Focus

REGENERATING EDUCATION FROM BELOW – ENDOGENOUS TERTIARY EDUCATION IN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT NICHES

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Abstract: This article discusses initiatives in Mexico to create alternative educational spaces. Following the 1994 Zapatista rebellion, subaltern social actors rejected mainstream education, seeing it as a failed means for imposing homogenisation, statism, and neoliberalism. We discuss two examples of alternative tertiary educational spaces in Mexico's poorest states, Unitierra in Oaxaca and CIDECI in Chiapas. Their alternative paradigm of endogenous education regenerates education from below, re-routing development according to local objectives of economic viability, dignity, and sustainability. They re-envision local development using education as an enabling force to create space for a plurality of human concerns and ways of being. The discussion explores the potential of such autonomous educational niches, as well as their limitations from a rights-based perspective. It reflects on the broader possibilities of counter-hegemonic popular education, particularly within the Latin American region, envisioning 'a world of many worlds' based upon strong claims for cognitive justice.

Key words: Neoliberalism; endogenous education; indigenous resistance; development alternatives; Mexico.

Introduction: Educational inclusion, Zapatista resistance, and alternatives to neoliberalism

Educational inclusion through the expansion of formal education has been the key strategy promoted by the World Bank and governments to foster development, reduce poverty, and achieve equity. Yet critics point out

education's complicity with neoliberalism and how programmes for inclusion can function to reproduce inequality. Neoliberal discourses of educational inclusion denigrate the poor and institutionalise surveillance of them. Educational strategies targeted at the poor in developing countries replay symbolic control through cultural production and reproduction (Bernstein and Solomon, 1999). Instead of opening channels for social inclusion, such programmes may serve to 'pedagogise poverty alleviation' (Rambla and Veger, 2009: 473).

Marginson (2008, 2011) presents a more differentiated view of higher education in the global frame. His influential analysis (2008) sketches the 'global field and global imagining' of education, employing a combination of Bourdieu and Gramsci's theories to distinguish an 'autonomous' subfield of elite higher education from a 'heteronomous' subfield of large-scale mass education with commercial characteristics. 'Autonomy' is associated with restricted production and hierarchical cultural status, while 'heteronomy' is associated with a hierarchy driven by economic capital and market demand. Between the autonomous and heteronomous subfields lies a range of intermediate institutions 'that combine the opposing principles of legitimacy in varying degrees and states of ambiguity' (Marginson 2008: 305). This article draws attention to the possibility of counter-hegemony, through the existence of an alternative, resistant mode of autonomy which relies on alternative legitimacy claims. The autonomy of endogenous education is either non-market based, or only marketised in a restricted, community-defined sense. This 'deglobalised' notion of autonomy from below is framed within horizontal, resistant, and alternative regional and global fields and imaginings.

Rizvi and Lingard argue that neoliberal globalisation has a dual effect: reducing 'some aspects of structurally imposed impediments to social equality', but simultaneously reinforcing or even deepening social hierarchies (2010: 140). Given this duality, increased formal access to schooling may not translate into equitable outcomes. Indeed, improving simple access may

be counterproductive, setting up expectations that create further social alienation if they are unrealised.

Demands for justice, educational or otherwise, have become more complex. Issues of identity, difference, and cultural recognition have come to the fore, leaving mainstream educational efforts too narrow in their conceptions of equity. The diversity of considerable and growing disparities that accompany globalisation heightens the need to understand issues of educational justice in relational and not simply quantitative terms. The struggle for recognition has rapidly become the paradigmatic form of conflict, as contemporary social movements have emerged. Group identity is just as important as class conflict, as material injustices are often enmeshed with demands for the recognition of difference (Fraser, 2008). Heterogeneity and pluralism have become the norms against which the demands for educational justice are articulated (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 159).

