

**Teacher negotiation of intercultural education
policy in rural Mexico: the implications for
educational equity**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the challenges and tensions facing an intercultural education programme, Modalidad Educativa Intercultural para la Poblacion Infantil Migrante, MEIPIM (Intercultural Educational Programme for Child Migrants), designed to meet the learning requirements of agricultural migrant child workers in Mexico. Working voluntarily on the programme, ethnographic research was carried out on both the teacher training component and the classroom-based implementation of MEIPIM. The teachers at the centre of the study are mainly from rural areas in Veracruz, Mexico, and the students are the child labourers of seasonal migrant agricultural workers.

The thesis is shaped by a central consideration to explore how teacher negotiation of 'top down' generic intercultural education development policy might function as a local practice to promote or inhibit educational equity. Teacher subjectivity and identity formation processes are fundamental to this exploration.

Analysis of the empirical evidence suggests that the cultural politics of global intercultural education policy appear to generate pedagogic practices to address cultural rather than socio-economic injustice. The data also suggest that teacher negotiation of MEIPIM's cultural affirmation strategies is mediated by wider discriminatory nationalist and ethnic ideologies. As a result, teacher negotiation of MEIPIM's intercultural aims appears to reinforce, rather than democratise prevailing discriminatory and racist social relations

Applying Bernstein's analytical distinctions for competence and performance pedagogic modes, the empirical findings also suggest that MEIPIM's intercultural policy is shaped by a contradictory pedagogic device which determines an unproductive form of 'strategy teaching' that undermines the programme's cognitive aims. As a result, this study not only demonstrates how the mediation of the global by the local rearticulates policy aims to generate unintended policy outcomes, but also suggest that global/local mediation is shaped by a global, rather than a local, deficit position.

**I hereby declare that except where explicit attribution is made,
the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own**

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Table of contents

Abstract.....	2
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	10

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research themes and arguments.....	11
1.2 MEIPIM: Intercultural education programmes for the children of migrant workers.....	13
1.3 Research aim and principal tasks.....	19
1.4 Why Migrant Education?	21
1.5 Research arguments.....	24
1.6 How the thesis is structured.....	25
1.7 A word about terminology.....	28

Chapter 2

The global, the local and the cultural turn: a critical examination of intercultural education development policy

2.1. Introduction.....	30
2.2. Reconfigured capitalism and the emergence of the new global civil society.....	31
2.3. The development of a globally active indigenous movement.....	34
2.4. The implications of international agreements for intercultural education in Mexico.....	36
2.5. Neoliberal logic of global governance and the cultural turn in development politics.....	38
2.6. The culture battles in the global public sphere.....	42
2.7. The cultural politics of state consolidation and 'the Indian problem'	45
2.7.1. The Vasconcelos prism; the cosmic race and its racist legacy.....	46

2.7.2. The emergence of indigenismo.....	48
2.7.3. Bilingual education.....	49
2.7.4. Bilingual bicultural education.....	49
2.7.5. Rewriting the national identity discourse.....	50
2.8. An examination of institutional intercultural discourse and development in Mexico.....	52
2.8.1. The co-ordinating body for intercultural bilingual education: CGEIB.....	53
2.9. MEIPIM.....	54
2.9.1. The privatisation of the agricultural sector.....	55
2.9.2. Some insights into MEIPIM policy rhetoric.....	57
2.10. Theories of pedagogy: an inevitable pedagogic merger?.....	60
2.11. Conclusion.....	64

Chapter 3

The Culture Debates: recognition versus redistribution and the importance of critical intercultural education

3.1. Introduction.....	66
3.2. Personal experience of multicultural education policy.....	67
3.3. Intercultural Education: the tensions and contradictions.....	68
3.4. The post discourses.....	70
3.5. Global intercultural education policy.....	72
3.6. Recognition, redistribution or both?	73
3.7. Critical theory and critical intercultural education.....	76
3.7.1 Critical theory.....	77
3.7.2. Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy.....	79
3.8 Choosing critical intercultural education: identity politics and the social division of labour.....	81
3.9. Intercultural education in Latin America: an overview of the literature.....	83
3.10. Silencing alternative epistemologies: global policy versus local initiatives.....	88
3.11. Community participation: consultation or critical agency? The case of Chile.....	96

3.12. Disarticulating hegemonic discourse.....	99
3.13. Conclusion.....	101

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1. Introduction.....	103
4.2. Research aims and questions.....	104
4.3. The theoretical underpinnings of critical ethnography.....	105
4.3.1 Reflexivity: a double translation.....	108
4.3.2. Cultural selves, translation and meaning making in the research process.....	109
4.4. Research sites.....	112
4.4.1. Negotiating access.....	112
4.4.2.Focal farms A and B.....	113
4.4.3. Defining the field.....	118
4.4.4. A first visit to in-service training.....	120
4.4.5. A first visit to farm A; instructor resistance, tutor authority and a general manager.....	122
4.5. Continuing fieldwork.....	126
4.5.1. Participant observation and field relations.....	128
4.5.2. Fieldnotes.....	130
4.5.3. Interviews.....	132
4.6. Some ethical considerations.....	134
4.7. Analysis of data.....	139
4.8. Conclusion.....	142

Chapter 5

MEIPIM: a documentary examination

5.1. Introduction.....	144
5.2. An intercultural educational model for migrant children: documentary sources.....	146

5.2.1. CONAFE (The National Council for Educational Advancement).....	146
5.2.2. MEIPIM policy development.....	147
5.3. Defining and describing migratory practices: a socio cultural analysis.....	149
5.4. The power of discursive control: establishing an authoritative voice.....	151
5.4.1. An Alternative Account.....	153
5.5. Deprivation and privilege.....	156
5.6. Normalising devices: just like any other child.....	160
5.7. Ethical challenges.....	162
5.8. Epistemological confusion.....	165
5.9. Lost and cheated.....	167
5.9.1. Refusing critical engagement.....	170
5.9.2. Discrimination.....	171
5.10. Instrumentalising culture as a technique of policy.....	172
5.10.1. MEIPIM policy and the culture debates.....	173
5.10.2. Culture as a political commodity in the policy context.....	177
5.10.3. Human rights.....	179
5.11. Conclusion.....	181

Chapter 6

The power of pedagogy: teaching agricultural day workers how to plant a seed

6.1. Introduction.....	183
6.2. A visit to the museum: who teaches what to whom and under what conditions?.....	184
6.3. The pedagogical device and the regulative discourse.....	187
6.3.1. Measuring success.....	188
6.4. Teacher construction of the integrated curriculum: project work as a waste of time.....	190
6.4. 1. The reasoning behind the pedagogic logic of project work.....	195

6.5. MEIPIMs global/ local dialectic: gaps, contradictions and paradoxes	199
6.5.1 Securing the learning evidence: strategy teaching for evaluative purposes.....	200
6.6. The exchange value of instrumentalised teaching: whose needs are being met?.....	210
6.7. Symbolic violence and the exclusion of real knowledge' from the official learning context	212
6.8. A contradictory pedagogy: what exactly is the purpose of project work?	218
6.8.1. The illogicality of an exam.....	221
6.8.2. Challenging the reasoning behind MEIPIM's pedagogical approach.....	226
6.9 Generic pedagogic models: performance and competence modes combined	228
6.10. Conclusion.....	230

Chapter 7

Intercultural education reconfigured: structure, agency and an historic-institutional context

7.1. Introduction.....	233
7.2. Structure and agency: the ongoing debate.....	234
7.3. Intercultural dogmatics and local pragmatics: the graduation party.....	238
7.3.1. They teach them to play and to draw and we want them to learn to read and write.....	240
7.3.2. If I had reported them they would have had to accept us; but I didn't.....	242
7.3.3. Mal ojo: Giving the children the bad eye.....	244
7.4. How instructors position migrant communities: fleas, cockroaches, bad manners and bad eating habits.....	246
7.5. Precarious identity constructs: the urban/ rural dichotomy.....	250
7.5.1. Negotiating Gender relations.....	252
7.5.2. Urban tales.....	254
7.6. Herbal teas and tummy aches: negotiating liberal intercultural education.....	256
7.7. Is there hope? ...more of the same go cut coffee, water melon, and sugar cane.....	261
7.8. A final note on human agency and socialised subjectivity.....	265

7.8.1. A university identity.....	266
7.8.2. Playing School.....	269
7.8.3. Socialised subjectivity.....	270
7.9. Conclusion.....	274

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1. Introduction.....	276
8.2. Empirical findings.....	276
8.3. Theoretical and empirical contributions of the study.....	281
8.3.1. Research on agricultural migrant education policy in Mexico.....	283
8.3.2. Critical Social Theory in Education.....	284
8.4. Some thoughts on performativity and surveillance	286
8.5. Areas for future research.....	288
8.6. A final note.....	290

Bibliography	294
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Annexe 1 Analysis.....	323
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Annexe 2 MEIPIM and migration patterns	328
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

CGEIB	Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural y Bilingüe Coordinating Body for Intercultural and Bilingual Education
CONAFE	Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo National Council for Educational Advancement
DGEI	Departamento para la Educación Indígena Department for Indigenous Education
INI	Instituto Nacional Indigenista National Indigenous Institute
MEIPIIM	Modelo Educativo Intercultural para Población Infantil Migrante Intercultural Education Model for Migrant Children
PARE	Programa para Abatir el Rezago Educativo Programme to Combat Educational Lag
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública Department of Education
SEV	Secretaría de Educación de Veracruz Veracruz Department of Education

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research themes and arguments

This thesis is a critical analysis of an innovative intercultural education programme designed to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of migrant child labourers in rural Mexico. The thesis engages critically with both programme policy and practice, aiming to identify the possibilities and limitations for educational equity offered by intercultural education programmes in rural Mexico. This introductory chapter has three specific aims: to present the main themes and the overall argument of the thesis, to provide both the personal and professional context that framed my reasons for researching intercultural education in Mexico and to describe how the thesis chapters are organised - in other words, the what, the why and the how of this research.

This thesis will examine and analyse critically the global discourses framing intercultural education policy. The thesis will then analyse how these discourses have influenced intercultural education policy in Mexico, specifically migrant intercultural education programmes in the state of Veracruz. Finally, using ethnographic research data, the thesis will analyse how teacher negotiation of programme policy translates as a local practice. Using data collected during training programmes for the tutors and instructors responsible for programme implementation, from classroom observations in schools on coffee and sugar cane farms in Veracruz and community schools in migrants' place of origin, I analyse the possibilities and limitations of intercultural education as an ethno-development education strategy in Mexico to achieve educational equity.

The implementation of intercultural education programmes in Latin America represents a paradigmatic shift in education policy towards the region's indigenous people.

Historically, education served the broader objective of nation building through assimilation and acculturation policies (Schmelkes 2006, Jimenez 2009). IBE, on the other hand, has evolved from constitutional and legislative reforms enacted in the early 1990s that gave official recognition to the multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual nature of Latin American countries. The legislative reform aimed to translate official recognition into concrete practice.¹ IBE is central to legislative conferral. To date, ten Latin American countries have legislated and implemented IBE programmes.²

My own interest in multi/intercultural education did not begin in Latin America. The seeds were probably sown in a segregated, rural Northern Irish upbringing where otherness dominated and mediated national, cultural, regional and personal identity in a very powerful way. These formative years eventually translated into a personal and professional quest to challenge and interrogate taken-for-granted, common-sense narratives framing the “other”. Professionally, I negotiated the labyrinthine pathways of multicultural London in the 1980s and 1990s, while, on a personal level I travelled and worked on development education projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Between 1986 and 1997, in my professional capacity as a teacher in London, I was variously positioned as the language development coordinator, multicultural post-holder, section 11 teacher, and, finally, ethnic minority achievement coordinator (EMAC). In 1998 I resigned and moved to Mexico.

Mexico of the 1990s did not provide the anticipated respite from my professional multicultural identity. Instead, interculturalism in Mexico, I soon discovered, was emerging as a major piece of educational reform. In 2000, while working temporarily in a local university, I was invited to a conference addressing intercultural education for agricultural migrant communities in Mexico City. The conference was held in Mexico

¹ The emergence of IBE in Mexico from an historical trajectory largely concerned to assimilate and acculturate indigenous populations has been widely documented in Mexican literature. For further information see Schmelkes 2006, Jimenez 2009, Mendoza 2009.

² Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela now recognise and accept their pluri- or multi-culturality and some, as in the Ecuadorian case, even postulate the "multinational" character of their country. To these are added another four (Chile, El Salvador, Honduras and Panama) with less extensive applications that also recognize these rights and their relation to a distinct education (Lopez and Kuper 2000).

City. Prior to attending this event, I was unaware of internal migration within the country and had no knowledge of agricultural migrant workers. I was also unaware of the conceptual frameworks defining intercultural education in Mexico. The following is a brief synopsis of the information made available to me at the conference:

1.2. MEIPIM: Intercultural education programmes for the children of migrant workers

Mexican migrant education programmes were established to meet the unique special needs of a group of culturally and linguistically diverse students: the children of migrant workers. Every year an estimated 3.6 million migrant workers travel with their families, mainly to the northern states of the country in search of temporary employment in the agricultural export business. They stay in these locations for the duration of the harvest and then return, either to their communities of origin or to other locations offering agricultural employment options. This nomadic lifestyle, combined with the rigidity of Mexico's educational enrollment policy, means that the estimated 900,000 migrant children in the country can no longer access mainstream education (Taracena 2003).

The national migrant education programmes to meet the needs of migrant children were originally the sole responsibility of the Secretaria de Educación Pública (SEP, Department of Education). The first pilot programmes were in the states of Veracruz and San Luis Potosi in 1980, but were abandoned two years later. In 1986 the Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE, National Council for Educational Advancement), an institution within the SEP, created in 1972 to manage compensatory basic education in remote rural areas, was asked to participate in the provision of migrant education services. In 1995, however, the Programa de Desarrollo Educativo 1995-2000 (PDE, Educational Development Plan 1995-2000) pointed out that research related to migrant education programmes indicated that, because of inefficiency and irrelevancy, the programmes "have had a limited impact on the extreme lack of educational provision for those affected," (Bonilla, Garduno, Guerra, Gonzalez and

Rodriguez 1999: 23). In the same report, migrant children were identified as the most vulnerable in the country.

In 1996, on the basis of these observations, CONAFE, in conjunction with the local UNICEF team, set about designing a more efficient educational model for migrant children that would have greater relevance for their migratory living conditions. In 1998, the programme Modalidad Educativo Intercultural para la Poblacion Infantil Migrante (MEIPIM: An Intercultural Education Programme for Migrant Children) was piloted by CONAFE in five different states throughout the republic: Sinaloa, Veracruz, Morelos, Nayarit and Sonora. UNICEF, working from a global agenda, favoured an intercultural and human rights-based curriculum (Bonilla et al 1999: 62). They also included a learner-centered pedagogy strongly influenced by constructivist ideas - a significant departure from the traditional rote-learning methods generally found in teacher-centered classrooms in Mexico (Tattoo 1999). Having successfully completed its piloting in 1998, the following year MEIPIM became an official school-certified programme. This now means that the children of migrant agricultural workers, after having returned to their communities of origin and having completed successfully the MEIPIM academic year³, can re-enter their local state school in their place of origin.

In keeping with other educational programmes administered and implemented by CONAFE, young people between the ages of 15 and 21, with a minimum secondary education requisite, are trained on the MEIPIM programme as school instructors to teach migrant children. If they successfully complete one year of teaching on the programme, they are entitled to a three-year continuing education study grant.

Training, which begins mid-September and finishes late November, is implemented using a cascade dissemination model. That is, tutors (instructors from the previous year) train the incoming instructors prior to their placements in the schools on the agricultural farms. Monthly in-service training is also provided throughout MEIPIM's academic year. Monitoring and assessment takes place at the monthly in-service sessions, and

³ MEIPIMs academic year is structured to meet the seasonal nature of the children's lifestyles.

regular visits are made by the tutors to the farm schools for the duration of the placement.

The MEIPIM literature describes a challenging pedagogical approach based on social constructivism with an overwhelmingly demanding planning and assessment component. Curriculum content is integrated across fourteen different projects designed to address learning diversity and to democratise and transform traditional teacher-centred knowledge and social relations. Collaborative group work and classroom dialogue are central to this process. Classrooms are multi-grade and aim to accommodate six year groups organised across three levels. Each level requires detailed planning for three key teaching moments: expressive, investigative and sharing. Pre-determined competencies (skills) need to be identified for each teaching moment on each level. Extensive and detailed planning is therefore an ongoing daily activity. Evaluation is based on learning evidence, collected and recorded in individual student records, which serve to demonstrate competence acquisition. This is closely monitored by tutors at monthly in-service sessions. Given the constructivist dimension, evaluative evidence also needs to be contextual. Hence, evaluation procedures also require contextual competence acquisition to be recorded and described in teachers' notebooks.

Programme aims to address diversity and promote intercultural relations assume informed knowledge of the community and the necessary social skills to establish good communication with the families. They also assume strategies for conflict-resolution between children and families from diverse migrant communities.

The programme literature made available at the conference served to challenge my preconceptions of primary (basic) education in Mexico. An intercultural human rights-based curriculum, structured within a pedagogical approach that favours child-centred learning, project work, collaborative group work and peer tutoring, was a challenge I had negotiated as a multicultural specialist in London, not one I had anticipated negotiating in rural education in Mexico.

On return from the conference in Mexico City to the state of Veracruz, I contacted a young CONAFE instructor participating on the MEIPIM programme (the daughter of a close friend) and arranged to visit the coffee farm where she was teaching. The farm was a thirty-five minute drive from the city of Xalapa where I live. This visit served to corroborate the socio-economic reality of migrant agricultural workers described at the conference. Living and teaching conditions for both the instructors and the communities were extremely inadequate. The single room allocated by the farm manager for the school didn't have electricity, and a cord extension from the administrative office connected to a thirty-watt bulb provided the lighting. This was problematic since schooling hours occurred in the evening between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., after the children finished working in the fields. During my initial visit the children did not arrive until shortly after 7:00 because of the walking distance between the fields and the classroom. The three instructors on this particular farm, with the exception of my friend's daughter, were from rural areas, and appeared to be struggling with MEIPM's pedagogical and curricular approach.

The juxtaposition of the MEIPIM literature describing child-centred pedagogy and intercultural education, with the extreme poverty, child labour and professionally-challenged young instructors I witnessed on my visit, generated a series of questions that I felt compelled to find answers for. These questions began with the obvious: how can a complex intercultural/constructivist pedagogy and project-based curriculum be successfully implemented, given the material conditions I had observed on my visit to the farm? How can young people with very little formal education and only two months' cascade dissemination training hope to understand and implement conceptual frameworks that trained teachers with years of experience had struggled with in London?⁴ Is it realistic to expect agricultural child labourers, who appeared to be malnourished, to engage with the learning process after a full day of working in the fields? The answer to these questions, in my personal opinion, is, quite truthfully, "they

⁴ Bernstein (1996) points out that in general teachers have always been challenged by child-centered pedagogies.

can't!" The gap between the ideology and the practice wasn't just wide. It seemed to me, after those initial visits to the farms, to be a veritable abyss.

Obviously, I wasn't asking the correct questions. My programme expectations were based on an interpretive framework I had applied in London. Setting my personal perceptions aside, I revised my questions. If these programmes weren't fulfilling their formal official goals, then what were they doing? What actually happened on a day-to-day basis? How were the instructors engaging with the programme? How were they interpreting, resisting, complying or negotiating their role as community instructors, promoting intercultural education and relations among diverse and sometimes antagonistic migrant communities. How were they reconciling a socio-economically oppressed and marginalised group, reliant on child labour, with an intercultural approach based on "cultural valuational" (Fraser in Phillips ed.1998: 437) strategies and the teaching of human rights?

In other words, what I really wanted to understand was how teachers (instructors /tutors) were negotiating an epistemologically and pedagogically challenging and complex intercultural education programme in the lived reality of agricultural migrant workers. How were they negotiating the social and material relations constituting daily life on the farms? What resources were they appropriating that allowed them to construct the consent and naturalisation of the inequities mediating their lived reality? The revised questions were no longer probing programme effectiveness; rather they were demanding ethnographic, and in all probability, critical ethnographic engagement, to secure data that might provide insights into how this programme was being negotiated by those responsible for its enactment; and how this negotiation was influencing the possibilities and limitations for educational equity for agricultural migrant communities.

To write my proposal I consulted the literature. Overall, I found that the literature clearly identifies intercultural education in Latin America as a global phenomenon. MEIPIM, for example, although specifically aimed at agricultural migrant communities in Mexico, appears to have emerged from international educational development

frameworks that favour child-centred pedagogies and human-rights based intercultural curricula (Bonilla Perez, Nino Jesus, Gonzalez Campo, Guerra and Rodriguez McKeon 1999). The educational philosophy framing this international development blueprint is strongly influenced by ideas related to the widening of democratic participation, both in the educational and wider social context. The concomitant educational discourses, therefore, endorse learner empowerment through cultural/intercultural affirmation policies and democratic learning processes. Hence, intercultural/constructivist education programmes inform policy development procedures to promote cultural respect and increased school democracy (Tabulawa 2003, 2009).

The literature also revealed two distinct analytical perspectives on intercultural education as a global ethno-development approach. Those critical of the intercultural discourses and the associated cultural affirmation strategies argue that it is a corollary of a neoliberal philosophy that empowers citizens while simultaneously disempowering the welfare state, an approach that aims to manage, rather than address and resolve the social and material relations that continue to oppress indigenous populations throughout Latin America (Hale 2002). Those in favour of Intercultural Education recognise it as an international ethno-development approach that will improve the lives of indigenous populations throughout the world. They argue that cultural disrespect is a central issue in maintaining poverty structures; and, therefore, promoting respect for cultural diversity will contribute to more just social relations (Schmelkes 2009).

In spite of the disagreements embedded in these two perspectives, the literature converges on the global dimension that frames the development of national and regional intercultural education policies and practices throughout Latin America. Neither perspective, however, allows for critical engagement with the impact that these policies might have on indigenous communities at the grass roots level. They both appear to assume a predetermined space where, depending on the ideological position, either domination or emancipation will occur (Garcia 2005).

I was unconvinced by the opposing positions being made available in the literature. My personal and professional experience of living and working in a provincial region of Mexico suggests that the regional specificity of historical, political, cultural and social structures influencing local engagement with international/national educational initiatives is far from given. MEIPIM, at first glance, was a case in point. Notwithstanding my initial impression of the programme as failing to meet official aims, I still needed to understand how MEIPIM was being interpreted, negotiated or even resisted by teachers in the local context, and to understand what this negotiation might mean for agricultural migrant communities in terms of educational equity. In other words, I needed data that would allow me to make sense of local “sense-making processes” (Levinson 2001:326).

1.3. Research aim and principal tasks

In sum, the neoliberal/global dimension shaping intercultural education policy, identified in my literature search, the cultural politics mediating MEIPIM policy described at the conference that appeared to privilege cultural, rather than socio-economic injustice, the discursive refusal in the MEIPIM literature to critically engage with the social and material inequality that I observed on my visit to the farm, and finally my perception of the young instructors as unprepared to implement a highly demanding and complex pedagogy are the formative experiences that converged to define the overall research question and principal tasks for this thesis. These are described below. Specifically, the overall research aim for this thesis is:

To explore if and how teacher negotiation of global transference of generic intercultural education policy promotes or inhibits educational equity when enacted as a local practice.

In this sense, I feel that MEIPIM policy, and the instructors and tutors responsible for interpreting policy as a local practice, provide a pertinent case study for investigating

this overall research focus. To structure my research therefore I established four principal tasks:

- 1) To identify and analyse further how international ethno-development policy, addresses indigenous demands and influences global intercultural educational discourse;
- 2) To identify and analyse how these discourses have contributed to the development of intercultural educational discourse and policy in Mexico and how these discourses might have shaped the cultural politics mediating MEIPIM policy;
- 3) To understand whether and in what way MEIPIM's cultural politics determine the official educational needs and the concomitant pedagogic logic embedded in its policy and if there is such influence, to what extent do global policy needs engage with local educational needs as described by local teachers and communities;
- 4) To examine and analyse further whether tutor/instructor interpretation and enactment of policy, and concomitant global pedagogic logic, as a local practice functions to address educational equity for agricultural migrant children;
- 5) And finally, to identify and analyse if and how tutor /instructor enactment of policy aims, to address diversity and promote intercultural relations, is mediated by the historical specificity of conjunctural relations shaping their subjectivity, agency and identity; and if so, how these subject positions might function to address educational equity for agricultural migrant workers.

In order to identify and analyse global intercultural discourse, I trace the journey made by indigenous activists, away from the local /national context, into the global public sphere. I identify the gains and losses for the indigenous struggle, determined by the shift from the national to the global, and analyse how these changes have influenced the development of intercultural education as a global blueprint for addressing indigenous

demands. The resulting “cultural-isation or ethnicisation” (Canessa 2006) of global indigenous activism is central to this discussion. The pedagogic logic that emerges from this process is also explored.

To identify and make sense of the global influences in Mexican intercultural educational discourse, I analyse the available literature documenting intercultural educational development in Mexico from the 1980s onwards. I look at both constitutional and legislative documents as well as institutional development. I also review and analyse publications by Mexican intercultural scholars, including the documentary literature framing MEIPIM. These discourses are examined in relation to the historical, political and cultural trajectories that have worked to determine Mexican nationalism since the conquest. The place of the indigenous population is central to this trajectory. Policies to address the “place of the Indian” (Taylor 2005:77) in the national context have straddled assimilation and acculturation approaches, bilingual education, bicultural-bilingual education and, as the subject of this thesis suggests, intercultural bilingual education (Schmelkes 2006, 2009).

Finally, to identify and analyse how intercultural rhetoric translates into practice in a local context, I carry out critical ethnographic research with those involved in delivering the ‘Intercultural Education Programme for Migrant Children’ (MEIPIM) in the state of Veracruz. The ethnographic research begins with tutor and instructor training, following instructors to their teaching placements on coffee and sugar cane farms, and then to the place of origin of the targeted migrant community.

1.4. Why Migrant Education?

The decision to focus on an intercultural migrant education programme relates to the series of circumstances described above that mediated my engagement with intercultural education on arrival in Mexico. More importantly, however, the decision was based on my professional identity, both in London and on various development projects throughout the world. In London I worked for more than a decade with refugee

families and with economically-displaced migrant communities. As a result, my professional identity is closely linked with “otherness” and the enactment of policy discourses which aim to represent and give voice to the ‘other’.

Why did I choose an intercultural migrant education programme rather than an intercultural education project focused exclusively on indigenous communities? Once again, personal reasons were a determining factor. Physical access will ultimately define where ethnographers do their research, and I live in the state of Veracruz where, historically, migrant communities harvest the coffee and sugar cane crops. Research on these farms was achievable. That said, however, there was a more important reason for choosing MEIPIM. Migrant communities can be both indigenous and non-indigenous. This was significant for my research because it broke the traditional research mould for intercultural education in Latin America, which arguably is overly-dependent on the conceptual frameworks for indigenous education and bilingualism. A managerial approach to bilingual education often substitutes for a more thorough analysis of intercultural education.

Finally, my choice to focus on the young instructors, as the interpreters of intercultural policy into practice, follows the same decision-making logic demonstrated above: that is, the merging of practical and professional needs. Migrant communities arguably occupy one of the most impoverished and marginalised positions in Mexican society (UNICEF 2009). Both linguistically and socially (those on the sugar cane farm speak Nahautl), establishing a meaningful non-intrusive relationship with these communities requires that the ethnographer become involved with the community for an extended period of time. Possibly, given the complexity of my Northern Irish rural formation, I am an over-demanding ethnographer in this respect. I suspect I might never have felt satisfied that my relationship with these communities was anything other than superficial.

Over and above these personal reservations, I had professional reasons for choosing to focus mainly on the instructors rather than the communities. Firstly, teacher training is

a space where the conceptual frameworks underpinning educational reforms can be more clearly identified. It is also a space where teachers negotiate the concepts framing educational reform using the discourses being made available to them (Beech 2002).

Following on from this, my work as a multicultural coordinator in London involved delivering in-service training to teachers. From personal experience, I knew that the space where teachers negotiate in-service training can be highly contested and contradictory. The discourses are often not adequate to the conceptual frameworks, particularly, as the case was in London, if it involved the repositioning and representation of ethnic categories under the conceptual umbrella of inter/multiculturalism. Analysing the information communicated to teachers during their training identifies the assumptions embedded in educational reform about the kind of school culture reform hopes to achieve. Analysing teacher resistance to these assumptions, and later their classroom enactment of policy rhetoric as practice, provides insight into how these reforms work to promote or inhibit educational practice as a transformative social space where educational equity might be realised.

The decision to choose both a coffee farm and a sugar cane farm in Veracruz is obvious. As stated above, I live in Veracruz surrounded by these farms. Again, physical access, both officially and geographically, played a determining role. There was, however, in terms of data, another more important reason to choose different crop farms. The sugar cane farm traditionally attracts indigenous workers while the coffee farm attracts non-indigenous migrant workers. I was interested in how the instructors appropriated the intercultural discourse to negotiate these very different social spaces.

Specifically then, this thesis will identify global intercultural discourses, analysing them in relation to indigenous activism in the global sphere. It will also analyse global intercultural discourse as a response to neoliberal philosophies. The thesis will then trace the influence these discourses have had on constitutional and legislative educational reform in Mexico. It will look at how these reforms have translated into intercultural policy and intercultural education in the national context. Using an

ethnographic research approach the thesis will then seek to determine the possibilities and limitations offered by teacher negotiation of an intercultural education programme, (MEIPIM), for educational equity in a local context.

1.5. Research arguments

The thesis is based on three major lines of arguments. In this chapter I will briefly outline the basis of these arguments which will be elaborated further in the following chapter.

Firstly, I argue that, if intercultural educational development policy represents a generic response to indigenous activism in the global sphere, then the possibility that it might represent yet another positioning device (Hale 2000) to manage, rather than transform, oppressive ethnic relations needs to be taken seriously.

Secondly, I argue that, if this response is formulated according to the neoliberal philosophies underpinning reconstituted free-market capitalism, then the reasoning behind this logic needs to be carefully examined. Neoliberal logic visualises culturally empowered citizens, acquiring skills/competences in a liberal democratic context that they can utilise later in a free market economy to address and resolve social injustices. In this case, we need to ask if and how this can be achieved in a context where liberal democracy might not yet be fully consolidated?

Following on from this, I argue that, if ethno-development educational development policy favours intercultural and constructivist pedagogies to achieve increased democratic participation in the learning context, then the compatibility and relevance of these pedagogic approaches, for local contexts, need to be assessed. This assessment needs to take place during, not after, the policy development stage. I argue that, if local actors are not an integral part of policy development from the beginning, then well-meaning efforts to democratise the learning process may generate unforeseen outcomes that lessen, rather than enhance, democratic and dialogical learning processes.

Finally, notwithstanding all of the above, I argue that intercultural education is not, as yet, a predetermined space; rather it is “a site where global, national and local intercultural agendas converge” (Garcia 2005). In this sense, critical ethnographic engagement with this convergence can provide valuable insights into the as yet undefined emancipatory and transformative potential that this space might offer for oppressed communities. I argue, therefore, that, without critical ethnographic engagement with local practice, it is impossible to ascertain the possibilities and limitations embedded in these policies for transformative social action, educational equity and social justice.

1.6. How the thesis is structured

To explore these arguments, I have divided the thesis into seven chapters. The chapter following this introduction identifies and analyses the emergence and development of interculturalism as a global phenomenon, and intercultural education as one of the primary mechanisms for translating it into an ethno-development policy. Examining intercultural education policy development in relation to reconstituted global capitalism and the neoliberal principles underpinning it, I examine the reasoning shaping policies that favour addressing cultural rather than socio-economic injustice. It is argued that the resulting pedagogical practices emerging from this reasoning might not be compatible with or applicable to the specificity of local educational needs. Analytical determinants, offered by Bernstein, to examine the pedagogic logic that emerges from this line of thinking, help to identify the ethical, political and pedagogical challenges that might need to be addressed in a local context. This chapter concludes, therefore, that, if global intercultural education policy is to be effective as a tool for addressing educational equity, it will need to reassess current policy from two perspectives: firstly, it will need to examine critically the global reasoning mediating the cultural politics of current policy and, secondly, on the basis of this, it will need to examine the compatibility of the epistemological and pedagogical logic that emerges from global reasoning with the logic of local practices.

To understand better the complexity of inter/multicultural politics, chapter 3 traces the historical trajectory of theoretical perspectives that have informed this approach since it first emerged as an educational policy in the 1960s. This exploration serves two purposes: Firstly, it identifies the complexity of cultural politics embedded in these frameworks; and, secondly, it identifies the need to go beyond the culture debates to address the social and material relations that underpin them. It is argued that, if intercultural educational development approaches are to be effective in addressing educational equity, then they will need to develop a critical intercultural framework which, while continuing to stress the complexity of cultural politics, engages with the underlying political economic structures that contribute to cultural injustice in the first instance (Fraser in Phillips ed. 1998). Applying this theoretical prism, I then review empirical studies on intercultural education in Latin America. This review suggests that research in the field appears to structure an ambivalent relationship between the cultural politics of intercultural education policy and the social and material relations mediating practice in a local context. In this sense, the conclusions drawn from this review make a significant contribution to understanding how teacher negotiation of MEIPIM might unfold in a local context.

Chapter 4 describes the methods used in the research and provides a methodological and epistemological rationale for my choice of these particular methods. I describe how I set about implementing my research design, and how I located the field, negotiated access, carried out participant observation and established an interpretive framework for field relations. I discuss the practical issues involved in making field notes and conducting interviews. The challenges of trans-cultural translation are discussed as well as the ethical issues involved in doing critical ethnographic research. The chapter concludes with a discussion on data analysis.

In order to understand how teacher negotiation of policy might unfold, it is necessary to examine carefully what they are negotiating. Chapter 5, therefore, undertakes a documentary examination of the MEIPIM policy literature. This examination suggests

that MEIPIM policy adheres to global, rather than local, recommendations for intercultural education and as a result, appears to have an increased focus on cultural, rather than socio-economic, injustices. I suggest, therefore, that MEIPIM's predominantly cultural (global) discourse generates a pedagogical world vision that may well be incompatible with, and irrelevant to, the local context. A detailed examination of the epistemological, pedagogical and ethical contradictions and tensions mediating the literature is provided. This allows for greater clarity on how and why instructors might have engaged with the programme in the way they did; the subject of the last two chapters.

Chapters 6 and 7 present the findings and analysis of empirical data collected during my participation with MEIPIM. Chapter 6 uses the data to describe and analyse how the instructors and tutors negotiated and made sense of MEIPIM's pedagogical device. The data analysis suggests that instructor "consequential making of meaning" (Levinson 2001:325) in the pedagogic context resulted in a series of unintended outcomes that had a negative impact on children's learning. The implications of these findings for policy aims to address educational equity are discussed.

Chapter 7 uses the data to explore why the instructors and tutors might have chosen to respond in the way they did. Drawing on analytical frameworks related to subjectivity, agency and identity, this chapter undertakes an exploration of how broader structural power relations and personal agency interact in the local context to rearticulate MEIPIM's intercultural world vision as a largely discriminatory and racist local practice. The data suggest that policy failure to engage with the specificity of gender, class and ethnic relations in a regional context undermined MEIPIM's official intercultural aims.

Chapter 8 brings together the analysis of global intercultural education policy with local practice to examine what it might mean for educational equity. This discussion highlights the implications that the global/local dialectic has for intercultural education as an ethno-development approach to address educational equity. I argue that, if global

policy persistently fails to make 'lived' local reality rather than 'imaginary' local culture an integral part of policy development, then teacher interpretation and rearticulation of these policies will continue to generate unintended outcomes that may well contribute to ongoing policy failure. The original contributions of the thesis are examined as well as areas for further research.

