"TO OVERCOME" CONTEXTS OF VIOLENCE: POPULAR EDUCATION AND
HISTORICAL MEMORY IN A MAYA ACHI COMMUNITY

by

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This work is dedicated:

To the students and staff of the Fundación Nueva Esperanza Rio Negro in Rabinal, Guatemala-- There are not enough words or pages to express the lasting imprint your inspiring work and wisdom have left on my life.

And

To my parents, Mark and Karla Mitton, who taught me what was important.

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Abstract

Postwar Guatemala continues to contend with ongoing criminal and state violence, insecurity, racial exclusion and disparity, exacerbated by neoliberal and neocolonial economic policies. These patterns are rooted in centuries of colonial exploitation that intensified in genocide against the Mayan and other indigenous peoples in the early eighties. This thesis explores Maya Achi youth interpretations of the historical and contemporary roots of violence through their interaction with the mandates and practice of the New Hope Foundation Intercultural Bilingual Institute in Rabinal. The institute combines historical memory, a participatory methodology, and cultural revitalization within an intercultural framework. By embracing institute themes of interculturalism, citizenship, leadership and cooperative learning, participants provide insight into the potential to transform structural violence through the promotion of alternative visions of grassroots development and reweaving community in this rural municipality, still impacted by the traumas of armed conflict.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols Used

BTS: Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network.

CEH: Comision de Esclaracimiento Historico/ United Nations Historical Clarification Commission

COCODES: Local Development Council

CUC: United Peasant Committee

IBI: Intercultural Bilingual Institute

ECAP: Equipo Comunitario de Accion Psycosocial/ Community Psychosocial Action Team

FUNDAEC: Fundación para la Applicacion y Ensenanza de las Ciencias/Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences

FNE: Fundación Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Foundation

PAC: Patrullos de Autodefensa Civil/ Civil Defence Patrols

PLQ: Proyecto Linquistico Quezaltenango/ Quezaltenango Linguistic Project

SAT: Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial/ Tutorial Learning System

REMEBI: Recreacion Metodologica de Educacion Bilingue Intercultural/ Methodological Re-creation of Bilingual and Intercultural Education

REHMI: Recuperacion de la Memoria Historica/ Recovery of Historical Memory Project

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

"To be young is a crime. Reality commits it every day at the hour of dawn; and also history, which is born anew each day. This is why reality and history are prohibited."
 –Eduardo Galeano, "The System" as quoted in "Victor Leiva," 2011

On the evening of February 2, 2011, Victor Leiva, twenty-four years old, was shot

to death as he walked home from work in Guatemala City's historic centre ("Condemning

the Assassination," 2011; "Justice for Victor," 2011). Leiva was a member of the youth

arts collective *Caja Ludica* and an activist for the rights of marginalized youth. Human

rights organizations condemned the murder and called for an investigation, which has still

not materialized ("Urgent Petition," 2012). His death is one of 3,000 violent crimes

against youth in 2011 alone, who are persecuted, tortured and detained throughout the

Central American region (see Dyrness, 2002; Karabanow, 2010; Ranum, 2011). These

crimes, often dismissed as vengeful activities between gangs or delinquents, are also

suspected as politically motivated, as a result of the targeting of artists, community

leaders, young indigenous rights activists, and others who attempt to support

disadvantaged youth in finding community in cultural realms outside of criminal activity

(see "Condemning the Assassination," 2011). These attacks occur against a backdrop of

danger faced by human rights, women's rights, and indigenous rights workers and

organizations in the country (Godoy, 2006; "The most violent year," 2011).

This study discusses the meanings indigenous adolescent youth make from

societal violence and its historical and contemporary roots, through the course of their

involvement in a participatory education project in Rural Guatemala. Amidst public fear

of rampant crime and violence, youth in the region are often scapegoated as a result of

the presence of gang activity and delinquency. The Central American countries of

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have on average an annual 53 homicides per 100,000 people, placing them "among the most dangerous countries in the world" (Bruneau, 2011; p. 1). In Guatemala, an important gateway in continental drug and human trafficking, the division between legal and illegal violence remains blurred and legal capacity weak, with only 2.7 per cent of criminal cases leading to conviction, creating an environment of impunity and fear (see Acosta, 2007; Bruneau, 2011). Youth, the main victims of homicides in the country, are overwhelmingly accustomed to this violence: Sixty-two percent of murders and violent acts are directed toward them, particularly men between 14 and 25 years of age, as a result of accusations of delinquency (Acosta, 2007; Ranum, 2011). Youth are victims of vigilante groups, extra-judicial killings, and outright social cleansing in the form of initiatives such as Plan Escoba, a 2003-2004 crackdown on gang activity in which thousands of youth were detained. The majority of these detentions were illegal, and the crowding of youth into prisons actually fortified gang presence (Ranum, 2011). Violence is not just in the streets: Family violence and trauma are realities for many youth, propelling them into precarious work, crime, and street life (Acosta, 2007; Dyrness, 2002; Karabanow, 2003).

In interviews intended to invite youth definitions of peace in this postwar nation, it became evident that all participants live with daily concerns about violence and personal safety. The central objective of the study was to learn about youth interpretations of the causes of and possible solutions to violence, and while a minority of participants mirrored public "tough on crime" discourse by suggesting punitive approaches, the majority reflected on the contributions of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination to violence. As will be explained more in depth in Chapter 3, economic

impoverishment and disparity are key factors in societal insecurity: Guatemala's United Nations human development ranking is 122 out of 182 countries, and Gross National Income per capita is US$ 2,440 (Bruneau, 2011). Guatemala is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the world, with large disparities in income, health, and education (Benson, Fischer and Thomas, 2008; see also Green, 2009). Two per cent of the population owns eighty percent of cultivable land, the most unequal distribution in the region (Green, 2009). As a result of centuries of colonialism, disparity also occurs along ethnic lines: Green (2011) indicates that although Guatemala's twenty-three indigenous peoples constitute a majority of the population, eighty per cent live in poverty. Ongoing loss of lands, lack of services, and unequal access to education force disproportionate numbers of rural indigenous adults and youth to seek survival as migrant workers, risking incarceration, violence, racism, assault and exploitation as they attempt to move to urban areas and cross borders (Green, 2011). Violence and conflict are perpetuated by these structural factors, but publicly conceptualized as isolated, criminal acts (Benson, Fischer, and Thomas, 2008).

Disparity and instability persist as legacies of Guatemala's 36-year civil war. As noted by one participant, in spite of the signing of peace accords in 1996 (French, 2009), "Guatemala is not so much in peace… but rather it's neither in war nor in peace. We're like, fifty per cent of both words…because of the pain left behind by those who caused the conflict" (Julia, October 2011). In addition to terrorizing the civilian population as a whole, the conflict consisted of indiscriminate attacks on the country's indigenous populations in the name of anti-communist warfare (see Schirmer, 1998). By the end of the conflict, death squads, massacres, and the military's infamous scorched earth

campaigns had resulted in 200 000 people dead or disappeared, one million displaced, and 600 rural villages destroyed (Schirmer, 1998; Rothenberg, 2012).   These atrocities were investigated by the country's two truth commissions: The REHMI (Recovery of Historical Memory) project, sponsored by the human rights office of the Catholic Church and published in 1998; and the UN-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) (French, 2009; Goldman, 2007; Rothenberg, 2012). The commissions' findings indicated that over ninety per cent of human rights abuses during the war were state perpetrated (Goldman, 2007; Rothenberg, 2012.), and charged the state with genocide in four indigenous Mayan regions (Higonnet, 2009). The commissions' focus on the social and political context leading up to the violence also revealed that civilians had been deliberately targeted in order to curb contestation of historical racist, cultural and economic injustices (Oglesby, 2007). Violent restoration of the status quo laid the groundwork for economic restructuring favourable to foreign investment and to the domestic capital-owning classes. These policies facilitate a postwar situation in which "new violence is a symptom of changes brought about by neoliberal reforms and amplified by residues of trauma from decades of armed conflict." (Benson et al., 2008, p. 40).

In light of these interconnections between violence and racial, cultural, and economic patterns of exclusion, youth cultural identity is another theme of inquiry in this study. Informed by their teachers and parents about historical persecution of indigenous peoples, many participants witnessed discrimination in public spheres; most notably, in previous experiences of schooling. The education system is a key example of structural discrimination in Guatemala. In spite of the potential of basic and secondary education

for breaking the cycle of poverty, average grade level is four years, and half the indigenous population is illiterate (Acosta, 2007; Green, 2011; Poppema, 2009). Higher quality programs tend to be privatized and less accessible in remote areas, while additional barriers exist for indigenous youth, since the curriculum continues to reflect Ladino[1] values, language and culture (Heckt, 1999; Poitevin, 2001; Poppema, 2009; Vanthuyne, 2009). After centuries of conquest and exploitation, language, culture and identity are still of significant value to many indigenous groups in Guatemala, especially the Maya (see Arias, 2006; Helmberger, 2006; Vanthuyne, 2009). Although educational reform, along with other resolutions toward intercultural respect and inclusion in policy, were major components of the peace accords, there has been little political will in implementing them (Cuxil, 2009; Godoy, 2006). In addition to undervaluing and even stigmatizing indigenous identities, public curriculum and discourse espouse a historical perspective that downplays the genocide and the preceding hundreds of years of institutional racism and colonialism (see Corntassel and Holder, 2001; Green, 2011; Ogelsby, 2007).This narrative discourages critical analysis of the reality that, in spite of the establishment of formal democracy, the socioeconomic inequities at the root of the armed conflict remain unaddressed (Cuxil, 2009; Godoy, 2006).

Poor availability of culturally resonant, historically informative education violates the intent of the Peace Accords as well as of both of REHMI and the CEH. These processes were instrumental in outlining the social, economic, and political causes of the war, and are potentially instructive for postwar peace-building and policy (Goldman, 2007; Oglesby, 2007; Rothenberg, 2012). As will be discussed in chapters three and four, post-dictatorial violence and disparity in Guatemala and other states in the region is

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[1] Of predominantly Spanish or European descent.

inextricably linked with historical patterns of conquest, colonialism, and continued dispossession of rights and resources, particularly for the country's indigenous majority (see Drouin, 2010; Galeano, 1997; Green, 2011). In order to address elevated levels of violence and poverty, educational and youth programs must also eliminate racial and cultural discrimination and promote a historical understanding not only of systematic exploitation and oppression, but the ways in which these have been resisted (Corntassel and Holder, 2001; Ogelsby, 2007).   In spite of the political challenges of disseminating the findings of the CEH and REHMI to the public, some popular organizations are investigating and adopting this work in order to urge the importance of a more equitable, inclusive society (Oglesby, 2007).

Participants in this study were students and teachers immersed in the theory and practice of one such organization, The New Hope Foundation, which teaches local history in connection to the conflict and promotes bilingual intercultural education in indigenous Maya Achi communities. The Maya Achi are a people descended from the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the central highland Rabinal region of Guatemala, populated by related ethnic Mayan groups since 500 B.C.E. (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009; Van Akkeren, 2005). The region was a target of severe military campaigns and massacres against the civilian population during the war (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009; Rothenberg, 2012). In the spirit of fostering peace through education for the postwar generations, one survivor, Jesus Tecu Osorio, organized the Fundación Nueva Esperanza Rio Negro, or the New Hope Rio Negro Foundation, in 1999. The Foundation's mandate is to provide better access to education as well as to content that revitalizes and honours local communities, culture, and history (Osorio, 2003). Its language and learning institute,

established in 2003 with the support of international solidarity organizations, employs a cooperative learning methodology with the aim of fostering critical thought and community-based political participation. ("Methodology," n.d.). Programs and scholarships are allotted for Achi youth from economically impoverished families in the surrounding communities, particularly descendants of genocide survivors (Osorio, 2003). In addition to instilling leadership, the Foundation's objectives and methods seek to promote interpersonal and intercultural harmony through the teaching of local and national historical memory ("Guia-Manual," 2006; Osorio, 2003).

Historical memory is a controversial construct in Rabinal, Guatemala, and throughout the region (see Acosta, 2007; Arias and del Campo, 2009; Oglesby, 2007). Historical or collective memory can be understood as the representation and interpretation of historical material in public spheres and shared resources (see Arias and del Campo, 2009; Irwin-Zareka, 2007; Olick and Levy, 1997). While it is unlikely that societies or nations reach consensus on historical narrative or a single collective memory, postwar Guatemala and Latin America have witnessed demands among social action groups for the recording and prosecution of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity across the continent during the Cold War era (see Arias and del Campo, 2009; Oglesby, 2007). These activities contest the conventional discourse regarding historical events, which often characterize the actions committed as necessary in a fight against terrorists or communist threats (Arias and del Campo, 2009; Drouin, 2010; Oglesby, 2007). In Guatemala, although state mandated historical memory in school texts and the media tend to frame the conflict in this way, other possibilities adopted by public initiatives and grassroots organizations emphasize that repression occurred not just of

individual victims and communities, but also against collective mobilization for social change (Oglesby, 2007). The CEH and REHMI are rich with potential for historical memory that urges redress of entrenched systemic inequality[2] (see Goldman, 2007; Rothenberg, 2012).

This case study of the New Hope Foundation was inspired by this aspect of memory that " is primarily brought forward by the need to express or define who we are in the present and, in turn, what we could possibly become" (Arias and del Campo, 2009, p. 11). That remembrance can shed light on society in the present was recognized by the majority of participants:

> The institute would not exist without the cause and struggle of the founder. Of Jesus. So, we cannot deny that part of history. It can be a sad history, a painful history, but it leaves us teachings, all history leaves us…. Teachings, also so that it does not happen again… we don't want it to happen again, in any way. (Sara, August 2011).

In the similar vein of learning from both the resilience and repression of the past, Rabinal writer Lopez de Gamiz explains historical memory as "teaching that which must not repeat itself" (2009, p. 7, translated from original). He suggests memory of the violent robbing of indigenous lands, centuries of exploitation, genocide, and resistance as a powerful tool for the pursuit of justice in the present, and preservation of persecuted cultural roots as a source of strength, respect, and solidarity for these struggles. Over a decade after the signing of formal peace, in the midst of continued political and social instability, how do New Hope Foundation youth explain historical memory? How do they articulate peace and justice, and how do they experience their cultural identity in the face

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[2] Of course, the formulation of alternative historical memories and their social and political applications is not a unified or cohesive endeavour, but also subject to intercultural relations, power structures, and multiple interpretations. For more on the diversity and discourse within these processes in Guatemala and Latin America, see Arias, 2006; Arias and del Campo, 2009, Dill, 2009; French, 2009 and Oglesby, 2007.

of continued systemic exclusion and violence?

Interviews invited students to reflect upon concepts of historical memory, education, interculturalism, peace and community in order to explore their interpretations of violence in the past and ideas for social change in the present. The central argument of this thesis is that participants grasp the systemic and historical factors at play in contemporary violence, demonstrated in values placed on interdependence, sustainability and inclusion emergent within their analyses of structural inequality and oppression. Participants often expressed impetus for social change through motivations "to overcome": Overcoming historical and present discrimination, overcoming poverty, and overcoming violence were consistently described as collective efforts requiring collective consciousness: "Peace is a value, but unfortunately it's much related with poverty. Because… peace, for me is not trying to ruin others, but helping them, with solidarity, seeing that she too is trying to overcome just like I'm trying to overcome"(José, August 2011). Participants demonstrated knowledge of the historical and contemporary interconnections between oppression, exclusion, poverty and violence through their engagement with education as a site of individual and community agency, by simultaneously embracing their cultural roots while recognizing the importance of learning from a diversity of cultures, and in their suggestions of approaches to peace and development that emphasize ecological well-being, cooperation, and equitable distribution of resources.

Redistributive, holistic perspectives of contemporary disparity and violence are invaluable in this era of global economic trends toward austerity and the concentration of wealth (see Klein, 2007). However, they are particularly pertinent to the Guatemalan

context, as state-mandated interpretations of historical memory imply necessity of the intensification of free-market, profit-based policies as the most beneficial form of development (see Green, 2011; Oglesby, 2007; Schirmer, 1998). As will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, across Latin America the repression of popular movements for local control of lands, resources and development during the Cold War has continued today in the form of neoliberal economic policies that privatize resources, minimize regulation and supports available for those marginalized and impoverished by such policies, and criminalize dissent (see Klein, 2007; Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011). Though some nations have begun to resist such policies at the state level (see Beasley-Murray, Cameron and Hershberg, 2009; Klein, 2007; Chomsky, 2010); in Guatemala, the legacies of state terror and genocide live on in prominent fears of political engagement and pronounced social ruptures (Acosta, 2007; Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011). Amidst institutional silence and threat, the New Hope Foundation's promotion of an organizing spirit and concern for the collective good is truly revolutionary.

In addition to cherishing an opportunity to learn from the New Hope Foundation, the inspiration for this research rose out of my background in Peace Studies and Education, and from my experience as a teacher for youth of ages 12-18. Previous work in intercultural settings and with youth affected by poverty and violence in Bolivia and Nunavut has consistently presented questions regarding the integration of inclusion, equity and social change into praxis—usually inspired by comments from my students! Throughout my training and work in education I have been particularly interested in tensions between educational programming that seeks to challenge the status quo, and the responsibility of enabling student survival within that status quo. Initially, as I began the

research process, I sought organizations with a mandate to work with marginalized youth, with a particular interest in anti-oppressive practices and the promotion of youth empowerment. I had learned previously of the New Hope Foundation through an interest in the Maritimes Breaking the Silence Network, which has extended support to the organization where possible. As I established contact with the Foundation and began to read more about their inspiring work, I realized that in addition to empowering students with discourse and abilities they might otherwise be excluded from, they are also seeking to change systemic patterns of physical, social, and economic oppression. I became eager to learn how this transformative theory of education translated into practice.

The New Hope Foundation seeks to break cycles of violence by providing alternatives to poverty for students and their communities, by teaching about the historical and contemporary causes of insecurity, and by re-asserting the value of Achi cultural identity. Their curriculum integrates Maya Achi historical memory, world view and language with Spanish instruction and community development. Thus, the Foundation's educational Institute is a dialectically enriching site where youth are making sense of complex topics of culture, power, and peace. Through the course of this case study, participants discuss their experiences and ideas related to living in a context of violence, their self-identification of Maya Achi, their ideas for more equitable, peaceful communities, and the potential of their unique education in facilitating these changes. Their insights speak to the cultural richness, power and resilience of the Maya Achi community, and to the immense potential of youth as historical agents for change.

Chapter 2: Study Intent, Design, and Methodology

Purpose and Rationale

This study seeks to understand the educational experiences of New Hope Institute students. The overall purpose of this study was to present a forum for New Hope Foundation youth articulations, interpretations, and understandings related to topics of peace, historical memory, identity, and social change. The community development approach of the New Hope Foundation's Intercultural Bilingual Institute (Spanish acronym IBI), as well as their mandate to promote societal participation, historical memory, and equity for Maya Achi youth and families, motivated me to seek the organization out as a potential space in which youth have an opportunity to negotiate complex, historical layers of economic, social, and cultural exclusion and oppression at play in struggles for peace and equality. As the New Hope Foundation is a site that embraces a radical pedagogy and explicitly contends with power and culture (See Osorio, 2003), it is also a good potential setting to discuss youth interpretations of these issues. Although the study is neither able nor intended to provide a curriculum blueprint applicable to all postwar or peacebuilding contexts, it does seek insights for alternative education from the perspective of Maya Achi students as members of a historically marginalized and oppressed group. Participants represent just one of many groups who are not only excluded from development discourse and educational policy-making, but also from discussions about alternatives, as inequity in educational systems can also prevent them from accessing the "activism conversation" (Ardizzone, 2003, p. 428). Finally, the study shares the Foundation's goal of supporting students in becoming agents of change, as well as the belief that "youth who are most affected by structural violence

hold out the most promise for changing the social conditions that lead to direct violence."

(Ardizzone, 2003, p. 423).

Research Design

This study's design is informed by a critical realist paradigm of inquiry. This

framework acknowledges the existence of multidimensional influences on theory and

practice (Bhaskar, 2008; Ollman, 2001). In analysis and interpretation, critical realism

considers linkages between concrete, objectively observable natural, economic and social

phenomena, as well as culture, value systems, and other symbolic and subjective

phenomena (Bhaskar, 2008; Ollman, 2001). Critical realism orients research through a

dialectical perspective, or the "intricate process of conceptual or social (and sometimes

even natural) conflict, interconnection and change" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 3, parenthesis in

original). A dialectical approach to research is founded upon the interrelatedness of all

aspects of reality, and the complexity of the relationships between its social, natural, and

material features (Bhaskar, 2008).   Critical realist study of societal phenomena rejects

the existence of a single set of truths to convey, while acknowledging the central

importance of material influences and power relations. For instance, the study of

education cannot ignore the decidedly political, cultural, and economic forces that impact

its content, delivery, and student interactions with programs. Education is acknowledged

across the ideological spectrum as a key factor in addressing poverty, HIV-AIDS and

other health issues, and in supporting child and youth in conflict and post conflict areas

(Lewis, 2006; Sandlin and Wickens, 2007). However, education is more than the neutral,

technical panacea that some development agencies or governments conceive it to be, and

its significance for development extends beyond functional literacy (See Pieterse, 2010;

Sandlin and Wickens, 2007). A critical realist analysis of education reveals that it can also facilitate and reproduce asymmetrical power relations, perpetuating the very problems it purports to solve.

Historically, Western education has acted as an accessory of colonial military and economic domination: "the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and blackboard" (Ngugi, 1986, p.14). This power manifested itself in multiple ways around the globe. In Canadian residential schools, policies of abusive discipline and active shaming toward First Nations cultures and languages effectively broke the bond between parent and child, traumatizing generations of youth (Archibald, 1997). Throughout Africa, the reservation of access for all but an elite minority fostered an inequality that continued after colonial rule, and now continues to marginalize rural and illiterate citizens through its application of a new category of "underdeveloped" (Rahnema, 1997, p.158). In nineteenth century Guatemala, curricula designed to assimilate and "civilize" indigenous citizens set the stage for ongoing institutional exclusion of indigenous peoples by privileging colonial language and customs (Hernandez, 2011).

In more contemporary times, educational programs continue to replicate economic, racial, and gendered patterns of exclusion as a result of their intersection with institutions of power and the discourses they privilege. A Marxist analysis of education in North America, where there is high correlation between low socio-economic status, school failure and juvenile delinquency, reveals the ways in which the school, as an extension of the advanced capitalist political economy, ultimately serves the interests of the ruling class, while pushing already disadvantaged youth to the periphery and even

into imprisonment (Richardson, 2005). De Lissovoy (2007) denounces the "positivist streak" in education that reduces curriculum content to a singular dimension of understanding emphasizing success and achievement, serving to privilege the discourse and knowledge of a dominant culture while promoting a competition that inevitably promotes few and excludes many.

In order to truly empower youth to overcome and rework unequal systems, educational programs must seek to embrace ambiguity, difference and multiculturalism, while questioning the roots and effects of power structures (hooks, 1994). Critical Literacy theorists critique the ways in which education is often employed as a tool of cultural and economic hegemony, evident in the way many educational initiatives recreate patterns of social control and domination (Crowther et al. 2005, Freire, 1972; Kilgore, 1999; Sandlin and Wickens, 2007; Tikly, 2004). The life and work of Brazilian popular educator Paulo Freire (2003) is perhaps most well-known for putting this critique into action, through a radical pedagogy that encourages critical understanding of cultural and social environments while building on a student's experience of his or her world, and fostering an "emancipatory literacy" (Freire, 2003, p. 354). In contrast to the traditional "banking model" of pedagogy in which the teacher, as authority figure, transmits information to the student, the critical approach prompts teachers and students to identify sites of social conflict and formulate modes of struggle (Cho, 2005).

This study engages with the New Hope Foundation as a potential space in which alternatives to conventional education are formulated and practised. However, critical realism and critical literacy theories discourage linear, standardized approaches to alternative education or its study, recognizing that both are fraught with myriad

contextual influences (see Bhaskar, 2008, Choules, 2007, and Freire, 1972). The challenge of balancing an alternative institute's mandates-- grassroots development, intercultural education, historical memory and indigenous participation-- with the need to meet educational requirements rooted in curricula that exclude indigenous worldviews, language and histories is just one illustration of the many conflicting considerations that can occur depending on time, place, and circumstances. These conflicts are discussed more in depth in Chapters 3 and 4. In order to address complex and contradictory intersections of identity, marginalization, and action at play in dominant and alternative approaches to education, the theoretical lens for this study integrates postcolonial, radical pedagogical and peace theories. This framework attempts to incorporate material and social influences implicit in a critical realist understanding of social activity, recognizing the prominence of natural and subjective forces as well as the agency of human consciousness (Bhaskar, 2008).

Postcolonial theory suggests that historic and ongoing colonial oppression can foster the construction and internalization of hybrid, and sometimes dissonant, subjectivities, particularly for members of marginalized racial and ethnic groups. The complex production and reproduction of these patterns are demonstrated in Fanon's (1963) work on the psychology of colonized or "subaltern" identities. In Fanon's analysis, colonialism produces a series of binary relationships between colonizer and colonized, such as rich/poor, powerful/powerless, resourceful/landless, and educated/uneducated. This relationship, originally established in physical violence, is sustained by psychological violence as the colonized are forcefully taught theirown powerlessness. Ultimately, any attempt to establish harmony or unity will fail, since it is impossible

within such entrenched dichotomies. From a postcolonial perspective, schools and other institutions become organized, systemic expressions of this violence in their exclusion or criminalization of racialized groups, for instance through the use of culturally biased standardized testing, or military recruitment (DeLissovoy, 2007).

As indigenous peoples all over the globe inherit the legacies of historical inequality and attempt to navigate or resist these institutions, many continue to experience the "coloniality of power" in daily life. This concept refers to the ongoing legacies of colonial policies, which live on in the form of rigid racial classification, hierarchical relationships of domination between "European" and "Non-European" identity groups, and socioeconomic structures that preserve these historical precedents (Sanjines, as quoted in Arias, 2006, p. 260). Contemporary postcolonial theory contests these structures by re-claiming hybrid, fluid conceptualizations of identity and signification, involving "processes of interaction that create new social spaces to which new meanings are given. These relations enable the articulation of experiences of change in societies splintered by modernity, and they facilitate consequent demands for social transformation." (Young, 2003, p.79).

Such efforts to subvert entrenched, binary meanings might seek to articulate new forms of identity, contest asymmetrical discourses, and advocate material redistribution. Arias (2006) discusses the power of indigenous "cultural agency:" activities that constitute a re-working of discourse or space, particularly on the part of subaltern peoples in an effort to seek justice and empowerment: "Projects linked to cultural agency, thus, explore how subjects establish their legitimacy in the public sphere through the various cultural practices—including alternative politics, transfer, use and/or acquisition of new

technologies—that they use to articulate polyvalent identities" (p. 251). The adoption of polyvalent or hybrid identities entails resisting racial stereotypes by embracing aspects of both one's identity from a traditional or indigenous culture, and of the dominant, colonizing culture. However, amidst societal organization predicated on violence, inequality, and injustice, cultural agency can conflict with a perceived need to survive within existing power structures, reproducing the status quo (Fanon, 1963). Positions of hybridity can be conflicting, particularly when racial and cultural dichotomies still exist.