Stromquist and Hennessy note that the fundamental role of education in social movements remains somewhat invisible (2012: 638). We hope to raise awareness of this education in Latin American by offering an account of resistant, endogenous education in Mexico. It is based on one author's observation and attendance at Unitierra and CIDECI-run public events and several interviews and conversations with Gustavo Esteva over two months in 2011, and documentary analysis together with a critical review by both authors of relevant theoretical and comparative studies.

On 1 January 1994, the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) launched an armed rebellion against the cultural, political, and military hegemony of the Mexican state and its support for neoliberalism. The rebels' opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) presented an early and dramatic instance of organised popular opposition to neoliberal globalisation (Castells, 1997). The Zapatistas united a network of rural communities, mainly comprising indigenous and *mestizo* peasants across the state of Chiapas, in the name of rights, autonomy, and resistance, and in protest against discrimination, socio-economic

marginalisation, and cultural assimilation. The Zapatistas viewed NAFTA as a colonial policy continued by the postcolonial state, 'a final death sentence' for the rural poor and indigenous communities in particular, as it threatened to erase the remaining survival spaces for local indigenous economies and communities. For some, the 1980s heralded an 'impasse of development' (Schuurman, 1993), followed in the 1990s by 'post-development' school of thinking. The latter included the Mexican intellectual, Gustavo Esteva, who proposed that 'development' was no longer a viable concept (Esteva, 1992; Sachs, 1992).

The Zapatistas became an icon for global resistance and solidarity in this context. Theirs was a 'postmodern' revolution, aiming neither to seize power, nor to seek change through state mechanisms. Instead, they argued for the creation of a 'future within the present' based on autonomous organisation, the revitalisation of indigenous ways of life, and the founding of participatory, bottom-up democratic structures. Explicitly rejecting the neoliberal state and market solutions, they strived instead to pluralise Mexico's polity and society, envisioning a future 'world of many worlds'.

Pedagogical revolution and the critical transformation of development

Educational transformation is central to the Zapatistas' struggle. Their vision for vindicating basic rights such as health, education, and freedom from poverty demands a reworking of democracy based on cognitive as well as material social justice. They are described as 'pedagogical guerrillas' who use education to re-tell history and reiterate local identity (Johnston, 2000: 463), transforming education from a tool of oppression into an instrument of resistance and liberation. Critical of assimilationist state ideology and mindful of community needs, they demand that education be re-rooted in local languages, communal systems of economic production, and traditional ways of knowing and learning (Reinke, 2004: 490). The Zapatistas established a network of autonomous, community-based primary and secondary schools combining multilingual education with learning and skills relevant to daily lives, such as agriculture and animal husbandry. Global

solidarity networks have enabled them to bypass state resources and educational services, following a pattern of movement activism common to other transnational advocacy networks that emerged in the 1990s (Khagram, Riker and Sikkink, 2002). The Zapatistas' 'pedagogical revolution' created a new focus and momentum for social struggles across Latin America, connecting the critiques of failing state education systems and the search for alternatives to a wider set of social actors looking to education to create spaces for development alternatives, democratisation, and wider social transformation.

The Universidad de la Tierra (Earth University or Unitierra) was established by Gustavo Esteva in 1999 as part of the 'Project for Oaxaca from Civil Society'. Its purpose was to provide a tertiary learning space, supporting and complementing existing non-formal, autonomous community education initiatives. 'We wish to create or support autonomous ways of living, linked to the conditions and aspirations of the individuals or groups who come to us' (Esteva, 2006b: 12). Unitierra was founded on a vision of autonomy from both the state and market, reflecting a democratic, community-centred ideal of economic, social, and cultural development. A comparable concept from post-crisis Argentina defines a process that 'distinguishes a person or group from the state and other hierarchical institutions, and is also used to reflect self-organisation, autogestion [self-management], direct participation, and democracy' (Sitrin, 2007: 46). Unitierra reflects a growing movement among indigenous communities to construct spaces where distinctive ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities can be asserted. Other Unitierras have been established across Mexico. The most significant of them, the Centro Indígena de Capacitación Integral (CIDECI) in Chiapas, is discussed below.