1.7. A word about terminology

Throughout this chapter I have used the terms intercultural and multicultural interchangeably. I am aware of the lengthy and heated debates that often frame the use of this terminology, particularly in Mexico (Schmelkes 2006, 2009, 2010), and I would like to offer an explanation for my seemingly casual use of these terms as synonyms.

Much of my initial research reading revolved around the implied conceptual pros and cons of interculturalism and multiculturalism. The former implies the interaction between different cultures, while the latter is a descriptive term denoting the demographic nature of a given society (Kymlicka 2007). While the implications for the official aims of policy development embedded in this terminology must not be underestimated, in the context of this thesis I argue that the detailed semantic minutiae of these debates serves more to distract than to inform. I contend that theoretical disagreement over whether cultures are described as interacting or co-existing are irrelevant in the context of the social and ethnic relations defining the lived conditions and social reality of migrant communities in Veracruz, Mexico.

Kymlicka (2007) argues that the label doesn't matter, inviting readers to feel free to substitute multiculturalism, his preferred term, for any of the other commonly used terms: minority rights, diversity policies, cultural rights, differentiated citizenship, etc. Resonating with the arguments presented in this thesis, he emphasises that what does matter is the predominantly generic and globalised culturalist, liberal democratic values that mediate all of these frameworks. These are the values that I seek to interrogate in this thesis, and in this respect, it really doesn't matter which term is used.

Thus, given the preferred usage of interculturalism and intercultural education in Latin America, from this point onwards in the thesis, for the sake of consistency, I will use these terms. If, however, I inadvertently insert multiculturalism; “please feel free to substitute your preferred term” (Kymlicka 2007:18).

In this chapter I have also used the terms teacher and instructor interchangeably. While the instructor is the teacher and, therefore, the terms can be used as synonyms, it is important to remember that in this research an instructor is an unqualified teacher with one-to two- months’ training rather than the mandatory four years of training required to become a qualified teacher. For this reason, I try to be consistent in my use of “instructor” rather than “teacher.”

To summarise, this chapter has offered personal and professional insight into the origins of the research project. It has established the overall research focus, described the principal tasks for the thesis and briefly outlined the main arguments. It has also provided an explanation for the preferred use of terminology. The next chapter endeavours to address some of the challenges presented in this introduction. Starting with an analysis of the global it attempts to establish links between global neoliberal philosophies and the underlying values informing intercultural education policy. It then seeks to demonstrate that these values are contradictory and contested articulations, that might be “neither simple nor risk free” in a local context (Kymlicka 2007:19).

Chapter 2

The global, the local and the cultural turn: a critical examination of intercultural education development policy

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to locate intercultural education policy in the discourses and debates that frame global capitalism and global governance. These debates emphasise a disempowered nation and the concomitant empowerment of individuals and groups within the nation (Castells 2000, 2004). This has triggered a shift away from broader class politics towards the specificity of group concerns with cultural domination and demands for cultural recognition; an approach usually referred to as “the cultural politics of recognition” (Fraser in Phillips ed. 1998:430). As a result, I argue in this chapter that global intercultural education development policy privileges cultural, rather than socio-economic injustice. It is also argued that this culturalist dimension generates pedagogical discourses and practices that appear to have an uneasy relationship with the lived reality of local communities. This chapter argues, therefore, that, if global intercultural education policy is to be effective as a tool for addressing educational equity and social justice, it will need to reassess current policy from two perspectives: Firstly, it will need to examine critically the reasoning informing the cultural politics that mediate current policy and, secondly, on the basis of this, it will need to examine the relevance and the compatibility of the epistemological and pedagogical approaches generated by these politics, with the socio-cultural values and material relations mediating local reality.

The chapter is organised as follows: firstly, key concepts such as globalisation, global civil society and the role of international NGOs are explored. I then locate the emergence of a globally active indigenous movement within the global public sphere. The gains and losses made by this movement for indigenous people are examined

within the movement's shift from class politics to cultural politics (Castells 2004). The neoliberal logic informing this shift is also examined; this leads into a definition of culture as a political commodity and an examination of the ensuing late 20th century culture battles. This discussion also includes a description of the pre-digital cultural politics that informed state consolidation and indigenous representation in Mexico for most of the last century. The educational initiatives formulated to address the indigenous question are pivotal to this discussion and provide the historical trajectory from which intercultural education has emerged. The final section engages critically with some of the political, cultural and pedagogical challenges that might emerge when global policy is enacted as local practice. Pedagogical theories, offered by Bernstein and Bourdieu, used later in the data analysis chapters, are introduced here as useful analytical frameworks to engage with these challenges. This critical examination goes beyond Mexico to include voices from other resource-scarcity development contexts questioning the cognitive and socio-cultural applicability of intercultural/constructivist pedagogies

2.2. Reconfigured capitalism and the emergence of the new global civil society

Manuel Castells, working from a Gramscian analysis of the relationship between the state and civil society, postulates the public sphere as a repository for the cultural materials which influence decisions of the state (Castells 2008). In other words, the public sphere mediates the relationship between civil society, providers of ideas and projects, and the state which makes policy decisions based on those materials. If this line of communication breaks down and citizens fail to recognise themselves in the decisions of the state, then there is a crisis of state legitimacy. Castells points out that this is an idealised formula and one that cannot survive the penetration of capitalist structures and ideology (Castells 2008:80). Nevertheless, he offers Gramsci's framework as a useful analytical prism for understanding the role of the cultural arena in providing the ideological cultural materials that construct the basis upon which politics and policies operate.

A series of events occurred during the twentieth century that significantly altered what Castells describes as the public sphere and civil society/state relations. The latter half of the twentieth century was characterised by an economic crisis in world capitalism and a parallel technological revolution which worked to reconfigure flailing capitalism (Castells 2004). The neo-liberal philosophies and economic policies that emerged from these events triggered what is now referred to as globalisation. Evolving technology allowed capital and politics to move out of the national context and into the global sphere, where they were reconfigured into what some have referred to as flexible capitalism, post-Fordist or even hyper-capitalism (Castells 2004). Reconfigured global capitalism is characterised by a neo-liberal philosophy. The definitions of neo-liberalism abound in the literature. The following is a brief descriptive synopsis serving only as a point of departure to understand the impact on civil society/state relations.

Neo-liberal economic policies operate in the global sphere and are dependent on open economies with free markets. They aim to maximise profit by seeking out cost-efficient work forces throughout the world. This has significantly altered management/labour relations with a detrimental effect for labour rights. Neo-liberal philosophy also redefines the role of the state and its relationship with civil society. Proponents of this logic argue for a less dependent relationship, giving greater responsibility for governance to groups or individuals. This is conceptualised as a valuing of civil society where greater responsibility is given to citizen participation in their governance (Apple 2003, 2005, Crossley and Watson 2003).

Within this framework, states are largely redefined as brokers for international policy with limited power to interfere with the direction and momentum of the free market; unencumbered markets need to operate in open economies free from state interference to maximise profit. This involves the retraction of the welfare state, the argument being that eventually empowered and informed citizens, in an unobstructed market context, will pressurise both the private and the public sector to address their needs. In other words, the market will work to redistribute resources and address social justice (Castells 2000, 2008, Apple 2005).

Pared down state responsibility, including the welfare of citizens, considerably disempowers national sovereignty, altering the relationship between the state and civil society. National sovereignty can be perceived as ineffectual and inadequate to addressing citizens' needs. Issues, such as the recent world financial meltdown or global warming, cannot be addressed adequately by nation states alone without reference to global non-state actors. While the nation state is far from defunct, increasingly global non-state actors function to address national concerns (Castells 2008, Douzinas 2006).

These changes in civil society/state relations, embedded in the shift towards the global, have immense implications for how citizens of any given national polity see themselves. Disenchanted and alienated from national politics, increasingly they construct meaning and experience around more pragmatic, particularised and regionalised issues, as opposed to more collective national concerns (Marti 2010). As a result, national collective identity has increasingly fragmented into a series of disconnected group identities. More immediate and pragmatic local/group concerns, combined with a scaled-down welfare state, encourage communities and movements to address and express their demands through alternative non-state actors. The exponential growth of NGOs in the latter half of the 20th century clearly reflects this shift in civil society/state relations. These organisations have evolved as the new guardians of social and cultural welfare, enjoying popularity and legitimacy previously awarded to popularly-elected national governments. In essence, internationally linked non-governmental organisations have become the advocates for the needs, interests and values of people at large (Niezen 2003).

NGO's leanings towards the international sphere, often referencing the legal character of international documents, have shifted local and group issues away from state governance towards international resolution. In this way NGOs can transcend the state-centric mediated relationship to international law. Access to the international arena has facilitated significant gains for previously oppressed groups in the national context.

Niezen describes NGOs as the enforcers of unenforced human rights, and Castells refers to them as constituting the new global civil society (Niezen 2003:44, Castells 2008: 80).

2.3. The development of a globally-active indigenous movement

The success of the indigenous movement in the global arena is probably one of the best examples of neo-liberal reconfigured state/civil society relations. The indigenous movement is now firmly established in the international sphere. Of course, it can be argued that indigenous politics have always been international in-as-much-as treaties between colonisers and native populations involved internationally-recognised agreements (Niezen 2003). Recent events, however, have redefined these interpretive frameworks for the international indigenous struggle (Canessa 2006). The following is a brief synopsis of the global trajectory negotiated by indigenous activists in the past two decades:

Most analysis on the globalisation of indigenous issues begins by citing the involvement of the International Labour Organisation Convention (No. 169, 1989): ‘Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.’ The convention outlines policies on land, self-determination, labour, education, health, conflict and employment. In a controversial manner it shifted the balance away from assimilation policies, but stopped short of legal self-determination (disqualifying clause, article 1.3).⁵ Since the passage of Convention 169 occurred in 1991, only thirteen countries have ratified it. Nine of those countries are in Latin America, including Mexico (ratification 1990), Bolivia (1991), Colombia (1991), Costa Rica (1993), Peru (1994), Paraguay (1994), Honduras 1995), Guatemala (1996) and Ecuador (1998) (Hall and Patrinos: 2010). While this convention ventured as far as it possibly could without making untenable resolutions it is still viewed by many indigenous leaders as a missed opportunity. Its failure to establish rights in terms of legal self-determination and the ineffectuality of its complaints procedure are quoted as its weak points (Niezen 2003).

⁵ The use of the term “peoples” in this convention shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the Rights which may attach to the term under international law (Niezen 2003: 39).

A more favourable global forum for indigenous rights emerged with the formation of the United Nations in the wake of the Second World War; addressing fascism was a priority. As a result, the UN determined an intense focus on protecting minorities and understanding the consequences of racism and discrimination (Douzinas 2000); a position more favourable to the objectives of the indigenous struggle than the labour rights established by the ILO. The notion that a nation state safeguards the rights of its citizens had been thoroughly discredited; therefore, establishing legally supported international human rights was a priority. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, along with two other declarations established in 1966, comprise what is now known as the “International Bill of Human Rights” (Douzinas 2000). This process shifted the focus of international law away from the rights of states towards a more generalised concern for the welfare of all groups and individuals with voices in the global system. This provided indigenous groups with a powerful international tool to negotiate their struggle for self-determination (Niezen 2003).

The UN declared the years from 1973 to 1982 the “Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.” This included a series of NGO conferences on the subject. A conference held in 1977 as part of this series focused on discrimination against indigenous populations in the Americas. Sixty indigenous nations and peoples from fifteen countries participated at this conference. This event shifted indigenous politics away from the seemingly charitable status awarded by previous ILO interventions towards independent international lobbying free from intermediaries (Niezen 2003). Ten years later, another international NGO conference, organised by the UN to address the interests of indigenous peoples and their struggle for land, confirmed the existence of a now globally-active indigenous movement. The UN working group on indigenous populations, which emerged from this conference, later evolved into the Permanent United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues, officially approved in December 2000. Gains made in this forum, including the draft bill on indigenous rights, have contributed to a growing awareness of indigenous peoples as a global community,

albeit imaginary, in other international arenas (Kymlicka 2009). The indigenous movement is now firmly established as an independent global movement.

2.4. The implications of international agreements for intercultural education in Mexico

The ongoing participation of indigenous NGOs in a permanent forum in the UN has produced significant achievements for indigenous groups in Latin America. Eleven Latin American nation states have modified their constitutions affirming their culturally-diverse and heterogeneous populations. They now describe themselves as pluri-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, recognising these attributes as positive contributions to national identity (see Chap. 1: 2).

Mexico's constitution was rewritten in 1992 to include a definition of the country as

“pluricultural based on its native peoples who are those descended from the populations that inhabited the current territory of the country at the beginning of colonisation and who preserve wholly or in part their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions” (cited in trans. in Schmelkes 2006).

The ensuing legislative implications for reconfiguring the country as pluri-cultural are recognised in Article 2 of the constitution. The obligations of the state and municipal authorities are described as

“. . . guaranteeing and increasing levels of education, favouring bilingual and bicultural education, literacy, completion of basic education, vocational training and higher education” (cited in trans: Schmelkes 2006).

This clause also states that grants are to be made available at all educational levels for indigenous peoples. Mexico furthered their pluricultural-plurilingual identity in 2003 with the language rights acts (Article 11) guaranteeing students in basic education the right to be educated in their mother tongue.

“Federal education authorities and those of the states shall guarantee that the indigenous population has access to compulsory bilingual and intercultural education and shall adopt the necessary measures in order to assure that the education system guarantees respect for the dignity and identity of people irrespective of their language. Moreover, in secondary and higher education interculturality, multilingualism and respect for diversity and language rights shall be fostered (cited in trans. Schmelkes 2006).

The above constitutional and legislative reform laid the groundwork for the development of intercultural education policy in Mexico. As noted above, constitutional changes in the global era are often a response to international initiatives, such as the ILO declaration on indigenous rights, or the permanent UN forum on indigenous issues (Niezen 2003). The reconfiguration of indigenous citizenship and identity, embedded in these changes, is indisputable. What is less clear is the impact that these global gains have had on the social and material reality of indigenous communities. At the end of the UN decade of indigenous people (1995-2005), most of the evaluative literature addressing Latin America, while applauding the international and national declarations and concomitant constitutional and legislative gains, agrees that the impact on material and social relations remains questionable (Kymlicka 2007).

This literature is significant because it brings into relief the debates that intercultural citizenship in Latin America has generated. On the one hand, the conceptual move away from assimilation and acculturation towards interculturalism is acknowledged as paradigmatic (Schmelkes 2006); interculturalism is described as the most significant

initiative to date for the indigenous struggle (Garcia 2003, 2005). On the other hand, translating international gains into state reforms has provoked a more recent body of literature referring to neoliberal multiculturalism, state-managed multiculturalism or constitutional multiculturalism (Hale 2002). In other words, an interculturalisation process which might appear to those at the grassroots level to be more appropriate to the liberal democratic context where global initiatives are formulated than to the socio-economic and political context informing local realities.

This is an important point. Interculturalism and intercultural education cannot be understood in isolation from the neo-liberal logic of global governance and needs to be analysed according to the reason of this logic. The following section therefore examines further neoliberal philosophy and the logic it generates, and considers the implications of this logic for intercultural education as one of the central axes of indigenous activism and indigenous development in Latin America.

2.5. Neoliberal logic of global governance and the cultural turn in development politics

Neoliberalism, as described above, rests on the idea that valued and empowered citizens, given the correct tools, will be able to function in a liberal democratic free-market society to address and resolve their problems, unencumbered by charitable handouts and state interference. Citizens are empowered through referencing the legal character of international documents relating to their rights, particularly their cultural rights, and by policies, especially education policy, that promote inclusion, diversity recognition and human rights; key issues for community development and sustainability. Intercultural education clearly reflects this world vision. Human-rights-based educational curricula emphasise inclusiveness, non-discrimination and cross-cultural understanding; child-centred pedagogies and project-based knowledge facilitate classroom dialogue, contextually-relevant content, collaborative group work and problem-solving skills; competencies essential to the democratic principles of the liberal democratic state and the efficient functioning of the free-market economy.

As a result, intercultural/constructivist educational blueprints are crucial to the development and consolidation of a neo-liberal democratic state. The underlying assumptions are that human capital, conversant in democratic principles, will use the invisible hand of the free-market economy to address and resolve social and material inequality. The embedded world vision is that of culturally-valued and empowered individuals or interest groups, equipped with the skills to establish strong social capital and enabled to pressurise both the private and the public sector to deliver goods and services, ultimately resulting in good governance. In other words, the market will work to address issues of social justice without resorting to state-led redistribution policies; “it becomes the guarantor of social good” (Hale 2002:40).

The centrality of culture, cultural recognition and cultural rights to neo-liberal logic and its impact on how indigenous activism has developed in the global public sphere needs to be considered. Valuing and empowering indigenous culture, not just rhetorically, but also within the legal framework of international documents, has facilitated an increasingly ethnicised/culturalised positioning of the international indigenous movement. As a result of this shift, ethnic and cultural concerns have largely replaced the class politics that framed the indigenous struggles of the past. Consequently, diversity recognition and cultural respect, as universal human rights, are now key issues in education development politics (Kymlicka 2007, Garcia 2005, Taylor 2005, de la Peña 2002).

The increasing focus on culture and the resulting cultural politics embedded in development policy has been referred to as the “cultural turn” in politics and development (Canessa 2003, Grey Postero 2007). International aid agreements and the attendant policy recommendations generally include guiding principles for countries committed to cultural plurality and democracy. In the educational sector this usually translates into recommendations for intercultural education. Equally, economic free-trade agreements, primarily concerned with economic expansion, also include the promotion of liberal democratic values concerned to address culturally disenfranchised

groups, such as the indigenous populations throughout Latin America (Taylor 2006, Williams 2002). Consequently when countries such as Mexico sign a free-trade agreement, they commit not just to an economic agreements, but also to the attendant liberal democratic cultural values that underpin these agreements (Williams 2002).

Ethno-development approaches, that reflect these values, such as intercultural education, have been developed and enacted throughout Latin America for almost two decades. While these policy developments were initially greeted with much optimism by indigenous activists (de la Pena 2002), more recent literature has begun to question the impact that these policies are having on the social and material benefits for indigenous groups. Critics of the 'cultural turn' in development policy argue that these cultural values are an 'add-on' factor legitimating the new global economic order, reconfiguring ethnic relations while refusing to address materialist social relations (Hale 2003). On the other hand, advocates of this policy argue that economic liberalisation and the related liberal democratic values will facilitate a social and cultural order which will translate into material gains promoting greater social justice for all (Schmelkes 2009). These arguments, usually structured as "a politics of identity versus a politics of redistribution" (Fraser 1998), beg the question posed by numerous Latin American scholars but perhaps most eloquently expressed by Garcia (2005: 13);

“Though it is remarkable that international organisations such as the ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank have shifted their energies away from integrationist policies towards multicultural ones, one should still ask how the new multicultural policies are being forged in Geneva, New York and Washington, by whom and on behalf of whom?”

Garcia's question resonates with the arguments framing this thesis: the link between reconfigured neo-liberal capitalism and the emergence of intercultural education development policy. These arguments, as described above, imply reconstituted

state/civil society relations where the state devolves power to NGOs and citizens, free from the shackles of the welfare system and state interference, to resolve their problems. In answer to Garcia's question therefore, how they are being formulated? I argue that intercultural policies are being formulated, as a response to indigenous activism, in accordance with prevailing global neo-liberal logic.

I also argue in this chapter that increased indigenous social capital, through links with international NGOs, is central to this logic; culturally empowered citizens with legal rights contribute to better governance. In answer to Garcia's question, therefore, on behalf of whom are these policies formulated it might be argued that they are formulated on behalf of good governance, that is, efficient, accountable governments that meet neo-liberal international criteria for integration into the global market. This answer resonates with those scholars who argue that the policies are more reflective of a neo-liberal multiculturalism, or constitutional multiculturalism (Van Cott 2000), where an adherence to liberal cultural politics mediates what some scholars refer to as "safe multiculturalism" or "light multiculturalism" (Canessa 2006); a version of multiculturalism that doesn't threaten the status quo but does meet the legal requirements of internationally-binding treaties.

In sum, the reasoning behind the logic of intercultural policy, a remarkable turnaround in assimilationist Latin America, appears to have emerged from the reasoning behind neo-liberal logic; that is, a reasoning that is heavily invested in cultural injustice as the cause of oppression and cultural recognition as the solution. As a result, this reasoning appears to inform the logic of ethno-development policies such as intercultural education.

The centrality of the culture concept to ethno-development requires closer examination. The following section takes a closer look at the 'cultural turn' in development politics and policies and the power relations mediating this shift. This section also considers what a focus on culture might mean for indigenous cultural representation in Mexico.

2.6. The culture battles in the global public sphere

Reduced state presence in civil society has, as argued above, significantly altered state/citizen relations. National identity, historically aligned along class allegiances, has been largely replaced with fragmented culturally-aligned group identities. Group interests, as opposed to collective class interests, focus on pragmatic concerns specific to the group. Accordingly, the power that any given group has is defined by its ability to organise, present and debate group issues in the public sphere. Equally, the ability to organise and communicate group ideas, values and interests in the global public sphere is increasingly defined by access to technology. This access, arguably, determines the power of any given group.

“Cultural battles are the power battles of the information age. They are primarily fought in and by the media, but the media are not the power holders. Power, as the capacity to impose behaviour, lies in the network of information exchange and symbol manipulation which relate social actors, institutions, and cultural movements through icons, spokespersons and intellectual amplifiers. Culture as a source of power and power as a source of capital underlie the new social hierarchy of the information age” (Castells 2004:425).

Technology, and access to it, therefore, has immense implications for culture and cultural interpretations. If, as Castells (2000: 381) describes, “cultures have been constructed throughout history by people sharing space and time, under specific relations of production, power and experience,” then the reconfiguration of space and time through technological intervention generates a new conception of culture which might be described as

“a culture of real virtuality. . . a system in which reality itself (that is, peoples’ material/symbolic existence) is fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in the world of make-believe, in which symbols are not just metaphors but comprise the actual experience” (Castells 2000:381).

The manipulation of symbols and cultural codes via networks of information exchange determines the power that any group operating within the “culture of real virtuality” will be able to exercise to address and resolve group issues.

Global indigenous activists are probably one of the best examples of this use of culture as a virtual reality. Shifting their struggle from a class struggle to a cultural struggle, a change of momentum that not only resonates with neo-liberal logic but also reflects global concerns with ecological sustainability, they have, as noted above, become much more powerful in the global public sphere, gaining considerable constitutional ground in the international and national context. I am not suggesting here that ecology and sustainability have not always been central to indigenous concerns at the local level. What I am saying is that the re-coding of these concerns from “real” cultural issues into a “culture of real virtuality,” where they resonate powerfully with the concerns of other global movements within the networks of information exchange, has empowered the indigenous movement in unforeseen ways.

Another much quoted example to validate this argument is the Zapatista movement in Southern Mexico. Historically, the power holders of indigenous cultural representation in Mexico, had remained firmly in the hands of the nation state and the multiple institutions and projects established to address the place of the ‘Indian’ in national identity discourses; (this is analysed in greater detail below). On the 1st January 1994, however, a group of indigenous people in Southern Mexico, using computer-mediated technology, altered irreversibly the power of the nation state to define indigenous representation in Mexico (Herlinghaus 2005).

The carefully planned appearance in January 1994 of a group of armed and masked indigenous people, to coincide with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), shook the foundations of indigenous representation in post-revolutionary Mexico. Seizing the political opportunities made available by the internationally defined constitutional and legislative reform, and using the internet to communicate their struggle to the world, indigenous peoples in Mexico, for the first time since independence, were challenging the state's hegemonic discourse on their identity. In other words, viewed through Castells' theoretical rubric, they were becoming the power holders of the images and cultural codes in 'the network of exchanges' used to represent their identity.

The impact was two-fold: apart from demonstrating the social fragility of Mexico within the context of an international trade agreement, it also questioned on a very powerful basis the cultural imaginary that had prevailed since the end of the revolution. Herlinghaus argues that Zapatismo represents the most challenging attempt, to date, to give new meaning to the Mexican past and present.

“On the one hand, it represents a challenge related to the asymmetry between a public space ruled by the politics of formal representation and more subtle, disorganised imaginaries on the other” (Herlinghaus 2005:54).

In Castells' terminology, the Zapatistas became the “symbol mobilisers” in the culture of real virtuality, subverting traditional symbols and codes in order to consolidate an alternative and autonomous identity project.

While Castells' theory of culture and power is developed specifically to analyse the cultural politics mediating post-socialist movements in the digital era, culture as a political commodity pre-dates the digital era by centuries. In Latin America the hegemonic power relations mediating official cultural representation of indigenous communities and their place in the nation state began with the conquest and continue

today. The policies, projects and institutions to address this problem increased significantly in the 20th century post-revolutionary context. In this sense, intercultural education policy and practice in Mexico cannot be understood in isolation from the pre-digital cultural politics that mediated 20th century post-revolutionary policies that targeted indigenous populations; these are discussed below.

2.7. The cultural politics of state consolidation and 'the Indian problem'

Homogenisation and unification of the population was the central aim of the newly-formed post revolutionary Mexican government, and education was a key site for accomplishing this. The government established the Secretariat de Educación Publica (SEP: Department of Education) in 1921; and President Alvaro Obregon, the first post-revolutionary president, appointed Jose Vasconcelos as the Secretary of Education (Coffey 2000).

The liberal model of education that prevailed from independence until 1910 was reinstated. It was, however, reconfigured within the ideological rhetoric and conditions that had sustained the revolution; ideals of solidarity and national unity mediated the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy remained; however, they now shared the curriculum with agricultural studies, crafts and community development, subjects that addressed the more immediate needs of remote communities (Levinson 2002).

In 1923, working within the new socialist framework, Jose Vasconcelos was appointed as the first Secretary of Education in the newly-established post-revolutionary state. Any analysis of Mexican culture and education would be incomplete without examining the work of Jose Vasconcelos. As a committed intellectual and as Secretary of Education, his legacy continues to shape and mould educational and cultural narratives in Mexico. His name is often invoked in projects related to the development and modernisation of rural education.⁶

⁶ The Veracruz department of education currently operates a digital education programme known as 'The Vasconcelos Project.' The project was awarded a million dollars in 2009 by the Gates Foundation for digital education in rural communities.

2.7.1. The Vasconcelos prism: the cosmic race and its racist legacy

Mestizaje,⁷ a Spanish term comparable to hybridity, was central to Vasconcelos' vision of a homogenous, coherent and modern nation. Mestizaje, he proclaimed, "would produce a cosmic race, fashioned out of the treasures of previous ones, and infinitely superior to all that have previously existed" (cited in Coffey 2000:42). The notion of a transcendent mestizo race is crucial to understanding how a particular politics of cultural representation established itself in Mexico. It is also fundamental to understanding how the Vasconcelos conceptual prism, in spite of contemporary intercultural politics and rhetoric, continues to position indigenous people in the unfinished mould of Mestizaje: a permanent state of transition towards being mestizo; "a work in progress, an object of the ever unfolding post-revolutionary task of cultural and economic modernisation"(Taylor 2005:84).

Vasconcelos' construction of race, albeit a cosmic one, was fiercely criticised by his Peruvian contemporary, Jose Mariategui, the first Latin American scholar to invoke a Marxist interpretation of the indigenous question (Sarlo 2002). Mariategui emphasises the futility of any analysis of the indigenous situation that fails to address socio-economic considerations.

"Any treatment of the problem of the Indian, written or verbal that fails or refuses to recognise it as a socio-economic problem is but a sterile theoretical exercise destined to become completely discredited" (cited in Hosam Aboul Ela 2004:263).

⁷ The term mestizo commonly refers to an individual of mixed ancestry (usually indigenous and European). However a process of mestizaje can also imply an indigenous person who has assimilated mestizo customs, dress, language, etc. (Garcia 2005).

In the same essay, perhaps making a veiled reference to the racism embedded in Vasconcelos' cosmic race theory, Mariategui⁸ observes;

“To expect that the Indian will be emancipated through a steady crossing of the aboriginal race with white immigrants is an anti-sociological naïveté that could only occur to the primitive mentality of an importer of Merino sheep” (cited in Hosam Aboul Ela: 2004:263).

Arguably, the category of mestizaje continues to mediate a deficit model for indigenous identity, positioning indigenous peoples as always being in the process of becoming Mexican (Taylor 2005, Schmelkes 2009). Racial miscegenation has also been invoked to explain Mexico's failure to achieve social parity and modernisation; the Indian element in the mestizo equation was generally understood to be the major problem (Levinson 2002).

The Vasconcelos framework for national and cultural identity has not gone away. While the rhetoric of cultural/identity politics has changed significantly the legacy of race theories continues to mediate ethnic and social relations in Mexico. This legacy presents enormous obstacles in the form of endemic racism for indigenous identity. Notwithstanding the constitutional and legislative reforms to reshape national identity as pluri-cultural, the concept of mestizaje established by Vasconcelos continues to persist as a cultural imaginary; a form of false consciousness which has enabled and legitimised a national racism with serious social and material consequences for indigenous communities (Schmelkes 2006, 2009).

⁸ Mariategui's work represents one of the first most important attempts from Latin America to apply a socio-economic analysis to indigenous social reality (Hosam Aboul Ela: 2004). Vasconcelos by comparison refused a materialist analysis and continued to adhere to a Victorian discourse on race throughout his life.

2.7.2. The emergence of indigenismo

The principal obstacle to self-representation in the post-revolutionary state for indigenous communities emerged in the form of social and cultural government institutions charged with the task of managing the place of the Indian in the nation state. The most important of these institutions was El Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI: The National Indigenous Institute), inaugurated in the late 1940s (Taylor 2005, Coffey 2000, Herlinghaus 2005). The specific task assigned to the INI was to define the aesthetic and cultural representation of indigenous peoples within the modern Mexican state, a process that became known as ‘indigenismo.’ The conceptual basis of this movement has been described as “the ways in which non-Indians have sought to represent indigenous peoples in political processes as well as in literature, visual arts and the social sciences in Mexico” (Taylor 2005:76). As numerous critics have made clear, indigenismo is not indigenous expression, but rather expression in the name of indigenous communities and individuals, a hegemonic discourse comprised of a non-indigenous elite group of theorists who worked to determine the place and power of indigenous groups in Mexico (Coffey 2000).

The emergence of indigenismo signalled an important shift in how the problem of the indigenous population was to be perceived. The struggle for land reform and social justice mediating the indigenous struggle was to be replaced with a focus on indigenous culture and language. This shift signalled that the issue was no longer social structure but rather social behaviour, “culture and language rather than land and water” (Taylor 2005:84). Thus the consolidation of the INI and the emergence of ‘indigenismo’ can be said to have laid the foundations for an official policy shift from the social politics of equality to the cultural politics of difference, a process that has culminated, at the end of the 20th century, with the introduction of interculturalism as a conceptual framework for national identity and intercultural education as the current strategy to manage the indigenous question.

2.7.3. Bilingual education

In reality, while official conceptual frameworks changed throughout the 20th century, the aims of schooling practice as a tool for assimilation and acculturation remained in place. Hence, in 1940 when Mexico hosted the first inter-American indigenous congress in Patzcuaro, Michoacán, bilingual education was discussed, not as an alternative to assimilation, but rather as a policy to achieve it; mother tongue teaching was established as a transitional stage towards Spanish language education and eventual assimilation (Garcia Segura 2004). That said, this approach was not formalised as an official policy and remained limited to a few scattered groups. In most regions the unmediated use of Spanish in schools continued to be imposed. It is important to note, however, that, in spite of the failure to translate policy to practice, the seeds of the bilingual debate were sown and the horizons of the indigenous education debate had broadened (Reinke 2004).

The perception of bilingual education as a transitional stage towards Spanish fluency and cultural assimilation persisted until the 1960s. During this decade, social unrest in Europe and the United States spread to Mexico where political mobilisation and social protest served to challenge nationalist discourses on unity, introducing an awareness of México's multi-ethnic population and the marginalised and oppressed status of indigenous groups (Paciotto 2004).

2.7.4. Bilingual-bicultural education

In 1973, in response to these challenges the government put in place the Departamento para la Educación Indígena (DGEI: General Board for Indigenous Education). The DGEI is part of the Department of Education and represents an educational subsystem for bilingual indigenous people. This department, while primarily concerned to promote bilingual education and resources, extended the educational indigenous discourse beyond linguistic concerns to making the school curriculum more culturally relevant. As a result, a new conceptual framework emerged which became known as 'bicultural-

bilingual' education. The DGEI was careful to emphasise that this approach was not a negation of unification, but instead aimed to enrich the identity of cultures, mestizo and indigenous, providing indigenous communities with the tools to achieve personal development in both worlds (Reinke 2004). Official reports often refer to this shift as a move away from indigenous education as a transitional stage, towards a "perception of indigenous education as a development and maintenance approach" (Paciotto 2004).

Critics point out that bicultural education, similar to bilingual education, was rarely achieved, and that assimilation and a politically-enforced project to ensure the predominance of Spanish continued throughout the sixties and seventies. While there were dissenting voices in government institutions, the INI and the DGEI continued to maintain a powerful monopoly on indigenous representation during these decades (Taylor 2005). In the early eighties, however, this monopoly began to crumble (Reinke 2004).

At this point a faltering Mexican economy, unable to meet loan repayments, encountered international demands for economic austerity measures. This involved restructuring and downsizing the role of the state in the public sector and opening up the country to free trade agreements in preparation for a greater role in a global economy. An international free trade agreement signed during the presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) signalled the beginning of economic liberalisation, thus paving the way for greater foreign investment. Then in 1993, Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement. This agreement assured Mexican integration and participation into the global economy. It also signalled the demise of the post-revolutionary socialist state and the consolidation of Mexican neoliberalism and the emergence of what became known as the era of "new democracy" (Munoz 2006).

2.7.5. Rewriting the national identity discourse

The economic and political reforms generated by the liberalisation of the Mexican economy were accompanied by a shift in social values; free trade agreements, such as

the North American Free Trade Agreement, as argued above, necessitate a cultural context favourable to neo-liberal philosophies and economic policies. Global economic participation is grounded in an international literacy of competition, hard work, productivity and entrepreneurial initiative within more democratic structures of governance (Williams 2002).

There was an urgent need to rework and re-code the post revolutionary hegemonic discourse on national and cultural identity. An assimilation policy of acculturation, contextualised in the socialist rhetoric of the revolution, was no longer useful to the emergent neo-liberal entrepreneurial state. As Taylor (2004: 78) points out, “the neoliberal heir to the national popular state is thus haunted by the institutional remnants and symbols of cultural nationalism.” In this sense, it can be argued that the ascendance of transnational capitalism over previously nationally-oriented economies in Latin America, and the attendant endorsement of liberal democratic values, has radically altered the grounds on which cultural production and the construction of cultural identity take shape (Williams 2002).

Participation in a global economy introduces issues of international accountability. Accountability comes in the form of adopting international treaties and agreements which reflect the liberal democratic values underpinning the neo-liberal state (Ornelas 2004). Hence, in 1990 after entering GATT, Mexico ratified the ILO convention 169 on the political rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (Ornelas 2004). Constitutional and legislative reform, as described above, followed, affirming Mexico as a pluricultural state. Intercultural-bilingual education replaced bilingual-bicultural education as a means to achieving social justice and educational equity for indigenous populations. Mexico’s assimilationist identity discourse, which, as noted above, dominated for most of the 20th century, gave way to a liberal intercultural discourse, committed to culturally empowering marginalised and oppressed indigenous groups and to culturally sensitising non-indigenous populations (Schmelkes 2010).

The urgency, with which these changes have occurred, however, appears to be more reflective of international agendas than a concrete assessment of local needs (Hall and Patrinos 2010). Viewed through Castells' analytical prism, the changes may well be more reflective of the global culture battles and the "culture of real virtuality" being negotiated by indigenous activist and multilateral agencies in the global public sphere than with the "local culture of real reality." The rest of this chapter, therefore, traces the contours of the conceptual and cultural geography that intercultural education has introduced in Mexico during the past two decades. It is important to point out that this geography is largely confined to the discursive arena, with little impact on everyday educational practice (Hall and Patrinos 2010).