In the Guatemalan context, these kinds of tensions are illustrated by Green's (2008) descriptions of Mayan youth who are "caught between the traditional and the modern." Some youth may live a contrast between their home lives and Western images of consumerism and individualism in the media, which tend to reinforce "notions of the 'traditional' as backward and inferior. These competing desires further remove youth from their families and their communities, even as they are simultaneously and ultimately denied access to the fruits of a wealthy capitalist lifestyle" (116). Constructed images of the "exotic" Mayan, heavily photographed and produced for national and touristic consumption can also create another layer of expectations and stereotypes that influence individuals (Green, 2008; Lykes, Terre Blanche, and Hamber, 2003, p. 84). The ambiguity and ambivalence that accompany competing identity constructs, definitions of culture, globalized economic restructuring and moves toward empowerment, prominently featured in postcolonial literature, also manifest themselves in schools around the world as points of discussion and understanding. The intercultural philosophy of the New Hope Foundation seeks transcendence of historically imposed dichotomies. Interviews with staff and students sought to explore participant articulations of tangible possibilities for

this transcendence; that is, their negotiations of historically marginalized Achi identity amidst ongoing institutional racism and pressure for assimilation (see Cuxil, 2009; "Guia-Manual," 2006; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009).

Radical pedagogical approaches address action and educational praxis relevant to these relationships and tensions. Radical pedagogical theorists such as Freire suggest that by encouraging an understanding of historic, economic and political context, education can promote agency and liberation in contexts of persecution and oppression (Freire, 2003). Through this reflexive approach, educators work cooperatively with learners to foster a literacy that helps them to "read and write the world" before the word, so that all involved can learn the ways in which they effect and are effected by their realities, and formulate paths to resistance, or transformation (Freire and Macedo, 2003, 354-56). However, the change involved in this "consciousness raising" is not straightforward. Freire and Macedo acknowledge "an enormous tension between these two dimensions of literacy:" Potential conflicts in choosing between or integrating a functional or technical approach to reading and writing, and a critical or radical one (2003, p.355). Learners may also struggle between mastering the dominant discourse in order to contest it, and doing so in order to assimilate (See also Gitterman, 1996).

The Foundation's Bilingual Intercultural Institute (Spanish acronym IBI) posits a philosophy of equitable cross-cultural relations, cultural rejuvenation and historical memory, as well as a unique, student-centred teaching methodology ("Guia-Manual," 2006; "Methodology," n.d. Osorio, 2003). This combination encompasses elements of Arias' concept of cultural agency through its potential to encourage new, less rigid concepts of identity and race, as well as a Freirian "reading of the world" through its

engagement with historical and political context. In such alternative educational spaces, one might anticipate that as students learn their connection to the world and to see themselves as social beings, the most effective radical pedagogy works with the tensions inherent in these approaches and explores ways in which to best navigate them. Thus, radical pedagogy assumes, and embraces, a certain ambiguity on the part of actors in cultural agency. The principles of radical pedagogy can provide a framework for questioning and understanding the myriad ways in which youth might define culture, mobility, inclusion, and other mandates of the program they participate in, as well as their place within these constructs. Overall, radical pedagogy encourages learners to critically engage with their history, and to recognize their role as agents in fostering societal change (Freire and Macedo, 2003; Gitterman, 1996). Influenced by an education that teaches a potentially subversive historical memory, espouses a participatory methodology, and pursues cultural revitalization, it is of interest whether participants in this study view education as a source of technical skills required for survival and assimilation within the status quo, as a vehicle for societal change, or a combination of these.

Organizations that encourage learners as agents of change cannot overlook the pronounced material disparity, repression and even fear that result from centuries of conquest and exploitation. In post-war Guatemala, continued inequality and the legacies of political violence have left many rural Mayan communities "in shambles." (Green, 2008, 116). One approach to radical pedagogy relevant to contexts of violence is Peace Education. Peace Education is closely connected to Freire's original work and to social theories of violence, which address systemic injustices through the concept of "structural violence" (Brunk, 2000, 22). This concept contends that poverty and inequality are

connected to oppressive systems, and are in their own right a form of violence. Indeed, they can be root causes of physical violence. Thus, peace education encourages analysis of structural violence and exploration of new patterns of thought and behaviour in order to address them. Fisk explains peace education as a form of "problem-posing education," in which teacher and student share in questioning the social and political interactions of which they are a part and formulating alternatives to promote "positive peace", or the presence of social justice. With this approach, "the world intercedes in our learning context and provides the opportunity to dialogue as equals about common life-situations." (Fisk, 2000, 176-177) Peace education builds on radical pedagogical approaches but is also relevant to the political and economic situation of Rabinal and Guatemala, as the New Hope Foundation was formed in the spirit of the 1996 Peace Accords and of reconciliation and truth at the end of the civil war (Osorio, 2003). In a country no longer formally at war, but experiencing augmented postwar violence, how do youth define the concept of "peace?" Do they perceive a role for structural factors such as poverty and racism in contributing to violence, and in illuminating the pursuit of a peaceful society?

This theoretical framework grounds the study's principal objectives and research questions. In light of the social activities and tendencies implicit in these theories-- negotiation of subaltern identities, critical engagement with subjective and material power dynamics, and formulation of directions of social action in environments of violence and ongoing oppression-- this study seeks to learn about FNE youth understandings and articulations of social change and what, if any, role the above factors may play in obstructing and/or creating social change. Research methodology was thus guided by the following main subtopics:

1. New Hope Foundation youth perceptions of "education" and its objectives: Do youth view school as a site for potential social change?

2. Youth interactions with Maya Achi identity and Maya Achi historical memory: How do youth value Achi traditions, customs, language, and history, and how do they interpret past and continued oppression in relation to their and the school's efforts toward societal participation?

3. Youth understanding of peace, development and social justice: What actions do youth suggest are needed to promote a peaceful, equitable society?

Research Methodology

Notes on the Field

I was in Guatemala from August of 2011 through to the end of April 2012. Until the end of 2011, my primary work in the region was as a researcher conducting this study as well as a volunteer English Language Arts Teacher at the Foundation's Intercultural Bilingual Institute. After this, I remained in the country in a different region in a new capacity as a human rights accompanier, for which I had been trained by the Maritimes Breaking the Silence Network (BTS) prior to departure. Though all three roles were distinct from each other, at times my learning as a teacher and accompanier lent insight into research material and directions. In working with an organization with a relatively politicized agenda such as the New Hope Foundation, followed by my involvement with a project aligned with Guatemalan human rights activists and workers, I must acknowledge an impact on the objectivity of the study, which I will elaborate upon in the following paragraphs.

The many complexities of qualitative, cross-cultural research arise in large part

from its subjective nature (see Myers et al., 2012; Apentiik and Parpart, 2006; Braun and

Clarke, 2006). Particularly in the historical and contemporary context of Rabinal and

Guatemala more generally, topics related to culture and social conflict are charged and

politically sensitive, and continue to wreak mistrust and division in postwar communities

(Acosta, 2007; Cuxil, 2009). The New Hope Foundation,, in the very act of working with

descendants of genocide survivors, at least implicitly takes a stand on a version of

historical memory that is unpopular in the dominant discourse (see Poppema, 2006). My

work with the Foundation meant that I focused on one "side" or perspective of a disputed

history, and of the potential implications of that version of history: social justice, support

for the peace accords, language rights, all contentious and charged issues in Guatemalan

society (Cuxil, 2009).

My rationale for the decision to align the study with these points of view was

based on a few factors. First, my own research of the Guatemalan context indicated that

official processes and documents, such as the UN Commission for Historical

Clarification (CEH) or the Guatemalan Recovery of Historical Memory project (REMHI)

support the occurrence of a genocide and existence of ongoing inequalities (Goldman,

2007; Higonnet, 2009; Oglesby, 2007). Second, it might have threatened the

establishment of a trusting relationship with FNE board members, staff, and families if I

had actively sought out segments of the community who took a different view about these

issues, particularly if these were related to perpetrators of past abuses. Finally, the study's

grounding in the philosophies of popular education also entails an orientation toward

social justice for historically marginalized or oppressed groups, and ultimately does not

permit much room for neutrality on these divisive issues. The analytical orientation of

this study toward a particular version of historical memory, one that confirms the occurrence of human rights abuses and contests state assertions that these were necessary excesses in defeating an internal enemy (see Rothenberg, 2012; Goldman, 2007), risks neglect of the multiple narratives that can also factor in continued social division, solidarity, and healing[3]. However, within the critical realist framework, this study acknowledges the necessity of isolating or "abstracting" (Ollman, 2001, p. 286) one perspective—this narrative of historical memory—from the myriad discourses in which it is embedded, in order to formulate conclusions regarding participant interpretations of memory for the present Simultaneously, a critical realist approach would concede the necessary incompleteness of these conclusions, warranting future study of alternative historical narratives (Ollman, 2001).

However, as a means of monitoring and minimizing potential misinterpretations or misrepresentations as a result of my "outsider" relationship with Guatemala and with Rabinal, I sought to learn as much as I could about the nuances and implications of these issues from the point of view of community-based solidarity organizations. Upon arrival in Guatemala I refreshed my Spanish through classes at the Quezaltenango Linguistic Project in the city of Xela (PLQ). This politically and socially active school also teaches foreign students about the history of the armed conflict and contemporary social justices issues through excursions, lectures, videos, and an extensive library. My time with PLQ helped to give me an initial sense of the relationships between historical conflicts, inequality and violence in the present. Supervision through the Rabinal chapter of the Guatemalan Community Psychosocial Action Team (Spanish acronym ECAP), a

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[3] For more insight on the complex processes and manifestations of historical memory in Guatemala and Latin America, see Arias and del Campo, 2009; Dill, 2005; French, 2009; and Oglesby, 2007)

grassroots organization that conducts workshops and interventions with genocide

survivors as well as peacebuilding initiatives, also pointed me in the direction of

important resources and activities. Although neither BTS nor the accompaniment

coordination in Guatemala City were directly affiliated with the research, my training and

work through these organizations also lent insight into relevant historical and

sociocultural considerations.

During my time in Rabinal I rented accommodations with the Foundation's

director and her family. The Foundation's office is located in town, but the institute is in

the small *aldea*[4] of Chixoy, which is about a fifteen minute drive into the hills outside of

Rabinal. Every morning at seven, the school bus leaves the office to transport the day

students to the Institute, and every day just after noon it transports them back to town. I

soon became involved in this daily routine, to teach three days a week and to organize the

study on the other two. The school is located in a beautiful natural setting, a detail near to

the heart of many teachers and students alike. Mountains overlook the Institute and it is

surrounded by fields used for the agricultural component of the curriculum. The buildings

surround an immense soccer field, which allows for work and instruction outside,

tournaments with other institutes, and a lot of fun at recess.

The institute is a level *basico* institute, which is roughly the equivalent of middle

or junior secondary school in Canada. Within this level there are three grades. The

targeted age group is younger adolescents, although due to poverty, migration or other

considerations some youth may study at a later age. Every morning, groups within each

grade level take turns with agricultural responsibilities-- growing and harvesting corn for

level one, raising chickens and selling eggs for level two, and yucca and husbandry for

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[4] Rural hamlet.

level three. The Achi teacher rotated the different sections with her own curriculum, and for the rest of the morning students would work in groups at designated tables on the SAT curriculum, to be explained in more detail in chapter 3. However, as I became more familiar with school life I soon realized the difficulty in describing a "typical" day at the institute, as the routine was often enriched and punctuated by workshops from ECAP, speakers from the community, parental or school-wide assemblies, ceremonies, celebrations, inter-school soccer games, musical or dance practice for community events, reforestation projects, or even unruly cattle breaking into the crops!

As a result of the school community's welcoming disposition, I soon found myself absorbed into everyday life in Rabinal. I started to feel confronted and conflicted by one of the most difficult aspects of field research: my status as a foreigner. The relative authority and privilege of a cross-cultural researcher in an underdeveloped country can affect both the researcher's perception of events under study as well as the community's perception of the researcher (see Apentiik and Parpart, 2006; and Murray, Scheyvens, and Scheyvens, 2003). Indeed, the assumptions about objectivity and causality that often underlie traditional Western research methods has resulted in greater value placed on research that is "ahistorical and acultural (or unicultural), and that often fails to take into account the interconnections and relationships between the individual and her or his embeddedness in social contexts" (McIntyre, 2000, p. 125). Alternatively, researchers must be conscious and critical of our own "positionality" in terms of international relations, culture, and privilege, and researchers motivated by social injustices must consider our relationships with the communities in which we study (Murray et al., 2003). As a researcher and teacher from a Western culture in an overdeveloped nation, I tried to

be reflective of my own reactions to culture shock and to question my own assumptions about events and interviews.

As a white, and therefore visible economically advantaged Canadian in Guatemala, where multinational corporations, including many based in Canada, continue to exploit and pollute Guatemalan lands without the consent of the peoples inhabiting them, I particularly struggled with the risk that research, too, can be another extractive activity in which local resources—in this case, knowledge-- are appropriated and misrepresented without reciprocation or informed consent (e.g. See Murray et al., 2003). In light of these concerns I hoped to build and honour a collaborative commitment to FNE through involvement in programming and in keeping the research as relevant and available as possible. I also tried to regularly evaluate and re-evaluate my own research agenda, its compatibility with FNE objectives, my own assumptions as a foreigner, and the way these might affect my relationship with the community. Some days, this would mean reflecting on my difficulties with communication barriers and cultural differences, while other times it would mean deliberating on my reactions or interpretations of interview responses, while still others it meant asking questions about customs, traditions, or beliefs. The existence of a solidarity relationship between the Breaking the Silence Network and the Foundation meant that the organization's experiences with foreigners seemed quite positive, and people were overwhelmingly welcoming and patient with my queries.

Overall, while recognizing that my own theoretical and methodological orientation necessarily came from a specific, primarily Western context, to the fullest extent possible I made efforts not to be intrusive or too imposing of my own beliefs

throughout the study, and to remain open to the ways in which my philosophical "springboard" might be contradicted or challenged. My work in accompaniment facilitated additional reflection on the role that privilege could play in my interactions and perceptions, as well as on the significance of the Foundation's work as I began to learn about parallel struggles across Guatemala for inclusion, memory, and justice. The honour of being welcomed into this and other communities and of learning about their challenging work has instilled the importance of representing participant perspectives as accurately and reflectively as I am able to.

Data Collection

The qualitative aspects of this study were in part informed by the principles of participatory action research (PAR). PAR is intended to promote critical consciousness and inspire social action by involving participants in problem identification, feedback, and even data analysis (Aoun, Foster-Fishman, and Lichty, 2010). In conducting PAR with youth, the objective is to "tap into" the wisdom of participants while supporting their own efforts to add to local knowledge (Aoun et. al., 2010, p. 78). While limitations of time and scope did not permit full involvement of FNE youth or staff in every stage of the research process, design, methods and analysis of the study were carried out in the spirit of PAR through efforts to align with the mandate, principles, and previous research of the Foundation in order to contribute to this body of knowledge. Through its incorporation of hands-on community-based research projects, cooperative learning and student-centred instruction strategies, the Foundation promotes learning that is similar to that entailed by PAR: "when youth are given opportunities to explore their voice and communicate their concerns, they can develop the participatory competencies often

linked to empowering, participatory outcomes" (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 80). Thus, in engaging with the practices at the New Hope Foundation that help students to pursue these outcomes, by collaborating to the greatest extent possible with staff beforehand regarding research design, and in its effort to create a forum for youth to discuss and deliberate on topics within this education, this study was approached in the spirit of participatory action research.

Time and financial constraints prevented me from visiting Rabinal before arriving for the research. In the weeks leading up to the interviews, I attempted to get to know as many of the students and as much about school and community life as possible, by attending school, community and cultural events. Prior to my arrival in Guatemala I consulted via email with the director of the Foundation regarding study design and the possibility of conducting informal observation and interviews. She gave initial permission and we agreed that I would also teach English during my time at the institute, in order to get to know the students, staff, and program. Upon arrival, I was introduced to the board of directors, and the principal of the school circulated with me in order to introduce me to students and staff. I approached one of the long-standing board members, the director, and the principal regarding the design of the study. They indicated themes within the framework that they thought they would prefer to look into, such as historical memory, and made specific requests, such as the design of a teaching tool and a list of suggestions, as well as a copy of the thesis, upon completion.

The principal was instrumental in helping me to present the research project and begin recruitment. I explained the study at an assembly for parents and students. Recruitment for the student interviews followed a combination of non-probability and

purposive sampling (see Myers, Weinbach, and Yegidis, 2012). The Foundation was selected for the study from the perspective that student familiarity with participatory intercultural education might lend them insight and awareness in connection to the research topics. As a result, the study was presented to the entire student body and anyone interested invited to volunteer. In addition to presenting at the assembly, I circulated the classrooms explaining the research, inviting questions, and offering the opportunity for students to sign up. By mid-September 2011, thirteen students had completed the parental consent process. Participants were all youth between the ages 12-18 who were attending the school, and as a primary mandate of the school is to teach Maya Achi heritage, all participants had some Maya Achi culture in their family. Participants were not asked to self-identify, but some voluntarily identified as fully Maya Achi and others as of partly Ladino (European) descent. Through snowball sampling, I also approached six staff and board members individually for interviews regarding the Foundation's mandate, challenges, and program logistics.

Upon obtaining permission, I began to participate in the Institute's daily programs and special events. When I was not teaching, I began to record unstructured observations of school life (see Myers et al., 2012). My field notes primarily recorded the contents of classroom and school-wide activities relevant to the research questions, as well as organizational considerations such as the use of group work and community involvement as teaching strategies. I sought to learn more about the Institute's routine, the ways in which they incorporated historical memory and Maya cosmovision into routines, as well as other values that might be embedded in day-to-day school activities. However, in keeping with the process of ideological critique bound up in critical theory and popular

education practice, I also tried to turn my reflections inward as I began interpreting and representing my observations. Critical reflection also helped me to examine my own biases during the interviews, as well as the intentions behind the follow-up questions and interviews that I took.

Since one of the study's major objectives was to represent the ideas and experiences of Maya Achi youth, many of my reflections focused on the nebulous nature of "voice". Popular education, like participatory action research, values "the knowledge and experience of oppressed peoples" while attempting to deconstruct the ways in which dominant ideologies perpetuate and mask inequities and oppression (Choules, 2007, p. 164). However, positionality in relation to culture, class, nationality, gender, and other factors can affect the interpretation of experiences. In particular, teachers, students, and researchers who are in one or more positions of privilege might be reluctant to acknowledge patterns of oppression (Choules, 2007). On the other hand, researchers committed to social justice must avoid essentializing popular resistance, culture, and the impetus to mobilize: "Sometimes, teachers and social activists working in schools with minorities or in poor neighborhoods begin their work with the assumption that the cultural manifestations they will encounter will be pure expressions of "popular culture" or social consciousness, always antagonistic to the status quo, and always resisting hegemonic practices…the sort of resistance culture that for some would serve as a remedy to the current neo-conservative restoration, is not the property of a single social actor, nor does it have a distinct chosen territory" (Fischman, 1998, p. 198; see also Godoy, 2006). Throughout the study design and process, it was challenging not to fall into the search for a unified, completely coherent explanation of the research questions in

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order to represent participant voices as speaking as one. The strategies described above of learning from grassroots organizations, self-reflection, and independent research all helped me to better my understanding of the complex, contextual nuances of the study's topics.

Throughout the observation process and prior to beginning the interviews, I became involved with life at the school and tried to build rapport with students and staff. In addition to accommodating me in their classrooms to teach a few times a week, the teachers, principal and director were incredibly welcoming, inviting me to workshops, school ceremonies and extracurricular events. Many were often willing to sit down with me and chat about things they wanted to share or thought I should learn—language, customs, holidays-- as well as invite me to share about my own culture. The staff also suggested and organized a group meeting in which they presented the basics of the school's teaching methodology, with each teacher describing their experiences and challenges in its implementation. These opportunities and relationships, aside from being a cherished, inspiring aspect of my time in Rabinal that I will never forget, gave me more insight into interviews and observations than a more hesitant school community might have.

A total of nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, six with staff or board members, and thirteen with students. The staff interviews were based on a short list of questions (see Appendix A) and usually lasted between twenty minutes and a half an hour. These interviews provided additional information about the Foundation's mandate, daily routines, objectives, and ongoing challenges. These and the observations culminated in a preliminary case study of the New Hope Foundation's vision and operation. The

student interviews were a longer list of questions (see Appendix B) and typically lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour. These overarching interviews were an effort to learn about the meanings and values that youth participants attributed to concepts connected to social change, such as historical memory, identity, and education. The questions were open-ended questions about school routines and community, their impressions of subject matter, and their ideas or personal definitions about concepts such as peace and culture. Although I started out with the same questions for each student participant, the order and format for each interview was similar, but not standardized. Rather, I attempted to build on the responses of each participant and allow these to determine the concepts I approached next, as well as follow up their responses with requests for clarification or elaboration. I took this approach for two reasons: First, in order to ensure an adequate comfort level for students, this approach allowed the tone of the interviews to be closer to that of a casual conversation, which put students at ease and piqued their interest in exploring the concepts as they related to them. Second, since an objective of the study was to illuminate the values and meanings attached to these bigger concepts, I hoped that taking guidance from participant responses was one way to value the youths' knowledge as well as gain a richer sense of their own unique interpretations.

After transcribing the interviews, I returned to Rabinal in order to conduct final "focus" or discussion groups to present initial emerging themes to participants, in order to see if they were in agreement with the topics I identified, whether they had additional questions, and to give them a chance to discuss some of the ideas in a group. At this time I also brought some art supplies so that they could break up into smaller groups and creatively express their impressions and ideas. School life was particularly busy at the

time of my arrival and so the discussion and activity were somewhat abbreviated.

However, participants were offered the opportunity to approach me if they had additional

concerns and they were invited to take the materials home with them and continue any

unfinished art. Students were given the option of either keeping their artwork for

themselves or contributing them to the school's cultural centre. The initial themes from

the interviews were also presented to the student body as a whole and in a final meeting

with teachers, along with the ideas I had formulated in response for the administration's

request for a teaching tool (see Appendix D).

Ethical considerations

In addition to concerns related to power, representation and identity discussed

above, some additional, practical considerations informed the study's design and

implementation. The most pressing was the involvement of minors in the study (e.g.

Youth under the age of 16). Oral, parental consent was sought for each participant after

discussing the study with both student and parent present. Individual consent was also

sought at the beginning of each youth interview, as well as an explanation of the process

and the right to pass on any question. It is of primary importance when working with

children and youth to take the time to build relationship and rapport, and to provide

opportunities to learn and gain competencies from the research process (Foster-Fishman

et al., 2010; Murray et al., 2003). My involvement in the school as a part-time teacher

allowed me to get to know the student body, particularly since many students were very

friendly. However, this relationship also resulted in a dual role as researcher and teacher. I

clarified for all students, parents and staff in presenting the study that the two were

separate, and that no discussions that occurred in the classrooms while I was instructing

would be included in the research. Similarly, as part of the consent process at the start of each interview, I reminded student participants that the interviews and classroom activities were completely separate.

Though the emotional and physical risks to participants were low, topics of culture, exclusion, and historical memory can be of a sensitive nature. In particular, the reality that these topics prompted all student participants to reflect on issues of violence was of prominent concern, since this could potentially cause uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings. Prior to recruiting for the study, I consulted FNE leadership about whether and how best to include these topics, and they provided ideas on how they might be approached in the interviews. Students were informed that participation may result in some difficult or unpleasant thoughts, and I collaborated with school administration in order to know the appropriate protocol should students experience distress. However, no participants showed signs of harm in relation to this or any other interview topics. In many ways, the Institute is arguably an ideal environment should participants experience distress in relation to these issues, as the school's mandate focuses explicitly on awareness of them. Finally, confidentiality was an important concern in light of the politicized nature of the topics and lingering divisions in rural Guatemalan communities. Pseudonyms were used for all participants and any potentially identifying information was left out of the quotations and analysis.

Analysis

Data was analyzed using a combination of thematic (Braun and Clarke, 2006) grounded theory and case study approaches (Myers et al., 2012). Case studies allow for observation and description of the actions, attitudes, and perceptions of an organization

(Myers et al., 2012). Accordingly, a case study was a valuable initial springboard for learning about the living mandates of the New Hope Foundation and participant interactions with these mandates. The combination with thematic and grounded theory was considered an appropriate lens by which "to learn what meanings people give to certain events in their lives" (Myers et al., 2012, p. 180). Data was transcribed in Spanish and read with a process of open coding, in which participant ideas and reflections were labelled. The next step was to cluster some of the most prevalent codes into common categories. These categories were grouped then grouped into themes. As some interviews were quite long, with several categories emerging, space and time limitations required that only those considered most relevant to the research questions be analyzed and discussed. The result was four major themes in relation to the research questions, each containing three sub-themes. A narrative "story line" describing observations of the data was written in tandem with the themes and explained additionally from field notes where deemed necessary. Finally, a few hypotheses on the significance of the data are formulated in the conclusion, as well as a few suggestions for praxis, as requested by FNE administration. In keeping with the study's critical realist framework, I tried to remain cognisant of both the power of individuals to interpret their own reality as well as the influence of the broader material and social context on both participant and researcher interpretations (see Myers et. Al, 2012; Choules, 2007; Braun and Clarke, 2006) .

Thus, as a result of the qualitative nature of the study and its objectives, I am compelled to address this subjective aspect of analysis. For both participant and researcher, there is ambiguity and subjectivity in the design, interpretation, representation

and expression of experience: "Privileging experience as foundational to knowledge, or as a transparent window of the 'real', denies its situatedness in discourses that constitute subjectivities in the first place, and that enable articulation of experience from discursively constructed subject positions..." (Luke, as quoted in Choules, 2007, p. 170). Participant meanings and experiences in relation to the interview concepts, and their representations in this study, are influenced by myriad factors of power dynamics, our interactions with and perceptions of one another, the languages we employed or were most comfortable with, and the translations between these (Achi, to Spanish, to English, in some cases), to name just a few.

Recognizing multiple layers of subjectivity, it is important to note that in choosing the setting, method, and objectives of the study, the main focus was not to obtain an objective sample of values and perceptions. Rather, the methodology was devised bearing in mind the fluid, ever-evolving, culturally embedded processes entailed in constructing and deconstructing knowledge, and as such did not seek to gather a collection of meanings or ideas that might represent the "absolute truth" of participant experience. Indeed, claiming the ability to represent local knowledge in such a way would be problematic, unethical, and potentially Eurocentric on the part of the researcher (see Apentiik and Parpart, 2006; and Murray, Scheyvens, and Scheyvens, 2003).   Thus, I took my cue for analysis from Ollman's (2001) process of abstraction, in which it is recognized that subjective and material phenomena are inextricably related, but that we naturally and on a daily basis isolate them in order to make initial generalizations and meanings. These meanings are not static; but rather, necessitate constant revisiting and re-abstraction in order to build our understanding of the relationships between meanings,

events, experiences—in short, between all aspects of reality. The initial, and somewhat artificial, separation of components for study allows us to look at systems from a "vantage point" that provides some clarity (Ollman, 2001, p. 288). In this case, the "component" isolated through interviews and observations was student experiences with education and social change, with the desired end of learning more about their relationships with the historical, cultural and socioeconomic systems that influenced their arrival at the Foundation.