The state of educational disadvantage and disconnect

The context for the emergence of endogenous educational alternatives was essentially one of extreme deprivation for the indigenous and *campesino* communities in Mexico. Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, noted that Mexico was the first country in

which the Washington Consensus was applied, prioritising debt servicing and fiscal austerity over public spending and public services. Privatisation put private schooling 'on equal footing' with public schools, even as the latter became increasingly impoverished (Tomasevski, 2006: 195). Recent studies by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy in Mexico show significant correlations between poverty, rurality, indigeneity, and educational disadvantage (CONEVAL, 2011, 2008). Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero, and Campeche, the states with the highest proportion of indigenous peoples, have the highest levels of combined disadvantage. In some municipalities, 95 percent of the inhabitants live in extreme poverty (CONEVAL, 2011). Chiapas and Oaxaca have the highest illiteracy rates, the lowest levels of primary school attendance, and the lowest completion rates for education at all levels (CONEVAL, 2008). A World Bank report on poverty in Mexico similarly correlates extreme poverty, low educational and development outcomes, and high proportions of indigenous population (Walton and Lopez-Acevedo, 2004: xxxvi–xxxvii).

This situation of the indigenous peoples in Mexico is far from unique, reflecting global patterns of indigenous poverty and educational disadvantage. The 2004 report by Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous, Peoples Rodolfo Stavenhagen, examined the rights to quality and culturally appropriate education, and found that inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous people is increasing. Indigenous populations are less able to access good-quality bilingual or culturally appropriate education; face racism and xenophobia in classrooms; and endure curricula that neglect indigenous cultures and reinforce negative stereotypes. The emphasis on classroom-based schooling means that learning is situated outside the community context. There is a disconnect between community-based forms of learning and the experience of education in the classroom. Schooling may also prevent indigenous children from taking part in community activities which may be linked to seasonality and livelihoods, reducing opportunities for 'the learning and teaching that take place as part of daily life' and that is essential to 'engender a sense of indigenous identity based in the intellectual and cultural heritage of the people' (Aikman 1999:

69). Predominant educational practices such as 'copying … reading and memorizing texts' differ from the experiential forms of learning found in communities – schooling imposes the 'exact opposite of the traditional orientation of family and community socialization of the indigenous peoples based on active learning' (Duque, 1998: 76). These factors likely contribute to a lack of successful attainment and completion of formal schooling, for indigenous children.

Across Latin America, schools have assumed the role of 'incorporating indigenous people to "civilized" society' by teaching almost exclusively in Spanish (ibid: 72). Where there are attempts to provide bilingual education, programmes fail to address the unequal position of dominant versus indigenous languages and cultures. Bilingual education therefore continues to epitomise 'the socio-linguistic dynamics which grant a lower status to indigenous languages vis-a-vis the hegemonic culture' (ibid: 74).

Indigenous responses to ethnocide: Spaces for subversion and proposals for endogenous education

The 1997 UNESCO-sponsored seminar in Oaxaca, 'New perspectives on Adult Education for Indigenous Peoples' collectively convened and formalised a global process of reflection about the negative impacts of formal state education on minority indigenous cultures. The ensuing Huaxyacac Declaration on Adult Education for Indigenous People states that 'official education has led to one single way of conceiving education which has produced the uprooting of our people and our lands … and ignores the value of our own knowledge' (1998: 217). The growing resistance among indigenous communities raised the possibility of endogenous education as a form of subversion and symbolic reconfiguration, resisting cultural dominance, perpetrated through formal state education and 'embedded in systems of knowledge' (Nandy, 2000: 115).

Esteva observes that the Zapatista uprising sparked the revitalisation of indigenous education as a concern within indigenous communities

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(interview, 13 August 2011), who began to look within for the knowledge and skills needed to create sustainable alternatives to formal education. A shift occurred towards autonomous, community-centred learning, balancing the educational needs of individual learners with the social, cultural, and economic needs of the community. The concept of endogenous education has become increasingly relevant in the post-colonial and post-development context. Rejecting externally imposed models of formal schooling and enculturation (exogenous education), endogenous education seeks to be community-based, culturally rooted and autonomous. It is based upon the 'traditional way of transmitting knowledge and of developing useful skills based on the family and community environments, whereas exogenous education is education offered through formal, non-formal and informal education services' (Duque, 1998: 68).

Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo challenge the Eurocentrism of the predominant Latin American educational paradigm, which serves to perpetuate North-South imbalances in knowledge, power, and wealth, keeping the global South in a position of economic, cultural, and social disadvantage, where 'southern realities and facts may be unknown, disregarded or unilaterally exploited' (2003: 103). Endogenous education rejects the claims of universalised knowledge that are 'epistemologically racist', Eurocentric, and that exclude non-Western cosmovisions (Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo, 2003; Andreotti, 2011). Endogenous educational alternatives are instead 'rooted in our own realities and circumstances that would contribute more effectively to our progress and development. [It] should be alternative to and more open than the dominant ones [paradigms]' (Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo, 2003: 104).

The 're-routing and re-rooting' of education in endogenous projects of cultural-political resistance and decolonisation (see Brydon, 2010; Loomba et al., 2005; Wilson, Şandru and Welsh, 2010) is one way to understand how endogenous education fundamentally 'cracks' the global imaginary of education. Endogenous education re-values the specificities of multiple and diverse cultures and contexts, grounding education in local

realities, instead of a hierarchical and falsely universal globality. Confronting 'epistemic racism', it recovers, revalues, and regenerates local knowledge in the hope that more truly universal alternatives can emerge: 'every scrap of local knowledge is not only a global heritage; it is an alternative form of universal knowledge' (Nandy, 2000: 122). Endogenous education makes strong claims for cognitive justice and the localisation of universal understandings of what makes a good education (Nordtviet, 2004), but its aims are also pragmatic: 'endogenesis of this kind should open the way for useful discoveries and initiatives that are able to alleviate social problems within the local world' (Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo, 2003: 104).

Unitierra and CIDECI: an endogenous university and tertiary education centre

Unitierra in Oaxaca is an endogenous university that distinguishes itself from state or market-driven higher education institutions, aligning instead with local communities desiring control over their education. Following the Huaxyacac Declaration, indigenous communities began to experiment with community-centred alternatives to learning (King, 1998). In extreme cases in Oaxaca, rural and urban communities expelled state-employed teachers and closed state schools, replacing them with community-based traditional knowledge and practical skills considered to be more authentically related to people's daily lives and community well-being. The most pressing practical concerns identified by Unitierra's director, Gustavo Esteva, were high unemployment, erosion of the social fabric, outward migration, and the failing education system.

Esteva saw formal education as being overly distanced from the everyday lives of indigenous people, failing to inculcate the skills they needed to remain as productive members of their communities. State education was failing to deliver on its promise of economic participation in the global economy, as many indigenous people could not access higher education, leaving them with the unattractive option of low-skilled, low-paid, and undignified jobs. Mainstream education has fostered the belief that economic opportunities are only available outside the community, causing

out-migration to cities and across the US border. The devaluation and neglect of indigenous knowledge means that 'school impedes children from learning what they need, to continue living in their communities, to contribute to their common prosperity, and to that of their soils and their homes' (Esteva, 2006b: 14).

The solution was to foster local opportunities, 'learning first and foremost how to stay in their own regions and lead a dignified life'. Their three main criteria are to be 'economically feasible, socially just and ecologically sensible', so young people can become less dependent on employers or the government. Sustainable, community-based development allows young people to stay and prosper in their home communities, while communities benefit from their work and skills. The principle of dignity is core. 'Dignity' is understood in terms of self-reliance for individuals and communities, freedom from dependence on outside forces for livelihood, living within one's means and in an ecologically sensible and socially just manner (Esteva, 2006b: 12-13).