2.8. An examination of institutional intercultural discourse and development in Mexico

In 1992, as noted above, Mexico revised its constitution (Article 4) to redefine the country as pluri-cultural and pluri-lingual. The implications of this redefinition for education are evident in Article 2 of the constitution, which requires the federal, state and municipal authorities to guarantee "bilingual- bicultural" education for indigenous communities (cited in Schmelkes 2006). Five years later, however, in 1997, bicultural-bilingual education, a synonym for indigenous education, changed to intercultural education. The conceptual shift invoked here is particularly relevant for this thesis. Intercultural education suggests broadening the interpretive framework away from an exclusive focus on indigenous communities towards an understanding that includes all groups and populations within the country and prioritising the relationships among those groups. Significantly, this was not explicit in the available literature at that time, nor was it addressed through educational legislation. Conceptually, it may have suggested a move away from bilingual-bicultural education and the notion of separate but equal cultures; yet in reality it appeared to be borrowed rhetoric, more indicative of international agendas than of a concrete assessment of local reality (Lanes Ortiz 2008).

2.8.1. The Coordinating Body for Intercultural Bilingual Education: CGEIB

In 2001, however, the SEP created the Coordinacion de Educaci3n Bilingüe Intercultural (CGEIB: Coordinating Body for Intercultural Bilingual Education). This was a powerfully symbolic move for both the indigenous struggle and for government responses to increasing social unrest among the indigenous population. Officially, it represents a state-managed intercultural education initiative to address indigenous issues; however increasingly it is becoming a more contested site where dissenting voices may be heard (Plataforma Educativa 2006).

While initially failing to make a distinction between intercultural education and bilingual education the CGEIB did introduce the idea of ‘Intercultural Education for All’ (CGEIB web site). The implications of this conceptual framework for all sectors of education are immense, and for the first time in Mexican history it suggests a mainstream approach rather than an educational subsystem for indigenous people. This was a significant challenge for how intercultural education might be interpreted. The conceptual shift being invoked here, however, is a highly contested theoretical site. Intercultural education, arguably, might still be considered a synonym for indigenous education (Diaz Polanco 2006, 2009).

The newly formed coordinating body is also responsible for culturally sensitive and relevant education for indigenous communities at all educational levels, including higher education. Previously, indigenous education had been limited to basic education. The intercultural universities, established in the last five years, are a direct result of intercultural education legislation and CGEIB policy. These universities represent a remarkable achievement for indigenous communities; however, to date they almost exclusively target indigenous students, running the risk of becoming one more subsystem in a long history of compensatory educational sub-systems for indigenous people in Mexico (Schmelkes 2010). Unfortunately, the unavailability of space precludes a more comprehensive analysis of their policy and practice.⁹

⁹ For further information on Intercultural Universities see Dietz (2009).

In 2005, the CGEIB was redefined yet again, this time establishing a distinction between intercultural education and bilingual education. To date, it is known as ‘The Coordinating Body for Intercultural and Bilingual Education’¹⁰ (CGEIB). Again, this signalled a conceptual widening of the interpretive lens. Bilingual education, previously confined to indigenous education, was perceived within the educational framework as a managerial solution to the structural and social problems of indigenous people. Officially distinguishing it from intercultural education allows it to be seen for what it is, namely, one of many important strategies to address marginalisation and oppression. Intercultural education, on the other hand, detached from bilingual education (indigenous education), can conceptually be extended to all cultural groups within the country. Again, however, this conceptual broadening appears to have remained within the discursive realm failing to translate into practice (Llanes Ortiz 2008).

It is important to pause at this point and ask: what are the implications of the above global, constitutional, legislative, institutional and conceptual developments? What might these convergences look like in the context of a national/regional intercultural education programme? A brief look at MEIPIM, the education programme at the centre of this research, enables privileged insight into how constitutional reform and legislative enactment might be unfolding as a national policy to address learning diversity within the specificity of local educational needs.

2.9. MEIPIM

MEIPIM needs to be understood in relation to the global and national historical trajectories examined above. As described briefly in Chapter 1, it was officially recognised in 1999, prior to the formation of the CGEIB (see Chap 1, pp 3-5). Migrant educational services had been in existence for more than a decade; however, their reformulation in 1999 clearly reflected the shifting sands of social values that paralleled Mexico’s integration into a free-market global economy. The liberal democratic values

¹⁰ This is how it appears on the website yet this descriptor rarely appears in other contexts.

informing MEIPIM's intercultural approach reflect those that would inform the CGEIB mission statement two years later.¹¹ This section therefore has two broad aims:

1) To contextualise the development of MEIPIM as a response to the social and material consequences of neo-liberal economic policies that resulted in the demographic displacement of previously sustainable communities;

2) To examine MEIPIM policy in relation to an ethno-development educational blueprint that emerged in the global sphere to address indigenous demands for a culturally appropriate education, as well as global pressures for educational accountability in relation to commitments for universal educational access,

2.9.1. The privatisation of the agricultural sector

The need to address and reassess educational access for agricultural migrant workers in the 1990s reflected an increasing need to confront the social consequences of neo-liberal economic policies in the agricultural sector. Seasonal migration, which historically involved an all-male workforce, increased dramatically in the late seventies and early eighties. The increased demand emerged from Mexico's gradual shift from a closed and protected economy to an open economy through a series of trade agreements. The North American Free Trade Agreement signed in 1993 with the USA and Canada, as discussed above, had confirmed Mexico's position as a global player in the world market (Ornelas 2000).

The economic austerity measures, decentralisation and restructuring programmes that followed, put in place the necessary conditions for Mexico's participation in this agreement. The ensuing reduction of state intervention in business, and the privatisation of hundreds of public enterprises offering incentives to foreign investment, paved the

¹¹While MEIPIM was designed by CONAFE and UNICEF, in response to a negative evaluation of migrant educational services, by the Department of Education, the CGEIB, as noted above, became actively involved with MEIPIM and other programmes providing an educational service for these children from 2003 onwards.

way for a private sector take-over of national assets. The subsequent withdrawal of state subsidies from the agricultural sector, including subsidies on food staples, to facilitate a private sector take-over, transformed agricultural production into large-scale industrialised processes (Bey 2003, Taracena 2003, UAM-UNICEF 2001, Sanchez 1998). The impact on rural communities has been profound. As early as 1992, UNICEF, in conjunction with the Solidarity Programme for Agricultural Workers, wrote:

“This form of agricultural exploitation is not favourable for most people; the benefits are monopolised by private producers and the small owners are the losers because they do not have the means to exploit their lands correctly. This phenomenon has produced a concentration of wealth among very few people and an increasingly relevant situation of social inequality that leads to the marginalisation of large sectors of the population” (PRONSJAG-UNICEF 1992).

The survival of previously sustainable rural populations now depends on community members looking for work wherever they can. This has forced members of many rural/indigenous communities to migrate to the USA or to the industrialised agricultural farms in the North of the country (Taracena 2003). The inclusion of children in this migratory flow can be explained as follows:

- 1) Increased migration to the USA has created a labour shortage among seasonal workers; the inclusion of children addresses this shortage.
- 2) Increased international demand for agricultural products requires an increased workforce.

Global interpenetration in Mexico, therefore, has witnessed the demographic displacement of members of previously isolated communities around the country or to the USA seeking employment in the agricultural export industry (Bey 2003, Carlson

2007). The inclusion of children in this flow of people requires an educational response, particularly in view of global education policy, which, more than ever at the beginning of the millennium, has become increasingly defined by millennium goals for universal access to, and completion of, basic education (Unterhalter 2004).

2.9.2. Some insights into MEIPIM policy rhetoric

As a result of the demographic changes described above and the attendant global pressures for educational accountability in relation to international commitments for universal educational access, MEIPIM, as discussed earlier (see Chap 1: 3-6), was developed by CONAFE in conjunction with UNICEF to address the extremely challenging educational needs presented by this community.

MEIPIM policy discourse clearly reflects the educational development global discourses discussed above.

“In accordance with the proposals made at the ‘Education For All’ conference in Jomtien, Thailand, we consider that a basic education, relevant to the life of migrant groups, needs to focus on meeting determined, fundamental basic human needs. We emphasise the needs that relate to the learning of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which human beings require to survive and to develop possibilities to live and work with dignity, to participate fully in their own development, improve their quality of life, make essential decisions and to continue learning” (Bonilla et al 1999:62).

The “fundamental basic needs” of migrant children, given their migratory lifestyles, are defined in relation to the constant changes that mediate their lives. Thus, creative and autonomous learning skills linked to problem-solving are prioritised. Equally, given

these ongoing changes, they require a pedagogical approach that engages with cultural and linguistic diversity as a positive attribute in the learning context.

“Migrant children need to communicate, to understand one another and to work together in spite of the diversity of languages, customs and belief; we could say that we need to see cultural ethnic and linguistic diversity as an advantage rather than an obstacle to their development” (Bonilla et al 1999:62).

As a result, the authors propose an intercultural pedagogic world-vision that privileges diversity.

“The cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity that characterise migrant children demands an educational proposal that recognises and takes advantage of this diversity. Diversity is a pedagogical advantage in that it promotes the integration of children from different place of origin, with varying educational levels, which enriches and increases their learning potential” (Bonilla et al 1999: 63, CONAFE Instructors Guide: 18).

The authors argue that if these objectives are to be achieved then MEIPIM will require a curricular shift away from traditional teacher-centred methods to a constructivist child-centred pedagogy (Bonilla et al 1999: pp. 67-68).

I describe these aspects of MEIPIM at this point in the thesis, not to provide a critical examination of policy rhetoric (this is the task of Chapter 5), but rather to identify the fundamental epistemological and pedagogical positions embedded in MEIPIM policy.

- 1) An intercultural pedagogy to address learning diversity and democratise social relations;

2) A constructivist epistemology informing a child-centred pedagogy to democratise knowledge relations.

It is important to point out that a constructivist child-centred pedagogy is not exclusive to MEIPIM but arguably might be generalised across the educational development policy context. Equally, the epistemological and pedagogical challenges embedded in this approach have not been controversy free; they are described by some critics as “the global overflow of constructivist pedagogies and Vygotskian psychological models in the development context” (Ladwig in Mahalingham et al 2000: 62). Questions are being asked about the cognitive justifications for use of these models in development contexts (Barrett 2007, Tabulawa 2003, 2009). These critics argue that these models are often incompatible with the socio-cultural values of the targeted population (Sripikash 2009, Barrett 2007, Vavrus 2008). They are also viewed as promoting limited and class-specific forms of knowledge, as well as having implications for resourcing that often cannot be met in resource scarcity development contexts (Barrett 2007, Vavrus 2008).

The inevitable questions that arise are the following: Whose interests might be served by these ‘middle-class’ child-centred educational development policies? (Tabulawa 2003); what are the pedagogical, cultural, ethical and political challenges at the local level of this kind of global pedagogic reorganisation, and what might these challenges look like in a local educational development context, such as an agricultural migrant community in rural Veracruz?

The final section in this chapter, therefore, examines critical pedagogical theoretical frameworks, developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, as useful analytical constructs for exploring these issues.

2.10. Theories of pedagogy: an inevitable pedagogic merger?

The theoretical assumptions underpinning what some scholars have referred to as “the intercultural-constructivist mighty merger” (Subrahmanyam, Hornstein and Heine in Mahalingham et al 2000: 170) appear to follow a particular logic. Informed by social constructivism, proponents of child-centred intercultural approaches contend that children learn through the construction of meaning from interacting in an environment. Constructivists also posit that knowledge is “temporary developmental, socially and culturally mediated and thus non-objective” (Subrahmanyam et al 2000: 171). The temporality of knowledge and the existence of multiple selves behaving in consonance with the various subcultures are also identified as key components of multicultural education. Invoking both the personal and cultural dimension, therefore, it is argued that

“ . . . constructivism and multicultural education complement each other: one emphasises the need to look at learners as unique individuals; the other sees individuals as members of groups” (Subrahmanyam et al 2000:171).

The pedagogical, epistemological, ethical and political challenges of this logic, in diverse development contexts, need to be examined. I suggest that the underlying, class-specific, liberal democratic ideals of the intercultural-constructivist merger appear to assume the presence of an already-established liberal democratic context where child-centered pedagogies and interculturalised relations might be developed. What happens, therefore, when this assumption cannot be made, which arguably might often be the case in local/regional contexts in Mexico?

In the context of MEIPIM, for example, the target population is a group of people enmeshed in exploitative, transnational labour relations. Labour relations are predominantly defined by ethnicity and involve the use of children in the labour circuit. The compatibility and relevance of the socio-cultural values embedded in these kinds of

pedagogical and epistemological approaches may need to be examined more closely. As Kymlicka (2007) points out

“To state the obvious, liberal multiculturalism is easier to adopt where liberal democracy is already well established, and where the rules of law and human rights are already well protected. In countries where these basic foundations of liberal democracy are not yet present, or consolidated, some level of democratisation and liberalisation may be needed before it makes sense to push for the full implementation of liberal multiculturalism” (Kymlicka 2007:18).

This begs the question: Why then do these epistemological and pedagogical positions appear to mediate policy development across the international educational reform context? More specifically, notwithstanding the social and material relations mediating the lived reality of agricultural migrant workers in rural Mexico, we need to ask why a liberal intercultural child-centred policy might be considered appropriate to address the needs of waged child-labourers.

I suggest that one way of exploring the challenges might be to use Pierre Bourdieu’s understanding of pedagogic action as a form of symbolic violence, insofar as the constructivist-intercultural educational development blueprint represents the imposition of a “cultural arbitrary” (Bourdieu 1976). I suggest that Bourdieu’s conceptual definition of symbolic violence is particularly useful, in the context of this thesis, for exploring the class-based social grammar embedded in MEIPIM’s policy rhetoric (see Chap. 5). The conceptual framework for symbolic violence illuminates how these generic educational development blueprints might aim, not to address the lived reality of migrant needs, but rather to legitimate and reproduce dominant subject positions. This argument resonates with Tabulawa (2003), writing in relation to child-centred pedagogic reform in Tanzania; he suggests that

“. . . aid agencies’ primary interest in the pedagogy is political and ideological, not educational. It is in this context, that learner-centred pedagogies much praised capacity to promote quality and effective education, should be understood, given that there is no compelling empirical research evidence that there is a positive and causal relationship between the pedagogy and students’ cognitive learning. Couching its efficacy in cognitive educational terms at best appears as an attempt to disguise its ideological mission” (22).

He calls for more research into the justification for these models arguing that there is no convincing evidence to warrant pedagogical justifications for learning efficacy.

Tabulawa’s concerns resonate with Bourdieu’s understanding of pedagogic action and the attendant symbolic violence as the unquestionable imposition of a common sense culturally hegemonic position that may function to devalue or exclude local knowledge and experience. These analytical determinants also go some way towards addressing compatibility and relevance issues related to MEIPIM’s constructivist/intercultural pedagogic discourse and organisational practice in a rural context in Mexico. That said, however, Bourdieu’s conceptual framework does not tell us very much about how this happens; how pedagogic discourse and action is constituted and how it is transmitted in such a way as to enact symbolic violence.

To explore further how the symbolic violence of class specific pedagogies might be constituted and transmitted in rural development education contexts, therefore, I suggest that Bernstein’s sociology of pedagogy allows for greater insights. The sociology of pedagogy offered by Bernstein privileges a theory of cultural transmission: “who transmits what to whom and under what conditions” (Bernstein 1996:46)? He emphasises that

“How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects the distribution of power and the power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within and changes in, the organisation, transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest” (Bernstein 1977: cited in Posner 2002: 17).

Bernstein’s analytical constructs provide useful tools for exploring how pedagogy acts, both as a discourse and a device. The pedagogic discourse is what is being relayed; an instructional discourse embedded in a regulatory discourse. The pedagogic device is a set of hierarchical rules which provides the internal or intrinsic grammar for the former (Bernstein 1996: 39-51). He uses the term “framing,” for example, to describe how teacher and student interaction with the device is regulated in the pedagogic space. Put simply, framing describes who controls what (Bernstein 1996:27). MEIPIM’s child-centred, competence based pedagogy, for example, is weakly framed, that is, the teacher and student are assumed to have greater control over the teaching and learning processes. Teacher-centred pedagogies, by comparison, are strongly-framed; teacher and student have little control over what is being taught and how it is being communicated.

I suggest that Bernstein’s analytical constructs for engaging with pedagogy as both a discourse and a device, replete with recognition and realisation rules, provides a useful framework for exploring how teachers might be negotiating the class-based grammar of MEIPIM’s pedagogical device in a rural context defined by exploitative labour relations and waged child-workers.

Bernstein refers to the pedagogic device as “a symbolic regulator of consciousness . . . a condition for the production, reproduction and transformation of culture” (Bernstein 1996: 52). This thesis might be described as an attempt, in the context of MEIPIM policy and attendant pedagogical practices, to understand “whose regulator, what consciousness and for whom” (ibid. 52).

While pedagogy as a symbolic regulator of consciousness in a local context is central to understanding teacher negotiation, Bernstein is careful to stress that this regulator is neither foolproof nor deterministic.

“The external reason why the device is not deterministic is because the distribution of power which speaks through the device creates potential sites of challenge and opposition” (Bernstein 1996: 52).

It is precisely these potential sites of conflict, challenge and opposition, mediating teacher negotiation of the “mighty pedagogic merger” that this thesis aims to analyse; the unanticipated and unforeseen outcomes of policy enactment in a local context. Understanding the as yet undefined space, generated by “potential sites of challenge and opposition” in a local context, is crucial to identifying the implications of global policy enactment for educational equity.

2.11. Conclusion

If, as I have argued in this chapter, intercultural education is mediated by middle-class, child-centred interactive pedagogies, with implications for resourcing and socio-cultural compatibility, then the global reasoning informing policy development may need to reassess its relationship with the social and material relations structuring the lived reality of local target populations. This reassessment may need to question the relevance and compatibility of global reasoning and the attendant pedagogic logic for the culture of ‘lived local reality.’ This may entail critical engagement with the cultural politics of

'real virtuality' (Castells) currently mediating development educational policy discourse.

Cultural politics in Mexico, as shown in this chapter, have worked to reposition indigenous identity throughout the post revolutionary period, to meet the needs of the Mexican nation state. Each of these repositionings has entailed an educational paradigm shift, always designed by non-indigenous people, for indigenous educational contexts. The impact of these programmes on educational equity appears to have been minimal (Schmelkes 2009, 2010). If intercultural education is to avoid becoming yet another strategy for managing, rather than transforming, the social and material relations constituting the lived reality of indigenous communities, then the reasoning informing global pedagogic logic needs to be made visible.

I have suggested that the ideological and political reasoning informing the cultural politics of ethno-development intercultural educational policy does not engage sufficiently with the socio economic injustices mediating local educational values, concerns and needs. I propose that if educational equity is to be achieved, then local reality needs to be an integral part of the policy development process. This will require a more meaningful local/global dialogue than the symbolic community consultations that represent local participation in policy development

This will also involve greater theoretical clarity and direction in the policy development context. The task of the following chapter, therefore, is to examine the contradictory and often conflicting theoretical frameworks that have informed intercultural educational development since its emerged as a policy in response to the social unrest stemming from discriminatory government policies and practices in the 1960s.

Chapter 3

The Culture Debates: recognition versus redistribution and the importance of critical intercultural education

3.1. Introduction

Intercultural education, as a repositioning tool for ethnic identity, is not exclusive to neoliberal Mexico or Latin America. Intercultural epistemology and pedagogy, to democratise knowledge and social relations, has been used in various formats from the 1960s onwards in different parts of the world to neutralise social unrest stemming from discriminatory government policies and practices (Kundnani 2002). Hence, intercultural education already has an established historical trajectory, mediated by inherent theoretical and conceptual contradictions and confusion. This chapter is an exploration of these theoretical debates as well as an attempt to explore the dominant theoretical positions informing intercultural education in the development context. In this chapter, I suggest that, if intercultural education programmes such as MEIPIM are to achieve transformative aims for educational equity, they will need to go beyond the culture debates informing pedagogical theory to develop a critical theoretical framework which, while continuing to stress the complexity of cultural politics, also engages with the underlying political-economic structures that generate cultural injustice in the first instance.

The chapter is organised as follows: The first part of the chapter traces the history of inter/multiculturalism as a concept that emerged in the 1960s to denote cultural difference and identity in society, to contemporary culture debates that include essentialism, hybridity and otherness. Having considered the plethora of theoretical variants that have framed inter/multiculturalism it is argued that critical material

interculturalism (McLaren 2001) is the most appropriate theoretical lens for informing intercultural education policy and practice in Mexico.

Using a critical theoretical lens, the final section of this chapter examines empirical studies on intercultural education in Latin America. The tensions and contradictions framing intercultural education in these studies provide important analytical insights for this research.

3.2. Personal experience of multicultural education policy

My personal experience in multi/intercultural education has ranged from acknowledging and celebrating cultural difference during the early eighties to the anti-racist approaches which emerged during the late eighties. As the millennium approached, both these approaches became bracketed into what became known as “equal opportunities,” a policy position that reflected the neoliberal culture engulfing the schools at this time (Apple 1999, 2000). My personal experience of the neo-liberalisation of school policy suggested that, while market models were sensitive to cultural diversity, they seemed more concerned to appropriate the language than to effect structural change. They appeared to be privileging diversity over and above equality.

While all three of these approaches adhere to a notion of inclusive non-discriminatory education, they are clearly framed within contradictory theoretical frameworks. The multicultural policies I compiled in London were concerned to create a school ethos that reflected the multicultural aspects of the school population, an approach informally described as the three Ss: saris, samosas and steel drums. The anti-racist policies that I wrote some years later, however, were concerned with deconstructing and reconstructing teacher and curriculum bias towards minority groups. It would be encouraging to believe that each theoretical framework emerges from the mistakes and experiences of the previous one. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Instead, identity

representations of culturally diverse groups, particularly in the educational context, tend to be defined more by socio-political considerations than by a thorough analysis of the theoretical concepts framing multi/intercultural education policies. Given the political dimension informing the shifting theoretical terrain on which these policies are founded, I consider it necessary to examine the historical theoretical contours which inform present-day policy. This is the aim of the following section.

3.3. Intercultural education: the tensions and contradictions

Interculturalism emerged in the late sixties as a conceptual framework to address the political and socio-cultural upheavals that resulted from a decade of civil rights movements. Canada was the first country to adopt interculturalism as an official policy in response to the grievances of the French-speaking minority (Canen and Peters 2005:309). The policy also affirmed the rights of the Canadian aboriginal populations. Throughout the late sixties and seventies interculturalism became official policy in countries such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand, and was gradually broadened conceptually to include, amongst other issues, citizenship questions, cultural difference, ethnic identity, racial coherence, racial discrimination and indigenous rights (Canen et al 2005, Akari 2005). It is hardly surprising then, given the immensity of the challenges involved in translating these demands into curricular practice, that the tensions mediating policy and practice in schools are as prevalent today as they were then. As Arun Kundnani pointed out in his analysis of the race riots in the northern towns of the UK,

“Multiculturalism is a phrase that is bandied about religiously but the meaning is rarely examined. The whole panoply of intercultural clichés - black communities are always vibrant, always making positive contributions, always to be tolerated – serves more to obscure than to clarify”(2002:3).

While this was written in response to the Cantle report on community cohesion (2000) and, arguably, lacks a thorough critique of the conceptual frameworks informing multiculturalism,¹² his article does capture a fundamental tension: the degree to which culturalism dominates western multicultural conceptual frameworks. Criticisms of the cultural fetish abound in the literature pointing to a need for a critical examination of this position in order to avoid the “different but equal” doctrine which can promote hyper-culturalism; an essentialised sense of cultural difference (Fuller in Mahalingham et al 2000:17). This position can unwittingly incapacitate the people on whose behalf its advocates speak, or alternatively, result in the radicalisation of identity, thus generating what has been referred to as the “Balkanisation” of cultures. This position resonates with mainstream views in the UK in the wake of the 2005 July 7 bombings. David Cameron, the leader of the opposition at that time, suggested that Britain’s multicultural approach had contributed toward essentialising ethnicity and, consequently, balkanising Britain (quoted in The Guardian Feb. 1st, 2007).

The overarching criticism of the culturalist dimension, however, for multicultural scholars appears to be the ongoing obfuscation and mystification of the social and material relations that are constituted in this approach. Gorski (2006) describes the culturalist approach as depoliticising multiculturalism. He argues that the crisis emerges from educators who ostensibly support the goals of multiculturalism, but their involvement in human relations activities reflects more of a compassionate conservative consciousness than an allegiance to equity. Leeman and Reid (2006), in their comparative study of interculturalism in Australia and the Netherlands, also underline the failure of cultural affirmative approaches to address adequately social inequality. They point out that overly-culturalist policy tends towards defining and ascribing identity attributes that are considered by the namers as innate. They conclude, that in Australia;

¹² David Blunket, the Home Secretary at the time, focused the blame for the riots on the lack of English language development amongst first-generation mothers which, he argued, was contributing to a form of cultural and linguistic deprivation for second-generation immigrants.

“This approach has revealed a marked tendency towards ‘social-agnosticism’ primarily concerned to manage cultural diversity rather than transforming social structures” (Leeman et al 2006: 243).

Affirmative action on culture is, therefore, generally understood to be a double-edged approach that runs the gamut of an essentialised static, but romantic, interpretation, to an essentialised static, but balkanised conception, increasingly exaggerated since the July 7 bombings, without much being made available in between these two positions. While these two perspectives are clearly at theoretical odds, where they do appear to converge is on the notion of culture as fixed and static: an interpretation, notwithstanding Cameron’s analysis, that has been seriously challenged by post-structural and post-modern perspectives from the mid- 20th century onwards.

3.4. The post-discourses

The notion of culture as a coherent whole has been challenged by what has become known in theoretical contexts as ‘the post-discourses,’ that is, the many discourses that emerged to counter the economic determinism of structuralism and its implications for identity discourses. These arguments, usually put forward in the educational context by post-structural intercultural scholars, deconstruct the notion of a fixed and static culture. Categorised as left-liberal multiculturalists (McLaren 2001), they analyse culture as socially constructed, dynamic and constantly changing. Applying a post-structural prism, they understand culture and cultural identity to be an intersection of multiple social spheres: class, gender, race, sexuality, religion and other group-specific identities that converge to produce myriad and hybrid subjectivities. These arguments shift interculturalism away from

“. . . defining and ascribing cultural characteristics to ethnic minority groups locked into a notion of a strong static culture towards a framework concerned to address the complex

identification of representation and belonging of multiple interpellated selves” (Luykx 1999: xli).

While this notion of identity, as being constructed in social intercourse and discourse, facilitates long-overdue debates examining issues of ethnic mobility and ethnic/state relations (Luykx 1999), hybridity culture discourses have also been vulnerable to accusations of being overly culturalist. These accusations stem from an underlying unwillingness to challenge the rule of capital. Their tendency towards contingent and indeterminate theories of identity contribute to “obfuscating the wider matrix of exploitation” of oppressed groups in society (McLaren 2002:414). Malik, cited in McLaren (2000) argues that in the context of race relations, for example, post-structural arguments, by insisting on heterogeneity and rejecting any idea of totality, undermine their “own capacity to challenge naturalistic explanations of difference” (Malik, cited in McLaren: 414). Likewise, Stephen May (1999), while arguing for an exploration of the complex interconnections of cultural and social identity, cautions against the over-pluralisation of social totality. He argues that underestimating the persistence and value of rooted identity ignores the “social and materials relations embedded in those identities” (May 1999:29).

The variants of interculturalism described above, and the embedded theoretical tensions and contradictions, have often been described as moving on a continuum from apolitical folklore engagement with culture to a much more-politicised interrogation of culture (Canen 2005). While this notion of moving along a linear axis from one extreme to another can be useful, it can also be misleading. It assumes a linear chronological development of discourses. Instead, as Canen and Peters (2005) point out, these differing conceptual interpretations interact with each other and impinge on how intercultural policy is theorised, generating complex theoretical positions reflecting equally complex cultural politics. As interculturalism and intercultural education have become more of a global concern, international policies appear to reflect the complexity of cultural politics described above. The following section looks at how this might be happening.

3.5. Global intercultural education policy

Conceptual vulnerability is complicated further in the context of globalisation, international agendas and educational transfer (Crossley and Watson 2004). Educational transfer is far from new, and has concerned most critical comparative educational scholars since this academic discipline was established. Even so, the ongoing formulation, consolidation and acceptance of globalised generic policy as normative practice from the 1980s onwards have raised crucial issues for this academic discipline. Intercultural education, for example, notwithstanding its contested and politicised theoretical trajectory, has emerged in the global context as normative policy recommendations for developing countries to address the needs of their minority populations. As discussed in Chapter 2, international indigenous activists have made considerable constitutional and legislative gains in relation to indigenous rights, and intercultural education appears to be one of the central mechanisms for translating these gains into practice. Nevertheless, global intercultural education development policy, to address indigenous demands, does not arrive in a vacuum. It is accompanied and contextualised in development criteria to address neoliberal prerogatives (Lewin 2007). It is important, therefore, to consider two fundamental issues that might impact on how policy unfolds:

Firstly, international educational development criteria, for the most part, occur within structural adjustment policies; the deregulation, decentralisation and marketisation of educational systems. The convergence of educational policy with development criteria and external aid has enmeshed policy implementation in a framework of evaluation and accountability, primarily concerned to meet international targets and indicators of development progress. Lewin (2007) argues that meeting these success indicators has superseded and compromised the quality and the relevance of educational provision. Target setting, according to national and international research, has created blind spots in both analysis and action in the local context.

Secondly, on the theoretical level, while discursively adhering to post-modern identity discourses, intercultural global policy still appears to be mediated by a predominantly culturalist framework that references essentialised folklore “tourist” cultural approaches, such as the contributions made by food, music, language, festivals, etc. As a result, the implications for culture and identity, suggested by post-structural discourses, are not addressed. Equally, while cultural justice and human rights are fundamental to these programmes, socio-economic concerns are largely absent.

While the convergence of educational policy with structural readjustment and external aid is of crucial importance for the analysis undertaken in this research (see Chapter 6), I would like, at this point, to explore further the implications of an overly culturalist discourse framing intercultural education development policy. In particular, I would like to engage with debates that suggest that culturalism functions to displace socio-economic and socio-political considerations. This debate is usually referred to as the “cultural politics of recognition versus the cultural politics of social equality” (Fraser in Philips ed. 1998) or “redistribution versus recognition” (Gallagher and Pritchard 2007). The following section considers the implications of the recognition/redistribution debate for a critical examination of MEIPIM policy.

3.6. Recognition, redistribution or both?

The recognition versus redistribution argument did not emerge in the intercultural educational context. Rather it has informed political struggle and mobilisation for most of the twentieth century (Fraser in Philips ed. 1998). Arguably, where this debate has found most coherence has been in feminist discourse, which has provided concise and demarcated analytical categories for engaging with the contradictions and tensions embedded in these two approaches. Borrowing from feminist analysis, I explore some of the central tensions embedded in these two approaches.

The principal dilemma posed by the recognition/redistribution divide can be described as follows:

“Under what circumstances can a politics of recognition help support a politics of redistribution? And when is it more likely to undermine it? Which of the many varieties of identity politics best synergise with struggles for social equality and which tend to interfere with the latter?” (Fraser in Philips ed. 1998:431)

The fundamental tension identified here is, recognition policies, by definition, seek to revalue the specificity of the group; whereas redistribution policies seek, through economic restructuring, to equalise the group and as a result, de-differentiate it. In other words, recognition aims to differentiate while redistribution aims to do away with the group categorisation altogether (Fraser in Philips ed. 1998).

While at the discursive level this tension may well generate ongoing debate, it is important to point out that the separation of cultural and economic justice in the real world is illusory.

“. . . Culture and political economy are always imbricated with one another and virtually every struggle against injustice when properly understood implies demands for both redistribution and recognition. Cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalised in the state and the economy; meanwhile economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life (Fraser in Philips ed. 1998: 434).

While, as suggested here, cultural and economic injustice are mutually intertwined in the real world, at policy level they are all too often treated as distinct approaches. MEIPIM policy, for example, is a case in point. Framed in identity/recognition politics, it seeks to address social injustice by pursuing cultural affirmation educational strategies that appear to have an ambiguous relationship with the social and material relations constituting the lived reality of these communities. As noted in Chapter 2, migrant agricultural workers, constructed as a cultural group in MEIPIM's intercultural discourse, are enmeshed in neoliberal restructuring economic policies that have contributed to the inclusion of children in the workforce and to their increasing marginalisation and exploitation. Migrant agricultural communities clearly require policies that also address issues of economic injustice. MEIPIM policy discourse, however, fails to engage with the structural socio-economic factors shaping migrant reality, focusing instead on the cultural injustices suffered by this group and the associated cultural-valuational strategies to address these injustices.

As noted above, the conceptual frameworks informing the distinctions between these two approaches are purely theoretical and are difficult to sustain in the real world where cultural injustice emerges from socio-economic inequality and where the latter sustains the symbolic violence perpetuated by the former (Fraser in Philips ed 1998). I argue, therefore, in light of these analytical distinctions, that global intercultural education policy, based solely on cultural affirmation approaches, may well be inadequate to address the social injustices suffered by oppressed indigenous/rural communities in Latin America. In the case of MEIPIM policy, for example, assuming that cultural affirmation strategies will eventually unfold as educational equity and possible socio-economic equality for agricultural migrant communities is clearly misguided given transnational capitalism's reliance on cost-efficient practices for maximum profits.

Hence, I suggest that an appropriate theoretical framework for examining intercultural education in Mexico, and more specifically, intercultural education policy for migrant agricultural workers in Veracruz, must be one which engages critically with both

cultural and social injustice. Intercultural education policy needs to engage with, and provide opportunities to examine critically, the asymmetrical relations of power and privilege embedded in the historical social and labour relations of capitalist production. It must also address the reconfigured social and labour relations of contemporary global transnational capitalism structuring increased migratory flows. Within this framework, it must avoid isolating race and racism in an ethnicity framework defined by a politics of difference, which leaves unchallenged the political economic structures that determine social relations (McLaren 2002). Instead, difference and diversity must be deconstructed so that its roots in the capitalist division of labour, embedded in the historical legacy of colonialism and slavery, can be examined (Boaventura 2001). This deconstruction must also allow for engagement with the multiple, intersecting and shifting identity discourses that are emerging in the context of globalisation, global capitalism and increased migration (McLaren 2001, McLennan 2001, and Giroux 2001).

More specifically, I contend that global intercultural education development policy needs to be informed by critical social theory, explicitly concerned with transformative and emancipatory aims. In other words intercultural education in Mexico requires a critical material intercultural framework if educational equity and social justice are to be achieved (McLaren 2001). The theoretical strengths and weaknesses of this framework and its relevance and applicability to third world critical ethnography are discussed below.

3.7. Critical social theory and critical intercultural education

The analysis in this research relies heavily on the work of critical educational social theorists (Giroux 2001, 2003, 2006, McLaren 2002, 2005, 2006, May 1999, 2003, Kinchloe 2000, 2006, hooks 1994), all of whom reference and borrow from the early critical theorists. It would therefore be beneficial to trace the historical roots of critical social theory. An historical perspective allows for a wider understanding of the

theoretical positions informing contemporary critical discourses, including critical interculturalism.

3.7.1 Critical theory

In his book on critical social research, Carspecken (1996) describes critical researchers as not having arrived at a shared methodological agreement but definitely having a shared value orientation. He is worth quoting in this respect.

