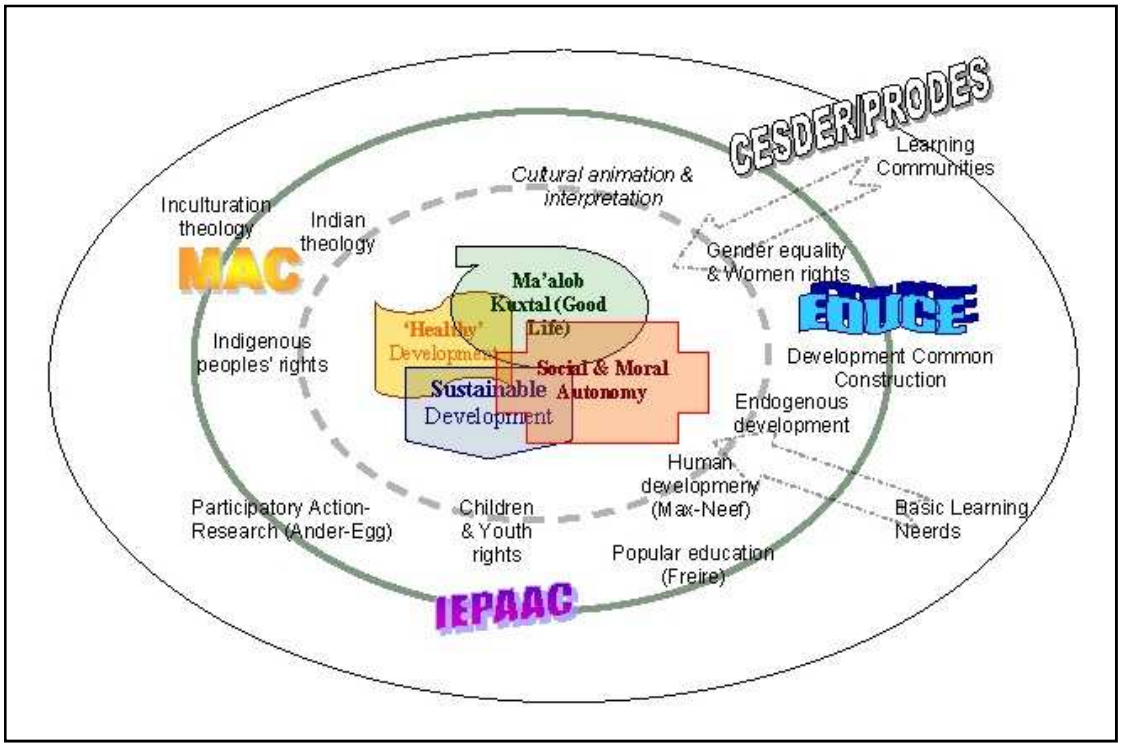


Figure 5. UCI-Red as a knowledge production community

In this image, it is possible to recognize the main theoretical and methodological orientations that UCI-Red promoting organisations have pursued since the beginning of their development work in the region. Because of its religious inspiration MAC characterises its work as concerned with Indigenous peoples' rights, Inculturation and Indian theology.

Inculturation is a term borrowed from educational theories and anthropology but used for the first time – within the context of Catholic theology – in the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council in 1967. In this document it was established that the "seeds

of the Word", as in the message of Christian salvation, could and had to be identified in every cultural tradition in the world, in order to initiate a newer, more perfect evangelisation. Such "seeds" are the traditions, the beliefs and the values to be found in cultures of those peoples and regions that have not properly known the "Lord's message". This includes peoples that were supposed to have been "evangelised" like the Latin American Indigenous communities. Therefore, one of the main tasks of the new evangeliser is to identify those cultural features and values that embed the same teachings and values present in the Christian Gospel. By doing so, what is expected is that these new converts would be able to maintain their cultural identity, their traditional beliefs and practices, and at the same time to incorporate the Christian "message of salvation" in their lives. Although seen in other contexts like Guatemala (Garrard-Burnett, 2004) and Oaxaca (Norget, 2007) as spaces for the formation of communities of resistance and liberation, this trend can also be interpreted as a new effort to assimilate other religious and spiritual practices to Christianity, and resembles attitudes and views that can be found among ethnocentric philosophers and theologians of the 17th and 18th centuries (Asad, 2002).

Now we turn to IEPAAC. This is an organisation that since the very beginning organised its work around the principles of "participatory action research" (PAR), and popular education. Their founding members started as a troupe looking to create awareness among street and abused children in the meanest streets of Merida, the capital of Yucatan. They became the regional experts in techniques of popular communication and cultural animation. Because their development work started with children, when they decided to move out of the city and into the countryside they continued with this same strategy. They were effective in creating new social organisations among bilingual Mayan peasants. Their methodology prescribed an equal relationship with the "popular subjects", and to include their views into the plans for participatory research. In this sense they were very successful in modelling the type of leader that would care for the community and be accountable to their groups. With time, IEPAAC started to incorporate some elements of the Human Scale Development (HSD) approach, developed by the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef (Max-Neef, 1991). The HSD is defined as "focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and on the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and technology, of global processes with local

activity, of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy, and of civil society with the state" (Max-Neef, et al., 1989: 12). Two interesting topics emerge from this definition. One is the idea of fundamental human needs, which are thought as a list of universally valid categories like subsistence, affection, participation, creation, identity and freedom among others. These would be uniquely combined in every society with existential conditions like being, having, doing and interacting. The combination of these ideas made IEPAAC members start questioning some of the previously held views about the needs of Mayan peasant groups.

The other concept that is equally interesting is the idea of self-reliance, or *autogestión* in Spanish, a concept that is at the core of the organisational identity of IEPAAC since it features in its name. Among the independent, anti-party politics Left in Latin America, the idea of self-reliance was an inspiring ideal to work for as long as this capacity coincided with the formation of a non-capitalist space. It can be also correlated to the same sources of inspiration that made Dependency Theory so popular in the region during the 1970s and 1980s (on this, see Grosfoguel, 2000).

EDUCE followed an approach developed within the organisation itself and that was based on the idea of "common construction" of development projects. In part inspired by the aforementioned theoretical viewpoints, "common construction" was said to be a process entailing constant efforts of consulting and dialoguing with the rural subjects in a way that would erase hierarchies and give way to a common space where the points of view of each actor implicated in development could have a stake. Controversies were to be solved by those arguments that were defended with the soundest reasons. Little consideration was given to the fact that different societies could have different ideas about what reason counts for. Another principle on which EDUCE made their work rest was the idea of "endogenous development" which was borrowed from COMPAS, an international organisation based in the Netherlands. For this organisation, endogenous development is that which is based on the people's own idea of what development means. It is underpinned by the conviction that people should rely mostly on their local resources but not exclusively on them. The notion encourages participatory development and with time has contributed to establish a network of national and local experts working on the development of a general methodology for endogenous development in different parts of the world like Bolivia, India, Ghana,

Tanzania, Sri Lanka and Guatemala, among others (see COMPAS, 2009, for an overview of their work).

It is easy to see how all these different theories and trajectories could converge first in the PPDP and then in the UCI-Red project. However, it is also worth noticing that the final synthesis around a definition of the desired development has been left aside. The reason for this is that many original NGO members, who were the most enthusiastic about theorizing and discussing these approaches, have left their organisations, or have become so embroiled in everyday work that they have somehow abandoned this task. That is why, at the centre of Figure 5, we have not a single term or ideal of development but several. *Ma'alob Kuxtal* an expression in Yucatec Maya that can be translated as "good life" is the idea that EDUCE mostly uses as a key concept and slogan. "Sustainable development" is what IEPAAC employs as an "ideoscape" that allows it to work and interact with many other organisations in the region and the country. "Healthy development" and "social and moral autonomy" are forms of expression for ideals that have not been completely discarded but that cannot be confidently deployed either.

The arrival of CESDER to the region was certainly an opportunity for the consolidation of this community of knowledge production. However, after the relatively successful experience of PPDP and the first educational programme promoted under the UCI-Red banner, it seems that this community is in the process of becoming more a symbolic point of reference than a true interactive space to share and learn from each other experiences. In the next section I will explore the main characteristics of the Diplomas and training programmes that have taken place under the concept of UCI-Red.

Characteristics of the UCI-Red's Educational Model and Cycles

In this section I will present and discuss the general framework for the Diplomas that UCI-Red in the Peninsula has implemented between 1999 and 2005. The definitions and concepts used by those Diplomas have been extracted from internal documents of the different organisations and the master dissertation of one of the main academic figures within the project (Zarco, 2003).

UCI-Red's educational model in the Peninsula of Yucatan consists of six thematic fields, also known as *campos de dominio básico* (which can be translated as "fields of basic knowledge command"). These fields of knowledge were defined by the NGOs in *el Colectivo* and they could vary from project to project depending on the particular ideas of development that the specific teams from these NGOs may have. This has already happened as we will see later. According to the methodology, these fields represent sets of capacities which need to be developed in order to meet the problems and necessities of a specific population in a particular region (the previous steps of the model are highlighted in Figure 4). One of these fields has to be chosen as the "organizing axis" for any given educational programme or modality. The fields or areas decided by the NGO members of UCI-Red were:

1) Cultural Identity and Dignity
2) Equality and Conviviality
3) Community and Family Welfare
4) Environmental and Productive Sustainability
5) Citizenship and Empowerment
6) Development of the Person.

Another interesting aspect of the UCI-Red model is the "education in alternation" approach it follows. This consists in the alternation of theoretical work with community tasks. The latter were thought, on the one hand, to be related to the responsibilities of the participants as promoters, or group leaders. On the other hand, the tasks were conceived as investigations or practices about what the participants had learned in the classroom sessions. In this way, the learning processes were intended as the combination of research and reflection about the everyday reality of peasant actors.

In order to understand how both the design of the educational programmes, and the integration of the community of knowledge production have developed in the short history of UCI-Red I will talk about two main "cycles" of implementation of the educational model.

a) First cycle of UCI-Red education projects

The first educational project that *el Colectivo* carried out with this model was called "Diploma on Management of Sustainable Local Development" (DGDLS). This is often referred to, among UCI-Red promoters, as the *Common Diploma*. It had the field of basic knowledge of Citizenship and Empowerment as its organizing axis. This meant that the most important objectives in terms of learning and training were related to the

definition of this field. The Citizen and Empowerment field contained those abilities considered necessary by NGO members of the UCI-Red for team work, consensus building, democratic participation, personal and social autonomy, critical analysis, policy making, and project management, among other crucial aspects of organisational life.

Accordingly, the Diploma was subdivided into seven educational modules which were denominated as follows:

1. Harmony in Human Development
2. Indigenous Autonomy and Interculturality
3. Formation of Opinion and Analysis of Reality
4. Social Participation (Citizenship) and Grassroots Democracy
5. Comprehensiveness of Rights or, the "New Sensibility and Equality"
6. Organisational Strengthening
7. Endogenous Planning of Sustainable Development.

All of these "*modules*" were arranged in such a way that in each one there was a problem to be "academically" solved. This was called *problema objeto de transformación* which can be translated as "transformation problem-object". The format of pedagogical interaction generally followed a spatial organisation similar to that of a classroom. The dynamics would sometimes be more open, resembling those of participatory workshops. The three NGOs invited different experts to "facilitate" at least one educational session per module, just asking them to comply with certain rules of method, such as to develop participatory techniques, and to use simple language in the sessions.

This first cycle of educational processes started on May of 2002 and ended on June of 2003. It was carried out in three different seats in equal number of micro-regions. These were: Los Chenes in Campeche, Western Bacalar in Quintana Roo, and the so-called *Camino Real* in Yucatan (see Map 5). In this last seat, some participants from the South of Yucatan's micro-region joined the Diploma. Almost 50 persons constantly participated in the three micro-regions with a very low rate of withdrawal. Most of them were men, and they had long participated in promotion and organisation tasks either with one of the NGOs or with their own community group.

b) Second cycle of UCI-Red education projects

This cycle of educational programmes was much more diverse and complex than the first. We can actually talk of three different processes, each with their own curricula and

objectives (see Table 4). All of them were again called Diplomas, although on paper some of the processes were conceived more as "basic training". The common feature is that the three Diplomas were based on the same UCI-Red's educational model. They had however different fields of basic knowledge as their "organizing axes": two had the field of Cultural Identity and Dignity, and one kept the Citizenship and Empowerment. The field of Cultural Identity and Dignity considered the following capacities to develop: historical memory, positive valorisation of local culture, reappropriation of native language, better understanding of cultural symbols, and intercultural dialogue, among many others.

One of the main unspoken reasons for this diversity of educational programmes, aside from micro-regional and organisational particularities, was the emergence of differences that led to certain resentment between the NGOs within *el Colectivo*. This bitterness was the result of administrative differences, lack of coordination, and personal issues which resulted in absences, delays and distancing. All these problems were not spoken about within the common meetings of *el Colectivo* but they were widely "conversed" and used as an explanation for many things that the original plan did not accomplish.

Although we are talking here of three different education programmes, two of them shared the same definition of their main educational goal. Thus the objective of both the Basic Program and Basic Formation (see Table 4) was said to be: "To train community *promoters* with (comprehensive, *mystical*, political and technical) knowledge/wisdom[6] and capabilities to promote local and micro-regional development from the perspective of (endogenous and sustainable) *Indigenous development*" (my emphasis). On the other hand, the scope of the one actually named Diploma (again, see Table 4) was set to promote: "That the participants increase their capabilities for the analysis and the management of *social organisations* in order to achieve ―along with other social actors and subjects from their communities and region― greater impact in the construction of models of well-being and being-good[7] from an endogenous and sustainable development perspective".

[6] The Spanish original expression reads *capacidades sapienciales* which refers to a type of knowledge that is actually based on wisdom, i.e. things that people know by means that are not necessarily intellectual but based on myth and rituals, knowledge of the supernatural or simply knowledge of the symbols of nature.

[7] In the original text in Spanish a difference is made between *bienestar* and *bien-ser* that is difficult to translate in English. *Bienestar* is commonly translated as both "welfare" and "well-being" yet in Spanish

Table 4. Summary of UCI-Red Diplomas (2nd Cycle)

Name of the process	**Micro-region and Municipalities**	**Responsible Organisations**	**Duration**
Basic Programme for the Formation of Mayan Community Promoters	**South** of Yucatan (Chacsinkin, Tixmeuac, Oxkutzcab, Tahdziu)	**MAC** and K-Ét Xíimbal S.C.	**1st. Stage:** Jul 2003 – Jul 2004 **2nd. Stage:** Aug 2004 – Dec 2004
Basic Formation of Mayan Promoters	**Centre - North** of Yucatan (Cansahcab, Teya, Motul, Sinanche, Tepakan, Suma de H.)	**FUNDEHY**, IEPAAC and Red Social	August 2004 – February 2005
Diploma in *Gestión* of Social Organisations for Regional Development	**Los Chenes** (Hopelchén, Campeche) **Western Bacalar** (Othon P. Blanco, Quintana Roo)	**EDUCE**	August 2004 – March/April 2005

Here we can notice an important if subtle difference between these objectives that shows a constant tension around visions of interculturality and development within the UCI-Red (something on which we will explore more deeply in the next chapter). Whereas one objective includes elements rarely mentioned by other development organisations such as mysticism and wisdom, the other relies on the belief that analysis skills are the main key to improve the organisational capabilities of people participating in the project. It seems that differences in the strategies followed for the revaluation of IK became more apparent once specific programmes started to be pursued based on the particular interests of the NGOs and their allies. Again, we will explore these differences in more detail later in this work.

There is another difference to be found in the type of subject defined as the aim of these educational programmes. One objective stresses the individual (the "promoters") whereas the other talks of "social organisations" as the actor to be promoted and trained. Finally, even if they both include references to "endogenous and sustainable development" only the first objective states that this "development" should be "Indigenous" in character. The main objective of stressing these divergences is to

---

and particularly among NGO philosophers and ideologues *bienestar* has come to be seen as a conventional ideal merely concerned with improvement of the material conditions of living. "Bien-estar" or "to exist in well conditions" is thus paired with "bien-ser" or "to be well or good as a person". Given how extensive such a translation needed to be I have been forced to experiment a little bit with the English language.

show the problematic negotiation of meanings and emphases at the core of the UCI-Red which I consider to be an explanation for the lack of concerted action and focus on key issues like the construction of interculturality itself.

For a clearer picture of these similarities and differences, Table 4 presents the three different educational processes of the second cycle in a comparative perspective. The table contains the names of the municipalities where local participants came from and that can be identified in Map 5. It should be noticed that whereas FUNDEHY's Diploma involves a greater number of municipalities, these cover a smaller territory than EDUCE's Diploma in Los Chenes. MAC's Diploma started before any other and it was divided in two stages. EDUCE's Diplomas started at the same time but finished on different months because of logistical and financial difficulties.

Table 5. Thematic maps of UCI-Red Diplomas (2nd Cycle)

	MAC's Diploma	**FUNDHEY's Diploma**	**EDUCE's Diploma**
THEMATICS	Module 0. Introductory Module 1. Mayan Health and Nutrition Module 2. Mayan *History* and View of the World Module 3. *Intercultural Dialogue* Module 4. *Organisation* Module 5. *Human Development* Module 6. Three Themes of Specialisation: Agro-ecology, Basic Administration and Human Rights	Module 1. *History*, culture and *intercultural dialogue* Module 2. *Human Development* Module 3. *Organisation* Module 4. Three Themes of Specialisation: Basic principles of agro-ecology, administration y productive projects	Module 1. Indigenous autonomy and *interculturality* Module 2. Peasantry socio-economic systems Module 3. *Human Development* and Team Work Module 4. *Organisational Strengthening* Module 5. Promotion and commercialisation
ORGANIZED IN	Common themes: 28 workshops Specialisation: 27 workshops	22 sessions	29 UTE (*Unidades de Trabajo Educativo*/Educational Work Units)

To give again an idea of the diversity of topics or areas of knowledge that were addressed during the *four* different programmes of this second cycle, I refer you to Table 5. Clearly, aside from petty formal differences, all three programmes had similar areas of training that I have noticed in italics. Be warned that although Table 4 only shows three programmes, these developed into four different educational processes, since EDUCE's Diploma happened in two regions.

c) The mechanisms of education in alternation

Typically, all of these Diplomas consisted of thematic modules organised in two to four periodic "workshops" or 'sessions" each. These sessions generally happened in the NGO headquarters or in a community centre built by the NGO and the associated Indigenous organisations. In tandem with their alternation education's orientation, the modules of these programmes were defined as 's*emi-presenciales*", or partially classroom-based. This meant that it was not necessary for the participants to stay inside a school or to be engaged full-time in the workshops. The sessions were planned to occur every other weekend but rarely happened like that. In one of the Diplomas, the planning established that modules were to be organised by alternating periods of both 16 hours of classroom-based sessions and 8 hours of practical tasks per month.

There were two basic pedagogical relationships considered in these Diplomas. In the next chapter we will analyse some of these in more detail. As I mentioned before, external academics, researchers and specialists were invited to collaborate with the project by providing the theoretical content of the modules during classroom-based sessions. Many of these "experts" were themselves members of other NGOs, or they were sympathisers of the project working in universities or research centres in the region. They were generally known as the academic "facilitators".

The other relevant pedagogical relationship was the accompaniment of local participants by "tutors". The principle of this role was the idea that a personal, face-to-face relationship would supply the right support to clear any doubts or learning problems the participants may express during the processes. Tutors in this fashion ought to help the participants in the solving of research and practice tasks while contributing to increase their self-confidence. Although this pedagogical relationship received much attention and support from UCI-Red organisers, these relations were not especially relevant for local participants. The ones that I interviewed could barely remember the names of their assigned tutors, nor even the activities that they undertook in their "tutorial sessions". Although potentially rich in educational terms, it seems that the figure of "tutor" is imagined differently among Yucatec Mayan peasants as we will see in Chapter 7.

In this chapter I wanted to present a very general description of UCI-Red as a project promoted by different social actors in a very particular region of Mexico. I hope to have shown how innovative and progressive this initiative is. And this is not only on

account of the theories of development and methods to encourage participation that are at the core of the work of these different social actors coming together in the Peninsular *Colectivo*. The educational initiative is progressive as well because it attempts to break with the discriminatory and marginalizing treatment that Mayan people, their language and their social forms of organisation have suffered in the context of the Mexican history. One thing that can be noticed right away is that UCI-Red has tried to make the most out of the experience of highly skilled development workers in the first 6 years of life of the initiative. However, the level of complexity of the education model and the absence of a space where the convergent views on popular development and respectful cultural encounters could be discussed and agreed on has probably caused a growing distancing between some members of *el Colectivo*. This shows the fragility of these "communities of knowledge production".

It should be noticed however that in this description of UCI-Red educational programmes Indigenous concerns and interculturality feature in some modules but they do not appear to be part of all the themes or even practices developed by this education project. Interculturality and Indigenous knowledge only appear as either titles and rarely as contents, while most of the educational units are more concerned with development objectives, such as human development, citizenship, organisation, administration, production, and commercialisation. This image of UCI-Red does not reveal how interculturality and Indigenous knowledge were thought to be integrated into the pedagogical practice. For that we have to examine the notions of "culture" and "identity", and the way in which these concepts were thought to be integrated into the educational sessions. It seems however worth noticing that at this point "interculturality" and various "development" topics seem in constant tension and negotiation. In the next chapter, I will show how these two notions were not considered entirely separated by NGO actors for they saw most of their current methods and practices to be embedding some form of interculturality in essence. But when examining closer some of the educational interactions developed during the two cycles of educational programmes I will ask some further questions about this supposed intercultural character.

CHAPTER 5. INTERCULTURALITY IN UCI-RED'S THEORY AND PRACTICE

As it has been said, sometimes the main focus of education programmes within UCI-Red seems to be sustainable and participatory development, rather than interculturality properly. However, it must be acknowledged that the most difficult challenge faced by the organisers of UCI-Red always was how to incorporate the local knowledge into the design and practices of the educational process. Most of the NGO actors were very experienced in conducting training sessions and some even in using forms of inter-lingual interpretation for the purposes of development projects. Many of their experiences were framed by the spirit and objectives of the old PPDP project but they were at this point striving for something newer and more ambitious. During the planning sessions of the programme continuous debate was held on the reasons and the criteria to judge what kind of local knowledge was going to be considered as valuable for these objectives. The disagreements had to do fundamentally with similar yet fundamentally different and confused notions of "culture", "identity", and "interculturality" that most of the NGOs have sustained in their development practice. In this chapter, I will review some of these debates among and within UCI-Red NGO members and then will look at how this is reflected in the actual didactics of different Diplomas and training programmes.

"Culture" and "identity" in UCI-Red

Since its very inception UCI-Red's main promoters have held different ideas – which can be seen sometimes as contradictory – about how to approach and work with "culture" and "identity" as part of their everyday work. In what follows I will present a "retrospective" ethnographic account about the process whereby some of these concepts were initially presented, discussed and finally tried to be integrated in an attempt to conform a shared "conceptual map" of them.

A crucial moment of the common construction and design of the UCI-Red project happened on June of 2001. At this point I was still trying to obtain my Bachelor's degree in Anthropology, after having collaborated for nearly 7 years with MAC, EDUCE, and to a lesser extent with IEPAAC. This happened when a group of

representatives from several organisations interested in the UCI-Red project gathered at the Community Training Centre of San Antonio Sihó. This is a small rural town, mostly inhabited by Maya-speaking temporary migrant workers, and located in the micro-region of *Camino Real* (see Map 5). On the outskirts of this town IEPAAC and local allied groups had built a complex of huts and spacious venues combining traditional materials and alternative technologies. This training complex was conceived as a social venue by the local groups, and as an opportunity to promote new building techniques in the area.

In order to reconstruct the exchanges and impressions of this meeting I have had to go back to a couple of documents produced around the same time. One is the relatoria collectively drafted by participants that remains as a testimonial of opinions and ideas of that meeting. The second source of information is a brief document that I was asked to produce as part of my work for EDUCE at the time.

A long list of items was discussed during the 3-day gathering which signalled a long and fruitful engagement among participants coming from different parts of the Peninsula and Mexico (see Map 3 and Map 5). During this meeting the first results of the New Jersey Assessment tool were presented. This was part of a research conducted by members of CESDER among potential participants in the UCI-Red, and about which I will be presenting an analysis later in this work. There was also the discussion about the meaning and directions to be taken by UCI-Red as a collective project. There were the debates about how to deal with "identity" and "culture", and “sustainable development". And finally, a general review of the planning process that would lead to the beginning of UCI-Red educational process.

For the part dealing with "identity" and "culture", the group had invited two specialists in the area, that is, two anthropologists from different regional institutions. They were both women, but differed in age. The older anthropologist was going to become involved afterwards in some of the sessions of the UCI-Red. The younger anthropologist was recognised in regional circuits as a rising writer and literary analyst.

The meeting started with an exchange about the different definitions of "culture" and "identity" under which the organisations have structured and set their work up, and the ways in which their work in these areas had been conducted so far. One of the facilitators of that meeting suggested that as people were sharing their ideas and

understandings of the two concepts, he would be developing a "cognitive map" of the discussion. The final image looked like Figure 6.

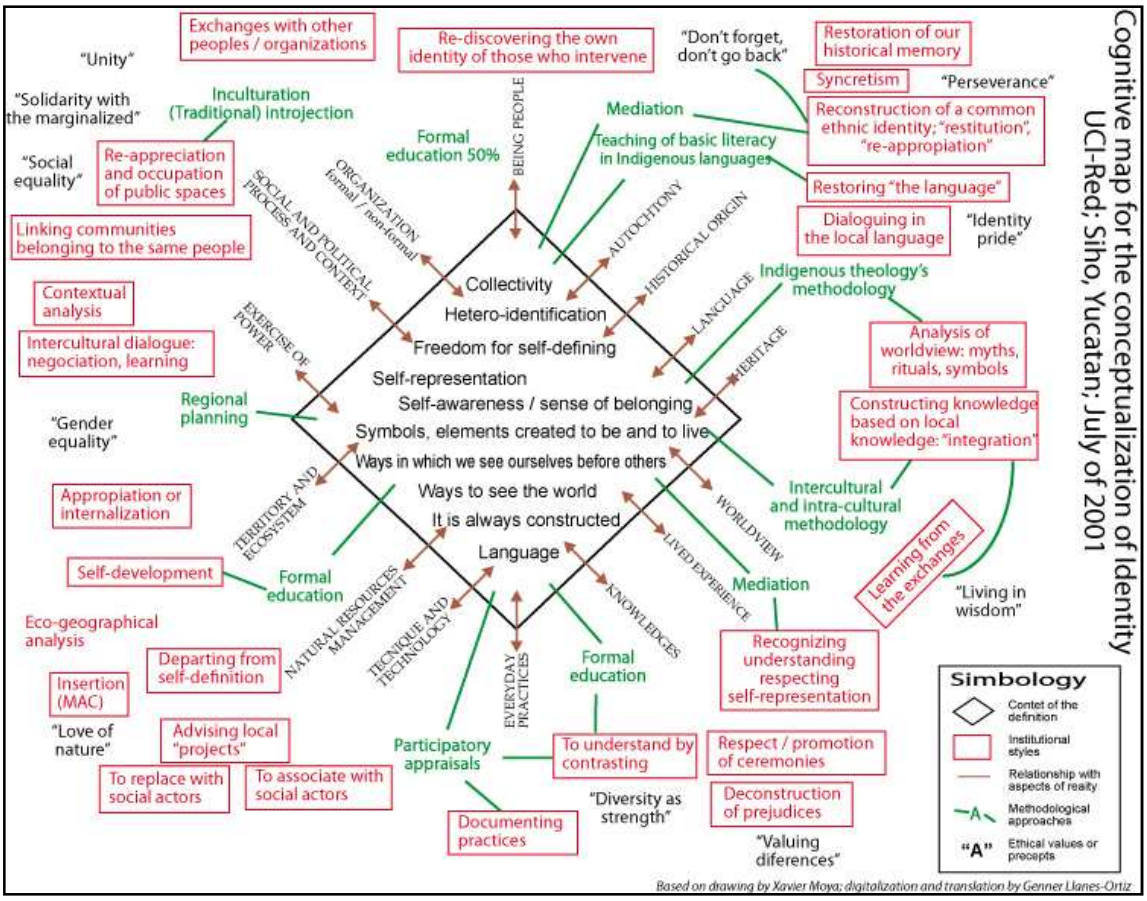


Figure 6. Cognitive map of the concepts of "Culture" and "Identity" among UCI-Red organisers

As pointed out before, participants of this workshop were all from different organisations and regions. There were participants whose work was with Spanish-speaking farmers while others worked with bilingual, Mayan-, or Tseltal-Spanish speaking peasants. Because of the absence of an Indigenous language within the communities they worked with, some of these organisations had often neglected the socio-cultural differences between them, as external "agents", and the local "agents" of development. For other organisations, the cultural aspects of their work were the most important. They expressed a view of "culture" that was engrained in the land, in the lives, and in the language of people living in the communities where their projects were promoted. One organisation was seeking a more "rooted" way of working with these communities, of being "more Maya" in everyday life. "[The challenge is] [t]o rediscover ourselves as individuals in the faces of our Mayan brothers so that we can

start recognizing us, taking root, and defining better our personal identities [yet collectively] as a team" (UCI-Red Collective, 2001)

Other organisations had different practices in relation to "cultural issues" which were more complex and contradictory. They were clear in their minds that they were not part of the imagined Mayan community, and they were not trying to be part of it. They saw their role as "methodological" assistants, not as local decision-makers. This latter role was for local, Indigenous agents to take. They had been more concerned about working identity issues with the person or the individual in mind, rather than the cultural self, and were therefore more interested in new, transformed identities that would correspond better with the changes they wanted to introduce in the community. This did not mean that they had not worked specifically with the idea of "Mayan culture" but that this came afterwards and sometimes without a clear picture of what they wanted to achieve with this, or how to do it. Along with members of local groups they had created a School of High Mayan Culture, around the same time that the idea of UCI-Red started to take shape, and some of the topics that they worked with on this project were useful to reinforce the idea of pertinence of technology innovations, such as organic agriculture and the reincorporation of local materials to productive activities. With this, and according to them, local agents "are now feeling *appropriate*, they feel with an identity, [since] the work they do [now] was done by the ancestors [too]" (Ibid). Other voices raised the issue of the absence of references to the "reality of the lives of Indigenous peasants", to the "knowledge of the community", or to "intercultural education" in the foundational documents of the UCI-Red project (Ibid).