Limitations

The scope of this study does not permit the application of the New Hope Foundation as a universal model or curriculum for alternative education, nor does it allow a set of generalizable conclusions based on student impressions. Rather, it is intended as a snapshot of one organization's objectives and philosophy amidst a theoretical economic and political backdrop. Similarly, participant interpretations are discussed as some possible reactions to alternative education in this specific local context, while leaving the possibility to build on or compare their impressions in future studies in other contexts. Finally, although FNE administration requested a list of suggestions, which will be included in the conclusion, this study is not an evaluation of the school's success or outcomes. The suggestions provided are anecdotal and out of respect for the Foundation's philosophical mandate.

Structure

This thesis discusses participant interpretations of education, culture, historical memory, and peace and their connections between contextual and theoretical considerations of these topics. Chapter 3 provides a literature review of the

interconnections between the resurgence of postwar violence, neoliberal and neocolonial economic policies, and militarized repression in Guatemala and throughout the region. Trends in popular and alternative education in response to these are discussed. Chapter 4 presents a historical case study of Guatemala, Rabinal, and the New Hope Foundation, with living mandates and objectives of the organization gleaned from observations and staff interviews. Chapter 5 analyzes themes from student participant interviews, and finally, Chapter 6 discusses the significance of these themes in relation to the research questions above.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The twentieth century might be described as *"the century of genocide"* (French, 2009, p. 93). By its end, ninety per cent of all war-related deaths were civilian deaths (French, 2009). Around the world, ethnic and linguistic groups have been targeted with violent policies of assimilation, segregation, and elimination both inside and outside of official wars, (see Corntassel and Holder, 2008; Ball and Chapman, 2001; Archibald et al., 1997). In contexts as diverse as Canada, South Africa, and Guatemala, government apologies, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and peace accords have begun to proliferate as a key structure for investigating human rights abuses, for establishing peace in post-conflict spaces, and for disempowered groups to reclaim their rights and agency as equal citizens (Corntassel and Holder, 2008; French, 2009; Kirmayer, 2010). However, when proceedings are determined in the context of colonial power relations, "states tend to place rigid material and symbolic limits upon apologies and truth commissions to promote political and legal stability" (Corntassel and Holder, 2008, p. 465; see also French, 2009). These limitations can obstruct true reconciliation and entrench the economic and social conditions that led to rights violations, particularly against the world's 350 million indigenous peoples still experiencing societal exclusion and state violence as a result of historical repression and dispossession (Ball and Chapman, 2001; Corntassel and Holder, 2008.).

The peace process in Guatemala is perhaps a case in point of one that has not ameliorated historical inequalities, as "the state, as well as the democratic system, remains structurally colonialist and racist" (Cuxil, 2009, 124). In Guatemala and across Latin America, post-war and post-authoritarian transitions have exacerbated economic

disparity while strengthening the capacity for state terror (see Chomsky, 1999; Green, 2011; Klein, 2007; Martinez, 2003; Schirmer, 1999). Militarization and the concentration of wealth, often occurring in the name of peace and development, have facilitated continuation of torture, persecution, and death to control human rights and social movements resisting the adverse effects of economic reforms (see Green, 2011; Goenner, 2004; Martinez, 2003; Schirmer, 1999). This chapter will explore the ways in which combined post-war and post-dictatorial economic and state policies of militarization and free-market "development" have continued to create physical and structural violence in the region by exacerbating poverty, inequality, and social instability. The rise of popular education will then be discussed as a source of resistance and engagement with new, more inclusive, more sustainable conceptualizations of development and peace.

Political Economy of Postwar Peace and Violence

Intersecting patterns of free-market capitalist reforms and state violence in contemporary Latin America are a testament to the notion that "development is war carried on by economic means" (Grotewold, as quoted in Schirmer, 1998, p. 75). During the Cold War, the CIA collaborated in and armed the overthrow of democratic leaders throughout the region in order to defend North American strategic and economic interests in the region (see Chomsky, 1999; Klein, 2007). This often involved instalment of notoriously authoritarian leaders along with violent suppression of social movements fighting for the restoration of local or national control of state resources and more widespread political and economic rights (Chomsky, 1999; Galeano, 1997; Green, 2008; Klein, 2007). These regimes reinforced patterns of colonial control and built upon it with economic reforms that would make Latin America a testing lab for intensified

privatization of resources and services, part of a new economic model that prioritized

economic austerity, profit and efficiency over re-distribution of wealth, positing that this

kind of growth would eventually benefit all of society (Klein, 2007). In reality, they

benefited foreign and local elite economic interests while wilfully eroding democratic

accountability (Chomsky, 1999; Klein, 2007, Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011).   Large scale

industrial "development" projects accompanied by terror intensified oppressive patterns

in order to introduce a new economic era (Colajacomo, 1999; Grandin, 2004; Godoy,

2006):

> With a few important exceptions such as Costa Rica, Mexico, and Ecuador, state-
> and elite- orchestrated preventive and punitive terror was key to ushering in
> neoliberalism in Latin America. The prerequisite for rapid economic restructuring
> that took place throughout the Americas beginning full throttle in the 1980s—
> lowering tariffs, deregulating capital streams, reducing government social
> spending, weakening labor protections—had as much to do with the destruction of
> mass movements as it did with the rise of new financial elites invested in global
> markets (Grandin, 2004, 14).

In post-authoritarian transitions across the Americas, in spite of the establishment

of moderate political rights, "the historic structures of mass social and economic

exclusion have remained largely intact, even becoming further entrenched in some

cases." (Godoy, 2006, p. 128; see also Arias, 2011; Bruneau and Dammert, 2011; Klein,

2007). Structural adjustment policies imposed by international financial institutions also

resulted in worsening economic conditions for many Latin Americans (Fischman, 1998;

Godoy, 2006; Kane, 2001).   Across the region and around the world, imposition of

structural adjustment policies promotes "privatisation of state enterprises, the withdrawal

of subsidies for basic commodities, the free flow of capital in and out of countries and the

ever-increasing process of globalisation in which giant enterprises dominate over the

sovereignty of national states" (Kane, 2001, p. 216). Such policies have resulted in what

Godoy refers to as the "neoliberal juggernaut" in Latin American countries: "formal

political inclusion coupled with socioeconomic exclusion and a paring down of

possibilities for social policy" (2006, p. 128).

These changes have, in spite of economic growth, promoted a growing gap

between rich and poor. They have also been accompanied by low human development

indicators, including in literacy (Bruneau, 2011; Klein, 2007; La Belle, 2000). Overall,

Latin Americans have witnessed higher levels of poverty, violence, illiteracy, hunger,

increased marginalization for both rural and urban populations, problems with traditional

and parliamentary representation, and attacks on unions (Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011;

Fischman, 1998; Klein, 2007). International agreements such as the North American Free

Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA),

ratified in 1994 and 2005, respectively, have also intensified privatization,

unemployment, and loss of land to the extent that increasing numbers of people in

Central America are in precarious survival conditions, where their only choice is to

migrate (Green, 2011). These "surplus people," many of them indigenous in the case of

Guatemala, become a source of cheap labour, vulnerable to exploitation, disappearance

and death, both in their own countries and as potential migrants attempting to cross the

Mexican and US borders (Green, 2011, p. 369). Loss of economic resources and rights

have disproportionately impacted those historically disenfranchised by conquest and

colonization: "What needs to be stressed is that these actions are taking place in a

context in which there has been a harsh attack on the social and personal rights of popular

sectors, minorities, poor women, and children as well as on the social, political, and

economic infrastructures that have traditionally supported them" (Fischman, 1998, p. 199).

Economic disparity both precipitates and is reinforced by societal violence in the region (See Arias, 2011; Bruneau, 2011; Green, 2011; Godoy, 2006; Schirmer, 1998; Ranum, 2011). In post-war Guatemala, violence remains and by some estimates has even increased (see Green, 2011) albeit with a change in character. Outright politically motivated disappearances and deaths have declined, but have been replaced with a "new wave of terror" typically understood as *delincuencia:* delinquency or common crime (Godoy, 2006, p. 44). The continent's homicide rate is twice the world average, and Guatemala's is among the highest in Latin America (Godoy, 2006). Youth gangs and drug trafficking have proliferated since the 1980's, with eighty-eight per cent of South American drugs now travelling through Central America and Mexico (Ranum, 2011). Crime in the region has definite socioeconomic roots: economic and social exclusion prompts many to seek better living standards both through illegal activity and by attempting the treacherous migration to the United States, propping up illegal drug trades and human trafficking networks (Arias, 2011; Bruneau and Dammert, 2011; Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011). These fund gang activity, while migration, familial breakdown, and economic stress further wear away at social and communal ties, often prompting young people to seek identity and community in gangs (Arias, 2011). Gangs in Central America, "while constituting a public security challenge, are basically cannon fodder for the far more powerful organized crime syndicates" (Bruneau, 2011, p. 2). Gangs, and by extension youth, especially street youth, are scapegoated by state and vigilante forces, placing them at risk of illegal detention, harassment, torture and death (Karabanow, 2003;

Godoy, 2006; Ranum, 2011).

In the aftermath of decades of armed conflict and authoritarianism, violence as an accepted method of settling conflict and teaching has become "normalized" and systemic in the region (Bruneau, 2011, p. 9). This phenomena is fed and reinforced by militarization of formal and informal state power enabled by the conflicts (see Arias, 2011; Godoy, 2006; Schirmer, 1998). Many ex-military men are now active in organized crime, drug trafficking, and the burgeoning security industry, effectively establishing a "murky symbiosis" between the oligarchy, criminals, police and military (see Bruneau, 2011; Ranum, 2011; Godoy, 2006; Martinez, 2003; Schirmer, 1998). These clandestine networks are also connected to illegal industries such as drug trafficking, the trafficking of migrants, stolen vehicles, and small arms (Godoy, 2006). The result is a combination of impunity and strengthened capacity for controlling dissent: Weak judicial infrastructure limits democratic accountability and involvement over social stability. Alternately, the nineties saw the rise of armed actors, often expanded upon the state-related armed groups that were instrumental in repressive "national security" policies from the 1960s to the 1980s, including torture, forced disappearance, surveillance, and counter-insurgency (Koonings and Krujit, 2004).The region has thus witnessed the strengthened capability of death squads, surveillance, and social cleansing campaigns that target marginalized, scapegoated groups, such as gays, prostitutes, and street youth (Bruneau,2011; Godoy, 2006; Schirmer, 1998).

This atmosphere of instability is employed as justification for repressing conflict, dissent, and civil society activity resisting neoliberal economic policies or their effects (see Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011; Martinez, 2003; Schirmer, 1998). In addition, collusion

between state and criminal actors grants perpetrators "total freedom to act with impunity and intimidate, persecute, kidnap, torture, and kill social leaders when it is convenient for the military establishment and other ruling powers to appear distant from political violence" (Martinez, 2003, p. 44). For instance, in Guatemala, human rights activists, land rights activists, and indigenous rights organizations are increasingly scapegoated, persecuted, and threatened, particularly groups opposing industrial development (Green, 2011; Godoy, 2006; Schirmer, 1998). The criminalization of protest is a deliberate outcome of consolidation of economic and military power around the world (Smith, 1990). Although some refer to the rise in narco-trafficking and violent crime as the "Colombianization of Guatemala," Godoy (2006, p. 54) notes:

> the proliferation of well-financed organized criminal networks with shadowy links to weak states, the ability to permeate national borders, and the potential to carry out politically motivated acts of violence designed to sow fear and disrupt politics is characteristic of a new global reality that should be painfully clear after September 11, 2001. There is nothing inherently 'Colombian'--or Guatemalan-- about this; what we are witnessing is the globalization (and privatization) of political violence.

Smith (1990, p. 35) points to contemporary trends of arming underdeveloped states as a strategy of international capital, indicating Guatemala's 1954 CIA-backed coup-d'etat as instructive (discussed further in chapter 4): "Even today, the techniques of building a military infrastructure that can control civil society have been borrowed from the developed world—in the case of Guatemala from the United States, Israel, and Taiwan." (see also Chomsky, 2010; Chomsky, 1999; Klein, 2007).

Control of civil society seeks to close already fragile democratic spaces by limiting public participation: "A very pernicious effect of violence is the undermining of civil society and the emancipative strategies pursued within it.... Violence and force are

thus implicit or explicit uncivil strategies to intimidate or destroy the efforts of those

seeking a legitimate public role or a peaceful and more just society" (Koonings and

Krujit, 2004, p. 14). This "new violence" deepens divides in society by facilitating more

coercive, violent forms of mobilization against the state, and by deepening mistrust and

fear, in turn de-legitimizing civil society and human rights struggles in the public's eyes

(Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011; 2009; Koonings and Krujit, 2004).

A widespread sense of endemic violence and instability has political

consequences in support for so-called "*mano dura*" ("iron fist") policies that take a hard

line against crime, including military involvement and a reduction in rights or protections

for adult criminals and juvenile offenders: "in the absence of trust in institutions, violent

'justice' becomes the only form of social control considered viable." (Godoy, 2006, p.

141). *Mano dura*, a central component of recently elected Guatemalan President Otto

Perez Molina's platform, is often accompanied by a disdain for human rights and human

rights organizations more generally (Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011; "The loud parade," n.d.).

Mano dura minimizes efforts to address the social and economic roots of crime,

sometimes implying concern for social and human rights as a cause of impunity and

further decreasing public sympathy for the rehabilitative, preventative approaches that

could alleviate crime (see Godoy, 2006; Ranum, 2011).

Ongoing, lived experiences of violence and fear, both of state reprisal and

criminal activity, frays the already torn social fabric:

> Since violence can come from anywhere for whatever reason, citizens become
> 'potential victims'... As a result, no one from beyond the intimate circle of family
> and friends can be trusted. Public institutions meant to provide security and to
> protect citizens' rights are non-performing, absent or have become part of the
> threat... Among the poor and excluded, fear and distrust are related to permanent
> hazards and risks; among the middle classes, they often take the form of a moral

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panic fanned perpetually by the mass media. (Koonings and Krujit, 2004, p. 14).

Mistrust and fear exacerbate divisions and the disruption of social relations, severely

compromised in communities who have survived years of surveillance, repression, and

even genocide (Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011; Koonings and Krujit, 2004; Rothenberg,

2012). Public support for *mano dura* policies parallels the rise of inter-citizen violence

and a blurring of boundaries between state and society, or rather, between political and

criminal violence-- with repressive crime policies, social cleansing,vigilante justice, and

lynching as just some examples of this effect (see Godoy, 2006; Koonings and Krujit,

2004). Apprehension, division, and terror further impede the collaborative efforts needed

in order to work toward social justice, democracy, and change of unequal economic and

social structures (Godoy, 2006).

The armed conflicts that terrorized Central American countries in the last half of

the twentieth century served to institutionalize repression of democratic change and

continued economic and political inequality. Complex reverberations of poverty,

disenfranchisement, discrimination, and insecurity constitute entrenched structural

violence (see Brunk, 2000; Godoy 2006; Martinez, 2003). New forms of civil society

violence, accompanied and precipitated by institutionalized state violence, are enabled by

a liberal conceptualization of peace in the reconciliation process, in which it is presumed

that minimal political democracy combined with free-market economic reforms will

resolve, rather than exacerbate, historical conflicts rooted in the maintenance of class and

colonial power (see Galtung, 2000; Goenner, 2004; Grandin, 2004). The material

ramifications of economic restructuring—cuts in social services, societal instability, and

attacks on marginalized groups—have left youth in already impoverished situations

particularly vulnerable to systemic oppression (Arias, 2011; Ardizzone, 2003; Ranum, 2011; Karabanow, 2003;2010). Education and other youth programs can promote "positive peace-- not just the absence of violence, but the promotion of justice and equality" (Ardizzone, 2003, p. 438) through anti-oppressive praxis that seeks to support youth in critically engaging with both their own lived experiences and their relation to unequal structures and systems (Aoun, 2010; Ardizzone, 2003; Bernat, 1999; Karabanow, 2004). This approach is central to Freirian philosophies of popular education, which continue to sweep the region in various forms.

Critical Pedagogy: Alternative Education for Alternative Development

Education is internationally conceived of as a tool for changing and improving quality of life. International development and financial institutions such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and The Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation value education for its potential to promote "community, self- and socioeconomic worth, mobility, access to information and knowledge, rationality, morality and orderliness" (Graff, as quoted in Sandlin and Wickens, 2007, p. 276). However, international institutions, development agencies, and national policies increasingly utilize educational programming as an instrument of the economic restructuring discussed above (see Crowther et al, 2005; Lavia, 2007; Sandlin and Wickens, 2007; Tikly, 2004). Educational programs are valued and promoted based on their impact on economic growth indicators such as human "capital" available for labour, and Gross National Product, ultimately measuring their worth in their relation to private profit and reflecting Western, capitalist theories of development (see Crowther et al., 2005; Kilgore; 1999; Pieterse, 2010; Tikly, 2004). This "commodification of knowledge" (Crowther et al., 2005, p.1) associates

social well-being with statistical economics, while overlooking the contradictory position of education as both a pathway to social inclusion, and a means of continued globalization in the form of its economic, cultural, and social connections to power (Cotter et al.; 2001; Crowther et al., 2005; Kilgore, 1999; Lavia, 2007).

This framework encourages profitable and technical programming in educational policy, but not quality curriculum, pedagogy, or equity (Dyrness, 2002; Kilgore, 2004; Poppema, 2009; Tikly, 2004). The resulting pressure on educators to utilize standardized content and evaluations both threatens cultural diversity and silences practices that promote "critical thought and social transformation" (Tikly, 2004, 194; see also Fischman, 1998; LaBelle, 2000). For instance, programs throughout the Americas that work with street youth ultimately fail to address the roots of poverty because they tend to promote technical solutions, such as vocational training, addictions counselling, health, functional literacy, without accompanying structural analysis or political engagement. "It therefore becomes extremely important for programs seeking to improve the lives of poor children and youth to be explicitly oriented towards social change" (Dyrness, 2002, p. 32). This approach to education, in which learning is conceived of as a market product and students the consumer, not only fails to contend with systemic inequalities, but also replicates segregation in educational systems, where dominant groups with cultural and economic purchasing power can access higher quality programs and the social advantages connected to them, but historically disadvantaged groups cannot (see Lavia, 2007; Poppema, 2009; Sandlin and Wickens, 2007). Without a commitment to economic and social justice, education becomes merely a tool for economic productivity that perpetuates asymmetrical power relations while neglecting the roots of the poverty it

purports to address (Cotter et al., 2001; Poppema, 2009). In replicating and deepening economic disparity, schools and other institutions act as systemic vehicles of power, violence, exclusion, and criminalization against marginalized groups (DeLissovoy, 2007; Foucault, 1980; Marshall, 1996).

Education for true social change could be a forum for critiquing the economic and political status quo, and for formulating alternative, redistributive approaches to social and economic development. Pieterse (2010) describes "alternative" development as a "paradigm of equitable, sustainable and participatory development"(p.104; see also Simon, 2007). This conceptualization of development, embodied in peasant collectives, labour organizing, and social movements across Latin America, critiques traditional theories that trickle-down, neoclassical economics will lead to material and social improvement for the world's poor (see Chomsky, 2010; Klein, 2007; Fischman, 1998; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009; Pieterse, 2010). Similarly, calls for educational change in the region have identified with these popular struggles, in favour of a more politicized approach to education that both exposes oppressive relationships in schooling and society, and critically examines historical patterns of oppression (Jara, 2010; Kane, 2010; Fischman, 1998).

Popular education emerged from the broader liberation movement sweeping theology, theory, psychology and pedagogy in Latin America from the seventies on, which espoused the importance of teaching people the political and economic roots of societal exclusion (Burton and Kagan,2005). In reaction to authoritarian regimes, land inequities, labour exploitation, and other products of colonial structures (see Helmberger, 2006; Kane, 2001), popular schools emerged out of grassroots revolutionary movements

in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Chile (Flores-Moreno, 2005). Early conceptualizations of popular education were heavily influenced by the Freire, who began his work in the late 1950s, initiating literacy programs in Brazil through popular culture programmes, theatre, and radio founded in radical pedagogical theory (La Belle, 2000; see also Lange, 1998). Popular education programs were often founded on the idea that state schools perpetuated exploitative and oppressive ideologies and systemic inequalities. Efforts thus emerged in non-formal movements aimed at "*conscientization*"-- a collective pedagogical process based in learners' lived, concrete experiences and linked to social action (Crowther et al., 2005)

Freire and his successors were passionate that dominant approaches to education domesticate students by failing to empower them to critically understand and analyze their world (Asgharzadeh, 2008; Freire and Macedo, 2003; Jara, 2010). The process of *conscientización* encourages students and teachers to identify the ways in which systemic barriers affect their lives, also known as oppressive "limit-situations" of their worlds, ultimately formulating ways to transform them (Asgharzadeh, 2008, p. 349). Founded in principles of liberation theology and Marxist theory, Freire's principles promote progressive political and social change from a framework of participatory, locally based development (Asgharzadeh, 2008; Crowther et al., 2005; Freire and Macedo, 2003). Popular education intersects with alternative visions of development by fostering the impetus for collective learning and radical action in order to eventually restructure economic relations that create material, cultural and psychological patterns of oppression (Jara, 2010; Crowther et al., 2005; Gitterman, 1996; Kilgore, 1999).

The powerful idea of education rooted in the struggles "of the people" permits

spaces in which historically marginalized, impoverished, and dissident groups can make their voices heard and their knowledge valued (Kane, 2010, p. 277; see also Crowther et al., 2005; Fischer, 1998). Simultaneously, popular education is a site in which learners can access knowledge and literacy denied them by the dominant classes: At its best, education becomes a dialogue between different kinds of knowledge (Fischer, 1998; Kane, 2010). By founding itself in the lived experiences and concerns of civil society, popular education is inextricably linked to more democratic conceptualizations of community development (see Gitterman, 1996; Kane, 2010; Jara, 2010). These efforts seek local agency and autonomy in defining and promoting social change: "Attempting to participate in their own development, communities simultaneously engage in educational processes of a formal, non-formal or informal nature, both to understand their communities better and to learn how to change them" (Kane, 2010, p. 277).

Although Freire cautioned against providing methodological blueprints for radical pedagogical approaches, one might outline some broad commonalities. A central component of the philosophy of learning is "an active process of dialogue in which there is a gradual decoding of the world, as people grasp the mechanisms of oppression and dehumanization" (Burton and Kagan, 2005, p. 68). In order to empower learners to contest asymmetrical systems, anti-oppressive forms of education must promote "critical consciousness" (Ardizzone, 2003; p. 438) of the ways in which power and exploitation conduct themselves, thus instilling capacities for structural analysis, willingness to question and transgress from the dominant social order, immediate, localized improvement of oppressive conditions, and impetus for social action (see Ardizzone, 2003; Choules, 2007; Jara, 2010; Karabanow, 2004; Lavia, 2007). Historical analysis is

crucial to these processes so that learners can understand the collective, totalizing effects of economic and cultural domination, while engaging with possibilities for resistance, particularly in the form of more equitable social, ecological, and economic relations (Cotter et al., 2001; Jara, 2010; Lavia, 2007). Jara (2010) suggests that such processes could create a more humane orientation toward life than individualistic, competitive values associated with neoliberal globalization. Popular education could empower citizens as agents of change to promote new "economic, political, social and cultural relationships as subjects of transformation. This is the perspective of *ethical and emancipating rationality*" (p. 290, emphasis in original)

Contemporary popular education movements attempt to integrate large-scale structural factors with related micro-level conditions. A classic initiative is the Landless People's Movement in Brazil (Movimento does Trabalhadores Rarais Sem Terra or MST), which seeks large-scale land reform as a result of inequities rooted in the colonial era and perpetuated by contemporary economics. Educational initiatives, while tied to the "specific struggle" of obtaining land, also promote critical inquiry and structural critique of the capitalist system maintaining current conditions (Kane, 2001, p. 107; see also Kane, 2010). Across Latin America popular education has emerged in a variety of political and cultural contexts and for a wide range of contestatory purposes, including the Popular University of the Mothers of May Square for social movement activists in Argentina, the Universidad Campesina in Caqueta, Colombia for community peasants organizing to end war, the Intercultural University for Indigenous Nationalities and peoples in Ecuador, and the Rebellious and Autonomous Zapatista education System for National Liberation in Chiapas, Mexico (See Flores-Moreno, 2005; Kane 2001; Kane,

2010). In the immediate postwar years popular education movements attempted to engage and inform civil society on the contents of the Guatemalan Peace Accords (Choules, 2007). In the spirit of Latin America's "turn to the left," states such as Venezuela and Bolivia are also employing versions of popular education in order to promote community development,building on earlier examples of nation-wide literacy campaigns in Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua (Kane, 2010, p. 284).

Although radical pedagogy was originally applied as a form of popular adult education, programs with anti-oppressive frameworks for marginalized youth also exist (see Bernat,1999; Dyrness, 2001; Karabanow, 2003; Karabanow, 2004; Leggett; 2006; Murphy-Graham; 2007). A Guatemalan example is the Programa Educativo del Nino, Nina y Adolescente Trabajador (Educational Program for Child and Adolescent Workers, or PENNAT) in Guatemala City. Based on Freirean principles, PENNAT is tailored to meet the needs of street youth and working youth, who are mostly indigenous. The program honours Mayan and other indigenous cultures and promotes both vocational schools and community organizing (Dyrness, 2001, 27-31). Other examples include Lafanmi Selavi, a Hatian organization for Port-au-Prince street youth that combines literacy and vocational training with critical radio programming about political issues (Bernat, 1999), and the Tutorial Learning System aimed at youth involvement in rural community development. The latter originated in Colombia and has been adapted in Honduras and Guatemala, and will be discussed in the following chapter (see Leggett, 2006; Murphy-Graham, 2007).

Contradictions and Ambiguities in Radical Pedagogy

Critical acts of "consciousness raising" in popular education are complex and

potentially contradictory processes of reflection and interaction. Educators and learners are faced with a potential paradox between the concepts of liberation and development: In the struggle for social and political change, empowerment can easily become conceptualized as gaining authority within existing power structures, with an end goal of power for the previously subordinated group but a potential reproduction of existing asymmetrical systems (Gitterman, 1996; Fischman, 1998). Even without this effect, popular education initiatives that seek to empower economically might perpetuate cultural hegemony: Although the colonial and economic systems examined through the critical pedagogical lens have implications for a diversity of peoples in myriad ways, its philosophy and methodologies are informed by Western theology and theory (Choules, 2007; Crowther et al, 2005; Lavia, 2007). As a result, preoccupation with class-based struggles can also neglect the role that culture, identity, gender and language should play in a critical pedagogy (see Crowther et al., 2005; Fischman, 1998; Flores-Moreno, 2005; Gitterman, 1996).