For Esteva, Unitierra differs from conventional vocational training institutes, as it rejects the purpose, values, and methods of formal education. He draws on Ilich's *Deschooling Society* (1971) to articulate a philosophy of autonomous, student-centred learning and reflective practice, based on a model of master-pupil relationships. Rejecting the pedagogy of the formal classroom, Unitierra assigns the responsibility for learning to individuals, under the guidance of 'masters' with specific skills. They wish individuals to be empowered, to regain control over their own learning, cease being passive receptacles of knowledge and actively pursue their individual learning paths. The traditionalist interest in reclaiming 'types of apprenticeship as old as the hills' is complemented with 'contemporary practices to ensure shared learning and study' (Esteva, 2006b: 13). Unitierra acts as a 'matchmaker', for example, matching a learner who is concerned with land rights with a practising agrarian lawyer. Other examples include urban agriculture and permaculture, sanitation, traditional healing and medicine, video and digital technology, and recycling. Unitierra tries to coordinate the interests of

individual learners, study groups, and cooperating communities' needs. 'Control over learning is in the hands of the person who learns… based on the[ir] interest, initiative and determination' (Esteva, 2005: 12). The learner's autonomy is mediated and facilitated by parents, family, and communities, with Unitierra filling any gaps identified within the learner's immediate communities (conversation with Esteva, 13 August 2011). Practical learning and experience are informed and supplemented by research, prioritising the recovery of knowledge and practices which communities once transmitted across generations, but are under threat due to educational and societal devaluation and neglect.

The establishment of Unitierra catalysed other autonomous educational initiatives in Mexico, and Esteva acted as advisor for the establishment of CIDECI in Chiapas. Both CIDECI and Unitierra are associated with the Zapatista movement, but a larger majority of CIDECI's students come from more activist, communities and have come up through the Zapatista system of autonomous primary and secondary schooling. CIDECI thus represents an endogenous tertiary progression route. Unitierra accepts students of any background from anywhere in Mexico or abroad, while CIDECI restricts enrolment to local indigenous communities. CIDECI's policy reflects the Zapatista ideal of autonomy and resistance as the starting point for regenerating indigenous livelihoods and culture. CIDECI is associated with internationally networked Zapatista events, for example hosting the annual international gathering of the Festival Mundial de la Digna Rabia (Worldwide Festival of Dignified Rage) and La Escuelita Zapatista. Beginning as a commemoration of the 1994 Zapatista uprising, this expanded into workshops including participants from different social movements across the Americas, and beyond, to explore alternatives to neoliberal globalisation (Bellinghausen, 2008).

CIDECI is principally oriented towards residential training and instruction within workshop settings. This contrasts with the individual, 'de-schooled', matchmaking strategy at Unitierra. Under the supervision of skilled craftsmen and women, CIDECI students learn artisanal or vocational

skills, including animal husbandry, horticulture, carpentry, baking, mechanics, metalwork, tailoring, and shoemaking. CIDECI's campus aims for self-sufficiency in food and energy consumption, but also generates income from the sales of products and services from their workshops.

Both institutions have demonstrated a considerable capacity for adaptation, allowing them to stay relevant within a changing landscape of social movements. Unitierra students have gone on to create an independent Centro Autónomo para la Creación Intercultural de Tecnologías Apropiadas (CACITA [Autonomous Centre for the Intercultural Creation of Appropriate Technology]) that aims to develop and promote technologies to serve the basic needs of families and communities in Oaxaca. CACITA runs workshops, courses, and exchanges for people interested in ecological and sustainable technologies. In Chiapas, the Festival Mundial de la Digna Rabia has been replaced by an annual gathering, Seminario Internacional de Reflexion y Analysis de Tierra Planeta Movimientos Antisistemicos (International Seminar for Analysis and Reflection for the Earth, Planet, and Resistance Movements). This gathering focuses on the creation of a global space for dialogue, reflection, and sharing experiences from a diverse range of social movements (Bellinghausen, 2011). Common ground is afforded by the focus on community-level examples of resistance and sustainable development from the global South, particularly amongst peasant and indigenous communities.