“Those of us who openly call ourselves criticalist definitely share a value orientation. We are all concerned about social inequalities and we direct our work towards positive social change. We also share a concern with social theory and some of the basic issues it has struggled with since the 19th century. These include the nature of social structure, power, culture and human agency. We use our research, in fact, to refine social theory rather than merely to describe social life. Together we have begun to develop critical social research” (1996:3).

This statement clearly reflects the views of the Frankfurt school, the home of the early critical theorists.¹³ The exact origins of the term are unclear. Crotty (1998), discussing the work of Max Horkheimer, a founder member of the school, traces its use to a 1937 essay. The title of Horkheimer’s essay, *Traditional and Critical Theory*, establishes a distinction between a theory that describes the situation and a theory that wishes to change the situation. The oppositional tensions described in Horkheimer’s essay frame the early work of the critical theorists. Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and, later, Habermas were reacting to the dominant presence of positivism and instrumental rationality in the social sciences. Dissatisfied with research that focused on the accumulation of facts to justify and objectify social norms, they emphasised the

¹³ The Frankfurt school was originally based in Frankfurt and was named after the location. During the second world war most of the prominent Jewish members, Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse moved to the US.

necessity for an approach to social inquiry that would reveal the underlying social relationships that constitute the material and social reality of people's lives. They argued that this approach to social enquiry would enable the formulation of transformative and emancipatory action on society. The principal areas of disagreement among the early critical theorists focused on the degree to which reason and empiricism should be involved in social research. Habermas, who belonged to what became known as the "second generation" of the school, argued that Adorno, in rejecting empiricism, had developed a cynical approach towards the role of reason, and in so doing had forfeited a space where transformative social action could occur. Habermas' extensive work focused on developing a social theory that would marry social critique with science. To this end, he developed the idea of a critical social science which aims to go "beyond critique to critical praxis: a form of practice in which the enlightenment of actors comes to bear directly in their transformed social action" (Carr and Kemmis 2005:144).

What begins to emerge, as we trace the origins and ensuing debates among the early critical scholars, to present day disagreements, is a concern with how to translate critical theory into social/human action. This challenge is central to critical theory's basic tenet: to provide an emancipatory and transformative social space. The challenge for critical educational theorists is how to enact transformative educational practices given the asymmetrical power relations of an unequal society. Surely, the aim of emancipation and transformation degenerates into an ideal if the material conditions are not first addressed.

MEIPIM policy for example, by invoking a constructivist/intercultural educational world-vision, aims to democratise social and knowledge relations (see Chap. 2). An exclusive focus on cultural injustice, however, as argued above, will not adequately address the asymmetrical power relations that structure the cultural injustices that MEIPIM seeks to resolve. What might MEIPIM look like in practice if a critical dimension were to be integrated into its pedagogical paradigm? How might it unfold as a practice if it were to incorporate a critical material intercultural approach? To discuss

this question, it is necessary to examine the work of Paulo Freire and the development of critical pedagogy; fundamental to any pedagogical space concerned with addressing transformative and emancipatory aims for social action.

3.7.2. Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy evolved from Paulo Freire's pioneering work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," first published in 1970. Freirian epistemology rejects both mechanistic objectivism "wherein consciousness is considered merely a copy of objective reality and solipsism, which reduces the world to a capricious creation of consciousness" (Freire cited in Crotty 1998:151). Aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice mediating the debates between the critical theorists, Freire's work emphasises the unity between subjectivity and objectivity in the act of knowing (Freire 1972). Translating this into praxis, he refuses the distinction between action and reflection, insisting that they are indissoluble and constantly and mutually inform each other. He describes reflection without action as "armchair socialism" and action without reflection as "pure activism" (1970:40). The two together define praxis and what has become known in Freirian circles as "conscientisation."

The question is, therefore, how we transform Freirian theory to a pedagogic practice that might facilitate transformative and emancipatory social action. Freire's answer to this is critical pedagogy founded on 'dialogue.' Critical pedagogy challenges what he called "the banking concept" of education, where the child is compared to a bank and unquestioned knowledge is simply deposited. By comparison, Freirian pedagogy is founded on a "dialogical par excellence" (1970:81) where the student/teacher hierarchy is dissolved and they become partners in the learning process by dialoguing. For student and teacher to become equal in the learning process, Freire dispenses with yet another dichotomy: that is, dialogue and critical thinking. Critical thinking produces dialogue, but there cannot be real dialogue without critical thinking. It is a two-way process.

The detailed pedagogical and methodological processes proposed and used by Freire to achieve critical awareness and conscientisation, cannot be described here, given the unavailability of space. However, one of the major obstacles to critical awareness about which Freire wrote at length needs to be mentioned. This obstacle resides in the nature of oppression itself. Freire explains that, for the oppressed to become critically aware and to intervene in their oppression and exploitation is extremely difficult. This, he explains, is because their oppression is structured in a prevailing “culture of silence” (1970:30). While a ‘culture of silence’ implies that they have no voice, more importantly, it suggests that they are unaware of their silence. This lack of awareness means that oppressed groups cannot name their oppression and therefore cannot be active in changing it. A culture of silence occurs when the oppressed have internalised the values of the oppressor and aspire, not to change their oppressors but to become like them. Breaking the culture of silence, therefore, means going beyond the helper/victim framework of change where the oppressed remain trapped in the culture of silence and do not participate in their liberation. Freire insists that liberation for the oppressed is dependent on their conscious reflective and committed participation in the process of liberation. Not a superficial participation, but committed involvement. Dialogue is the way forward, but he cautions against dialogue without trust and faith in the ability to reason. Without trust, dialogue inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation (1976: 63).

Freire’s methodology is a “dialogical problem posing and conscientising” approach. In a literacy learning context for example students identify key generative words (themes) with which they interact in the pedagogic context to name the challenges facing their community. Language empowers them to name the problem, and to verbalise and structure interventions in order that the problem might be addressed. Freire’s problem-posing approach to critical awareness has evolved into what is now known as “critical pedagogy.” Critical pedagogy is pivotal to translating critical theory into social action, “unembarrassed by the label ‘political’ and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness” (Kinchloe et al 2007: 453).

Nevertheless, critical pedagogy has not been controversy free. Successful implementation of policy requires that those responsible for implementation question and problematise the authority and power of the teacher. Freire has written extensively on this subject; however, teacher authority continues to represent the principal obstacle for transformative aims. Giroux (2003) also cautions against a simplistic applications of critical pedagogy. He argues that while it facilitates dialogue and provides students with critical knowledge and analytical tools, if it does not affirm adequately the experience of the social, then it will fail to invoke social transformation. He points out that some North American intellectuals have consumed Freire's original understanding of critical theory and critical pedagogy as educational technology for problem-solving activities in simplistic pedagogical contexts. Sanjay Sharma (2006), also cautions against the consequences of an over-prescriptive critical pedagogy and cautions against critical pedagogical approaches that might require students to adopt prescribed anti-racist subject positions. This, he advises, can prevent them from acquiring real emancipatory knowledge.

In spite of these concerns, critical pedagogy remains central to translating critical theory into emancipatory and transformative praxis. Without critical pedagogy, critical theory renounces the possibility of a transformative social space and risks becoming indistinguishable from traditional theory, seeking simply to reflect a social situation, not to change it (McLaren 2002). A critical material intercultural framework, therefore, like all critical theories, requires critical pedagogic action to put into practice emancipatory and transformative aims for social justice, both socio-economic and cultural.

3.8. Choosing critical intercultural education: identity politics and the social division of labour

I argue that critical theory, critical pedagogy and their convergence in a critical material intercultural educational approach offer the possibility for a transformative and emancipatory educational practice in Mexico. Such an approach would facilitate critical

engagement with the historical specificity of Mexican identity politics and the place of indigenous groups within this trajectory. It would also allow for an analysis that links identity/cultural politics to capitalist labour relations, thus avoiding tendencies that might reduce socio-economic injustices to experiences of differences (McLaren 2001).

Nevertheless, critical material interculturalism, like all critical theories, has not been controversy free. It has been described as inconsistent and unpersuasive, alternating between fixed and static identity frameworks which rely on a strong culture template and post-structural identity discourses which position culture as weak and indeterminate, while all the time positioning monoculturalism as the demon other. Equally, it has been accused of conceptual vulnerability. Some critics have pointed out that post-structural cultural politics emerged in reaction to the economic determinism that positioned culture as fixed and unchanging. Therefore, combining redistribution approaches suggestive of a deterministic super-structure analysis with post-structural discourse presents a theoretical contradiction (McLennan 2001). I suggest that these arguments, while possibly sustainable at a high level of abstraction, appear to lack a sustained analysis of the workings of cultural injustice and socio-economic injustices in the real world. Ironically, most of the criticisms appear to borrow from the reflexive analysis that critical material intercultural discourse applies to its world vision.

In conclusion, critical material interculturalism, like all critical theory, maintains a forceful criticism of instrumental rationality associated with positivistic social inquiry. Influenced by the early neo-Marxist critical theories, and later by the practices of post-structuralist deconstruction, it engages across many critical theoretical approaches, including post-colonialism, critical race theory, and post-feminism. However, it frames all of these subjectivities within the class-conflicted structure of capitalism (McLaren 2002). In praxis, critical material interculturalism translates into Freirian critical pedagogy, where individuals and communities are empowered to name the conditions of their oppression and participate meaningfully in their liberation. Unlike other forms of interculturalism, critical material interculturalism is not politically neutral, but aims to confront injustice, both cultural and socio-economic, in a struggle for a fairer world.

In the following section, therefore, I bring a critical intercultural analytical prism to both the literature and empirical research concerned with intercultural education in Latin America. This literature review goes some way towards identifying the conflicts, tensions and contradictions that mediate intercultural policy when enacted as an educational practice in Latin America. While much of the empirical research can be described as pertaining to a critical theoretical position, post-colonial, Freirian or post-feminist, the review identifies the limitations and possibilities of these frameworks for the theoretical and empirical specificity of MEIPIM.

3.9. Intercultural education in Latin America: an overview of the literature

Focusing primarily on Latin America, this review identifies the emergence of the intercultural debates that have framed policy development in the area. These debates resonate with the culturalism versus inequality debates (discussed above) that have mediated inter/multicultural education since its origins in the 1960s. In Latin America critics of the culturalist turn and cultural affirmation approaches suggest that they are simply an “add on” factor legitimating the new economic order, and reconfiguring ethnic relations while refusing to address material and social relations (Hale 2002, McLaren 2001, Garcia 2005). Those in favour of the culturalist bias in policy argue that cultural empowerment, economic liberalisation and the attendant liberal democratic values will converge to facilitate a social and cultural order which will translate into material gains promoting greater social justice for all (Schmelkes 2006, Jimenez 2010).

At the end of the first millennium decade this debate still prevails; however, a more recent literature has attempted to go beyond this dichotomy. This small, but growing, body of work is based principally on ethnographic research and analysis and focuses on the power of indigenous agency to go beyond “the goals of international organisations and the pessimism of “Foucauldian views of power” (Garcia 2005:13). These scholars view global intercultural education policy and practice as a “site of contestation and

articulation” (Garcia 2005: 14), where indigenous agency can negotiate, resist and subvert international agendas to more effectively address local concerns.

Arguably the most ambitious work to date has emerged from Bolivia. The election in 2005 of an indigenous president, Evo Morales, has generated a body of literature concerned with demonstrating the unanticipated possibilities embedded in intercultural policy. Andrew Canessa captures this perfectly in his defence of indigenous agency and their co-optation of international agendas. He argues that Bolivian politics demonstrate “how state-endorsed interculturalism” was used in unanticipated ways by indigenous movements. He points out, somewhat wryly, that if co-optation of indigenous movements was the aim of the intercultural approach embarked upon by the Sanchez de Lozada’s administration in 1993, then it can be described only as a “monumental failure” (Canessa 2006:257).

Events in Bolivia have also provided material for the first attempt to-date to establish a post-intercultural framework. Grey Postero (2007) argues that indigenous movements in Bolivia are actively contesting the basis of the neo-liberal frameworks that worked to empower them in the first instance. Her analysis shifts indigenous resistance away from subversion and into a more empowered space where subjects actively engage with neo-liberal practices, taking advantage of the embedded potential and contesting the exclusionary or negative side. Empowered engagement, she argues is a new stage for neo-liberal interculturalism: a shift to post-intercultural citizenship. Evo Morales’ subsequent repeal of intercultural bilingual education reform appears to corroborate Grey Postero’s post-intercultural argument (Howard 2009).

By comparison with Bolivia’s post-intercultural position, the intercultural literature in Mexico suggests a tangible reluctance to move beyond the comfort zone provided by the cultural valuational approaches embedded in global intercultural educational policies, and a reluctance to address the underlying socio-economic structures in Mexico that contribute to social inequality and endemic racism.

Sylvia Schmelkes, arguably Mexico's most prolific and best-known intercultural scholar, appears to refuse a materialist analysis, favouring solutions to educational inequality that rely on affirmative action for language and cultural empowerment. Arguably, as an international intercultural scholar, her engagement with intercultural education in Mexico contributes to the normative discursive template for discussing this issue. Many publications are concerned with the implications of the official terminology. Hence, many Mexican scholars focus on the epistemological distinctions between inter-and-multi-cultural educations (Jimenez 2009). The social and material relations constituting the lived reality of Mexico's indigenous population are often described but not analysed (Schmelkes 2006). This omission allows for conclusions that favour cultural affirmation approaches, such as, valuing language and increased bilingual education, leaving unaddressed the ambivalent relationship with the underlying political economic structures. Notwithstanding the described impact of unqualified teachers that dominate most of these publications, more bilingual programmes, as solutions to educational inequity, are usually recommended. Equally, further research on the causes of racism and discrimination towards indigenous children in the classroom is encouraged.

“We require many more studies to understand how the school produces racism and discrimination towards people who belong to minority cultures, not just at the curriculum level, but also in monocultural contexts” (Schmelkes 2009:15).

While these are important recommendations, an exclusive focus on racism in the school, de-contextualised from the endemic racism mediating broader social relations in Mexico, will not achieve the transformative social aims that are embedded in intercultural education policies favouring cultural valuational approaches.

At the end of the first decade of Mexico's new democratic era, mainstream intercultural debate has broadened its discourse to include conceptual frameworks for “Intercultural Education for All”, post-colonial education, post-structural identity ,

endemic racism, increasing acknowledgement of structural poverty and the need to address gender parity. More recently de-colonial education has also emerged as a discursive position (Gutierrez Rodriguez, Boatcab and Costa (eds.) 2010) Nevertheless, while the discursive parameters may have broadened, educational solutions continue largely to favour cultural valuational approaches and increased bilingual schooling while failing to engage with the underlying political-economic framework that generates educational inequity in the first place.

That said, Mexico has also produced some notable exceptions to those who continue to maintain a messianic faith in managerial bilingualism. One of the most coherent critics of interculturalism is Hector Diaz-Polanco, who refers to this manner of dealing with diversity as a liberal project of global capitalism that

“ . . . recognises difference in the cultural sphere but denies it in the economic and political spheres. Multicultural policies use the notion of diversity not to promote socio-cultural equality but to muzzle it to support inequality” (2006:131).

Diaz-Polanco strongly resists the idea that socio-economic inequality and the dominant hierarchy of the hegemonic culture can be reduced to a simple cultural diversity equation.

Moving south of Mexico, Diaz-Polanco’s position resonates with research that has emerged from Guatemala. Charles Hale, writing early in the millennium, goes so far as to warn against the “menace” of the multicultural project. He argues that the neoliberal cultural project “entails pro-active recognition of a minimal package of cultural rights and an equally vigorous rejection of the rest” (2002:174). He describes state-multiculturalism as a regime which rewards indigenous groups who comply with a neo-liberal interpretation of multiculturalism and punishes those who don’t. Capturing a central contradiction of the neo-liberal cultural project, he points out that, by leaving

social inequities in place, indigenous people confront the paradox of cultural affirmation while remaining economically marginalised.

Both Hale (2002) and Diaz-Polanco (2006) adhere to a body of literature that engages with the liberal intercultural project in the development context as the administration of “difference according to the logic of the neo-liberal state” (Sanudo et al 2008: 131), where the state uses its hegemonic power to permit tolerance for difference, not to transform society and make it more just, but to consolidate its social, economic and political control on behalf of global capitalism. Thus it is argued that the neo-liberal intercultural discourse adopts an implicit common-sense position towards culture, obscuring its relation to value, epistemological pursuits and subject formation (Coffey 2000). From this analytical position, interculturalism and its culturalist turn are understood to be techniques of governance. In other words, power is a constitutive component of culture, in which case

“... it behoves us not to try to determine what culture is, in its essence, but rather how it is produced as a category and how it functions in particular constitutional or policy contexts” (Coffey 2000: 52) .

Within this framework, as Diaz Polanco (2006) points out, discussions on the epistemological implications embedded in the choice of terminology, intercultural or multicultural, have little or no relevance (2006: 183).

The above review provides some insights into the complexity of the cultural politics and concomitant debates framing intercultural policy in the region. Conscious that the complex theoretical debates and analytical positions described above are those which also mediate MEIPIM policy, I now review empirical studies which examine how intercultural policy might translate into practice in local contexts. The reviewed empirical studies consider the limitations and possibilities offered by global intercultural educational policy for educational equity in local/regional contexts. They also provide

valuable insights relevant to this research. The empirical studies reviewed below, therefore, have been chosen to demonstrate the ongoing tensions and disagreements mediating the relationship between ‘top-down’ and ‘grass root’ policies. Focusing principally on a grass-roots intercultural education project that evolved in the Peruvian Amazonian region in the 1980s, prior to constitutional and legislative intercultural educational reform in Peru, I explore the epistemological, ethical and pedagogical challenges that emerged from this initiative. I then compare this project with research evidence and analysis from ‘top down’ intercultural education policies and programmes and consider the impact that these different approaches have had on local communities. I conclude the review by looking at an empirical study related to the role of community participation, a central tenet of MEIPIM policy, in an intercultural education project implemented in the Mapuche region of Chile.

3.10. Silencing alternative epistemologies: global policy versus local initiatives

Much of the literature addressing intercultural education in Peru focuses on a grass-roots intercultural education programme that emerged in the Amazon Basin in 1987. The product of collaboration between an Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon (AIDSESP)¹⁴ and a teacher training college in Iquitos, the capital of Peru’s Amazonian region; this intercultural education programme stands in marked contrast to later government-led initiatives implemented in the 1990s. Jorge Gasché, who was central to the programme’s design, reflects on the reasoning behind the programme’s epistemological value orientation.

“For those of us who participated in creating this intercultural education programme in Iquitos with the indigenous federation, the idea of interculturalism was inseparable from the notion of

¹⁴AIDSESP is an umbrella organization that brings together indigenous associations and federations, such as the Harakmbut organization FENAMAD, to lobby nationally, regionally and internationally for recognition of indigenous rights to land, way of life, cultural practices and education (Aikman 2002).

domination. You cannot understand indigenous culture without seeing the culture as a product of a society. That is the product of a specific interaction between human persons; or without seeing indigenous societies enclosed in relations of domination, both national and international” (Gasché: 2004: 221).

In the same publication Gasché questions the underlying reasoning of government-funded intercultural education initiatives. He argues that the embedded assumption that “self-esteem for minority groups, respect for others, tolerance of difference and dialogue without prejudices” (Gasché: 2004: 223), will contribute to a more harmonious and less conflictive society, rests on an artificial classroom framework of what constitutes inequality. As Gasché points out, tolerance and self-esteem appear to be divorced from the asymmetrical relations of power that produce hierarchical societies. Thus, the belief that this approach will change macro-relations is not only an “idealistic illusion, at best ingenuous, but is also lacking in social responsibility” (Gasché 2004:222). He concludes that, instead of the teaching young people the ethical, intellectual and emotional skills to confront relations of power and domination, they are taught attitudes of tolerance and respect, conformism and submission, in order to adapt to dominant forces. He concludes that it is hardly surprising, therefore, that intercultural education programmes, funded by agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, GTZ, and other NGOs, have had such “staggering success in official and governmental contexts across diverse Latin American states” (Gasché 2004: 223).

Much of the research literature from Peru resonates with Gasché’s position. Unfavourable comparisons between the ‘top down’ policies that emerged after AIDSESEP’s grass-roots project had already been established, inform much of the research emerging from the country (Garcia 2006).

Sheila Aikman (1997) describes Peru’s national policy on intercultural education as “radical by comparison to previous indigenous education projects in that it recognised the multiethnic nature of national society” (1997:466). Nevertheless, resonating with

Gasché's argument, she points out that the document failed to interrogate the conceptual notion of plurality and heterogeneity in the historical, social and economic conditions that produced social inequity in the first place and in so doing ignored the nature of relations between cultures within Peruvian society (1997:466).

“Hence while the DIGEBIL (Department for Intercultural and Bilingual Education) policy was far-sighted in terms of its conception of Peru as an intercultural society, it avoided issues of equality and avoided the overriding problems of internal domination of ethnic groups by mestizo elite; that is, it failed to consider the nature of interculturality within the society as a whole” (1997:468).

Aikman's (2002) research with the Harakmbut indigenous people, from the south-eastern Amazon region of Peru, questions the adequacy of a 'top-down' government intercultural policy implemented in this community as part of the above educational reform process.¹⁵ The reform aimed to address issues of retention and achievement by making learning more contextually and culturally relevant. As a result, a generic constructivist/intercultural child-centred educational development approach (discussed in Chapter 2) was introduced to address educational equity issues.¹⁶

However, as Aikman (2002) notes, the constructivist/intercultural epistemology embedded in this reform is recontextualised in a “top-down” policy development process as predetermined knowledge, which remains uncontested and unchallenged by local teachers and students. By comparison, the intercultural curriculum developed by

¹⁵ Educational reform was introduced in the 1990s as a reaction to the irrelevancy and poor quality of rural and indigenous education, which had been widely reported in many Latin American countries, by both government researchers and international groups (CEPAL: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe 2005).

¹⁶ Aikman points out the implications for teacher training were and continue to be, immense. However, as in many parts of Latin America, the teacher-training component has been negligible. It appears that “. . . curriculum reform is designed by experts at the national and international level to be implemented by poorly-trained teachers” (Aikman 2002:47).

AIDSESEP is a product of a constructivist collaborative process between indigenous people and indigenous activists.

“The curriculum is constructed by teachers and trainers together, through a collaborative and iterative process. The curriculum focuses on the interface between different ways of doing and knowing, local, national and global processes and knowledge, and an analysis of the children’s and teachers’ context” (Aikman 2002:47).

In the intercultural training process used by AIDSESEP, knowledge is problematised, contested and challenged; an epistemological position that contrasts sharply with the imposed, uncontested and unchallenged knowledge that structures the global/national intercultural educational initiative targeting the Harakmbut.

Aikman’s research exposes the theoretical gaps, tensions and paradoxes of global policy in the local context. Focusing specifically on the official educational service that the Harakmbut community in the Peruvian Amazon receives, she points out that indigenous knowledge systems are excluded from an intercultural educational programme where competencies are not only pre-determined but also need to be measurable. Aikman points out that Harakmbut epistemology views indigenous knowledge as predominantly oral and therefore written forms of evaluation and assessment to measure competence acquisition are neither appropriate nor compatible with local epistemologies. She concludes that government intercultural educational policy was introduced, framed in global criteria, that failed to take into account already-functioning and highly-successful intercultural education programmes such as the one developed by AIDSESEP.

Aikman’s work in Peru, conducted primarily within the historical and cultural specificity of the Amazonian regions, addresses important ethical and epistemological considerations that global policy makers will need to address if policy failure is to be avoided. The conciseness of her longitudinal ethnographic research with the Harakmbut

community in South Eastern Peru allows privileged insight into how generic policy compares with the specificity of a regional, bottom-up educational programme which emerged from continuous dialogue among community leaders, community teachers and intercultural activists in a collaborative process which emphasised “the interface between different ways of doing and knowing, local national and global processes and knowledge and analysis of the children’s and teachers’ context” (Aikman:2002:48).

The overwhelming importance of Aikman’s work for intercultural education in Latin America is indisputable. She draws attention to policies based on international intercultural rhetoric and challenges the validity of rhetoric that fails to take into account asymmetrical power relations defining the social and material reality of indigenous groups in Latin America. She questions hegemonic epistemologies and cultural positions aiming to problematise

“... a dialogue which merely recognises that Peru has a wealth of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity does not challenge the increasing hegemony of technological knowledge or contribute towards the process of decolonisation and the undermining of internal domination” (1997:476).

She also highlights the complex entanglement of international, national and indigenous networks. She describes how they converge to put indigenous demands for intercultural education on the international and national agendas and how they diverge in the global and local interpretations of what constitutes interculturality. While all of these issues are immensely relevant to this thesis, some limitations for this research study need to be mentioned.

The longitudinal nature of her work in the Amazon region with the Harakmbut, while allowing for in-depth understanding of their epistemological values and the symbolic violence being enacted by government education programs from the mid-nineties onwards, is very specific to the cultural, political and regional context of the south-

eastern area of the Peruvian Amazon. While Aikman has never suggested that Harakmbut culture is essentialised or fixed, referring instead to challenging knowledge and culture, there is a strong sense in her writing of a Harakmbut cultural identity and cultural body of knowledge that might be recontextualised within a local epistemological and pedagogical framework. In this sense, the Harakmbut differ markedly from the migrant populations who are at the centre of this study. Demographic displacement, forced migration, paid child-labour, language and group diversity makes it much more difficult for agricultural migrant communities to collaborate, debate and dialogue about an alternative epistemological orientation. This is not to suggest that an alternative epistemology to that currently used in MEIPIM is not available, but rather the challenges of creating a space where it can be debated and systemised are very different from those that AIDSESEP encountered in south-eastern Peru. Following on from this, while Aikman's work highlights the potential of the local as a site where knowledge can be challenged and contested, it doesn't problematise sufficiently the difficulties involved in defining and enacting an agreed epistemological framework among indigenous groups in a local/regional context.

By comparison, Lucy Trapnell's research (2003), also focusing on the AIDSESEP intercultural programme, emphasises the need for ongoing theoretical debate and curriculum revision in locally-formulated projects given the highly controversial and complex processes involved in agreeing on a locally-defined curriculum. "Intercultural inductive dialogue," (Trapnell 2003:170) for example, used on the AIDSESEP programme to discursively remodel perceptions of traditional society, resulted in students focusing on the past to the detriment of present reality. Students who complained about the course bias towards the past were perceived as rejecting their indigenous identity. These perceptions prevented those responsible for curriculum decision-making from taking on board the students' recommendations. Equally, attempts to remodel traditional society as a dynamic and continuously changing process did not result in enriched relations with others, as the programme originally intended. Instead, the students worked within a framework defined by a duality which contrasted

a glorious past with a present reality defined by loss and deprivation. The students also made distinctions between authentic and inauthentic indigenous peoples.

At the practical level, some students, working in multiethnic indigenous contexts, were unable to address the needs of other ethnic groups. This resulted in conflict between parents from different ethnic backgrounds. Trapnell (2003) points out that these conflicts emerged because the teacher, already overloaded with the new and complex intercultural curriculum, was unable to facilitate intergroup dialogue. The programme trainers in collaboration with the teachers later addressed this issue by considering the limits of dialogic relations and by introducing a curricular component dealing with the identification and management of conflict. Other issues, such as limiting the perception of diversity to the Amazonian regions and failing to comprehend Peru as multi-lingual and multi- ethnic, also generated a limited engagement with an intercultural conceptual framework and required curricular revision (Trapnell 2003).

Trapnell's research provides invaluable insights into the immensity of the pedagogical, ethical and political challenges involved in a grass-roots intercultural educational curriculum. Nevertheless, while Trapnell provides useful insights into local negotiation of and resistance to specific pedagogical and epistemological perspectives, her work, unlike Aikman's (2002), privileges critical engagement with the local while failing to engage sufficiently with the local/global dynamic.

Maria Elena Garcia's research with highland indigenous communities in Peru (2003, 2005), aims to address this challenge. Garcia's research highlights the local /global negotiation and the evolving space, as yet undefined, generated by this dynamic. Her earlier work (2003) focuses on parental negotiation of intercultural education in Cuzco, in the Andean region of Peru. She explores the gap between an intercultural discourse that affirms cultural diversity and increased democracy in the learning context, and what the enactment of this discourse might look like in practice. Garcia describes how parents in the Andean communities perceive intercultural bilingual education mostly as "a waste of time." The parents had, for the most part, negative associations between

intercultural education, indigenous identity and low socio-economic status. While they were sympathetic to the ideals of interculturality and bilingual education, they preferred to see concrete results, such as their children reading and writing in Spanish. As a result of their resistance to this global initiative, however, Garcia describes how the mothers secured adult Spanish literacy classes in order to be able to teach their children Spanish at home.

Resonating with Aikman's views above, Garcia points out that policy concerned to promote inclusion can be effective only when it engages critically with the historical-social relations of internal domination defining Peru. Expecting parents to reposition indigenous language as an empowering cultural asset, in a context where indigenous language and identity have mediated endemic racism for centuries, is unrealistic. She argues that policy that fails to engage with hegemonic relations will fail to achieve official policy goals. As Garcia's research demonstrates, however, the local/global/dynamic of intercultural education policy can generate unintended and unanticipated outcomes. In this case, local, rather than official educational needs were met when mothers renegotiated global logic, to secure Spanish classes.

The contradictory global/local interaction is explored further in Garcia's later research: a multi-sited ethnographic exploration of the paradoxes within and the local challenges to the enactment of intercultural policy throughout the Andean region of Peru. Engaging with the debates put forward by NGOs, government representatives, parents, activists and an intercultural university in the area, Garcia points out that "much is at stake in these debates as they speak to the changing position of indigenous people in the nation state and in transnational development agendas" (2005: 3). She is careful to emphasise that her research is not about indigenous communities united in opposition against neo-liberal intercultural policy, but rather an attempt to trace the twists and turns of "a broad pattern of local and global interaction characterised by contradictory projects of resistance and integration" (2005:3).

Garcia concludes that converging international and state agendas are double-edged, that is, useful to both movements of resistance and projects of governance. Her multi-sited ethnographic research makes a significant contribution to a small but growing body of literature concerned with taking a more “grounded level view of globalisation as a corrective to post-discourse analysis that sometimes operates on such a high levels of abstraction that the lived reality of its subjects can no longer speak to the reader” (Garcia 2005: 14).

3.11. Community participation: consultation or critical agency? The case of Chile

Although not discussed explicitly above, community participation is central to the work of Garcia (2005), Aikman (2002) and Trapnell (2003). All three writers question what this might look like in the local context. Garcia suggests that participation in official educational policy formulation is usually “a consultation process with decision-making powers removed.” Aikman, referring to a AIDSESEP’s grass-roots programme, describes participation as involving ongoing dialogue between indigenous activists, community representatives, teachers, students and non-indigenous participants (Aikman 2002).

Some of the most useful, controversial and theoretically-sustained research on community participation has emerged from an intercultural educational project “Proyecto Kelluwun,” introduced in a Mapuche community in Southern Chile in 2003 (Pinkey, Williamson and Gomez 2004). The primary goal of the project is described as supporting the social participation of the Mapuche community in the development of the educational process. Applying an action-research methodology and a Freirian critical/emancipatory theoretical framework, this research study focuses both on the training component of intercultural teachers at the local university and on the promotion of a democratic culture and organization, both in the school and within the municipal system of education in the region.

Chile, similar to other Latin American countries, in response to increasing rural poverty and decreasing school participation and achievement, began a massive educational reform effort in the mid-1990s. The reform effort focused on equity, quality and participation. As Pinkey et al (2004) point out, while the reform did nothing to challenge the underlying structures that generate educational inequity, it did succeed in putting equity back into the educational discourse, a subject that was prohibited during the Pinochet dictatorship. Equally, the inclusion of participatory strategies in the educational discourse was a radical turn-around in a context where civil democratic practices had also been absent for the duration of the dictatorship.

Chilean educational reform adopted the constructivist-intercultural educational development blueprint (see Chap.2) that characterises educational reform throughout Latin America. Proyecto Kelluwun, unlike other officially managed education projects, however, chose to interpret these paradigms within a Freirian theoretical framework. As in many other educational contexts in Latin America, a constructivist vision for community participation in Chile was interpreted as functional and instrumental to the state's vision of education. This vision assumes that the reform process is in the best interests of all; challenges to the vision are not anticipated from those who are invited to participate in this process.

The Freirian interpretation of participation used in the Kelluwun project, by contrast, assumes that teachers and communities are equal partners in determining the epistemological and ontological basis of the educational reform process. This interpretation facilitates broader community participation in “definitional and foundational decisions, actions and designs: a type of participation that invites the potential of critical agency” (Pinkey et al 2004). Invoking a critical-material intercultural analytical position those involved in this project envisage the classroom as a transformative space where students might reject market identities if they so wish, in order to explore identity narratives that are “underwritten by a concern for liberation and social justice.”

The Kelluwun research provides a comprehensive road map for understanding some of the ethical, political and pedagogical challenges involved in introducing these types of participatory policies into a community where the legacy of a dictatorship, combined with historic racism, makes community interactions fearful and distrustful. Their research produces some critical reflections on the tensions and contradiction that might mediate aims for Freirian-based participatory social action.

“Re-conceptualizing the format and structure of institutional schooling, created in the interest of the state, into something which intends to enable spaces for political and social expression, that may well undermine the traditional interests of the Western capitalist state, involves a paradigmatic educational shift that presents significant if not insurmountable obstacles for transformative and emancipatory pedagogies” (Pinkey et al 2004).

Invoking a cultural-Marxist position, they contend that participation implies agency and agency implies “that we can make history in the concrete conditions in which we find ourselves.”

The resources of hope offered by Pinkey et al (2004) in this research need to be understood in relation to the tensions that they describe. Participation, in the Freirian sense, implies transformative aims that may well run counter to official programmes in Chile, where constructivist ideas about community participation are invoked as educational technology, rather than emancipatory tools of the oppressed. The tensions discussed by Pinkey et al (2004) were not unfounded. More recent research (Richards 2010) in this area of Chile describes how projects such as Kelluwun, introduced by the government at that time in response to intercultural education reform to recognise indigenous rights and promote diversity in Chilean society, have not succeeded in quelling Mapuche resistance to development plans that have encroached on their territory. Consequently, ongoing Mapuche resistance has resulted in the Mapuche being

constructed as a terrorist movement; a stark contrast to earlier narratives that positioned the Mapuche as an indigenous group in need of intercultural affirmation - a paradoxical twist to the neo-liberal intercultural policies that ostensibly aimed to address diversity and promote respect for difference. As Richards (2010) concludes, it appears that

“ . . . official neoliberal multiculturalism is shaped by transnational and national priorities, and involves constructing some Mapuche as terrorists while simultaneously promoting multicultural policies” (2010: 59).

This turn-of-events seems to lend credence to Hale’s notion of intercultural education as the administration of difference and “el indio permitido” (trans: the permitted Indian) (Hale 2002:518). In other words, those who obey are rewarded and those who don’t comply, as is the case with the Mapuche, may well be constructed as terrorists if their resistance is interpreted as a threat to national interests.

It is impossible to ascertain what impact Kelluwun might have had on this turn-of-events. What is apparent in this research, however, are the tensions that mediate a community’s choice to implement a form of participation which “empowers communities to name the conditions they inhabit and identify solutions” (Pinkey et al); a choice that may well undermine the traditional interests of the Western capitalist state. The Mapuche are a case in point.

3.12. Disarticulating hegemonic discourse

The above review highlights the ideological contradictions and tensions that mediate intercultural educational reform, not just in Chile, but, arguably, in most countries in Latin America. While projects such as Kelluwun in Southern Chile or AIDSESEP in Peru engage with constructivist-intercultural reform from critical theoretical perspectives these programmes appear to be the exception rather than the norm. For the most part, intercultural educational reform in Latin America seems to be

co-opting progressive educational concepts, such as community participation, and re-contextualising these concepts into policy development procedure informed by neoliberal logic (Diaz Polanco 2006, Sanudo et al 2008).