One thing that was evident during this meeting was that every organisation had their own way of looking at these issues in their development interventions. Thus, while for some "culture" had always been part of the main strategy of intervention (MAC) for others it was only one element among many others (EDUCE), or even perceived sometimes as an obstacle for a successful intervention (IEPAAC).

However contrasting these views on "culture" and "identity" may appear to the external observer at this point in the construction of the educational project there was an emphasis on the aggregation of visions. The emphasis was set on where the viewpoints overlapped, because it was said there would come a time to clarify these issues. Again what we have in Figure 6, while actually being an exercise of synthesis, looks more like an aesthetic representation of the lack of definition about "culture" and "identity". I am

including this image because I wanted to present an example of the aesthetics of planning and analysis that are frequent among many NGOs. However I would like the reader to notice how the so-called "content of the definition" mixes the fields of meaning of the concepts that the two guest anthropologists had explained before were in fact very different, i.e. "culture" and "identity". Thus, the confusion of these two notions would influence and characterise the way in which UCI members understand intercultural dialogue. One of the effects of this misunderstanding is that, because some NGO members believe that speaking Yucatec Maya and dressing traditionally defines the cultural identity of a person, they would not consider themselves "culturally defined" or with an "identity".

Principles of interculturality in UCI-Red

In this same workshop some first attempts at defining "interculturality" in the practice of NGOs involved were offered too. Here, again, different forms of engaging with the issue of "culture" were revealed but are not reflected in Figure 6 as contradictions or differences. Some of the buzzwords coming from the explanations given by the workshop participants about what they considered to be "interculturality" are scattered all over the "cognitive map".

Thus for some of these NGO members (Ibid), "interculturality" was understood as:

- Respect for the Other; expansion of the capacity to understand him/her; taking advantage of what is similar or common in the construction of development initiatives
- Constructing plans and projects with direct involvement of local organisations in such a way that actions reflect their views and that meeting their needs be the main guideline of development.
- Appreciating the [Indigenous] culture, - in what knowledge, practices and values are concerned, but in dialogue with forms of thinking, doing and being that are external or Non-Indigenous. Part of this effort is signalled by the practice of incorporating local concepts that are relevant for the [institution's] work.
- To recover", "to reconstruct" and "to strengthen" culture and identity. These objectives are pursued by: 1) placing oneself or finding one's own place within the community; 2) analysing how people perceive themselves in specific situations; 3) unveiling and re-appreciating the historic memory that community elders keep; 4) supporting, respecting and strengthening traditions and ceremonies "that recreate culture"; 5) constructing new knowledge based on or by adapting the local people's own knowledge; and 6) analysing and reflecting about the tales, the myths and the rituals in order to extract from them values "like somebody who digs out a well until he/she finds the spring"

One can notice the themes being played out in these definitions of "interculturality". They come fundamentally from the theoretical and methodological approaches that these organisations have followed for a very long time. There are references to:

"common construction", "participatory methodologies", "endogenous development", "inculturation" and "cultural reaffirmation". Here it can be noticed too that when one of the positions implies an "essentialistic" approach to intercultural dialogue, others insist in the need to open up and incorporate that which comes from "outside" the community.

Later in the process of designing and planning the educational model of UCI-Red, the time came for the definition of the pedagogical relations (PR) that were going to be promoted in the educational programmes. A long list of ideal practices were considered of which I have extracted some that seem to be related to "intercultural dialogue" (Zarco, 2003). Among them we have:

- Greater plurality in the dialogic processes for the construction of collective meanings.
- PR that are based less in knowledge transmission than in learning construction
- PR that incorporate and potentiate all learning spaces that everyday life in the community and in society has to offer
- PR that encourages horizontal dialogue, high criticism and self-appraisal in a permanent and rewarding construction [processes]
- PR that encourage the use of written and oral expression and get inside the languages (Spanish and Maya) possibilities; ones that take people closer to the artistic forms of the words; and that review the semiotics, the semantics and the episteme of the words
- PR that rely on interculturality, interdisciplinarity and the codes of Indigenous culture

This code of "best practice" was said to be fundamental to promote constant intercultural dialogues within the educational programmes of UCI-Red. Yet there was no clear way in the planning and running of the Diplomas that I witnessed or that they reported and evaluated in which these pedagogical relations could be enforced. This crucially affected the ways in which actual training sessions were conducted as I will show later.

With time some of these ideas were described and systematised in different internal documents. There is little record of the series of decisions that led to the assignment of this task to some members of MAC. It seems, however, that their deep interest in Inculturation and Indian theology led them to assume more and more the function of being the intercultural theoreticians of UCI-Red. The document that they produced at the end of the first cycle, however, contains lines and recommendations that are going to be analysed in the next chapter.

Interactive educational dynamics

After this general overview of the ways in which UCI-Red's organisers tried to incorporate their own understandings of "culture" and "identity" into the educational design, we must now look closer at some of the actual educational practices.

Based on my observations and the description of many sessions contained in the *relatorías,* the pedagogical methodology often followed different strategies or pedagogic interactions, combined differently as to make for a varied structure for each session. The most frequent strategies used were:

- **Interactive lecturing:** presentation of concepts and discussion of what has been presented trying to adapt the meanings proposed to what can be more easily understood by the participants. Such presentations most of the time consisted only of speech. Increasingly so, as the Diplomas gained momentum, these started to include Power Point presentations.
- **Group tasks and presentations:** This technique generally goes along the former pedagogical practice. Most of the time these tasks are intended as dynamic breaks for the sessions. Other intended goals are to test the level of understanding that participants have achieved from the explanations provided, and to give these people the opportunity to feedback whatever the presenter has said about the topic in question. In general, the effect that these tasks have has remained unclear since the bulk of the information generated in these sessions goes unreported. It is not clear how this information gets incorporated in a dialogue of sorts.
- **Plenary ("assembly dialogue"):** One pedagogical adviser or "asesor" takes central stage during the sessions and helped with a battery of "generator questions" intends to facilitate an individual-to-collective multi-directional "dialogue" where the most keen participants play along answering questions and sometimes, the least, advancing points or contesting assertions. In very few instances, these "assembly dialogues" turn into debate or open contestation by the participants. The adviser or "facilitator" frequently tries to summarise what he or she perceives as the most important points of the exchange of answers or opinions and writes them down on either a flip chart or a blank wall chart. He or she uses color markers and generally stresses the points that go in tune with the general theme or topic.

The following is an example of a combination of these strategies as recorded by a NGO member in a report of a session happening on October of 2004:

> *"The session started by presenting the name of the topic for the day: "Human Scale Development"* […]*".*
>
> *"After the [warm-up] group dynamics, Carmen explained that sometimes it is difficult to show our feelings but she said that this is part of our human development.*
>
> *"They formed five teams which the tutors joined, each with one team, and they worked by answering three questions:*
>
> *"1. What do we understand by Human Development?*
>
> *"2. What do we understand by Human Needs?*
>
> *"3. What do we wonder when we hear Human Development?*
>
> *"They were very participative during the activity, by sharing their points of view while one person in each group was in charge of making notes. In the beginning*

though it was not clear what the question was referring to. When the work finished the plenary took place and in it they presented the following:

"Mercy (Uci) and Yesdi (Suma)
"1. What do we understood by Human Development?
- Who knows?
- What is that?
- It is the growth to prosper
- It is the person, how we develop
- It is to communicate with other people
- It depends on what development may be
- It is how each human being develops
"2. What do we understand by Human Needs?
- It is a stage where the human beings change
- It is a means to progress and growth
- It is a way of thinking
- It is where you ask for something (where they need help)
- It is a way of life as human beings
- It is an education
- It is a way whereby we can develop
- It is when you need help from other people
- It is problems
- Need of work
- Need of ourselves
- Need to dialogue with the people
- Need of a better life
- Need of many things
[From a different group]
"3. What do we think when we hear Human Development?
- I thought of myself
- In the formation of human being
- In the growth of a person
- In the knowledge and in the economy
- In the human self-sufficiency

[The narrative continues with the presentation by other groups. Later on the "facilitator" comes to the front again and introduces the following ideas.]

"*There exist the government and other national and international organisations which have the responsibility of looking after the promotion of human development in order to meet the basic needs* [of the people]. *In Third World countries there is poverty.*

"*It is not only about having food, or means of support, but also about covering other needs like the affective ones.*

"*When we talk about Human Scale Development of the people* [sic]*, the governments think in giving us development,* [yet] *if what we've got is only services we haven't got covered the rest.*

"*There are two types of needs: Existential –To Be, To Have, To Make, To Be Located– and Axiological –Protection (Social Security, Health Systems, Prevention), Affect (Love, Hugging), Understanding (Education, Study, Research), Participation (You develop), Leisure (It is a necessity, to get rid of stress), Identity (To know yourself, to know how you are), Freedom (Expression, Thinking, Love whoever you want, to decide what you want to be).* [And so, it follows a long yet simplistic explanation about the principles of the Human Scale Development approach of Chilean economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef.]

> *"After* [the explanation] *there was a group dynamics "of the candy". Everyone was given a lollipop and all were given five minutes to touch it, feel it, open it and taste it. They were asked then what they felt and they said that* [the lollipop] *was sweet, salty, hard, piquant, milk-flavoured, etc. Carmen asked them, how would they apply these comments to the topic* [of Human Scale Development]*; they said that sometimes they live situations like that, that they have different tastes, different ways of satisfying their needs, need of remembering, of choosing. Sometimes, they said, they give us the things without wondering whether we like them or not.*
>
> *"Human Scale Development should cover other needs, not only the one of* having*".*

Another example of the type of dynamics where these strategies are employed comes from my field notes. This session was part of the Module 4 of EDUCE's Diploma in Los Chenes, Campeche and it was specifically concerned with "sustainable Technological Development":

> *"With an attendance of nearly 14 promoters we begin the workshop at around 9:30am. This is the second day of the session devoted to Module 4 and UTEs 2, 3, 7 and 8. Today's session would be devoted to the last one.*
>
> *The venue for the workshop is a big room in the backyard of EDUCE's headquarters in Hopelchen. To get there one has to get past the administrative offices of the NGO at the front of the property and climb a tiny hill at the back of this first set of buildings. It is certainly a short walk but one that some people, particularly the overweight or elderly, find difficult to do sometimes. This place has been built expressly to hold training events of the type we are having today. It is a long room of approximately 10 meters of length per 4 meters of width. The building materials are blocks and cement with large wooden windows that look to the east and to the south. In general, the space for educational interactions is arranged in such a way that coordinators of these events use the long bare wall to the west as the "blackboard" where they either paste flipcharts, project power point presentations, or stand in front of the audience with their back turned to the wall. Participating people settle themselves in mobile chairs brought from EDUCE administrative offices down the hill.*
>
> *For this workshop, however, Imelda, the facilitator, has decided to subvert the traditional allocation of space and asks the participants of the workshop to re-arrange their seats in a small circle on one of the sides of the big room (the one nearest to the main entrance). In order to initiate with the workshop, she raises the question: What do you expect to learn from this session? She has placed a blank flipchart on the long naked wall and as people answer the question she asks them to write their question on the paper. Norma, a promoter from Iturbide, wonders what "technological" (as in 'sustainable Technological Development") means. She comes forward and writes her question. Another promoter from this community, Avelino, expresses that: "We would like to learn what that thing they call 'sustainable development" is? So that we can teach this to our compañeros." He also steps in and writes his question in the flipchart. Noemi, from Crucero San Luis, also enquires: "How can I develop this topic with my group? How can I make use of it?" and repeats what the others have been doing.*
>
> *"Imelda has noticed that some middle-aged women (in their 50) are very shy to express their opinion and directly asks to some of them, by their name: "When we ask what do you expect from this topic, what does Eneyda feel? Would it be of any use in her daily life?". To this Eneyda answers: "I learn these things here, and then I explain them to my group, so that they also know what I've come to learn here".*

Imelda then said that they are going to play a game (the game of the stones) to explain (to remember, she says at some point for she has been told that people already know) what is sustainability. In the game, some volunteers (Avelino, Norma, Noemi and Eneyda) will try simultaneously to grab as many small stones as they could from a basket, but only with one of their hands. The condition is that every time they do this, Imelda doubles the number of stones that remained in the basket. The game ends when the basket is emptied in one turn by all the participants.

After two rounds, Imelda explains later that the basket is like the soil of our fields and that the stones are like the nutrients. After round three Imelda enquires about the opinions that participants have about the game. One says that they feel bad because they were taking the nutrients from the soil. Another say that she was taking as much as she could from the basket and jokingly added "I was exploiting my land".

This basket was finally emptied after round 5. Every time participants grabbed the stones Imelda recorded the number of stones that everyone had taken in another flipchart. By the end of the game, she notices that the number of stones they were able to take decreased in every round. And she notices that this happened even though they started to moderate themselves immediately after she explained the meaning of the game. She says that they allowed nature to rest a bit.

Imelda invites the participants to express what they thought about the game. There was an even distribution of the resources? Would it be "sustainable" if some people in their communities did not have access to the resources? Resources such as the soil's fertility?

Noemi says that it was not fair because some participants continued taking lots of stones. She did not get that many but on the other hand it was OK because it was beneficial for the land. Because she did not exploit it that much.

Imelda calls the attention to the fact that just as after each round they doubled the number of stones in the basket, so does nature work in the same way.

She says that if somebody helps nature to recover its nutrients then they are contributing to the regeneration, to the restitution of nutrients. And again she enquires, do you do the same in your productive work with your groups? "Do you give nature a hand?".

Some people say they do. Norma asserts that she uses fertilizer on her land. Noemi says that in her group they are planting trees.

Imelda then explains that what they do is a different form of production, because they generate a different kind of resources. That is what they call "sustainable technology". To prepare fertilizers, to plant trees, are all forms to preserve resources. But when we fell the trees without planting others, when we use "poison" [agro-chemical products], *we kill the soil. The aim of "sustainable technology" is that the productive activities, our management of the land, do not exhaust the resources- "That our children will have these resources too". It has to do with the idea that there should be resources for everybody, and that both the resources and the benefits that they yield are distributed equally.*

She adds that in part most of what they already do and practice in their work with EDUCE is "sustainable technology". And to answer to the question that Norma posed at the beginning of the workshop, she says that "technology" is the practice that one person uses to produce something. To raise livestock, to prepare fertilizers, to cultivate, all this is technology."

[The educational session continues with the use of a power point presentation with very simple phrasing yet quite complicated tables about different types of technology such as peasant technological development, technology transfer and participatory technological development. The session closes little after noon with some people falling sleep because of the high temperatures registered that day, around 35 C].

Interpretation of terms

As we have already seen one of the central objectives of UCI-Red has been the 'strengthening of Mayan identity" which is at the core of fields of basic knowledge command like the one which organised some of the programmes of the second cycle. Cultural Identity and Dignity was thought to be possible to achieve by promoting the following strategies within its educational processes: the critical analysis of regional history, the reflection on issues of discrimination, and the encouragement of Mayan writing. As part of this same effort, a group of people undertook the task of exploring and discussing the defining features of Mayan culture and identity with local participants, and the attempt was made to incorporate this approach into all regular educational sessions.

In addition to these strategies, the bilingual interpretation of important terms for the development practice, a method that was first implemented during the PPDP, was incorporated to the practices of UCI-Red.

- **Word interpretation/translation**: This can be undertaken either in a plenary or in working groups. The mechanism is the following: people are presented or given a term in Spanish. They have to express their opinions as to what this term means for them and debate whether they indeed share the same understanding of the word. This exercise is conducted by a pedagogical facilitator (who may or may not be a Mayan speaker him/herself). The facilitator writes some of the definitions on a flip or wall chart and after some discussion asks the participants to try to express the same ideas in Yucatec Maya. Participation tends to increase at this point. Many forms are tried and finally the plenary along with the facilitator choose one that becomes the consolidated interpretation of an alien term.

An example of this type of interaction is described in the following *relatoría* written by an anonymous NGO member about an educational session happening in the South of Yucatan micro-region on May of 2004.

> *"Topic: Organisation (Juan B, facilitator)*
> *What is organisation? Tsol much' kuxtal* [To put together and order the life].
> *"The group is asked how can we say in Maya the word "organisation". They mention the following:*
> *"- Much= together, commun, union.*
> *"- Tsol, tsolik= to put together something in certain order, to tidy up, to line up, it can be applied to men and animals.*
> *"- Un'uk* [sic]= *order, harmony*
> *"- Tsolik un'u* [sic] *káan= to line up in a straight (right) way.*
> *"To organise =*
> *"+ To put something in order so that it would work well.*
> *"+ To order our life to live well.*

"The group is asked to give examples of organisation.
"M- Horticultural groups
"T- Chá cha'ak *societies*
"M- School
"M- Municipal government.
"M- State and federal government, health, education.
"M – Communication media, radio and TV.
"M- Religious groups.
"M- Beekeeping groups.
"M- Businesses, particular o private industries.
"M – NGO, non-governmental organisations.
"T –M Ejido.
- *community councils*
- fajinas *(voluntary community service)*

"T – gremios *(traditional Catholic societies).*
"M- T Family
"A question emerges among participants [about the different types of organisations], *how long does it have to pass* [for an organisation] *to be considered traditional?*
To adopt= external
To adapt= internal
"The plenary is split in 4 groups and they must answer:
How is the traditional Mayan organisation?
How is the modern Western organisation?
[After some time, the groups come together to the plenary and present their conclusions that go in the following vein:]

Traditional	*Modern*
It has been born among the Maya	*Very complicated structure*
It has a committee or a president	*Work is paid*
They respect the activities, tasks	*They take orders from the government*
[One joins by] Invitation	*[They use] Modern tools*
[It comes together] Every year	*Complex and complicated*
[It is formed] By work groups and sub-groups	*Lots of technology*
Women [organise] apart	*[They use] Industrial inputs*
They give out food	*New techniques*
There is [It is based on] solidarity	*They do not have assemblies [general meetings]*
Family contributions. Material [In kind]	
They allocate tasks to be done	

Dino [a bilingual tutor] explains in Maya.

[Later they have a group dynamic exercise, or game, consisting of having to solve a jigsaw without talking to the other members of the group. This group dynamic approach is employed to reflect on issues of coordination in organisational or group endeavours. Together they define the functions of a good leader or coordinator for a group by making reference to traditional roles in the community such as that of a chaperon in traditional courtship practices. This is generally the little brother of a girl who must at

all times take care and devote constant attention to what her sister does. This is said to be similar to the role of a coordinator with regard to his/her group.]

Critical analysis of UCI-Red practices

From the examples that I have provided here, it seems quite apparent that in most of these interactions between NGO members, academic experts, and peasant locals we had very conventional pedagogical relations where the interactive "flow of knowledge" ran mostly in only one direction.

What I hope to have shown as well is how the intercultural ideals of the educational planners are profoundly permeated by their development agendas. The recognition of this tension is necessary to understand some of the compromises that UCI-Red has had to make in the actual running of this educational project. As we have seen UCI-Red promoters had slightly different approaches to popular or alternative development when they set out to create this project. Since their main focus was to promote these development objectives along with interculturality, UCI-Red organisers had often to combine reflexive sessions with knowledge transfer and skills development sessions. It seems that "interculturality" in the form of "dialogue between knowledges" while being also part of the background and conception of these educational sessions was very often left aside in order to being able to achieve the other educational objectives of the university.

The principles defined by Fornet-Betancourt and others, and even those defined by NGO members themselves – like the appreciation of Indigenous culture, or the promotion of learning construction more than knowledge transmission – were absent even in the most interactive among these examples. Dialogue, whether intercultural or any other form, must have its participants taking turns, and information must go both ways. It needs to be reflected in all participants gaining a new understanding of the "Other" or the "Others". Thus, while we had examples of "facilitators" failing to encourage the exchange of knowledge between participants and themselves, or seemingly indoctrinating participants on essentialist views of the "Maya" as communitarian, it may be possible still to acknowledge the challenges faced by "facilitators", "organisers" and "local participants".

What some of these "facilitators" were reproducing were forms of knowledge transmission that are probably the only ones they know. The "organisers" failed to create a space for discussing "intercultural methods" with these facilitators; something

that was not considered in the project budget. “Local participants” might have felt enthusiastic about a space for learning that was not “completely” colonized by school culture. “Facilitators” and “organisers” seemed to have been governed in many of the practical decisions they made by the “basic learning needs” approach followed in the construction of the education model. This is expressed in the emphasis on the “lack” of knowledge (again a tendency of developmentalist thought) and leaves aside the possibility of exploring those resources that already exist, of dwelling on the alternative life styles in place.

The final test of the intercultural nature of these encounters is however whether the “facilitators” had been transformed by their participation in some of these educational sessions. I spoke only to a few of them during my fieldwork but the impression I gathered from what they said to me is that they developed little new understandings about the topics addressed during these sessions from what local people presented or contributed. I am talking about specific elements of knowledge, the kind of which you would use as an example for a particular topic the next time you would address an audience. What was indeed mentioned is how these encounters nurtured a sense of purpose on the individuals that have participated in them, both local and non-local people, in relation to their work as either researchers or community workers.

NGO members and specialists needed to address the specificity of the forms of knowledge and practice that people have in their towns and villages, which are unmistakably related to their use of a different language from Spanish in their everyday life, their lack of familiarity with school training, and their way of life as peasants and/or labourers.

When considering what people managed to learn from these sessions in terms of practical knowledge or abilities to manage their organisations or defend their rights, it becomes clear that the methods used to establish a particular form of knowledge among the participants have not produced the effects intended. Some possible answers about why this may have happened are provided in the final two chapters.

Some of the experiments in the use of myths and rituals (which I will describe in the following section) hint to something that can evolve in the direction of intercultural forms of knowledge production and reproduction. It seems, however, necessary to go beyond the essentialist use of these cultural practices and to explore more organic processes of cultural production as source for the reflexive exercises. However, even in

the interpretation of terms one still perceives a certain uni-directionality. This is because external concepts have to be interpreted and integrated by local participants but the outside “facilitators” do not re-interpret or call into question their own assumptions, for instance, about “organization” or “sustainability” when approaching their subjects. The analysis of these concepts is done beforehand and, in the actual sessions, they are presented to the local participants. They are then expected to incorporate those concepts into their practice and understanding of the world.

A better understanding of cultural dynamics in place would prevent the awkward situation where non-practitioners preach to the reproducers of such practices the convenience of maintaining them. In the following two chapters I try to explore some of these processes, by revealing other limitations in the way UCI-Red promoters understood learning, and what we can learn from other ways of approaching the challenge of intercultural communication.

CHAPTER 6. CONTRASTING LEARNING MODELS IN THE UCI-RED

In previous chapters I have presented a very brief account of the organisational trajectories of the UCI-Red NGO promoters. In this section I will focus more on the trajectories and perspectives of those actors located on the "other side" of the intercultural bridge.

Picture 1. Los Chenes' Micro-Regional development promoters' group, Múuch' Kambal (Learning together)

Local participants' trajectories in relation with UCI-Red promoters

Most of these actors – though not all of them – have been Maya-speaking farmers, beekeepers, horticulturalists and processed food small-scale producers coming from four loosely defined micro-regions within the Peninsula of Yucatan. Their common characteristic was that their place of residence would be a small town within the micro-region, and that they were members of associations that UCI-Red NGO promoters had a previous relation with. Usually members of these NGO "constituencies" would be the most vocal and willing participants in the Diplomas. Indeed, given the history of long-term collaborations between many of these local bilingual (Maya and Spanish) actors and the NGOs, the first Diploma designed within the framework of UCI-Red was

fundamentally aimed at formalizing and polishing previous experiences of training for development promoters, as we will discuss later.

In some of these micro-regions, like Los Chenes, people from outside the sphere of influence of EDUCE, joined in the first Diploma too. They were mostly from other micro-regional organisations, coming under the auspices of the *Indigenista* local representation in Hopelchén. These were leaders of several groups, and were included in the list of participants, partially owing to funding commitments. Although these participants of the first UCI-Red's cycle were from different regions, most of them knew about each other from previous training projects, i.e. PPDP, ROSDESAC, among others (see previous chapters for NGO trajectories).

All of the NGOs, except MAC, saw the first Diploma as an opportunity to take their local recruits to the next level of "complexity" in the planning and execution of development activities, as we will see later, after having spent some time being NGO "helpers" or, even, "employees". MAC directive members, however, considered that potential local participants from their area of influence did not have what it took to move on to that level. Therefore MAC as a group decided to conduct a parallel complementary educational process that they called a "*propedéutico*" or "introductory course" while still taking part of the first Diploma with IEPAAC in the *Camino Real* educational centre. Surprisingly for some of the other NGO members, among the people that MAC selected to take part in this "*propedéutico*" was a female, non-Maya speaker, dentist from Merida. She was then part of a group of people made up mostly by Maya-speaking men and women with different years of schooling, generally basic schooling. MAC's decision on the "introductory course" and the kind of people they suggested for the Diploma was generally seen by the rest of the educational community to correspond with their specific needs and values. In fact, respect for each organisation's internal decisions has been a constant rule of engagement for participating in *el Colectivo*.