Growing numbers of popular education and development initiatives accordingly seek cultural rights and societal representation for marginalized identities (Kane, 2010; Fischman, 1998 Flores-Moreno, 2005; "Methodology," n.d., Simon, 2007). The Bilingual Intercultural Education (EBI) movement has emerged across Latin America as part of an effort to revalue, revitalize, and rescue indigenous world views and self-determination in educational contexts ("Methodology," n.d.). Indeed, these objectives are quite compatible with traditional popular education mandates (Flores-Moreno, 2005). Neocolonial and neoliberal patterns of globalization continue to disproportionately exploit and oppress the world's "subaltern", or historically colonized peoples, through dispossession of resources

and imposition of dominant cultural values and languages (Asgharzadeh, 2008, p. 340; see also Crowther et al., 2005; Lavia; 2007). These postcolonial perspectives of popular education can align with the political materialist analysis implicit in radical pedagogy by acknowledging the relationship between cultural identity and structural position; that is, the ways in which social divisions of power under capitalism play out according to class, race, and gender (Crowther et al., 2005; Lavia, 2007). Moreover, through efforts to bring previously subjugated perspectives, histories, and realities to public discourse and institutions, postcolonial approaches to radical pedagogy respect the centrality of local experiences and the theoretical conviction that knowledge is constructed and connected to power (Apple and Buras, 2006; Asgharzadeh, 2008; Lavia, 2007). By acting as sites of resistance for historically silenced points of view, popular education efforts can strengthen collective identities and lend a rich moral, cultural, and linguistic dimension to more democratic visions of development and societal organization (Arias, 2006; Asgharzadeh, 2008; Jara, 2010 Lavia, 2007).

Ideally, popular education is compatible with cultural revitalization in that both seek to re-work oppressive relationships, within and between cultures (Jara, 2010; Freire, 1972). However, this is not a straightforward process, and it is unrealistic to assume that civil society groups possess uniform ideas about what constitutes change. In particular, Godoy (2006, p. 130) cautions that dominant notions of popular participation may be irrelevant or take on new forms in postcolonial contexts: "Many Mayan peasants, for example, told me they did not have the luxury of debating political decisions when there are so many hungry mouths to feed; this does not mean they lack political consciousness, only that the forms in which they articulate political demands are likely to differ greatly

from those favoured by white male landowners in nineteenth-century Europe."

Alternatively, efforts to inform popular education struggles with local experiences and world-views must be mindful that cultural groups are not static, may possess hierarchies and oppressive patterns of their own, and may also disagree on whether or how societal transformation should occur. Thus, it is unproductive and essentializing to attempt to base policy or pedagogy in supposedly pure, pre-Colombian versions of indigenous cultures (Asgharzadeh, 2008; "Guia-Manual," n.d.; Heckt, 1999; Mann, 2011). Education in this vein alone can also further marginalize students by reducing resistance to symbolic, in lieu of material, economic understandings of oppression, while denying them knowledge of the dominant language and culture, which are still a vehicle for power and social mobility (Asgharzadeh, 2008; Cotter et al., 2001; Fischman, 1998; Lavia, 2007).

Recovering marginalized knowledge and identities can be challenging for popular movements in light of hegemonic patterns of conquest, conversion, and more recently, mass consumer culture (see Arias, 2006; Asgharzadeh, 2008; Green, 2008). Historical systems of colonial control imposed rigid racial and cultural dichotomies on public and private life in their attempt to assimilate and degrade indigenous identities, languages, and values (Asghazadeh, 2008; Arias, 2006; Fanon, 1963; Young, 2003). Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak's conclusion that "the subaltern cannot speak" implies that these multiple layers of systemic and symbolic repression define colonized cultures according to the colonizer's perceptions of them, ultimately effacing full representation in education or other public spheres (Asgharzadeh, 2008, p. 340 see also Young, 2003). However, to draw this lesson diminishes the agency and resistance efforts of persecuted groups, as well as the potential role for education and popular movements to bring their

voices forward (see Apple and Buras, 2006; Arias, 2006; Asgharzadeh, 2008).

In order to truly construct new, more equitable ways of knowing and interacting with the world, popular education must contend with the power structures that prevent subaltern representation, critically deconstruct rigid dichotomies and stereotypes produced by these structures, and engage in constant dialogue and analysis of praxis (Cho et al., 2005; DeLissovoy, 2007; hooks, 1994; Lavia, 2007). An objective might be a multidimensional, intercultural dialectic, in which learners and educators embrace ambiguity in relation to societal categories, but not at the expense of redressing material disparity and cultural domination that privileges members of certain categories while subjugating others (Asgharzadeh, 2008; Cotter et al., 2001; Lavia, 2007). Education, even alternative or radical education, must be negotiated as "an institution where people are inculcated into hegemonic systems of reasoning and as a site where it is possible to resist dominant discursive practices. In this way, education has a systematically ambivalent relationship to postcolonialism" (Rizvi et al., as quoted in Lavia, 2007, p. 287).

Struggles over educational reform in connection to Mayan self-determination and societal representation in the Guatemalan context reflect many of these tensions and conflicts. For centuries, public discourse conceived of the over twenty-three ethnic groups in the former Spanish colony as the "Indian Problem," eventually culminating in violent policies of assimilation and genocide (French, 1999, p. 277; see also Arias, 2006; Drouin, 2010; Handy, 2003). Although linguistic and cultural representation in the curriculum, along with greater indigenous access to education were key components of the peace accords, there is little political will to implement these reforms (Helmberger, 2006). The ministry of education has not updated the middle school curriculum in thirty-

five years, and when education reform occurs, the country's low-income, rural,

indigenous and working class populations are typically left out of the process

("Methodology," n.d.). In educational and public policy debates, indigenous intellectuals

and organizations in pursuit of greater political and economic participation are countered

by a powerful *ladino* (of Hispanic descent) elite that tends to prefer mono-culturalism in

favour of national unity, even suggesting that indigenous identities have disappeared or

been eliminated (see Cuxil, 2009; Handy, 2003; Pelaez, 2009). Participation in education

and state development projects have historically required complete or partial

abandonment of indigenous clothing, traditions, language and land in order to succeed

socially and economically, through dress codes, the requirement to learn Spanish, and

even forced re-education, as will be discussed in the next chapter. As a result, some

writers also fear deepened marginalization, both of indigenous peoples and of Guatemala

in global markets, will result from culturally-based education initiatives (see Arias, 2006;

Poitevin, 2001; Vanthuyne, 2009).

In light of these conflicts, the Mayan empowerment movement also witnesses

tensions between traditional, rural world-views ("*cosmovision*") and the ideals of

"modernization" (Arias, 2006; see also Green, 2008; Handy, 2003; Heckt, 1999;

Vanthuyne, 2009). Both during the war and afterwards, this ambivalence has resulted in

disagreement over how best to further Mayan interests. The postwar proliferation of

Mayan art, literature, advocacy, and educational models has reflected and embraced a

hybridity of identities as a forum for cultural agency—emphasizing empowerment by

reconciling all elements of historically constructed identities rather than succumbing to

the paralysis of choosing between dichotomous categories (Arias, 2006). Arias suggests

that regardless of whether empowerment reflects Western values, Mayan worldviews, or a hybrid of the two, "what matters is who exercises the power/knowledge relations in this process. In other words, Mayas have no problem being neither Mestizo nor Western, as long as this comes out organically from their own initiative and agency process, one that includes a revaluation of their own culture and languages" (2006, p. 255).

Vanthuyne (2009) suggests that advocates of Mayan representation articulate "flexible identities" in national discourse and educational spaces (p. 206), as navigating imposed societal categories has historically been a source of agency. Alternatively, the knowledge and ways of the Maya need to be valued and recognized for true empowerment: "Their traditions are no longer to be seen as symptomatic of a fundamental inferiority; rather, they should be read as proof of existence of an authentic alterity, one that legitimates their claims to the rights of a People: language rights, spiritual rights, socioeconomic rights, and self-determination rights." (Vanthuyne, 2009, p. 207-208). Learning empowerment and history should thus entail understanding of the ways in which Mayas have been able to maintain their language and customs while adapting to power, and use these abilities as a springboard for broader social analysis and justice (Vanthuyne, 2009, p. 208). The school, rather than a tool of state power, could act as a catalyst for critical dialogue and action toward these rights. The New Hope Foundation is one example of a space in which pathways toward cultural and economic inclusion and participation are explored in these ways, with inquiry founded in local and national historical memory.

Chapter 4: Historical and Contemporary Context of The New Hope Foundation

"A veces no somos capazes para, para aver tantas cosas, tantas como este dia cuando fue la masacre. Y, pero, que decia que los arboles tienen mas historias que, que nosotros por que ellos, los arboles vieron todo y tambien la madre tierra."

"Sometimes we aren't capable of, of seeing so many things, so many like this day when there was the massacre. And, but, it is said that the trees have more histories than us because they, the trees saw everything and so did Mother Earth."
--Jesus Tecu Osorio, survivor of the Rio Negro massacre, as quoted in French, 2009, p. 106.

This chapter provides a historical overview of the conditions that led to the Guatemalan armed conflict, the massacres in Rio Negro and the wider Rabinal region, and the formation of the New Hope Foundation by Jesus Tecu Osorio. The overview is followed by a description of the organization's mandates, objectives, and operations. The brutal violence that the Maya Achi people, as well as indigenous peoples across the country have been subjected to are effects of historical patterns of colonial exploitation, more recently restructured and re-defined in destructive development policies that profit outside interest but negatively impact local livelihoods (See Green, 2008; Green, 2011; Schirmer, 1998; Smith, 1990). Unfortunately, the 1996 Peace Accords have done little to address the socioeconomic roots of the armed conflict. Political will even to implement the Accords has been lacking, combined with an atmosphere of threat and impunity that impacts social movement toward this and other progressive ends (Cuxil, 2009; Green, 2008; Godoy, 2006). However, as discussed in chapter 3, resistance to colonial and neocolonial development and cultural hegemony has taken on vibrant and varied forms in Guatemala and across the continent, including in organizations like the New Hope Foundation, which combines popular education with cultural revitalization in order to promote alternative visions of peace and development.

Disputed Development: Conquest, Genocide and the Rio Negro Massacres[5]

The Guatemalan armed conflict was precipitated by centuries of dispossession and exploitation of indigenous lands, labour, and culture (see Drouin, 2010; Galeano, 1997; Green, 2009; Pelaez, 2009). From the time of Spanish invasion during the sixteenth century, violent conversion and prohibition of traditional rituals and beliefs, compulsory labour policies, and forced relocation of indigenous communities created a small, land-owning, primarily European racial minority that ruled over the country's impoverished, indigenous majority (Kinzer and Sclesinger, 2005). From the era of conquest through the twentieth century, "the legal mechanisms for native oppression were perfected, and brutally applied" (Pelaez, 2009). Following independence from Spain in 1821, the spread of coffee , banana, and other export plantations consistently worsened working and living conditions for indigenous peoples : "by the mid-1970's, over a half-million peasants were making the annual trek from the *altiplano* to the coastal coffee, cotton, and sugar plantations, seeking work, and where labor [sic] conditions were increasingly deplorable" (Green, 2008, p. 106; see also Kinzer and Schlesinger, 2005; Osorio, 2003; Pelaez, 2009).

Until 1944, there were few political spaces in which to contest systemic oppression and discrimination, as post-independence Guatemala was characterized by authoritarian and conservative regimes (Cuxil, 2009). However, the "October Revolution" of that year saw the emergence of popular student and peasant movements and ushered in ten years of "Democratic Spring," with the expansion of the franchise, recognition of labour's right to organize, and the democratic election of Dr. Juan José Arevalo and his successor Jacobo Arbenz (Kinzer and Schlesinger, p. 31; Green, 2008).

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[5]Unfortunately, space and time limitations do not allow for discussion of Mayan pre-Colombian history. Some excellent resources on this topic include Ruud van Akkeren (2003), Galeano (1997) and Mann (2011), as well as Tedlock's (1985) edition of the Popol Vuh.

Increased demands not only for political rights but also for equitable development, social welfare, and indigenous land rights accompanied the emergence of liberation theology, literacy campaigns, peasant leagues, and agricultural cooperatives in rural indigenous communities (Drouin, 2010; Grandin, 2004; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009). Among other reforms, the securing of wage increases and the movement of the government toward land reform were viewed as threats by the capital and ruling classes, and with the advent of the Cold War, they began to seek military assistance from the West, particularly the United States (Drouin, 2010; Grandin, 2004). In 1954, a decision to redistribute unused lands owned by the United Fruit Company prompted the notorious CIA-backed overthrow of the Arevalo government, which was painted internationally as a communist threat (see Kinzer and Schlesinger, 2005). The democratic space had been closed: A guerrilla movement formed, and the Guatemalan civil war began.

In its worst years, the war entailed a concerted attack on indigenous economic autonomy and political engagement, particularly in the Mayan highlands (see Drouin, 2010; Schirmer, 1998; Rothenberg, 2012). Under the 1982 National Plan of Security and Development, the country's indigenous population was effectively scapegoated as an internal enemy, considered vulnerable to manipulation by the guerilla insurgency and susceptible to communism (Grandin, 2004; Rothenberg, 2012; Schirmer, 1998). These accusations essentially criminalized "progressive social agency" (Salazar, 2008, p. 213) and acted as justification for curbing cooperative efforts toward development (see Dill, 2005; Drouin, 2010; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009). Such activities were labelled as subversive, and military incursions sought to destroy the cultural and community ties that enabled collective mobilization (see Drouin, 2010; Grandin, 2004; Salazar, 2008). For instance, in

Rabinal, leaders were targeted, followed by massacres of civilians: "the health promoters… the catechists, the elders, the education promoters… all those who knew something, those who taught, those who contributed to the community" (witness, as quoted in Drouin, 2010, p. 88). In addition to the destruction of rural villages, a tragic component of the national strategy was the forced recruitment of locals into Civil Defense Patrols (PAC's), whose participation in the terror further undermined group solidarity and severely divided communities for decades to come (Dill, 2005; Godoy, 2006; Rothenberg, 2012).

The genocide enabled the Guatemalan state to institutionalize military control of social and economic life and entrench the status quo of indigenous land and labour exploitation (Arias, 2006; Green, 2011; Schirmer, 1998; Smith, 1990). The destruction of social cohesion was followed by physical and symbolic promotion of more capitalist versions of development (Godoy, 2006; Schirmer, 1998; Smith, 1990). The final component of the National Security and Development plan entailed the relocation of refugees into "model villages" or "development poles," which were the sites of new economic programs as well as re-education campaigns, emphasizing the transformation of indigenous culture into one closer to ladino culture and more conducive to nationalism, patriotism and "orthodox politics" (Schirmer, 1998, pp. 103-104). The subsequent intensification of free-market reforms, cash-crop production, and resource exploration and extraction worsened economic and land disparity (Green, 2009; Salazar, 2008; Smith, 1990). The establishment of a political culture endorsing neoliberal development as the solution to this ongoing poverty continues to exacerbate inequality today: As foreign companies gain permits for mining, hydroelectric dam, and other megaprojects,

indigenous peoples are required to either vacate their lands or live with life-threatening

ecological and health impacts (Salazar, 2008; Green, 2008).

The Rio Negro Massacres in the Rabinal region illustrate the ways in which the

genocide increased neocolonial patterns of dispossession and displacement that often

underlie large-scale development through foreign investment in Guatemala today (see

Colajacomo, 1999; Einbinder, 2010; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009). The village first drew

accusations of guerilla sympathies in the late seventies as a result of local opposition to

the construction of the Pueblo-Chixoy Hydroelectric Project[6] (Colajacomo, 1999). The

dam, engineered and constructed by Canadian and Italian companies and funded by the

World Bank, was not planned in consultation with the villagers and required them to

relocate, in spite of ancestral, cultural, economic and legal ties to the land (Colajacomo,

1999; Osorio, 2003). In 1982, parallel to the state-wide increase in militarized repression,

Rio Negro and nine nearby communities were brutally attacked and eventually razed to

the ground in order to complete the project, torturing and killing over 400 men, women,

children and elderly people in a period of six months (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009;

Rothenberg, 2012). This tragic event elevated hostilities and between 1981 and 1982,

military and paramilitary groups killed at least 4,411 people in the Rabinal region, or

twenty per cent of the population (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009; Rothenberg, 2012). As in other

areas, the violence directly targeted children, women and the elderly. Local livelihoods—

property, crops, tools, and domestic animals—were destroyed and burned in order to

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[6] Though Rabinal was not a combat zone,the area was used for passage, recruitment, and supplies, and thus considered strategically important to the state military (Rothenberg, 2012). There was some guerilla presence in Rio Negro during the Chixoy Dam conflict as well; however, as in this and other conflicts in the country, military attacks did not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants; to the contrary, incursions often strategically ensured the targeting of greater numbers of civilians (Rothenberg, 2012; Schirmer, 1998). For more on the guerilla's involvement in the conflict in Rabinal and nationally, see Lopez de Gamiz, 2009 and Schirmer, 1998.

compromise the survival of those fleeing to the mountains and surrounding areas (Colajacomo, 1999; Rothenberg, 2012). The Chixoy dam was flooded in January 1983 (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009).

The legacies of violence linger in postwar Guatemala. Rabinal, like many regions in the years following the war, has been marked by fears of organizing, of political involvement, and of discussing the events of the past among the population (Poitevin, 2001; Acosta, 2007). The state's security and intelligence apparatus was strengthened by the war and continues to permeate all levels of Guatemalan society (Goldman, 2007; Green, 2009; Schirmer, 1998; Smith, 1990). This enhanced military capability is wielded as a tool to deter social protest against devastating economic restructuring, and to discourage public investigation and prosecution of the intellectual and material authors of war crimes (Goldman, 2007, Green, 2009; "The Loud Parade," 2011). Impunity and instability compound the social rifts left behind by the genocide as criminal and drug violence create new mistrust and conflict in communities (Godoy, 2006; Green, 2009). State collusion with organized crime and drug trafficking, combined with weakened justice, services, and social welfare systems have facilitated general insecurity, in which one is never quite certain whether ubiquitous violent acts are politically motivated or random (see Godoy, 2006; Goldman, 2007; Green, 2009). Not only does this atmosphere of fear additionally discourage human rights, land rights, or other activism, but it also fuels support for vigilante justice, *mano dura* policies (discussed in chapter 3), and hard-line leaders, as exemplified in the 2011 presidential election of former general Otto Perez Molina on a law and order platform (see Godoy, 2006; Green, 2011; "The Loud Parade," 2011).

Public discourse typically obscures the systemic aspects of violence through a

culture-of-peace narrative of liberal democracy, in which social problems are

individualized, and the political conditions conducive to free trade are prioritized over

economically redistributive policies (Corntassel and Holder, 2008; Oglesby, 2007). Racial

inequality is also overlooked, as the state continues to emphasize assimilation and unity

at the expense of indigenous nationhood or identity (Corntassel and Holder, 2008; Cuxil,

2009). Historical memory is instrumental in maintaining or contesting the lens through

which public insecurity is viewed. Media and civic education often deny the veracity of

the genocide, framing the armed conflict as either a series of isolated, random acts of

violence or a "triumph of democracy" (Oglesby, 2007, p. 79; See also Schirmer, 1998).

This "depoliticization of historical memory" (Oglesby, 2007, p. 82) neglects the multiple

causes of violence outlined in the CEH: structural injustice, racism, and the closing of

democratic spaces (Oglesby, 2007; Rothenberg, 2012). Stories of collective struggle,

resistance and indigenous self-determination that could illuminate contemporary

mobilization are also suppressed (Corntassel and Holder, 2008; Oglesby, 2007). The New

Hope Rio Negro Foundation, established by survivors of the Rio Negro massacres, is one

example of a popular organization that teaches an alternative historical memory, in the

process encouraging learners to formulate more equitable and sustainable approaches to

peace and development for the present (Osorio, 2003; Einbinder, 2010; "Methodology,"

n.d.)

Case Study: The New Hope Rio Negro Foundation

The New Hope Rio Negro Foundation (Fundación Nueva Esparanza Rio Negro,

or FNE) was formed in the Rabinal region of Guatemala in 1999 with the vision of

improving access to culturally relevant education for disadvantaged Mayan youth in the region. The Foundation was in part inspired by a need for healing for victims and their families, and by poverty and marginalization of Achi communities worsened by the war (Osorio, 2003; "Guatemala," n.d.). The New Hope Foundation objectives are as follows: First; to subsidize education at all levels for local families, second; to promote peace education in order to circumvent patterns of violence;third, to make sure beneficiaries and families understand the rationale for starting the foundation; fourth, to foster dignity and respect for human rights and for all cultures; fifth, to work in cooperation with like-minded institutions; and finally, to advocate for justice and equality at the national level (Osorio, 2003, 55-56).

In 2003, the Foundation opened the New Hope Community Bilingual Institute for local adolescent youth ("Guatemala", n.d.). Scholarships are provided for youth in need of financial support ("Methodology", n.d.). In 2011, the Foundation also began providing subsidized room and board throughout the week at the school for students from communities far from the municipal centre. The curriculum, the Tutorial Learning System, is a middle-school level program tailored to the needs of rural communities. Upon graduating from the Institute, students are awarded the standard middle school degree, but also two other degrees recognizing skill development in the promotion of rural well-being ("Methodology, n.d.). In addition, the Foundation recently was approved funding for a *diversificado* (high school) level program in Rural Well-being.

Teaching strategies are focused on local rural development and on celebrating the Maya Achi world view, or "*cosmovision*" (Osorio, 2003; "Methodology," n.d.) The Foundation embodies many principles of popular education and peace education.

Through its emphasis on healing and justice and critical awareness of local history, it builds on the concrete reality of the Maya Achi struggle. By innovating intercultural education, it acts as a forum for voices that have long been silenced. And by engaging at the collective level, the Foundation participates in the social movement to rectify ongoing systemic injustice. The Foundation is affiliated with the Maya Alliance for Popular Education (AMEP), a national organization with three like-minded Institutes across the country. Among others, they also work in collaboration with the Rabinal chapter of the Community Psychosocial Action Team (ECAP), which focuses on postwar community development, human rights, and the study of political and social violence ("Acciones," n.d.). At the end of the 2011 school year, teachers received a Diploma for a Culture of Peace and Participation for Development from ECAP, which trained them, students, and community members through a series of workshops on the Peace Accords, local development councils (COCODES), and other topics related to citizenship (for a sample workshop plan, see Appendix C).

This section seeks to outline a non-exhaustive set of living mandates, objectives, and practices of the Community Bilingual Institute gleaned from relevant documents, staff interviews, and observations. The underlying philosophy that emerges is of an alternative perspective to education that promotes a more critical and cooperative approach than the traditional state system, as summarized by one staff participant: "The role of education should be transformative... what we aspire for now is that education be liberating and transformative, that it makes a person critical, with substantial values" (Oscar, September 2011). Both curriculum and practice embody values of intercultural and societal harmony, inclusion, historical memory, and grassroots development, which

manifest themselves in the following components.

Rural Community Development: The SAT Methodology

The tutorial learning system (Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial or SAT) originated in 1974 in Cali, Colombia by a nongovernmental community education organization, the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (Spanish acronym FUNDAEC) ("Rural Learning", 1996). It was developed by local professors and teachers with the objectives of making secondary education not only accessible, but also relevant to rural populations, promoting community service and leadership, and stemming migration from impoverished areas through the integration of technical skills in agricultural project management, environmental education, and academic learning ("Rural Learning," 1996). The philosophy of FUNDAEC recognizes a disparity of power, resources, and population between rural and urban areas prompted by industrial development (FUNDAEC, n.d.) . The organization seeks to build local self-sufficiency as an alternative to dependence on precarious labour in export crops, sweatshops, and other industries (FUNDAEC, n.d.; "Rural Education," 1996). Accordingly, the SAT methodology was designed to require little new infrastructure for its implementation, but rather to work within existing community structures. It was also designed with the aim of applicability or adaptability to other, like-minded rural contexts: By 2003, forty-five schools throughout rural Colombia were employing the SAT methodology to teach over 20,000 students (FUNDAEC, n.d.). The methodology has begun to garner interest internationally and has been adopted by some rural schools in Honduras and Guatemala (FUNDAEC, n.d.; Murphy-Graham, 2007; Leggett, 2006).

SAT targets rural youth and adult populations with a curriculum roughly the

equivalent of a grade 7-12 level (Leggett, 2006; Murphy-Graham, 2007). Students work

in small groups under the guidance of a tutor whose role is to facilitate more often than

lecture. The program consists of seventy interdisciplinary textbooks divided into five

areas of capability: technology, math, science, language and communication, and

community service . The workbooks and curriculum encourage students to learn through

dialogue, to share experiences and ideas, and to apply their knowledge to rural

development themes (Murphy-Graham, 2007). The hallmark of the SAT methodology is

perhaps its integration of theory and practice. Academic concepts are learned in relation

to their relevance to local issues and practical skills, such as budgeting for agricultural

project management in math, or learning about the reproduction of local insect

populations and their impact on local ecology in science (Sara, interview September

2011; "Rural Education," 1996). The goal of this approach is to promote skills and

knowledge valuable to student's communities, but in keeping with the subject matter and

"rigour" of traditional state models ("Rural Education," 1996, para. 16). Staff at the

Fundación Nueva Esperanza confirmed the importance of SAT's integration of theory and

practice to students of Rabinal:

> We have the advantage of the SAT methodology, its texts are linked with practice.
> Theory matters and practice matters, but with applications. In the regional system
> they have theory, theory, theory, and in the practical there is no application. So
> there is no significant learning for the student, nor much less pertinent... (Oscar,
> September 2011).

Through its combination of abstract concepts with concrete applications, its

emphasis on student-centred learning, and its valuing of community service and

improvement, SAT promotes a participatory environment in the classroom, but also seeks

to promote a more democratic development, based in citizen engagement and social

action (FUNDAEC, n.d., Murphy-Graham, 2007, Leggett, 2006). In particular, its entails a philosophy of alternative development that is not conceptualized as "modernization" via the revitalization of local livelihoods (FUNDAEC, n.d.). Involvement of students in this process encourages them to be active agents of change and service in their communities, to engage in dialogue and debate, and most markedly, to overcome fears of public speaking and group participation (Murphy-Graham, 2007; Foundation teachers' presentation, 2011; Leggett, 2006). Citizenship and community ties are strengthened by inviting students to, quite literally, have a voice in local issues, and by fostering a sense of mutual support and interrelatedness (Leggett, 2006; Murphy-Graham, 2007; "Rural Education," 1996). Although to date no comprehensive evaluations of the SAT methodology exist (Murphy-Graham, 2007), this study's participants confirmed the positive experiences with community engagement and public speaking in the literature regarding SAT thus far, as will be discussed in the analysis chapter. These processes of dialogue and discussion create a new concept of knowledge for students accustomed to the individualist, teacher-centred approach of the state system: students learn that knowledge is a shared activity, constructed and deliberated rather than simply transmitted from teacher to student (Foundation teacher presentation, November 2011; Leggett, 2006).

Bilingual Intercultural Learning

While the Foundation's adoption of the SAT methodology reflects an intention to redress economic and educational exclusion of rural communities, their intercultural bilingual mandate is informed by the ways in which economic exclusion has historically occurred along ethnic and cultural lines, wreaking societal divisions and violence in its

wake (see "Guia-Manual," 2006). Cesar explains the Foundation's goals in terms of these

multifaceted aspects of societal participation:

> The objective of the Foundation is mostly to offer accompaniment to youth of
> scarce resources at this stage of their studies. And in this form, having a
> preparation, there will be more opportunities for indigenous people, the Maya
> people, so that is the objective of the Foundation. But also, we seek the
> eradication of discrimination, of fascism, that's the objective. (Cesar, September
> 2011).