Michael Apple (2003) emphasises the disarticulation of progressive educational concepts and their re-articulation into a neoliberal conservative educational discourse. He points out that within the neoliberal educational discourses on identity we will find references to critical pedagogy, cultural hybridity and interculturalism, disarticulated from counter-hegemonic movements and re-articulated into a hegemonic discourse. The challenge for critical educational theory is to disarticulate these historically progressive conceptual frameworks from neoliberal conservative discourses and rearticulate them back into the progressive (Apple 2003: 198). This, as Michael Apple points out, is no easy task.

Some of the challenges implied by Apple have been identified in this review. The AIDSESEP project in Southern Peru engages with curriculum development using critical theoretical perspectives that aim to deconstruct racial domination. That said, the literature appears to suggest that this process is complex and challenging in the local context. I also suggest that grass roots projects, such as AIDSESEP, fail to sufficiently problematise the global/local dynamic and its implications for multiple, intersecting and shifting identity frameworks. Finally the Kelluwun project in Southern Chile uses a Freirian theoretical prism to structure community participation. The researchers quite correctly point out that this choice might well undermine the traditional interests of the western capitalist state - a tension that was shown to be reality in later research in the area that analysed how Mapuche resistance had been constructed as terrorist activity against a backdrop of official multicultural policy.

In sum, disarticulating historically progressive conceptual frameworks from the neoliberal logic that now informs them is not easy. It is important, therefore, to emphasise that the research projects above represent important and significant efforts to rearticulate the progressive ideals that underscored community participation or critical

pedagogy prior to their neo-liberalisation. It is equally important to stress that the AIDSESEP and Kelluwun projects, while very much the exception, are not the only counter-hegemonic intercultural projects in Latin America. Similar innovative and progressive projects are occurring in other countries. In Nicaragua, for example, the University of the Autonomous Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast Region (URACCAN) has introduced a radical form of community participation, along the lines of Kelluwun, that structures intercultural policy development and enactment in this area (Mato 2008). In the same way, the Autonomous Indigenous University established by the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca in Colombia (CRIC), has struggled for almost thirty years to maintain an educational dialogue with local communities to ensure an educational context pertinent to local needs (Bolanos et al 2008). It would have been informative to have reviewed research relating to these projects and other innovative intercultural initiatives in Latin America, however, limitations of space made this impossible.

3.13. Conclusion

Through an exploration of intercultural theoretical discourse, this chapter was able to identify two distinct analytical positions relating to intercultural educational development initiatives. On the one hand, intercultural ethno-development policies are considered inclusive and culturally sensitive, while on the other hand, a body of work has emerged that analyses these policies as a fiction of progress constituting “new disciplinary strategies targeted at subaltern populations” (Diaz Polanco 2006). These debates have been located within a dichotomous framework that distinguishes between “politics of identity and the politics of redistribution.” I argue that these positions are not mutually-exclusive and need to be combined in the policy context if social justice is to be meaningfully addressed. Using analytical determinants offered by critical theory, I suggest that, despite accusations of inherent theoretical contradictions (McLennan 2001), critical material interculturalism is the most effective analytical lens available for understanding the limitations and possibilities that global-intercultural education policy offers for educational equity and social justice in a local development context.

However, further exploration of the literature and empirical research relating to intercultural education projects throughout Latin America reveals that this is only half the battle. Two principal challenges mediate the possibilities offered by critical material intercultural theory and practice: Firstly, critical theory, by definition, is constituted by many different theoretical positions, leaving room for disagreement among critical theorists. Secondly, global policy appears to have appropriated the conceptual foundations of critical theory and re-shaped it according to a neoliberal logic that uses it as educational technology to legitimate intercultural education policy rather than to promote transformative and emancipatory practice. The challenge here, as Apple (2003) points out, is to disarticulate these ideas and re-appropriate them for transformative intercultural praxis, all of which complicates further global policy in the local context. How this might be possible is discussed further in the analysis chapters.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1. Introduction

Most research on intercultural education in Latin America tends to focus on higher education. The emergence of intercultural universities in the past decade has dominated this research field (Mato 2008, Dietz 2009). By contrast, research on intercultural education in basic/primary education has remained thin on the ground (Jimenez 2010). Where ongoing research has prevailed, it has focused principally on the often contradictory relationship that indigenous communities have with this development initiative (Garcia 2005, Howard 2009). While this research focus serves to demonstrate the complexity of the local/global dialectic, it often leaves the role of the teacher unproblematised as the hegemonic instrument of policy enactment. This oversight is unfortunate as teacher identity and subjectivity mediate how intercultural education policy unfolds as a local practice. In this sense, understanding how teachers negotiate intercultural education is crucial to understanding the transformative potential that might be embedded in these policies. This thesis, therefore, is an attempt to address this research gap. As such, my research approach is ethnographic and, given my overall focus to identify the possibilities for educational equity, it includes a critical dimension. In this way, I describe my method as a critical ethnographic approach.

This chapter is an attempt, therefore, to chart the intellectual, but perhaps more importantly, the emotional and social journey made during the process of fieldwork. It begins by reiterating the overall research aims and related tasks; the chapter then defines the rationale underpinning qualitative research and the epistemological underpinnings of critical ethnography. A distinction between methods and methodology is offered, followed by detailed descriptions of the methods and the problems encountered. I

complete the chapter with a consideration of the ethical issues that emerged in the field and in my choice of methodology. I also include an outline of my data analysis process.

4.2. Research aims and questions

The overall aim of the research is to explore

If and how teacher negotiation of the global transference of intercultural educational policy promotes or inhibits educational equity when enacted as a local practice.

In the context of MEIPIM, this overall focus generates five related research tasks:

- 1) To identify and analyse further how international ethno-development policy as a response to indigenous demands, influences global intercultural educational discourse;
- 2) To identify and analyse how these discourses have contributed to the development of intercultural educational discourse and policy in Mexico, and how these discourses might have shaped the cultural politics mediating MEIPIM policy;
- 3) To understand whether and in what way MEIPIM's cultural politics determine the official educational needs, and the concomitant pedagogic logic embedded in its policy, and if that is the case, to what extent do global needs reflect local educational needs;
- 4) To examine and analyse further whether tutor/instructor negotiation and enactment of global pedagogic logic as a local practice function to address educational equity for agricultural migrant children;
- 5) To identify and analyse if and how broader ethnic and nationalist ideologies might mediate tutor/instructor subjectivity, agency and identity, and how these subject

positions might function to promote or inhibit educational equity for agricultural migrant workers.

I felt that the above aims and tasks could be meaningfully addressed only by using a qualitative research approach. Understanding the meaning-making processes used by those responsible for policy enactment could be accessed only through daily immersion with the social actors and the habitualised practices that inform their interpretation of MEIPIM. I became aware of my commitment to qualitative research during the pilot phase of the research process. Structured primarily by evaluative aims, I used questionnaires and formal interviews to try to measure the success of the programme. This experience served to demonstrate the following: firstly that I didn't want to evaluate the programme, and secondly, that my data collection methods were simply telling me what I already knew. In this way the pilot made me realise that I wasn't interested in whether or not the programme was functioning efficiently according to my London-centric criteria. Instead, what I really wanted to know was if the programme wasn't addressing the official aims, and clearly it wasn't, then what was it doing? What was happening on a day-to-day basis, why was it happening, and what did it mean for educational equity and social justice in the real world?

These post-pilot realisations informed my later decision to use a critical ethnographic research methodology. However, prior to describing what this means in terms of methods, I offer in the following section an epistemological and ontological justification for this approach.

4.3. The theoretical underpinnings of critical ethnography

The increased transference of global educational policy has heightened the importance of qualitative research, particularly in the development context; understanding the mediation of global policy by local meaning making frameworks is crucial to policy success (Vulliamy 2004, Levinson et al 2011). However, given the

neoliberal values mediating global policy (see Chap 2), positivistic forms of inquiry, to measure effectiveness and secure accountability, have mostly superseded qualitative approaches in the research field. In this respect, the tensions mediating qualitative and quantitative research have grown. Nowhere are these tensions more evident than in the development context, where teacher identity often is marginalised during the research process. This is succinctly captured by Vulliamy (2004). Describing his research in Papua New Guinea he observes:

“There was too much emphasis upon policies, plans and structures, at the expense of research on the actual processes of implementation of these in practice where the role of culture, and especially that of teachers, was a crucial influence” (266).

Arguably, given the emphasis on positivistic modes of inquiry, the importance of qualitative research engagement with local meaning-making processes cannot be overstressed. The increased need for qualitative research is emphasised further if we consider that globalisation has imposed yet another cultural layer to be negotiated and made sense of by local actors. Criteria imposed by neoliberal global agendas, as is the case with MEIPIM (see Chap. 5), often assumes an objective teacher facilitating classroom dialogue and encouraging intercultural communication. On the other hand, these policies also presuppose social practices which adhere to neo-liberal aims for cost-efficiency and measurable outcomes. These assumptions are often at odds with local identity constructs. Welmond, cited in Vulliamy (2004) argues that

“. . . separating teachers from their historical, political and cultural contexts has devastating unintended consequences that need to be understood by policy makers if they are to break the cycle of policy failure” (267).

Teacher subjectivity, agency and identity and the broader conjunctural relations that mediate them are central to policy success or failure. In this respect, qualitative research is more necessary than ever.

I suggest that critical ethnographic educational research can make a particularly meaningful contribution. Like all qualitative research approaches, critical ethnography seeks to understand local meaning-making strategies, however critical research is also committed to a search for an alternative project of social justice (Levinson 2002: xvi). Phil Carspecken describes the value-orientation of critical researchers in the following way:

“We are all concerned about social inequalities and direct our work towards positive social change. We also share a concern with social theory and some of the basic issues it has struggled with since the nineteenth century. These include the nature of social structure, power, culture and human agency” (Carspecken 1996: 3).

Joe Kinchloe and Peter McLaren describe the political and ideological value-orientation embedded in critical ethnography. They assert that critical researchers accept the assumptions that certain groups are privileged in society and that oppression is most effectively reproduced when subordinate groups accept their status as natural or inevitable. They identify language as being central to the formation of subjectivity, and argue that the social relations of capitalist consumption and production mediate the relationship between the signified and the signifier. Underpinning these concepts is the premise that all thought is mediated by power relations that are historically and socially constituted (cited in Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 440, Carspecken 1996:4).

My need to understand “how what is has come to be, whose interests are served by particular institutional arrangements and where our (my) frames of reference come from” (Kinchloe et al 2000: 472) reflects this political and ideological orientation.

Specifically, I aim to examine the relationship between the social structures that constitute the material reality of migrant agricultural workers and the discursive mediation of this reality by an intercultural educational discourse. In other words, I aim to examine critically the power relations structuring this discursive re-signification and to “examine the social relations of capitalist consumption and production that mediate the relationship between the signified and the signifier” (Kinchloe et al 2000: 436). I also aim to understand how those involved in implementing MEIPIM negotiate these power relations and the conflicting world vision that they structure, that is, the discursive migrant identity and the concomitant intercultural world with the lived conditions and the social relations constituting the material reality of these communities. Finally, I seek to establish what this negotiation might mean for educational equity for migrant agricultural communities.

4.3.1. Reflexivity: a double translation

Adopting this political and ideological value orientation during the research process requires a high degree of reflexivity. These values involve being honest about any prior ideological and political commitments we might bring to the field and to subsequent data interpretation (Levinson 2002). For example, my personal and professional history in London of resistance to new school management procedures, based on controlling and quantifying teacher performance, needed to be acknowledged. My resistance in London made it highly improbable that I would be any less resistant to market models in rural Mexico. That said, I would like to think that if successful market management of the project had been visible, I would have put my prejudices to one side. I also need to be honest about my long and complicated relationship with inter/multicultural education. Brought up in a family-run bar in a rural area in Northern Ireland, at the height of “the troubles,” in what became known a “bandit territory,”¹⁷ I might possibly have more tools at my disposal for positioning, repositioning and even reinventing the ‘other’ in relation to myself, than most people. Liberal multicultural policy and practice in London, mediated by largely folklore values, facilitated and

¹⁷ Tyrone and Fermanagh

legitimated my repositioning devices for many years. Eventually, exposure in the educational context of 1980s London to anti-racist frameworks based on a structural analysis of social justice, made this folklore repositioning untenable. It also introduced me to critical pedagogic teaching approaches that have since informed my classroom practices. My critical position towards liberal intercultural policy and culturalist discourses in the educational context required careful monitoring during the research approach. As a passionate practitioner of critical pedagogy I was all too ready to see demon liberal intercultural values, even when they were not present. During the research process, this required what Dietz (2009) refers to as a “doubly-reflexive” process. My perception of liberal intercultural values are mediated by London-centric frameworks, however, their presence in rural Mexico embody local articulations that often suggest something entirely different.

4.3.2. Cultural selves, translation and meaning-making in the research process

Critical ethnography also requires a close examination of the presence of the researcher in the social order and in the construction of knowledge about that selfsame order. The above reflexivity provides some insights into the cultural selves that I brought into the research process. Feminist ethnographers argue that these personal traits are no longer considered troublesome, and can be seen as a set of resources that may even be useful to the process (Olesen 2000). I agree with this view, conscious that I enter this process as a subject and not as an object (hooks 1993: 146). That said, however, careful monitoring was required. This became particularly evident during my interactions with parents.

I first became aware of my subjective positioning of parents when I started to translate data from community interviews. As noted above, I spent much of my childhood in a rural bar in 1960s Northern Ireland. The symbolic value of education was an ongoing conversation among the customers: obviously enhanced in this context by the availability of alcohol. The symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1977) enacted upon these men, by their exclusion from the educational process, mediated an ongoing conversation about the value of school education and what might have been had they had access to it.

As a child, it seemed to me that education was consistently invoked as the black box of social mobility, of what might have been and the devaluation of what is. The internal workings of the educational black box, however, were rarely made explicit.¹⁸ Instead, education was referred to as an object. I was often told about its importance and how “the larnin (learning) is easy carried,” once you got hold of it, that is.

I find it interesting, that when I started to translate parental interviews I translated them into a rural Irish dialect. In other words, I imposed a socio-cultural framework from my rural upbringing onto a socio-cultural context in rural Mexico. In the translation context, this process is referred to as using functional equivalences (Stalleart 2006). That is, to make sense of a rural agricultural migrant’s relationship to education in Mexico, I was employing language embedded in a socio-cultural framework pertaining to education in rural Ireland. For example, I noticed I was translating ‘Los Estudios’ as ‘the studies,’ a phrase from my childhood memories that sustains the idea of education as an object; a mysterious black box of social mobility. These functional equivalences occurred intuitively, and while in this particular instance, the functional equivalent that I used according to everyone that I consulted happened to be correct, I became self-conscious about projecting rural Irish identity constructs onto rural agricultural migrants in Veracruz.

Trans-cultural translation is difficult and needs to be understood as being embedded in the historical, political, social and cultural complexity where encounters take place (Gutierrez Rodriguez 2010: 38). They are also peppered by social positionalities. Try as I might to find common identities with the instructors in terms of gender, or teaching vocation for example, I was all too aware that these commonalities were mediated by the limits of my own identity constructs. The projection of a socio-cultural language construction onto parental or instructor/tutor language during the translation process is vulnerable to Spivak’s accusation of epistemic violence (Spivak, cited in Gutierrez et al 2010: 36). To avoid the “epistemic violence” of the translation process, I consulted as many people as possible, from diverse social contexts, to ensure that my translation was

¹⁸ When it was it invariably related to archaic methods of discipline.

not just literally correct, but also an adequate socio-cultural approximation. In this sense I am particularly grateful to my Peruvian husband who has lived in Mexico for more than thirty 30 years and, while he obviously has assimilated the socio-cultural usage of Mexican Spanish, he can still apply an outsider's understanding to how meaning is being produced. With these precautionary measures I hope that my translations do justice to the political and cultural context of each person's speech and avoid the imposition of a hegemonic script.

Cultural selves, embedded in the linguistic selves, as described above, cannot be avoided; in this case it is useful to see those selves as extra research tools. That said, however, I personally feel that ongoing monitoring and interrogation of the power relations mediating researcher/subject relations is crucial to a successful ethnography. I discuss this relationship further in the methods and ethics section below

In sum, critical ethnography's value orientation for "an alternative project for social justice" shaped my overall engagement with the research process. It is important to point out that it is precisely the value-orientation that determines whether or not a researcher is carrying out a critical ethnography or not (Carspecken 1996). The methods are important; however methods alone do not determine whether a research project is related to emancipatory and transformative goals. For example, as noted above, I used some ethnographic tools during the pilot stage; participant observation and interviews. These ethnographic tools however, did not determine a critical ethnographic approach. My overall evaluative focus meant that I was not implementing an ethnographic, critical or otherwise, research project. It is not the methods, therefore, that determine critical ethnographic research, but rather the "underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions" (Vulliamy 2004: 266).

I now turn to the research design that emerged from this value-orientation and the methods used to structure this process. I begin by describing my research sites and the processes involved in negotiating access to them. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all place names and personal names have been changed.

4.4. Research sites

My research with migrant agricultural workers was conducted exclusively in the state of Veracruz, specifically in the mountainous central regions surrounding the state capital. Notwithstanding the demographic reversal that Veracruz has experienced since the early 1990s (Mestries Benquet 2003), internal migration, albeit rapidly decreasing, still takes place on an annual basis in the struggling coffee and sugar cane sector. Migration patterns in Veracruz fall into three categories:

- **Pendulum:** Migrants leave their villages for 4-6 month periods and then return to their birthplace.
- **Swallow:** Migrants do not have a fixed workplace. They cover different agricultural camps according to work availability.
- **Established:** They reside for good in the place where they work (Taracena 2003: 302-303).

Internal migration in the state of Veracruz can be said to coincide with the categories of Pendulum and Established. Pendulum, in particular, presents educational access problems for the children of migrants. Theoretically, the children start the academic year in their village of origin and then abandon school for four to five months.¹⁹ Established migration is equally as problematic because the children still have to leave school in their place of residence to work four to five months harvesting coffee or sugar cane. MEIPIM, as described in Chapter 2, was designed specifically to accommodate the interrupted school year.

4.4.1. Negotiating access

Access to my research sites was a somewhat convoluted process. As discussed earlier, I first became aware of MEIPIM's existence through a friend's daughter, an instructor, on

¹⁹ Local schools refuse to accept the children once the family establishes a yearly migration pattern. As a result, the schools on the farm are the only schooling the children receive.

what later became, Focal Farm A. Once my doctoral proposal was submitted and accepted, I contacted the local academic coordinator. He seemed reluctant to meet me and cancelled three appointments. Rather demoralised, I wrote to the doctoral coordinator in Mexico City explaining my predicament. He kindly wrote an introductory letter for me to meet with the Director of CONAFE. This proved to be a very successful meeting. The director authorised access to all the necessary MEIPIM documents, and given the inaccessibility of the farms, she suggested that I accompany the academic coordinator on farm visits. Her authorisation allowed for a meeting with the academic coordinator; as described below, however, this was the only meeting I was to have with him. He was replaced the following week.

Access to the farms, however, had to be negotiated with farm managers. I arranged visits on both Farms A and B. Both managers were rather surprised by my formality, since the schools had been in existence for almost seven years, and they were accustomed to MEIPIM personnel making visits. Although I explained that my research project was not officially part of the programme, I remained in some doubt as to whether they made this distinction, particularly on Farm A, where the manager often complained to me about issues related to the instructors' behaviour. I had prepared written permits to access the farms, however both managers were visibly confused by this gesture and said that they weren't necessary. They made it clear to me that participating on the programme was not a problem. With these informal conversations, it seemed that access had been negotiated. I discuss the ethical implications of not securing written informed consent later in this chapter.

4.4.2. Focal Farms A and B

As a result of the above negotiations, my research is conducted primarily on two farms (campamentos).²⁰ Farm A is a coffee farm established at the beginning of the last century. It produces coffee for internal consumption and has, for the most part, been

²⁰Campamento literally translated means campsite. In the context of the agricultural farms it refers to the area and buildings where migrants reside during the harvesting period. I use farm and campamento interchangeably in the rest of the text.

unaffected by the economic crisis in the coffee sector. It is located five miles west of Xalapa, the capital of Veracruz, my permanent place of residence. Farm B is a sugar cane refinery established in the 18th century. It produces raw sugar for exportation, mainly to the USA. It is located ten miles from Xalapa. The development of a thriving eco-tourism industry in this area has made significant improvements to road maintenance.

The decision to focus on two campamentos, that produce sugar and coffee, was determined by three very important factors other than their geographical accessibility. Firstly, harvesting sugar is both dangerous and physically demanding. Because of the dangers involved, younger children, usually under the age of twelve, do not participate in this process. Consequently, these children are able to attend school in the morning from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. By contrast, those involved in harvesting coffee have school in the evening from 6pm to 8pm. Because of the two different schedules working on different crop farms offered me two periods of daily participant observation. I was able to participate most mornings in the classroom on the sugar cane farm; in the evenings between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. I was able participate in the classrooms on the coffee farm

Secondly, the families who participate in sugar cane harvesting come from a small mountainous community in the state of Puebla. They are indigenous and speak Nahuatl.²¹ Some of the adults have a degree of communicative bilingualism, and the children are predominantly monolingual Nahuatl speakers. The families on the coffee farm are, by comparison, monolingual Spanish speakers and predominantly mestizo.²²

Thirdly, the indigenous families from the state of Puebla experience Pendulum migration; they leave their places of origin for 4 – 6 months, returning only for

²¹ Nahuatl is one of the 63 indigenous languages surviving in Mexico and is the dominant indigenous language spoken in the states of Veracruz and Puebla.

²² The term mestizo commonly refers to an individual of mixed ancestry (usually indigenous and European). However a process of mestizaje can also imply an indigenous person who has assimilated mestizo customs, dress, language, etc. (Garcia 2005).

important religious festivals during this period.²³ The families on the coffee farm, by comparison, experience both Pendulum and Established patterns of migration.

Implementing an intercultural education programme in a rural bilingual indigenous learning context presents different challenges from a rural non-indigenous monolingual learning context. Equally, instructors' interactions with a migrant community that resides permanently on the farm are different from their interactions with communities that remain for a few weeks during the peak of the harvesting season. Likewise, educational opportunities afforded to communities that have chosen not to return to their place of origin are markedly different from those who have remained temporarily. This was particularly evident in terms of retention and completion.

The instructors on these two farms were initially identified as key informants. Instructor transfer between farms, however, is an ongoing practice in programme administration. As a result, while the farms themselves remained as key research sites for the duration of the research process, there were five transfers on the two farms during the year; a turnover of fourteen instructors. My initial reaction to this bureaucratic procedure was one of dismay. However, I soon realised that this turnover was facilitating access to a larger number of instructors, and also providing more opportunities to visit other farms; when they were transferred I often provided transport. Ongoing transfers also allowed me to follow two groups of instructors, who had originally been placed on the coffee farm, to the communities' places of origin. This was extremely fortuitous as these were two of the four sites where MEIPIM actually accompanies the members of the communities when they return home.²⁴

Whilst I was often unable to identify why an instructor was being transferred, these changes did resolve many practical issues involved in visiting remote farms. Working voluntarily on the programme, therefore, I did participant observation on both the

²³ Day of the Dead (1st and 2nd of Nov.) and the feast day for the Virgin de Guadalupe (12th Dec.).

²⁴ In the official literature Veracruz is always quoted as an example of programme continuity in the place of origin. I suspect, therefore, that it may be the only state where this policy is implemented.

instructor and tutor training component in the classrooms on the two farms. I also followed two groups of instructors who accompanied communities returning to their place of origin, where I was also able to observe classes. Community visits also allowed for parental interviews.

The planning involved in generating and collecting data, however, was complicated by my January starting date.²⁵ On a structural level, starting in January favoured a longitudinal research dimension; fieldwork eventually extended across two academic years and accessed three generations of instructors and tutors. This was complicated further by an interim year between the pilot and the fieldwork, when I attended courses at the Institute of Education in London. Consequently, fieldwork, albeit in a somewhat fragmented manner, extended from March 2003 to January 2006 .It was structured as described in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.1 Field research, Year One: MEIPIM Academic Year One (first generation of instructors)

<p>Feb. 2003: Introducing myself to CONAFE staff (administrative and academic) Negotiating access and acquiring relevant literature.</p> <p>Mar. 2003: Habituation period and passive observation on campamentos and at in service training for instructors. Design pilot</p> <p>Apr-May 2003: Implement pilot research: participant observation on campamentos and at monthly in-service training for instructors</p> <p>Jun. 2003: Participant observation at migrant community's place of origin. Application of questionnaire to all instructors at in service training.</p> <p>Jul. 2003: Beginning Fieldwork Participant observation at tutor training Conducting tutor interviews</p>
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²⁵ I registered for my doctoral course in January 2003.

Figure 4.2 Field Research, Year Two: MEIPIM Academic Year Three (second generation of instructors)

Oct-Nov 2004: Introducing myself to new CONAFE staff and habituation with newly-recruited instructors and tutors.
Participant observation on instructor training implemented by tutors.
Dec. 2004-May 2005: Participant observation on campamentos and ongoing participant observation at monthly in service training.
Jun-July 2005: Participant observation in place of origin: parental interviews
Informal, semi-formal and formal interviews with instructors.

Figure 4.3 Field research Year Two, MEIPIM Academic Year Four (third generation of instructors)

Dec 2005-Jan. 2006: Return to field: participant observation on instructor in-service training with third generation of instructors
Informal interviews with tutors and instructors

While the interrupted year in London frustrated initial plans to complete pilot and fieldwork within a twelve-month academic period, it did ultimately prove to be fortuitous in terms of data collected. Fortunately, there was some continuity of instructor and tutor participation between academic year one and academic years three and four. This continuity not only made access easier on return from London but also provided important data on shifting patterns of instructor subjectivity and resistance to the programme in relation to length of time on MEIPIM (see Chap. 7).

In sum, data was generated during a pilot study carried out between March 2003 and August 2003, from fieldwork which took place during the academic year 2004 to 2005,

and an unplanned return to the field in December 2005 to January 2006. I collected data from the following sources:

- Instructor interviews (formal, semi-formal and informal)
- Tutor interviews (formal, semi-formal and informal)
- Parental interviews (informal)
- Participant observation in classrooms on campamentos
- Participant observation in classrooms at place of origin
- Participant observation during instructor training
- Participant observation during tutor training
- Participant observation at community events
- Documentary analysis of programme literature
- Questionnaire given to instructors at the end of the academic year 2003.

Finally, three years is a substantial period of time in terms of policy shifts and I was able to witness not only the decentralisation of the programme but also the introduction of an alternative programme, which, in all likelihood, will eventually replace MEIPIM. All of these factors greatly enriched the quality of the data collected.

4.4.3. Defining the field

The above is a broad structural definition of the field (research sites and timeline); however, as Emerson et al, in Atkinson et al eds. (2001) have pointed out, the field is not just a given, but is also something which we construct. Understanding the field as a “construction” or in ethno-methodological terms, as somewhere where “reality constituting interaction takes place,” (Gubrium and Holstein in Emerson et al 2001: 354) resolved many of the anxieties I had as an inexperienced ethnographer, about the shifting parameters of my ‘field’. Migration implies change and my field obviously wasn’t going to stand still waiting for me (Clifford and Marcus 1986:10). Farms open and close, migrant communities arrive and leave, instructors come and go, and researchers leave for London and some instructors follow communities back to their

place of origin. It didn't take long before I realised that my field was extending well beyond my original decision to focus on two farms with focus instructors.

Many of my interactions, for example, were taking place in my VW bug where most in-depth conversations with participants unfolded. Long, sometimes arduous and eventful journeys, driving instructors to their schools or to the remote mountainous areas where migrant communities lived, often allowed for intimate conversations. These conversations often extended well beyond teacher negotiation of MEIPIM policy. Likewise, my field was occurring in my home when I offered overnight accommodation to some instructors/tutors or in cafes when I treated them to coffee and cake.

Impromptu invitations or opportunities to make a one off visit to an extremely remote farm, or to a place of origin, also provided opportunities to extend the field into unanticipated geographical spaces. In this way, during the research process the field was, and continues to be, the "focused disciplined attention" (Emerson et al 2001: 354) I bring to any situation where tutors, instructors, parents, researcher and anyone else concerned with the educational provision for migrant agricultural communities, are engaged in "reality-constituting interactions" (Gubrium and Holstein in Emerson et al 2001: 354).

An understanding of the field as a construction functioned to legitimate the above data sources that might otherwise have been excluded. This interpretation of the field however, required an increased degree of reflexivity in relation to the ethics of my sources. It is important to point out that I tried consistently to contextualise shared information in a broader conceptual context, so that the informants could understand how their personal experiences might make a contribution to an overall critical analysis of the programme. For example, when Roxana shared her health issues, including emotional challenges, I related her personal experience to the material conditions on the farms. I also explained that these physical challenges might be having an impact on programme success or failure. Some interactions did generate ethical concerns; these concerns are discussed below (see ethical considerations).

Another important aspect that needs to be considered when the field is extended beyond the designated sites is the physical cost to the researcher. The long journeys to remote communities during the rainy season were very demanding as well as, to a certain extent, dangerous. While a VW “Bug” is fairly resilient, it is often inadequate to the rough terrain in the mountainous regions of Veracruz (see Chapter 7). Likewise, these communities suffer severe poverty and often don’t have access to clean water. I contracted typhoid twice during the second phase of fieldwork, and Moctezuma’s revenge was a frequent visitor. Since I am a mother, I almost always tried to return to Xalapa on the same day. The journeys often involved long hours of arduous driving at night on sometimes barely passable roads. Notwithstanding all of the above, the hospitality I received from the communities and the friendships established between the instructors/tutors and I, more than compensated for the physical challenges endured, not to mention the adventures and the fun that we had.

4.4.4. A first visit to in-service training

My first visit to an in-service training session took place soon after my one and only interview with Don Guillermo, the academic coordinator at that time. He invited me to participate on the in-service training for instructors. Training was taking place in a church hall not far from my home the following week. When I arrived at the church, however, I was surprised to learn that Don Guillermo had been replaced by Daniel. This young man had just registered for a doctoral programme in Mexico City and was delighted by my presence and our shared interest. I encouraged him to use MEIPIM as a possible research site while he furnished me with the curriculum and training guides, a list of the schools and directions for how to get to them.

The instructors, while understandably curious, appeared unperturbed by my presence. There were twenty-eight instructors divided into four groups; each group was assigned one of the four tutors. Jorge, the academic assistant, was involved in administrative matters with Daniel, so I was free to wander. This proved to be an invaluable opportunity for establishing relationships with both instructors and tutors. It also

provided insight into ongoing bureaucratic problems and issues related to programme implementation.

During these three days, I learned about the instructors' personal frustrations with their lack of skills to teach non-Spanish-speaking indigenous children. I sympathised with the tutors' physical exhaustion because of the demanding travelling required visiting the farms located throughout the state. I listened to their explanations for the annual reduction in the number of farms requiring an educational service, given the increased migration to the US, the decrease in the price of coffee and, concomitantly, the decrease in wages for coffee picking. I listened to stories told by a group of instructors who worked together in an area in the north of Veracruz, about drug abuse in the community. These problems, they explained, had evolved because of influences imported by returned migrants from the US. This same group also described how, on accompanying the agricultural migrants to their place of origin, class numbers tripled when other non-migrant children, unable to secure a place in the local public school, decided to participate on the MEIPIM programme. This was my first insight into the complex and not entirely harmonious relationship between CONAFE and the Veracruz Department of Education (SEV).

I also had a glimpse into the demanding living conditions on the farms. Worried by infected flea bites that one of the young instructors had on his torso, I gladly gave him a bottle of lavender oil to soothe the swelling. Margarita, one of the tutors, told me about her ongoing battle with anemia and gastroenteritis, unable as she was to maintain an adequate diet because of the extensive and often physically exhausting travelling involved in visiting schools. I realised that this problem and many others were exacerbated by their frugal salaries and, according to them, lack of support from CONAFE/MEIPM administrative staff.

Finally, during these three days, I observed the first of many pedagogical conundrums. I bit my tongue as instructors' requests for help with teaching non-Spanish speaking children, or discipline issues were glossed over or even ignored. I watched in dismay as

a professional psychologist refused to dialogue with the instructors on how to discipline the children or how to encourage reluctant parents to participate on the programme. Opportunities for meaningful dialogue seemed to be persistently denied during the training sessions thus creating a sort of detached or de-contextualised feeling to what might otherwise have been perceived, by a less-interested observer, as an active and creative learning context.

On a practical level I received kind offers by all the tutors to accompany them to their farms (campamentos). An offer was extended to visit Farm A, which I had visited with my friend's daughter. Given its proximity and accessibility in a car I was keen to visit. Patti, one of the tutors, offered to take me the day after in-service training finished. I arranged to pick her up at the bus stop on the Veracruz Road.

4.4.5. A first visit to Farm A: Instructor resistance, tutor authority and a general manager.

Patti was unable to arrive at the appointed meeting place because of administrative issues in CONAFE, and so I decided to make the journey alone. The road to the coffee farm is lusciously green, lined with shade coffee plants that shelter under sprawling banana trees. The road itself, comparatively speaking, is quite good although narrow and peppered with pot holes. For a VW "Bug," my principal mode of transport throughout the research process, the road was, relatively speaking, fairly easy.

When you turn off the main road into the farm, the coffee mill is on the left. A row of small concrete buildings are on the right. I later learned that these buildings are used as accommodation for workers who live permanently on the farm. At the end of the road there are three stone steps leading up to a small gate providing access to an open area. This area has a series of small, one-roomed concrete store houses on either side. The space between is used for playing football. The first building on the right is, in fact, a SEV primary school. The school was originally established as a feeder school for a

neighboring coffee hacienda. Given their work commitments, the SEV primary school is inaccessible to agricultural migrant children. The other buildings are used for storage as well as doubling up as a CONAFE/MEIPIM multi-grade classroom/school and sleeping accommodation for the instructors.

I introduced myself to the farm manager and explained that I was doing an evaluation of the educational service provided by MEIPIM. I also tried to negotiate informed consent (see above). I wrote the following description of our conversation in my notebook.

Arrived at farm. No school. Spoke to the manager. Told me they had transferred one of the teachers and the other had a problem the day before and hadn't arrived. He said that the children had lost faith and none had bothered to turn up for school that evening. He also told me that they hadn't had school since the previous Monday. The teachers had left early to go to Xalapa for their in-service training and hadn't been seen since then. . He said that he was worried that the tutors would be angry, as would Daniel, the academic coordinator, but he felt he had to tell them the truth. As I was talking to him, Mariana the teacher arrived and said that she didn't want to sleep in the campamento alone, now that the other teacher had left. The manager explained that it was completely safe, but she persisted so I offered her ride to Xalapa. As we were leaving we met Patti, the tutor, who looked very annoyed that Marianna was leaving. To prove to Mariana that it was safe, Patti said that she would stay the night, and expected to see Mariana early in the morning to revise her planning and learning evidence. I felt very uncomfortable about taking Mariana away from the farm. In the car she told me about her boyfriend who was five years older than she was but was someone who was very good to her and treated her well. She also told me about her sister who was looking for work as a domestic cleaner. She explained that she decided to work on MEIPIM in order to get the grant to finish her high school studies.