For what I have characterised as the second cycle of UCI-Red the defining characteristics of participants, as was to be expected, varied from one micro-region to other. Thus, in the case of EDUCE in both Los Chenes and Western Bacalar areas, more people who did not have a previous relation with the NGO were invited to participate as long as they were part of the directive committee of either a community or micro-regional, work group. Of the people who responded to this call for participation, many

of them were from newly formed groups, at least in the Los Chenes region. These groups were organised mainly around horticultural home garden production, fruit production, and community development promotion. The number of people who took part in EDUCE's second Diploma were 20 in Los Chenes and 18 in Western Bacalar.

IEPAAC did not organise a new cycle in the region where it had worked for a long time, i.e. the Camino Real region, but instead decided to help and guide FUNDHEY in the organisation of its own Diploma in Northern Central Yucatan. Since this was the first time that FUNDHEY adopted the UCI-Red framework in the training of their own development workers, having worked as a "promoter" or being considered a potential one was the main defining characteristic of all 63 participants. Most of these participants had at least completed secondary school, and some had studied high school. However, an important number of these participants were also adults engaged in diverse rural production activities, mostly related to back garden, and handicraft production. Among the other activities in which they were engaged were cultural animation youth groups, and savings societies promotion.

MAC changed its strategy for the second cycle and decided to open the invitation to members of other groups in the micro-region, not necessarily promoted by them. Unlike the first Diploma when only a handful of trainees were selected, this time MAC invited more than 20 people to the second Diploma. Responding to MAC's call for participation, an assorted group of people from different work groups in the micro-region attended this second educational cycle which was this time called "Basic Programme of Training". Among the activities that their work groups were concerned with were adult literacy programmes, indigenous rights promotion, back garden production, beekeeping, and organic agriculture.

General characteristics of local participants

While loosely defined by their "ethnic condition" (imagined as members of the Maya people of Yucatan), all these local participants were consciously and consistently identified as being rural and peasant. This is clearly apparent in definitions such as that of the target population of the Diploma in Management of Social Organisations for Regional Development, organised by EDUCE which was aimed at "men and women from Mayan peasant communities" (EDUCE, 2005b). This indicates that even if they were not directly marked as "Maya", it was assumed that their latent ethnic identity

would emerge eventually since they came from an environment imagined as already determined by its "Mayanness".

UCI-Red community groups' participants were indeed highly diverse and their constantly changing work and economic situations would sometimes defy the "peasant" aspect of the definition. This was particularly true for the case of the Northern Central Yucatan micro-region, where several participants were young people with different levels of instruction and employed in diverse jobs in and around the main city in the area, Motul. Some of these young men and women even temporarily held a job in one of the maquiladoras (foreign assembly plants) established in several towns around Merida, the state capital (see Baklanoff and Moseley, 2008). Even some of the older participants coming from predominantly peasant communities, could be defined more by their employment as administrative staff for NGOs, or even for some of the *Indigenista* institutions, on a temporary basis. It is important to recognise, however, that in Yucatan, "being peasant" or "poor" can sometimes be the result of a combination of ethnic and class classification strategies and not necessarily be defined by occupation (Gabbert, 2001; Castañeda, 2004; Kray, 2005).

Another element that added diversity to the profile of participants was the level of instruction acquired at school. Most of the adult participants, and even some of the young ones, would show levels going from third year of primary school up to complete secondary school, but hardly more than this. Although one of the conditions for taking part in the UCI-Red Diplomas was that the suggested people had to be bilingual (Maya-Spanish), several among the participants did not meet this requirement. Levels of bilingualism were variable, but even when the person showed a good command of Spanish, he or she would sometimes switch back to Maya when disengaged from educational dynamics. On the opposite side, young people or even younger adults would sometimes not speak Maya even when it was clear that they understood and that they had some level of competence to speak the language. These latter attitudes were seen by some of the UCI-Red promoters as a challenge to be addressed by way of the strengthening of the local participants "cultural identity"[8].

[8] However, the fact that few or none of the UCI-Red promoters could understand or speak Maya was not considered relevant for the functioning of this intercultural project. It was not that the NGO members had not taken an interest in learning the language. Most of them had done efforts in that direction. It was rather that they were not able to learn a very nuanced and complex language, very different from Spanish. Confronted with failure or serious limitations in their grasp of the Mayan language, NGO members had generally given up on this undertaking.

Another level of variability was their religious beliefs or affiliations. NGO members considered that all the local participants shared a common mixture of ancient Mayan beliefs and Catholic forms and practices. However, many and the most active local participants were affiliated to Protestant churches, especially people of the West of Bacalar region. Towns in this area were relatively "new", founded in the 1970s, and for a long time they lacked regular religious services from the Catholic Church. This situation had been taken advantage of by several Protestant churches, and in some cases non-Catholic affiliations represented half of the town's population. Church attendance or membership does not necessarily account for religious beliefs and yet, in the case of many of these UCI-Red students, strong participation in their respective churches would generally lead to being noticed and recruited as community promoters. The forms of religious re-socialisation and training would vary from one case to the next but it can be said with assurance that those belonging to Protestant churches looked at beliefs in the existence of forest spirits, cornfield guardians, town protectors, saint miracles, and mythological entities, still common in many Maya-speaking towns, as heathen or just plain ridiculous, and rejected them in consequence. Followers of Catholic-like practices and beliefs – characterised by the syncretism between Western and Mayan symbols – reacted differently to these same elements, but some would still react to them with incredulity.

Despite their variability and their current disengagement from agriculture activities, it is fair to say that most of the participants, young and adults alike, had gone through early socialisation processes, common to peasant families and communities. In fact, as I show later, in many of the semi-structured interviews that I had with some of them, they give many references to this. If something can be said to be common among those who did not spend much time at school, it is that this socialisation may have been the most important process of learning that they have undergone and that this appears to influence how they think of themselves as persons too.

It was with this kind of social actor that UCI-Red wanted to engage, and yet in their design and definition of educational objectives the potential differences in the ways of learning or of constructing knowledge that these agents had were insufficiently problematised and/or taken for granted as an specification of place and, only marginally, of culture. UCI-Red NGO promoters had their own ideas about what needed to be

learned - and how - that reflected and maintained hegemonic ideas about knowledge and modes of learning as we will see in the following section.

The shift from informal training to "education in alternation"

As mentioned before, NGO promoters of the UCI-Red had been working for some years with many of the individual actors that later became local participants in the Diplomas. This work happened over a relatively long period of time and consisted of a close collaboration for development promotion purposes. The collaboration process is worth considering in light of what these NGO promoters (and I with them at different points in this narrative) tried to achieve with the UCI-Red initiative.

In one example of this form of collaboration – that I knew first hand years before this research, NGO members would seek among local people, those with the will and aptitude to engage in development promotion activities, in the first place. Once identified, these local agents would be invited to the NGO headquarters, or NGO-run meetings, for some talks about the development perspective and objectives of the external organisation. With time, they would initially be asked to perform "translation" services for NGO members – since most or all of the latter would be ignorant of the Mayan language – and later they would be gradually integrated into the "organic" work of NGOs and start being considered as "interpreters" of their own language and "culture". They would be named then "community development promoters" or simply "community promoters", and be allocated some of the tasks that NGOs in the area had decided to promote, most of the times, in dialogue with other local actors and their work groups. Their main job would be to extend and facilitate the transfer of technical information and organisational skills that NGOs sought to promote in their micro-regions through participatory and popular education means.

Some of the roles that these promoters would play were "gender equality promoters" (*promotores de género*), "beekeeping promoters" (*promotores de apicultura*), "saving micro-union promoters" (*promotores de cajas de ahorro*), "home garden production promoters" (*promotoras de solar*), and "community video promoters" (*promotores de video comunitario*). Becoming promoters was the meaning that gave continuity to this informal and, somehow, fragmented process of training.

If these "community promoters" showed signs of having grasped the model of intervention sought by these NGOs, they would be left later to do the development

promotion work on their own or with minimal supervision from NGO members. Many of these “community” or, later, “micro-regional promoters” would be encouraged to create their own separate organisations, but animated by more or less the same goals that their “parent” NGO. This was the case of groups like *Et-Ximbal* (Fellow walker, or accompanying partner), formed as a co-operative of “community promoters” in Chacsinkín; or *Múuch’ Kambal* (Learning together, see Picture 1), a not-for-profit organisation created to promote a human rights agenda in the municipality of Hopelchén.

The training of “community promoters” as mentioned before was considered a major strategy for “sustainable development” promotion by these NGOs. Rather than being based on a particular theory or strategy, this form of training had emerged from practical concerns and needs related to productive and cultural promotion activities. However, when CESDER approached this group of NGOs with the idea of creating a “Peasant University”, their educational model was questioned and a new way of conceiving and improving it begun to take shape. The new emphasis was focused on a training model called “education in alternation” (*educación en la alternancia*).

Even though many local participants had been acting as “community development promoters” for some years before the first Diploma, the UCI-Red NGO promoters wanted to complement what they saw as an irregular educational process with new, better organised, and more complex knowledge. As we have seen these previous training projects were, for the most part, improvised as the NGO’s urgent promotion activities developed, and were thought to be too scattered and uneven as to be considered “proper education”. Therefore, when planning the educational activities and contents for the first Diploma, NGO promoters sought to include all those topics that had been rarely or only superficially covered when these local promoters were being induced to development projects and tasks.

As we have seen in the previous sections of this dissertation, the layout for UCI-Red has consisted of a combination of school-like sessions with organisational and data collection tasks. Organisational tasks have been determined by the logic of instruction, i.e. what the pedagogical designers have deemed as necessary to know, in the sequence of contents offered as solutions to problems that would eventually lead to the completion of an educational cycle. It has been thought that combining conceptual, general analysis – in the form of information to be discussed and interpreted by local

participants within this classroom-based dynamics – would improve their work as managers and leaders in their own organisations. Such conceptual, general knowledge, along with analytical tools and methods, were due to be "tried" or rather applied by local participants in their everyday running of their groups. This is what was generally understood to be the crucial aspect of the "alternation education and learning" model: a combination of skills-formation with more formally organised acquisition of theoretical knowledge, or in other words, of "classroom-based cognitive learning and workplace-based experiential learning" (Schuetze and Sweet, 2004: 5). This framework in education in general and adult education in particular has been hailed with praise and presented as a major shift in recent years, away from traditional interpretations of adult education (Torres, 2003).

However this approach has indirectly been criticised and called into question by different perspectives on learning, notably the view represented by the work of Lave and Wenger on "legitimate peripheral participation", which we will review later. Something that can be said in relation to the "alternation education" approach is that, despite its innovative claims, it still continues to reinforce a view that places theoretical, generalizing knowledge in direct opposition to, and in a higher position than, contextual, localised practice. That is, it maintains the differentiation between schooled "formal education" and work-place "informal education" or apprenticeship, which corresponds with knowledge hierarchies widely accepted and unchallenged. In this two-sided view:

> "Formal education [is] supposed to involve "out-of-context" learning in which instruction is the organisational source of learning activities; learners build understanding through abstraction and generalisation, which produces less context-bound, more general understanding, and results in broad learning transfer to times and places elsewhere and later. In informal education, learning [is] supposed to be embedded in everyday activities, taking place through demonstration, observation, and mimesis. The product [is] supposed to be a literal, context-bound understanding, one not conducive to general learning transfer" (Lave, 1996: 150-151).

In what follows we will examine evidence that this bias persisted and somehow pervaded the ways in which UCI-Red NGO promoters conducted their educational processes and dynamics. We will see how and why this left them dissatisfied and uncertain about the extent to which the educational strategies were working in the intercultural ways intended, especially in what concerns the "cognitive development" they were seeking to promote in local participants.

Learning and cognitive development for NGO promoters

The UCI-Red raison d'être has been consistently established as the "strengthening of educational and development processes in different rural and indigenous areas of [Mexico]". It was said to depart from the premise that: "knowledge does not circulate only in the Universities located in the Cities; it is not to be located only in the big universities. [Knowledge] circulates within the civil society, within the social organisations, too. It is to be located in the capacity that these may have to managing their own knowledge and turning it into projects of good life, in arguments, and in tools for striving for a dignified place in a different nation" (Words by Benjamin Berlanga, UCI-Red ideologue; quoted in UCI-Red and Saldívar Moreno, 2004).

This principle defined the "alternation education" project among rural, peasant and indigenous communities as a "university". However, even in this quotation, the emphasis is put on "organisation", "management", "project", "arguments", and "tools", motifs that speak of a rationalistic, and developmentalist mindset in relation to "knowledge" (in singular).

While many UCI-Red documents and enunciations declare their acknowledgement and respect for "peasant forms of knowledge" or "local knowledge", UCI-Red NGO promoters still thought of these as somehow incomplete or, at least, as in need of further development, judging by one of the particular strategies that UCI-Red incorporated. This was the area of thinking, or cognitive skills (*área de habilidades de pensamiento*), that along with the area of language skills (*área de habilidades de lenguaje*), were planned and designed as transversal strategies, running along and across the different thematic modules of the Diploma.

The objective for the area of cognitive skills was: "To support the strengthening of the mental abilities that are more useful for the analysis of reality, and the formulation and management of projects" (Collective drafting, 2002). This is another phrasing of intentions that reveals a bias towards theoretical, general knowledge and a culturally specific ideal of "rational problem solving" (Lave, 1988: 172-5).

In order to encourage development of cognitive skills in an orderly, methodical way, UCI-Red NGO promoters based its understanding and practice on the theories of Structural Cognitive Modifiability, and of Mediated Learning Experience, developed by cognitive psychologists and philosophers Reuven Feuerstein and Matthew Lipman, respectively. What both theories and sets of methods have in common is their

inspiration from constructivism and a certain relation with context-based cognitive development theories (Vygotsky, 1978). They are basically aimed at the development of abstract thinking in children, from a very early age, and rely mostly on verbal interaction in order to achieve these goals, i.e., philosophical stories, sentential articulation of problems and solutions, etc. The form that this set of theories often assumes in practice is the so-called method of Philosophy for Children (P4C), which several organisations and institutions across the world now use (see, for example Sharp and Reed, 1992). In Mexico, UCI-Red associated with CELAFIN (Latin American Centre for the Philosophy for Children), and Tanesque AC, seeking for help to understand and incorporate this methodology to its work.

Consequent with their professional practice of development, one of the first actions that NGO promoters of UCI-Red undertook was the application of an appraisal of the cognitive abilities of the potential participants of the first Diploma. For this, they used two tests, designed and tried elsewhere in Mexico and the U.S., mostly among schooled children and teenagers, and rarely among rural, peasant adults. These were the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge, commonly known as the New Jersey assessment.

The New Jersey assessment that UCI-Red NGO promoters applied was a very standard school-like, psychological test with an answer sheet full of codes and numbers for people to enter their input. The test was designed to capture logical and problem-solving thinking. Local participants were presented with questions like this:

> *"There is a notice in the school's office that says: "Visitors not allowed". To this Rodrigo comments, "therefore those who are allowed to get in are not visitors".*
> *A. Rodrigo is wrong: from what the notice says one can conclude that some of those allowed to get in are visitors.*
> *B. Rodrigo is wrong: from what the notice says one can conclude that some visitors have been allowed to get in.*
> *C. Rodrigo is right.*

It contained basic arithmetic operations such as adding, extracting, multiplying, and dividing. It also asked more complex questions, such as square root and arithmetic operations; also, the recognition of similarities between different maths operations, the solving of hypothetical everyday life situations using mathematical thinking. The examples presented situations located in the context of agriculture or domestic activities in an imaginary Mexican countryside. It included the reading of graphics, the translation of geometrical procedures, and the use of percentages in arithmetic operations. There

was a section that included the graphic representation, and representation of answers, called the Raven Coloured Progressive Matrices and Standard Progressive Matrices.

The idea of presenting these situations to Maya-speaking farmers and agriculture labourers was to see how well they had developed these cognitive abilities when they attended school (as many of them had reportedly done so).

The LPAD and New Jersey assessments were initially "applied" to samples of 10 people per region; these regions including other parts of Mexico, like Guerrero, Puebla and Chiapas, and not only the Yucatan Peninsula. Unsurprisingly, and in spite of the small size of the sample, remarkable differences appeared in the performance of tasks and the evaluation of answers. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the high diversity in the personal trajectories and backgrounds of the local participants that we saw before. The analysis of these results established that "a low manifest performance in relation to logical thinking" characterised the majority of people tested, and added that this was probably due to "the problem that entails the comprehension of reading in Spanish in order to understand the concepts" (CESDER, et al., 2001). Over all, it was established that while people did significantly "bad" in the New Jersey assessment given their "deficiency in the use of verbal tools since Spanish is not their mother tongue and since they only have basic schooling", they had conversely done better in the Raven Progressive Matrices, which included a "graphic modality". This, according to the analyst's view, showed that where the test "entailed an exploration of perceptual basis, instead of conceptual", people had had "a better performance in the cognitive structure" (Block 2 conclusions; Ibid). Verbal expression (in a different language that the one used in everyday interactions) and conceptual representations were then highlighted as crucial areas in need of development and particular attention.

With this input, UCI-Red educational promoters started to consider the necessary steps to carry out a Diploma that would "adjust" these abilities in Yucatec Maya-speakers local participants. The analysis carried out was not however without controversy. Members of MAC reacted very critically against these results expressing that the instrument was exogenous and did not clarify the ways in which the cognitive skills measured could be developed. They wondered: "Where is this contribution going to come from, according to what times, and with what mediations are they [cognitive skills] going to be learned? [The question is] Not what is needed from outside, but what does the individual have inside him? This instrument was created in the Western world"

(UCI-Red Collective, 2001). In this meeting, the answer given by those in charge of the application of the measuring instrument was that this was “perfectible”, and that more analysis was necessary.

Many months after this meeting, Dora Ruiz-Galindo, one pedagogical facilitator with many years of experience working with another Indigenous group, the Tseltal in Chiapas, and who had been invited to take part in the study about the educational needs of potential local participants of UCI-Red, wrote a brief document that was circulated among members of the Peninsular *Colectivo*. In this she reflected on the findings of the assessment considering that both the New Jersey test and the LPAD provided insights about the command of some cognitive skills that bilingual peasants have. She acknowledged however that these tests required some adjustments and sometimes were too difficult to apply given that they needed a specialised agent to do that. She considered these tests to be the basis for the design of appropriate instruments to measure different cognitive and language development levels given that there was “a big gap with regard to "intercultural" instruments that could allow us to recognise” those differences. She meant by this that the right tools to measure cognitive capabilities across different cultures were still missing. The results of these assessments had made her think that “if there is a development of rational thinking following a different process to the linear, Aristotelian one, but ultimately going to the same place: what should the mediation strategy be in an intercultural curricular development? Reason makes us similar, judgment is universal… What are then the differences? The word Intercultural is an attractive and impressive one… but, do we know exactly what it means when we use it in the design of education programmes?” (Ruiz-Galindo, 2002)

MAC members took on the challenge of coordinating the area of Cognitive Skills, and attended courses on the “Philosophy for Children” methodology. During the first Diploma they used this method in special sessions where they adapted some of the techniques by using Mayan myths and legends, and encouraging local participants to talk about and discuss them.

In one example of these educational sessions local participants were read the myth of *kuxa’an suum* (living rope). The “living rope” features in Yucatec Mayan oral tradition as a mythical object hidden beneath the roots of a big *ya’axche’*, “ceiba, silk-cotton tree” (*Ceiba pentandra*). This “rope” was kept in a wooden box, and there was a time when somebody took it out and could not put it back again, so he had to cut the

rope in pieces, and then he realised that it was bleeding and was alive. It is said that since that day many ills have spread in the world. The rope has since then been lost and it is said that people must try to find it and put it together so that evil would leave the world. This is paired with the prophecy about the return of the King of the Mayas, who will challenge the King of the *Ts'úulo'ob*, "foreigners, non-Maya people", to a race on the "living rope" which will be then hung above in the sky. The myth says that the Mayan king will allow the foreign king to choose his own ride, and that he would pick a horse, a grey fox, or a rabbit. By picking up a squirrel the Mayan king shall win the race because this is the only animal that knows how to run on a rope. And from that day, all evil will stop on the earth. After having read this story in both Spanish and Maya the local participants were asked a long list of questions concerning different aspects of the story in an effort of collective interpretation of the myth.

When this exercise was applied in Hopelchen, Campeche, most of the participants of this session were not shy to share what they understood as a symbol of the need to recover their "culture and identity". One common characteristic of these participants was that they had a similar level of schooled education, ranging between completed primary school to high school education. Their answers were insightful and touched on many themes that they had been working on for a long time, such as cultural rights, gender equality, environmental education, among others. A similar effect was recorded in Nueva Jerusalem, Quintana Roo, when this exercise was reproduced there. People were also able to recognise this myth as a symbol of the need to recover some traditions and values of the old culture. In this micro-region the participants had a slightly lower level of instruction but they were people that had been working for a long time as literacy instructors, organisation promoters, and community authorities.

The method gave way to interesting interactions and worked as a cathartic moment where people would feel free to talk about whatever they thought this and other stories referred to. Other stories suggested to use in these sessions were *u yits ka'an*, "dewdrop of the sky", *ba'ax úuchu uch yetel le semiyao'*, "the origin of the seeds", and *j-ma' oka' yetel Cháak*, "the skeptic and the rain god". The suggestions were that the stories were short and simple, not too polemical, related to educational units of the Diploma, and with values or concepts which could lead to debate. In fact, there were few examples during the first Diploma of the use of these stories to instil debate or discussion on any other session than those of the Cognitive Skills area.

In a report written by the people in charge of this area (Noh and Burgos, 2003) they commented that the cognitive skills that they had practiced the most during those sessions were: pondering the most important elements, discovering or defining a problem, making a clear description, giving examples and counter-examples, sustaining opinions with sound arguments, generalizing when necessary and making balanced judgments. In this same document they also highlighted those skills that they did not "properly" address: management of inclusion and exclusion, sustaining opinions with sound arguments, unveiling of suppositions, detecting contradictions, inferring using logical relation, and detecting ambiguities.

Their summary stated that such abilities had been dissimilarly taken up by participants and that one of the common limitations detected was the "lack of security in the management of language". People often felt that they understood the first time they heard an instruction, or explanation, but would have to ask later again for a clarification. For the coordinators this was due to different circumstances, including lack of concentration. They noticed too that the "elderly get tired more quickly and that they were slower". And they highlighted that "due to deficiencies in language skills, they [participants] are always tempted to "guess" (to act intuitively) since they do not perceive well [sic]".

One of the main concerns on the part of the coordinators of this area was to follow the sequence of exercises and skill development according to the material provided by the P4C methodologists. These included loose photocopies from diverse sources like "Development of Cognitive Skills" (De Sánchez, 1991). Every exercise gave them a clue about some important differences with regard to the kind of abilities more common among the local participants. An important realisation or belief that came out of the work in this area was that, in the process of learning and understanding, "we, peasants, are more visual than auditory".

Despite the very interesting work done in this area, it was actually very difficult for UCI-Red organisers to communicate these intuitions to all the academic facilitators (the "experts") that were invited to work with the local participants on different specialised topics, such as sustainability, accounting, time management, commercialisation, among others. Hence the contradictory and sometimes limited methods that the latter tended to use. Some of these guest educators had however deeper disagreements with this kind of approach that UCI-Red promoters, particularly those

from MAC, were trying to recreate and advance. In particular they did not care much for mythology and some of the religious beliefs and practices involved. They were of the opinion that MAC members had gone too far and were not sure about the appropriateness of inducing local participants to talk about these stories, or re-enact traditional ceremonies.

Many of these academic facilitators did not share MAC members' belief that these myths, rituals and symbols were the "core", the "essence" of Yucatec Mayan peasants' identity and culture. And some of them were not even aware that this was an important principle behind the idea of UCI-Red (since there was not always somebody who had the time or the responsibility to explain these things to them). Still, even though some of the other UCI-Red promoters would voice their agreement with some of these ideas, they did not know or think that they needed to adapt or modify their educational approach either.

This emphasis or preoccupation with the development of specific cognitive skills was maintained as long as the common effort in organizing the first Diploma lasted. When the second cycle of educational programmes started, there was an attempt to recover what had been learnt from the work done in this area. Juan Burgos, from MAC, was commissioned to put together a document containing these lessons as part of an "intercultural methodological approach" for all UCI-Red members. Juan ended up writing and presenting different versions of this document, some of them very long drafts, some of them of a semi-academic appearance, others of a more experimental but still literary nature. As far as I know and during the time that I was collaborating and facilitating the internal analysis of UCI-Red, this document was only consulted and brought to the forefront of *el Colectivo*'s work when some of the Diplomas of the second cycle started being documented.

The version that I am going to comment on here is the one he entitled "Towards a Mayan intercultural education: Notes for the intercultural construction in the educational field of an initiative for Mayan and Yucatec development" (Burgos, 2004). In this 42 page draft, Juan includes a summary of the interpretations discussed with local participants on the *kuxa'an suum* myth, along with quotes from the colonial Mayan text, the Chilam Balam of Chumayel, and one of his own poems with the Mayan title *Yáaxche', u che'il kuxtal* (Ceiba, the tree of life) but written in Spanish, among other sources of inspiration. The index also mentions an exploration of pre-Hispanic

forms of education and a discussion of other models of "Western" education. A crucial aspect of what Juan was trying to convey in this document had to do with the idea of *cosmo-vivencia*, a Spanish neologism that can be translated as “lived cosmology”. This term implies that the worldviews of different cultural groups are not merely static “images” of the world but fundamentally “lived experience”. In his view, this expression could be understood as synonymous with “ethos, cultural matrix, or the core of fundamental values” that distinguishes a people or makes it alike with respect to others. Juan Burgos is a former Catholic priest who developed a new sensibility about the traditional Mayan beliefs and contributed with other Catholic and Protestant church members to the formation of the Indian Theology movement in Yucatan. His view of the Mayan *cosmo-vivencia* is based on an image of the universe that reflects both ancient and contemporary beliefs by the Maya and that allegedly structures their lived experience and practice. This cosmological representation is too complex to be described here. It tries to reproduce a certain view of the world based on archaeological and anthropological literature, especially classic studies of the Maya and the work of French ethnologist Michel Boccara. It makes little reference to stories or opinions collected from the workshops held during the first Diploma, except those related to the analysis of the *kuxa’an suum* myth. Another important element of his analysis is that Mayan education is based on the mythology which represents “the Mayan wisdom that has survived”. His constant campaigning for the recreation of traditional ceremonies was based on a view of them as ‘symbolic mediators” that form part of an “education in wisdom” where “the Past is fundamentally lived and learned as myth, the Present is lived as symbol and the Future is lived in the rite, which integrates all three” (p. 16). The trilogy myth-symbol-ritual is later incorporated in the cosmological model that Burgos painstakingly tries to recreate in this document.

This model became a constant permanent conversational feature and methodological framework for educational representations of the Mayan culture in the practice of some MAC members. Most important in relation to this attempt to synthesise what was learnt in the Cognitive Skills Area is the statement that the intercultural method of UCI-Red had been advanced and relied in:

a) participatory appraisal of development needs
b) use of some elements of oral tradition
c) interpretation of Spanish concepts into Maya and Mayan concepts into Spanish

d) consideration of knowledge that local participants have
e) intra-cultural processes of communication (peasant to peasant)
f) workshops for the development of cognitive skills
g) study of specific contents of Western culture

These are more practical definitions of what needed to be considered “intercultural” and were the ones that the majority of UCI-Red members were able to recognise as their own approach, rather than the cosmological model based on the image of the Mayan universe and the myth-symbol-ritual trilogy. Yet, even this list of practical endeavours was not entirely observed when these different organisations went on to organising their own diplomas for the second time.