The Foundation's mandate is not only to address economic and political injustice, but also

inequality between cultures, while recognizing the ways in which these varied modes of

disenfranchisement and marginalization might intersect. The daily Achi content at the

school was indicated by all participants as unique compared to other institutes in its

depth, richness, and effectiveness. Students receive an hour of formal Achi instruction

with the remainder of programming in Spanish, but work is underway in the hopes of

eventually moving the curriculum to fifty per cent in each language, "to not value one

more than the other, but both of them equally" (Sara, September 2011). Alternative

visions of community development implicit in the SAT methodology and in the

Foundation's intercultural philosophy necessitate the rejuvenation and revaluing of local

linguistic knowledge and cultural worldviews (FUNDAEC, n.d.; "Guia-manual," 2006;

Leggett, 2006; "Rural Education," 1996). Sara describes the ways in which the dominant

society impacts local cultural identity:

> [W]e live in a consumer society, where we're pulled if we don't have a good
> orientation, if we don't have a good education, it pulls us. We think that having
> makes us better. And it's not like that... we are educating like... without offending,
> run-of-the-mill students. That graduate, go out, look for work and forget... they
> lose their identity. And we become ashamed in the end, once we are professionals,
> we are ashamed of... ourselves. We become ashamed of our past. And it shouldn't
> be that way... (Sara, September 2011).

> The Foundation seeks not only to promote tangible Maya Achi participation in

society, but also to address the more personal aspects of discrimination described by Sara and other participants through cultural and linguistic revitalization projects. These take the form of an internationally sponsored cultural centre at the school, collaboration with Rabinal's community museum, participation in dances and activities, and Mayan ceremonies, among others. In addition to the SAT curriculum, there is also a vibrant Achi curriculum, in which students learn local history, traditions and spirituality while gaining competency in the language. In 2002, in cooperation with local collaborators and international volunteers, research began into the Methodological Recreation of Intercultural Bilingual Education project (Spanish Acronym REM-EBI) ("Methodology", n.d.). This research, based in SAT methodology, is an effort to compile traditional local knowledge and values in order to develop a curriculum that honours and draws upon Achi *cosmovision,* or world views in order to inspire the community leaders the Foundation shapes ("Methodology, n.d.; "Guia-Manual," 2006). The project culminated in the creation of the *Guia-Manual de Re-Creacion Metodologica de Educaion Bilingue Intercultural* (2006)*,* a manual outlining background and results of community-based research to guide the creation of in Intercultural Bilingual curriculum. Pending financial and staff resources, the Foundation's administration indicated plans for studies into design and implementation in 2012.

Deliberately founding curriculum or educational philosophy in a particular cultural perspective is not a straightforward idea or process, especially in Guatemala's context of multiethnic, multilinguistic diversity, where diverse local cultures are threatened and stigmatized by dominant Western world-views ("Methodology," n.d.). The REM-EBI approach recognizes the ongoing changes and influences in Maya Achi

communities as well as the shifting, fluid nature of cultures generally (Guia-Manual, 2006; "Methodology," n.d.). As a result, this approach to education and to social relations more broadly posits an equitable form of cross-cultural interchange, founded in the preservation and appreciation of local cultures while recognizing the complexity and ambivalence of the concept of culture. While establishing community-expressed values as key aspects of an achi worldview, the Manual rejects the notion of a pure form of culture and keeps its analysis open to the reality of ongoing change and exchange. Alternatively, it also examines and criticizes the idea of forced cultural change as a result of asymmetrical power dynamics, pointing to hundreds of years of conquest in Guatemala as an example ("Guia-Manual," 2006). It emphasizes the need for equitable, ground-up transformation of cross-cultural relations beneath an overarching analysis of these power structures. This approach goes beyond the idea of mere tolerance or coexistence conceptualized by pluri-culturalism or multiculturalism, entailing genuine respect for, interest in, and exchange of values and learning between cultures (Guia-Manual, 2006).

In order to foster these more equitable intercultural relations, the Foundation's approach balances two priorities: First, students must first be able to appreciate and respect their own culture and language. Second, the curriculum attempts to integrate equal content from the dominant Western culture, in order to promote the knowledge required within it but also in order not to value any one culture over another ("Methodology, n.d., Sara, interview September 2011). This dual project of recuperation and literacy within dominant public spheres is conducive to both cultural and economic equity:

[W]e want... harmony in the intercultural relations of peoples. Just like the revaluing of culture and historical truth. That's what we want. To contribute, to achieve a balanced development, just and in solidarity, of the municipality. For me it's important. Our mission is important...our vision is an innovation of methodology. Educational methodologies that promote the person, the community, equality, and respect and the values of the Achi people. I think it's a big challenge, that we have in our hands... what we want is ... to rescue what is being lost. To strengthen our identity, our culture, because it's getting lost. (Sara, September 2011).

Sara captures the ways in which harmonious social relations are complementary to a more equitable vision of development, stemming from the rescue of historically stigmatized and colonized cultural identity. A crucial element of the Foundation's pursuit of cultural revitalization, emphasized by adult and student participants alike, is local historical memory.

Historical Memory

One of the Foundation's primary objectives is for students to know the history of the Rio Negro Massacres, the story of Jesus Tecu Osorio, and the rationale for creating the organization (Osorio, 2003). The story is learned through a book that students read in their first year, discussed in Achi class, and engaged with formally and informally through the ECAP workshops and other points of the curriculum and school activities. In early 2012, for instance, students created mural-sized paintings depicting the massacres to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Rio Negro massacre. Every March, third-year students visit Rio Negro with Osorio, to participate in the Mayan ceremony commemorating the massacre at its original site. In talking with students in class and in my observations of a few school activities, I received the impression that similar historical patterns and regional trends were also discussed, such as the Spanish conquest. To an extent, students learn local history in the larger context of the conquest and

genocide against Guatemala's indigenous peoples, in an effort to correct the silence

regarding this history in the mainstream curriculum:

> Now in Guatemala we have, well the state manages a methodology... but a methodology created from the Spanish, Western point of view, while a methodology created in agreement with the culture, traditions and histories of Guatemala, we don't have. Many times the texts that the state gives hides the true history of Guatemala, and the true history with names and surnames doesn't exist. (Cesar, September 2011).

Staff participants often emphasized a conviction that youth must learn about the

armed conflict in order to prevent the violence from repeating itself. Historical memory

might prevent violent cycles from repeating themselves if the next generation

understands what is at risk: "It has to do with conscientizing the student, or the youth of

all that the people of that era suffered, and apart from conscientizing them, it has to do

with them knowing the story. Knowing what occurred, knowing and also respecting the

people of that time. Because there was much violation of human rights." (Ernesto,

September 2011) This knowledge is also needed to foster respect and pride in Achi

culture:

> Yes, I am in agreement that we must work on historical memory. It's something that leaves us a lesson, and to the youth it would give them a little bit of sensitivity maybe, not to lose it, and to continue thinking that Rabinal is a people that has a lot of culture, history, and sometimes a history that's a little bit bloody, violent, awful, intense, but, we must continue struggling...historical memory is fundamental. Nobody can achieve development if they do not know their story, where they come from... (Oscar, September 2011).

Several of the staff and a few of the student participants shared Oscar's perspective that

students need to learn from the past in order to create a better future, most notably to

promote development. This learning can promote change not only in avoiding repetition

of repression and violation of rights, but also by teaching about ongoing collective

struggle, resistance, and resilience. Sara refers to this struggle as part of why she

disagrees with those who think that these painful memories are best forgotten,

> Because we can't live without the past, without history... we shouldn't avoid what happened, in the first place, so that it doesn't happen again. In the second place, to recognize the struggle of various people, to achieve a better system...If we are conscious of history, we can be better people, better citizens... (Sara, September 2011).

Historical memory as part of the Foundation's mandate, in addition to encouraging respect and appreciation of a culture directly targeted during the war (see Rothenberg, 2012), also allows for alternative visions of development and societal organization. Above all, the Foundation fosters the capability for alternatives in the promotion of citizenship, leadership, and democratic participation.

Leadership, Citizenship and Participation

Another explicit Foundation mandate is the formation of leaders ("Methodology, n.d.). Students are encouraged to participate actively in their learning, school activities, and to consider becoming community leaders, with emphasis placed on participation in both cooperative work and individual initiative: "being at the institute, the student has to show their leadership above all because it's one of the objectives of the institute, that the student be a leader, that the student participate, that the student learn how to work on a team" (Juanita, September 2011). The encouragement of school and community participation is echoed in the Foundation's broader objectives of societal participation, starting with the educational system in of itself: "[In] countries like Guatemala, often education doesn't come to communities, and often if it comes, it isn't free...We are a nongovernmental organization, so we have limitations mostly with resources. And the role of education should be free, and for all of society—boys, girls, women..." (Cesar, September 2011). Juanita explains the ways in which systematic exclusion disadvantages

youth: "if they don't have education, it's very hard for them to get into a professional field. They won't find a job because they don't have the academic preparation that they need to get work." (Juanita, September 2011). Several staff and student participants similarly connected leadership and education to obtaining professional work or a "good job", suggesting that economic well-being, whether in the context of the traditional community or elsewhere, is a consideration in the Foundation's activities.

Teaching skills and abilities for economic empowerment is not an unusual philosophy for an educational institute. What several staff indicated as unique about the Foundation, however, is that this teaching, embedded in the school's methodology and philosophy, accompanies new skills with values of community service, with the aim that students "return to their communities, because that's the vision of the institute. To form leaders. But with conscience, with values, of course" (Oscar, September 2011). Staff often indicated that students must learn to think critically and in a socially responsible manner, in order to fully engage in their democratic duties. Sara sums up how this combination might materialize:

> If we are educated, if we have knowledge, for example, we have more opportunity, at the professional level, also, we can play very important roles in decision making at the level of the authorities, local as well as national, and why not say it, international! So, education, it doesn't only give knowledge, but also, that knowledge gives you more opportunities... it gives the chance to take charges, charges that can contribute to the integral development of the country. Not avoiding one's reality... and not like happens lamentably with the majority of people, in the majority of politicians, that they see their own interest, that they see how they will generate money for their own benefit. Or that they see development as pouring cement in the streets. So education breaks barriers, and gives a broader horizon, also. But it has to be an education where the student is taught to be critical, not a passive entity, that only receives information but rather two-way, that [the student] participates. (Sara, September 2011).

The tangible opportunities that might follow an education are a vehicle for public

leadership, and, through more ethical citizenship, new conceptualizations of development, and critical engagement, leadership provides opportunities for systemic change. The Foundation promotes such leadership and citizenship in part through its implementation of ECAP workshops on the peace accords, navigating the community development councils (Spanish acronym COCODES), and economic inequality, among other themes. These workshops involve much discussion and are often very experiential, with students dramatizing concepts and presenting them at parental assemblies. Several staff expressed that preparing students for high levels of leadership and democratic engagement could result in the promotion of real social change:

> Knowledge in education is something very important so that the youth go overcoming... that they go rising up, so that they, in the future... give Rabinal its corresponding place. To overcome, culture, good customs, etcetera, and after, to Guatemala as well. So that Guatemala sounds not like a country of violence, but rather like a country of culture and peace. (Ernesto, September 2011).

Ernesto repeatedly mentioned "superación", a verb which translates in English to overcoming or rising above, particularly in adversity. Tellingly, student participants often echoed Ernesto's emphasis on "superación" as an outcome of their education. Students also appeared to share Ernesto's ideas of change most often: the strengthening of Achi culture, and an end to violence. These are clear living mandates of the Foundation, but are inextricably linked to another major objective of the SAT methodology, REMEBI, and staff: an alternative vision of development.

Holistic Personal and Community Development

Several staff participants emphasized the importance of understanding students as part of a larger context, who in turn brought their own knowledge and experience to the classroom. "We recognize the human side of the student." (Juanita, September 2011).

Staff members heralded this aspect of the SAT approach as a more humanizing alternative

to what they saw as the state system's tendency to view students as passive entities

(Foundation Teacher presentation, November 2011). This perspective of personal

learning also complements and facilitates a concern for community improvement and

development, as teachers are regularly confronted with the economic disadvantages faced

by students:

> The big challenges are, have to do with defeating certain difficulties... like for
> example, the   economic situation, distance, familiar problems, sequels that the
> war has left. That the war left. Because still, there are sequels... there are young
> men and women who have those problems still... because there are several who
> have many, many economic lacks, lack nutrition, lack clothing... but why was it?
> Because this was part of the sequel of what happened in the eighties. (Ernesto,
> September 2011).

Staff care deeply about the ways in which students require support beyond the academic

and, like Ernesto, several staff participants acknowledged historical and societal patterns

underlying students' economic struggles, particularly in the distribution of resources:

> The model of development that the country has is above all... a model... I would
> call it maybe   more mercantilist, everything about the money part, but it leaves
> forgotten human capital. And they don't invest in human capital... they're more
> interested in infrastructure, construction, but less, in the person... our constitution
> says that the principle function is of the human being, the family. But in reality,
> it's not like that. Neither the family nor the person have components attended to,
> [the government] is not interested in health, not interested in education... (Oscar,
> September 2011).

Oscar describes a society focused on profit and industrialization, pointing to the ways in

which these priorities, and the diversion of resources to them, neglects families and

individuals. The Foundation is not only a space in which individual learning is conceived

of in contextual ways, but also where the need and possibilities for social change are

formulated. This change often echoed SAT's promotion of community development that

values social responsibility, ecological sustainability and human beings rather than profit

and industrialization:

> Supposedly we're on our way to development. What development will it be? If we're polluting more? Before, in the plaza, you went to buy something... and they gave it to you in a leaf, in a   leaf! A banana leaf... Now you go, and they give you a bag... Now, sometimes, we don't want to use a *wakal!*[7] Before we drank from this. You brought your *wakal*, and you drank, and now no. Now it's disposable... they think it's better. For that I say that we're in an unsustainable society, a consumer society. (Sara, September 2011).

Sara also expressed her thoughts that consumerism and disparity were contributing to delinquency in Guatemala, reflecting FUNDAEC's conviction that crime, urban sprawl, and other human and environmental tolls are indictments of the dominant notions of "development" (see "Rural Learning," 1996; Leggett; 2006). The fact that SAT includes a technological component, as well as teacher emphasis on learning about skills relevant to capitalist society, suggest that the Foundation does not simply eschew the dominant Western discourse in favour of a return to a pure and perfect past (see also "Guia-Manual," 2006, "Methodology," n.d.). Indeed, to represent change in terms of this dichotomy is to essentialize and misrepresent Mayan and other pre-Colombian cultures as technologically primitive (see Mann, 2011; "Guia-Manual," 2006). However, the curriculum and discourse at the Institute appear inspired by a need for alternative visions of development that encompass democratic participation, ecological sustainability, traditional knowledge, and the well-being of impoverished rural communities. In light of their promotion of critical awareness and their recognition of historical and contemporary under-resourcing of their students' communities, staff demonstrate the necessity for systemic change in order for these forms of development to materialize.

Challenges

Like many non-governmental organizations, the Foundation operates under tight

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[7] Traditional wooden drinking bowl.

financial and logistical constraints. At present the organization receives no government funding or assistance, and is dependent on international donor organizations. For this the foundation and community-based development initiatives around the world, these relationships can be conflictual as local priorities are tailored to donor priorities, who in turn are increasingly restrained in their mandates as a result of state and development agency fiscal policy in the neoliberal global North (see also DeFillippis et al., 2010; Pieterse, 2010). This results in some precariousness of the Foundation's financial situation, while influencing which projects they have funding for, and which they do not. On the other hand, a few staff members indicated that the politicized nature of the curriculum makes government funding difficult to obtain and even the prospect problematic. Thus, while the the Foundation attempts to subsidize student costs, in 2012 the Institute was forced to charge a nominal fee for registration and attendance.

Other challenges expressed by staff participants were to deliver a quality curriculum, recognizing the area of written composition as an one that could be improved upon in the SAT curriculum (see also Murphy-Graham, 2007). Related to this is the task of teacher-training: staff indicated that although intuitively a student-centred curriculum might appear easier for teachers, that in fact, the interdisciplinary program requires extra learning and involvement on their part (Foundation teacher presentation, November 2011). Paradoxically, while more resources and quality are needed in this area particularly since many students might be at a disadvantage with Spanish as a second language, an additional challenge is to balance out the currently Spanish-dominated curriculum with more Achi learning (Sara, Interview September 2011, "Methodology," n.d.). Staff are hopeful that the REMEBI curriculum will build competency in both

languages as well as an appreciation of bilingualism ("Methodology," n.d. ; REMEBI, 2006). Sara explains that the objective of a linguistically and culturally balanced curriculum is "not that one be more than the other, but rather to even it. And that we value what's ours. That we ourselves build our own history. Not that others come and tell it to us. So, we must be the actors of our own history" (September 2011). In spite of the many challenges the Foundation faces, the organization has created a space that invites students to actively participate in public discourse about identity, language, and history, to use their voice, and to act as agents of change.

The New Hope Foundation, through an overall school philosophy that promotes grassroots development, cultural revitalization, participatory citizenship, and historical memory, provides a space in which students can formulate changes to the economic and political status quo, thus embodying many of the aspects of popular education discussed in Chapter 3. The school also makes efforts to teach the skills students might need to survive the dominant society, in the hopes that they might choose to do so with an equitable, sustainable future in mind. Maintaining a similar balance, the school's intercultural philosophy seeks to transform power relations rather than replicate them and replace the actors. How do students in this learning environment interpret historical memory, culture, and education in relation to social change? The following chapters will discuss student interactions with these themes.

Chapter 5: Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the meanings and values that students attributed to their education at the New Hope Foundation and to the topics that they study: historical memory, peace, and culture. Through analysis of responses to interview questions (see Appendix B), observations, and participation in school events, four themes were identified: 1) Living with Violence, 2) Motivations for Learning, 3) Identity, and 4) Community. Each theme also entailed three or four sub-themes. Reflections on living with violence included violence of the past and of the present. Participants often expressed the importance of remembering and learning from the local tragedies of the armed conflict, occasionally drawing a connection between the war and current violence. Participants also suggested possible causes of contemporary criminal activity and violence, which appeared as pervasive in their lives. Often, discussions of the roots of violence explored the role of social factors such as family violence, poverty, and unemployment. Education was often suggested as a key for addressing violence as well as its underlying factors, and economic mobility was a motivation often expressed for continuing with schooling; not just for oneself, but in order to support one's family and community. Students also experienced the institute as a site of learning about leadership and participation in their own communities, and knowledge as a shared activity that could serve others. Learning about Achi language and culture was also a popular aspect of the institute's curriculum among participants, and many emphasized the value of embracing local knowledge and customs even in the face of discrimination and pressures to assimilate. Participants also valued diversity very highly, and emphasized the joys of

learning and sharing between cultures. Most often discussed in relation to culture, economic distribution, and the environment, participant ideals of community were predicated on equity, inclusion, and solidarity.   .

Living In, Living With Violence

In response to questions related to peace and to historical memory, it became clear that students were quite aware of and affected by both the violence that had occurred during the armed conflict, and the ways in which rural and urban Guatemala are still impacted by trauma from the war as well as increased criminal violence. Although none of the interview questions dealt with violence directly, students often spoke of violence as a reference point to the changes needed for peace. Reflections on violence emerged more often than any other theme in the interviews and were categorized under three sub-themes: violence of the past, contemporary violence, and causes of violence.

Violence of the Past: "Never Forget"

All participants reflected on violence that had occurred during the armed conflict. Most understood that civilians in their region had been targeted. Some had learned from their parents and grandparents about lost loved ones, abuses, and survival of local massacres. Several expressed interest in learning about the past and reflected the impression that they in part came to the school to learn about "how our ancestors suffered" (Guadalupe, October 2011). The interview questions even prompted three of the participants to reflect upon the Spanish conquest, and they demonstrated an awareness of ongoing persecution and violence toward Guatemala's indigenous peoples even before the armed conflict. For the most part, however, participants responded to questions

around historical memory, peace and culture with their knowledge about the recent past, and the majority about the civil war as it had affected Rabinal. Many learned about the genocide through the ECAP workshops and in reading the text targeted to first year students that tells Osorio's story, and thus grasped the specific dimensions of these sad events:

> Here in Baja Verapaz, it was for the lands. There were many ambitious people that wanted Guatemala's riches. The richness of the lands. One was... the conflict was that there was construction of a hydroelectric... because here, people can have, for example, to have earthly belongings like this like, a house, animals, a piece of land, they had to work hard to get it... And it was what our ancestors did. The grandparents. They didn't want to leave their lands. They loved what they had achieved very much. But, the people who wanted to build the hydroelectric (dam) forced them to, so that they would leave their land... so they, so that, so that there wouldn't be problems, thought in, simply making people disappear. To kill them. To have what they wanted, to obtain what they wanted. To be able to have those benefits of theirs. And that was one of the causes that there was a massacre here. (Julia, 15, October 2011).

Julia displays a very sophisticated knowledge of the economic and political dimensions of the conflict at the local and national level, as well as some of the tactics used, such as forced disappearances. Though all participants understood that violence had occurred, this level of understanding of the layers of the conflict was unique to a minority of participants, all of whom were older and indicated they had also learned from family members at home. This small group tended to describe the conflict in relation to policies, political leaders, and tensions over land and work. However, most participants' descriptions of past violence reflected a sense that the military had targeted innocent civilians, and a few picked up on the rhetoric portraying victims as guerrilla soldiers or supporters:

> Innocent people died, and they shouldn't have, children, mothers, they were pregnant, they killed them, and youth, farmers, they killed all of them, they didn't owe anything... nothing... the people who owed were those who, they were a

group who, of people who identified with that handkerchief that I tell you that, they were guerillas. And for them they killed the rest of the people who were innocent. (Marcos, 15, October 2011).

Marcos makes the distinction between the victims of the massacres and the guerrilla forces that he understands the massacres were blamed on. Like Marcos, most participants explained the acts of violence during the armed conflict as having been committed against innocent civilians. While very few used the word "genocide", most articulated the acts as unnecessary, targeted attacks rather than strategic acts of national defence or war. In spite of advances in human rights cases connected to the war (see ACOGUATE | La Coordinación de Acompañamiento Internacional en Guatemala," n.d.), the dominant discourse in Guatemala still negates the notion of crimes against humanity or that genocide occurred, favouring at best the "caught between two armies" narrative referred to in chapter three and, to greater extremes, continuing to blame the guerrilla for acts of violence or for forcing the state apparatus to commit those acts (Poppema, 2009). Regularly in the national newspapers, particularly when a high-profile court case was approaching, I read columns that denied the genocide, claiming the CEH was inaccurate or exaggerated and justifying violence during the war as necessary for national defence. In early 2012, some columnists were even suggesting that foreign agitators were organizing and encouraging indigenous peoples to bring forward the genocide cases. In January 2012, for the first time, the national day to commemorate victims of the conflict also saw a rally organized by AVEMILGUA, the military veterans' association, to honour military deaths during the conflict. The nationalistic tone taken on by events such as these that I gleaned from the newspapers, as well as informal conversations with concerned community members while I was in Guatemala, gave me an impression of a continued

perception in public forums that reduces the conflict to equal atrocities on all sides and

blames victims of the conflict by continuing to label them as guerillas, in spite of the

majority of crimes having been committed by the state against non-combatant civilians

(see Poppema, 2009, Oglesby, 2007).   One participant, who had not read the entry level

book most students at the institute read as an introduction, reflected this perception in

suggesting that the crimes in the past were committed by the guerillas. However, the

participants' messages about the conflict for the most part did not seem to have inherited

this narrative. Rather, some expressed sadness about knowing how much their

grandparents and other loved ones had suffered, and most of the emphasis was on

honouring, and healing from, an overwhelming loss of innocent life:

> More honest people died, more honest elderly people, including children there,
> without knowing anything, and so, we must always remember... how they died in
> the massacre. To remember people who maybe still, remain alive. They stayed
> alive from the massacre, have pity for them, have respect for them. (Celina, 15,
> October 2011)

Camilla (16, September 2011) similarly referred to grandparents who had died from or

suffered from the conflict as "victims", and suggested that communities should do more

to alleviate their suffering and ongoing poverty. Witnesses and human rights activists I

would meet as an accompanier similarly expressed the importance of remembrance of

those who died in order to remind the public that they had not committed crimes: Most

had been innocent, and many had simply wanted a better life for their families and future

generations. Compassion and respect for survivors of the conflict often moved

participants to the impetus to "Never Forget" the armed conflict. Remembrance appeared

very important to the participants, as all except for one associated powerful stories from

the conflict with the concept of historical memory, while all participants answered

positively when asked if they thought historical memory was important. Participants

spoke of historical memory both as a means of dignifying victims and also for

illuminating continued trends in the present:

> That time was long years of, of cruel massacre. So that stayed in the memory of almost everyone. Everyone who was there and everyone who lived it... in some of the people that, that were involved in that many people were not detained and justice was not applied. So what they do now is like, continue reliving what is already dead. Coming here to another war so for that reason many people want the people who murdered to pay for their actions. So, now that they are free, it's a big problem for Guatemala because it's possible that they succeed reliving it. It could be that they succeed that there is another war in Guatemala. (Julia, 14, 2011)

Julia's understanding of the present is unique among participants in her reflections on

impunity for perpetrators of crimes during the conflict, but several participants shared her

emphasis on preventing future violence. Many expressed that Guatemala should learn

from the past in order to create a more peaceful present, "so that it doesn't come back and

repeat itself... because it was very hard" (Marcos, 15, October 2011). Their concern

echoes that of one staff member's comment the morning after the election of President

Otto Perez Molina, a former general implicated in the genocide in the Maya Quiche Ixil

region (see "The loud parade," 2011): "we are in trouble because our people do not have

historical memory." Participants lamented that, in the ways described by Julia and Celina

as well as by others, people were still suffering, still living the consequences of the armed

conflict. Many participants interpreted contemporary violence as influenced by, and at

times even a continuation of the suffering of the past, although on the surface the new

violence appears to have taken on different forms.

Contemporary Violence

Without exception, every participant talked about contemporary violence as a part

of their reality, most often in response to the questions about peace. Crime and violence

in relation to murder, rape, narco-trafficking, extortion, kidnapping or hostage-taking

emerged as themes more than any others, mentioned at least once by the majority of

participants. Approximately half of the participants also described family and

interpersonal violence as common difficulties in their country. Niki's statement shows one

way in which participants understood present violence as manifestations of past conflict:

> It started because in the past, according to what they told us, people killed
> eachother, but of that they weren't killing just because, rather that there was
> someone who was sending another to kill, so that's the reason why... why they
> were killing. And others who didn't know anything, they killed, but in self-
> defence, so that nothing would happen to them. And this connected because now
> there is a lot of violence, that they assault, they extort, and so for that reason it's
> replaced, they replaced the violence in the past with the violence now in the
> present. (13, September 2011).