(Orange field notebook 10th Mar 2003: Visit to Roma)

My conversation with the farm manager and the ensuing interaction between Patti (tutor) and Marianna (instructor) revealed a series of issues which were to have implications for fieldwork and for structuring my research design. Likewise, my observations during the three days of in-service training helped to identify issues that would have to be taken into consideration during research planning. I summarise these below:

1) Instructor transfer, to schools on other farms mentioned by the farm manager, appeared to be an accepted organisational MEIPIM practice;

2) Monthly in-service training as an opportunity to leave the farm early and return two or three days late was also identified as an established pattern. During fieldwork, I soon learned not to visit farms for at least two or three days after in-service training had finished;

3) Gender issues embedded in Mariana's reluctance to sleep alone on the farm were a prevalent and largely unaddressed problem for MEIPIM. During my field work as I visited ever more remote farms and places of origin, I became increasingly aware of the serious implications of sleeping there, both for myself and for the young instructors;

4) Finally, the complexity of tutor-and instructor-subjectivity and identity needs to be considered. As the above transcript suggests, their identity constructs are much more complex than I might have first imagined. Mariana is positioned as a teacher by the community and the farm manager; by CONAFE/MEIPIM, she is positioned as a poor marginalised rural school student in search of economic means to continue studying. The tutor positions her as a subordinate. In the car returning to Xalapa, she positions herself as a mature, responsible woman engaged to be married to an older man who takes good care of her.

On a practical level, these multiple and often contradictory subjectivities, generated principally because of the undefined assumptions embedded in the instructor/teacher equation had a two-fold impact during the research process. On the analytical level,

(discussed later in Chapters 6 and 7) instructor subjectivity generated a complex and challenging process that was mediated by these multiple positions/positionalities. On a practical level, the ambiguity embedded in their professional subjectivities required careful monitoring so as not to compromise tutor/instructor interactions or instructor/farm manager relations. Insensitive handling of these relationships would not only impact on my field identity but might have, on a far more serious level, jeopardised instructor/tutor possibilities to continue working on the programme.

The following week I visited the sugar cane farm and refinery. The accommodation on the farm for the seasonal agricultural migrant workers had been purpose-built. It consists of a series of concrete shelters with an open area for cooking and an enclosed space for sleeping. While these shelters offer considerably better conditions than those on the coffee farm, the lack of vegetation and their indistinguishable concrete facades make them oppressive. Likewise, the black ash from the burning cane on the nearby farms makes everything and everyone look a dark muddy-grey.²⁶ That said, there is electricity and running water in each of the individual family units. The school room, compared with the educational facility on the coffee farm, is more comfortable for the children and has a window which permits natural light. The instructors' accommodation, however, is an adjoining room with one small camp bed which they are required to share (head-to-toe). As I was leaving, Eugenia, the tutor who had accompanied me, introduced me to some of the mothers. The mothers didn't speak Spanish and were very shy. Unlike the women on the coffee farm, where I had been invited to eat, these women were visibly reluctant to communicate with me.

These preliminary visits and three other follow-up visits to each farm shaped the pilot research that I did later that year (April – June 2003). As noted above, my original research proposal (to evaluate the effectiveness of migrant education programmes) was already quite seriously challenged from these visits; however, uncertain of my overall

²⁶ The ash from the burning cane blackens every available surface. I was quite unprepared for the blackened appearance of the children, and I confess to being shocked before realising that their appearance was a direct result of the ash.

research aim, I decided to forge ahead. Not surprisingly, this proposal gradually unravelled during the pilot. The embedded research assumption that the official aims of the programme are in place and require evaluation and further refinement could not be sustained. During the pilot study, the contradictions, paradoxes and tensions embedded in these assumptions became apparent. My focus gradually shifted from programme refinement and improvement to a concern with how those involved were negotiating these tensions and contradictions. By the end of the pilot in June, as discussed above, I had revised my research aims to focus on teacher negotiation of MEIPIM policy and what this negotiation might mean for educational equity. Hence, when I started fieldwork in July of the same year, doing participant observation on tutor training, I was aware that teacher negotiation, subjectivity and identity would play a major role in my analysis.

In sum, the pilot research phase had an important impact on my research design. The idea of focal instructors and key families as data sources had to be dropped. The transient nature of instructor-teaching placements had to be accommodated. Equally, the combination of family work commitments, language and very strong Spanish dialects presented significant obstacles for parental interviews. While I still wanted to have as much contact as possible with parents, I realised that this was something that could not be programmed into a research plan. I would have to rely on evolving circumstances and opportunities. This did eventually happen, largely because of my involvement with community events. While these interviews were ethnographically limited, they made a significant contribution to understanding the social relations mediating instructor/community interactions. They also allowed some insight into parental negotiation of the educational process

4.5. Continuing fieldwork

On return from London in October 2004, I re-entered the field. A visit to the CONAFE director reassured me that access to the research sites was officially granted. Personal access, however, still had to be negotiated. An unexpected home visit from the

now ex-assistant coordinator proved to be fortuitous. He explained that two of the instructors from 2003-2004 had extended their service and were now involved in the programme as tutors. He also gave me the address of the new training venue, another church, this time on the other side of Xalapa. The next day I found my way to the church and introduced myself to the tutors and the new instructors.

The tutors I had known as instructors were delighted to see me. It was already mid-October, and they were one month into instructor training.²⁷ There were twenty-three instructors in all, divided into three groups: one group of pre-school instructors and two groups of primary instructors. From mid-October 2004 until the last week of November, I participated daily in their training programme. While I aimed to move among groups, conscious that ongoing transfers required that I establish a relationship with all the instructors, a more active in-depth participation evolved unexpectedly with one of the groups. This facilitated a more comfortable situational identity for me and appeared to eradicate researcher impact on group behaviour. It also allowed for a more systematic overview of the training process. Two factors contributed to this. The pedagogical approach used during the cascade dissemination training sessions aims to reflect the child-centred pedagogy favoured by MEIPIM. As a result, collaborative learning in groups facilitated a comfortable active membership role. The second factor was the notable absence of institutional support. During the pilot there was a permanent assistant coordinator, as well as an academic coordinator who made frequent visits. I was surprised to find that the assistant's role had been eliminated and, according to the tutors, the academic coordinator had yet to visit. The absence of an institutional authority figure allowed for a comfortable participant observation role. Surprisingly, the instructors gradually began to relate to me as a sort of informal substitute authority figure. When decisions had to be made, in the absence of a coordinator, they would often consult with me.

Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) refer to membership role as “the decision to take part in a social setting rather than react passively to a role assigned by others” (115).

²⁷ I had in fact interviewed two of these tutors during the pilot.

After a few days my awareness of the lack of institutional support influenced my decision to take on an active pastoral role. Consequently, for the remainder of the instructor training component, I participated in the collaborative learning activities and training assignments while acting as chauffeur for the tutors and instructors, who often needed to visit the resource centre or report to CONAFE's administrative offices. During this period, I was also involved in the inauguration of a new hostel for instructors; I became part of a lunch rota devised by the tutors and I helped the tutors address the organisational practicalities of the one-week teaching placements for the instructors. This involved quite a lot of travelling, both within the city and in its surrounding areas; this travel would have been very difficult without access to a car. I also helped to organise various birthday parties and the end-of-training party. When I entered the field as a researcher, the official role that I had given myself was to improve the programme, but that identity soon became submerged in a situational identity that evolved from my personal involvement with instructor and tutor welfare. There were, of course, ethical and practical aspects associated with my presence. I discuss these in the second part of the chapter.

4.5.1. Participant observation and field relations

Almost all literature describing ethnographic methods will locate participant observation at the heart of the research process, identifying the researcher as the key research instrument. Brown and Dowling (1998), Walsh (in Seale ed.1998) talk about the differing roles the observer/participant researcher might adopt and the associated problems that these roles entail. These vary from the risk of going native, associated with being a complete participant, to ethnocentrism associated with being a complete observer. These two positions represent the extremes of the observer participation continuum; most people negotiate a position somewhere in-between (Brown et al 1998).

By the end of instructor training I felt my presence in the research setting could best be described as “naive participant,”²⁸ (Walsh, in Seale 2001 ed: 222) in-as-much as my presence no longer had a noticeable impact on the nature of observed behaviour. In fact, my absence appeared to have more of an impact than my presence. Reacting and responding sincerely to the individual needs of those involved mediated a level of trust that allowed access to insights which might otherwise not have been available.

Unfortunately, my situational identity, as a participant observer in the farm classroom was not so easily established. Memories of many years of class teaching, combined with the instructors’ youthfulness and lack of experience, made me overly sensitive to their roles as community teachers. I didn’t want to intimidate them as they negotiated their newly assigned identity as community teachers. Instead, I tried to situate myself as a helper, willing to assist in whatever way possible. If I could not identify a helpful non-intimidating role then, at least, I endeavoured to make myself as unobtrusive as possible by quietly writing field notes. I am all too aware that note taking, at the back of the classroom is intimidating, and I have no doubt that some of the observed behaviour was a direct result of my presence. That said, on a more positive note, this position inadvertently allowed for the compilation of a “thick primary record” (Carspecken 1996) on classroom routines; this proved to be exceedingly helpful during the analysis process.

The above accounts might suggest a linear process that ultimately resulted in successful and effective participant observation. This would be misleading. The problems associated with this approach, as noted above, began before I even entered the field. Negotiating access, prior to my pilot, I was viewed with suspicion, given my privileged contact with the director, my foreign status, my class and my gender. None of these positions could have been avoided, and were resolved only when I had gained the trust of those with whom I was working. There were however, other aspects of my role as a researcher that I could have negotiated, had I been more experienced. My research

²⁸ Walsh describes this as the researcher remaining self-conscious, but the incompetent observer has now been replaced. He/she now has an awareness of what has been learned, how it has been learned and the social transactions that inform the production of knowledge.

questions, as explained to my original “gatekeeper,” (Walsh, in Seale ed. 2001) were not clearly defined; an evaluation of the programme suggested, at some level, a measure of success or failure - a judgment of worthiness. On reflection I suspect that this generated defensiveness on the part of Don Guillermo, the original coordinator. This oversight almost prevented access to the two local farms. The ethical implications of this experience are discussed below.

4.5.2. Field notes

My proficiency with classroom field notes did not extend to my many conversations with instructors and tutors. Given the spontaneous and informal nature of these exchanges, many of which occurred in the car, I was continuously challenged, firstly, by memory retention, since you definitely can’t write when driving, and secondly, by my dual roles of researcher and confidante for the instructors, often causing my reluctance to commit their revelations to paper.

The term “field notes” suggests a deceptively straightforward process of note-taking in-situ. Based on my own personal experience in the field and post-field, this couldn’t be further from the truth. Setting aside ethical concerns for the moment, the practical and technical aspects involved in writing field notes are enormous, and can really be rationalised and resolved only when there is methodological awareness and clarity (when, where and how field notes are written and what their place will be in the final analysis).

Another complex and much-debated aspect of field notes is their indispensable role in shaping and framing the ethnographic text. In this respect, they have become a central consideration in recent discussions on ethnographic representation (Clifford and Marcus 1986).

As discussed above, classroom observation facilitated a systematic note-taking process; however, I found informal conversations and interactions outside of the classroom

context very challenging; that is, the option of taking out a notebook to record the details of a conversation, a gesture I would consider unacceptable, was not available. Certainly, the option of finding a quiet space to record what was said as soon as possible after the interaction was viable on a practical level, but this strategy often presented ethical conflicts. I personally felt a sense of betrayal recording confidential conversations in the secrecy of a post-conversation context.

I also went through a few experimental phases writing up notes in various creative writing styles; at one point I even experimented with poetry. All of this converged, however, into what can best be described as “unruly” field notes, that is,

“. . . in- process writings produced in initial versions solely or primarily for the ethnographer, reflecting shifting concerns, contradictory claims and varied writing styles accumulating day by day without close preplanning and overall structure” (Emerson et al 2000 :356, 365);

a format that has made cross-referencing during analysis a rather labour-intensive process.

These difficulties were never fully resolved, and I continue to have an uncomfortable relationship with this tool. In fact, I now lean towards the possibility proffered by Emerson et al (2002) that “fieldnotes may even stymie in-depth understanding, getting in the way of deep experience, intuitive understandings and coming to grasps with the big picture” (365). While I fully appreciate the immense benefits of well-constructed and well-organised field notes that can be revisited time and time again, long after fieldwork has been completed, my own personal experience, for which I make no general claims, seems to suggest that participation, without worrying about writing up the details, can facilitate more intuitive understandings and insights. These intuitions and perceptions from less-detailed field notes can sometimes lead to greater understanding of the cultural context. Sometimes overly-careful note-taking can prohibit

spontaneous immersion and participation in the field. Having said this, I did manage to fill three thick notebooks during the course of my fieldwork.

4.5.3. Interviews

Fortunately, my difficulty with field notes did not extend to interviewing as a methodological tool. Ongoing involvement in activities outside of the official learning context²⁹ seemed to structure a fluid transition from conversation to interviews. They always seemed to be extensions, or revisiting of, previous conversations, and didn't require discussion of previously-assigned topics. I conducted and recorded extensive in-depth interviews with sixteen instructors and five tutors. While relevant topics seemed to unfold without pre-planning, at some point during the interview I addressed the following issues:

- 1) I always asked them about their personal reasons for working on MEIPIM;
- 2) I encouraged them to talk about their experiences on the programme and their hopes and aspirations for the immediate and distant future;
- 3) I enquired specifically about their perception of migrant workers, pre and post CONAFE;
- 4) Following on from this question, I usually asked them to talk about their understanding of intercultural education;
- 5) I often finished the interview by asking them about their expectations for the children. I generally related this question to the human rights projects that form part of MEIPIM's curriculum.

The success of my interviews with tutors and instructors, based on day-to-day reciprocal sharing, contrasted starkly with the formality of the parental interviews. Whilst I was able to minimise status difference in-situ with instructors and tutors, this was not

²⁹ Outside of the classroom, activities included attending parties for *El Dia del Nino* (children's day) fund-raising events, baptisms, first communions, graduation ceremonies and school trips. I also spent a significant amount of time, before and after classes, talking to the instructors and tutors.

possible with parents. Gender undoubtedly acted as a significant filter with male parents; however, my “assigned” official status appeared to be a far more significant obstacle. This perception seemed to prevent going beyond a communication strategy that rural people in Northern Ireland, especially during the height of the troubles, described as “tell them what they want to hear and whatever you say, say nothing.”³⁰

I was, however, able to establish a limited degree of trust with two communities through visiting places of origin and participating in festivities; nevertheless, the interviews are stilted and fragmented in comparison with the instructor interviews. My nervousness, combined with their reticence made for a fairly limited dialogue, based as the interviews were, on a more formal question-answer format than the open dialogue that mediated instructor interviews.

The circumstances determining the differences between these two types of interviews serve to highlight the importance that feminist methodology places on reciprocity. Fontana and Frey point out that

“ . . . the emphasis is shifting to allow the development of a closer relation between the interviewer and respondent; researchers are attempting to minimise status difference and are doing away with the traditional hierarchical situation in interviewing” (in Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 45).

In this way, feminist methodology gives permission to interviewees to be themselves, to show emotions and sensitivity, and to share details from their own personal history and professional life. Feminist interviewing practice, however, has also been criticised for ignoring the underlying positivistic assumption that might still prevail in a ‘feeling’ interview; that is, the notion that somewhere out there we are going to find objective knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Silverman (1993, 1997) also points to the

³⁰ This is the title of a Seamus Heaney poem; however, before this poem was written it was given as standard paternal advice throughout my formative years.

contested nature of 'feeling' interviewing, stipulating the necessity for clear analytical positions on whether we treat "the interview as a direct line to authentic experience or whether we see it as a constructed narrative". He also argues that we "run the risk of sacrificing profundity and simplicity for the trivial and gossipy" (Silverman 2000:36). My argument here is not with the notion of access to authentic or inauthentic experience depending on the degree of formality involved, but rather with the quality of the data generated. The long unstructured in-depth interviews I had with the instructors and tutors, where I took an active role, were a direct result of months of shared empathic experiences and understanding. The multiple meanings attached to their narratives can be traced and analysed. By contrast, the data generated from the parental interviews are one-dimensional. In this respect, while the interviews provide some valuable insights, they are limited and rely primarily on inferential deductions, rather than lived experiences of parental narratives.

4.6. Some ethical considerations

As mentioned above, I was an inexperienced ethnographer. In fact, this research represents a first attempt to do qualitative research outside of the classroom context. As I reflect on this process, I am aware that in many ways my inexperience was, in unforeseen ways, beneficial to the research process.

As I also mention above, my formative years, more than forty years ago, were in rural Ireland. This is not to suggest that I carry a romantic ideal around in my head about rural people; quite the opposite. I am much too aware of their complexity and their readiness to judge the outsider. Also, since I was the publican's daughter, the notion that the customer, my bread and butter, is always right, no matter how troublesome he or she might be, still prevails. On the one hand, this worked to my advantage since I feel comfortable being around rural people, sober or otherwise. On the other hand, conducting and recording formal interviews with campesinos generated an almost-

debilitating discomfort. This personal discomfort was exacerbated further by the confusion that ensued when I implemented IOE policy on informed consent.

Informed consent, as noted above triggered confusion in the early stages of the research process when negotiating access to the farms. The farm managers were dismissive of the process and I was too uncertain to insist that they sign the papers I had prepared. I later realised that this was not to be an isolated incident. During the initial stages of the pilot phase, unsure of where my research goals were taking me, I didn't feel comfortable asking for informed consent from the instructors. However, when I made an initial visit to a community, I asked Don Gerardo, the President of the School Committee, to sign a consent form prior to interviewing him. I realised immediately that I had made a terrible mistake. He was visibly uncomfortable, muttered something about not knowing the right answers to my questions, and walked away from me. This fiasco was based on two unforgivable oversights on my part. Firstly, Don Gerardo, like most of the parents I met during the research process did not have access to an educational service as a child (see Chap. 7). Consequently, he could neither read the consent form nor put his written signature. Secondly, even if he had access to literacy classes, I doubt very much that he would have signed the form. The relationship between rural communities and urban bureaucrats in Mexico is mediated by an historical mistrust that appears to rest on an implicit maxim; you do not put your thumb print on any piece of paper. Don Gerardo's reaction played a significant role in my decision not to make parents focal informants. I tried later to repair the damage caused by my request, however I am certain that I was viewed with suspicion from that day onward.

Informed consent with the instructors/tutor also generated confusion. At the end of the pilot phase, I issued a questionnaire to the instructors, including an informed consent permit for those who wanted to continue participating in the research process. Sixteen instructors filled in the questionnaire and two gave written consent. I discussed this with the Academic Coordinator, who explained that it wasn't culturally appropriate. He explained that a signed document might be viewed with suspicion and may be used as evidence against instructors at a later point. As the empirical evidence described in

Chapters 6 and 7 suggest, these assertions were not without good reason in the institutional context. As a result of these experiences, the following year when I started fieldwork, I made a point of emphasising anonymity and confidentiality to both parents and instructors/tutors participating in the research process. I did not, however, ask for a signed paper with informed consent.

Of course, this discomfort with formalising the interview process with rural people also needs to be contextualised in more generalised considerations having to do with power relations, such as, my social class, gender, and ethnic identity in relation to migrant agricultural communities. I needed to monitor carefully the extent to which my professional, economic and class status acted as filters in my relationships, not only with the communities, but also with tutors and instructors. Initially, because I was an over-anxious researcher, and possibly far too reliant on the letter of the ethnographic law, the rigour I brought to my interaction with parents blinded what Bourdieu calls the sociological “feel or ‘eye.” The sociological “eye” permits the researcher to assess the asymmetric power structures mediating social interaction, without losing sight of personal intuition (Bourdieu cited in Emerson et al 2000: 378). For example, I once momentarily debated donating clothes to the families. That moment of doubt, I am relieved to say, brought me back to my intuitive senses. The realisation that my personal ethics were in conflict with professional ethics, served as a reminder that my relationship with those involved would not only be asymmetric, but would also be inauthentic. That awareness made an important contribution to this process.

As noted above, feminist discourse on research processes has legitimated authentic relationships based on reciprocity and intimacy. Nevertheless, it’s important to remember that authentic relationships in the field are not any different from authentic relationships outside of the field, that is, criss-crossed and mediated by all kinds of complex personal and structural considerations. As a result, the emotional vulnerability associated with personal compromise is also applicable to ethnographic relationships. Obvious matters, such as a request to provide a financial loan and having to refuse, are emotionally and practically messy and can make one wish that they were a million miles

from the field; being asked to stand as a godmother for a child, when the possibilities for future contact are highly unlikely, can cause all kinds of emotional turmoil. And on a more subtle level, as described above, the cultural selves that are with us, whether we are inside or outside the field, can play havoc with our research relationships. The power relations mediating my professional status with the instructors, for example, were much easier to monitor and negotiate than my post-colonial rural Ireland subjectivity in relation to the agricultural migrants. These rural Mexican farmers on a symbolic level represented the ‘bread and butter’ of my formative childhood years, an emotional entanglement that made it extremely challenging for me to ask people for a formal interview. However, it is precisely this kind of messy emotional vulnerability that provides insights into the social complexity of the interpersonal dynamics mediating relationships. This kind of awareness eventually allowed for a more meaningful dialogue and a better understanding of those I was working with.

My relationship with the instructors and tutors, as noted above, was definitely less challenging and less complex. I am comfortable with my professional identity as a teacher and teacher-trainer, albeit in a different socio-cultural context. I was also at ease with my concerns for the teachers’ physical and social well-being; a response that initially mediated our relationship. That said, in the institutional context I had to be particularly rigorous in monitoring ethical considerations that emerged from the close and trusting relationships that we established. Institutions are based on hierarchies and in the institutional context tutors position instructors as subordinates. Tutor evaluations, could, and sometimes did, determine whether instructors continued working on the programme or not. Because of my intimacy with tutors and instructors I was sometimes privy to both sides of internal conflicts. This level of confidence required a great deal of sensitive handling. Whilst on some occasions I was able to mediate successful outcomes, on other occasions I felt I couldn’t and shouldn’t intervene. In this sense, I didn’t have an overall ethical policy of dealing with institutional conflict; rather it was more a question of what Frey and Fontana (2000) describe as “situational ethics.”

I also struggled throughout the process with the degree of deception/disclosure when I explained my research goals. This, of course was never resolved. How on earth do you explain to a community or even to the instructors that I am interested in how you make sense of these global discourses in a local context; and I am therefore going to analyse what you do and what you say in order to identify possibilities and limitations for educational equity. I settled for offering the questionable hope of improving the quality of the service. This level of disclosure however, in relation to the families, was disturbing for me. One parent implied that I might be like the politicians who visit rural communities close to elections

“ . . . and promise many things if we vote for him. We vote for him, nothing happens, and we never see him again. Then another comes and offers to help if we vote for him, so we do and again nothing changes. Now we don't bother to vote

(Purple field notebook: p14: 13th Aug 2003)

Tragically, the fact that he related this tale to me suggests that researchers are probably tarred with the same cynical brush. This would hardly be surprising; despite the increase of research projects based in indigenous communities in the past two decades, any assessment of the material and social reality of these communities can only conclude that material and social relations remain unchanged or have deteriorated.

On a more personal level, however, I feel that my involvement in this research process has significantly influenced my teaching at the Veracruz State University, where, in an indirect way, I may have an impact on how young people conduct their research in rural/indigenous communities. Teaching applied ethnography, the course aims to provide opportunities to explore the power relations and the underlying political economy that influence the cultural practices that they seek to examine. While I avoid imposing a pre-determined research position, this critical-theoretical dimension may have some impact on the students' intercultural education research projects and contribute to increased possibilities for transformative social action.

Finally, and perhaps the most surprising ethical conflict that I confronted, relates to finishing fieldwork and beginning the writing process. At the point of interpretation and representation, I experienced extreme discomfort about imposing my voice on what is a collective and shared experience. I am aware that the writing process involves the same challenges as trans-cultural translation of interviews. In this sense, my representation of MEIPIM needs to be understood as “relational: an inscription of communicative processes that exist historically between subjects in relations of power” (Clifford et al 1986:15). While these power relations are unavoidable during the writing process, I have tried in the analysis chapters to include as much interview transcript as might be acceptable in a doctoral thesis so that actors’ voices can be heard first-hand. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the use of these transcripts involves a sort of double translation as the translator’s voice is my own. I have, however, as I explained above, used ongoing consultations with bilinguals, polyglots and monolinguals from a diverse range of gender, class and ethnic groups to cross-reference the translation process. Likewise, given that this is a critical ethnography, my analysis of “Who speaks? Who writes? When and where? With or to whom? Under what institutional and historical constraints” (Clifford et al 1986:15), attempts to address the historical, political and social framework of what is being said. In this way, I hope to minimise the epistemic violence embedded in the power relations of textual production.

4.7. Analysis of data

Data analysis was a long and labour-intensive process. While I had tried to allow ongoing data analysis to guide my fieldwork, I soon realised that this wasn’t possible on a practical level. I was returning from the coffee farm late in the evening and returning to the sugar cane farm early in the morning. As a result, most of the formal data analysis happened after fieldwork was completed. I used the following steps to structure this procedure:

Stage 1: I transcribed my interviews. I didn't translate them, because the Spanish versions were closer to the socio-cultural contexts where they were conducted. I also transcribed selected passages from recorded sessions during tutor training. I read through my field notes and transcribed about half of them (these were in English); and I read and systemised a document prepared by the tutors for an evaluation exercise requested by the academic coordinator. Once the interviews were transcribed, I combined them with the transcribed fieldnotes, recordings and documents and had everything bound into a book with a wide margin on the left of each page. This rather cumbersome text became daily and nightly reading for about a month. As I read and re-read I started to play with ideas jotting them down in the margins.

Stage 2: After multiple re-readings, I began to identify overall categories. As these emerged I began to construct a colour coded data bank, on the computer. This process helped to identify some preliminary and tentative data patterns that I was able to put into categories. I labelled these categories using phrases from my informants that seemed to suggest an overall tentative theme, e.g., "forgotten communities;" "the worst of the worst;" "cutting and sticking as group activities;" "copying," "afraid to tell the truth," "I too have tail that can be stood on." (What these phrases suggested for me is made clearer below)

Stage 3: The coding procedure in Stage Two, while useful for familiarising myself with data detail, was too fragmented, extensive and unwieldy. I decided, therefore, to try to develop broader, more manageable and less fragmented categories. The broader conceptual categories that began to emerge, however, remained site specific; that is, pedagogical strategies in classrooms, institutional relations during instructor/tutor training, gender relations on farms, etc. That said some of these broader categories began to overlap with broader data categories from other sites.

Stage 4: At this point I started to cross-reference broader site-specific categories to formulate overall interpretive frameworks. As broader multiple-sited categories

emerged. I kept some of the original labels (informant's phrases) used in the first stage and tagged them with a tentative interpretive/conceptual frameworks, for example, "Lost and cheated"/ **social relations**; "I want to leave a footprint"/ **institutional power relations**; "these projects don't work" / **symbolic violence**; "in the country you won't die of hunger"/**rural- urban divide**, etc.

Stage 5: Finally, after I gathered and triangulated the data from multiple sites, four broad conceptual categories emerged to structure my theoretical/analytical lens. I identify these conceptual frameworks here using data fragments to describe the categories they evolved from. These fragments/titles become clearer in the analysis chapters. I found it useful to maintain them as they served to contextualise the conceptual frameworks they denote.

1) **The power of pedagogy:** *"If the idea is to teach competencies, then let's not mess with projects;"*

2) **Social and material relations on the farm:** *"The teachers give the children bad looks and refuse the food;"*

3) **Institutional power relations and resistance:** *"I too have a tail they can stand on;"*

4) **Broader social structures:** *"So you see the future and then you don't see it."*

The overall selection of data and data analysis was determined by the value-orientation described at the beginning of this chapter. These values emphasised social justice and the possibility for transformative action. I needed, therefore, to analyse what people say and do in relation to the broader power-dynamics mediating their actions and their narratives.

In rural Mexico, the historical, political and social framework that determine social practices and local relations are further complicated by the epistemic violence of

colonial and post colonial histories (Mignolo 2007), intertwined with international development initiatives (Lewin 2007). The social positionalities evoked in informants' narratives and actions, therefore must be situated within these historical and political frameworks. While this involved visiting and revisiting data over a prolonged period of time, as a critical ethnographer, there was no alternative route to analysing what people say and do. I needed to understand the “consequential making of meaning” in the local context, and to explore the implications of these local ‘sense making processes’ for the official goals of global intercultural educational policy, educational equity and social justice.

4.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to describe how I reached the decision to use a critical-ethnographic research framework, and how I then proceeded to apply this approach in an educational development context in rural Veracruz. I have justified my choice of methodology by arguing that, in the current global climate, qualitative research is increasingly important for understanding how global policy is being mediated by local values and concerns, and how this mediation might function to re-articulate and reshape policy as a local practice.

I also described how my critical-ethnographic value-orientation emerged from my own struggle against oppression. In this way, I declared my commitment to a research approach that is openly political. Critical social theory and the attendant assumption that discourse is mediated by the social relations of capitalist consumption that in turn, mediates the relationship between the signified and the signifier (Kinloch et al 2001), is central to my value-oriented research approach.

Of course, this value-orientation is not exclusive of my presence in the research process, as a translator of language and as translator of culture, empowered to signify and re-signify, local discourses and practices. In this respect, I have also aimed for

transparency in relation to the power structures that might have mediated the methodological discourse and organisational practices I brought to the study.

Asymmetrical power structures and relations cannot be completely eradicated; however I have used such techniques as complete anonymity for research sites and subjects to protect the interests of those involved. I also describe personal attempts to address some of the material challenges that informants confront on a daily basis. These gestures might or might not have lessened the physical challenges experienced by participants working on this programme. It was important to point out, however, that personal involvement at that this level required careful ethical monitoring to avoid institutional or personal repercussions for both research participants and researcher.

Finally, in describing my analysis procedure, I demonstrated how a critical ethnographic value-orientation requires that all data be situated in the historically and socially-constituted power relations mediating what local actors say and do. In this sense, the data needs to be understood as representative of encounters that simultaneously articulate conflict and exchange within spaces that are ruled by power imbalances. In this way, rather than seeing subjects as contradictory and confused - a form of epistemic colonial violence - it becomes possible to access the multiplicity of subject positions from which individuals might be responding.

Chapter 5

MEIPIM: a documentary examination

5.1. Introduction

High migration rates are a reality in Mexico, as they are in many parts of the world. The implications for education, therefore, are immense. Educational research in Mexico related to migration tends to focus on bi-national education programmes between Mexico and the U.S. (Ramirez in Sanudo et al 2008), rather than Mexican education initiatives designed to address the educational needs that result from internal migratory flows. As a result, research on educational programmes for migrant agricultural communities within Mexico is limited (Taracena 2003, Bey 2003). The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the development of MEIPIM as an intercultural educational discourse, and policy designed to address the educational needs generated by internal migratory practices.

The overall aim of the thesis is to understand teacher negotiation of intercultural policy and discourse. To achieve this aim it is first necessary to examine the policy discourses they are negotiating. To this end, a thorough examination of the MEIPIM literature is central to the research process.

The documentary examination undertaken in this chapter describes how MEIPIM's policy development adheres to global intercultural educational values and recommendations. I suggest, therefore, that the international criteria informing policy development allowed for the recodification of migratory practices. I also suggest that discursive recodification of migrant practices permitted policy-makers to identify and privilege cultural, rather than socio-economic injustice, as the primary cause of

educational inequity. As a result, the identified educational needs, and the concomitant policy recommendations are embedded largely within a cultural diversity discourse. I argue that this discourse appears to have a contradictory relationship with the political economy that determines agricultural migration and that generates educational inequity in the first place.

I also argue that MEIPIM's cultural politics engender pedagogical and epistemological policy positions that are often contradictory and confused. An examination of the policy documents suggests that these tensions remain unresolved across the policy literature. I conclude, therefore, that the implications for those responsible for policy enactment are immense and need to be understood.

The chapter is organised as follows:

Working from the primary and secondary documentary sources listed below, I provide an account of how and why MEIPIM was first developed as a policy to address the educational requirements of agricultural migrant communities. I suggest that the literature appears to structure the migration process as a "a poverty/privilege," trajectory that functions as a narrative-accounting device to justify the migratory practices undertaken by agricultural day labourers and their families. I also suggest that the poverty/privilege trajectory embedded in the literature resignifies migration as a privileged form of travel that exposes the children to cultural diversity; an enriching learning resource. The ethical and epistemological tensions and contradictions that seem to emerge from this cultural diversity discourse are also discussed. The final part of the chapter discusses the instrumentalisation of culture in MEIPIM's policy discourse to justify an intercultural pedagogic approach and what this might mean for teacher negotiation.

5.2. An intercultural educational model for migrant children: documentary sources

In 1999, the authors of MEIPIM, in conjunction with UNICEF, published a book, Intercultural Education: A proposal for migrant children in Mexico, reviewing the educational initiatives that shaped educational policy for agricultural migrants from the 1980s onwards (Bonilla, Garduno, Guerra, Gonzalez and Rodriguez 1999). This text also traces the emergence and development of MEIPIM and provides details of how and why it developed as an intercultural migrant education programme, and why the pedagogical and curricular policy approach was developed. The book has been an influential and determining resource document for all those involved with the programme. Two of the authors, Garduno and Rodriguez, subsequently presented and published papers outlining the philosophical, epistemological and pedagogical basis of MEIPIM (Garduno 2000, Rodriguez 2002).

The book, Intercultural Education: A proposal for migrant children in Mexico, the two presentation papers and the curricular and evaluative guidelines for the programme provide the principal data sources for this documentary analysis. A report published by CONAFE in 1997, and a report published by the Ministry of Education (SEP 1998), as well as two internationally-published research papers (Taracena 2002, Bey 2002), are also referenced as secondary data sources.

5.2.1. CONAFE (The National Council for Educational Advancement)

MEIPIM is administered by CONAFE (The National Council for Educational Advancement). CONAFE was put in place by The Department of Education (SEP) in the 1960s to address the challenges presented by rural education in Mexico. While it is officially considered a sub-department of the SEP, CONAFE's funding structures pertain mostly to international agencies, principally the World Bank (CONAFE 1996). Consequently, CONAFE has traditionally been viewed, both nationally and internationally, as an educational body where more progressive international policy

recommendations can be introduced and explored (CONAFE 1996). While CONAFE's financial independence has benefitted SEP, in as much as CONAFE often functions to address global educational initiatives, financial autonomy has also generated a degree of tension, particularly in relation to standards. Educational programmes administered by CONAFE are generally understood to be of a lower standard than SEP programmes. As will be made evident later in the thesis, CONAFE's lower standards have consequences for policy continuity between the two departments; with specific implications for MEIPIM policy enactment (Martin and Solórzano 2003).

That said, the first migrant educational programme was initiated in 1980 by the Department of Education (SEP). During the following decade, numerous projects and various government departments, including CONAFE, were involved in providing services for these communities. In 1996, however, evaluative research indicated that migrant education projects in general were failing to address the educational needs of migrant communities (Bonilla et al 1999).

On the basis of this evidence, CONAFE, in conjunction with UNICEF, set about designing an innovative programme that would have greater relevance for the challenging educational needs presented by migrant communities. Borrowing principally from the CONAFE/UNICEF text referenced above, the following section provides a synopsis of the authors' account of how and why MEIPIM was formulated and established as an official policy to address the crisis in migrant education.

5.2.2. MEIPIM policy development

In 1991, CONAFE implemented a compensatory education programme to address educational lag in rural areas; the lag in rural areas was strongly associated with Mexico's traditional authoritarian classroom practices. For that reason, 'El Programa para Abatir el Rezago Educativo,' (PARE: Programme to Address Educational Lag) favoured a more democratic teaching approach. This approach spearheaded the introduction of pedagogical reform based on constructivist ideas into Mexico's

traditional transmission teaching model (Tattoo 1999). As a result, notwithstanding research demonstrating the challenges for rural teachers presented by child-centered education,³¹ PARE served to establish child-centred constructivist pedagogy as the methodological template for all CONAFE's rural education programmes, including the migrant educational programmes that preceded MEIPIM. In 1996, however, an impact evaluation study identified the following challenges for migrant educational services. (Bonilla et al 1999):

- Student mobility determines intermittent attendance, resulting in incompleteness of planned curricular activities;
- In some of the agricultural camps the increased migrant population during intensive periods of harvesting results in an increased student population, greater than previously planned for, obliging instructors to modify curriculum and classroom organisation;
- Some instructors are unable to implement multi-level activities because of the lack of adequate classroom space;
- Where cultural and linguistic diversity are evident in the classroom situation, instructor training is not adequate to address these challenges;
- Discrimination among migrant groups is evident in the classroom. Consequently, school attendance is affected, not only by work commitments, but also by discriminatory attitudes in the class;
- Travelling makes it difficult for migrants to keep official documents (school attendance and exam results) in safe-keeping. Registration, evaluation and certification are therefore haphazard; most of the time the children do not receive official recognition for academic completion.