By the end of this second cycle and with the clarity given by different evaluation processes under way, many among the UCI-Red members started to question the model and the methodology given the fact that out of the many contents that participants had been offered in the different diplomas, the level of learning seemed very unequal and difficult to grasp without using the kind of tools that conventional schools use. Aware that adult peasant learners could not be evaluated by sitting exams or asking them to do essays, UCI-Red promoters had commissioned a couple of evaluations where general questions about the themes they found relevant were asked (UCI-Red and Saldívar, 2004; EDUCE, 2005a). Not surprisingly the answers given by local participants were often vague and did not give many clues about difficulties or limitations they perceived during the Diploma. The most general assessment of these educational programmes was that it had been a wonderful opportunity for learning that had improved their sense of worth. They felt happy of having learned about many things of past history they did not know before (archaeological and historical data that were not offered when they went to school), and declared that this had made them more appreciative of their identity and culture.

However, by the end of the second cycle the question that Doris Ruiz-Galindo had posed at the beginning of the research to determine the level and type of cognitive skills that local participants needed to develop, and that the work of the cognitive team had tried to address, had not still been properly answered or even explored: What are the differential processes of cognitive development (if any) that Indigenous subjects experience and what are the most important cognitive skills that they build up and how do these determine their way of being in, and perceiving the world? And, how could this

knowledge be used to improve the educational programmes they were trying to promote?

Juan Burgos' document had been an attempt at answering these questions but its complexity and mysticism (along with other basic disagreements and diverse values attributed to those elements that were considered important by Juan's approach) in a way discouraged UCI-Red members to continue asking them. In what follows I will present an approximation to possible answers to these same questions that show that processes of learning and cognitive skills among Yucatec Maya, while being significantly different to what UCI-Red promoters imagined, respond to a very "universal" although undervalued set of learning and cognitive development forms.

How do Yucatec Mayan peasants learn what they know?

In light of the UCI-Red educational practices that I have described in previous sections, one can only wonder how contrastive these structured training spaces were with regard to the forms of learning that are locally put in place. Given the meagre results in terms of significant change in the amount and the quality of knowledge that several evaluations of UCI-Red have shown, it seems worth exploring what it can be possible to call a "Mayan perspective on learning".

Within the current debates about what defines local and indigenous knowledge a growing rejection of attempts to represent this knowledge as systems has prevailed in recent years. On this point, several anthropologists have argued that indigenous or local knowledge's peculiarity resides in the practices that support it as much as in the information and representations of the world it contains.

After showing what the UCI-Red promoters thought were the cognitive skills that local participants needed to develop, I would like to share some of the stories that I gathered from these participants in my research. As part of the exploration of the effects of UCI-Red's Diplomas I held diverse conversations with people in and out the workshops and educational sessions still in place. In some cases, these conversations happened with people that I knew from long ago, although in others it was with new acquaintances. These conversations were semi-organised affairs, mostly to satisfy a demand for systematic understanding of the impact of Diplomas by some UCI-Red promoters.

The local participants' stories that I want to focus on now tell of the learning processes that they have gone through in their lives; processes with different angles but with striking commonalities. In most cases, the most significant experiences that local promoters have been through as learning subjects had little or nothing to do with schooling. In their accounts, primary education was described as that which gave them the ability to read and write. I was more interested in the modes of learning that they could identify outside the school, so I did not insist much on this subject, but it was remarkable that out of the nearly 20 people I systematically talked to, none wanted to expand on their experiences of learning in the school. Some of them however would be excited to tell me how they learned to "do *milpa*", to hunt or to become a "promoter".

Out of nearly 20 conversations I have selected two that seem to reflect, some of the commonalities expressed and at the same time to show some of the particularities given micro-regional context and family circumstances. They are significant and striking in their simplicity, in their unimportant and monotonous appearance. I have selected them precisely for these reasons, and I present them not as exemplars but as part of a common experience with historical specificities.

Picture 2. Don Luis during our conversation

a) Don Luis: Hard work and opportunities to learn

My conversation with Don Luis happened on a late afternoon of December after a couple of days following other community promoters' activities. Don Luis's house is a very solid building located on one of the many small and unpaved streets of the town of Chacsinkin in Southern Yucatan. He was born in 1955 in this same town as his parents. Don Luis's main job, he declares, is the work of the cornfield (*u meyjukool*), and the

work of honey bees (*u meyjukaab*). However, he has also been trained to become a community worker, or a community development promoter. The training has been "given" to him ([*tu*] *ts'áajteen* / [he/they] gave me), in order to perform this work.

His father was a "campesino" (peasant) while his mother worked "at the kitchen" (*ku meyaj te k'obeno'*). His father also learned the job of baker (*in papae' tu kanaj unp'ée* clase *meyaje' kya'alale'* panadero). When he was 11, his father died and he had to stop going to school where he was already in the second year of primary education in Chacsinkín. What happened then he explained in this way:

> "When I came back I was taken [to work] in the cornfield because I did not have a father then, I only had my mother. I was taken into the field, and I was taken to carry water. I was taken to carry the *k'eyem* (maize food for field workers). I couldn't work because I was only 11. I was very little. The work I had to do was taught to me by my grandfather (*tu ka'ansaj tumeen in áabuelo*). I was handed over to the house of my grandfather, whose name was Cristino Chan. When I was there I had to wake up very early to go into the cornfield. It was my grandfather who taught me how to work, but he taught me the work of the cornfield (*in* áabuelo *ka'ansjen meyaj*, pero *ka'ansjen u meyju kool*). I mean to plant! When I followed him it was to plant! (*le ka'aj binen tu paache' páak'!*). When it was the time of planting, it was planting that he taught (*le tiempou páak', páak' ku kaansaj*)."

He received the fruits of work according to his contribution at the time, "*unp'íit*" (a little) which is the contribution a child of his age could make. He would receive corn, wood and other products from his grandfather. Another person who took part in his education was his uncle who, apart from being a peasant, raised cattle too. He had a life as a young person that he recalls as marked by work. He worked, he said, even on Sundays. Because he had to work for him and his mother he did not have any opportunity to attend school. It was only before getting married that he decided to learn the basics with one teacher from INEA, the National Institute for Adult Education. This decision came after realizing that, in order to be part of work groups in his town, he needed to know basic arithmetic operations, as well as reading and writing.

He describes this process emphasizing the human features of the person who taught him this:

> "There was a teacher in INEA who was a very good friend. […] He taught me to subtract, to multiply (*ku ka'ansajten reestar, multiplicar*). It was only there [that I learnt]. Only they did not give you books there. But because those books had very beautiful readings I am thinking I need to learn then. Not just because but to keep count of how much maize I sell (*tia'al in xooke' buka'aj ixi'im in konol*). I don't have count of the money that they pay for my products. That is the use for me to learn how to read/count (*leti' u bilal úuch in kanke xook*). When I started to study, they made me "comisario ejidal" (local authority on land use matters). Before this I was made the

> representative of a beekeepers organisation. When I was in that, I learnt some Spanish because I did not know any (*men español min wóojli'*)".

It was his desire to learn how to count and read (both skills called *xook* in Yucatec Maya) that he links to being elected for several local authority positions like "president of the beekeeping organisation", "*comisario ejidal"*, and "council representative". These new positions also made him learn much more things as he describes:

> "I learnt lots of things (*ya'ab ba'alo'ob teen in kanik*). I learnt how to make receipts, and other documents like that. Even if I wasn't the one doing it but I see how is done and then I keep it (*kin wik bix u beeta'ale' entonces kin líisik*). I keep it [the receipts] and when I need I take them out and do them [myself]."

He explains that he knows how to read and write but not too much. He has taught himself, or rather has learned on his own using the method he described. The INEA instructor only helped him with the basic arithmetic. He explained that when he was a president of the beekeeping association, he did this job with the INI, the National Indigenista Institute. There he says: "I learnt how to make myself a community promoter (*tin kanaj in meentikba* promotor comunitarioo'). Being a promoter entailed training other people in using specific technical knowledge to improve their beehives. When I asked him how he learnt all these things he explains:

> "When they give a workshop there is a technician who comes to give the workshop. Then [he explains] how to recognise if there is no disease (*bix u k'ajoltik ma' ti k'oja'ani'*) [in the beehive]. Then, the symptoms, how much medicine to apply, how many medicines,… When I finish my training I come back and go practicing in my apiary. What comes out well I talk about (*ka'aj tsikbatik*) [to other people]."

Only when he has a grasp of how things work does he start spreading the training among other people. He says that he has also managed to learn a little bricklaying, though he never did this as a migrant labourer in the big tourist places of the region, as many other adult men have done and young men still do in his town. He only made this apprenticeship up to the level that they call "*media cuchara*" (half spoon). However, an old man in town who knew a lot about bricklaying and house building told him how to build one. He did this by paying attention to this old person's explanations: "I do the house only with what he explains. Everything he taught me like that" (*Teene' ten beete najo' cheen ba'ax ku tsolik. Tuláak lelo' leti' tu ka'ansajen*). What he describes as a process of instructing (*ka'ansaj*) in this case has implied giving directions, explaining measures, directing to select the right materials, and how to use them to build a house.

Don Luis has 9 children: 8 daughters and 1 son. Of his 9 children, several had concluded secondary school. All of his children live in Chacsinkin. Some had dropped out of school. One of them, the boy "likes the work of the forest more" (*máas uts yich u meyju k'áax*). Don Luis, however, has tried to encourage him and his daughters to continue studying, at least until finishing secondary school since he considers this to be important: to know "*xook*" for many kinds of work, whether they want to be bricklayers, carpenters, or peasants. *Je'e ba'axak claseil meyaje' k'a'abet xook.* (For whatever kind of work you need to read/count).

Throughout the second Diploma organised by MAC in the region, Don Luis was one of the most devoted to the programme. He did not fail to attend any of the sessions and even though he did not speak Spanish he would make an effort to make a point, speaking to the whole group and the academic facilitators, even when he knew that they did not understand Yucatec Maya. He was one of the most proud holders of a Diploma as a Mayan Community Promoter from the UCI-Red at the end of the educational programme.

Picture 3. Doña Isabel during our conversation

b) Doña Isabel: Learning by doing and observing

I interviewed Doña Isabel on a thundery afternoon in the town of San Antonio Xiat in the micro-region known as Northern Yucatan, where IEPAAC, MAC and FUNDEHY had joined forces organizing a Diploma for Community Promoters. Her house was located on one of the sides that form the main square, the most important public space of this small town of the region formerly known as the Henequen Zone. The town was part of a former henequen plantation and still shows its architectural legacy in what are

now the decaying homes of peasants and waged labourers. This is the case of Doña Isabel's house, although it is still a solid structure with lots of light and air.

In my conversation with her, she declares that she was born in this small town, as were her parents. She was 39 at the time of the interview and talked about how she had to go and live in a different town, not far away after the destruction of hurricane Gilbert in 1988. She takes this as an opportunity to tell the story of how the communication between this town and San Pedro Chicabal, the place where she went to live during this time, has improved significantly since then.

When I asked her what is her main occupation she said that she is currently mostly devoted to tend her children at home, without "going out" to "earn money" (*ma' taan in jóokol bey náajal beya'*).

She explained that her father was "flataromero" which is a corruption of the Spanish term "plataformero", the person who drives the "plataforma" which was the small truck employed to transport sisal packs between plantation and cord factories. She describes the different tasks that his father used to perform as part of this job, such as cutting the henequen, tying it down and putting it on the "platform".

She also tells of how she did not get a chance to study, to go to school, since there was always work to do at home and how she was required to help with this labour and work in the field sometimes too. She does not mention the word "ask" or "demand" but presents it as something that needed doing it, especially when her father was ill. Her attendance at school was erratic because of this. She managed however to finish third grade of primary education. She describes her ability to read and write as "not very good but I learnt a little" (*ma' jach ma'alob pero tin kanaj unp'íiti'*).

I asked her what she can recall about learning or being taught about her working life. She answers that: "There were times when, at dawn, they would tell that I have to go into the cornfield".

Since she was very young she was assigned the responsibility to bring food to her father in the field, and this was an opportunity for her to learn how to work and what to do to help her parents. Thus she learned (*kanik*) many of the different jobs available in the henequen workshop, like picking up the agave leaves, sweeping them, and carrying them. She also learned to plant corn and to harvest, to "walk in the forest" and to defend herself.

She also learned to embroider (*chuuy*) the traditional cross-stitch, and so-called the counted-stitch (*xokbil chuuy*), which are the main decorative designs of women clothing. Other tasks she learned were to make ice lollies, and to make "panuchos" (traditional snacks) to sell. These jobs were taught (*ka'ansaj*) to her, although she cannot specify or describe exactly how she learned them.

For some time before taking part in the Diploma, Doña Isabel was a member of a group of women who received some training and support to improve their homegardens, in a bid by the Kellog Foundation to improve the levels of nutrition of poor rural communities in this region. It was because of her participation in this project that she was invited to attend the Diploma.

Of the training she received as part of this initiative she says:

> "Sometimes I go out to the meetings of the Kellog [Foundation] people, and because there is demonstration we are learning (*táan k-kanik*), we are learning to make a little of… a little of agromón (?). I like it this way and even if I am little late I go because there are people who have come out to teach us (*yaan gente jóosa'ano'ob tia'a ka'ansjko'one*) and so I like to go."

She explains that she has learned many things in this way, such as how to make belts, fantasy jewellery necklaces (chaquira), among other things. I asked her whether she has learned these handcrafts by making, by reading, or by some other mean. She answers that she learned these only by doing them, *cheen meentbil*. Evidently, there has been some more instructing than simply doing but she cannot really point her finger to them. She explains how this happens in little more detail:

> "The one who knows (*ma'ax u yojel*) is the one who brings people together in order to demonstrate the work. He or she is the one who does the work, […] and every month we have a job that he or she shows us (*ku ye'esaj ti to'on*)."

In her conversation, Doña Isabel often interchanges Spanish and Mayan terms and expressions as in this last quotation where she uses the Spanish noun "demostración" first and then uses the Mayan verb *e'esaj*, "to show, to demonstrate". One of the things she learned to do this way is to make "piñatas", because, as she explains, she did not know how until someone showed her. She says that as long as there are people wanting to "teach us", *ka'ansko'on*, she is always going to be willing "to learn [it]", *kanik*: *Kanik pero tu ka'ansaj beyo'* (I/we learn but [if] he/she/they teach this way).

Doña Isabel was singled out and suggested by some of the coordinators of the Diploma in Northern Yucatan because of her continuous participation. These same

people were however interested in knowing how much she had actually managed to learn out of the Diploma since she apparently always talked in Yucatec Maya during the sessions, a language that few or none of the organisers actually speak fluently. From my conversation with her it was clear that she had had a mixed recollection of the topics worked during these sessions, sometimes confusing these with previous trainings she had been to. Later during that period I met Doña Isabel again when travelling along with other community promoters between the many towns that have been integrated into the "micro-region". She was very happy to be travelling and talking to other people in the area to whom she would not be able to meet otherwise. This contentment was for her enough reason to continue participating too in this kind of educational programmes.

What I hope to have been able to show with these two shared stories is that there are other processes that are relevant in the way Yucatec Mayan people learn. While generally happening outside schools or formal spaces for learning, these can, and indeed are, used in relation to organised spaces for the production and reproduction of knowledge. Yet these strategies are little known or, even more, known but not considered relevant and therefore have remained unexplored by UCI-Red promoters. They do not correspond with the ideas that UCI-Red organisers have about what makes people to develop "basic cognitive skills", "critical thinking", "high cognitive functions", or "abstract cognition". They can be seen as traditional forms of apprenticeship and as such tend to be considered "a lesser form of learning" as Lave has consistently pointed out (Lave, 1996). However, as she and Wenger have demonstrated there is more to "learning by doing" than meets the eye, by suggesting a way to approach these forms of apprenticeship as "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In the following section I will try to explore further what goes on in the processes of learning in practice among the Yucatec Mayan people. Additionally, I will rehearse a form of analysis that takes into consideration the grammar of learning and personal development in the Yucatec Mayan language and the everyday metaphors that tell more about "cosmo-vivencia" than structurally and philosophically conceived "contemplations of the myth" (Burgos, 2004).

CHAPTER 7. EXPLORING MAYAN VIEWS OF LEARNING AND IDEALS OF PERSONHOOD

Legitimate peripheral participation and Mayan development

While any researcher can attempt to capture the classification systems and to describe the techniques and methods employed for local knowledge production, the social and cultural logic of practice with its forms of authority and ways of understanding knowledge and learning can easily be overlooked.

Some approaches to indigenous knowledge stress that while unsystematic and unevenly distributed, knowledge in local settings responds to a certain model, logic or, in cognitive terms, script or schemata (Hanks, 1991; Bloch, 1998) that provides meaning and enables the reproduction of forms of learning and acting in the social world. In what follows I would try to highlight those elements important for understanding the ways the most significant learning most likely happens for Maya-speaking actors, like those participating in the UCI-Red.

Cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave has questioned the primacy of decontextualised knowledge as a highest form of cognition in her study of arithmetic thinking in everyday life (1998). She found that when faced with decisions in real life people must often resort to elements of cognition and reasoning that do not reflect the abstract rules of thinking as they are generally taught (or intended to be taught) at school. Lave points out that:

> "Procedures for solving problems, as well as their goals, are inherently value-laden. […] A problem is a dilemma with which the problem solver is emotionally engaged; conflict is the source of dilemmas. Processes for resolving dilemmas are correspondingly deprived of their assumed universalistic, normative, decontextualized nature" (Lave, 1988: 175).

She takes this realisation to question cognitive development theories that exclude "culture" from the realm of cognition and reduce it to context. She makes the case for shifting the focus from ideologies of formal rationality to an approach that pays attention to situated processes of cognition where this "would be located […] in the experiencing of the world and the world experienced, through activity, in context. [Where] Culture, on the other hand, is an aspect of the constitutive order" (ibid: 178). In this view cognitive activity acquires a distinctive "physical character" fundamentally

involving the person in action, and all their embodied senses. She stresses how language seems to be constantly referring to this involvement of the body by using English common expressions like “digging out” ideas, “catching the eye” of people, “getting to the point” of something, etc (ibid 182). She takes these initial ideas and develops them further in her research on tailor apprenticeship in Liberia, from which insights would be later incorporated into the collaborative and influential book written with educational theorist and practitioner Etienne Wenger.

In their work on situated learning practices Lave and Wenger (1991) presented a series of ideas that have contributed to change the way in which some educational practitioners and theorists view learning and education. Significantly they have contributed to the formation of a field of practice and research around the idea of “communities of practice” that has been adopted by many agents and institutions (see, for example Wenger, et al., 2002), including international development agencies like the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC)[9]. It is not necessarily this idea of “communities of practice” that is, for me, the most important contribution of these authors but rather the invitation to look at culturally embedded and context-based forms of apprenticeship and learning as “legitimate peripheral participation” (LPP) processes. In this perspective, learning is considered an aspect of all forms of social engagement whereas LPP is not viewed as an educational methodology or strategy but rather as “an analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning” (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 40).

They base this approach on the notion that practice does not constitute a “moment” or a secondary element in the process of learning but rather that “learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world” (Ibid: 35). LPP is suggested as a term for describing this kind of processes. It is peripheral in the sense that the social actor starts participating somehow marginally and gradually increases his or her involvement by aiming at full participation within a given community of practice. The expression “full participation” tries to reflect “the diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community membership” (Ibid: 36-37). Peripherality is intended to convey openness, “a way of gaining access to sources of understanding through

[9] See, for instance the website for the “Communities of Practice in Ecohealth” programme: http://www.idrc.ca/ en/ev-101449-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html [Accessed October 2009]

growing involvement" (Ibid: 37). Now, "participation" is not reduced in this approach to "learning by doing" but it is rather more than that:

> "Participation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world. This implies that understanding and experience are in constant interaction - indeed, are mutually constitutive. The notion of participation thus, dissolves dichotomies between cerebral and embodied activity, between contemplation and involvement, between abstraction and experience: persons, actions, and the world are implicated in all thought, speech, knowing, and learning (Ibid: 51-2)."

LPP denotes more than cognitive skills, it is also about "knowledgeably skilled identities". It is related to social representations of personhood. Moving beyond the individual cognition and on to the social construction of ideas of the person, LPP tends to be a culturally specific dynamics where the practices of community formation – historically constructed, conflictive, synergistic and relational – have to be unveiled.

Clearly the notions of "community of practice" or "peripheral participation" imply hierarchies and power relationships. Apprenticeship models can be, and have been, used as exploitative forms of labour extraction in many parts of the world, particularly during the Middle Ages and the birth of capitalist economic relationships in Western Europe and the United States. There are however many more examples among African, Asian and Latin American societies where different and complex circumstances have given "a relatively benign, relatively egalitarian, and nonexploitative character to apprenticeship" (Ibid: 64). Because of this historical background Lave and Wenger highlight the need for any participation in a community of practice to be legitimate "in order for learning identities to be engaged and develop into full participation" (Ibid).

Crucially for our understanding of Yucatec Mayan practices as valid forms of learning, within the set of considerations leading to the construction of the LPP standpoint, observation and imitation are not seen as lesser or simply "basic" cognitive functions. Communities of practice are highly diverse and complex entanglements of people, activity and world, in constant interaction with other communities, as this general frame discusses:

> "An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs. From a broadly peripheral perspective, apprentices gradually assemble a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the community. This uneven sketch of the enterprise (available if there is legitimate access) might include who is involved; what they do; what everyday life is like; how masters talk, walk, work and generally conduct their lives; how people who are not part of the community of practice interact with it; what other learners are doing; and what learners

> need to learn to become full practitioners. It includes an increasing understanding of how, when, and about what old-timers collaborate, collude, and collide, and what they enjoy, dislike, respect, and admire. In particular, it offers exemplars (which are grounds and motivation for learning activity), including masters, finished products, and more advanced apprentices in the process of becoming full practitioners" (Ibid: 95).

Although apparently in stark contrast with schooled theories of learning, or even with cognitive skills development strategies used in "informal education" projects – like the ones described before, what Lave and Wenger propose does not drastically separate "schooling" from "apprenticeship" but rather, moves towards an understanding of schooling as a distinctly, culturally specific form of LPP. As Lave suggests in a different work, the problem with schooled education is that it relies on the belief on the superiority of decontextualised knowledge and cognition, yet this decontextualisation constitutes in itself a politically charged, socially situated practice. Treatments of learning so far have been too concerned with the epistemological, and Lave suggests a new approach that considers three basic components: the *telos*, or ultimate goal for changes in participation and learning; the basic relation thought to exist between the individual and the social world; and the mechanisms whereby learning is thought to occur (Lave, 1996: 156). In this regard, she recommends to those engaged in schooled education to enquire and get to know "about the powerful identity-changing communities of practice of their students" (Ibid: 159). Ultimately the main difference between schooled education, more "informal" or alternative forms of education, and traditional forms of apprenticeship, is not only that the latter can be characterised as a form of LPP while the others cannot. The main distinction between the three resides on the social identities being formed and the practices involved in this construction of the person in relation to the social world.

Without directly relating her work to this approach, anthropologist Suzanne Gaskins has provided us with an interesting window to imagine and start to understand how these processes of LPP are culturally defined by Yucatec Mayan peasants. More than in LPP she is interested in the ethno-theories that explain children's development and enculturation among Yucatec Maya-speakers living in small rural communities. She identifies her approach with the same critique made by Lave and Wenger to conventional views of situated practice and learning which restrict the meaning of what they call the 'situation" to the immediate context of behaviour. What is left aside is precisely what she calls ethno-theories which are "more abstract and more general

cultural beliefs about *what* the child should become, [including] the nature of children, how they develop and learn, and the parents' role in socializing children" (Gaskins, 1996: 345). She emphasises that without taking into consideration these beliefs, the educational theorists and researchers will only impose their own interpretations on the processes that they observe and document.

Following from this insight, she has been able to characterise different beliefs and theories current among the Yucatec Maya about children, learning and development. At the core of these there is the widely shared conviction that children's development is "largely natural and automatic" where cognitive features like intelligence and talent "are thought to be influenced almost completely by innate forces that are beyond both their own and their parents' ability to change or control" (Ibid: 355). Later in a different work, she has put this same idea in a slightly different way by saying that: "The Maya believe that the source of development is internal and preprogrammed—it just "comes out by itself." Development and socialisation are both thought to be ongoing, gradual, and continuous processes" (2000: 380). She has also stated that Mayan parents think of children's growth as "a process of unfolding and maturation" (2006: 289). This main principle is going to be considered later in a more symbolic and metaphorical way when we examine the grammar of personhood of the Yucatec Maya. Without going into much detail about the specific Yucatec Mayan terms used to describe this process, Gaskins notices that Mayan parents constantly use linguistic formulas that imply a continuously evolving process of development where their children's speech, for example, is "coming out" or their understanding "coming into being". Learning is conceived in this way as happening "little by little".

Based on this realisation and on an extended and continuous fieldwork in a small unnamed Yucatecan town, she has proposed to understand the forms of socialisation of Mayan children as organised according to three main cultural principles: primacy of adult work, importance of parental beliefs, and independence of child motivation. These three elements structure most of the everyday activities that integrate children into the domestic "community of practice". On this she asserts that: "Yucatec Mayan children's daily activities are […] primarily structured by adult work activities. *Children are legitimate cultural participants in adult work, even as they are learning how to participate appropriately*" (Ibid: 379; my emphasis). The second principle has already been commented upon but another interesting belief held by Mayan parents is that if

any involvement from them is necessary this is mostly concerned with making sure their children are protected and grow healthy. On the third principle Gaskins notes that: "even while Mayan children are often involved in ongoing, adult-directed work activities, they are also given a much greater range of independence in general. […] There are few attempts by parents to organize or influence their children's behaviour […]" (Ibid: 380).

Gaskins' observations of Mayan forms of socialisation and cognitive development reveal other very interesting features such as,

a) Children grow with great independence and competency in maintaining themselves (feeding, cleaning, etc). They accept help if they feel they need it and responsibility when they know they can cope. Parents do not force their children to learn and rather than encouraging them "to participate in activities that are beyond the child's ability and then providing the help needed to accomplish them (as suggested by Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development), they permit participation only to the extent that the child is actually able to do the task" (Gaskins, 2006: 294).
b) Children devote a significant amount of their time watching other actors' activities in the household compound. They seem at times to be keeping a "running tab" which in turn reflects adults' attitudes and behaviour. Mayan adults, Gaskins highlights, "are careful observers and monitor village activity in the same way" (2000: 382).
c) Verbal communication is rare and not the main form of educating: "Adults rarely speak to young children unless it is to tell them to do something (or not to do something) or to offer information they think the child needs to do a task" (Ibid: 383). Gaskins makes a point of saying that the lack of spoken communication looks to Westerners as "withdrawal or a lack of engagement" while in fact this would be coherent with the 3 cultural principles highlighted before.
d) Observation is considered the main mechanism for learning: "Mayans […] believe that children learn best by watching" (Ibid).
e) These forms of socialisation seem to have the effect of making children keen to participate in family life from a very young age, which is in turn encouraged by parents. Mayan children "take pride in newly developed skills and the confidence that the adults come to place in them to do new tasks independently" (Ibid: 386).
f) Extended family is the most important "community of practice" and of reference for children and gives adults too their main sense of belonging: "family members have a virtual monopoly on Yucatec adults' social interactions" (Gaskins, 2006: 289). These relations are structured by relations of hierarchy and respect. Such forms of socialisation influence the way Mayan people engage with other actors beyond their household circle. When other interactions happen these are organised by relationship, generation, gender, and age (Ibid: 291).
g) The importance of these ideas of hierarchy and respect determines that if parents get involved at all in the processes of socialisation of their children this intervention is aimed at making them aware and "learn proper patterns of social

> interaction and display these patterns appropriately. The most basic principle here is showing proper respect for older family members and proper responsibility for younger family members" (Ibid: 294)

All these contemporary observations are surprisingly similar to early accounts made by Spanish Catholic missionaries of the colonial Maya as Clark and Houston have noticed when exploring ideas of craftsmanship and personhood of the post-Conquest period. Their analysis reveals, on the other hand, that "the mastery of basic domestic arts was fundamental to social perceptions of a well-trained child (and probably of adequate parents, too). […] At a very personal and fundamental level, the mastery of domestic arts was self-mastery and achievement of full adult status in Maya society" (2008: 40).