Dilemmas of responsibility and respectability

Endogenous experiments involve a de facto shifting of responsibility for education away from the state and onto civil society. The communities discussed here have assumed responsibility for providing their own education at all levels. Seeking 'to apply energy and imagination to creating a whole new world in our own places, in the present' (Esteva and Prakash, 2008: 416), endogenous efforts provide alternatives that bypass the state, instead of pressuring it to improve and reform. This has profound implications for how we understand the role of the state, especially with regard to its obligations to

protect and fulfil the right to education according to international human rights law, norms and policies.

Ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) obliges the Mexican state to respect, protect, and fulfil the right and accessibility to education at all levels:

> "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN General Assembly 1966, Art. 13).

Regarding higher education, states parties must ensure that it is 'equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education' (ibid). States have obligations to enact plans and implement these measures, taking steps to realise the right to education, according to their maximum available resources (UN General Assembly 1966, Art. 14). The rights-based approach to education is further founded on the principle of non-discrimination, meaning free availability and accessibility, regardless of sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, or race (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [CESCR] 1999, para. 6.b.i).

Reinke (2004: 487) complains that state efforts to address the discrimination and marginalisation of indigenous peoples in education have been misguided, ad-hoc, and inadequately resourced. In 2010, the National Congress on Indigenous and Intercultural Education highlighted continuing concerns about discrimination, repeating many of the issues raised in the lead-up to the Huaxyacac Declaration. This suggests that the growth of endogenous education has not prevented formal schooling from continuing to function as the principal tool for assimilating indigenous people into a homogenising and discriminatory Mexican state (López y Rivas, 2010). The 2010 National Congress indicated that more, not less, engagement and consultation was needed between indigenous communities and the state in

designing and implementing education programmes. The state retains obligations to guarantee and increase levels of school attendance and provide quality bilingual and intercultural education. If the state is to meaningfully address educational deficits within indigenous communities, it must demonstrate clear efforts to 'remedy collective victimization' (Tomasevski, 2006: 195).

The Mexican state's failure to meet its international obligations has made the option of endogenous education a last resort for some communities. Paradoxically, the success of initiatives such as Unitierra and CIDECI may facilitate a further withdrawal of the state from educational provision, playing further to the neoliberal agenda to reduce state efforts in public education. When individuals and communities assume the cost and responsibility of providing education, they may run the risk of replicating certain neoliberal tenets of education, recasting their citizens as neither more nor less than consumers. Tomasevski (2006: 182) highlights this as one of the greatest impediments to the realisation of the right to education for all. Esteva is fundamentally opposed to the conception of education to primarily serve the market, not individual or collective wellbeing. Unitierra's vision of self-sustaining communities promotes 'steady state' economics, rather than the continuous pursuit of economic growth. Human dignity and the freedom to lead a dignified life are core principles, an essentially communitarian, rather than individualist, statist, or consumerist worldview. The local-global orientation is understood as a worldwide network of grassroots activists, not the imposition of a market-oriented 'global design' on local realities (Mignolo, 2000).

Mexican society is deeply preoccupied with formal accreditation as a mark of status, and respectability and educational qualifications are important for social positioning and social mobility within a highly stratified society. A lack of formal qualifications denotes exclusion from mainstream higher education and professional life. The alternative of endogenous education is therefore risky, because exogenous qualifications matter greatly. Aware of this dilemma, Unitierra decided to award all participants a diploma,

admitting that their diplomas lacked official status, but arguing that this nevertheless helped to legitimise Unitierra's activities in the eyes of the outside world and to protect its participants. By packaging their activities 'under the rubric of a University' Unitierra plays with 'the symbols of the official system' using 'to our benefit all symbols that we perceive as tools of domination' (Esteva, 2006a: 14-15). Learners and communities are knowingly complicit in this subversion, valuing the diplomas as 'an expression of people's autonomy', symbolising the 'commitment of our students to their own community, not a right to demand anything' (Esteva, 2005: 15).