³¹ Tattoo (1999) concludes that, while PARE successfully produced appropriate curriculum materials and raised awareness among teachers for the need to consider pupils' knowledge as a point of departure for meaningful learning to occur, "it had failed to teach teachers how to teach pupils by allowing concerns with efficiency and accountability to stand in the way" (Tattoo 1999:18). Resonating with voices from Africa and Asia, Tattoo's position highlights the implications involved for the changing role of the teacher in constructivist approaches. The necessity for long-term intensive training is emphasised, given that knowledge construction, rather than transmission teaching, challenges long-held assumptions in teacher education in Mexico. The research points to urgency in Mexico for rapid educational change which disregards the complexity of the change processes, thus jeopardising the success and the integrity of the constructivist approach (ibid.).

Subsequent research to address the above observations, carried out in various states, led to the following recommendations:

- To increase the number of instructors available to accommodate unanticipated increase in pupil numbers;
- To include instructors who speak an indigenous language;
- To emphasise co-operative learning during training so that the multi-level/mixed ability approach favoured by the programme, may be facilitated;
- To increase administrative flexibility for registration, evaluation and certification.

These recommendations, along with policy guidelines published by the Department of Education in early 1998, provided the pedagogical and curricular frameworks for MEIPIM policy formulation. Combining the constructivist child-centred approaches used in CONAFE's basic education programmes with the above modifications, and following the SEP guidelines, the authors describe how they set about designing a programme that would be relevant to the children's migratory lifestyle. In particular, they emphasise how programme flexibility aims to accommodate the children's work and travel commitments. Likewise, they explain how curriculum content reflects their lived reality while the intercultural /constructivist pedagogy encourages and supports intercultural communication. MEIPIM was piloted later that year in 1998 and was officially accredited in 1999 (Taracena 2002).

5.3. Defining and describing migratory practices: a socio-cultural analysis

'Intercultural Education: a proposal for Migrant Children.' is divided into six chapters. The first two chapters provide migrant community profiles, migratory typologies and a social/psychological analysis of migrant culture. The associated challenges for educational provision are also outlined. The third chapter, drawing on the presented profiles and identified challenges, provides an ontological and epistemological justification for intercultural education as the preferred route to successful educational provision. The remaining three chapters describe how the

curricular and pedagogical approach is structured. For the purposes of the documentary examination undertaken in this chapter, I will draw principally from the first three chapters.

Chapter One states that the reasons for migration are poverty, failed harvests, absence of a productive infrastructure and the depletion of natural resources at the places of origin. Salaried work on industrialised agricultural farms is described as an employment option for landless campesinos and owners of small agricultural farms. The decision to migrate is characterised by various determining factors. These include the type of crop, the duration of the harvesting period, climatic conditions and the historical tradition and culture of migration associated with certain groups (Bonilla et al. 1999: pp 15-25).

An increase in migration among indigenous populations is noted from the 1970s onwards; however, the authors point out that because of rapidly increasing demographic displacement precise statistics are not available. In the 1980s the ethnic diversity among migrant agricultural communities included Mixtecos, Triquis, Zapotecos, Purepechas, Nahuas, and Tlapanecos. They are quoted as constituting 20% to 30% of the migrant population at the time of the book's publication (Bonilla et al 1999: 18). The increase in family migration is correlated with the increase in indigenous agricultural migration. Family migration, as described in Chapter 4 of this thesis (pp 113-114), is framed in three migratory typologies. These typologies are categorised as follows:

Pendulum: Migrants leave their places of origin for 4 to 6 month periods and then return to their villages;

Swallow: Migrants do not have a fixed workplace. They migrate to different agricultural farms according to work availability;

Established: They reside permanently on the agricultural camp (Taracena 2003: 302-303).

The migratory typologies are followed by a detailed description of the working conditions on the camps. I quote this description in full.

“Migrant day workers are provided with somewhere to live either on the agricultural camps or in hostels close to the camp. Although there are exceptions, living quarters are usually long galleries divided into small individual spaces for each family (five or six people). They are usually constructed from zinc panels, cardboard or recycled rubbish. In general the families sleep on the floor where there is little protection from the elements. Separate kitchens for food preparation are not usually provided. The families frequently cook in the living and sleeping area. They usually cook on wood or coal fires. The smoke causes problems for the occupants. Toilets if they exist are communal and insufficient. Recurrent illnesses, particularly respiratory and gastrointestinal, are related to malnutrition and contact with agricultural chemicals” (Bonilla et al. 1999: 21-22).

Working conditions and the allocation of accommodation are acknowledged as being based on discriminatory practices. Ethnicity, age and gender determine salaries and quality of accommodation: “. . . for example, certain indigenous groups are given accommodation with fewer services or further away. They are paid less and are given the most difficult tasks” (Bonilla et al 1999: 22).

This section of the first chapter concludes by stating that, in spite of these dangerous and discriminatory working conditions, the families receive only a minimal wage, which allows them to return to their villages, work their own land, organise village festivities, weddings, baptisms and resolve their debts, in other words, “survive” (Bonilla et al 1999: 22).

5.4. The power of discursive control: establishing an authoritative voice

The material conditions described above, and those I encountered during field work, are by any measure, fairly shocking. Arguably, the impact that these conditions

might have on programme design and implementation needs to be considered. This concern, however, in the consulted literature is not the case. Instead, agricultural migrant profiles, detailing consistent poverty, associated work hazards and illnesses, inadequate housing and social discrimination do not extend beyond the introductory profiles and are notable for their absence in the remainder of the consulted texts.

In Bonilla et al. (1999) the detailed analysis of migration, the precise identification of migratory typologies and their descriptive labels, the listing of ethnic groups participating in this practice, the emergence of family migratory practices, the climatic issues and choice of crop determining migratory decisions and the matter-of-fact description of discriminatory practices on the agricultural camps converge to establish an official frame of reference for engaging with agricultural migration issues. What begins to emerge in the first chapter, therefore, is an authoritative voice concerned with establishing migration as a specialist subject. As a result, migration is framed within a body of specialised knowledge; the effect of this expertise is to subordinate a more spontaneous or personalised involvement with this issue.

I suggest that the desired effect of the authoritative language used in the first chapter is to construct an image of a community involved in systematic decision-making processes to enact migration. The narrative development suggests that these decision-making processes address poverty considerations at the place of origin and climatic and crop type considerations in the place of destination. The narrative also suggests that all these considerations are framed in designated migratory routes and typologies; an under-analysed poverty is acknowledged as one of many possible considerations in the decision to migrate, while the options available on the agricultural camps are portrayed as the solutions to these considerations.

In sum, these descriptive categories constitute the fixed discursive parameters of the migration jigsaw, and appear to shape a particular engagement with seasonal agricultural migration as a social practice. The technical language used to describe migratory practices, the reasons given for these practices and the organisation of this

information converge to encode specific values which control and regulate how the reader engages with seasonal agricultural migratory issues. This analysis resonates with arguments that link documentary evidence with the discursive construction and shaping of social institutions and practices of social control and regulation (Tonkiss in Seale ed. 1998:247). I suggest that in the context of MEIPIM policy development the discursive control and regulation of migrant agricultural practices embody the power to constitute and make natural migratory norms.

It is important to point out that I am not disputing the field of knowledge being established in these texts, nor am I disparaging their usefulness, albeit limited and specific to specialised areas of study. What I am questioning are the silences and gaps where alternative interpretations have been excluded by omission. What follows, therefore, is an alternative account of migration, based on critical engagement with, and examination of, the increasing demand for seasonal agricultural workers. This account engages with the underlying political-economic structures that might inform the social and ethnic-specific modes of exploitation that characterise seasonal agricultural work.

5.4.1. An Alternative Account

I suggest that the analytical framework used in this text that references unanalysed poverty at the place of origin as the cause of migration, and employment on the agricultural farms as the solution to these problems, embodies a comparative device. This device functions as a justificatory mechanism to rationalise the deplorable working and living conditions on the agricultural farms, including child labour. I propose, therefore, that if we were to shift the analytical lens, away from community needs at their place of origin, to focus on the labour needs on the agricultural export camps, reasons for migration can be refocused. Labour needs on the industrialised agricultural export farms recontextualises migration in an analytical framework that addresses transnational capitalism and the racial division of labour. This moves the analysis away from a discourse based on climatic change, crop availability and types and categories of migration, to a framework that is concerned with the precise number of workers

required to harvest the quotas of tobacco/coffee/sugarcane to meet export demands (Salinas 2004:5). In other words, it shifts the focus to the labour needs of transnational capitalism. The analysis at the place of origin, free from climatic conditions, crop types, migratory routes, etc. can now be summarised in one very direct and simple question “¿Cuanta miseria es necesaria para hacer la decision de migrar?” (Salinas 2004:5). (Trans: How much misery is necessary before making the decision to migrate?)

Acknowledging the racialised and classed division of labour that characterises the industrialised export farms generates an engagement with seasonal migration that requires other issues to be addressed; the emergence of these farms in the wake of international trade agreements and the impact these agricultural export plants have had on micro-economies. These concerns generate important questions; why intensive export farming, under what conditions and what impact on small rural farms? These considerations structure a very different engagement with the questions posed in the MEIPIM literature, why increased migration, why increased indigenous migration and why the emergence of family migration since the 1980s?

Answers to these questions are not difficult to find. There is an extensive body of literature available which analyses and describes the impact of free-trade agreements and subsequent economic restructuring processes on Mexico’s economy and population. Much of the analysis is concerned to demonstrate the devastating impact that these policies have had on rural population survival (Ornelas 2000, 2004). As early as 1996, UNICEF, in conjunction with the Solidarity Programme for Agricultural Workers (PRONSJAG) described the unfavourable outcomes of free trade agreements for rural communities in Mexico. I quote this text in full.

“Neo-liberal conditions prevailing in Mexico have significantly reduced the government’s presence in the agricultural sector. This pulling back has facilitated a private sector take over. Conceived of as a private business it has permitted the modernisation of cultivation methods, introducing high

technology machinery to industrialise the whole process. This form of agricultural exploitation is not favourable for most people; the benefits are monopolised by private producers and the small owners are the losers because they do not have the means to exploit their land correctly. This phenomenon has produced a concentration of wealth among very few people and an increasingly relevant situation of social inequality that leads to the marginalisation of large sections of the population. The survival of these populations depends on looking for work wherever it can which has forced many peasant/ethnic groups to migrate either to the US or to the great agricultural camps in the north of the country that are happy to find a cheap and generally docile workforce. The abundant labour force can explain the inclusion of women and children as part of the work force for a relatively short period, but their presence was also welcomed for a more technical reason. They can sometimes perform delicate work with greater efficiency than the men can. Despite legislation prohibiting salaried work before the ages of fourteen, children are allowed by the farm supervisors to work from 8 years onwards?" (PRONSJAG-UNICEF 1992)

The documentary evidence available in the official MEIPIM literature fails to engage with the macro context described here. Granted, poverty is acknowledged, but only as a possible reason for migrating. Equally, the hazardous and shocking working and living conditions on the farm are described but not analysed in relation to the cost-efficient approaches that inform transnational labour relations. Instead, as I have suggested, poverty at the place of origin appears to function as a justificatory device for the unacceptable working and living conditions on the farms.

I conclude, therefore, that the documentary evidence made available in the first chapter of the CONAFE/UNICEF text privileges an authoritative and expert voice on migration.

This voice establishes an objective/technical account to promote discursive control and regulation of migration patterns while simultaneously working to silence the concomitant misery and oppression involved in this practice. It also undermines another important analytical voice, one concerned to address the labour needs of transnational capitalism and the associated social inequality, marginalisation and increased population displacement in the wake of international free trade agreements. Granted, a field of migration expertise helps to identify some of the problems faced by these communities; but by failing to engage with the fundamental causes of structural inequality and ethnic labour relations educational strategies to address these problems appear to be, at best ingenuous, at worst, misguided.

5.5. Deprivation and privilege

Chapter Two, working out of the ‘migration made natural’ framework established in Chapter One, provides an analysis of migrant children, their hopes and expectations of the schooling process, their lived experiences and the importance and value of migration as a learning resource in the educational context. The failure of previous schooling models to address the specific educational needs of these children is also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of cultural discrimination in the classroom and teaching strategies to address this issue.

The introduction to the chapter invites the reader to engage with all aspects of a migrant child’s life:

“. . . the riches, the losses, fulfillments and hopes, knowledges and customs. Knowing the breadth of experience of a migrant child’s life helps to destroy the idea that migration is without foundations, a loss” (Bonilla et al 1999: 37).

The authors acknowledge the difficulties involved in leaving a familiar, secure place, “a birth place, a place where you are known and valued . . . a place where you have your possessions,” (ibid: 37). They argue, however, that the decision to migrate, “in search of new horizons, can offer alternative possibilities . . . new cultural worlds and the possibility of learning new things” (ibid: 37).

Migration as an opportunity to experience and learn from cultural diversity is pivotal to the development of the CONAFE/UNICEF narrative. Cultural diversity, as an integral part of the migration experience, allows the authors to identify intercultural education as the appropriate pedagogical and epistemological approach for engaging with the educational requirements of seasonal agricultural migrant groups. I suggest, therefore, that the cultural diversity discourse established in this chapter, facilitates a discursive re-codification of the poverty and deprivation described in the first chapter into a ‘migration as a cultural identity’ framework.

The re-codification of socio-economic concerns into cultural concerns is both discursively complex and challenging and requires close and careful analysis. It is central to understanding how the MEIPIM literature works to address demographic displacement, waged child labour, malnutrition, illnesses associated with exposure to pesticides and discriminatory practices as cultural, rather than socio-economic needs.

I propose that the CONAFE/UNICEF narrative, as well as the narratives structuring additional literature/documents discussed below, rely on a specific discursive trajectory. These narratives begin by acknowledging deprivation and poverty, they then describe migration as a technical-social practice, and finally they conclude by referencing migration as cultural practice.

Arriving at culturalism is crucial. It is the epistemological justification for the intercultural educational model which MEIPIM is based on. The cultural affirmation strategies structuring MEIPIM’s intercultural pedagogy depend on an interpretation of migration as a form of travel encoded with values that are generally associated with

travel for leisure or educational reasons. In other words, migration (travel) is positioned as a valuable learning resource. There are two central tenets embedded in this interpretation:

Firstly, as noted above, the travel/learning couplet is axiomatic to the epistemological justification for a cultural diversity policy discourse—a cultural diversity discourse provides the legitimacy basis for intercultural education and the concomitant intercultural pedagogical and curricular approach. This is important, and is discussed further in the culture section below.

Secondly, and more significantly at this stage of the analysis, is the pattern of contrast established between those who haven't had the opportunity to travel (migrate) and those who have. This pattern of contrast reconciles the discourse of deprivation, established in the first chapter, as the cause of migration, and the discourse of privilege (travel), being established in this chapter of the book, as the result of migration.

This deprivation/privilege contrast relies on and appropriates a cultural diversity educational discourse which describes migration in relation to the learning opportunities made available through contact with different places, people, languages and customs (ibid :39). It also consolidates further the pattern of contrast, established in the first chapter, between an impoverished unemployed community in the place of origin and the employment opportunities available on the agricultural export plants.

The transformative narrative-power encoded in this pattern of contrast is evident at the beginning of the next sub-section called "Migration and work produce valuable lessons" which begins with the following assumption:

"In general, because of their life conditions, we tend to think that the migrant child doesn't know as much as other children. We understand that his/her learning possibilities are reduced" (ibid: 39).

This, however, argue the authors, is a mistaken perception. Drawing on the deprivation/privilege axis they offer an alternative perception:

“Migration allows the migrant child to have a broader vision of the world than the one that these communities usually have. They know the roads, woods, mountains, rivers and cities. They are in contact with different environments, climates and landscapes. Participating in agricultural work exposes them, among other things, to other forms of organisation, agricultural processes, machinery and tools and systems of measurements. That is, they relate to other ways of thinking, they learn different languages, customs and diverse ways to resolve problems” (ibid: 39).

The contrast between the deprived child without hope or a future, and the privileged child who has been exposed to geographic, cultural and knowledge-diversity, is striking. This contrastive rhetoric resonates with the deprivation/privilege trajectory used in the first chapter to justify living and employment conditions on the farms.

Tonkiss in Seale ed. (1999) argues, “Patterns of contrast being established in a text point us to the work that is being done to reconcile conflicting ideas to cope with contradictions or uncertainty or to counter alternatives” (Tonkiss in Seale ed: 1999:225). They can guide the more discerning reader to the internal hesitations and inconsistencies within the text and to the work being done to resist alternative accounts (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). As suggested above, the CONAFE/UNICEF text works to combat an alternative account which might have privileged socio-economic inequality, and the underlying structures in the political economy that generate the attendant educational inequity. The contrastive rhetoric structuring the narrative shifts the focus away from material and social inequality to a discourse concerned with establishing

migration as a cultural practice. According to this reasoning, an educational policy that fails to recognise the cultural importance of the migratory experience will be ineffective as an educational practice. Educational policy must engage with the cultural characteristics of migration. This position establishes cultural hegemony and domination as the cause of educational inequity and educational policy based on cultural affirmation as the proposed solution. In other words, what seasonal agricultural migrant groups require is an intercultural education that promotes cultural affirmation strategies to address cultural injustice.

Discursively, sustaining migratory practices as, 'privilege and opportunity,' in a context of extreme structural poverty, is challenging. The internal hesitations, inconsistencies and contradictions within the text become more obvious as the narrative develops. The following section identifies and analyses how these tensions and contradictions unfold in the literature. How the text achieves/fails to achieve this is examined in the next section.

5.6. Normalising devices: just like any other child

Chapter Three of the CONAGE/UNICEF text positions the migrant child labourer as a "normal child," capable of taking advantage of the travelling opportunities offered during the migratory process. Drawing on normative language associated with childhood, the authors describe the malnourished displaced migrant child of the first chapter as:

“. . . just like any other (child) , who plays, runs, gets up to mischief, dreams and of course works to contribute to the family survival. . . ”(Bonilla et al: 37)

This taken-for-granted construction of childhood works to obscure problematic socio-economic representations of the migrant child labourer, and substantiates the idea of a

child, predisposed like any “normal” child, to travel, to take advantage of the opportunities available in the travelling process and to help his/her family.

The repositioning of a waged child-labourer as being “just like any other child” draws on a discursive practice that entails the “alienated representation” of the “other:”

“... alienated representation encourages the reader to dispose of challenging identity constructs and to seek out value systems that equate with our own” (Vinz, in Mahalingham et al eds. 2000:143).

This discursive technique aims to negate ‘the other’ by imposing a dominant value-system. For example, in the context of MEIPIM policy rhetoric, the migrant child’s experiences can be validated only if and when those experiences derive from a centralised set of dominant moral values that frame universal taken-for-granted notions of childhood (Aboul Ela: 2003). Discursively, this practice moves the reader towards “pre-configured identities and away from competing contradictory and other dissonance producing perspectives” (Vinz in Malingham et al eds. 2000:130).

I suggest that the MEIPIM literature is mediated by “contradictory and dissonant perspectives.” The need, therefore, to universalise normative childhood values is crucial to maintaining discursive coherence, as well as to addressing tensions within the text related to child labour, and to silence alternative accounts. Abstract qualities embedded in descriptors, such as “playful” and “mischievous” inscribe hard-to-challenge normative values that validate our own childhoods, and, by extension, the migrant agricultural worker’s childhood. No one would want to dispute these qualities or deny them to the migrant child.

Alienated representation (“just like any other child”), as an accounting device in the MEIPIM literature, therefore, facilitates further the discursive transition from socio-economic injustice to a focus on cultural injustices. Negating the other, however, to

validate hegemonic childhood discourses, generates a series of contradictions and tensions in the text that the authors subsequently fail to address. These discursive internal hesitations and inconsistencies (Coffey et al. 1996) become more pronounced as the text attempts to develop and systemise an official pedagogical discourse and methodology.

Developing an intercultural pedagogical discourse that straddles the socio-economic injustices described in Chapter One of the UNICEF/CONAFE text and the cultural-valuational approaches being established in Chapter Two is not easy. The ethical and epistemological challenges that emerge are explored further in the following section.

5.7. Ethical challenges embedded in MEIPIM policy rhetoric

Within the educational development framework there is an assumption that education works to alleviate poverty. This assumption stems from human capital theory (Bonal 2004, 2007). Human capital theory, since its inception in the 1960s, argues that investment in education will result in greater productivity, which in turn works towards poverty reduction. There is an implicit assumption here; that schooling will provide the necessary knowledge and skills to escape the poverty trap. This assumption is based on two other basic assumptions:

- 1) The child will complete the requisite number of years to acquire the necessary skills to transcend poverty;
- 2) The basic conditions for learning are in place (Bonal 2004).

The migrant child, notwithstanding his/her repositioning as being just like any other child, would be unlikely to meet these criteria. The MEIPIM literature makes this clear when the authors point out that:

“Schooling is not a long-term investment that will show results in the future. Instead, it provides the possibility to learn skills to more effectively resolve the problems he/she encounters on a daily basis” (Bonilla et al: 41).

This functional educational approach is also reflected in the authors’ engagement with official certification processes.

“From the migrants’ point of view the importance of the school is located in concrete learning results. From this point of view, official certification, internal to the system, is not prioritised. That is, learning to speak Spanish fluently and being able to read certain documents is more important than obtaining a certificate, which is at risk of being lost, misplaced or suffering a similar mishap during the migration process ” (ibid: 41).

While it may well be argued that the authors are positioning themselves as progressive realists, in relation to a highly-prohibitive bureaucratic system, it is unlikely that they are unaware of the implications of this position for educational continuity and the attendant assumption of poverty alleviation in the Mexican context. Equally, the implicit disregard for formal educational qualifications needs to be examined in relation to other social programmes. Without evidence of educational continuity, families are disqualified from receiving the monthly stipend offered by Mexico’s national poverty alleviation programme, *Oportunidades* (Opportunities).³²

In sum, by framing its objectives in short-term practical and functional considerations, rather than in long-term objectives to transform poverty, MEIPIM policy makers

³² The conditions for participation on this programme stipulate that the parents provide evidence of children’s school attendance and monthly visits to the health clinic.

appears to be renouncing the assumption embedded in human capital theory, that is, investment in education will lead to poverty reduction.

I suggest that a normative construction of childhood, juxtaposed with aims for a functional education to meet survival needs, does not only fail to address the criteria for poverty alleviation, but also appears to contradict MEIPIM's justificatory pedagogical and epistemological discourse. What begins to emerge is a child, positioned as normal, just like any other, yet excluded from mainstream education and from future educational opportunities. This excluded child sits uneasily with MEIPIM's critical engagement of previous migrant education programmes, which were described in the first chapter as failing to reverse social inequality. The excluded child, unable to access further education, also contradicts MEIPIM's normative childhood discourses and the attendant cultural-valuational pedagogy as the route to educational equity.

Setting aside for the moment the embedded contradictions in the CONAFE/UNICEF text, the ethics of prioritising skills (competences) in general, over and above achieving formal qualifications, has generated a wider body of literature, critical of the short-term educational goals embedded in compensatory education programmes.

“Compensatory education programmes were put in place when neoliberal restructuring and educational decentralisation occurred. These models displaced the traditional efficiency/equity education models to allow for the marketisation of the educational system. In the neo-liberal context, efficiency is prioritised and the equity trade-off is addressed outside of the system through compensatory programmes, a sort of safety net, a social targeting approach” (Martin and Solórzano 2003:12).

MEIPIM is categorised as a compensatory educational model. It addresses the needs of a community that cannot be met through mainstream education. Critics of this approach

argue that the compensatory approach will marginalise further communities that are already marginalised. Assertions such as the one quoted above, from the MEIPIM literature, work to corroborate the worries and ethical concerns of these scholars.

Arguing against the effectiveness of compensatory education programmes in Mexico, Martin and Solorzano (2003), emphasise the ethical tensions of short-term goals. They argue that compensatory education programmes, such as MEIPIM, do not demonstrate long-term commitment, and circumnavigate an obligation to real reform.

“Administrative reform plus compensation are a poor substitute for a thoroughgoing reform based on pedagogical development” (Martin_and Solorzano 2003:15).

5.8. Epistemological confusion

The concerns generated by a functional survival approach to education are not just limited to ethical considerations, but also generate epistemological contradictions. The epistemological confusion that evolves in the literature stems from the juxtaposition of a functional education with the constructivist philosophy that informs MEIPIMs methodological and curricular strategies for intercultural education:

“Moreover, the school should provide the possibility to analyse and reflect on reality as a social construction where knowledge and cultural givens make sense in terms of human efforts to find provisional answers to a changing and dynamic environment that presents permanent challenges” (Bonilla et al 1999 :66).

Knowledge and culture as social constructions, and the concomitant pedagogies that emerge from this epistemological position, aim to make learning relevant to the current

life experience and realities of students. These approaches are often linked to Freirian notions of transformative educational practice (see Chap.3 pp.78-83), that is, an educational practice that draws on critical pedagogy and learner empowerment to enable students to become transformative citizens in a democracy ³³ (Subrahmanyam et al in Mahalingham 2000:171).

Making learning relevant to current reality and empowering students to enact transformative social action is entirely different from giving children skills to survive demographic displacement and exploitative labour conditions. MEIPIM policy, as described in Chapter 2 (pp 43-47), does not aim to provide the skills to analyse and critically reflect on migration in order that those involved might be empowered to transform exploitative capitalist labour relations. Instead, policy discourse is concerned to identify the practical challenges involved in migration and to provide skills to negotiate these challenges. That is, it aims to maintain the status quo, rather than transform it. I suggest that a child's ability to count might challenge cheating farm-managers and his/her ability to read might facilitate migrating to larger cities for construction work, but these skills cannot be equated with the skills that might contribute to a transformative educational practice.

In sum, an educational policy based on constructivist concepts of how "real" (contextualised) knowledge is constituted invokes possibilities for a transformative educational practice. Transformative pedagogies aim to name the conditions that the oppressed inhabit and provide the skills to transform those conditions (Freire 1970). By comparison, a policy founded on functional/practical skills aims at providing the capabilities to negotiate better exploitative labour relations, while refusing to engage with the underlying framework that engenders injustice and exploitation in the first place. I argue that the skills to survive oppression are not the same as the skills needed to engage critically with oppression. If MEIPIM's educational policy is limited to

³³ Bernstein (1996) points out that there are three pedagogic genres that emerge from a constructivist conception of truth. . While they differ in many aspects, they all converge around the notion of transformation.

addressing survival skills, then the possibilities for educational equity and transformative social action may be greatly reduced.

The epistemological confusion and ethical ambiguity that mediate MEIPIM's cultural diversity discourse are not resolved in this text. In fact, as the text develops further, the contradictory constructivist pedagogy intended to address the intercultural needs of the community becomes more pronounced. The following section critically examines one of the principal accounting devices, based on parental interviews that is used throughout the literature, to justify a curriculum that addresses immediate, rather than long term educational needs. It is interesting to note that this same device is also used to legitimate intercultural education and a constructivist pedagogy which, as noted above, implies an alternative epistemological position; one that seeks to democratise the learning context and empower students to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

5.9. Lost and cheated

According to the CONAFE/UNICEF text, policy aims to teach functional skills are a response to data collected from parental interviews. When parents were asked about their educational hopes and aspirations for their children, parental interview data emphasised the need for the school to teach their children the necessary skills to be able to migrate, "so that they won't get lost." The parents also emphasise the need for their children to learn to count "so they won't be cheated."

"It's important (the school) because if they don't know how to read it's like someone who can't see. For example, if you're in the city then you need to know how to read. The person who can't read will get lost. He will wander around asking. Someone who can read knows where he is going. It's very important that the children learn to count so they are not cheated. By reading you can do something, you can defend yourself. But someone who knows nothing

won't ever find work" (data from a parental interview; cited in Bonilla et al 1999: 41).

Two important and powerful images begin to emerge from the parental expectations that are quoted in this text: to avoid being lost and to avoid being cheated. The CONAFE/UNICEF text, as evidenced above, chooses to interpret these expectations to be a request for a school curriculum that will provide the children with skills to resolve "real problems" in their daily lives as waged child workers. In other words, what the migrant children require is "Una Escuela para la Vida" (A school for life) (Bonilla et al 1999: 58).

Skills to avoid being "lost and cheated", expressed in the parental interviews conducted by the authors of this CONAFE/UNICEF publication, were also cited by the academic coordinator that I interviewed during the pilot phase of this research study. The phrase was also used by the parents I interviewed when I visited communities at their place of origin. Likewise, parental requests for the school to teach skills to avoid being lost and cheated are quoted in academic articles published a few years after MEIPIM was officially recognised as a government programme (Garduno 2000, Rodriguez 2002).

Given the persistent reiteration of parental hopes and aspirations for their children's education, encapsulated in this phrase, I suggest that a more in-depth analysis is required. MEIPIM interprets "lost and cheated" to be a call for practical and functional life skills. This interpretation, as suggested above, contradicts the programme's constructivist philosophy.

During the research carried out for this study, when parents quoted 'lost and cheated' as the reasoning behind their school expectations, they invariably did so using the same images and arguments quoted above. That is, the illiterate person is seen as blind and lost and the innumerate person is perceived as a victim of those who have the power to cheat them. . The impression I received was that those expressing these views didn't appear to be arguing or reasoning through a point of view. Rather, they seemed to be

expressing an already established adage; lost and cheated seemed to embed a positional wisdom for parents.

On the basis of this, I suggest that the parental reasoning, quoted in the CONAFE/UNICEF text, is less a request for a school curriculum based on life skills (although it may well also be this) than it is a powerful signifier that encodes an indirect revelation of marginalisation and oppression. MEIPIM's use of "lost and cheated" in policy discourse, as a request for a functional education, demonstrates the subjective nature of ascribing value and meaning to indigenous (migrant workers) expression; the discursive usage of "lost and cheated," demonstrates the social and political nature of received knowledge (Morrison 1992).

Viewed through a critical pedagogic theoretical prism, I suggest that if parents repeatedly position themselves and their community as vulnerable to being lost and cheated outside of their place of origin, then it is this reasoning that should inform programme logic, rather than the reasoning embedded in survival skills or, alternatively, the reasoning that informs cultural affirmation strategies. I argue that, if this level of repeatedly-emphasised mistrust embedded in the "lost and cheated" maxims mediates community perception of social and labour relations, then all pedagogical and curricular initiatives, whether they be functional or constructivist, will fail if they refuse to engage critically with the value and meanings encoded in this signifier. From a Freirian critical-pedagogic point of view, the constant reiteration of these signifiers mediating parental educational aspirations would require their inclusion in the curriculum as generative key words that might empower the community to name the conditions they inhabit and to identify solutions (Freire 1970). In this sense, I suggest that critical-pedagogic practice should be axiomatic to the possibilities offered by the programme for a transformative intercultural education and to educational equity.

MEIPIM's policy adherence, however, to affirmative action, rather than transformative action, refuses critical engagement with parental expressions of their exploited, marginalised and oppressed status. Instead, constructed from limited and arguably

irreconcilable discursive resources, “lost and cheated” is translated initially as a request for functional schooling, and later, as a request for a constructivist intercultural education based on cultural affirmation strategies. As a result, the asymmetrical power relations mediating this level of parental mistrust remains unchallenged from the outset.

5.9.1. Refusing critical engagement

Equally, the authors’ refusal to move beyond cultural injustice to critically engage with socio-economic injustice often obliges them to position parental comments as paradoxical or contradictory. For example, they quote parents who expressed the hope that their children wouldn’t have to experience the “same knocks in life” that they, (the parents) have had to endure:

“With schooling you begin to lose the fear that they (the children) won’t be like us. We didn’t even know how to write our names. In those times, there were no teachers, or if the truth were told, our parents, didn’t worry about us. We have the example of our parents and grandparents; they couldn’t give us the studies, and that causes the ignorance for the person who doesn’t know how to read. Since we don’t have the studies, we can only ever be agricultural workers or builders. We don’t want our children to make the same mistakes³⁴ (Bonilla et al. 1999: 42).

The programme designers, however, describe this point of view as contradicting parental requests for a curriculum that will provide the skills to function as an agricultural migrant (ibid:43). The tensions mediating the dialectic between the structured needs of parents and their personal hopes and aspirations are ignored by the

³⁴ Interestingly, this citation was taken from a parental interview conducted on the coffee farm where this research was carried out

authors. Equally, when another parent is quoted as describing the school as important, given that “farming work is coming to an end now that we don’t have any land and so we need to study” (ibid: 42), the underlying political-economic structure informing the privatisation of the agricultural sector is ignored by the programme designers. Instead, they choose to interpret this comment as a request for “school knowledge to be relevant to building new horizons in life, so that they can do other work in the city and live with greater dignity” (ibid: 42). Once again, MEIPIM policy discourse serves to demonstrate the social and political nature of received knowledge (Morrison 1992).

5.9.2. Discrimination

The final section of Chapter Two in the CONAFE/UNICEF text analyses data that address discrimination in the classroom. Discrimination is understood to be discriminatory social relations between indigenous/non-indigenous migrant groups and the discriminatory practices used by the instructors to stereotype and stigmatise certain indigenous or regional groups. Teachers are quoted as stereotyping children from Oaxaca as “timid,” those from Guerrero as “fighters,” and the children from Veracruz as “destructive” (Bonilla et al: 50). Once again, while the text provides a framework to engage with the impact of discrimination on children’s learning, it refuses to engage critically with the underlying framework that structures cultural discrimination and cultural injustice in the first instance. Racism and discrimination are considered to be problems only among indigenous groups, rather than being structured by the broader asymmetrical power relations that mediate ethnicity, race and gender in Mexico. Thus, the conclusions drawn in this section propose implementing a school experience that recognises cultural difference fully, and addresses the difficulties that these symbolic differences represent for the incorporation of the child into the school system (ibid: 55). This is a valid conclusion; however, given the socio-economic oppression and exploitative labour relations, based on ethnicity, that structure the life worlds of this population, cultural recognition alone will not eradicate discrimination nor will it achieve educational equity.

5.10. Instrumentalising culture as a technique of policy

The analysis so far has focused, for the most part, on the CONAFE/UNICEF publication, the principal text outlining MEIPIM policy development. I have focused largely on patterns of contrast, variations and binary positions within the text. MEIPIM, positioned as meeting the “real needs” of the community, contrasted with previous programmes, largely irrelevant to migrant needs and failing to reverse inequality: a poverty-defined community, without options, contrasted with a community availing itself of employment opportunities on the agricultural camps; a previously-closed community contrasted with a worldly, well-travelled community enriched through contact with other worlds and cultures. Identifying these patterns of contrast as accounting devices permits insight into the work being done to reconcile conflicting ideas and to silence alternative accounts.

In this section, the documentary examination aims to work across texts, not to find patterns of inconsistency, but rather to identify consistency. Variations within a text point us to the work being done to reconcile conflicting ideas; however, as Tonkiss in Seale ed. (1998) points out, identifying consistency within and across texts can also reveal patterns of emphasis.

“Looking for consistency within and between texts also provides a useful analytic tool. On a simple level the repetition of key words, phrases and images reveals most clearly what the speaker or author is trying to put across in their discourse. Put simply, it reveals patterns of emphasis” (Tonkiss in Seale ed: 257).