This highlights one important point that has not been spelled out by Gaskins: that the ultimate goal of Mayan ways of socialisation is to achieve a certain type of person and social identity. Based on what has been said here and on personal observations, it seems clear that the main belief of what makes a proper person for the Yucatec Mayan people is, above all, a hard-working person. This may be the reason of why so many contemporary Mayan organisations emphasise this characteristic when deciding about the name they want to be known for. While their non-Mayan counter-parts would look at mystical or romantic names, they generally pick up names such as *meyjil máako'ob* ("workers", Lit. "people of work"), as one peasant organisation involved in UCI-Red training was called. A *meyajil máak*, hard-working man, is self-sufficient and knows the forest well; he is capable to provide for his family and is sexually potent too. (The most common term to describe a lazy man is *jooykep* which literally means "flabby penis"). A *meyajil ko'olel* (hard-working woman) has healthy and clean children, and works as hard as her husband to sustain the family.

This ideal of personhood will be further analysed in the following section along with other elements that form part of the symbolic repertoire that sustains what can be seen as a Mayan epistemology.

The grammar of personhood among the Yucatec Maya

The following analysis has been inspired by the work done by linguist Antonio Paoli Bolio in collaboration with Mayan human rights organisations in Chiapas, Mexico. In his work on the ideals of education and autonomy among the Tseltal, Paoli employs a

sociolinguistic analytical framework to unveil those elements that, in his view, differentiate Mayan Tseltal epistemology and praxis from those of mainstream Mexican society. In particular, he focuses on key concepts like “autonomy”, “education”, “knowledge”, “teacher”, and “life” to discuss the distinctive values found in Tseltal language and culture. He presents an analysis where the most common term in Mayan Tseltal language for "to educate": *p’ijubtesel*, can be interpreted as "to make other person to uniquely germinate" (Paoli, 2001). He goes then on to examine different linguistic and monographic examples of how this "uniquely germinating", or as he also puts it, "becoming unique", takes place in Tseltal everyday life and tends towards the achievement of *lekil kuxlejal*, "good life".

I am aware that the analysis that I shall present here is far from being a complete picture of the sociolinguistic practice of the Yucatec Maya. What I would instead try to show is that there is evidence that in the way peasants, speakers of Maya in the Yucatan understand knowledge and learning we can identify elements of a general script for learning or local epistemology.

As many linguistic and anthropological studies have showed, language shapes the experience of the individual member of a community by recreating the world every time he or she names it. Important notions of life, society and, in this case, cognitive theories and cultural orientations are embodied in the language we speak, an approach called linguistic relativity (cfr. Lucy, 1997). Linguistic constructions tend to be sometimes of a metaphorical nature which, as Rosaldo (1980) and Kövecses (2003) provide evidence for, cannot simply be dismissed as idioms, or figures of speech.

In what follows, I shall offer some clues found in the etymological and sociolinguistic analysis of Yucatec Mayan terms and expressions –like the ones used by Don Luis and Doña Isabel– that give a very different picture of the ideals of personhood and development to those shared by most of the UCI-Red promoters. Following the point of departure taken by Paoli Bolio, I will begin by looking into the Maya Yucatec nouns and verbs concerned with cognitive development.

Before initiating this presentation it is necessary to highlight two main characteristics of the Maya Yucatec language, particularly the written language as it figures in several historical and religious texts, and dictionaries compiled over more than five centuries. These are homonymy and polysemy. According to linguists like Arzápalo (2009: 14) these two features derive from the monosyllabic morphology and

syntax of the language. Yucatec Maya is a tone language with at least three tones (neutral, long, and high) and five different vowel inflections (three tone vowels and glottal and re-articulated vowels). This makes it a complicated language to represent graphically, an issue that has for many years puzzled Mayanist scholars. The Colonial alphabet designed by Franciscan friars in the 16th century has gradually given way to diverse forms of representation of the language. In 1984, State educational institutes, and bilingual teachers and administrators revised the different styles of writing the language and attempted for the first time to agree on a standardised alphabet, which has however proved very difficult to implement (on this process, see Brody, 2004). For this analysis I use sources from Colonial and contemporary Maya dictionaries, and linguistic databases. When referring to common expressions and concepts found in contemporary Yucatec Maya I will be employing the so-called 1984 alphabet (regardless of the written form in which they were found) in italics, and will make clear when I am using the Colonial writing by using bold letters, particularly when enquiring the etymological foundations of current words and phrases.

"Learning" and "educating": etymological roots and symbols

The concept of learning in Yucatec Maya is expressed in several ways, but the main morphologic element is the stem *kan*. According to the linguist Manuel J. Andrade (1955), most Yucatec Mayan stems are monosyllabic and these can be found by removing structurally identifiable suffixes. *Kan* is the main component of the transitive form for "to learn" as seen in the following examples:

I learn [it]	Kin *kan*ik
They learned [it]	Letio'ob tu *kan*ajo'ob
You will learn [it]	Teeche' yaan a *kan*ik
They have learned [it]	Ts'o'ok u *kan*iko'ob

The intransitive is formed by combining the stem *kan* with the passive, intransitive marker *bal*. In this form the "a" sound is extended, and so it renders *kaanbal*. Some regional variations have it as *kaanbaj*, *kambal*, or *kambaj*, but these are less common forms. This is also the basis for the noun "learning" that is constructed by adding the suffix *–il*, as seen in the following examples:

How to learn	Bix u *kaanbal*
Let's learn the Mayan language	Ko'ox *kaanbal* maaya t'aan
The learning of Juan	U *kaanbal*il Juaane'

The stem *kan* changes during conjugation as in the following example of past tense:

Felipe hadn't learnt to read	Feelipe' ma *ka'an*chaj xooke'

Another stem used to refer to the act of "learning" is *xok*/*xook* (transitive/intransitive forms, respectively). Yet the etymological meaning of this stem is "to count" and "to read", and is mostly used to refer to those processes of learning that happen in a classroom, or in formal education.

The act of "educating", or "teaching", is formed by the stem *ka'an* and the causative suffixes *–bes*, or its contraction *–s*. When appended the suffix *–saj* the verb becomes intransitive which defines it as an irregular form since it resembles the verbal inflection of the past tense. The following examples show the most common iterations of the term:

You taught me (it)	Ta *ka'ans*aj teen
I'm going to teach you (it)	Táan in *ka'anbes*ik teech
Let's teach the Maya language	Ko'ox *ka'ansaj* maaya t'aan

When looking at the etymology of these main expressions we face the problem that our main sources were written using a spelling system that did not take into consideration the nuanced tonal nature of the Yucatec Maya pronunciation. Thus, Colonial, 19th century, and early 20th century registers of the language compiled by Bolles in his combined dictionary (2001) show different entries for these two concepts. For "learn" we have the concordance terms: **camba**, **cambal**, **cambenil**, **can**, **canal**, **canbal**, and **canben**, among others. For "educate" and "teach" we find the expressions **caanzah**, **caanzic**, **cambecah**, **cambez**, **cambezah**, **canbezah**, **canzah**, **canzic**, and **canzah**. In these expressions the alternative stems can be identified as **can** and **caan**, which reflect the modern differentiation kan and ka'an which we have seen before. In Bolles' compilation the dictionary entries for these two stems give us:

> **Caan**: Up, above. // Verb root: to tire. // Sky, heaven.
> **Can**: Snake. // Four. // By extension: much, strong. // Speech, talk. // Verb root: to speak, to talk. // Verb root: to learn. // Shoot of a plant. // Gift, present. // Alternative spelling for can = to tire.

Additionally, Bolles reports the use of the terms **canbal**/**cambal** to name different species of shrubs, bushes and undergrowth. The analysis of contemporary sources reveals a similar picture where these two main roots have the following meanings:

Popular Mayan Dictionary	Mayan Dictionary Online (Erfurt University)
Ka'an: Sky *Ka'anaj*: Up, high. *Ka'anal*: Height, elevated, higher. *Kan*: Four, when. *Kaan*: Snake. *Káan*: Adverb for strength.	Ka'n (intransitive verb) "to tire (oneself); to wear (oneself out); to get exhausted; to be overwhelmed." Ka'n (noun) "cielo" Ka'n (adjetive) "tall, high, elevated" Ka'n (intransitive verb) "to climb, to ascend" Kan (transitive verb) "to learn" Kan (numeral) "four" Kaan (intransitive verb) "to study" Kaan (noun) "snake"

The differential contemporary spelling of these monosyllabic stems is the battlefield where recent attempts to standardise the Yucatec Maya language take place. On this subject a lot of words have been written for there is little agreement on the alphabet and the proper ways of spelling in order to emphasise lexical and phonemic variants. There is however much debate about to what extent these differences correspond to the internal formation of the language or whether they correspond to regional accent and dialectal variance within the Peninsula (Brody, 2004). Furthermore, as early linguists have warned, there is little evidence that pronunciation of the language in the Colonial period was similar to contemporary forms. We thus see that etymological analysis of the language reveals a terrain that is more uncertain than that where Paoli's study of the Tseltal language was made.

There are however some clues that are worth noting. If we compare this analysis with the studies carried out by Gaskins (1996; 2000; 2006) and Le Guen (2005; 2006; 2008) on ethnotheories of socialisation and development, it seems to me that it is possible to say that the concepts of "learning" and "educating" in the Yucatec Maya language are closely related to the notions of "respectful conversation" (*tsikbal*), of "hard work" (*meyaj*), of "being elevated" (*líik'il*), and ultimately, of "growing" as a person, and metaphorically, as a plant (which would be contained, as I will try to show within the notion of *kaanbal*).

Let us take this reflection step by step. As we have seen, the contemporary words for "learning" etymologically come from various possible sources. In old Yucatec Maya, the terms **canbal**, **canben**, and **canbenil** seem to have had a similar meaning where the meaning for **can** was probably more consistently 'speech, talk". Looked at from a morphological perspective these three words are constructed in similar

way to **tzicbal** and **tzicben**. The following are the different meanings found for the basic stem:

> **Tzic**: To honour, to obey, to venerate. // To unravel or pull apart fibrous material, such as cord or meat. // Strand or thread. // Numeral classifier for threads, counted in sets of 20. // Pride, arrogance.

The suffix *-ben* has been recognised as having the meaning “worthy of”. Thus, in this diad **tzicben** can be etymologically interpreted as something that is “worthy of obedience, honour, or veneration”, and this is how it appears in Bolles’ combined dictionary. The suffix *–bal* has previously been said to convert a verb stem into an intransitive verb, or a noun. But etymologically can also be interpreted as **bal** = thing. **Tzicbal** can then be etymologically interpreted as "a thing of obedience, honour, and veneration", but it appears in old Yucatec Maya dictionaries as “to talk, to converse".

Contemporary ethnographic analyses (Burns, 1980; Berkley, 2001) have revealed that *tsikbal* is an interactive narrative performance based on social hierarchy and prestige and generally oriented towards consensus building. *Tsikbal* can then be better understood and translated as “respectful conversation”. Although literal translations of the word have it alternatively as “story, storytelling, chat, conversation”, proper *tsikbal* is marked by a series of characteristics like “exchange of conversational turns and cross-speaker repetition of a broad range of communicative forms, including lexical items, intonation, and phrasal and clausal syntax” (Berkley, 2001: 356). With this information in the background, it is possible to extend the etymology of **tzicbal**/*tsikbal* to “a thing of unravelling, of pulling apart; a thing of threading (like a story); and, a thing of pride or prestige”.

With this analysis in mind we turn to the previous diad (**canbal**/**canben**) and with this we may be able to reveal several possible translations for these old Yucatec Maya terms. Thus **canben** could be interpreted as “worthy of learning” but also as “worthy of talk”, and this is its old definition “something worthy of being spoken of” (Bolles, 2001). **Canbal** could then be said to be “a thing of learning” and “of speech or talk”. However as in the following example – and given Yucatec Maya’s polysemic nature –, alternative interpretations based on the etymology of this term can also be the following:

Canbal/*Kaanbal*:
1. Lit. A thing of learning (Intransitive form of “to learn”)
2. Altern: A thing of speech or talk
3. Altern: A thing of snakes
4. Altern: A thing of four

5. Altern: A thing of strength
6. Altern: A thing of vegetal shoots
7. Altern: A gift (thing of)
8. Altern: A thing of tiring, a tiring thing

Of all these possible meanings, what we found in the ethnographic study of Mayan children's socialisation symbolically corresponds well with most of these roots: learning is above all about taking in the world often imagined as organised by "four" sides, and growing up in "strength". Sometimes this learning has to do with magic and the supernatural, symbolised by "snakes". Learning happens naturally and can be seen as a "gift". And it is fundamentally linked to work which is "tiring". Only marginally learning has to do with "speech" or "talk". As Gaskins" research suggests, Mayan learning mostly occurs without the mediation of verbal communication of rules or sentences. And yet, social learning by Mayan children is reinforced when personal experience is interpreted through the sharing of stories which provide the cultural and logical framework to understand them. In Le Guen's view verbal communication like "direct explanations, comments or stories told" work as reinforcement to the lived experience of the apprentice or of those close to them, rather than as what is known. It is "the personal experience of the individual […] in relation to rules, recommendations, and prescriptions from experts and people concerned [what] is going to make an individual internalise a particular knowledge" (Le Guen, 2005: 67). This framework is mostly provided via *tsikbal* and will ultimately contribute to memorisation, since this is what allows the individual to make sense and explain what they have been through with the help of more experienced members of their society. As for the relation of learning with "vegetal shoots" we will explore this later in this section.

The act of "educating" or "teaching" presents a similar polysemic challenge. Whereas Bolles (2001) is inclined to interpret **caanzah** as an alternative spelling for **canzah**, and this as the causative form of learning, i.e. "to teach, to cause to learn", contemporary spellings of the term are, as we have seen, more consistent with **caanzah/caanzic**. Taking this into consideration, it seems likely that while considering *ka'anbesaj*, *ka'ansaj*, and *ka'ans-* as alternative causative incarnations of *kan* as Bolles (2001) has it, it seems that exploring an alternative etymological analysis for these terms is worth trying. Thus what we have is that while **caan** could mean "up, above; to tire; sky, heaven", the suffixes **–bezic**, **-bezah**, and **–zah** are all consistent with "causing, making something into". If we take and divide further the first two disyllabic

stems we end up with the roots: **be** and **–zic**/**-zah**. **Be** stands for "road, path, course" which is formally spelled **bel** or **beel** but that consistently appears even in early colonial sources in this contracted form. Alternatively, in many entries of the combined dictionary, **be** translates as "office, position, job", and similarly as "doings, deeds" as in the expression **yutztacil be**, "good deeds". In its form **beel** + transitive stem **–t**, **be** becomes the origin of the verb stem **beet**/*beet*, "to make". Finally, **–zah** would stand as the causative stem as it does in many other Yucatec Mayan terms.

If we join the multiple roots of our etymological analysis in the same form we did with **canbal**/*kaanbal* we are able to list the following possible meanings:

Caan(be)z(ah)/*Ka'an(be)s(aj)*:
1. Lit. To cause somebody to be on the path, or in the work of, learning; to teach, to educate.
2. Altern: To cause somebody to be on the course, or in the work of, going up, above; or to induce somebody into an ascending path, or position
3. Altern: To cause somebody to be on the course or the work of tiredness, or to induce somebody into a tiring job, or path
4. Altern: To cause somebody to be on a path to, or the work of, the sky, or to induce somebody into a celestial, divine or sacred road or job

All these possible meanings are consistent with the many uses and instances of the act of educating, and they signal to the notions of "course" and "work" with associated values of "ascending" and "tiredness". This is to say that the etymological roots of both "learning" and "educating" there is the idea that the process of becoming a person is related to "working hard" and "ascending/growing" in the same way plants, trees and crops do, as we will see later.

Knowing: transformed self and memory

While the main stems of *kaanbal* and *ka'ansaj*, as seen in the previous section, are the main referents of the process of learning in the Yucatec Maya language they are not used to describe its main product, allegedly, "knowing" or "knowledge". The two terms employed to describe these are *ojel*, "to know, to do something frequently, to find out, to experience" and *k'aj-óol*, "knowledge, to know, to meet, to recognise". Some examples of the way they are employed in everyday communication are:

They have learned	U y*ojel*tmajo'ob
How did you know that boy	Bix úuch a *k'ajóol*tik le xíibpaalo'

I have informed the people (Lit. I have given knowledge to the people)	Ts'o'ok in ts'aik *ojéel*tbil le máako'obo'
I have no knowledge of this thing	Mina'an in *k'ajóol*al ti' le ba'ala'
We don't know what will happen	Ma k-*ojel* ba'ax bin úuchuk
Have you met Pedro?	¿A *k'ajóol* wáa j-Peedroi'?
Being known	*Ojéel*a'an
Known as	*K'ajóol*a'an

The two disyllabic stems can work as transitive verbs without the need of a transitive suffix. However, when they are used in this fashion, their conjugation is irregular and they are therefore considered defective verbs (Andrade, 1955). It is when attached the suffix *–t* that they become regular transitive verbs. When attached the suffix *–bil*, the form *ojéelt* becomes a passive form, "that which has been known", and a noun which translates as "knowledge, notice, information". With the suffix *–al*, the stem *k'ajóol* turns into passive form too, "the known" which is used as "knowledge" in general. This is the word to express knowledge as an object, as something that can be accumulated and had by a person. Another term used less frequently to describe this is *tuukul* but this one translates just like the verb root "to think" and the noun "thought". In some common expressions it is *k'ajóolal* that is considered necessary to understand the world surrounding humans, as in the following example taken from a monograph about the cultivation of maize written by Santiago Domínguez Aké (this was taken from Montemayor and Frischmann, 2004: 84-85):

> *Le beetike', j-kolnáale' k'abéet u yantal ti' junp'éel k'ajóolal ti'al ka páajchajak u na'atik ba'axo'ob ku dzaik ojéeltbil che'ob, ba'alche'ob, u "xook k'íin," yetel u chukáan ba'alo'ob ba'pachmilo'ob.*
>
> (Therefore, the peasant needs to have one knowledge in order to being able to understand the things that are given to know by trees, animals, the count of days and all other complementary surrounding things.) (My underlining)

The surrounding environment, or nature, communicates or provides signs to humans about the near future. In order to make sense of these signs, humans need the *k'ajóolal* that has been passed from generation to generation, much of which is considered to be "lost" nowadays.

Ojel is considered the product of learning as in the following expression: *Ts'o'ok u kanik pak'ach, boora u yojel* (She has learned how to make tortillas, now she knows). This expression is used by Le Guen (2007) as an example of how the learning process is gradual and is achieved by way of small changes in knowledge. On this same issue of Maya cognition, Gaskins states that: "development is seen as an ongoing

approximation of a change, so subtle that it is rarely proclaimed that a child has accomplished that change" (1996: 355). When these changes finally seem to have happened whatever has been "learned" is considered now *ojela'an*, "known".

When analysing etymologically these two stems what we find they have in common is the basic stem *óol*. This is probably one of the most complex and important notions to be found in the Yucatec Mayan language. Its meaning has changed little since the first records found in early colonial indexes. Yet its spelling has varied significantly. Thus we have the following possible translations:

> **Ol**: Centre, heart, core (also as **olal**, **olil:** spirit, heart). // Heart, bud, shoot; stem, stalk. // Hole. // Ball. // Verb root: To want, to desire, to wish for. // Will, desire, intention. // Condition, property, status. // Almost.
>
> *Óol*: State of mind, mood. // Spiritual energy. // Will, intention. // Almost. // Sprout, shoot. // (As wóol: numeral classifier for round objects).

All these examples have been taken from Bolles' combined dictionary and the Popular Dictionary Maya-Spanish (2003). Le Guen and Pool (2008) dubbed it the "emotional word", and translate it as "vital energy". Linguist William F. Hanks defines it as "will, capacity for involvement and sensate experience" and considers this to be, in an abstract sense, part of what "makes a human being". He also highlights the fact that this is "the lexical base for nearly all expressions describing momentary states of being or feeling" (1996: 250). Semiologist Gabriel Luis Bourdin considers *óol* as the "fundamental core of the individual, associated to the core of vegetal growth; it is the "tender heart" (*cogollo tierno*) of plants, trees and flowers" (2007/2008: 5). In his semantic analysis, *óol* as centre "not only refers to the idea of a region or geometrical space, but also to the idea of a nucleus from which a certain growth or a vital movement with a centrifugal and upward orientation irradiates" (Ibid: 12). When exploring the aspect of *óol* as "condition, status", Bourdin compares it with the social identity of a person. It can be concluded that this multifaceted stem represents processes of cognition and emotion, and is one of the most important aspects of human agency among Yucatec Maya speakers.

Other Mayan languages have different words for similar cognitive and agentive principles – *ch'ulel* in Tseltal and Tzotzil, *altzil* in Mam, or *cuctal* in Chol, to mention a few examples (see Martínez, 2007) –, and these are generally translated into everyday Spanish as "heart". The Yucatec Maya *óol* however do not receive the same treatment when translated to other languages. It is only in the language of the specialised linguists

and semiologists that the deep meaning of the stem is revealed and yet, in metaphorical and cognitive ways, it seems to influence the way Yucatec Maya speakers think of development and growth. When the Yucatec Maya speak of the "heart" in a bodily way they may use another two terms *puksi'ik'al*, "material heart, pit of the stomach", or *ts'uuts'*, "heart, the soft area below the rib cage", which make reference to the physical regions where strong emotions are experienced. These two terms are the most commonly used as equivalent to the Spanish "corazón".

If we look at the etymology of the terms *ojel* and *k'aj-óol* we realise how this reflects some important principles of Yucatec Mayan epistemology. The most probable roots for *ojel*/**ohel** in the combined dictionary (Bolles, 2002) are **ol** and **hel**. **Ol** is the colonial spelling of the stem *óol* which polysemic nature we have already analysed. The second stem has these possible meanings: "change; repayment; verb root: to repay, to pay something back (sometimes, as a reward); rest; successor, replacement". In its transitive form, **hel-t**, the stem is translated as "to free oneself, to escape". *K'aj-óol*/**kahol** divides into **kah** and **ol**. Bolles gives us the following meanings for **kah**: "bitter; bile, gall; verb root: to embitter; verb root: to remember; to break sticks, branches; "pinole", a drink made of ground parched corn mixed with a sweetener and water".

In this way, our two terms can be interpreted as:

Ohel/*Ojel*:
1. Lit. To know, to do something frequently, to find out, to experience.
2. Etym. Change of heart, core, centre, spirit, vital energy.
3. Altern: To repay, to reward the heart, spirit, vital energy.
4. Altern: To replace the heart, spirit, vital energy.

Kahol/*K'aj-óol*:
1. Lit. Knowledge; to know, to meet, to recognise.
2. Etym. To remember the heart, core, centre, spirit, vital energy. The heart, core, vital energy remembers.
3. Altern: To embitter the heart, core, vital energy.
4. Altern: To break the sticks, the shoots of the heart, core, vital energy (?)
5. Altern: To feed "pinole" to the heart, core, vital energy. (?)

Second in the list of all these possible interpretations of the two terms are the most common and accepted meanings attributed to them. An important conclusion that can be drawn from the etymological and discursive analysis is that the two processes recognised in the Yucatec Maya language connote different practices and forms of

knowing, one, *ojel*, closer to practice and identity, and the other, *k'aj-óol*, more related to memory, space, and the senses. Thus, Yucatec Maya speakers *ojel* how to work, and *k'aj-óol* the environment where this work happens. Hanks' linguistic studies reveal that Yucatec Maya speakers make "a minimal binary distinction between seeing and perceiving with some other sense" (1996: 251). These are *il*, "to see", and *u'uy*, "to feel, hear, smell, taste", which refer to more than the sensorial performance like Hanks explains: "To 'see' another's speech is to comprehend it, to understand the overall point. To 'hear' their speech is to follow its directions, to obey it or otherwise affect one's conduct in light of it" (Ibid).

What is important in this review of the linguistic components of Yucatec Maya cognition is the idea of "memory". This is particularly relevant for Yucatec Maya epistemology for, as with many other subaltern forms of knowing, this has relied for centuries after the Spanish colonisation on oral transmission and reproduction rather than on permanent or static records. Being *k'aj-óol* a little more than "memorizing", *k'a'ajal*, "that which is remembered", implies constant practices of learning involving the body and sight. Le Guen has found that this gives Yucatec Maya peasants a surprising ability to remember sites and objects in their constructed view of natural space. In his study of the organisation and the learning of space among the Maya of Quintana Roo, Le Guen uses many examples to show that the Maya rely on a number of spatial markers in their everyday life to organise their movements in the forest. Being able to memorise, or recognise these markers is a fundamental skill that seems to be developed by way of experiencing the world (getting acquainted to places, species and people) and by specific mnemonic techniques (see, Le Guen, especially chapter 5). Le Guen states that Maya children learn from a very young age to recognise (*k'ajoltik*) arboreal and vegetal species that would later be used as spatial markers in the forest. They learn to memorise particular trees in such a detailed way that they can recognise them in photographs and explain where they are geographically located (Le Guen, 260). That this knowledge is important in the formation of the person (regardless of gender) is apparent in the mention Dona Isabel does of her having learnt how to "walk in the forest" (see above, p. 122).

To be able to remember is part of what makes a person aware, conscious and responsible, notions that are expressed as *k'aj iik'*. We have already discussed the multiple meaning of the stem *k'aj*. The term *iik'*, or **ik** in its colonial spelling, is another

example of a very complex notion in the Yucatec Maya language. We found the following definitions in colonial and contemporary dictionaries:

> **Ik**: Breath. // Spirit, the soul of a person, animal, or thing. // Divine, sacred. // Wind.
>
> *Iik'*: Air, wind. // Breath, respiration. // Spirit, life. // Bad wind which causes disease.

Hanks translates the term as "breath, physical endurance, animacy, awareness", and to some extent reduces its "meaning" to "motion generally" (1996: 250). In another work, Hanks looks at the multiple meanings and uses of the word concluding that:

> "It is significant that this same term is used to designate the winds that blow upon the earth, the spirits who are embodied in the wind, the breath each person draws, and the force that makes the blood circulate in the veins. Nor is this a matter of metaphorical extension from a single literal meaning. For Maya shamans, all of those referents are literally the same thing under different aspects" (Hanks, 2000: 201-2)

French ethnologist Michel Boccara has the term *iik'* as one of the most important elements of Mayan religion and science. Based on a long engagement with the Maya, and extended fieldwork in the region, Boccara has developed a painstaking analysis of Yucatec Maya mythology. This is how he has come to understand that *iik'* is fundamentally related to supernatural entities that he identifies as "ancestors". His conversations with Mayan shamans made clear for him that when dying: "The ancestors turn into wind and can then interact with us" (Boccara, 2004: 15). These interactions occur in many ways: in the forest, in dreams, by way of diseases caused by bad behaviour, or provoked by stepping on powerful places. While analyzing these manifestations of what he calls alternatively "mythical ancestors" and "universal life energy", Boccara suggests translating the word *iik'* using the neologisms *vencêtre* in French, and *viantepasado* in Spanish, which combine its main meanings: "wind" and "ancestor". In this way, *iik'* can be paired with *óol* as the two most significant principles of Mayan agency and consciousness.

When this important concept is combined with the verb stem for "remembering" we end up with the following expressions:

K'aj iik'	1. Lit. Responsibility responsible, to realise, to be awake. 2. Etym. To remember the wind, spirit, ancestors. The wind, spirit, ancestors are recalled. 3. Altern: To embitter the wind, spirit, ancestors. 4. Altern: To feed "pinole" to the wind, spirit, ancestors. (?)
K'a'ajal iik' (intrans. verb):	1. To begin to understand, to realise the effects of one's acts.