Educational horizontalism and sustainable development

Sitrin's notion of non-hierarchical community organisation, horizontalidad (horizontality), contextualises endogenous education within a broader canvas of emerging social movements. *Horizontalidad* characterises the commonalities shared by myriad social movements attempting to 'reorganise' and 'reshape' lives. It signifies the creation of 'direct democratic relationships, rejecting hierarchy…and to construct a better environment through autogestionandose (self-management) in communities, neighborhoods, work places, schools and universities' (Sitrin, 2007: 47). The focus of social movements has shifted from global to local, as communities of students, workers, landless peasants, and indigenous peoples strive to remake their current reality and 'create a new future within the present' (Sitrin, 2007: 44, 47). Sitrin contends that localisation and the focus on community do not necessarily demand the sacrifice of the individual. Individual and community are seen as mutually constitutive and interdependent. The philosophy of Unitierra reflects this conception of a collectivity that values individuals, but not as free-floating, autonomous beings. 'Real freedom' is conceived in terms of a reciprocal relationship:

> "Our 'students' do not belong to communities. They are their communities and have a responsibility to those communities, that is, to themselves ... [they] have the internal and social structure that is a fundamental condition for real freedom ... Real people, persons,

knots in nets of relationships, can be together by themselves, in freedom" (Esteva, 2006a: 16).

Unitierra and CIDECI illustrate the horizontal logic of Latin American social movements: revisioning the idea of development, with education acting as an enabling force to create space for a plurality of human concerns and ways of being. The focus on essential skills for individuals-within-communities allows them to survive, to challenge neoliberalism and connect with other movements. The 'curriculum' at Unitierra is based on the communities' identified needs for food, adequate and sustainable sanitation, waste disposal, and access to water (interview with Esteva, 13 August 2011). 'There is a determined effort to repair the damage inflicted by colonization, modernity, development, and globalization'. Indeed, 'for people on the margins disengaging from the economic logic of the market or the plan has become the very condition for survival' (Esteva, 1992: 27).

In seeking to recover and regenerate indigenous knowledge, Unitierra and CIDECI substantiate the concept of an 'ecology of knowledges' and an 'alternative way of thinking about alternatives', as advocated by de Sousa Santos (Dalea and Robertson, 2004). Endogenous tertiary education is intimately tied to the nurturance and valorisation of a plurality of knowledges and cosmovisions, as alternatives to the Eurocentric canon of the so-called 'knowledge society' (Dalea and Robertson, 2004: 158). This answers Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo's call to 'construct more balanced, endogenous paradigms' (2003: 104).

De Sousa Santos sees cognitive justice as dependent upon the 'coexistence of many knowledges in the world', given 'the relation between the abstract hierarchies which constitute them and the unequal economic and political power relations which produce and reproduce increasingly more severe social injustice' (2007b: xv). Chan-Tibergien similarly argues for global (educational) justice to be achieved through a combination of critical pedagogy and a fundamental critique of the cognitive injustice inherent within hegemonic neoliberal ideology. Cognitive justice involves re-

asserting value systems and restoring subjugated knowledges through alternative methodologies (2004: 191). It requires resistance and grounding in alternative epistemologies that engender 'alternative ways of looking at alternatives' (Andreotti, 2011: 390).   Cognitive justice demands that epistemic racism be exposed, and diversity and richness in living, learning, and constructing knowledge be celebrated, validating 'the beauty and wisdom that exist in communities and cultures which can be inspiring and mutually nurturing'. The communities involved are not only concerned to seek alternatives to schooling, they have an explicit wish to pluralise epistemologies and recover experience (Fasheh and Pimparé, 2006).

Unitierra and CIDECI could be said to represent different localised visions of Santos' proposal for a 'Popular University of the Social Movements', 'a global university from below, indeed a counter-university aimed at bringing together activists of social movements and social scientists/artists engaged in participatory research-action'. A plurality of knowledges could aid 'the struggle against this monoculture of knowledge' (Dalea and Robertson, 2004: 158) in another world where local and global citizens are willing and able to participate in new forms of democratic governance, like the World Social Forum. It begins with, and is achieved through, the regeneration of education and the flourishing of alternative knowledge.   Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo call for 'free and altruistic universities committed to … the creation, accumulation and diffusion of this knowledge committed to social progress. They should be authentically participatory' (2003: 107).