Though participants knew that peace accords had been signed in 1996, many suggested

that Guatemala did not yet have actual peace, as a result of ongoing violence, albeit of a

more criminal nature, as suggested by Lucy (14, October 2011): "Now, in Guatemala,

peace is signed. But it's not fulfilled because there's a lot of violence in the streets, in the

neighbourhoods, and sometimes in towns." Many described Guatemala city as a violent

place but the majority also acknowledged that there was crime and violence in the smaller

towns and hamlets as well. Living "free of fear" was often described as a characteristic of

a more peaceful society, with many participants indicating that violence affected and

restricted them in very personal ways: having to stay inside after dark, fear of being

robbed, family tragedy as a result of gang violence, and sadness upon reading the

newspapers. One participant described his personal experiences with robberies:

> Here there is delinquency. So, well, I don't like that so much because, well, an
> example I give you, I work. My dad has animals, he has sixty-three animals, so I
> go to take them home, I leave the institute, I go eat and I go to the mountain. And

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later I bring them and so [robbers] stop me on the   road. "Give me your telephone. Give me money." And so I can't do anything anymore because I don't have anything. So there, they can get mad and they can leave us dead. (Diego, 16, October 2011).

As Diego's story suggests, personal security is an everyday consideration throughout Guatemala. Daily the newspapers abound with graphic images of shootings and crimes. I was often cautioned about walking alone or travelling in parts of Rabinal and the surrounding area, whether during the day or at night. In saying goodbye, I would often hear people urge, "Vaya con cuidado!" (Go with care, or go carefully), and I couldn't help wondering if this was a reflection of a shared sense of uncertainty when living with so much violence. During my time in Guatemala there was extortion of local businesses in Rabinal and numerous reports of buses attacked by extortionists across the country, though particularly in the capital (see also "The Loud Parade," n.d.). In the recent past at least one local business owner that I learned of had been killed for not complying with extortionists and shootings occurred at at least one local store in early 2012. Armed security guards are ubiquitous, and informal conversations revealed a sense of wariness about strangers and their possible connections. Violence was often explained by participants as a regular phenomenon, almost out of control, and committed with impunity.

> In Guatemala, there's rape, there's familial maltreatment, child maltreatment, people steal from other people, there's threats in all of the communities, towns, hamlets, wherever now. Now there are people... who are narcotraffickers, who use arms, who knows from where they bring them. That now the government for me isn't doing anything anymore. (We) can no longer take, no longer sustain so much law breaking, so much maltreatment in Guatemala. (Celina, 15, October 2011).

Almost all participants expressed similar feelings that there was too much violence and crime in their country, as well as a sense that it happened without consequence, such as in

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Guadalupe's (14, September 2011) statement that narcotraffickers "go killing other people... I think they kill to not have problems with them, they kill whoever." Some indicated that violence was learned from parents or peers, or passed down from generation to generation, suggesting patterns or cycles that needed to be intervened and broken.

> So what one tries to inculcate in a child... is that, if one does damage to another person, that   person, the damage that they do, that will continue the violence. It will make it so that that person thinks of the necessity, because they see the necessity, to commit other crimes. So... it's a chain. I do something bad to a person, they will do something back to me, but with bigger consequences. That is what is happening in our society now. (José, August 2011).

Violence is endemic and epidemic. Many participants shared José's point of view that children and families were an important beginning for learning and unlearning violence, and the role of the family is discussed in more detail below. A handful of participants also made reference to politics and public policy. Julia gave a particularly complex analysis of the mechanisms by which inter-generational violence has become systemic and almost normal:

> The place where it came from most is... from the people who weren't judged. Those who murdered in the years of the massacre... yes some were detained, but thanks to having a lot of money, they had to pay a fine to get out. So what they did was... they're, teachers... the youth who now commit those crimes are like, apprentices to the people who, in the years of the violence (killed), they inculcate all over again to the young people. So from there they learned from them and went out into the streets as if it was nothing to commit many crimes. (October 2011)

From Julia's point of view, violent crime not only has become routine and like "nothing" for those who commit them, but it is also a result of instruction: an effect of historical corruption and lack of justice that allows violence, and the transmission of it, to become

normalized. The descriptions here point to a lived experience of fear and violence that is arguably quite overwhelming. Rather than appearing consumed with this phenomenon, however, many participants articulated thoughtful, critical perspectives in making sense of the reasons for the violence they feel surrounded by.

Causes of Violence

By brainstorming their ideas about a peaceful society, participants often reflected on the causes of ongoing violence. When participants talked about criminal violence, narco-trafficking and youth "delinquency" were the most common forms discussed, and solutions often centred around strategies for reaching out to young people. A few participants mentioned intergenerational transmission of values, such as respect for others and hard work, as something that was missing and leading young people astray into crime. The family was indicated by the majority as the first basic unit in which values were developed and interpersonal respect was taught, and the cycle of violence broken. However, most participants also indicated that families were struggling with poverty and related problems, forcing them to perpetuate violence:

> Now, to tell you, in our society, there is a lot of, to tell you, violence. And that is born from parents who didn't have an education. So they, due to that they didn't have an education, they can't enjoy work. They can't have a job. So, and they don't have that idea that, to have a lot of kids, and not having an education for work or a source of income. They can't provide for their kids... they can't buy them shoes, they can't buy clothing. So that makes it so that the youth opt to rob, to kill... to kidnap to have money. So the same poverty is what generates the violence. (José, 18, August 2011).

Though a significant number of participants shared the idea that breaking the cycle of violence begins in the home, like José, many acknowledged that poverty and its resulting marginalization interfered with families' ability to do so. All participants articulated

education as a means of alleviating this poverty, albeit at times a contradictory one, which will be discussed in relation to other themes. However, many participants also understood that education was not universal in Guatemala, and also indicated that difficulty accessing it was another societal factor in producing violence. While participants such as José suggest that missed education can lead to poverty, Jorge also reminds that poverty can exclude families from accessing education:

> Beautiful, it's a dream I've always had, to see my country in peace. But it never comes. Never... [Guatemala] doesn't have peace. A lot of delinquency, nothing can be done. I would like to, but what can one do? ... Maybe you have solutions, about a process that will be carried out, from now, from where it starts, like educating children... it has to do with a process that the government should start now, for education. A lot of teachers right now are on strike, because the government doesn't pay them. Their salaries... the government doesn't worry much for education. It's more from there that the delinquency arises. Many students can't study... there are locations where there are no institutes like this one. Where everything is free. They have to pay a monthly fee, registration, so that an under-resourced family can't pay. So [the country] needs schools, where they can register for free... that would help for peace. Yes. If they occupy their time with something good, not bad. (Jorge, 15, October 2011).

Jorge's perception is that the biggest obstruction to peace is "delinquency", a phenomenon widely perceived as perpetrated by young people-- and so his solutions also have to do with reaching out to young people, primarily through the multi-generational "process" of education. Lack of free education excludes children in poverty from this "something good" that Jorge describes. Several participants implicated the schooling as the next possible mitigating factor for violence, after the family, and perhaps this kind of teaching is also what Jorge is alluding to. The issue of universal education was evident during my time in Guatemala and immediately after my departure. When I arrived in late 2011 the public school teachers were, indeed, striking, and in conversation with staff at the institute I learned that working conditions in the public system were overcrowded and

otherwise difficult. Later, in 2012, a student strike erupted over changes to requirements

for teacher training that would further privatizeand decrease access to certification.

Participants understood that their subsidized access to education at the secondary level

was unique, and many like Jorge reflected a sense of gratitude and also awareness of the

role of education in connection to wider social issues. Supporting oneself, particularly by

finding a good job, was often expressed as a means of alleviating poverty and ending

violence. Thus, unemployment was typically identified as another factor in creating

violence, with education, or lack thereof, as one of its underlying causes:

> Having more work... well the country would move forward... people wouldn't rob
> anymore, there wouldn't be gangs anymore, people, would stay clean and not
> want to sell drugs, to have money illiterate people that don't have it... [don't
> have] work for the same that they don't have education, not having education,
> narcotrafficking, selling drugs, and that affects the country very much. (Marcos,
> 15, 2011).

Marcos establishes a connection between employment and overall improvement for the

whole country. His explanation also highlights education as a sort of status marker or

even class marker, to be literate, one can move out of violence by accessing a job, but to

be "illiterate" is to be marginalized, or excluded from work and economic mobility. He

sees this exclusion as turning people to crime and violence, and making impacts on a

national scale. Again, accessing education or literacy is a factor in preventing these

problems. The theme of education in its own right reveals in more detail the ideas youth

had in connection to changing patterns of violence and exclusion.

"Superación": Motivations for Learning

This theme represents participant responses to and values attached to FNE's

unique curriculum. Most of the codes that fell under this theme were related to various

versions of the idea of "superación", which was mentioned often in its own right.

"Superación" means to overcome difficulty or challenge, and participants often associated their learning experiences with individual or collective changes, either in personal growth, practices or relationships, that would promote positive change. This kind of learning was discussed most often in relation to being able to support oneself and family, participation in one's learning, and wanting to share one's learning.

"Salir Adelante": Supporting Self and Others

The most common reason that participants expressed for wanting to study was to be able to "salir adelante" or "seguir adelante," meaning to come out ahead or to move forward. Many connected their education with an idea of progress, indicating that studies and hard work had been the key to "superación" for themselves or for others. This progress could be personal through success or by embracing values, or it could be tangible, in learning to support oneself, as suggested by Anita's (13, September 2011) rationale for attending the Institute: "I wanted to study, and my parents gave me the opportunity to continue studying to be someone greater in life... with greater thoughts, to get a good job." Becoming "great", or becoming a better person, was expressed in connection to learning in this way by a few participants, sometimes followed up by living according to values or, as in Anita's statement, by having "greater thoughts". These ideas are perhaps reflective of the emphasis staff place in the classroom and during the ECAP training workshops on living according to values, such as solidarity and respect. Several participants also associated becoming "great" or learning with getting a good job, and a quite a few described the professional fields, such as teaching, accounting, clerical, or law, as ideal, suggesting that they might be role models for their communities in such positions. Others focused on having the ability to do agricultural work in the country or to

take leadership in rural project management and for still others, it meant having the option to do both.

> In the future, I would like to have a profession greater than what others have. To be able to sustain myself in my life ahead... so to sustain oneself, one must come out of an institute well prepared to have a good education. Later on. To be... in a greater profession, that has greater strength, one can sustain oneself later on in life. We, oneself must, to one's parents so that, to be able to offer them help because they offered it to us when we were studying and now it's our turn to offer it to them when one has a profession. (Celina, October 2011).

Like Celina, most participants were motivated in their studies to be able to support themselves, and to support others. Celina was one of the only participants who expressed wanting her work to be "greater" than that of others, as most participants tended to focus more on self-sustainability or, like Celina, giving back to their families. In realizing this difference from my own, more individualized culture and upbringing I'm reminded of an animated conversation about attitudes toward family with my instructor at PLQ, in which he teased me for my embarrassment over living with my parents when I went home to write my thesis, exclaiming, "you North Americans, you're so independent, it terrifies me that my daughters wouldn't want to be around me!" Family was a factor in many aspects of the participants' studies, including the decision to continue past the primary level in the first place. Some were motivated to help sick family members, or to be role models, and others wanted to alleviate suffering or help recuperate and tell the story of their ancestors and culture. Some, like Diego, wanted to contribute to their community. Motivated by crime in the countryside, Diego explained that he wanted to use his education to become a police officer, in order to be able to "look after my community". Like many, Diego simultaneously articulated his education as a means of survival:

> I wanted to come out ahead because, well in this future that we're in, it's not possible that we go without studying. Because life is a little, very hard because if

we don't work we don't eat. So for that reason I say achieve the well-being of ourselves, and come out ahead." (August 2011).

Education is viewed as a definitive key to economic survival, and as a means of moving beyond the hardship he describes. The "future" he refers to appears to bring on an increased difficulty or precariousness that necessitates hard work, and his use of "we" suggests he might conceive of this work and survival as something that happens collectively, or that should happen with others in mind. Like other participants, Diego does not want to study for only his own success, but to also to support others. Many participants indicated that an education would not impact them alone, but could impact society as a whole: "Through education our people progresses more... there won't be much violence anymore, because the majority will be professionals... they'll be working, or others, working in the country." (Niki, September 2011). Though the concepts of education and work did not always appear as neutral constructs as participants interacted with them, as will be discussed in their connections to other themes, most participants did reflect on education as a pathway to peace and social change, in part because of its potential use for obtaining work and economic survival.

Participation

Participants overwhelmingly expressed a sense of active involvement in their own learning and the learning of their classmates. This was also evident in simply observing everyday life at the Institute: students take turns in managing the agricultural projects at each grade level as well as helping out around the school with smaller caretaking tasks. This sense of ownership seemed in part facilitated by the SAT methodology, in which "we all work together...not just me, and not just you, if we are a group we have to work... we have the SAT methodology, because we have to have it as a community, because we

work at a table of four, and the four support each other to be able to work" (Niki, September 2011). This cooperative approach not only encourages individual participation, but also appears to promote inclusion of all students through its emphasis on mutual support. Teacher and student participants alike highlighted the importance of SAT's teaching strategy for helping rural students overcome their shyness in order to engage with their learning. Students are encouraged not only to speak in front of the group, but to share their opinions or questions, on a regular basis, including at school-wide events. Several participants indicated that this approach was different from other schools, particularly in the public system, where many recalled simply copying notes from the board and being discouraged from asking questions. Celina (October 2011) contrasted the public system with the SAT approach, describing a thorough process of analyzing, questioning, and discussing: "Here, one learns to work in the country, to be a leader... to not be embarrassed to be in front, to give one's opinions, of what one knows and what one understands." The SAT methodology's focus on realities of rural life emerged as very relevant to most participants, as the majority enthusiastically described at least one aspect of experiential learning-- project management, learning about plants, agricultural work, reforestation-- as a highlight of their studies.

Experiential learning and practical, relevant subject matter also seemed to prompt interest and engagement with a wide range of topics. For instance, I was surprised at the number of students who identified math as one of their favourite subjects, for reasons like Celina's: "because one discovers more about math. One discovers more about what the word mathematics contains, the word mathematics contains not only add and subtract, multiplication and division. What one accepts more is understanding, discovering... about

what it can be about, how one can analyze" (October 2011). Discovery and investigation

were concepts that also piqued the interest of a few students in relation to studies in

language, culture, and history: "in the research we do in Achi (class), we realize that our

people is full of mysteries. Of great things. Of great events that have occurred. That here

great people have existed, very beautiful places have existed..." (José, August 2011).

José's beautiful insight goes beyond interest to a sense of wonder for local knowledge,

and a deep appreciation for cultural heritage was expressed so often by participants that I

interpreted it as another theme in its own right, to be discussed in more detail below.

Youth also built upon the feeling of participation in their learning to describe a

deeper involvement with the world around them. One of the most common forms of

involvement prompted by these discussions was through topics related to environmental

sustainability. Several participants reflected on similar motivations to put learning into

action through environmental initiatives, such as cleaning up waste and reforestation

projects.

> We learn more about technology, about energy because, because the environment
> is how it is now, by global warming, and because, they pollute the environment...
> our parents tell us that the future is in our hands. And we have to learn because
> that way we can re-establish once more the environment, and not have pollution
> anymore (Anita, October 2011).

Anita, like other students, describes the learning process as one in which students focus

their attention on creating positive change, or ending pollution, upon critically engaging

with the need for change and potential causes of and solutions to problems-- it is unclear

whether she is referring to overconsumption of energy, or new forms of energy, or

something else, but she indicates that studying it can precipitate into change. Moreover,

there is a sense that she and others *can* create change, as she listens to the message of her

parents. Elsa (13) also reveals a similar sense of agency and responsibility when she

describes some of the Institute's subject areas and activities:

> My favourite subject is math. And science. More science because it helps us with everything, one can see the whole world... because, science helps us to plant, teaches us to plant, how to plant, how to cultivate, and everything. It helps us. And it helps us... to be in citizenship training, from ECAP. That is always talked about. About values. About values like solidarity, sharing with one's ideas. Everyone has different ideas. Ah ha. And I like that... because like that, one meets (with others), and from there they say, what do we do from there, and different ideas start. (September 2011).

Experiential learning helps to connect Elsa in a more meaningful way to the natural

world, while learning about values encourages her to become engaged with multiple

ideas and perspectives in her social world. These rich learning experiences appear to

enhance participation among many dimensions for students: in connecting to their actual

studies more actively and thoughtfully than in other institutes, they participate in their

own education. In learning about the relevance of their studies to the world, they begin to

think critically about the world and are prompted to participate as citizens. Finally,

encouragement to share opinions and to embrace values such as "solidarity" and respect

for others, mentioned by Elsa here but also by many other student and staff participants,

invites greater participation through inclusion and valuing of different ideas and points of

view. There are spaces in FNE programming for more traditional competitive strategies

such as tests and exams, but in the day-to-day instruction at the Institute, students are

often encouraged to collaborate with others and to help classmates having difficulty. The

oft-heard maxim, "no seamos egoistas" (let's not be selfish), appeared to be taken

seriously by many both in the classroom and beyond.

Sharing Knowledge

The Institute's cooperative approach also appeared of value to participants outside

of their peer groups. Several participants spoke of their motivations to bring their learning to family or community, particularly in the case of environmental knowledge and agricultural practices, but also regarding social issues such as parenting and conflict resolution. José described relaying ideas about reforestation to his parents in order to request that they replenish the lumber they used, indicating: "the knowledge we learn here, we bring to practice at home" (August 2011). Other participants suggested a need for sharing their education in order to promote more widespread social change: "putting into practice everything that's talked about, with the students, with the teachers, and with students' mothers and fathers, putting into practice everything that is education, and only that way can we help our country." (Lucy, October 2011). The same value of "practice" is demonstrated in many aspects of the SAT methodology, which incorporates experiential learning across disciplines. Students learn important concepts in the classroom and then learn their applications. For instance, mathematical concepts might be applied in budgeting, entrepreneurship or project management, while learning to label the parts of a plant are viewed as relevant since students participate in planting and harvest. Interactive components to the curriculum, such as learning traditional dances, music, and art, as well as regular group work seemed to promote the idea that learning is a shared, rather than solely individual activity. At the upper levels students also design their own community-based research projects, which could be one reason why so many participants expressed a desire to do *charlas,* or public talks, in communities and schools on environmental and social issues:

> What I would like is that, is that we recuperate nature as well, because... it's like it forms part of our culture...for example in Rabinal, the history of images in our people, appear in rivers, in lakes, in forested, mountainous locations, like that. So, I think that (nature) also forms part of our culture... I would like to teach, or give

talks, form my group of people and give talks, to the schools and institutions about the importance of nature, about that we must not pollute... because they still haven't realized the damage they're doing, to our nature. They haven't realized the damage that we do.(Camilla, September 2011)

Students are presented with opportunities to share their learning through many aspects of their academic work. Staff often remind students that the school's objective is to form "leaders" who will take initiative in their communities, and a few participants reflected this emphasis on leadership as well. The school organizes parental assemblies several times a year, and during my time with the Institute, students would present aspects of their learning in creative ways, often through dramatization. I was able to observe two occasions where students became teachers, both times in connection to the ECAP workshop material. At the first, a parental assembly, students and teachers performed a skit about the structures and policies of local development councils (COCODES in the Spanish acronym), and how to navigate them. They actively involved parents throughout the skit, and a member of ECAP spoke with the group afterward about the creation of COCODES as part of the peace accords, their right to approach these organizations, and the importance of voting and remembering the history of candidates in the upcoming presidential elections. The second event was the teacher certification ceremony for their ECAP course, where students presented dramatizations demonstrating concepts such as interculturalism and class. These and other activities encourage students to promote citizen engagement, historical memory, and societal participation in their own communities.

Identity

All of the youth gravitated toward opportunities to discuss various aspects of Maya Achi culture and identity. These topics emerged most often in connection to the

interview questions about historical memory, intercultural relations and school activities. Youth generally expressed positive feelings for their self-identification with Maya Achi culture, while many also discussed the importance of welcoming new cultures and world views, particularly in light of knowledge or experiences of past and present discrimination. The most common sub-themes in relation to these ideas were celebrating Maya Achi culture, discrimination, and leaving or changing one's culture.

"Knowing Our Roots": Celebrating Maya Achi

Many participants expressed motivations to continue their studies in order to learn more about Maya Achi history, language, and customs. The value that participants attach to Maya Achi culture is evident in the ways they discuss various symbols of Maya Achi cultural identity, most prominently, language:

> I think that at the hour that our language leaves us, the language is also getting lost. Because it embarrasses youth to speak it... so, I think that it's a form of, so that we get interested. Because there are many of us who don't know, we can say that, it's awful, that it gives us shame, but at the hour of knowing we realize it's a treasure. That it's a great value for us, to learn our maternal language. So, I think that at the hour that they teach us Achi, it's very good because it would be a way of not being ashamed of our language, and then we would like recuperating it more (Camilla, September 2011).

Several participants were similarly motivated to recuperate cultural knowledge, tradition, and history. Activities that seemed to rejuvenate and celebrate Maya Achi culture often took place during my time with the Institute: students eagerly participated in, and won, a local traditional dance contest, classes were in the process of painting Achi signage for school property, and preparations for the new cultural centre were underway. Parents and students alike spent the night at the Institute for a Mayan ceremony to celebrate the end of the year. The elder conducting the ceremony talked with students about how in the

past Mayan rituals had received accusations of witchcraft, encouraging them to

appreciate the ceremonies rather than feel the shame historically associated with them. A

few participants reflected on the historical achievements of Mayan society, including

Guatemala's famous Tikal ruins, the traditional scriptures and legends, astronomy, and

scientific advances. One participant even requested a second interview for the purpose of

explaining more to me about Achi traditions. Pride in Maya Achi culture was often

expressed in connection not only to language but also to food, dress, history, and

customs, and instilling this pride in order to overcome discrimination was viewed with

great importance by many participants.

> Achi is important. Because it makes us remember the language that our ancestors
> spoke... and this language is like a memory that they left to us. The Achi
> language... what we have to do is study it, place importance on it, even though
> one is in, like the majority of young people, of people are leaving the Achi
> language, because the language is being badly discriminated against in the whole
> country... but, for me it's wonderful studying the Achi language. (Celina, October
> 2011)

Language was often described as a pathway to remembrance and celebration in spite of

discrimination. This remembrance was in turn explained as a form of honouring

grandparents and ancestors, and of appreciating their legacy as well as the suffering or

discrimination they may have experienced. A few participants also treasured the Achi

language as a means of communication with elders, thus facilitating additional cultural

and historical knowledge. Remembrance was connected to other cultural symbols and

activities as well:

> "we learn to use our typical dress here, because our grandparents (and) ancestors
> used this dress... it's important because, well its dress for the ancestors, and like
> (the teacher) says, we must not stop using this dress. Because this dress lets us
> remember our grandparents." (Elsa,   September 2011).

> (Culture) is an activity that we should always celebrate... it's good because it's what they bring us, our grandparents, and that's how people that, that were there in past years, already brought us... and for them I think it's... like a celebration that they do every year." (Anita, October 2011).

Dress was often described as a valuable aspect of culture. It is mostly women who continue to wear traditional dress, particularly in the younger population. A few participants signalled changes from traditional to North American style dress, particularly in males, as indicative that Maya Achi culture was at risk of being lost. Not all students at the Institute wear the traditional woven *corte* or skirt, and my impression was that students are permitted to choose their style of dress. Traditional dress and accessories are, however, often worn and celebrated at school cultural events. In some outside conversations during my time in Guatemala, I received the impression that some critique the use of traditional dress, since at least some forms of traditional dress were historically mandated by colonial powers. Alternatively, other conversations indicated that this information was false. Regardless of its origins, many participants claimed or reclaimed traditional dress as a show of respect for their ancestors and pride for their past. History and remembrance prompted many participants to draw on suffering and struggles of the past as sources of cultural strength and survival, as in Camilla's depiction of a local legend of the Prince Rabinal Achi. The original Danza Rabinal Achi is a drama dated from 1478 A.C.E., with parallels in the Mayan Popol Wuj (van Akkeren, 2005). The Danza is performed every January at Rabinal's UNESCO recognized festival. Camilla relates that since the events in the legend, the prince has remained at Kahyup, an ancient ruin site in the mountains overlooking Rabinal. In more contemporary history, he is said to have protected the people of the area:

> It is said that (Prince Rabinal Achi) loved us, also they they've told me a story, of

how he lived in Kahyup, it was more, more in the era of the war I think... they say
that planes were coming, planes to throw bombs and destroy Rabinal, but... today,
they say that Rabinal, he converted it into a lake. So since the soldiers, the
military saw that... it was a like, there wasn't a town, so they went back. And
when he saw that there wasn't any more danger, he turned it back into a   town...
to protect us. So that they wouldn't destroy the town. Because if not right now our
town   wouldn't exist... because planes came to throw bombs to destroy. Destroy
all of the people that lived here without caring that they are people. (Camilla,
September 2011).

I heard this legend from other sources outside of the Institute as well. Camilla is referring

to the more recent civil war, and told the story as part of her explanation on the

importance of historical memory. The prominent figure of Achi heritage, the prince, is

present at a moment of extreme danger, and of notorious oppression against his people,

indeed, so notorious that they were not recognized as people, but quite literally

dehumanized. In colonial times, the Rabinal Achi people were also well-known for

resistance against oppression (Lopez de Gamiz, 2009). Camilla's recounting of this

legend is perhaps a metaphorical testament of the strength, resilience, and survival that

participants attributed to their Achi ancestors, and of the immense value they see in their

own roots.

> Education... should be based in our culture, in our history, in our roots. Of our
> ancestors, because first, we have to know our past to be able to see our future.
> Education in Guatemala should be based in... discovering past knowledge,
> remembering what we were before. In discussing what happened before in
> Rabinal of what was the armed conflict, so that we don't see that anymore in our
> society. That what happened should be an example that future generations
> do not return to in the future. (José, August 2011).

In addition to placing importance on knowing one's roots for cultural or traditional

knowledge, Jose also views the conflict as connected to these roots. A few other

participants also articulated a very practical end for historical memory, that is, to learn

from and avoid repeating the violence of the past. In addition, however, many also shared

José's impressions that historical memory could lead to better understanding of "what we were before" as well as of the present. Valuing local knowledge and traditions were often mentioned alongside the political aspects of knowing "our roots"-- namely, the suffering that happened to their predecessors as a result of the conflict--as a starting point for a better, more peaceful future. Historical and ongoing discrimination against Achi and indigenous cultures prompted participants to express a sense of urgency in learning about their roots.

Discrimination

The majority of participants made reference to discrimination against Maya Achi language, dress, or other aspects of cultural identity. Some shared knowledge about discrimination in the past, with a minority even discussing the conquest as an early example of racially-motivated persecution and oppression. Most mentioned knowledge of or experience with more recent discrimination, or the ways in which a Maya Achi identity might affect their social status. For instance, many of the participants indicated that even with at least one Achi-speaking parent,   they were not taught Achi in their homes. There could be a combination of reasons for this-- including parents who spoke different languages or dialects using Spanish as their common language, as was the case for a couple of participants. However, some participants noted the role of discrimination as potentially motivating their parents:

> If we return to times back, people spoke more Achi, so they didn't express themselves well in Spanish. So that closed doors to them, because beforehand, in order to study, or work, one had to manage Spanish well. Because before, people were Ladino, they were descendants of Achi and Spanish people. So they spoke more Spanish. And that's why they discriminated a lot against a person for being Achi. Because an Achi person, confused their words, or mixed both languages, so it didn't come out very good. So it's for that reason that my father inculcated more Spanish in me than Achi, but I understand Achi! I understand perfectly. But I can't

express myself (José, August 2011).