K'a'ajsaj iik' (trans. verb): 1. To counsel, to advise, to warn.

The last expression in our previous list conveys an interesting idea, which is consistent with what we have been discussing so far; namely, that the act of counselling or guiding in Yucatec Maya learning is an important yet "casual" component leading to the development of the person. The counsellor would simply remind his or her apprentice of what is already a part of them, their life energy. A similar term describing this same act of tutelage is *tsol xikin*, "to advise, to counsel", whose components mean separately *tsol*, "to order, to line up; to explain", and *xikin*, "ear", which gives us "ordering or lining up the ear". This would imply an encouragement and facilitation of the hearing (*u'uy*) that as we have seen encompasses all the other senses, with the exception of sight (*il*). *Tsol xikin* would therefore be describing "counselling" as a preparation for the experience.

"Knowing" (*ojel, k'aj óol*), and "realizing" (*k'aj iik'*) lead to the emergence of *na'at* (understanding) and *tuukul* (thinking). While these two stems function as both verbs and nouns, when used to describe cognitive skills in everyday speech they appear generally as nouns signifying "intelligence". Hence, it would be said: *Maaría jach yaan u na'at kex chichan* (María is very intelligent though she's young; Lit. María has indeed understanding although she's little), or *mina'an a tuukul* (you're not intelligent; Lit. you don't have thought). As a property of the person, *na'at* and *tuukul* are thought to reside in the head where they are either permanent or where they pass by, as in the common expression *ku máansik u tuukul Pedroi'* (Pedro thinks; Lit. Thought passes by Pedro's [head]). *Tuukul* would sometimes be extended as to mean a "way of thinking" or "intention" which in turn would be consider a "condition" of the person as in the saying *jats'uts'/k'aas u tuukul* (She or he is good or bad; Lit. Her/his thought is beautiful or ugly, bad).

So far, by exploring the etymology of key concepts as well as the grammar of Yucatec Mayan forms to describe processes of learning and knowing I have tried to show how a certain Mayan epistemology starts to appear. This is fundamentally an epistemology of Yucatec Maya-speakers whose livelihoods are closely related to the cornfield and the forest, but not necessarily of speakers of the same language who live and work in urban settings. The examination of these terms and concepts reinforce the notion that learning processes among Yucatec Mayan peasants correspond to forms of

legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). There is however another dimension of these varied forms of learning present among the Yucatec Maya that has worked to firmly anchor them in the life cycles of people in the region. These are the metaphors that often compare human beings with plants. To understand this symbolic language would allow us to add another layer of significance to the studies on cognitive development of, and to specify the cultural model of LPP as lived and experienced by the Yucatec Maya.

Metaphors of the human being as a plant

It is common knowledge among Mayanists and other scholars in the region that pre-Hispanic mythological accounts spoke of the Maya as children of maize corn. The *Poop Wuj*, or Book of the Council, compiled originally by Franciscan friars in Quiche, one of the Mayan languages of Guatemala, is our main source in this regard. According to this account humanity was created from white and yellow maize dough. In the Yucatec Maya region, the several written records of *Chilam Balam*, or the Prophet Jaguar, in particular the so-called *Chilam Balam* of Chumayel, contain an account of creation of human beings from maize corn, although this is couched in ritual language. According to Brian Stross, "it is clear that before heaven and earth there was a maize spirit, referred to as the "three cornered jade stone," who remained within the maize, later emerging with long locks of hair (2006: 585)."

Archaeologists and historians of the Classic and colonial Yucatec Maya have come to accept this account as one of the defining features of Mayan identity and it has even been adopted as a discourse by contemporary Mayan activists and intellectuals. And although maize continues to be the most important plant for the Yucatec Mayan peasants – who still call it in both ritualistic and everyday language, *saanta grasiya*, or holy grace –, nowadays there is not a single account that would link humanity to maize in the way those ancient creationist myths have recorded it.

If however we look at one of the possible meanings of *óol*, this gives us a clue of some continuities between those early accounts of Mayan humanity and contemporary notions of the person. If *óol* can be interpreted as "bud, shoot", this puts the growing process expected from children under a new light for it seems to parallel that of the plants. As we have seen before *óol* is considered part of the core of the person, the place where volition and agency are to be found. But this element, as expressed in verb

formations, is not static. It can change and is constantly evolving in an upward movement, as Bourdin confirms it (2007/2008).

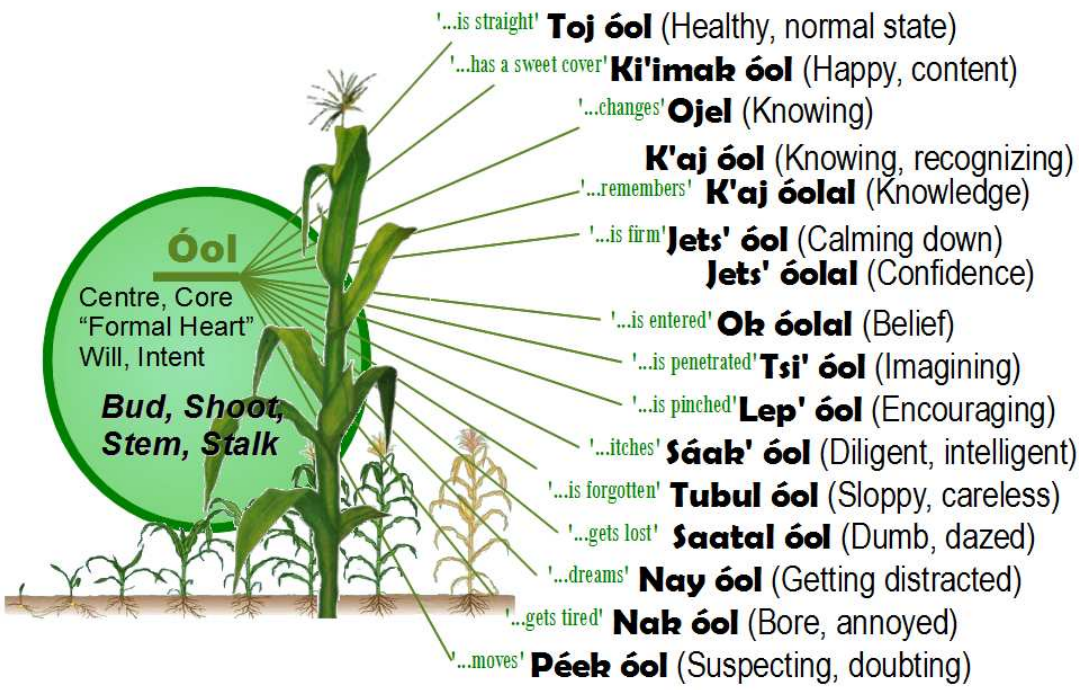


Figure 7 . Cognitive functions and emotional states involving the óol

The use of *óol* in several expressions that refer to emotions as well as to values and qualities of humans gives more evidence about this, as shown in Figure 7. In this image I attempt to show the presence of *óol* in common verb compositions that rely on metaphorical expressions – called "ditransitive verbs" by linguists –, which are related to emotional states and cognitive functions (Verhoeven, 2007: 254-5). This graphic represents ways in which they can be seen as metaphors of people as plants, and the most important of all, maize. We find that the *óol* is perceived as changing or remaining in certain location or status. If the *óol* trembles or moves, the person is in doubt, suspicious. If the *óol* is tired, the person gets bored. When the *óol* is dreaming, the individual gets distracted. Or if it gets lost, one becomes dumb. A person whose *óol* is forgotten becomes sloppy. Conversely, if their *óol* is itching, or pinched; if it is "lively experienced", then the individual is considered diligent, or active. If something sharply penetrates, or enters the *óol*, then it is imagined or believed. The *óol* needs to be firmly placed inside the person so that they become calmed and confident. When the *óol* is remembered, or capable of remembering, the individual recognises and learns about the

world. Changes in the *óol* mean that the person knows how to go about everyday tasks and important work. And if the *óol* shows a nice cover, the self is content and happy, a normal state expected from all the healthy people whose *óol* has grown straight, in the same way in which the maize is expected to grow.

Of all the previous metaphors, the ones that can be identified as images of plant growth are those who make reference to the *óol* as being settled or moved, or as having a nice colour, or growing straight (*toj*). Interestingly, the Yucatec word for illness (*k'oja'anil*) does not speak directly of the óol but its root *k'oj* means 'substitute, mask, disguise", which may be referring to an altered, false, unnatural state of being, opposed to the expected life. *Toj* (straight) is a quality that not only the *óol* but also the *bej*/*béel* is expected to have. This is apparent in some of the ways the Yucatec Maya greet each other:

Q= *¿Bix a béel*? (How is your road?)
A= *Toj in béel* (My road is straight, i.e. I'm fine)
Q= *¿Bix a wóol*? (How is your óol?)
A= *Toj in wóol* (My óol is straight, i.e. I'm healthy; I'm fine)

That the road should be a straight one does not refer to virtue or goodness but to practicality since the straight path is the one that would take you quickly where you want to be.

Na'at, "understanding", metaphorically connects human nature again with the maize plant, since the root *na'* (mother) is associated with the Mayan goddess of maize in Mayan Classic script where a portrait of the goddess is used to represent this syllable **na**. According to epigraphist Bassie-Sweet, she is depicted with a corn bud over her ear, "that is, the bud from which the corn ear grows" (2000: 8). The Mayan goddess of maize is associated with the corn seed; she would be the bones and skull from where the first corn seed originated. The analysis of other Mayan languages shows that in most of these languages the name of maize is *ixim* (Stross, 2006: 581). *Ixi'im*, the Yucatec word for maize, etymologically means "woman's breast", from *ix*, "female gender particle", and *im*, "chest, breast". That *na'at* and the corn seed are related is manifest by the fact that some diviners often use corn kernels in their prognostication practices. They "read" the corn kernels, in order to "understand" what is coming ahead. What they gain with this practice is *na'atil*, "understanding", of the signs of future, as we have seen in other common expressions (see above, p. 139).

Other metaphors of human beings as plants in Mayan expressions and beliefs tend to compare the act of procreation with agricultural practices. It would be traditionally recommended that children should be conceived according to the cycles of the moon. If the new person is conceived during full moon, it would be a boy; if it happens during new moon, it would be a girl (Bastarrachea, n.d.). This same advice is given when it comes to planting, especially maize, beans, and squash, the main crops of the Yucatec Maya *kool*, "field". This advice is quite variable throughout the Peninsula; in some regions, it is only recommended for trees and plants that grow above the ground, and not advised for roots like carrots (Milbrath, 1999: 30).

Conception is thus equated with the planting of the seed which is reflected again in language. The Mayan word for adult, married woman is *ko'olel* which etymologically can be decomposed into **col,** "cornfield, garden", and **el**, 'suffix referring to parts of the body". *Ko'olel* becomes the "body of the field"; her husband, *ichan*, is thought as the one who "plants" the new person in her and makes her "bear fruit", *ichankil*.

Brian Stross has showed how in many Mayan languages there are terms of body parts exchangeable with maize parts. Although few of these examples come from the Yucatec Maya region, there is one existing term that this language shares with the others, *bakal*, "corn cob", which is related to *baak*, "bone" (2006: 581). While not specific to the maize plant, Hanks reports and shows that: "Vegetation is another semantic domain very closely related to corporeality, and many of the terms have ethnobotanical meanings alongside their bodily ones" (1996: 252). Thus, we find that just as humans, plants and trees have also *óol*, "live core, sprouting point"; *paach*, "back" for people, "bark, outer surface" for trees; *ich*, "eyes, face" for humans, "fruit" for plants; *k'ab*, "hand, arm" for humans, "branch(es)" for trees; *chuun*, "trunk" in both cases; and, *nak'*, "belly, abdomen" for people, "the girth (of trunk or individual branch)". Hanks warns however that not all corporeal terms are shared because while both plants and humans have *óol*, only people have *iik'*. Verhoeven highlights that in the verb formations involving the *óol* – which she calls "person part" – these expressions refer to "bodily sensations of the person as a whole" as well as "bodily conditions" (2007: 263). She notices that in cognitive domain descriptions *óol* is slightly less present than *iik'* or *tuukul*, while acknowledging that "cognitive part collocations are all compositional and based on metaphor, in contrast to some of the emotional ones", and that this 'seems to be due to the conceptualisation of cognitive states and

activities that take the respective person part as location or goal with respect to which the state […] or activity […] is predicated" (Ibid: 264).

This brings me to the most comprehensive example of symbolic representation of human beings as plants which is to be found in the contemporary ceremony of *jéets méek'*. An important monograph study on this ritual states that its origin is to be found in pre-Columbian times (Romero de Nieto, 1986). The expression "to do the *jéets méek'*" to a child refers to the act of carrying him or her astride on the hips. Both the expression and the practice are widely extended in the Peninsula without necessarily referring always to the ceremony that we will describe in the following lines. However, even without its ritualistic performance, there is a shared belief behind this practice that considers it necessary for the proper development of children. It is generally assumed that by carrying children in this way, their legs would "open", and grow properly, making it easier for them to walk without getting tired quickly. The first person to *jéets méek'* the child becomes his or her godparent.

When the ceremony is performed, more care and detail is paid. The selection of godparents becomes a formal affair and more commitments and responsibilities are taken by all parts. There is no specific rule and many ethnographic accounts report sometimes slight or important differences between regions, towns and families. There are however constant elements like: the invitation by the parents to other adults to become godparents of the child, the prescribed age of the child defined according to gender, the presence of work tools and objects that are presented to the child, the feeding of the child with specific kinds of food, the carrying of the child around a table, and the belief that this ritual will contribute to the physical and intellectual development of the child.

The *jéets méek'* has been generally taken as the equivalent of baptism within Yucatec Maya society, an idea that most of the authors reviewed reject. Again, Terán and Rasmussen hypothesise that this may have been a ritual practiced in pre-Hispanic times to welcome the newly born into the adult world by "propitiating the opening of conscience and the entering into the community" (2005: 283). These days its main purpose is to "awaken the physical and intellectual capacities of the newly born" (Ibid). For Peón the ceremony is a "rite of passage, of insertion, and of integration; it is a rite of initiation to the activities and responsibilities" (2000) that children will perform later in their lives according to gender roles. Mayan activists like Vázquez think of this as an

important value that "determines what is to be Maya" (2005: 106). Unlike other ethnographies concerned with this ceremony, it is Cervera's analysis that breaks new ground by associating it with Yucatec Mayan parental ethno-theories. She does so by calling attention to the role that "psychological entities" (*óol* and *iik'*) have in the development of personhood among children. Cervera defines the *jéets méek'* as "a form of human agency exercised by the parents with the aim of influencing the construction of [their] children as persons" (2007/8: 20). The specific aims and effects that this ceremony is expected to have will be described later, and linked to the metaphorical framework which compares human beings with plants.

What follows now is a general description of the jéets méek' ceremony based on these different reports and descriptions (Peón Arceo, 2000; Terán and Rasmussen, 2005; Vázquez Canché, 2005; Cervera Montejano, 2007/8):

> The ceremony is performed when the child is three-month old, if she is a girl; or four-month old, if he is a boy. The extended family and guests get together in the place of the parents. In an enclosed space, everybody gathers around a table where food and work tools have been placed. The godparents come with presents and to start the ceremony they take the child from the parents' arms and approach the table. If the child is a girl the godmother is the one who carries her around the table and the godfather if it is a boy. The godparents present the child with objects and tools that are related to their gender and role within the family. If the child is a girl, she is presented with kitchen utensils and sewing or other tools associated with female tasks. If the child is a boy, he is presented with agricultural tools and hunting objects. More commonly these days, children are presented with objects used in schools or other white collar jobs (computers, keyboards), regardless of their gender. The children are also presented with food which is put in their mouths. The types of food that are generally present are: *je'*, "eggs"; *tóop'*, "large squash seeds"; *k'aj*, "pinole, or sweet cornstarch"; and, *chaay*, "tree spinach" (*Cnidoscolus aconitifolius*). While the child is presented with these objects and food, the godparents go around the table in alternate turns, beginning first anti-clockwise and returning clockwise. Once the child has touched and tasted all that has been given, he or she is returned to their parents, thus closing the ceremony.

The main differences appearing in these different reports have to do with numbers and the kind of objects that children are presented with. Some reports say that the number of rounds that the child and godparents must perform around the table is 13 if it is a boy and 9 if it is a girl (Romero de Nieto, 1986), while others say that it must be 9 regardless of gender (Peón Arceo, 2000). These two numbers make reference to pre-Hispanic and contemporary representations of the world, where 13 represents the skies or clouds whereas 9 represents the underworld. Terán and Rasmussen report another component that is not mentioned in any other description which is a massage applied to arms, legs and body of the baby before the ceremony (2005: 285). These elements are

important because they place this ritual at the centre of religious and practical concerns about the nature of children's development.

Yet what all different accounts of the *jéets meek'* have in common is always an explication of the meaning of the food given to the children that is based on the similarities between their Mayan names and the effects that feeding them with this food are expected to have in the development of the person. There is not always correlation between food and the ability that is aimed to be developed but what is constant is the effect that it is expected to provoke. The combinations are represented in Figure 8:

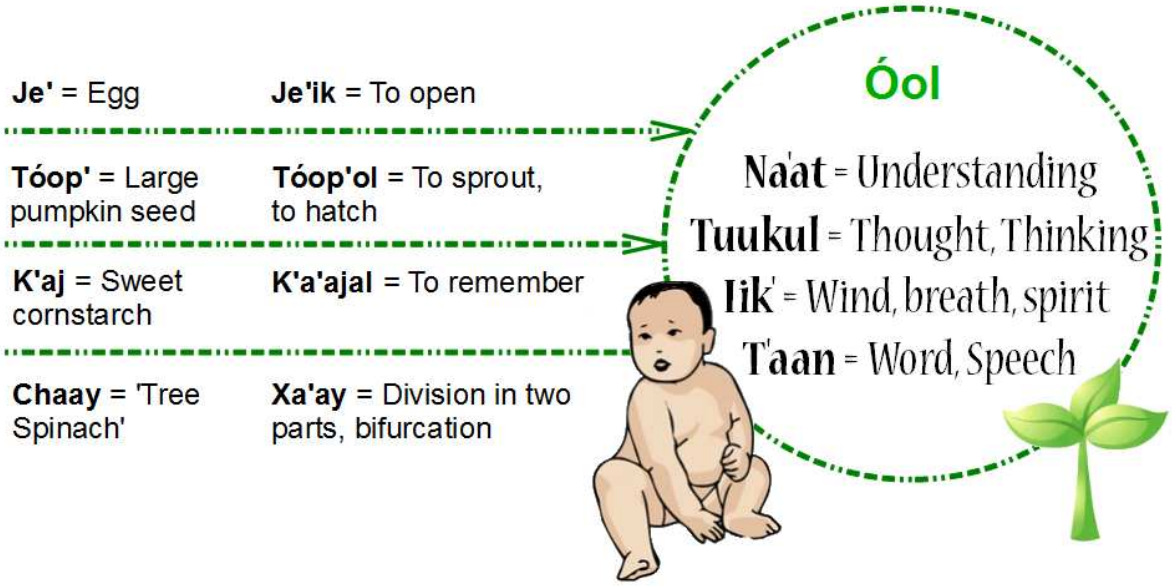


Figure 8. Cognitive processes and elements symbolised in the Jéets Méek'

In this image I try to synthesise the many answers or interpretations given for the types of food that are included in the ceremony. Thus, the hard-boiled egg, *je'*, is aimed at "opening", *je'ik*, *je'kal*; the large seeds of the squash, *tóop'*, are intended to induce the sprouting, the germination, *tóop'ol*; and, the cornstarch, *k'aj*, is hoped to help the child to remember, *k'a'ajal*. The tree spinach leaves, *chaay*, have a more difficult explanation, in what their effect is concerned. Its similarity with the term *xa'ay*, "division, bifurcation", may refer, according to Romero, to the capacity of discerning or discriminating opposite qualities of reality, good and evil, a moral sense (1986: 44). The qualities that all these processes seek to promote are circled and they complement each other, in my view, to form the human agency or personhood of children. Understanding, thinking, responsibility and speech are all cognitive functions that are at the core of the human person in Yucatec Maya language and ideologies, as I have tried to show

throughout this chapter. The *jéets méek'*, as Cervera discovered, is a symbolic expression of these ethno-theories and of an ideal of personhood that equals development with germination, and natural, ascending growth, in the same way the forest and the maize cyclically develop, with little or no interference by other human beings. Development is thus attained by propitiation, according to natural cycles, and not by encouragement, which somehow reflects the attitude of Yucatec Maya peasants to life and society.

I would like to finish this section with a very interesting reference that I found in the Bolles' combined dictionary of colonial sources. This describes what in the past constituted the idea of a good learner and shows the way in which the relation between óol and iik' used to be imagined. Bolles makes this comment about the colonial term **ik tan**: "Ingenious, quick in learning. By extension a poet, or priest. Possibly a shorten form of **ik tan yol uinic** = lit. spirit in the middle of the metaphysical heart of a person" (Bolles, 2001). And although the expression has since then disappeared, as we have seen it is still present in many ways in the language, the metaphors, and the ceremonies of the Mayan peasants of Yucatan.

CONCLUSIONS

On the second day of the micro-regional meeting in Chacsinkin, after picking up his Diploma from the hands of the former Catholic priest of the town, Don Luis proudly showed this unofficial document to the rest of the audience gathered under the palm thatched, open structure that for many months had served as the main gathering point for the UCI-Red local branch. And it was then that Don Luis, visibly moved by the occasion, let out a loud call to all, young and old, to get involved in the educational project promoted by this local NGO in several towns of the southern tip of the Yucatan state.

What don Luis was expressing made me at the time reconsider once again the importance of the UCI-Red initiative, not only in the context of the several development projects of which it is an integral part, but in reference to the encouragement of personal and ethnic self-recognition to which many of the sessions are aimed.

During the almost two years of my most recent collaboration with the promoters and organisers of UCI-Red, I was always ready to point out the many flaws I encountered, the inconsistencies, the mismatches between what had been said or planned and what had been practised or accomplished. I was particularly critical of the way they had been conducting their experiments in “intercultural dialogue”.

But at this very moment, something was telling me that the whole picture was a lot more complex and nuanced that what my critical researcher attitude was allowing me to see. After months of trying to get over the “familiar gaze”; was I just moving towards the other extreme? With his spontaneous and passionate call for engagement and participation, Don Luis was making a case for the continuation of a project that had apparently given him the enthusiasm and confidence to continue learning, even at his age (don Luis was nearly 50 years old).

As I was recording his participation, I remembered what he had told me when I spoke to him some months before. Don Luis was the only person that I had interviewed from that micro-region as part of my research. The reason was that Don Luis was one of the few persons that had persevered during the 18 months of the Diploma in the South of Yucatan, and one of the few I had not worked with before, when I was a member of the NGO promoting organic agriculture and apiculture, and cultural revalorisation. In

fact, during those years when my identity as an anthropologist melted away amidst the demands and urgencies to promote sustainable and culturally appropriate development, Don Luis had acted sometimes as an opponent to the environmentally friendly, organic methods that we were encouraging local people to adopt in order to control a devastating plague decimating their beehives. Don Luis was not merely an unbeliever of our methods, he was an active promoter of a different, commercial alternative based on strong chemical substance, and supported by the governmental Indigenista Institute in the region. Since what we were offering had the advantage of being cheaper and since we practically embarked on a missionary campaign, town by town, to convince people to use our method, Don Luis eventually dropped his own campaign and approached our NGO seeking for some advice and wanting to learn the more affordable if time-consuming method. When we met again, for my interview for this research, Don Luis told me that he still managed, applied and taught the same techniques we promoted for controlling the plague. His profile was that of an apt learner, capable of committing and of spreading knowledge among his peers, and with the capacity to discern and choose among different alternatives. The problem he had with some of UCI-Red tasks and commissions is that he had not been socialised in a school like some, certainly not all, of the rest of his companions had. His thirst for learning and his proved capacity for educating is what made me re-consider and re-examine some of the testimonies that I had gathered during my fieldwork and to embark in an exploration of Mayan forms of learning.

From anxiety to method: recapitulating

When I began this academic path I was immediately drawn to innovative ideas and theoretical frameworks that promised to reveal new ways to engage with the problems and challenges faced by my people, the Yucatec Maya. With time I feel that I have come home, to the modest analytical work of anthropologists and activists where great things come into shape as a result of constant minimal steps.

The writing up of this work has been a path filled with anxieties about the fairness of my judgment on projects that have the potential, as illustrated by the spontaneous reaction of Don Luis, of changing people's lives in a good way. I have come to make peace with myself about many of the arguments that I use in this thesis because I believe that what I say here is the same I told my friends, the silent co-authors

of this research, when I was with them in one of our endless analysis meetings. The only difference is in the language and the form in which these criticisms have been expressed here.

My feeling at this end of my personal educational cycle is that more and better forms of investigating are still possible. The construction of a research agenda for Indigenous peoples in Mexico seems now more than a mere intuition. However, more work and probably theorization are still necessary.

My starting point at the beginning of this thesis was the characterization of "interculturality" as a highly contested terrain. This condition is perhaps a sign of its revolutionary potential. Yet, if the promises of "interculturality" are to be fulfilled we are in need of practical ways to understand how they can be realized. In this thesis I have followed a path where, by identifying the contributions, limitations and challenges of a distinctive project aiming at the realization of this ideal, I expected to be in a better position to grasp the complexities of power, agency and communication in very dynamic social spaces. I think that I have only partially fulfilled this objective.

As we have seen, among the many processes that call themselves Intercultural and Indigenous Universities there is a high degree of variation and different forms of implementation. Some of them rely on the support of powerful players in the national or international arena, while others depend on organisational processes defined by the needs and preoccupations of their local constituencies. There is a high differentiation in the level of pedagogical experimentation that they are willing to explore. But maybe the Intercultural and Indigenous Universities that will turn out to be more interesting are those where "quality education" can be built-in from the bottom up, with the participation of all people concerned.

We have seen how these education projects involve a wide range of social actors and organisations. They represent varied ways in which Indigenous agents, government officers, NGOs, intellectuals and international aid combine in order to achieve differently that which appears as a universal aspiration, "mutual understanding".

My initial decision of looking at "interculturality" formations from three specific angles, i.e. the actors involved, the discourses displayed, and the practices and strategies followed, seem at the end of the day to have proved consequential. After having used these three keys to access the process of construction of projects that I was only able to know on paper (or screen, since a very important amount of information I gathered

online), I went on to examine a more specific case. This project was not a "university" in the proper sense of the term but it was highly interconnected to methodologies and designs closely related to others. The analysis of the UCI-Red as an instance of "interculturality" construction might prove to be more relevant than the study of other more formal "universities". Here again the close attention that I placed on the interfaces of discourse and practice demonstrated that "interculturality" has to be always approached in the places where "dialogues" take place. I hope that by focusing on "dialogue" as a way to really assess whether a practice can be deemed "intercultural" or not, the discussion here may contribute to other studies on the same topic and help them be less speculative and more grounded.

Two aspects are necessary to keep under examination. One is the issue of participation of Indigenous actors in the design and management of these education projects. Given the characteristics of my case study – run by Mestizo NGO members – this aspect did not seem to be relevant. There are however many ways in which Indigenous agents affect and influence the ways in which certain projects operate, which I did not have the time to explore. The unintended consequences of the "intercultural" and "transcultural" spaces created by these projects deserved attention that I was not able to give.

The other is about the representation of different notions of knowledge. As I hope to have demonstrated there is more use in asking about the epistemologies, the explanations about knowledge and how this can attained, of Indigenous agents and their communities of practice, than in inventories of itemised chunks of information that can actually be an obstacle for the achievement of understanding. In what follows I would like to make further points about the importance of these different elements.