Endogenous education remains open to, but is determined not to be dominated by, external forces. Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo caution against isolation from outside influences: 'one should not become xenophobic nor should we isolate ourselves from the general intellectual world … [W]e should comply with the need to accumulate diverse patterns of thought and action congruent with our specific modalities of growth and progress' (2003: 106).   The aim is not to return to 'colonial forms of bush gathering and the export of tropical products', but to 'facilitate a rational use of land, water,

wind, and solar resources, as well as introducing more constructive and productive methods of territorial occupancy and use' (ibid: 107). It requires an awareness of modern technological advances and the need for interdependence in the ever-globalising world. Reinke (2004: 489) shows that indigenous communities are not averse to modern technology: 'the Zapotecos [one of Oaxaca's main indigenous groups] believe it is possible to fuse the traditional with the modern, taking advantage of new technology in order to maintain and recognise the value of their traditional way of life and resist assimilation'.

Endogenous education can stimulate an often-necessary internal dialogue within the community. An uncritical approach to community and traditions poses the danger of retaining, even encouraging, persistently unequal relations, such as gender or racial discrimination or violence within and between indigenous communities. Unitierra and CIDECI try to address these issues and challenge destructive social norms through processes of dialogue. Challenging community norms is a gradual process that should develop organically from within the community, rather than be externally imposed (conversation with Esteva, 13 August 2011).

Conclusion: possibilities for survival and interdependence

Unitierra and CIDECI do not just provide another form of development education; rather, through the autonomous regeneration of education at community level, they are using education as a space for re-defining development and shifting the power balances of globalisation as we know it. This model of 'development education' can be seen as an enabling space for a plurality of human concerns and ways of being. The Zapatistas maintain that their movement is not a prescription for global transformation, but one possibility out of infinite possibilities for transforming our present reality. Unitierra and CIDECI operate in the context of a deeply divided society where discrimination of the indigenous population is a routine, and often institutionalised reality. Its alternative philosophy of knowledge is means for both survival and interdependence, though survival is no small concern in situations where the state has failed to provide basic social services.

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Endogenous educational spaces represent profound attempts to question the content, purpose, and values of education. They are radically different from exogenous, globalising educational discourses that can be found in the 'Education for All' or the 'Millennium Development Goals' initiatives. Those policy models are primarily concerned with implementing a version of education and development whose superiority over other forms of education remains unquestioned. The envisaged result involves the conversion of local people into a perhaps falsely universal 'global' education, where progress claims to be measured in terms of wealth, happiness, and cultivation (Nordtveit, 2009), but is actually an imposition of 'global designs' on 'local realities' (Mignolo, 2000).

The significance of endogenous education lies in the efforts to create and strengthen collectivities, democratise educational, political and social relationships and deliberately shift from hierarchical to horizontal forms of learning and organisation. This is a growing trend across the world, as a diversity of peoples and communities adopt alternative forms of organisation and look for autonomous solutions where states have failed. The protagonists are as diverse as the means employed to achieve this, but all share a common goal of re-examining 'local democracy and the possibility of variation within national states based on the recuperation of participatory traditions that had been suppressed in the process of constructing homogenous national identities' (Santos and Avritzer, 2008: xxxvii). Andreotti (2011: 393) poses the question of how to support 'learners in the difficult stages of this undoing when they face the uncertainty, fear, anger and possible paralysis that comes in the early stages of the renegotiation of (and of disenchantment with) epistemic privilege?' Esteva attempts an answer by reminding us that Unitierra was not actually needed to create the alternatives, since the alternatives were already in existence. What endogenous alternatives can do is to facilitate authentic and critical dialogue between individuals and communities, nurture alternative ecologies of knowledge, and keep inclusive and democratic processes of transformation on our horizons.

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