José's explanation for not learning Achi in his home point to some of the most tangible ways in which Achi was an obstacle for his parents; namely, the ability to study and to work in the dominant Ladino society. From his point of view, this discrimination, and perhaps the stigma attached to not being able to express oneself clearly or correctly in the dominant language and culture, are still considered a risk to his parents, and so they prioritize the Spanish language. Although he and others still place value on knowing one's culture, expressing oneself in Achi, and on communicating with elders, he is momentarily less able to do so. He and other students who did not arrive at the institute expressed that they felt they were learning quickly, and that they were on their way to managing the language well. While a couple of student participants had the impression that more jobs and post-secondary programs are now requiring Achi or other indigenous languages, other informants told me that aside from specialized programs, this is false. Alternatively, some staff informed me that particularly in the cities and in order to emigrate, higher status employers seek working knowledge with English, with most post-secondary institutions offering some study in this language. Many participants acknowledged that primary and secondary institutions still do not include a significant Achi curriculum, linking language and school success:

> They [our parents] didn't teach us (Achi), because what they thought was that, if we spoke Achi, that when we arrived in school, we wouldn't be able to understand what they were talking about in Spanish. So what they said was that first we would learn Spanish well, later, being, eighteen to twenty years old, learn to speak Achi. To be able to be bilingual. (Julia, October 2011).

Julia's parents still value learning Achi, and place importance on bilingualism-- not just so that she can eventually grasp her own language, but also, and perhaps primarily, to

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secure understanding in an institution where the dominant language is still Spanish.

Navigating the school system seemed to prompt reflections on the difficulties with

showing one's indigenous identity, and on pressures for indigenous youth to assimilate or

integrate, as demonstrated by Nikki's story from her primary school:

> In the girls' school ... they treated people badly because they wore *cortes*... they told them they were Indians, and that why did they come to study, Indians don't study they told them... they want to leave their culture, they want to leave their dress, so that they treat them the same as the others. Because, they start to judge them, to bother them, even a student who left her dress, she left her culture... now she wears makeup, she doesn't use her dress anymore, but now... now she uses pants... because that girl, they attacked her saying those words, and so she got upset and never, ever went back to wearing her dress again (Niki, September 2011).

Niki's account of ostracization in school portrays the associations her classmates make

with indigenous dress and culture with identity-- namely, that one doesn't belong in

studies, in school. In order to belong, and to be treated with respect, this student changed

these aspects that made her heritage visible. Exclusion in this social institution, and the

assimilation that this exclusion can prompt students to seek, is particularly problematic

for youth since education was seen by all participants as key to advancement and

belonging: "There are people who don't know how to read or write, or add numbers, and

for that reason they discriminate against them" (Marcos, September 2011). Identifying as

Mayan can mean social discrimination, as seen through the derogatory remarks made to

the student in Niki's story. If one is unable to overcome or address this discrimination,

identity can also mean economic discrimination in terms of employment if one is

perceived as uneducated. Celina signals these multiple layers of racially-motivated

discrimination:

> In these times, people hide their identity, they don't want to show, they don't want it discovered that they are indigenous. Maybe what they want is to pass for

Ladino, but they can't get there because of their language... that person isn't just hiding their identity but also, their language. Their culture, which is principally what one should remember. In between cultures, they indicate that there's a lot of discrimination between Ladinos, that Ladinos discriminate a lot against indigenous people. Because they're poor, because they don't have a, they're not teachers, or they don't have another profession, or they don't eat the same kind of food that Ladinos eat, and other things that Ladinos, that make them reject indigenous people a lot. (Celina, September 2011).

Though Celina values remembering one's heritage, she recognizes the intersection of cultural or ethnic rejection in reactions to one's language or food with class discrimination in reactions to one's economic, professional or educational status. Even if one wants to assimilate, as discussed above, language can be a barrier in this process, and we become aware once more of the pressure that some youth may feel to change or abandon identity, even if discrimination or social barriers make this difficult. This linking of social status with ethnic identity is also evident in Niki's description of identifying as mixed descent: "When we're mestizo, they treat us for equal, they don't look down on us, and they don't do harm to us. And we don't have to see ourselves as superior." (Niki, September 2011). These seemingly arbitrary impositions of identity-- superiority for Ladinos, but the treatment of indigenous identity as inferior-- appear to reinforce somewhat entrenched realities of poverty, stigma based on language, and difficulty in accessing social and economic advancement through schooling. Prompted by this discrimination and by other realities of intercultural influence, participants also explored ideas about fluidity and change in cultures, because so many had been faced with the question of whether or not to leave their cultural identities.

"Leaving our culture"

Participants often discussed the influence of outside cultures and the tendency they sometimes saw in peers to move away from their own cultural traditions and

identities. One participant made reference to changes in tradition, values and language as a result of the new influences ushered in by the Spanish conquest. However, the majority of participants who discussed cultural change did so in relation to the proliferation of North American and Mexican music, television, and styles that they saw in their country as well as the large presence of North American and European tourists:

> I don't want to offend you in this sense... for us it's very good that tourists come to get to know our culture, which is what we notice. But in some situations we, for example listen to music from other locations, but we don't listen to our music. We copy other cultures but we don't realize that we also have a very beautiful culture, and, to tell you, a language... (José, August   2011).

Tourism is one of Guatemala's biggest generators of national income (see Green, 2011), and José is likely referring to the high numbers of foreign faces, language, music, and clothing notable particularly in tourist hubs like Antigua, but also visible in rural areas and in organizations like FNE who regularly receive foreign interns, volunteers, delegations, and researchers. Not only does this presence sometimes result in a devaluing of traditional cultures, as José suggests, but Guatemala's status as a tourist attraction also facilitates the production of a homogenous, exotic image of the "Maya" identity for market consumption (Green, 2008). Tourism, media, and the status of migration as the third biggest source of national revenue (Green, 2011) all seem to increase North American influence in many facets of Guatemala's rich, diverse cultural landscape. National newspapers refer to the Guatemalan migrant's search for the "American Dream" and follow American politics. Brand name logos from factory cast-aways and recycled secondhand clothing, available relatively cheap in ubiquitous "Paca" or "American Clothing" stores, combine with traditional *cortes* and other clothing items. English lyrics mix with Spanish lyrics in pop songs and jingles, some appropriated in turn from protest

or folk music. In the response to the tailoring of local markets to meet tourist needs and

desires in terms of taste, style, and language, and in order to obtain   good employment

either nationally or internationally, many students also saw a necessity to learn another

dominant trade language, English:

> Now there are various people who know how to speak English.. but knowing how
> to speak English, they've gone... to places like the United States, to be able to...
> produce more of what they don't have. Like the people who studied and were left
> with nothing. Some dedicated all of   their time and all of their money to study.
> So, then with this... with being able to speak English, now they can get a better
> job in the United States, so a lot of people have left for the same reason. For the
> money, for poverty, and well... that is positive... it's like, to tell you it's a little bit
> of *superación* for Rabinal because, because sometimes the, sometimes there are
> people who are very intelligent, but they haven't been able to develop their
> intelligence. So thanks to other people, they have been able to develop their
> intelligence. That's one of the positives, that Rabinal has changed a little. The
> negative is that they changed, but they left their culture behind. (Julia, October
> 2011).

Learning English, and migration, according to Julia, become sources for some positive

change-- namely, a way out of poverty, to gain material wealth, and perhaps an

opportunity to study and apply one's intelligence. It is unclear what she means

specifically when she refers to Rabinal as a whole changing, but perhaps she means an

increased standard of living from remittances, guessing from the whole context of her

thoughts. Her reference to people who find themselves "left with nothing" and to not

being able to "develop" one's intelligence might echo the destitution or lack of

opportunity discussed by Green above (2011). The change involved in gaining

opportunities or improving one's situation can also mean leaving one's culture or way of

life, one's "everything," in order to survive in the capitalist economy (Berger, as quoted in

Green, 2011, p. 366). I was saddened by stories I heard regularly in Guatemala of loved

ones who had been killed or who had disappeared as a result of the treacherous and

exploitative nature of migrant labour (see Green, 2011). Although all participants referred

to education-- whether English, Spanish, Achi, any education-- as a positive opportunity

for change, there was a similar sense from a few participants that it could also

compromise culture or language, as a result of its location in exclusionary, dominant

institutions, or of propelling one into employment in a new, dominant culture.

> There are some people who aren't honest, that when they have an education, for example, they believe themselves... they want to hide their indigenous identity. But never can one hide the identity of someone who is indigenous. If one is indigenous, it must be accepted. If one is Ladino, it must be accepted. As God ordered and so it was. (Celina, October 2011)

Once more, Celina associates education with an impetus to hide or cover up one's culture,

even while she and other participants place immense importance on education.

Intriguingly, her idea of identity as undeniable, mandated by God, suggests an

impossibility for actually changing one's culture. Celina almost contradicts the concern

expressed by herself and several other participants that indigenous identity could be lost.

This conceptualization of culture as inherent or fixed was less common among

participants. The decisions of parents to teach dominant languages in homes, decisions to

change one's dress, to migrate, all suggest that to some extent assimilation is possible in

the eyes of students, and happens, albeit regrettably in light of the immense value they

place on their Maya Achi identity. The pressure to assimilate can be very great in the face

of discrimination, the promise of economic improvement, and bombardment with North

American media. On the other hand, as noticed by some participants above, changing

one's cultural "markers", such as language, can be difficult. Nonetheless, in response to

topics of intercultural relations, more referred to culture as a personal choice:

"Interculturalism for me is saying that we don't all have one same culture. Maybe other

people have another culture, and we have other ones... we don't all think the same. A lot of people think differently from others and each person decides what culture to have" (Lucy, October 2011). Students consistently referred to the co-existence of many ethnic groups in Guatemala and, as discussed below, placed value and importance on diversity. Like José and Celina, several participants articulated the importance of valuing their own culture within this diversity, while indicating that people have some agency and choice in doing so.

> It would be... a decision that a person would make to learn another culture, but keeping their culture. It would be their own decision to be able to have their culture but in another culture. Because people, sometimes learn about that culture, but leave their culture behind. What they came from, what they were. But other people dedicate themselves to knowing other cultures, but also intend not to lose their culture. (Julia, October 2011).

Julia's reference to culture as a personal decision suggests that she does not see cultural change or loss of identity as inevitable. Individuals have the power and ability to maintain their own culture while learning from new ones. These complex interactions with the notion of "culture" often shed light on the nuances and tensions in relation to participant understandings of interculturalism. In reconciling the influx of foreign mass culture, local ethnic diversity, and their own wishes to recuperate and celebrate Maya Achi heritage, participants often grounded their responses in values of mutual respect, rights, and responsibility, values that I was compelled to understand as consisting of a commitment to community.

Community

Many participants expressed values that reflected an emphasis on collective well-being, or a sense of community. The theme of community, as discussed above, was highlighted at times in connection to cooperative work in the school, but participants also

valued responsibility and respect toward others from local, national, and even ecological perspectives. The concept of community emerged in the various ways that the need for harmonious conflict resolution and cross-cultural, social relations emerged from the interviews, often in connection to issues of inequality and sustainability. I interpreted this theme in the values youth articulated in connection to peaceful co-existence and positive change: equal rights, inclusion, and solidarity.

Equal Rights

Participants spoke about rights most often when discussing culture. In reference to learning about Achi heritage, Camilla asserts, "I think that we all have the right and the obligation to know where we came from, what are our roots, what are our cultures... that way many questions appear, that come out of historical memory." The right and responsibility toward knowledge of one's own culture also extended to recognition of an equal value for all cultures, with several participants making note of Guatemala's ethnic diversity:"we relate between, between different cultures. Let's say different peoples, like Ladinos, Garifunas, Indigenous, Xincas, up to Mestizas... that we treat each other all equally, no matter our colour, our dress, or our culture" (Niki, September 2011). Though a couple of students referred to interculturalism as "co-existing" between different cultures, the most common ideas in reference to this concept had to do with an interchange between cultures, as well as with equal entitlements.

> Interculturalism. They are of the different cultures... that everyone shares, all of the cultures. Let's say different countries... all have the same right, the same obligation. Everyone participates... we all have the same rights. And some say that Achi is different, others that Qeq'chi is different, it doesn't matter. We are all equal. No matter the dress, language, we are all equal. That's what I understand for interculturalism. (Jorge, October 2011)

Equal rights, and equal obligations regardless of culture or difference, translate into a

society as national community, in which all can participate. A vision for a multicultural society, with respect for cultural and linguistic rights, was where most participants valued equality. A couple of participants also referred to violations of rights in their descriptions of the armed conflict:

> I asked (my father) why did that happen? He explained that, because they reclaimed their right... it's very different now. The work was, they would go to other locations, or locations here in Guatemala to be able to go work and earn. But the owners of the *finca* didn't pay them well, so they organized a group there and they said, let's go reclaim this. So they started reclaiming rights... and they started with the government and they asked them to pay them well. And that's how it was, and since the government was bothered by that they told them that if they were going to continue at best they would kill them or something, so they caught all of them, they went and caught all of them. (Jorge, 15, October 2011)

Not only does Jorge's account describe a historical struggle for rights, but also a struggle for economic rights in the form of better wages and perhaps also, implicitly, violation of human rights such as life, liberty, and of the right to organize. Historical accounts like Jorge's recall the organizing spirit that flourished in the region in the years preceding the genocide: "During the seventies, the majority of the population of Rabinal was organizing itself with the goal of bettering itself" (Janssens, as quoted in Lopez de Gamiz, 2009, p. 66). The economic rights discussed here are, of course, not disconnected from the cultural rights referred to by other participants, especially in light of their simultaneous historical and contemporary repression and exploitation (Green, 2011). A society based on respecting these rights, on ending discrimination, was one of the lessons that many students hoped to learn from the study of history, "so that it doesn't repeat itself, because it was very, very hard... people must know what happened, what went on because they'll start to reflect, they'll start to reflect that that should never be done because we are all equal with the rest." (Marcos, October 2011). This equality extended in many participant

reflections to entail more equitable intercultural and interpersonal relationships: a more inclusive society.

Inclusion

This sub-theme is meant to encompass the many participant reflections that placed importance on belonging and participation-- cultural and economic--for all. These are core values at the institute. For instance, the dramatization that students performed at their teachers' ECAP convocation engaged with both intercultural and economic inclusion and exclusion. In the first, students portrayed the cultural diversity of their country by demonstrating the different groups who might meet at a market. In the second, they acted out the concept of "class", depicting the lives, struggles, and share of the population of upper, middle, and lower classes. These elements of inclusion were reflected in participant responses about interculturalism, peace, and community.

Above all, ending discrimination and racism toward indigenous and other minority groups in Guatemala were expressed as important by most participants. Many embraced interculturalism as a positive action to address this need, so that accepting diversity entailed not mere tolerance for differences, but rather actively valuing different customs or points of view:

> That interculturalism for me, is living together with different people from different cultures. It's that there are people from different places, and that we live together... that we don't make less of ourselves, for being from a certain place, but the opposite. To value it... and we learn not to discriminate, and not to be racist. (Camilla, September 2011).

Many participants spoke of valuing differences in smaller-scale contexts as well, when discussing collaborative relationships in the classroom or community. The importance of valuing multiple perspectives and exchanging ideas was pronounced, as in Anita's

prescription for community: "we should be united with others, helping each other, giving our opinions, each person has to have their own ideas, to say what they feel..." (September 2011). Another act of inclusion, reflected upon by many, is mutual support, the "helping" that Anita refers to. A few participants emphasized the importance of supporting each other in the classroom and in the community, through cooperation and in sharing resources. For instance, Jorge suggests that in order to work for more peaceful communities, that "they need to organize themselves... they should do it with calm, in the case of projects, they should see, because there are (development) projects that come only for a few families, and they should see too that families with scarce resources are getting help." (October 2011). Inclusion is also economic from his point of view, and necessitates concerted efforts for distribution to those in need. Inclusion and participation of all is not only desired, but also required in order to make collective organization and change possible:

> (Ending violence) should start in the home, educating the family, later passing on to the community, for example, one would create, it would be a committee, a representative of the community, to do something... pass on to the municipality, then, in the municipality, look for something, from there to the department and to the country. But it's very hard to do... because one alone can't do anything. I have to be with a group of people. Big, big, big, I have to organize. One alone cannot do anything. It's the same with work, one here wants to do something, but if the students don't cooperate, one cannot do anything... it has to be everyone, they meet and they do something. (Jorge, October 2011).

The students' wishes to pursue and share their learning that we saw above revealed a sense of personal action as well as a sense of commitment to cooperation and community. In addition, a few others shared Jorge's idea that one person alone cannot effect change, but rather all must work together and organize, just as they are taught in the classroom. To a question on how he might like to contribute to peace, Hector responds, "I alone can't

make peace. That has to happen in community" (September 2011). For several participants the "right" to belonging that comes with ending discrimination also includes an obligation to promote social and economic inclusion in community, as well as in nation:

> And within countries too, for example, high economic levels exist, and what they want is to have more than they already have. But they don't realize that... in our society, there are people who go without. So, what we should do is share what we have with other people, try to help them, because in some manner they, upon having something, will do the same. So that goes, that comes back, like a chain. I help you, you help me... there would be peace. There wouldn't be a necessity for violence. (José, August 2011).

In this recognition of economic inequality, José's description of sharing is in keeping with the mutual support emphasized by Jorge, Anita, and others, only this time on a national scale. Moreover, sharing is not just an individual act, but one that reciprocates and reverberates, his "chain" is a testament to the power of collective, small acts of giving and of sharing.

Solidarity

"Solidarity" was a value that staff often emphasized in school activities and in the classroom, and was identified regularly by participants. It is a particularly subjective sub-theme and difficult to outline. One of the ECAP workshops I had the privilege of observing (See Appendix C), on peace and socioeconomic equality, engaged students with the concepts of solidarity, liberty, and equality as they related to societal inclusion, development, and participation. The students, in large and small group discussions, were invited to apply the concepts to community customs such as support for the sick or grieving, and to political and economic situations of communities such as the resettled Rio Negro, which still does not have power. In the context of the organization, then,

solidarity can encompass all of the above sub-concepts, which perhaps transpose best into the definition in REMEBI (2006) as a predisposition of care and concern for other human beings in joyful as well as difficult circumstances, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Student participants demonstrated solidarity when discussing the well-being of their communities, peace, development, and more harmonious cross-cultural and interpersonal relations. For instance, many students suggested that peace meant greater respect for others and greater respect for nature, with several including the word "tranquilo", (tranquil, calm) in reference to interpersonal relations in their definitions of peace: "that there's no problems, no arguments, rather everything is tranquil and we get along like brothers, there's no fights, no disputes, we don't attack eachother with words, or with blows. And that way we're generating peace, because there won't be violence" (Niki, September 2011). For several participants, harmonious and peaceful relations were viewed as impacted by past conflict:

> Here today, there are still people who are traumatized by that... there were people who had to emigrate in order not to die. And others who to survive hid themselves. Like in the mountains, in the rivers, people who, thanks to their abilities, managed to live...And if they found someone hidden in a house what they did was mistreat their family. To not leave evidence. So, a few people today, are still, like, traumatized , by what happened. And others are still searching. In Rabinal there are a lot of people who were militias at the time. And people who are still walking the streets who haven't had justice applied to them. And that is what many in Rabinal ask for, is justice (Julia, October 2011).

Julia's poignant account of resistance and survival reminds of the division and discord that rends the social fabric in communities today, as former perpetrators of war crimes live alongside victims and their families (see Godoy, 2006, Green, 2011). The legacy of trauma from past abuses continues as survivors in many communities organize and aid in exhumations, investigations, and court casesseek justice. Witnesses in the Rio Negro area

still seek reparations for loss of lands and destruction of their communities (Lopez de

Gamiz, 2009). At the time of these interviews, witnesses from a 1982 massacre in the

local village of Plan de Sanchez were in the process of organizing and preparing for a

trial in the national court that, in the spring of 2012, found five former military officers

guilty of crimes against humanity and murder (see "Guatemala—Truth, memory and

justice," 2012). "Never Forget" might be in part a call for legal justice for perpetrators

and victims, validating struggle and providing a redress for previous, unjust atrocities. It

might also be a call for a change in social relations:

> Don't forget that. It is, because it is a real history, that our families came from, it
> continues to   affect them... never forget that.. it's important because they
> struggled, and yes, they succeeded.   So when peace was signed, if that war hadn't
> happened they wouldn't have signed for peace. From when they signed for peace,
> there something new, different started, that is one can go with liberty, and so, it's
> important. To know why we are here now, why we take advantage of that, what is
> what they fought, so that we would be alright. We must not forget those things
> that happened before (Jorge, September 2011).

The struggles and the fighting in the past, while affecting families and passing down

negative effects, as Jorge and others acknowledge, can also yield positive change. Jorge

signals the new era as one in which people can go with "liberty", as one in which a

pronounced change happens upon signing peace. In spite of the horrors of the war, he

advocates study of the details and reasons for the conflict in order to truly appreciate and

promote this positive change he sees as possible. In wanting to know more about their

ancestors' suffering, in wanting to end the discrimination of the past, and in creating

spaces for inclusion and participation in school and community, many students, like Julia

and Jorge, alluded to historical memory as a resource.

Development, progress, and general positive economic change, discussed as part

of the ECAP workshop on peace, were also referred to in interviews in tandem with the

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need for less violent, more equitable interpersonal relations and for balance with nature:

"Because if a people develops it develops our country. Not to be part of those underdeveloped countries anymore. Rather, one that's developed but in a way of seeing, finding a form to be developed but not destroying at the time of developing either." (Camilla, September 2011). We might speculate that this caveat on development could mean a more sustainable, less environmentally damaging form of development, as Camilla placed a lot of value on human relationships with nature. In any case, rather than an inevitable, uncontrollable process, development according to Camilla as something that people participate in, and as a process that considers the overall well-being of the country, that avoids destructive patterns. José also seemed to share this more holistic vision of development and positive change:

> I imagine a very beautiful country... calmer, one with more security.. walking in the streets, one would enter more secure... a country more developed, with more solidarity, a country that, it remains for us to rise up, ourselves. Not to seek *superación* alone, but rather seek the *superación* of our community. So, in the future I would see a country with peace, without violence, more united as a country, as people, as ethnic groups... caring for what we have, a country where we won't be selfish, in the sense of not supporting others, a country that would be in peace with nature as well. (José, August 2011).

Development, peace, and *superación* should occur in consideration of all, including the environment. With *superación* , and with the liberties and security afforded by a less violent society, participants saw possibilities for building unity and solidarity.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter I will explore the relationship of the analysis themes to the original research questions regarding student perceptions of school as a site of power, their understandings and interpretations of historical memory and cultural identity, and broader youth ideas about the nature of social change. I will discuss the significance of these issues in relation to issues of power and change in the Guatemalan context as well as in light of my theoretical framework. Based on this analysis, some ideas for programming at the Foundation are presented as well as some considerations for interpretation and future study.

Overall, the results and analysis from observations and participant interviews reveal the New Hope Foundation Intercultural Bilingual Institute as a participatory educational site promoting dialogue about historical memory, cultural identity, development, power, and peace, among many other complex topics. In the process of engaging with these topics and reflecting on their educational experiences, student participants offered thoughtful and insightful ideas about postwar violence and exclusion. Participant descriptions of education suggest a perception of schooling as a vehicle for power and change in their communities, in its potential to provide economic and social mobility, but also in learning skills appropriate for leadership, citizenship, and stewardship. A key aspect of their learning was remembrance and celebration of language and cultural customs. Acknowledging historical and present racism, participants placed value on diversity and interculturalism, countering institutional discrimination with inclusive approaches to social relations. Finally, many participants advocated mutual support, cooperation, solidarity, and cultural and economic rights at the community and

national levels. These reflections speak to possibilities for the renewal of collective consciousness and transformation of structural violence through schooling, interculturally harmonious social relations, and equitable, sustainable approaches to peace and development. Participant recognition of both material and social influences on violence—economic disparity, racial discrimination, and institutional exclusion—encompass the multidimensional perspective of critical realist analysis (see Bhaskar, 2008; DeLissovoy, 2007). Reflections on practice within this framework allow greater approximation toward action for social change on one hand, and directions for future reflection on the other (see Ollman, 2001). Thus, the conclusions and recommendations outlined here are intended both to honour possibilities for future pedagogical praxis and investigation, as well as the inevitable incompleteness of interpreting the complex intersections of theory, practice, meaning, and context in an organization such as the New Hope Foundation.

Schooling and Power

Participants at the New Hope Foundation appear to experience their education as a site in which capacities for critical analysis, community engagement, and citizenship are formed. In addition, the associations made by many participants between education, employment, progress, and ending violence indicates an understanding of the school as a source of social mobility and social improvement or change. Of course, the question remains: what kind of change, and for whom? While education is intuitively considered synonymous with positive change, Jara (2010) notes its conflicting purposes: first, as a tool for adapting to the rapid, immense changes of the neoliberal economy, that is, a more commodified version of education that creates human capital for the purposes of profit. Second, education can be viewed as a humane undertaking, in which learners are active

citizens and agents of history, able to transform social relations and cognizant of their interdependence with the environment and others. Although identification with the former purpose for education can perhaps allow for change for some individual situations, identification with the latter purpose can lead learners toward structural analysis and change. Participant responses simultaneously emphasize education as a means of employment and a way out of poverty, and thus of economic and societal inclusion, but also as a space for participatory learning, cooperative work and leadership. In short, schooling in the view of participants presents potential both for individual, familial advancement within the economic status quo as well as opportunities to contribute to community and collective change.

The experiential, applied aspects of the SAT curriculum and its emphasis on dialogue and discussion provide rich, relevant learning opportunities for students. Within this context, student and adult participants in the study demonstrated and discussed active learner ownership of academic material. Participants valued not just the potential, tangible outcomes of their education, but also the learning process itself. Eagerness to share their learning with communities and schools, as well as to apply it to environmental and social causes denotes a key capacity of popular education outlined by Jara (2010): " a vital sympathetic disposition towards the social and environmental surroundings as a daily affirmation" (p. 295; see also Kane, 2010). Generally, the SAT methodology promotes comparative student engagement and confidence in their learning processes, concern for well-being of their communities and overall social responsibility (see Murphy-Graham, 2007; Leggett, 2006).