Collaborative research: lessons and challenges for an Indigenous anthropologist

My motivation for writing this thesis has been to provide a basis to reflect on my own experience as an Indigenous scholar and anthropologist in collaboration with other social actors. The main contribution that I aspire to make with this work is to the improvement of the theoretical and methodological tools that we have now for the

understanding of “interculturality” and the processes of creation of Indigenous education projects in Mexico and Latin America.

The approach that I have taken in this work has been to look at “interculturality” in its historical diversity and interrogating it in several cases by looking at three key components: the discourse, the actors, and the practices. That “interculturality” has not been defined in a specific way does not mean that one should give up asking those who uphold this idea for some consistency and accountability. The space of “interculturality” definitions and counter-definitions is an open field for many a kind of engagements and interrogations that are renewed every time we reach a port, and are likely to remain contested.

While reflecting on these issues I hope to have made my argument clear. What I wanted to know is what enhances and what limits the possibilities of “interculturality as intercultural dialogue”. In this way (with Root, 1993) my research agenda has been an engaged and “partisan” one. This can be characterized as an “intercultural agenda”. Acknowledging that such an attitude can be construed as suspicious I have tried to make clear that my basic commitment is with my research subjects and with intellectual honesty. Anthropology as a discipline suffers from a colonialist curse where the best ethnographies and researches are generally considered to be those where the researcher is the most detached and objective, where she or he can spot the relevant institutions and principles that are not accessible to the “native” eye and mind. Strategic dislocation while resembling this perspective can perhaps be considered as a valid strategy for those who seek a different relationship with their research subjects. Working in collaboration with those that I aspire to write about has meant for me assuming the ethical commitment of facing them when exerting my main criticisms. This has forced me, as an anthropologist, to take a role in the development of that which I am studying. My advantage was that I had this role in some ways before I ever started this second level of individual and collective reflexivity (a DPhil thesis). However at that time, practical demands, and the lack of access to other (academic or militant) voices probably confined my reflexive role as a co-inspiring recruit of the UCI-Red, rather than that of an inexperienced explorer. Hopefully whatever I have achieved by systematically gathering information and looking at it with the eyes of a “dislocated participant” would go back to continue inspiring what UCI-Red has become and is becoming for the future generations of community promoters.

What I have intended in re-visiting much of the data available to me by way of my participation in the construction of UCI-Red is to problematise under a different light many issues that already intrigued those who were still promoting this project. What makes for a more relevant learning process for participants? Why is it that they seem sometimes withdrawn and unwilling to engage? What are the cultural categories that may explain how they feel about concepts such as autonomy and development? This is why after describing how difficult it becomes for these NGOs to negotiate and realise their designs I thought it necessary to confront these views with a combination of local participants' and other actors' perspectives on similar questions.

The problem as I stated before is that there is commonly a misrepresentation of Indigenous knowledge that seriously affects and prevents other actors from engaging with it. Here I would like to insist in that rather than systems of knowledge Indigenous universities would be better positioned if they unleash the creative energy of Indigenous epistemologies. In this sense, why should a university worry about what peasants believe and practice when they go about their everyday lives? Why should the case of the Peasant and Indigenous University Network be of any relevance for the design of higher education programmes in other Indigenous regions of the country and the sub-continent? What can we learn from this work about forms and means to achieve an understanding of "interculturality" constructions beyond the discourse?

Hybrid and negotiated: the future of Indigenous knowledge in universities

As it has already been made clear, the case of UCI-Red is a very different type of project with regard to those Intercultural and Indigenous Universities presented in Chapter 3 But it is precisely because it involves Indigenous adults, legitimate participants in the communities of practice at play in Indigenous towns and territories, that the lack of space for their epistemologies to be included needs to be critically considered. For, if these cannot be recreated even in these semi-formal education programmes this could be telling us a lot about the limitations and challenges that these epistemologies face in other, more formal education projects. What happens with Indigenous knowledge when this is taught in a classroom to mostly school-socialised Indigenous young people? It does not follow from this question that the proper answer

should be a simplistic reaction against schooled education. What this interrogation calls for is self-awareness and continuous revision of method and objectives.

Far from suggesting that all universities give up on the development of innovative practices to go back to everyday processes of learning in social practice this work suggests a rethinking on the primacy of school-like education as the most effective medium to achieve cognitive development. Hybrid forms of learning can be constructed in continuity with epistemologies that have as much value in providing solutions to old and new challenges as others. These would be newer and probably more grounded forms of "border thinking", the kind of knowledge that emerges from the crossroads between different perspectives in cross-cultural encounters (Mignolo, 2000). The reason why recognizing and translating these epistemologies is important resides not only in their intrinsic value as representatives of the infinite possibilities of human creation but also in that they can give us clues about new paths for the construction of personhood and knowledge in different social spaces.

Reflecting on the trajectories that "interculturality" and "development" have had in the work of many of the NGOs behind the UCI-Red it seems that innovative practices and learning processes were already happening among them even before they started thinking about creating the "university". The education and training of community promoters took many forms and generally involved getting on with constant demands derived from development promotion. These processes of education appear under a new light once we consider the implications of cognitive anthropology and the analysis of language practices for learning among the Yucatec Maya. It was this practice that has proved more effective and fundamental in the promotion of new practitioner's identities which according to Lave (1996) is one of the main effects of learning processes.

In UCI-Red, "interculturality" must not be seen as product but as an unfolding process of awareness and reasonable doubt about the assumed cultural similarities and differences. By this I mean that just when we think that we have already figured out what it is that makes us culturally different and similar, when we create this common ground about which intercultural theoreticians talk about, we need to rethink and try another way of looking at things. This must be clearer. When UCI-Red began, one of the main assumptions was that "intercultural dialogue" could be achieved through participatory techniques. "Endogenous development" would then be achieved because NGO members would sit, apply their techniques, diagnose needs and plan projects with

Yucatec Mayan actors. In the midst of this, and while we were reflecting together about "interculturality" in UCI-Red they started to realise that even notions of participation and learning are culturally defined, and some of them have now considered exploring this in dialoguing with Yucatec Mayan actors without a predetermined agenda.

The effort to understand Yucatec Mayan epistemologies faces the prospect of becoming a new recipe and shortcut to produce quickly other similar projects and to try to "teach" Yucatec Mayan actors what their traditional forms of learning are. I will strongly warn against this since it is precisely this attitude which fundamentally undermines any possibility for dialogue. The presentation and representation of Indigenous knowledge to Indigenous agents has to follow a different strategy and to be constructed, again, in continuity with their own epistemologies.

Interculturality as dialogue in diverse spheres

The constructions of "interculturality" that we have been analysing in this work show that at the core of this notion are two important challenges: how to strike a balance in power relations between different social actors? And, how to represent and translate different worldviews, or cultural orientations, in a way that does not cancel their dynamism?

Concerning the first question, there are different ways in which power relations affect the creation and internal configuration of Intercultural and Indigenous Universities. We have found that power relations are established in the economic control and financing of these initiatives. This determines a form of ownership, the material property of the university. Who pays for the programme, and who is then in charge? Who decides ultimately about programmes and contents in this university? Who dictates the agenda? As we saw in Chapter 3 these universities have many "owners" but we also identified that a strong control can lie in the hands of the institutions and organisations that pay for them. Sometimes this bid for control takes the form of debates on "quality in education". Negotiations can take place and compromises extracted from those with the money in their pockets, but if Indigenous organisations and communities want to have a say in the running of higher education programmes that purportedly aim at the construction of a new relationship between these subaltern identities and ways of life with mainstream society they will have to be able to control their resources.

Another form of power is encoded in the language of recognition in which educational programmes are written. By this I mean the apparent need to represent Indigenous knowledge in a form that can be incorporated into schooled education in order to be properly recognised. This is a point with which some anthropologists have taken issue in the context of the use of Indigenous knowledges in development (Agrawal, 1995; Agrawal, 2002). Important limitations for the expression of other forms of conceiving the world originate in this objectification of knowledge.

There is a need for the construction of a common language which goes beyond the all important idea of bilingual interpretation. Whereas this practice can be seen as a window to intercultural understanding, the method as practiced in the UCI-Red still showed important limitations. This means that even though it shifted from being mostly interested in "interpreting" Western concepts into Yucatec Mayan to starting exploring Mayan "concepts", the emphasis was always placed on achieving "definitions". Definitions of Mayan concepts, symbols and rituals are still part of a language that abstracts in order to understand. As I have showed in Chapter 7, a different language is the one in which all these forms of inhabiting the world are expressed, a language that is not verbal and static but most likely visual, sensual and even oral and dynamic. It is a language of the body which as a result of the reflection contained in this work still needs to be explored. Since *tsikbal* is at the same time a narrative and interactive performance, a common language that deconstructs the primacy of verbal knowledge in favour of other forms of knowing can be hinted by some of the research done around this practice.

While focusing the analysis on the notion of "dialogue" I hope to have presented and discussed with enough clarity, three basic forms of "dialogue" within Intercultural and Indigenous Universities:

- "Dialogue" between actors who are defined not only by their cultural orientations but by their economic and political status. This in the analysis turns into a "dialogue" between agendas and the forms of, political and conceptual, representation of Indigenous identities and knowledges. We are not necessarily talking about knowledge itself but the way this is represented as a goal, an objective or as content of the universities' agenda. This is something that can be seen as an example of political "interculturality".

- “Dialogue” between knowledges which tend to be perceived as the junction of different meanings, symbols, histories, narratives and other immediately observable phenomena including language. As we saw in both Ch. 4 and 5 there are many ways in which Indigenous knowledge can be included in the curriculum of universities, but its specific weight and centrality can vary depending on whose project the institution represents. Yet even where Indigenous knowledge seems to be the main organizing principle of university education, the alliances with non-Indigenous social actors are reflected in reformulations and reinterpretations, hybrid forms of representing knowledge. Examples of this interculturality can be probably seen as the most innovative and challenging and are perceived with optimism by other researchers like Laurie et. al. (2005) and Dietz and Mateos (2008).
- “Dialogue” between epistemologies. These, as I hope to have proved, go beyond mere representations of knowledge and interrogate the social practice of learning and the construction of learners’ identities. Some clues have been already presented here but more still need to be explored. An outstanding question is whether “epistemologies”, “gnoseologies”, and “cognitive processes” can all be considered features of a “cultural logic” that influences symbolic and bodily grammars. In my case it is probably in some forms of cognitive anthropology that I have been able to find clues, inspired in particular by some of the works of Maurice Bloch (1998).

Exploration and construction of “interculturality” in this project have occurred by tumbles and experimenting rather than by advancing theorizing. But an important loss has been made because this rich experience of trying different ways of dialoguing and interacting is lost and unappreciated by the very actors who perform these tasks. The tyranny of the expert knowledge in development projects subjugate even those who can themselves be characterised as experts. Out of insecurity and lack of opportunities to see their own reflection in the theorisation of their own practices, these social actors, the UCI-Red promoters have sometimes missed the innovative nature and value of their own work. The same can be said of the learning ability of Mayan peasants who have learned to see themselves as illiterate and dumb. On the contrary, out of the many testimonies that I collected on the field (and of which I only presented two examples in

this work) I was able to understand how rich and varied their strategies for acquiring knowledge in their context and from outside their towns, fields and forests are. Then again, it has taken me a long time to assimilate many of these lessons and to be able to convey these in a manner that would be understandable for other actors similarly interested in the representation of Indigenous knowledge and practice in education. In a recent meeting with Indigenous scholars and activists we discussed the role and the value of anthropologists' work for the advancement of Indigenous life styles, objectives and rights. It was here that it dawn on me that while my main role in this research has mainly been to translate the views of these partners in solidarity with Indigenous communities in the Yucatan to wider audiences, I performed a different task at the same time. I tried to communicate and helped them to understand as well the work of other anthropologists and specialists about the most pressing issues affecting their work. And by working in this way I have strived to honour my own commitment to the cause of intercultural understanding.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aboites, Hugo

2006 Autonomía y educación. Contribución de los pueblos originarios a la educación del México del siglo XXI. *Memoria*. 207. Accessed on: May 2008. [http://memoria.com.mx/node/796].

Academia de la Lengua Maya de Yucatan A.C.

2003 Óol. *In* Diccionario Maya Popular. Merida, Yucatan: INDEMAYA, SEP, Gobierno del Estado de Yucatan.

Agrawal, Arun

1995 Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge. Development and Change 26:413-439.

—

1996 Poststructuralist Approaches to Development: Some Critical Reflections. Peace and Change 21(4):464-477.

—

2002 Indigenous Knowledge and the Politics of Classification. International Journal of Social Sciences (173):287-297.

Aikman, Sheila

1997 Interculturality and Intercultural Education: A Challenge for Democracy. International Review of Education 43(5-6):463-479.

—

1998 Towards an intercultural participatory approach to learning for the Harakmbut. International Journal of Educationional Development 18(3):197-206.

—

1999 Intercultural Education and Literacy. An Ethnographic Study of Indigenous Knowledge and Learning in the Peruvian Amazon. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Alcalá Baillie, Luis

2008 Identidade, educación e desenvolvemento: sobre o pobo Eñepa e a universidad indígena de Venezuela. Presented in Simposio Antropoloxía e Cooperación ao Desenvolvemento, Facultade de Humanidades de Ferrol (Universidade da Coruña), 8, 9, 10 e 11 de abril de 2008, 2008.

Alvarez, Sonie E., Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar

1998 Cultures of politics, politics of cultures: revisioning Latin American social movements. Boulder, Colorado; Oxford: Westview Press.

Ander-Egg, Ezequiel

1980 Metodología y práctica del desarrollo de la comunidad. Salou (Tarragona): Unieurop.

Andrade, Manuel J.

1955 A grammar of modern Yucatec. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Apffel-Marglin, Frédérique, and PRATEC, eds.

1998 The spirit of regeneration: Andean culture confronting Western notions of development. London: Zed Books.

Appadurai, Arjun

1996 Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Arce, Alberto, and Norman Long

1992 The dynamics of knowledge. Interfaces between bureaucrats and peasants. *In* Battlefields of Knowledge. The interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development. N. Long and A. Long, eds. Pp. 211-246. London and New York: Routledge.

Arzápalo Marín, Ramón

2009 La traducción de textos mayas desde una perspectiva semiótica. The Mayan Studies Journal / Revista de Estudios Mayas 1(3):2-23.

Asad, Talal

2002 The construction of religion as an anthropological category. *In* A reader in the anthropology of religion. M. Lambek, ed. Pp. 114-132. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Baklanoff, Eric N., and Edward H. Moseley, eds.

2008 Yucatán in an Era of Globalisation. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Barreno, Leonzo

2002 Educación Superior Indígena en Latino América. Caracas, Venezuela: IESALC-UNESCO.

Bartolomé, Miguel

2001 El derecho a la autonomía de los máasewalo'ob. Temas Antropológicos 23(1):130-159.

Bartolomé, Miguel Alberto

1997 Gente de Costumbre y Gente de Razón: las identidades étnicas en México. Mexico: Siglo XXI.

Basile, Teresa

2002 La Universidad Popular de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo: emergencia de nuevas prácticas en cultura y poder en la Argentina de la posdictadura. *In* Estudios y Otras Prácticas Intelectuales Latinoamericanas en Cultura y Poder. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 67-78. Caracas: CLACSO y CEAP, FACES, Universidad Centra de Venezuela.

Bassie-Sweet, Karen

2000 Corn deities and the complementary male/female principle. Presented in La Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Mexico, July 1999, 2000. pp. 19.

Bastarrachea Manzano, Juan Ramón

n.d. Los orígenes de la vida humana según las aalansajo'ob (parteras) mayas peninsulares de hoy. *Yucatán: Identidad y Cultura Maya*. Accessed on: 29/07/2009. [http://www.mayas.uady.mx/articulos/origenes.html].

Battiste, Marie

2000 Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.

Battiste, Marie, and James Henderson

2000 Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage. A Global Challenge. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: Purich Publishing Ltd.

Berkley, Anthony R.

2001 Respecting Maya language revitalization. Linguistics and Education 12(3):345-366.

Berlanga, Benjamín

2000 Educación y trabajo: la experiencia del Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural en la formación técnica y profesional de jóvenes campesinos e indígenas. *In* Simposio Latinoamericano "Los jóvenes y el trabajo: la educación frente a la exclusión social". Universidad Iberoamericana Santa Fé, México DF.

Berlanga Gallardo, Benjamín

2000 Educación y trabajo: la experiencia del Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural en la formación técnica y profesional de jóvenes campesinos e indígenas. Simposio Latinoamericano "Los jóvenes y el trabajo: la educación frente a la exclusión social", Universidad Iberoamericana Santa Fé, México DF, November of 2000, 2000.

Bermúdez, E.

2002 Procesos de globalización e identidades. Entre espantos, demonios y espejismos. Rupturas y conjuros para lo "propio" y lo "ajeno". *In* Estudios y Otras Prácticas Intelectuales Latinoamericanas en Cultura y Poder. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 79-88. Caracas: CLACSO, CEAP, FACES, Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Beverley, John

1999 Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bloch, Maurice E.F.

1998 How we think they think. Anthropological approaches to cognition, memory and literacy. Oxford: Westview Press.

Boccalon Acosta, Adriana

2006 Universidad Indígena de Venezuela: Un alto en el camino para rescatar la cultura y los valores ancestrales. *Analitica.com*. Accessed on: June 2008. [http://www.analitica.com/va/sociedad/articulos/8701657.asp].

Boccara, Michel

2004 Introducción. Nacidos de una piedra de maíz. *In* Enciclopedia de la Mitología Yucateca. M. Boccara, ed. Pp. 96, Vol. 1. Paris, Francia: Editions Ductus & "Psychanalyse et pratiques sociales" (CNRS-Universités de Paris 7 et de Picardie).

Bolaños, Graciela

2004 Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, Colombia. *In* Educación superior para los pueblos indígenas de América Latina. Memorias del Segundo Encuentro Regional. CGEIB, ed. Pp. 263-279. México D.F: IESALC, CGEIB.

Bolles, David

2001 Combined Dictionary-Concordance of the Yucatecan Mayan Language. FAMSI reports. Accessed on: April 2009. [http://www.famsi.org/reports/96072/index.html].

Bolpress

2008 Reafirmación de la identidad y apertura a otras culturas, dos logros en la Universidad Indígena Intercultural. *Bolpress*. Accessed on: June 2008. [http://www.bolpress.com/art.php?Cod=2008032612].

Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo

1996 México Profundo: reclaiming a civilization. P.A. Dennis, transl. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre

1977 Outline of the theory of practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdin, Gabriel Luis
2007/2008 La noción de persona entre los mayas: una visión semántica. Revista Pueblos y Fronteras digital (4):31 pp.
Brody, Michal
2004 The fixed word, the moving tongue: Variation in written Yucatec Maya and the meandering evolution toward unified norms, University of Texas at Austin.
Brokensha, D., D.M. Warren, and O. Werner
1980 Indigenous knowledge systems and development. Washington D.C.: University Press of America.
Brysk, Alison
1996 Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights. Latin American Perspectives 23(2):38-57.
Buechler, S. M.
1995 New Social Movement Theories. The Sociological Quarterly 36(3):441-464.
Burgos, Juan
2004 Hacia una educación maya intercultural. Apuntes para la construcción intercultural de una propuesta de desarrollo maya y yucateco desde el ámbito educativo. Chacsinkín, Yucatán: MAC, UCI-Red.
Burns, Allan
1980 Interactive Features in Yucatec Mayan Narratives. Language in Society 9:307-319.
Cadart, Rosali Sales
2000 O MST e a formação dos Sem Terra: o movimiento social como princípio educativo. *In* La Ciudadanía Negada. Políticas de exclusión en la educación y el trabajo. P. Gentil and G. Frigotto, eds. Pp. 125-144. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
Cardoso, Roberto
1992 Etnicidad y estructura social. Mexico: CIESAS.
Casillas Muñoz, María de Lourdes, and Laura Santini Villar
2006 Universidad Intercultural: Modelo Educativo. México, D.F.: CGEIB/SEP.
Castañeda, Quetzil E.
2004 "We Are *Not* Indigenous!" An Introduction to the Maya Identity of Yucatan. The Journal of Latin American Anthropology 9(1):36-63.
Castells, Manuel
1997 The power of identity. 3 vols. Volume II. Malden, USA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
Castro-Gómez, Santiago, and Eduardo Mendieta
1998 Introducción: la translocalización discursiva de "Latinoamérica" en tiempos de la globalización. *In* Teorías sin disciplina (latinoamericanismo, poscolonialidad y globalización en debate). S. Castro-Gómez and E. Mendieta, eds. México D.F.: Ed. Miguel Angel Porrúa.
CDI, and PNUD
2006 Regiones Indígenas de México. México: CDI, PNUD.
Cervera Montejano, María Dolores
2007/8 El *Hetsmek'* como expresión simbólica de la construcción de los niños mayas yucatecos como personas. Revista Pueblos y Fronteras digital (4):34 pp.

CESDER-PRODESC
1998 Dignidad y Calidad de Vida en Comunidades Campesinas. Propuesta de Desarrollo para el Municipio de Zautla, en la Sierra Norte del estado de Puebla. Pp. 267. Zautla, Puebla: Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural, Promoción y Desarrollo Social A.C.

CESDER, CELAFIN, and Tanesque A.C.
2001 Resultados de la evaluación cognitiva: evaluación dinámica de la modificabilidad cognoscitiva. Evaluación del razonamiento lógico. *In* Documentos de análisis interno de UCI-Red. Zautla: CESDER, UCI-Red.

Chambers, R., A. Pacey, and L.A. Thrupp
1989 Farmer First: Farmer Innovation and Agricultural Research. London: ITDG Publications.

Chávez Alonzo, Juan
2003 El Correo Ilustrado: Aclaración a la columna Desfiladero. *La Jornada*. Accessed on: 09/03/2003. [http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/03/09/correo.php].

Clark, John E., and Stephen D. Houston
2008 Craft specialization, gender, and personhood among the Post-conquest Maya of Yucatan, Mexico. Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 8(1):31-46.

Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus
1986 Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography. Berkeley, Calif; London: University of California Press.

Collective Author
ND Proyecto de Organización y Estructuración de una Universidad en Territorio Indígena, Nasa. Colombia. Pp. 41 pp.

Collective drafting
2002 Área de Habilidades del Pensamiento. Diplomado en Gestión del Desarrollo Local Sustentable. *In* Diseño teórico-metodológico de la UCI-Red. Mérida, Yucatán: UCI-Red.

COMPAS
2009 Endogenous Development In Practice. Leusden, The Netherlands: ETC Compas.

CONAIE
1999 Las Nacionalidades Indígenas y sus Derechos Colectivos en la Constitución. Quito, Ecuador: CONAIE.

Corona Berkin, Sarah
2004 El periódico para un venado que tiene una escuela. De Vinculación y Ciencia 4(13):4-11.

Crapanzano, Vincent
1990 On dialogue. *In* The interpretation of dialogue. T. Maranhão, ed. Pp. 269-291. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.

Cuevas Cob, Briceida
2008 Ti u billil in nook'; Del dobladillo de mi ropa. Mexico: CDI.

Dávalos, Pablo
2002 Movimiento indígena ecuatoriano: Construcción política y epistémica. *In* Estudios y otras Prácticas Intelectuales Latinoamericanas en Cultura y Poder. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 89-98. Caracas: CLACSO, CEAP, FACES, Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Davis, Charlotte Aull
1999 Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others. London and New York: Routledge.

De Sánchez, Margarita
1991 Desarrollo de habilidades de pensamiento. Procesos básicos de pensamiento. México: Trillas, ITESM.

Demorgon, Jacques
2003 L'interculturel entre réception et invention. Contextes, médias, concepts. questions de communication (4):43-70.

Dennis, Philip A., and Laura Hobson Herlihy
2003 Higher Education on Nicaragua's Multicultural Atlantic Coast. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. 4. Accessed on: 5-11-2008. [http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/higher-education-nicaragua-smulticultural-atlantic-coast].

Deruyttere
2001 Pueblos indígenas, globalización y desarrollo con identidad: algunas reflexiones de estrategia. Washington D.C.: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.

Didou Aupetit, Sylvie, and Eduardo Remedi Allione
2006 Pathways to Higher Education: Una Oportunidad de Educación Superior para Jóvenes Indígenas en México. México, D.F.: ANUIES.

Dietz, Gunther
1999a Etnicidad y Cultura en Movimiento: Desafíos Teóricos para el Estudio de los Movimientos Étnicos. Nueva Antropología XVII(56):81-107.

—
1999b Indigenismo y educación diferencial en México: Balance de medio siglo de políticas educativas en la región purhépecha. Revista Interamericana de Educación de Adultos 21(1, 2 y 3):35-60.

—
1999c La Comunidad Purhépecha es Nuestra Fuerza. Etnicidad, cultura y región en un movimiento indígena en México. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala.

—
2002 Cultura, Etnicidad e Interculturalidad: Una Visión desde la Antropología Social. *In* El discurso intercultural: prolegómenos a una filosofía intercultural. G. González R., ed. Pp. 189-236. Madrid, Spain: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva.

—
2003 Multiculturalismo, Interculturalidad y Educación: Una Aproximación Antropológica. Granada, España: Editorial Universidad de Granada, CIESAS-México.

Dietz, Gunther, and Laura Mateos Cortés
2008 "Indigenizing" or "Interculturalizing" Universities in Mexico? An ethnography of diversity discourses and practices inside the *Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural*. Presented in 10th Biennial Conference of the European Associaion of Social Anthropology, Ljubljana, Slovenia, August 2008, 2008. pp. 15 pp.

Dietz, Gunther, and Rosa Guadalupe Mendoza Zuany
2008 Prólogo: ¿Interculturalizando la educación superior? Revista TRACE VI(53):5-12.

Dimas Huacuz, Bertha
2006 ¿Interculturalidad de papel? Apuntes sobre la idea de Universidad Indígena. Educación Superior, Cifras y Hechos Año 5(No. 27-28):36-41.
Dumoulin, David
2003 Local knowledge in the hands of transnational NGO networks: a Mexican viewpoint. International Social Sciences Journal 178:593-605.
Dussel, Enrique
2000 Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism. Nepantla: Views from South 1(3):465-478.
EDUCE
2005a Diplomado Gestión de Organizaciones Sociales para el Desarrollo Regional (Evaluación General). *In* Evaluaciones de UCI-Red. Pp. 33 pp. Mérida, Yucatán: EDUCE; UCI-Red, Región Península de Yucatán.
—
2005b Sistematización general y evaluación del Diplomado Gestión de Organizaciones Sociales para el Desarrollo Regional en las microregiones de Chenes, Campeche y Poniente de Bacalar, Q.Roo. *In* Evaluaciones de UCI-Red. Pp. 46 pp. Chetumal, Hopelchén, Mérida: Educación, Cultura y Ecología A.C.
Ellen, Roy, and Holly Harris
2000 Introduction. *In* Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and its Transformations. Critical Anthropological Perspectives. R. Ellen, P. Parkes, and A. Bicker, eds. Pp. 1-33. London and New York: Routledge.
Escobar, Arturo, and Sonie E. Alvarez
1992 The making of social movements in Latin America: identity, strategy and democracy. Boulder, Colorado; Oxford: Westview Press.
Esteva, Gustavo
2003 Universidad de la Tierra: Reclaiming Our Freedom to Learn. Kamiriithu, The Multiworld Network Newsletter I(2):4-5.
Fabian, Johannes
1983 Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object. New York: Columbia University Press.
Fahim, Hussein, and Katherine Helmer
1980 Indigenous Anthropology in Non-Western Countries: A Further Elaboration. Current Anthropology 21(5):644-663.
Fairhead, James, and Melissa Leach
2003 Science, Society and Power. Environmental knowledge and policy in West Africa and the Caribbean. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fals-Borda, Orlando, and Muhammad Anisur Rahman
1991 Action and knowledge: breaking the monopoly with participatory action research. New York: Apex Press.
FI
2007 Avances de la consolidación institucional. Informe de gestión 2007. Pp. 74. La Paz, Bolivia: Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe.
Fischer, Edward F.
1999 Cultural Logic and Maya Identity; Rethinking Constructivism and Essentialism. Current Anthropology 40(4):473-499.
Flyvberg, Bent

2004 Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *In* Qualitative Research Practice. C. Seale, G. Gobo, J.F. Gubrium, and D. Silverman, eds. Pp. 420-434. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fornet-Betancourt, Raul

2002 Lo intercultural: el problema de su definicion. *In* Interculturael: Balance y perspectivas. Y. Onghena, ed. Pp. 157-160. Barcelona: Fundacion CIDOB.

Fornet-Betancourt, Raúl

2000 Philosophical Presuppositions of Intercultural Dialogue. polylog. Forum for Intercultural Philosophy 1:1-60.

Foucault, Michel

1991 Governmentality. *In* The Foucault effect. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, eds. Pp. 87-104. London: Hanester Wheatshoaf.

Fox, Richard, and Laurie Obbink

2003 World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power. Pp. 14: International Symposium No. 131 Report, Wenner Gren Foundation.

Freire, Paulo

2000 Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Continuum.

Gabbert, Wolfgang

2001 Social Categories, Ethnicity and the State in Yucatán, Mexico. Journal of Latin American Studies 33:459-484.

García Canclini, Néstor

1997 La globalización y la interculturalidad narradas por los antropólogos. *In* Symposium "Identidades". UNAM, México D.F.

Garrard-Burnett, Virginia

2004 God was already here when Columbus arrived: Inculturation theology and the Mayan movement in Guatemala. *In* Resurgent voices in Latin America: Indigenous peoples, political mobilization, and religious change. E.L. Cleary and T.J. Steigenga, eds. Pp. 125-153. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Gaskins, Suzanne

1996 How Mayan parental theories come into play. *In* Parents' cultural belief systems: Their origins, expressions, and consequences. S. Harkness and C.M. Super, eds. Pp. 345-363. New York: Guildford.

—

2000 Children's daily activities in a Mayan village: a culturally grounded description. Cross-Cultural Research 34(4):375-389.

—

2006 The cultural organization of Yucatec Mayan children's social interactions. *In* Peer relationships in cultural context. X. Chen, D.C. French, and B.H. Schneider, eds. Pp. 283-309. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Geertz, Clifford

1973 The interpretation of cultures: selected essays. New York: Basic Books.

González C., Pablo

2003 Colonialismo interno (Una redefinición). Rebeldía 12.

Grosfoguel, Ramón

2000 Developmentalism, Modernity, and Dependency Theory in Latin America. Nepantla: Views from South 1(2):347-374.

Gundara, Jagdish S.

2000 Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson

1997 Discipline and Practice: "The Field" as Site, Method and Location in Anthropology. *In* Anthropological Locations: boundaries and grounds of a field science. A. Gupta and J. Ferguson, eds. Pp. 1-46. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hale, C.

1997 Cultural Politics of Identity in Latin America. Annual Review of Anthropology 26:567-590.

Hanks, William F.

1991 Foreword. *In* Situated learning. Legitimate Peripheral Participation. J. Lave and E. Wenger, eds. Pp. 13-24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—

1996 Language and communicative practices.

—

2000 Intertexts: writings on language, utterance and context. Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Harding, Sandra

1994 Is Science Multicultural? Challenges, Resources, Opportunities, Uncertainties. *In* Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader. D.T. Goldberg, ed. Pp. 344-370. Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.

Hastrup, Kirsten

1983 Fieldwork among friends. *In* Anthropology at Home. A. Jackson, ed. Pp. 95-108. London: Tavistock.

Hernández, Armando

2004 Los wixáritari se abren a las culturas. Magis XXXV(372):7-9.

Hernandez, Rosalva Aida, Sarela Paz, and Maria Teresa Sierra

2004 El Estado y los indigenas en tiempos del PAN: neoindigenismo, legalidad e identidad. Mexico City: CIESAS, Miguel Angel Porrua Editores, Camara de Diputados, LIX Legislatura.

Herrera Beltrán, Claudia

2003 Busca la universidad intercultural el arraigo de indígenas a sus territorios. *In* La Jornada. Mexico DF.

Hervik, Peter

1999 The mysterious Maya of National Geographic. Journal of Latin American Anthropology 4(1):166-197.

Hofstede, Geert

1984 Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related values. Beverly Hills, California: Sage.

Hooker Blandford, Alta

2004 Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense. *In* Educación superior para los pueblos indígenas de América Latina. Memorias del Segundo Encuentro Regional. CGEIB, ed. Pp. 247-255. México D.F: IESALC, CGEIB.

Hostettler, Ueli

2004 Ethnographic Perspectives in Maya Studies: Trends in Writing about Mayas in Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize. Ethnohistory 51(2):435-444.

Jackson, Anthony, ed.

1987 Anthropology at Home. London: Tavistock.

Kahn, Joel S.

2003 Anthropology as cosmopolitan practice? Anthropological Theory 3(4):403-415.

Kane, Liam

2001 Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America. London: Latin American Bureau.

Karp, Ivan, and D.A. Masolo

2000 Introduction: African philosophy as cultural enquiry. *In* African philosophy as cultural enquiry. I. Karp and D.A. Masolo, eds. Pp. 1-18. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Kenrick, Justin, and Jerome Lewis

2004 Indigenous peoples' rights and the politics of the term 'indigenous'. Anthropology Today 20(2):4-9.

Kleymeyer, Charles David, ed.

1994 Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development. Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Koonings, Kees, and Patricio Silva

1999 Construyendo la etnicidad: rumbos y dimensiones. *In* Construcciones Étnicas y Dinámica Sociocultural en América Latina. K. Koonings and P. Silva, eds. Pp. 183-190. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala.

Kövecses, Zoltán

2003 Metaphor and emotion: language, culture, and the body in human feeling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kray, Christine A.

2005 The Sense of Tranquility: Bodily Practice and Ethnic Classes in Yucatán. Ethnology 44(4):337-355.

Krotz, Esteban

2005 Reforma legislativa y diálogo intercultural. El Varejón (69):7-9.

Kuper, Adam

2003 The return of the native. Current Anthropology 44(3):389-402.

Kuwayama, Takami

2003 'Natives' as dialogic partners. Some thoughts on native anthropology. Anthropology Today 19(1):8-13.

Latour, Bruno

2005 Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network-theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laurie, Nina, Robert Andolina, and Sarah Radcliffe

2005 Ethnodevelopment: social movements, creating experts and professionalising Indigenous knowledge in Ecuador. Antipode 37(3):470-496.

Lave, Jean

1988 Cognition in practice. Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, New Rochelle, Sydney: Cambridge University Press.

—

1996 Teaching, as Learning, in Practice. Mind, Culture, and Activity 3(3):149-164.

Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger

1991 Situated learning. Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Le Guen, Olivier

2005 Geografía de lo sagrado entre los mayas yucatecos de Quintana Roo: configuración del espacio y su aprendizaje entre los niños. Ketzalcalli (1):54-68.

—

2006 L'organisation et l'apprentissage de l'espace chez les Mayas Yucateques du Quintana Roo, Mexique, Universite de Paris X - Nanterre.

Le Guen, Olivier, and Lorena Pool Balam

2008 The emotional word of the Yucatec Maya: from universal to culturally specific (Poster). Presented in XIIIth European Maya Conference (EMC), Paris, France, December 1-6 2008, 2008.

Llanes Ortiz, Genner de Jesús

2003 Intercultural University of Ecuador: Dialogue from Indigenous Grassroots Organizations with Globalizing Knowledges. MA Dissertation, University of Sussex.

—

2005 Construyendo el diálogo de saberes desde la base. Universidades indígenas en América Latina: reflexiones y experiencias sobre la "interculturalidad". *In* Etnicidad en Latinoamérica: movimientos sociales, cuestión indígena y diásporas migratorias. J.J. Pujadas and G. Dietz, eds. Pp. 193-209. Sevilla, España: FAAEE, Fundación El Monte, Asana.

—

2008 Interculturalización fallida. Desarrollismo, neo-indigenismo y universidad intercultural en Yucatán, México. Revista TRACE VI(53):49-63.

Loewe, Ronald

2007 Euphemism, Parody, Insult, and Innuendo: Rhetoric and Ethnic Identity at the Mexican Periphery. Journal of American Folklore 120(477):284-307.

Long, N., and A. Long

1992 Battlefields of Knowledge. The interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development. London and New York: Routledge.

López, Luis Enrique

2004 Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para los Países Andinos. *In* Educación superior para los pueblos indígenas de América Latina. Memorias del Segundo Encuentro Regional. CGEIB, ed. Pp. 195-227. México D.F: IESALC, CGEIB.

López, Luis Enrique, and Wolfgang Küper

1999 La educación intercultural bilingúe en América Latina: balance y perspectivas. Revista Iberoamericana de Educación 20:17-85.

Lucy, John A.

1997 Linguistic relativity. Annual Review of Anthropology 26:291-312.

Macossay Vallado, Mauricio, et al.

2005 La Escuela de Agricultura Ecológica U Yits Ka'an de Maní, Yucatán. 10 años de trabajo. Pp. 27. Mérida, Yucatán: CRUPY, UADY.

Maffie, James

2006 Ethnoepistemology. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Accessed on: 23 July 2009. [http://www.iep.utm.edu/e/ethno-ep.htm].

Maldonado, Luis

2004 Módulo Desarrollo con Identidad. Pp. 84. La Paz, Bolivia: Fondo Indígena, Programa de Formación de Líderes Indígenas de la Comunidad Andina (PFLICAN).

Mall, Ram Adhar

2000 Intercultural philosophy. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefiel Publishers, Inc.

Mallon, Florencia E.

1992 Indian Communities, Political Cultures, and the State in Latin America, 1780-1990. Journal of Latin American Studies 24(Quincentenary Suplement):35-53.

Maranhão, Tullio

1990 Introduction. *In* The interpretation of dialogue. T. Maranhão, ed. Pp. 1-22. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.

Marcus, George

1995 Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. Annual Review of Anthropology 24:95-117.

Márquez Nava, Ulises, and Benjamín Berlanga Gallardo

1995 La educación para adultos en regiones rurales de extrema pobreza: los procesos educativos en la búsqueda de la autosubsistencia. *In* Necesidades básicas de los adultos: Encuentro de especialistas. INEA, ed. Pp. 268-281. Mexico DF: Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos.

Márquez, Ulises, and Benjamín Berlanga

1995 La educación para adultos en regiones rurales de extrema pobreza: los procesos educativos en la búsqueda de la autosubsistencia. *In* Necesidades básicas de los adultos: Encuentro de especialistas. INEA, ed. Pp. 268-281. Mexico DF: Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos.

Martínez González, Roberto

2007 Las entidades anímicas en el pensamiento maya. Estudios de Cultura Maya (XXX):153-174.

Mateos Cortés, Laura Selene

2008 The discourse of interculturality and its transnational migration: towards a comparative analysis of its appropriation by academic and political actors in the state of Veracruz. Presented in First Conference on Ethnicity, Race, and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, University of California, San Diego in La Jolla, CA, May 22-24, 2008, 2008.

Mato, Daniel

1998 Pueblos Indígenas y Democracia en tiempos de Globalización: La experiencia del Fondo Indígena. Cuadernos del Cendes 15(38):31-44.

—

2007 Interculturalidad y educacion superior: diversidad de contextos, actores, visiones y propuestas. Nómadas (27):62-73.

—

2008 Diversidad cultural e interculturalidad en educación superior. Problemas, retos, oportunidades y experiencias en América Latina. *In* Diversidad cultural e interculturalidad en educación superior. Experiencias en América Latina. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 23-79. Caracas: IESALC-UNESCO, ASCUN.

Max-Neef, Manfred

1991 Human Scale Development. New York: Apex Press.

Max-Neef, Manfred, Antonio Elizalde, and Martín Hopenhayn

1989 Human Scale Development: an option for the future. Development Dialogue: A Journal of International Development Cooperation (1):7-80.

Mignolo, Walter

1995 The Darker Side of the Renaissance; Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

—

2000 Local Histories/Global Designs; Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

—

2002 El potencial epistemológico de la historia oral: algunas contribuciones de Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. *In* Estudios y Otras Prácticas Intelectuales Latinoamericanas en Cultura y Poder. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 201-212. Caracas: CLACSO, CEAP, FACES, Universidad Central de Venezuela.

—

2003 Globalization and the Geopolitics of Knowledge. The Role of the Humanities in the Corporate University. Nepantla: Views from South 4(1):97-119.

Milbrath, Susan

1999 Star gods of the Maya: astronomy in art, follore, and calendars. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Montemayor, Carlos, and Donald H. Frischmann, eds.

2004 Words of the True Peoples/Palabras de los Seres Verdaderos: Anthology of Contemporary Mexican Indigenous-Language Writers/Antología de Escritores Actuales en Lenguas Indígenas de México. Volume Volume One/Tomo Uno: Prosa/Prose. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Morgan, Douglas L.

2003 Appropiation, Appreciation, Accomodation: Indigenous Wisdoms and Knowledges in Higher Education. International Review of Education 49(1-2):35-49.

Moseley, Edward H., and Edward D. Terry

1980 Yucatan: A World Apart. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press.

Moya García, Xavier, and Sally-Anne Way

2003 Winning spaces: participatory methodologies in rural processes in Mexico. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

Moya, Ruth

1998 Reformas educativas e interculturalidad en América Latina. Revista Iberoamericana de Educación 17.

Muñoz, Manuel R.

2006 Educación Superior y pueblos indígenas en América Latina y el Caribe. *In* Informe sobre la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe 2000-2005. La metamorfosis de la educación superior. IESALC, ed. Pp. 129-143. Caracas, Venezuela: IESALC.

Mutua, Kagendo, and Beth Blue Swadener

2004 Introduction. *In* Decolonizing Research in Cross-Cultural Contexts; Critical Personal Narratives. K. Mutua and B.B. Swadener, eds. Pp. 1-23. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Nader, Laura

1996 Introduction. *In* Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiry into Boundaries, Power, and Knowledge. L. Nader, ed. Pp. 1-25. New York and London: Routledge.

Noh, Margarita, and Juan Burgos

2003 Area de habilidades del pensamiento (relatorías y apuntes del primer Diplomado). *In* Documentos de análisis interno de la UCI-Red. Chacsinkín, Yucatán: MAC, UCI-Red.

Norget, Kristin

2007 Dialogues of religion and liberation: decolonization and the politics of syncretism. The International Education Journal 34(1):72-97.

Paget-Clarke, Nic

2005 A University without Shoes. An Indigenous Intercultural System of Informal Education. *In Motion Magazine*. Accessed on: May of 2008. [http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/global/rsb_int_eng.html].

Paoli, Antonio

2001 Autonomía, conocimiento e ideales de la educación tseltal. Reencuentro (32):54-65.

Papadakis, Elim

1993 Intervention in New Social Movements. *In* Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice. M. Hammersley, ed. Pp. 83-104. London, Newbury Park, New Delhi: The Open University, SAGE Publications.

Parekh, Bhikhu

2000 Rethinking Multiculturalism. Houndmills and London: MacMillan Press.

Peirano, Mariza G. S.

1998 When Anthropology is at home: the different contexts of a single discipline. Annual Review of Anthropology 27:105-128.

Peón Arceo, Alicia

2000 Rituales del ciclo de vida en Tuzik, Quintana Roo. *Yucatán: Identidad y Cultura Maya*. Accessed on: 29 July 2009. [http://www.mayas.uady.mx/articulos/rituales.html#1].

Petrich, Blanche

2004 En marcha, proyecto de universidad mixe. *La Jornada*. Accessed on: 21 Diciembre 2004. [http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2004/12/21/044n1con.php].

Pottier, Johan

2003 Negotiating Local Knowledge: An Introduction. *In* Negotiating Local Knowledge: Power and Identity in Development. J. Pottier, A. Bicker, and P. Sillitoe, eds. Pp. 1-29. London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.

Pottier, Johan, Alan Bicker, and Paul Sillitoe, eds.

2003 Negotiating Local Knowledge: Power and Identity in Development. London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.

Quijano, Aníbal

2000 Coloniality of power, eurocentrism and Latin America. Nepantla: Views from South 1(3):533-580.

Radcliffe, Sarah

1996 Remaking the Nation: place, identity and politics in Latin America. London: Routledge.

Radcliffe, Sarah, Nina Laurie, and Roberto Andolina

2002 Indigenous people and political transnationalism: globalization from below meets globalization from above? *In* Transnational Communities Programme seminar. Pp. 21. Oxford.

Ramos, Marisol

2006 Tatei Yurienaka 'Iyarieya, un bachillerato innovador impulsado por el ITESO. Cruce (318):6-7.

Rappaport, Joanne

2003 El espacio del diálogo pluralista: historia del Programa de Educación Bilingüe del Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca. *In* Políticas de identidades y diferencias sociales en tiempos de globalización. D. Mato, ed. Pp. 257-281. Caracas: FACES-UCV.

—

2005 Intercultural Utopias: public intellectuals, cultural experimentation and ethnic dialogue in Colombia. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Regino, Adelfo

1999 Los pueblos indígenas: diversidad negada. Revista Chiapas 7.

Romero de Nieto, Carmen

1986 El jet's mek'. México DF: DGCP-SEP.

Root, Michael

1993 Philosophy of Social Science. The method, ideals and politics of social inquiry. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Rosaldo, Michelle Z.

1980 Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rosales González, Margarita

n.d. En la variedad está el gusto... y el sustento. Dibujando parcelas de comunidades mayas de la península. *Yucatán: Identidad y Cultura Maya*. Accessed on: July 2009. [http://www.mayas.uady.mx/articulos/parcelas.html].

Rosales González, Margarita, and Margarita Inés Zarco Salgado

2004 Local development agents' training for sustainable and endogenous development: A participatory development project among mayan communities The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension 10(3):133-142.

Ruiz-Galindo Hagerman, Dora Maria

2002 Algunas reflexiones acerca de la investigación. *In* Documentos de análisis interno de UCI-Red. Pp. 2 pp. Zautla, Puebla: UCI-Red, Patronato Pro-Educación Mexicana.

Schiwy, Freya

2002 ¿Intelectuales subalternos?: Notas sobre las dificultades de pensar en diálogo intercultural. *In* Indisciplinar las ciencias sociales: Geopolíticas del conocimiento y colonialidad del poder. C.e.a. Walsh, ed. Pp. 103-134. Quito, Ecuador: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Editorial Abya-Yala.

Schmelkes, Sylvia

2004 Educación superior intercultural: el caso de México. Pp. 9. México D.F.: IESALC.

—

2008 Las universidades interculturales en México: ¿Una contribución a la equidad en educación superior? Presented in First Conference on Ethnicity, Race, and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, University of California, San Diego in La Jolla, CA, May 22-24, 2008, 2008.

Schuetze, Hans G., and Robert Sweet
2004 Integrating School and Workplace Learning in Canada: An Introduction to Alternation Education Concepts and Issues. *In* Integrating School and Workplace Learning in Canada: Principles and Practices of Alternation Education and Training. H.G. Schuetze and R. Sweet, eds. Pp. 3-21. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Scoones, Ian, and John Thompson
1994 Knowledge, power, and agriculture: Towards a theoretical understanding. *In* Beyond Farmer First. I. Scoones, J. Thompson, and R. Chambers, eds. Pp. 16-31. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
Scott, David
1992 Anthropology and Colonial Discourse: Aspects of the Demonological Construction of Sinhala Cultural Practice. Cultural Anthropology 7(3):301-326.
SER-Mixe
1996 La autonomía: una forma concreta de ejercicio del derecho a la libre determinación y sus alcances. Revista Chiapas 2.
—
2004 Ante-proyecto de creación de la Universidad Intercultural Ayuuk. Pp. 18. Santa María Alotepec, Oaxaca: SER Mixe.
Sharp, Ann Margaret, and Ronald F. Reed, eds.
1992 Studies in philosophy for children: Harry Stottlemeier's discovery. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Sieder, Rachel, and J. Witchell
2001 Advancing indigenous claims through the law: reflections on the Guatemalan peace process. *In* Culture and Rights. Anthropological Perspectives. J. Cowan, M. Dembour, and R. Wilson, eds. Pp. 201-225. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sillitoe, Paul
1998 The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new applied anthropology. Current Anthropology 39(2):223-252.
Smith, Graham Hingangaroa
2000a Protecting and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge. *In* Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. M. Battiste, ed. Pp. 209-224. Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.
Smith, Linda Tuhiwai
1999 Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London and New York, Dunedin: Zed Books, University of Otago Press.
—
2000b Kaupapa Maori Research. *In* Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. M. Battiste, ed. Pp. 225-247. Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.
Speed, S., and J. Collier
2000 Limiting Indigenous Autonomy in Chiapas, Mexico: The State Government's Use of Human Rights. Human Rights Quarterly 22(4):887-905.
Spivak, Gayatri
1988 Can the Subaltern Speak? *In* Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Nelson and Grossberg, eds. Pp. 271-313. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Starn, Orin
1991 Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru. Cultural Anthropology 6(1):63-91.

Stavenhagen, Rodolfo
2000 Indigenous movement and politics in Mexico and Latin America. *In* Aboriginal rights and self-government. The Canadian and Mexican experience in North American perspective. C. Cook and J.D. Lindau, eds. Pp. 72-97. Montreal and Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Stross, Brian
2006 Maize in Word and Image in Southern Mesoamerica. *In* Histories of Maize: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Prehistory, Linguistics, Biogeography, Domestication, and Evolution of Maize (Zea Mays L.). J.E. Staller, R.H. Tykot, and B.F. Benz, eds. Pp. 577-598. New York: Elsevier Publishers.

Subcomandante Marcos
2003 Resistencia y autonomía vinculan luchas de más de 1.5 millones de indígenas. *La Jornada*. Accessed on: 17/02/2003. [http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/02/17/006n1pol.php?origen=index.html].

Suess, Paulo, et al.
1998 Desarrollo histórico de la teología india. Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala.

Tedlock, Dennis
1983 The analogical tradition and the emergence of a dialogical anthropology. *In* The spoken word and the work of interpretation. D. Tedlock, ed. Pp. 321-338. Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania Press.

Terán, Silvia, and Christian Heilskov Rasmussen
2005 Xocén: el pueblo en el Centro del Mundo. Mérida, Yucatán: Ediciones de la UADY.

Torres, Rosa María
2003 Lifelong learning. A new momentum and a new opportunity for adult basic learning and education (Able) in the South. Supplement to Adult Education and Development (60):240 pp.

Tucux, Daniel
2001 Retrospectiva del Proceso de Creación de la Universidad Maya. Accessed on: July of 2004. [munixela.com/ infomaya/ articles. rpv. php ? id = 81 & mod = print].

Turner, Terence
1993 Anthropology and Multiculturalism: What is Anthropology that Multiculturalists should be mindful of it? Current Anthropology 8(4):411-429.

U-Mapuche
n.d. Cursos Actuales. Accessed on: August of 2004. [www. universidadmapuche. org/ recup- lingua/ cursos- actuales. html].

UAIM
2006 Modelo educativo. Pp. 132. Mochicahui, Sinaloa: Universidad Autónoma Indígena de México.

UCI-Red, and Antonio Saldívar Moreno
2004 Diplomado Gestión del Desarrollo Local Sustentable. *In* Evaluaciones de UCI-Red. Pp. 19 pp + Appendixes. Mérida, Yucatán: UCI-Red, Región Península de Yucatán.

UCI-Red Collective
2001 Reunión UCI-Red, Junio, 25, 2001-06-25, Sihó, Halachó, Yuc. *In* Reuniones para la construcción de la propuesta UCI-Red. Halachó, Yucatán: UCI-Red.

UINPI-AW
2008a Acuerdos de la Red de Universidades Indígenas de Abya Yala. UINPI-Amawtay Wasi Website. Accessed on: June 2008. [http://www.amawtaywasi.edu.ec//MANIFIESTOREDUNIVERSIDADESIND%C3%8DGENAS.pdf].

—
2008b Informe de actividades de la Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas "Amawtay Wasi" al III Congreso de las Nacionalidades y los Pueblos. CONAIE Website. Accessed on: June 2008. [http://www.conaie.org/IIIconaie/uinpi.html].

Valenzuela, María de la Paz
2000 Los Pueblos Indígenas y la Educación de Adultos en México. Pp. 131 pp. Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, México: UNESCO Institute for Education; Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe.

Van Binsbergen, Wim
1999 'Cultures do not exist': Exploding self-evidences in the investigation of interculturality. Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy. XIII(1-2):37-114.

Van Cott, Donna Lee
2000a The friendly liquidation of the past: the politics of diversity in Latin America. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

—
2000b A Political Analysis of Legal Pluralism in Bolivia and Colombia. Journal of Latin American Studies 32(1):207-234.

Varese, Stefano
1996 (1) The Ethnopolitics of Indian Resistance in Latin America. Latin American Perspectives 23(2):58-71.

Vázquez Canché, Gregorio
2005 A través de sabias palabras. II Encuentro Internacional por la Naturaleza "El Chamanismo y las Fuerzas de la Naturaleza; Un Análisis sobre la Cosmovisión de los Pueblos Indígenas y Sitios Sagrados", Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, México, 27-30 Abril 2005, 2005, pp. 102-122. Música por la Tierra, UICN.

Verhoeven, Elisabeth
2007 Experential constructions in Yucatec Maya: a typologically based analysis of a functional domain in a Mayan language. Volume 87. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Vygotsky, Lev S.
1978 Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wade, Peter
1997 Race and Ethnicity in Latin America. London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.

Walsh, Catherine
2001 ¿Qué conocimiento(s)? Reflexiones sobre las políticas de conocimiento, el campom académico, y el movimiento indígena ecuatoriano. Boletín ICCI "Rimay" 3(25).

—

2002a (De) Construir la Interculturalidad. Consideraciones críticas desde la política, la colonialidad y los movimientos indígenas y negros en el Ecuador. *In* Interculturalidad y Política. Desafíos y posibilidades. N. Fuller, ed. Pp. 115-142. Lima, Perú: Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales.

—

2002b The (Re)articulation of Political Subjectivities and Colonial Difference in Ecuador. Nepantla: Views from South. 3(1):61-97.

Warren, D.M., L.J. Slikkerver, and D. Brokensha

1995 The cultural dimensions of development: indigenous knowledge systems. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Warren, Kay B., and Jean E. Jackson

2002 Introduction: Studying Indigenous Activism in Latin America. *In* Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation and the State in Latin America. K.B. Warren and J.E. Jackson, eds. Pp. 1-46. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press.

Watanabe, John

1994 Unimagining the Maya: Anthropologists, Others, and the Inescapable Hubris of Authorship. Bulletin of Latin American Research 14(1):25-45.

Wearne, P

1996 Return of the Indian. Conquest and revival in the Americas. London: Cassell, Latin American Bureau.

Wenger, Etienne, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder

2002 Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge. Harvard: Harvard Business School Press.

Wilson, Richard

1995 Shifting Frontiers: Historical Transformations of Identities in Latin America. Bulletin of Latin American Research 14(1):1-7.

Wright, Susan, and Nici Nelson

1995 Participatory research and participant observation: two incompatible approaches. *In* Power and Participatory Development. Theory and Practice. N. Nelson and S. Wright, eds. Pp. 43-59. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Yashar, Deborah

1998 Contesting Citizenship. Indigenous Movements and Democracy in Latin America. Comparative Politics. 31(1):23-42.

—

1999 Democracy, Indigenous Movements, and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America. World Politics 52(1):76-104.

Zarco Salgado, Margarita Inés

2003 Necesidades de aprendizaje y desarrollo regional: una propuesta educativa para la región de los Chenes, Campeche, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

Zibechi, Raúl

2003 Los movimientos sociales latinoamericanos: tendencias y desafíos. Revista del Observatorio Social de América Latina 9:185-188.

Žižek, Slavoj

1997 Multiculturalism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism. New Left Review (225):28-51.