Social responsibility, as well as an orientation toward critical awareness of

societal structures and oppression, is also reflected in the historical component of the Foundation's mandate and curriculum. Historical understanding of patterns of exploitation, so central to critical pedagogical theory and practice (see Cotter et al., 2001; Jara, 2010; Lavia, 2007), is demonstrated by student knowledge of the Rio Negro massacres, local histories of conquest and persecution, and local stories of collective survival and resistance. Learning the events of the past was indicated as important by all participants because of the ways in which they presented lessons in order to avoid future war, illuminated the roots of ongoing violence, provided clarity in the continued struggle for social and legal justice, and perhaps above all, instilled a sense of cultural resilience, strength, and identity. Concurrent with the notion that education could lead to progress and development was a sense that Achi historical and cultural roots needed to be valued and understood in order to direct alternatives to ongoing poverty and discrimination. In this way, participants recognized the problematic implications of a public peace narrative written by the historical winners of the armed conflict (see Oglesby, 2007; Poppema, 2009). They echo calls for a peace based on recognition of the struggle of disenfranchised groups, and on changing structural oppression: "never again to genocide, yes, but what about the simultaneous silencing of the histories of collective, contestatory politics?" (Oglesby, 2007, p. 92)

Re-valuing and recuperating Maya Achi history and identity was considered a key objective of a liberatory education by adult participants, and a cherished part of learning by student participants. In this way, teachers and students are participating in an educational project that directly counters the status quo: as discussed above, education is a site of racialized exclusion in Guatemala as elsewhere (Heckt, 1999; Hernandez, 2011;

"Methodology," n.d.; Pineau, 2008; Poppema, 2009). This exclusion not only occurs as a result of under-representation of indigenous cultures and languages in the curriculum, but also in systematic economic and cultural barriers to accessing education. Thus, educational policy has historically fulfilled its capacity as "a tool for violent capitalist colonization" (Salazar, 2008, p. 214) both in its denial and its provision: in the early colonial era, Mayans were forbidden from learning Spanish for fear that they would gain subversive knowledge and power along with these linguistic skills (Arias, 2006). However, nineteenth century agricultural institutes provided rudimentary language and literacy education with the objective of assimilating Mayans while preparing them with skills needed for a status as a labouring class within the colonial hierarchy (Hernandez, 2011). Even in accessing the knowledge needed for power in the dominant society, education marginalizes by reinforcing the dichotomous notion that colonized cultures are in need of modernization, conversion, or economic improvement, and thus somehow inferior.

The dichotomous, contradictory status of education in privileged language and discourse also plays out materially, since it is widely conceived of as a way out of poverty (see Pineau, 2008; Poppema, 2009). Another hegemonic layer now exerts itself in Guatemala as indigenous youth attempt to access dominant national language and discourse (Hispanic) as well as another globalized language and discourse (American English) in order to obtain advantage in navigating the economy. Paradoxically, the opportunities sought also result in cultural loss, dispossession, and exploitation of indigenous workers (see Green, 2009; 2008). Existing educational programs for rural indigenous youth in Guatemala, while rhetorically celebrated by international financial

institutions as able to lift students out of poverty, are second-rate and ultimately do not address systemic economic and social inequality (Poppema, 2009). Poor quality and low access to education contribute to the continued vulnerability and socioeconomic positioning of Mayans as involuntary sources of labour for exploitation, both nationally and internationally (see Green, 2009; Poppema, 2009). That participants understand schooling as a site of power raises additional questions about their understanding of the larger hierarchical and symbolic structures of power the school is instrumental within, and the ways in which they perceive these structures in relation to their identification as Maya Achi; a historically marginalized construct in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture.

Inteructulturalism as Resistance

Prominent ethnic and cultural binaries have spurned overt racism toward Mayan identities throughout Guatemalan history, while serving to justify the exploitation of indigenous labour and lands (See Arias, 2006; Drouin, 2010; Green, 2009). For instance, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the notion of the uncivilized, backward Mayan sparked morally dubious debate about the merits of instructional assimilation versus the merits of forced labour (Drouin, 2010). Ongoing stereotypes of Mayans as lazy, in need of discipline, and only capable of understanding brute force fosters stigmatization and marginalization of indigenous cultures in public discourse and policy (Cuxil, 2009; Green, 2008; Hernandez, 2011). The genocide, and the economic restructuring it enabled, further entrenched this symbolism: Military rhetoric celebrated the birth of democracy and of a purer, assimilated citizen, portraying the indigenous population as childlike and in need of discipline in order to fit into the new ladino,

entrepreneurial state (Schirmer, 1998). These stereotypical identities often become internalized as indigenous peoples continue to live lives "arranged according to a socioracial hierarchy," potentially preventing social movement toward multicultural equality (Vanthuyne, 2009, p. 208).

New Hope Foundation youth astutely perceived the material and symbolic ways in which external and internalized racist binaries affect their peers and their culture. The students bear witness to systemic discrimination through shame over learning and speaking the Achi language, under-representation and harassment in public education and other spaces privileging ladino language and dress, and loss of culture as a result of conquest, globalized influences, and economic necessity. In this manner participants touched on the racial and class-based dimensions of oppression active in their everyday lives. Simultaneously, however, participants all expressed the importance of recuperating and valuing Achi culture, language, and traditions. While a few recognized a general paradox in the pressure to abandon indigenous identities in order to navigate education, social life, and other public spheres, most participants placed importance on schooling both as an opportunity for individual and collective economic survival as well as a site for revitalizing historical memory and cultural identity. Indeed, knowing one's roots was considered perhaps synonymous with a good education. Participants' emphasis on pride in one's culture along with appreciation of multiple cultures suggests that conceptually, education and culture need not be mutually exclusive for these youth. Eager engagement with all aspects of their studies reveals an interaction with educational content that seeks to, to paraphrase one staff participant, value dominant and marginalized cultures equally. The Institute thus resists indigenous exclusion in the dominant society, on one hand, but

defies discourse and policies toward the elimination or extinction of indigenous cultures, on the other (see Arias, 2006; Vanthuyne, 2009).

Embracing dual and even multiple cultures can allow Maya Achi youth to help forward narratives such as the Mayanist movement's "counter-history," that is, discursive celebration of the capacity of indigenous peoples to "reproduce their modes of being-in-the-world while adapting themselves to the dominant political-cultural order" (Vanthuyne, 2009, p. 208). The adoption of flexible, polyvalent identities, on the unique terms of each individual, allows for Mayans and other colonized peoples to transcend rigid racial dichotomies by learning the skills and language conducive to countering their own exclusion, but also by revitalizing cultural knowledge, values, and practices, thereby presenting alternatives to an otherwise ahistorical, acultural discourse, and by highlighting ongoing racial and class-based patterns of social control (Arias, 2006; Asgharzadeh, 2008; Lavia, 2007; Vanthuyne, 2009). These alternative perspectives are crucial in order to formulate more peaceful social relations and more sustainable, equitable policies for economic development and re-distribution. The New Hope Foundation's intercultural focus similarly emphasizes the ever-changing nature of culture while affirming positive identities of historically oppressed groups and calling for harmonious social and economic relations ("Guia-Manual," 2006). Participants expressed similar ideas of cultural fluidity and cross-cultural respect in their reflections on equal rights, inclusion and acceptance, both within and between cultures.

Peace, Development, and Social Change: Renewing Community

By embracing transcultural identities while rejuvenating historically marginalized aspects of indigenous cultures, Arias (2006) asserts that the Mayanist movement in

Guatemala is resisting internalized colonialism and strengthening civil society ties. Rabinal is just one area of the country where destruction of the local culture was synonymous with deliberate disruption of leadership and cooperative organizing by the military. In her work with witnesses from the Rio Negro, Plan de Sanchez, and Agua Fria massacres, Dill (2005) suggests that the biggest loss experienced was of kinship and relationship: "It took me awhile, but I finally realized that these were not testimonies. They were not to be used as evidence—at least not in terms of individual accountability. I was being told the story of the destruction of community. I was listening to Achi oral history" (p. 343). Breaking community was a central component of the genocide, and the desire of many civil society groups in Rabinal is to rebuild it on social, cultural, and political fronts (Dill, 2005; Einbinder, 2010; Lopez de Gamiz, 2009).

Stories of collective struggle, resistance, and survival can perhaps be a starting point for re-weaving the frayed social fabric in Guatemalan communities (see Dill, 2005; Oglesby, 2007; Poppema, 2009). Green's (2009) description of the manner in which a group of survivors in the Ixcan region, in hiding from military incursions, built a sense of collective and political consciousness through the equitable redistribution of food and resources is one example of an alternative narrative that can re-claim indigenous historical agency, all but obliterated in military propaganda (see Schirmer, 1998). In relation to lessons learned from historical memory, their interactions with the cooperative approach of the Foundation's methodology, and in their own articulations about peace and development, student participants reflected this desire to establish community. Valuing of equal cultural and economic rights within Guatemala's context of ethnic diversity was paralleled by appreciation for respect, mutual support, and open dialogue,

suggesting that students view inclusion and equity as key to changing their country's social and economic situation. Youth observations of criminal, familial, interpersonal and even political violence, as well as their descriptions of poverty and lack of access to resources all shed light on their perceptions of a need for change, in spite of the signing of the Peace Accords.

Youth participants evoked an ethic of interdependence while explaining their understanding of the root causes of societal crime and violence, with poverty, unemployment, and postwar trauma, rather than individual pathology, among their most common ideas of contributing causes. In addition, their discussions around progress, development, and solving social and economic problems, frequently suggested cooperative, organizational, redistributive approaches and strategies, as well as concern for ecological sustainability. These laudable concerns for collective well-being, complementary to the mandates articulated by staff and Foundation materials (see "Guia-Manual", 2006; "Methodology", n.d., Osorio, 2003) contrast the individualized, free-market models of development imposed by the re-education campaigns and policies of the armed conflict (see Colajacomo, 1999; Einbinder, 2010; Schirmer, 1998;). The wisdom of FNE youth is consistent with holistic theories of peacebuilding and reconciliation, which view interpersonal conflicts and suffering at the "micro" or community level as interconnected with disparity and violence at the "macro" or state and international levels, and addressing the myriad patterns of disparity, disadvantage, impoverishment and oppression that constitute structural violence as essential to long-term, positive peace (Brunk, 2000; Fisk, 2000; Galtung, 2002; Kirmayer, 2010).

Youth at the New Hope Foundation are participating in and demonstrating

knowledge of principled action that can prevent future conflict in post war contexts:

Promoting belonging, revitalizing repressed cultures, maintaining consciousness of

historical injustices, and adequate concern for both individualism and collective well-

being are vital to reducing violence (Kirmayer, 2010). Grassroots, community-based

organizations such as the New Hope Foundation face immense logistical and financial

challenges in creating a spirit of solidarity amidst a newly entrenched "Culture of fear" in

the country (Glijeses, as quoted in Benson et al., 2008). The culture of fear, a

psychological and psychosocial effect continued from the conquest, acts in the form of

postwar militarism, state terror, and the criminalization of dissenting and marginalized

groups (Benson et al., 2008; Salazar, 2008). It is accompanied by public discourse

emphasizing national security and mass media sensationalism about the need for a hard

line against gangs and delinquents for law and order, as well as increased impetus for

private security and vigilante justice (Godoy, 2006; Salazar, 2008). One young study

participant was acutely aware of the dilemmas this insecurity presents for postwar

generations:

> Sometimes there are women who appear dead... by the men who murdered them but not for money. Rather because they raped them, or something like that. So, I think...there's a chance of around fifteen per cent. That it could break out again, a war in Guatemala... people think that, when there is more security, Guatemala gets better. But in those years that the war grew, there were many soldiers here, many people who, for example the generals, the colonels, people like that... those people were the ones that started murdering (people). So the older people don't know what to choose, because if the soldiers aren't here, delinquency grows. And with those times when the soldiers were here, it was them that started the delinquency. So the elders, the adults don't know what to choose. (Julia, October 2011)

Julia's reflection on the almost impossible choices that must be made in the midst

of marked poverty and violence also remind of the fear, mistrust and division that can be

obstacles to collective efforts for social justice and harmony (see Green, 2011; Godoy,

2006). Salazar (2008) refers to this peacetime state terror as "a reinvigorated process of

teaching and learning dehumanization" (p. 214). Even without crime, disparity and

impunity, the rifts, devastation, and atrocities of war impose obvious limits on postwar

forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation (see Ball and Chapman, 2001; Derrida, 2001; Dill,

2005; French, 2009; Kirmayer, 2010). Nonetheless, in the face of these complex

obstacles, formal democracy and fragile offspring of previous organizing activity create

spaces in which civil society can become more politically conscious and active (Godoy,

2006). The intentional establishment of community such as that forged at the Foundation

appears to have fostered both the appreciation for individual and cultural differences and

concern for harmony so integral to creating and sustaining mobilization for the common,

social good (Jara, 2010; Kirmayer, 2010). Moreover, as marginalized youth find

community and belonging in gang and organized criminal activity (Arias, 2011;

Karabanow, 2003), strengthening and healing community by reducing the need for

migration, revitalizing local cultures and economies, and rebuilding cooperation, projects

like the New Hope Foundation could play a key role in addressing societal violence. As

this study is not a comparative one, it is difficult to ascertain whether youth perspectives

result directly from their location in an educational space such as the Institute, from

values instilled in the family and community, or from a combination of these and other

factors. What is clear, however, is that these members of the post-war generation possess

immense eagerness and potential for leadership, engagement, and compassionate

promotion of peace: local capacity for community and solidarity, though repressed and

compromised, has not been extinguished.

Suggestions for New Hope Foundation Programs and Further Study

Based on the outcomes of interviews and observations, it was requested that I make some suggestions for the Foundation. They will be outlined here, with the caveat that they are informed by my own theoretical orientation, as well as my background in a different educational system in a different national and cultural context. As much as possible, I hope to present these suggestions in light of the Foundation's mandate, and my understanding of the social, cultural, and historical conditions of Rabinal. However, as Freire was fond of reiterating, popular education is context-specific and it is not possible to produce and reproduce blue-prints: my impressions of school life from my brief time at the Institute, perceived through my own cultural lens, might not always be applicable in the light of ongoing change and resource shortages. Indeed, while I was humbled by staff indications that our work was an opportunity to learn from a Canadian researcher, I must emphasize that I have been truly inspired and awed to learn so much from the staff, students, and programming at the organization, who are designing and implementing unique, innovative approaches beyond anything I've witnessed in other intercultural educational settings, in the face of great challenges. With these considerations in mind, my ideas are as follows:

First, I strongly encourage the continuation of research and curriculum development toward the intercultural bilingual methodology as outlined in the REMEBI Manual Guide (2006) and as described by staff participants. The strong appreciation both for their Achi culture and roots as well as for the equal value of diverse cultures demonstrated by youth participants reflect the philosophies described in the Manual. Additional activities teaching about the importance of societal inclusion, along with the

SAT methodology's encouragement of dialogue and cooperative learning, might combine in order to promote understanding of why these practices are valuable on a broader, cross-cultural, national and even international scale. Opportunities for discussion around the fluidity and ambiguity of culture, also acknowledged in the Manual, might allow students to share their impressions and experiences of cultural change, foreign influence, and brainstorm ways in which they might prevent the loss of their own culture—a threat passionately described by many participants-- while continuing to learn from multiple cultures and resist discrimination by dominant cultures.

Second, I suggest that those aspects of the curriculum that cover historical memory, development, citizenship and peacebuilding also incorporate discussion on the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of ongoing oppression, as well as of public debates and social movements in relation to these realities. That is, teaching about the relationship between historical events and contemporary issues can help to instill a critical awareness of power structures and their effects on culture as well as class (see Cotter et al., 2001; Freire, 2003; Jara, 2010; Kane, 2010). The current economic situation in the new Rio Negro, as discussed with students in relation to the ECAP Peace Accords workshop (see Appendix C), might be one example of a way in which staff are already taking this approach. Resource exploration and extraction in the area, deforestation and other ecological topics, migration and poverty in student communities, all topics that were discussed at various points in my time with the organization, might be analyzed for their historical and political factors. As the Foundation consciously aims to form community leaders for the future, as staff and students are aware, they will face difficult decisions that too often pit the well-being of communities against foreign financial

interests, requiring astute political, environmental, historical, and legal knowledge.

Finally, in light of the overwhelming extent to which student participants expressed criminal, societal, and interpersonal violence as realities in their lives, I would suggest that the school activities and content include discussion and reflection on delinquency, crime, and new forms of violence, particularly as they affect youth and their communities. Several staff and student participants acknowledged that this violence, and the poverty, consumerism, and disparity that influence it, are sequels of the armed conflict, and threats to a repeat of more widespread conflict. In this vein, the systemic, political nature of violence and its effects could be sources of discussion, as well as ideas for transforming division and conflict in communities, perhaps informed by the cooperative values instilled in the Institute. It is with some caution that I make this suggestion, as I am aware that the local and national dynamics of gang violence, drug trafficking, and interpersonal violence might have implications for this kind of content with which I might not be familiar. In addition, the staff and administration are far more aware of what is appropriate to the sensitivities and security of youth and their communities than I am. However, as one staff member expressed to me and as indicated by the openness with which student participants discussed topics of violence in the interviews, youth are often more able to handle tough subject matter than adults give them credit for. Building relationships and fostering a sense of community, as the Institute does, can foster a sense of safety and promote a sense of agency among youth as peace builders in contexts of violence (Ardizzone, 2003).

These broad suggestions are a result of the themes that I interpreted as emerging from this study. They are focused on content rather than practices or strategies because I

believe that staff and administration are better positioned than I am to know the best, most creative modes for implementing these ideas, should they choose to adopt them. Upon request I have also included an adaptable idea for a teaching tool (Appendix D), based on study participant ideas and modelled on the approach of the ECAP workshops. I close this section with the additional suggestion that the Foundation continue to collaborate with like-minded organizations such as ECAP, in order for its continued relevance to local and national social justice issues. It is a privilege for me to have been involved with the valuable, important work and focus of the Foundation and an honour to be asked to contribute to their great vision in some small way.

Conclusion

Education is a contested and controversial process all over the globe. From movements for cultural inclusion and against ongoing privatization of education in Guatemala, to student movements in Chile, Spain, Greece, New York, and the Maple Spring here at home, the content, accessibility, and purpose of education is re-asserted as something more than a commodity or laboratory for the profit of the powerful (see Brophy, 2012; Giroux, n.d.; "Student eviction," n.d.; Swift, 2012; "The Global Revolt," n.d.). Disputes over education are just one aspect of a global wave of protests against economic austerity measures that eliminate or privatize social programs, undermine public control of the economy, and place the burden of economic crises and the environmental and social costs of business on the backs of citizens (see Giroux, n.d.; Klein, 2007). Organizations such as the New Hope Foundation specifically, and educators more generally, are faced with the daunting task of preparing the future generation for the ecological, societal, and cultural consequences of these policies and conflicts, and with

the critical moral capacity for reversing them (see Jara, 2010).

This task is neither straightforward nor uniform across the diverse contexts impacted by the effects of the global drive for, and concentration of, profit. While citizens of the global North begin to suffer from the loss of our social safety nets through structural adjustment policies, citizens of the global south, who have already been subjected to these policies for decades, face intensified pursuit of their national natural and human resources by multinational companies (see Chomsky, 2010; Green, 2009; Klein, 2007; "People's Tribunal," n.d.). Proliferation of resource extraction licenses in countries such as Guatemala has prompted community consultations and referendums against mining, hydroelectric dams, and other mega-projects. These conflicts, which so often follow colonial and neocolonial patterns of expropriation in indigenous territories, also reinforce systemic inequality and discrimination: Because Mayan lands are wanted by international businesses and their supporting national elites for minerals and water, communities opposing such projects are increasingly militarized and classified as drug trafficking areas, effectively a new form of "collective racialized criminalization" (Salazar, 2008, p. 211; see also Green, 2011; "Local Votes," n.d.; "Mining, repression...", n.d.). These are the complex, urgent issues that future generations of students and community leaders will inherit.

Symbolically and rhetorically, large-scale economic projects and unfettered free-market capitalism are conceived of as synonymous with development and progress, and thus beneficial to impoverished communities (see Jara, 2010; Mann, 2011; Roberts and Thanos, 2003). These processes can wreak divisions between those who may welcome employment from industry, and those who fear its cultural and ecological consequences,

resulting from the loss of traditional livelihoods and from low environmental and social

regulations (see Green, 2011; "Impoverishment, not Development," n.d.; "People's

Tribunal," n.d.; Klein, 2007). On a global level, environmental movements founded in

rich countries risk further simplifying or obscuring these conflicts by failing to consider

the very real concern of indigenous communities for economic improvement, assuming

stereotypical, essentialized representations of indigenous societies and their relationships

to the land (Mann, 2011; Roberts and Thanos, 2003). As a result of these varied

interactions of cultural, social, and economic forms of power, it is crucial that

organizations such as the New Hope Foundation, who negotiate these myriad forces on

the terms of local historical and social contexts, be granted autonomy and resources for

their work. It is also vital that civil society learn from critical educational movements and

organizations such as this one, in order to engage in widespread questioning and

challenging of oppressive social relationships: "overcoming these forms of violence

opens new and unimagined possibilities for what human being and human solidarity

might be." (De Lissovoy, p. 368).

On the first anniversary of Victor Leiva's death, I attended the memorial held at

Caja Ludica. The ceremony, a bittersweet celebration of life with a combination of

dancing, singing, and poetry, prompted me to reflect on the challenges and fears faced not

only by youth in Central America, but increasingly, around the world as a result of

economic disparity and criminalization. I thought about my own past experiences with

students struggling with poverty, violence, and the colonial legacies of systemic

discrimination. By valuing educational spaces as creative sites of dialogue, diversity,

community and critical awareness, societies can resist oppressive forces that perpetuate

tragedies such as Victor's murder. To paraphrase several participants: Violence and

exclusion must be overcome.

Appendix A: Adult Participant Interview Questions (Translation)

In your opinion, what are the principle objectives of the New Hope Foundation and the Bilingual Intercultural institute?

In your opinion, what are some challenges in achieving those objectives?

Do you think it is important that youth in Rabinal and Guatemala learn about Historical Memory? Why or why not?

In your opinion, what should the role of education be in the community? In Guatemala? In general?

Is there anything else related to these topics that you would like to share?

Appendix B: Youth Participant Interview Questions (Translation)

1. Why do you come to school?

-Who made the decision for you to come to school? (Family? Yourself? Community)
-Why did you/your family choose the institute?

2. What is your favourite subject at the institute?

-What do you enjoy or find interesting about this subject?
-How do you like language classes? History classes?
-What does "Historical Memory" mean to you?
-Do you think it's important? Why or why not?

3. Tell me about a typical day at the institute

-What are some of your favourite activities in the school routine?
-Why do you think the Institute has these activities (agriculture, parades, group work, dances...). What do they want you to learn? What do you think about these goals?

4. Why is education important?

-How would you like to use your education in the future?
-What are your motivations for continuing your education?
-In your opinión, how does education benefit your community? Your country? Your culture? Yourself?
-What objectives should education and schools have for communities and the country?

5. What does the Word "community" mean to you?

-Is the Institute part of the community? If so, how?
-What is the role of culture in your community?
-How does the institute support culture in your community?
-In your opinion, what does interculturalism? Is it important? Why or why not?

6. What does the word Peace mean to you?

-Describe an image of a family/ a community/ country that has peace.
-Is there peace in Guatemala now? If not… What would be needed to create peace?
-Can education help to create peace in these locations? How, or why not?
-How would you like to contribute to a more peaceful society in the future?
-What do adults, youth, and schools need to do in order to promote peace?

Appendix C: Sample Community Psychosocial Action Team (ECAP) Workshop Plan (Translation)

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE

GUIDE NAME:
PEACE ACCORDS ABOUT SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS AND AGRARIAN SITUATION, STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND FUNCTION OF THE MILITARY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

A. **INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME:**

DISCUSS IN PAIRS FOR 20 SECONDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONCEPTS OF: *EQUALITY, LIBERTY, SOLIDARITY.*

Each pair reunites to emit their point of view for each theme. Later form bigger groups to work on a more complete definition.

B. **SUMMARY OF THE TOPIC**

Glosary:
Inclusion: Consists of forming part of something. *Development:* Advance, progress or growth. *Human Development:* Economic, social, and cultural growth of human society. *Agrarian:* Pertinent or relative to work in the country. *Participation:* To exercise rights to act or make decisions in society.

Principal Ideas:

- From the conquest to our days there have been great inequalities in Guatemala in ethnic, social and economic relations around property and exploitation of the land. This has brought a concentration of wealth in few hands that contrasts with the poverty of the majority, which is an obstacle to national development. It is indispensable to overcome this situation inherited from the past.
- Real democracy requires dialogue between all who participate in development. That requires the effective participation of citizens in the identification, prioritization and solution of their necessities.
- Women must be granted the same opportunities as men in accessing credit, awarding lands and other resources, as well as in studies and training, and education must contribute to eradicating all discrimination.
- It corresponds to the State to promote socioeconomic development of the country while assuring social justice, generating work and social development that implicates raising the standard of living, of health, of education and training of its citizens.

- Guatemala needs changes in land ownership so that peasants can reach economic, social and political development, in order for land to contribute to the well being and dignity of those who work it.

C. **DEBATE QUESTIONS:**

In what manner is participation strengthened in your community?
Have the organizations in your community taken you into account?
Do you think the seizure of land from Mayan peoples has improved agrarian conditions?

Appendix D: Lesson Plan Idea by Request of New Hope Foundation (Translation)

TOPIC: DELINQUENCY AND SECURITY

This activity aims to offer an opportunity to students to share their knowledge about security among themselves, and to formulate individual and group actions to promote peace and prevent delinquency in their communities. As a broader objective, it aims to establish knowledge about the roots of insecurity, such as poverty and historical injustice.

A. **INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC:**

A few moments in pairs or groups to construct the concepts of ***DELINCUENCY, CONSUMERISM, AND SELF-ESTEEM.***

Combination of the whole group to form a more complete definition of each concept, with contributions from volunteers.

B. **SUMMARY OF THE TOPIC**

Glosary: (terms are informed by the research study, definitions to be further discussed by participants)

-Peace
-consumerism
-Self-esteem
-security
-culture
-memory
-"moving ahead"

Principal Ideas: (A few results and ideas from the research study)

- Today in Guatemala, we've talked about how there are problems with delinquency, crime, and insecurity.
- To obtain a real peace, we need to be able to live free of fear of these things, be at peace with one's self, have peace with others, and with nature. This starts in the family and with education.
- Today in our society we receive many messages and habits of consumerism—that one must always have the best material things. It can be difficult to have peace with the self and maintain self-esteem with those messages.
- Consumerism is doing damage to the environment and also causing, in some locations, people to lose their culture.

- Poverty, the feeling of not having peace with the self, and lack of access to education can contribute to delinquency and crime.
- If we do not have knowledge of our past and our culture, it can be difficult to move ahead toward a good future

C. DEBATE QUESTIONS:

How can you strengthen your own self esteem and that of others, in the family and community? How can we strengthen the self esteem of our classmates here at the Institute?

Do communities have the necessary resources to avoid delinquency and crime?

Is imprisonment the only way to solve delinquency in communities?

What are some examples of consumerism in your community? How does it affect the environment?

What is the difference between development and consumerism?

What powers and gifts do we receive from our culture and our education to create a better future?

D. DRAMATIZATION:

In groups of 4-6, create a scenario about one of the following topics:

-security
-consumerism
-self-esteem
-culture
-moving ahed

Please reflect on a problem connected to your theme, with a negative solution and a positive solution.

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