Revealing patterns of emphasis can expose the intricate ways in which meaning is put together. Focusing principally on the conceptual frameworks used to understand culture, I examine how a specific and consistent interpretation of culture works to legitimate and justify MEIPIM’s cultural affirmation approach as the foreclosed solution to the deprivation/privilege trajectory established in the first two chapters.

5.10.1. MEIPIM policy and the culture debates

Chapter three, in the CONAFE/UNICEF text, is called “Intercultural Education,” and aims to provide a justificatory account of why intercultural education and the associated epistemological and pedagogical frameworks are appropriate for migrant communities. It also aims to clarify the theoretical framework for culture used by the authors to formulate intercultural policy.

Some years after the CONAFE/UNICEF publication, two of the authors, presented papers at international conferences: Rodriguez (2002) and Garduno (2000). In 2003, two further texts were published in “Childhood.” One of these texts is a detailed study of MEIPIM, while the other considers the role of work in the socialisation of agricultural migrant children. All the articles, however, follow the narrative structure used in the original CONAFE/UNICEF publication examined above; poverty and socio-economic oppression is recoded as cultural oppression; children’s educational needs are interpreted within a cultural diversity discourse; a conceptual understanding of culture as fixed and static is rejected and a much more dynamic understanding of culture as hybrid and multiple is invoked. Finally, an ‘Intercultural Education for All’ framework is emphasised. The argument here is that for intercultural education to succeed, cultural affirmation for oppressed groups needs to be juxtaposed with strategies to address the perpetrators of discrimination and cultural stereotypes (Bonilla et al. 1999, Garduno 2000, Rodriguez 2002, Taracena 2003).

Each of the consulted texts begins, therefore, by grouping educational needs into three broad categories:

- Valuing yourself and others;
- Developing in different contexts; and
- Participating in improving the environment.

The logic of these categories is described in relation to the culturally diverse experiences confronted by this population. “Valuing yourself and others” relates to the constant changes that migrant children experience, necessitating

“... skills for adaptation to diverse contexts without losing sight of family and wider cultural values; language, customs, beliefs and knowledge. Equally, while valuing themselves they must also learn to recognise that all ways of life are valuable and work to enrich the cultural universe of all those who share in it” (Bonilla et al. 1999: 63).

The need to “Develop in different contexts” is based on the understanding that children require stability to develop. In the case of the migrant children, their stability is the diversity of the migration experience. The challenge for an education programme, therefore, is to take “advantage of the diversity of languages, cultures and contexts to promote an integral and safe space in the school for the migrant child” (Bonilla et al. 1999, Garduno 2000, Rodriguez 2000, Taracena 2003).

The need to “Improve the environment” stems from the assumption that migration exposes the children to the mutually-dependent relationship between the natural environment and the social environment.

“Travelling exposes the children to practices that contribute to the betterment or the deterioration of the natural environment and to the mutual interdependence between social groups and the environment” (Garduno 2000:9).

In the same way, the authors also argue that the children’s engagement with diverse forms of farm production and techniques might well influence and even transform community work at the place of origin (Bonilla et al 1999:69, Garduno 2002, Taracena 2003, Bey 2003).

Having identified and contextualised the primary needs of the children, all the consulted texts address the pedagogical and epistemological challenges involved in meeting them. Understanding and interpreting culture is central to this challenge. Hence, culture and the debates framing cultural interpretation are discussed at this point.

The authors describe the educational limitations of the bi-cultural education programmes used previously to address migrant needs. They argue that, while they emphasised a differentiated educational formation based on the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the students, paradoxically it may also have contributed to furthering marginalisation and discrimination by promoting a fixed and non-dialogical cultural approach. To avoid these pitfalls, each of the authors proposes a cultural interpretation, which, rather than preserving fixed and static identity traits, makes difference an object of analysis within the curriculum.

“Our proposal adheres to an intercultural educational perspective. The object of analysis, contrary to the bicultural approach, isn’t the culture of origin, as if it were a symbolic universe enclosed within itself, but rather the points of connection between cultures; the values, stereotypes and categories that stigmatise cultural differences between determined social groups. In this way, the proposal is not just aimed at the discriminated but also at those who discriminate as the only way to better cultural understanding; to challenge the prejudices that are products of the constructed stereotypes that make cultural encounters difficult” (Bonilla et al 1999:65).

The shift described in this citation, away from traditional culture frameworks to an understanding of culture as hybrid, dynamic and unstable, informs a specific narrative development in all the consulted literature. While an understanding of culture as dynamic, hybrid and constantly changing is to be welcomed, the overall emphasis in the literature appears to be a concern with positioning children’s needs as cultural; that is,

whether they are to be analysed as intercultural or bicultural, post-structural or structural, is less important than establishing them, in the first instance, as “cultural”, rather than socio-economic.

I suggest, therefore, that the past/present, bad cultural framework/good cultural framework contrast, used in the consulted literature is intended, not so much to provide a theoretical debate between essentialist and post-modernist understandings of culture and identity, but rather to put culture and cultural-valuational strategies on the migrant-educational map. In other words, these debates invite the reader into a discussion where cultural affirmation, as the solution to educational inequity and injustice, is a predetermined conclusion, whatever the outcome of the debate might be. I argue, therefore, that the good culture/bad culture binaries, emphasised across the literature, serve more to silence alternative accounts concerned to address socio-economic injustice, than to explore culture as a social construction.

I also suggest that referencing a more progressive and dynamic cultural framework in the MEIPIM literature, albeit unsubstantiated and unexamined theoretically, works at the textual level to facilitate an important narrative contrast between a limited and out-dated approach to culture with a more progressive and dynamic understanding of culture. This contrastive rhetoric is consonant with the overall rhetorical organisation of the MEIPIM literature which uses patterns of contrast: a progressive future contrasted with a deprived past, malnourished child with a normal child, good culture frameworks with bad culture frameworks. Contrastive rhetoric as noted above functions as an accounting devices to silence alternative perspectives.

The consistent emphasis on culture, cultural debates, cultural needs and cultural pedagogy across the literature, and the discursive leaps of faith to accommodate these cultural positions, suggests that an analysis of culture in the MEIPIM discourse needs to go beyond the debates offered in the texts. I propose that instead an engagement with culture as a public discourse is required (Coffey in Malingham et al 2000). The following section, therefore, examines how the concept of culture is being used in an

educational policy context as a regulatory and legitimacy device to facilitate a social-management project that targets agricultural migrant workers.

5.10.2. Culture as a political commodity in the policy context

Arguably, MEIPIM's critique of frameworks that essentialise culture, rendering it static and fixed, could point the way towards a critical multiculturalism. Equally, policy measures to address both the victim and the perpetrator resonate with Freirian ideas for critical pedagogy and transformative praxis. This, however, is not the case in the MEIPIM policy context. Having positioned culture as dynamic and hybrid, each of the published texts, when required to describe what this might look like in practice, revert to using traditional cultural signifiers generally associated with frameworks that essentialise culture. Knowledge of medicinal plants, food, festivals, legends, language and traditional dress are invoked across the literature to negotiate an intercultural pedagogy.³⁵ Equally, notwithstanding the authors' analysis of the impact of discrimination on the children's learning (Bonilla et al. 1999, Rodriguez 2002, Garduno 2000), strategies to address both victims and perpetrators of discrimination aim to engage with relations among indigenous groups rather than between dominant and oppressed groups.

These contradictory theoretical positions suggest that culture as a way of life, static or shifting, fixed or hybrid is not really the issue in the narratives offered by these texts. Instead, the role of culture in the MEIPIM policy context needs to be understood as a technique of government, a public discourse concerned with regulating and legitimising the social management of migrant agricultural groups. According to this analysis culture might be described as

³⁵ These cultural traits are usually referred to as 'usos y costumbres' and are generally associated with traditional folklore understandings of indigenous culture.

“An instrument of subjectifications through which one is obliged to recognise oneself through a particular formation of identity. . . To name, know and create the people as well as to proscribe modes of conduct” (Foucault 185:4 cited in Coffey 2000:51).

From this point of view, it can be argued that when subjects’ lived reality is instrumentalised in a public discourse, such as intercultural education policy for migrant agricultural child labourers, processes of subjectification, rather than autonomous self-knowledge, become the aim of the discourse. From this point of view, subjectivity can be understood to index

“ . . . relationships to the self brought into being by processes of subjectifications through which individuals are able and obliged to recognise themselves as subjects” (Foucault 1984:20 cited in Coffey 2000).

I suggest, therefore, that in the MEIPIM policy context, migrant agricultural identity and culture are produced through disciplinary and governmental initiatives that are discursively imposed on the group. These discursive impositions, in turn, inform the educational needs of agricultural migrants. In this understanding of culture, therefore, migrant culture is being produced rather than given. This is not to argue that migrant culture doesn’t exist as a practice, but rather, that in the policy context it needs to be understood more as a legitimatory or regulatory device in a social discourse than as a cultural practice in reality. In this case, debating whether or not migrant culture should be analysed according to a post-structuralist framework, dynamic and changing, or a folklore understanding (fixed and static) serves more to distract than inform, and “obscures its relation to value, epistemological pursuits and subject formation”(Coffey 2000: 52) in the context of policy development.

From this analytical perspective, therefore, the contradictions and tensions that emerge in the literature need to be explored according to a logic that positions culture as a public discourse, and as a political commodity that serves principally to obscure social and ethnic relations, as constituted by transnational capitalism. When viewed through this lens, the epistemological and pedagogical contradictions and tensions described above begin to make more sense.

5.10.3. Human rights

Cultural diversity discourses, and the concomitant culturalist policy to address cultural injustice, generate intercultural/constructivist pedagogies (see Chap. 2) that aim to democratise the learning process and address the cultural rights of students. Hence, human rights, and particularly cultural rights, are central to MEIPIM's curriculum development.

“We understand intercultural education to be an education that through recognition of difference, promotes equal opportunities, not just access, but also educational completion and success” (Bonilla et al 1999: 67).

Addressing children's rights within the historically-complex and regionally-specific social and material relations that constitute these groups is complex and challenging. The most obvious tensions emerge when the literature attempts to address the issue of child labour. An interview with a programme manager, described in the Taracena (2003) publication, highlights some of these challenges.³⁶

“The problem of human rights is a delicate one because we are on the camps where the child works and the question that comes

³⁶ The ethnographic data collected during this research project resonates with this response -a need to avoid teaching human rights in relation to child labour on the camps (see Chaps. 6 and 7)

up is how can we tell them about their rights without creating a conflict with their employers? We have to do it but it has to be done in a way that will not create confrontations” (Taracena 2003: 308-309).³⁷

Taracena offers us a confused analysis of what she refers to as “a delicate issue.” She points out the obvious difficulties of teaching children about their rights, given that child labour on the camps is already a human rights transgression.³⁸ However, to address this problem, she suggests that it might offer an opportunity to reflect on child labour in general, both on the camps and at the place of origin. She also implies that the knowledge acquired at school will “allow them to understand better the hiring conditions and to defend their right against potential abuse” (Taracena 2003: 310).

I suggest that the equivalences implied, not just in Taracena, but in all the consulted texts in general (Bonilla et al 1999, Garduno 2000, Rodriguez 2002, Bey 2003) between waged child labour on the camps and children performing household chores at their place of origin, function as a legitimacy accounting device to justify waged labour as a contravention of children’s rights. Borrowing from discourses that analyse household and family chores as an integral part of the socialisation process, Taracena appears to be suggesting that this framework can also be applied to waged child-labour. I contend that equating mechanical and alienating waged labour with the social and cultural development provided through children participation in household chores may work to obfuscate exploitative labour relations.

³⁷ The quote above, taken from an interview with a project manager, encapsulates the prevalent tension framing state managed cultural plurality- making rights visible but not applicable. This is a conundrum that bedevils interculturalism, both as a cultural identity representation project and as an epistemology. The incongruities, contradictions and confusion that emerge stem principally from this challenge- the need to maintain ethnic, social and labour relations while paying lip service to a liberal multicultural discursive adherence to human rights.

³⁸ Mexico signed the 138th Convention of the ILO which established 15 as the minimum age for a person to perform waged labour.

The most powerful device employed consistently across the literature to justify child labour is the use of data taken from parental interviews. Parents, when asked about child labour practices, explain that the child's salary is essential to family survival, and that they would oppose any legal initiative to prohibit the children from working (Bonilla et al. 1999, Bey 2003, Taracena 2003). Parental requests to allow their children to work, coupled with an implied sensitivity towards employers, appear to function as legitimacy narrative devices to justify the authors' failure to engage critically with the structural conditions mediating child labour. These types of legitimacy devices represent significant obstacles to the possibilities embedded in MEIPIM's constructivist world view as a transformative educational practice.

These types of legitimacy devices to reposition human rights transgressions reinforce the argument sustained in this thesis that the focus on cultural injustice and cultural rights in the MEIPIM literature appears to preclude engaging with socio-economic injustices. Quite frankly, without direct reference to a structural analysis of inequality, all attempts to justify the child labour practices used on the agricultural camps seems evasive and more concerned with concealing, rather than revealing.

5.11. Conclusion

The documentary examination undertaken in this chapter demonstrates a basic assumption mediating MEIPIM policy: the injustices characterising migrant agricultural communities are primarily cultural and, as such, require culturalist strategies to address them. References across the literature to international conferences, such as Jomtien, suggest that this assumption stems more from global recommendations than from locally-based research on migrant educational needs. This is evident in the way that parental requests for basic skills in Spanish, reading and writing to avoid being "lost and cheated" were re-coded within MEIPIM's cultural diversity discourse into educational needs for valuing oneself and others in culturally-diverse contexts.

As a result of this documentary analysis, I suggest that this local/global convergence in the policy development process has generated a series of tensions and confusions that have resulted in a contradictory policy discourse. These contradictions generate ethical and epistemological issues that remain unresolved in the policy literature. These unresolved issues are apparent in the contradictory way that the policy shifts from short-term to long-term educational support, from functional and practical skills for survival to a constructivist competence-based model where transformative education might be implied. Unresolved narrative positions are also apparent in the contradictory shifts between culture paradigms. Referencing post-structural interpretations of culture and identity, the curriculum content described in the policy appears to draw heavily on traditional culture signifiers, more appropriate to culture as static and fixed than hybrid and changing. Accordingly, while culture debates are referenced in the literature they remain under-theorised and unapplied.

As a result of this theoretical confusion, the cultural politics informing MEIPIM policy seem to be unable to engage, in a congruent manner, with the socio-economic injustices and contravention of rights, such as child labour and the discriminatory social and ethnic relations structuring these practices. This documentary examination suggests that these underlying tensions remain unresolved throughout the consulted literature.

The implications for teachers (instructors/tutors) responsible for implementing this programme are immense. How they negotiate the tensions, contradictions and theoretical confusion embedded in the policy discourse, therefore, is the central focus of the following chapters. Making use of the empirical data gathered during field work, the following chapters analyse what teacher negotiation of this contradictory policy discourse might look like in practice, and what this negotiation might mean for educational equity for migrant communities.

Chapter 6

The power of pedagogy: teaching agricultural day workers how to plant a seed.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of MEIPIM policy on the discursive and organisational practices of the instructors and tutors responsible for programme implementation. An exploration of their subjective experiences, in relation to how the teaching and learning process is constituted in the policy context, is central to understanding how a globally-informed initiative, such as MEIPIM, might be enacted by local actors responsible for policy implementation.

The analysis generates two central arguments: Firstly, the cultural politics and neoliberal values shaping MEIPIM policy appear to structure a teacher-centred/child-centred dichotomy where moves towards child-centred education are viewed as progress.

I argue that the organisational practices generated by child-centred pedagogies may well be inappropriate to and incompatible with the socio-cultural values mediating local pedagogic world visions. Hence, the data demonstrates how child-centred pedagogic approaches are reinterpreted and reworked according to local criteria of what constitutes a successful education. Secondly, I argue that MEIPIM's pedagogic device and concomitant discursive and organisational practices embed a fundamental paradox. This generates pedagogical confusion which the instructors seem to be unable to resolve. Hence, they develop forms of resistance that re-articulate and transform the social and cognitive aims of the programme.

The chapter proceeds as follows: I begin by exploring the asymmetrical power relations structuring, what Bernstein (1996) calls “the pedagogic device.” I use empirical evidence to describe how the instructors negotiate these power relations to address institutional demands for learning outcomes. Using Bourdieu (1977), I initially explore the symbolic violence embodied in the MEIPIM policy. Following on from this, drawing on analytical determinants offered by Bernstein (1996) the chapter explores how MEIPIM’s contradictory pedagogic device generates a form of strategy/instrumentalised teaching based on copying and memorizing that seriously undermines learning achievement for agricultural migrant children.

6.2. A visit to the museum: who teaches what to whom and under what conditions?

On the 4th May 2005, I accompanied two instructors and a group of migrant children and their parents to the Science Museum in Xalapa. Coffee harvesting had already finished, and the instructors were now teaching the migrant children in their place of origin. The instructors had established a trusting relationship with the community, and had persuaded community members to give permission to organise a day trip to the museum for the children. Permission had been granted; however, the parents were reluctant to allow the children to make the visit without them. After a series of fund raising events the instructors collected enough money to include the parents. We were nine adults, including two instructors and myself, and fifteen children.

The women wore their aprons over their working clothes, and all the children had shoes. Some shoes were too big or too small, but all were shod. The men, of course, had their wide-brimmed white hats and wore their work clothes. As we approached the museum door, Itzel, who was wearing a pair of plastic flip-flops at least two sizes too big, turned to me in dismay. Her shoe had broken in such a way that it was impossible to keep it on

her foot. We all knew that to enter the museum without shoes was not an option. It would be hard to describe the collective desperation and powerlessness we felt at that moment. We were programmed for a one o'clock admission in order to access our reservation for the planetarium and it was now three minutes to one. We made a circle around Itzel. No one spoke and the tension was tremendous. Suddenly Don Tomas produced a small machete shaped knife. I had a shoulder bag made from piassava that had begun to unravel after years of wear and tear. I pulled out one of the loose ends and handed it to him. He worked deftly for about five minutes as we watched in silence.

Notwithstanding MEIPIM's discursive positioning of migrants as travellers, these children and most of the parents had never been to Xalapa; and most, after this trip, would be unlikely to have an opportunity to revisit, despite living less than three hours from the city. I can also say, with much certainty, after two years of working with migrants, that this would be their first and last trip ever to a museum. Shoes as a way of mediating social relations and access to another world had never been so important and so powerful; despite my childhood years of polishing shoes on a Saturday night for admittance to church on Sunday. I prayed fervently.

Don Tomas was successful, and we crossed over into the world of the museum. The first thing I noticed on entering was how everyone already in there stood still to stare at us. The second thing I noticed was the overwhelming smell of tortillas and smoke from a wood fire. The smell was coming from our group. We had brought the smell of the rural into an urban space, and this presence was out of place and invasive. The men were unsure about what to do with their hats; the women nudged them to take them off.

I negotiated the entrance fee while the instructors guided the community down the stairs towards the first exhibit, a set of interactive digital resources about Veracruz. This activity was literacy-dependent and inaccessible to all the adults and most of the children in our group. Literacy-dependent activities were standard fare throughout the museum.

What I remember most from that trip, and wrote about at length in my field notes, was the section of the museum designed to inform visitors about ecological issues. In this exhibit, visitors to the museum are invited to plant a seed in a flower pot. They are asked to follow instructions on how to provide the seed with adequate care in order for it to grow. I watched with incredulity as the men, woman and children in our group stood silently in a row awaiting instructions from a young male museum guide on how to plant a seed. The men had put their hats back on in order to free their hands to hold the small pot. The enthusiastic young man had shown them how to fill the pot with soil and was demonstrating how to plant and care for a seed. The agricultural day workers held their seeds in one hand and their miniature pots in the other as they stood in a row, awaiting their instructions (Blue Notebook: 61-65).

This experience begs the question: why would a community, subsisting on agricultural activity for generations, allow an urban teenager, who in all likelihood has never been required to work on the land, to teach them how to sow a seed.

The key to understanding what happened in the museum is the focus of this chapter: pedagogy and its potential power to regulate, devalue or exclude the personal knowledge, values or experiences of those it targets. The incident at the museum, while unrelated to the MEIPIM programme, in-as-much-as it is extracurricular, is a forceful example of how power relations mediate pedagogical interactions. Pedagogy, as described in this incident, functions as a powerful disciplinary tool to legitimate certain ways of knowing and being, in this instance, a certain way of planting a seed that excludes the personal history and experience of a group of agricultural day workers in the State of Veracruz, Mexico.

It is important to point out that the purpose of relating the above incident is not to question the merits of the interactive pedagogy used in the museum or, for that matter, in the MEIPIM programme. Instead, it is to critically examine the way the power relations, concealed within a pedagogic model, function to empower the knowledge of a young urban teenager, while simultaneously disempowering the knowledge of the

agricultural migrants. Resonating with the aims of this chapter, the museum incident illustrates how this empowering/disempowering device might function when MEIPIM policy is translated into a local practice in an official educational context.

6.3. The pedagogical device and the regulative discourse

Bernstein (1996) argues that the pedagogic discourse is not in itself an actual discourse. Instead, he describes pedagogic discourse as a principle or a device that appropriates other discourses: “it is a relay for something other than itself” (1996:47). He explains that when other discourses, such as “physics, chemistry, biology,” or even social-constructivism, for that matter, are appropriated by the pedagogic device, they are re-contextualised, thus causing a transformation to take place (Bernstein 1996: 47). The process of re-contextualisation is what Popkewitz refers to as “pedagogic alchemy” (2000: 23).

The transformation takes place, because every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is a space in which ideology can play. In other words, no discourse ever moves without ideological mediation. Bernstein concludes, therefore, that when the re-contextualisation of a discourse occurs, via the pedagogic principle or device, it is transformed from an unmediated discourse to a mediated pedagogy (1996: 47).

As pedagogic discourse appropriates other discourses, unmediated discourses are transformed into mediated, virtual or imaginary discourses. As a result of this ideological transformation, pedagogic discourse also creates imaginary subjects (Bernstein 1996:47).³⁹ These imaginary subjects, such as the discursive migrants in the MEIPIM literature, are mediated by specific socio-cultural values. These values embody the hegemonic world vision of the imaginary discourse; this is what Bernstein calls

³⁹ Bernstein makes the distinction between real and imaginary as follows: the imaginary subject is abstracted from its social base, position and power relations 1996:53.

“pedagogic codes,” replete with specific recognition and realisation rules (Bernstein 1996: 48-50).

If Bernstein’s analytical prism is held over MEIPIM policy, agricultural migrants are discursively imagined as subjects who embody a specific set of innate cultural competencies. Accordingly, these cultural competencies are in need of recognition and realisation in the pedagogic context. The assumption here is that, if these innate competencies and cultural resources can be systemised within specific organisational and discursive classroom practices, then migrant agricultural educational needs can be addressed successfully. These specific organisational practices and discourses need to be grounded in an intercultural and constructivist epistemology since MEIPIM’s imaginary subjects inhabit a world of cultural diversity.

6.3.1. Measuring success

Educational success, of course, particularly in the current neo-liberal climate, needs to be evaluated and measured; therefore, a success criterion to assess outcomes is also established in MEIPIM’s pedagogic discourse. However, as the museum incident demonstrates, what is actually being measured here is not innate competence, as originally understood by Vygotsky or Chomsky, but rather the individual’s performance in relation to a hierarchy of prescribed knowledge. In the context of the museum incident described above, for example, this was determined by the specific socio-cultural values mediating museum policy. As a result, success is measured according to how participants shape up within the hierarchy of knowledge, determined by the particular social entity that structured policy development (Popkewitz 2000).

For example, if an official success criterion had been in place in the museum, in all probability that criterion would have measured the number of seeds planted successfully, rather than the knowledge and experience the agricultural migrants may have brought to the seed planting activity.

Therefore, to answer the original question, that is, “why would a group of agricultural day workers stand patiently in a row awaiting instructions on how to plant a seed,” it becomes necessary to move beyond the logic of the interactive pedagogy used in the museum towards considering the reasoning that shapes and informs this pedagogic logic. In the museum incident, the pedagogic reasoning that informed the logic of the “recognition and realisation rules” of seed planting appeared to preclude skills for agricultural subsistence survival. The reaction we caused on entering the museum suggests also that the success criterion precludes the cultural objects that subsistence living generates.

Viewed from this perspective, the overwhelming smell of smoke and tortillas, the women’s aprons, the too-large shoes and wide-brimmed white hats that we brought into the museum are more important to understanding what happened than Dewey’s or Vygotsky’s original discourses on socially-constructed learning (Popkewitz 1998). That is, the asymmetrical power relations that mediated the re-contextualisation of an interactive constructivist discourse in a pedagogic device within the museum context determined, “who teaches what to whom and under what conditions” (Bernstein 1996:27). In this instance, a young urban teenager is empowered to teach a group of rural agricultural day workers how to plant a seed, according to the pre-determined recognition and realisation pedagogic rules that prevailed in the museum.

As noted above, the task of this chapter is an examination of “who teaches what to whom and under what conditions” (Bernstein 1996:27). It is also an interrogation of how the ‘what’ is negotiated, resisted and reshaped by the ‘whom’, under the ‘conditions’ mediating a historical-institutional local context in rural Veracruz. In this sense, the data need to be understood and analysed in relation to the manner in which local reasoning (cultural production of meaning) structures a contextual logic. Drawing principally on Bernstein’s conceptual understanding of the pedagogic device and the dominant regulative discourse and Popkewitz notion of pedagogic alchemy and the “reason of pedagogic logic” (1998, 2000), the rest of the chapter explores and critically engages with how instructors and tutors enact MEIPIM policy. The empirical data

describe how the instructors and tutors navigate, negotiate and ultimately re-shape and re-articulate MEIPIM's intercultural/constructivist pedagogic device. The data also describe what policy enactment might look like in a local context.

6.4. Teacher construction of the integrated curriculum: project work as a waste of time

In December 2005, the instructors arrived in Xalapa from the coffee and sugar cane farms to participate in their first monthly in-service training session. In-service training is organised by the tutors and usually lasts for three days. While in-service sessions tend to be dominated by assessment and evaluation processes, or administrative issues such as the payment of salaries and travelling expenses, on this particular day the instructors seemed to have their own agenda. After a month of living and teaching in the communities, their concerns were exclusively with the practicalities of day-to-day living on the farms. They were also visibly annoyed with what they perceived as the incompatibility and irrelevance of MEIPIM's pedagogic logic with the lived reality of the agricultural migrant children. After a heated discussion on the material and physical challenges they had faced during their first month, the conversation turned to their pedagogical concerns. The following excerpts were hastily scribbled in my field notes:

In-service problem session: The instructors identify their problems to date with MEIPIM methodology in the classroom.

Pablo: The biggest problem is project work Always the same project. They are repeated every year and the children are bored.

Lili: The children get restless. The activity designed to welcome the children takes up so much time that it's already dark when it is time to do the project. There is no electricity and the children can't see so writing the date can take half an hour. Also the children can't read and this also slows them down during project work.

Carmen: When I asked for more time the parents said no because the children are tired from working all day. They don't want them at school for more than two hours.

Martin: The children on farm A don't speak Spanish. I tried to do the project but they didn't understand anything so they didn't come back the next day.

(In-service training, Fieldnotes, blue notebook: 23)

Emerging in this session were unresolved issues with project work relating to the children's literacy levels. As indicated in the above data, these issues included lack of time, non-Spanish-speaking students and the prescribed lesson format itself. During this particular session, the academic coordinator was present. While not offering any concrete solutions, other than suggesting that bilingual children might translate for monolingual children, the tutor did request that all problems be documented on the appropriate form and submitted to the central office.⁴⁰

The following day, however, the tutor in charge organised a literacy session to address the complaints made by the instructors. The academic coordinator was no longer present; his absence allowed the tutor greater freedom to acknowledge the social reality of the instructor's complaints. He explained:

Sergio: Basically, this is how it is, especially in the first year; often the communities don't want you. It depends on their previous experience with MEIPIM; it's difficult to verify how many families and children there are; there are no materials and usually the children can't read or write.

Sergio asked them not to lose faith.

(Field notes, blue notebook: 27)

Sergio then asked the instructors to identify their literacy teaching strategies. The instructors collectively identified strategies elaborated in MEIPIM's instructors' guide;

⁴⁰ As far as I could determine, the problems identified by the instructors on these formats were not addressed.

reading out loud, using older children to read to younger children, using real reading resources such as newspapers, magazines, letters etc. (Fieldnotes, blue notebook:28-29). Sergio congratulated them; reading from the guide he explained that these strategies encourage

Sergio: Learning to read by reading and write by writing in real situations (Instructor's guide: 238).

Sergio spent some time discussing how this approach is more effective than the mechanised phonetic decoding approaches used to teach reading when they (the instructors) were children (Field notes, blue notebook: 27).

His enthusiasm surprised me. Prior to in-service training, I had offered Sergio a ride to collect school material from a large store house in an outlying district of Xalapa. During this journey, he talked at length about his difficulty with the programme's approach to literacy, questioning the need to discard the tried-and- tested phonetic approach which had worked for all of them (Fieldnotes, blue notebook: 22)

As I categorised my field notes for that year, the pattern that emerged suggested that, while both the instructors and tutors paid lip service to holistic literacy approaches, they rarely employed them; and outside of the official training context, they questioned their effectiveness. A few more-confident instructors did resort to the traditional phonetic decoding approach; however they were careful not to include this in their official plans.⁴¹ As a consequence, given that literacy challenges were rarely addressed in any systematic manner in the classrooms, the children's illiteracy remained a significant obstacle for teaching project work: the principal pedagogical tool structuring MEIPIM's discursive and organisational practices. My field notes, documenting classroom observations for that year, can appear repetitive and monotonous. Invariably they begin with: "Arrive at farm. Children are copying the date, the title, the learning

⁴¹ During informal conversations instructors often admitted to using traditional approaches which they didn't record on their planning sheets.

moment and the project question. They are bored and restless. They haven't finished copying and almost an hour has gone by".

Arrive at Farm A, 9:35: Children are doing project work. The project is 'How do we communicate?' They have been copying the date, the title, the learning period and the project question for almost half an hour. They are bored, and Eugenia is threatening to tell their parents if they don't finish copying.

(Fieldnotes, blue notebook: 40).

Arrive farm B, (6:30pm): There are only five children. Maria explains that they are picking coffee in a field far from the school and will arrive late. Maria writes the date, the title and the question on the board. The children have been copying for more than twenty minutes. They don't seem to understand what they are copying.

(Fieldnotes, blue notebook: 52)

Farm A (9:05am), Rosalinda writes the date, the project title, the learning moment (first) the learning period (expression) and the question: 'Why are we part of Nature?' on the board. The children are copying. Juan leaves. It's too much copying for him. Ivan and Rafael continue copying. I go outside. I feel my presence is intrusive. I talk to Adrianna.⁴² Back in the class,(9:45am) the children are bored and disruptive and tired from copying the titles on the board which they still haven't finished. Forty minutes have already passed. Rosalinda decides to change activities and tells them to put away their books. (The period of expression has finished and no one has expressed!!)⁴³

(Fieldnotes, blue notebook: 74)

⁴² Adrianna is a single mother who travels with the community to cook and wash. Her child stays in the place of origin with the grandmother.

⁴³ This was scribbled in the margin of my notes. I include it here as it is pertinent to the point I am making.

These observations begin to identify a routine classroom practice for teaching project work. The data suggest that this routine generally involved labour-intensive copying of the lesson format; that is, the date, title, question and teaching period. This time-consuming copying process, required for children with barely functional literacy skills, combined with a poor grasp of Spanish, generated a degree of boredom that often resulted in the children rebelling or simply giving up and leaving the classroom. My notes also demonstrate an overall absence of any systematic literacy or language input during these sessions to address these challenges.

As a result of these literacy challenges, during interviews and informal interactions outside of the official learning context, instructors and tutors often expressed an ongoing dissatisfaction with project work as a curricular approach. The fundamental problem for all those interviewed was their perception that project work was “a waste of time.” They argued that in order for the programme to be successful, it would need to be replaced with activities “to teach the children to read and write.” In other words, project work was viewed as an obstacle to literacy teaching, rather than an organisational practice for literacy acquisition; as the following data indicates, instructors interpreted the project approach as a “no-win” situation.

SD: What do you think of the programme?

Rosa: Good, but they have to do something or it is going to fold. It's always the same thing with the project. They need more support with reading and writing.

SD: What aspect of the programme would you change?

Rosa: The project

SD: What you replace it with

Rosa: Activities that allows the child to learn other things...in level one, to learn to read and write.

(Recorded Interview: Disc 2: second generation instructor)

Maria: And you try to explain and more, but when they present their arguments and they say it doesn't work, this doesn't work for me, then the only thing that you can tell them, and I've even said this to those in charge, I'm going to revise their work to see if the children have learning continuity and if they tell me that the project doesn't work then I'll say, don't use it. (Silence)

Maria: Put simply, there are many things that they don't touch on so that the children learn to read and write.

(Recorded conversation, Disc 3: - "Third generation tutor having difficulty convincing the instructors of the relevance of project work").

Carmen: There are many projects to do and you are always stagnating in 'Who am I' or "Caring for my health..." junk food." The children are bored. It's always the same thing. They even know it by memory. They need activities where they can learn to read and write

(Recorded Interview: Disc 2: - second generation instructor).

My field notes and interview data collected across three generations of instructors and tutors suggest that, since most of the children had barely functional literacy skills, they were unable to participate meaningfully in project work. Continuing on from this logic, the data suggests that, since project work structures the two-hour cross-curricular school session, there isn't ever any available time to address literacy skills. In other words, project work was viewed as exclusive of, rather than inclusive of, literacy teaching. As a result, notwithstanding children's yearly participation in MEIPIM, literacy levels did not change significantly during the three academic years that I observed. The children progressed, if they progressed at all, from total illiteracy to barely functional literacy skills.

6.4.1. The reasoning behind the pedagogic logic of project work

Instructor/tutor construction of project work as an obstacle to literacy and to learning achievement suggests a significant problem for official policy aims. MEIPIM's

intercultural and constructivist pedagogic discourse (see Chap. 5) generates a world vision where increased democratic social and knowledge relations mediate the learning context. Project work is central to realising this world vision. Hence MEIPIM's pedagogical and methodological approach is based primarily on integrated learning, structured within fourteen cross-curricular project areas.⁴⁴ Curriculum integration based on project work aims to facilitate intercultural collaboration, affirm cultural and intercultural values, and permit children to construct contextually-relevant knowledge. These aims are outlined in the Instructor Guide (pp. 100-101):

- 1) Cultural encounters using the practices and knowledge of each participant in the learning process.
- 2) Recognition of children's needs and interests in both the school and everyday life.
- 3) Integration of knowledge areas overcoming a fragmentation that acts as an obstacle to a holistic vision of reality including language, values and ways of thinking.
- 4) Learning for the present without a prolonged gap between learning and application.
- 5) Taking advantage of group diversity given that gender, language, age, culture, interests, knowledge, and academic levels enrich thought processes and favours communication with others helping to respect them and to know them better.

The importance of project work to realising MEIPIM's epistemological and pedagogical vision is clearly expressed in these official aims. Project work facilitates intercultural encounters where diverse cultural practices can be valued and diversity is understood as an important and enriching learning resource. An integrated curriculum also avoids the fragmentation of knowledge into specialised areas, thus allowing for a more immediate knowledge application to address to everyday challenges.

In this sense, project work allows for an emphasis on learning processes and skills ("learning to learn"), rather than on more traditional didactic approaches based on rote learning.

⁴⁴ See MEIPIM appendix for further information on projects and MEIPIM organisation.

“Memorisation does not guarantee that the children will develop the capacity to know more, to live better and resolve their problems. To be competent is to have the ability to recognise, analyse and resolve everyday problems. Thanks to project work these abilities can be developed (Instructor Guide: 20).

MEIPIM’s project-based integrated curricular approach also reflects the curricular recommendations, cited by the authors that emerged from the first world conference on “Education for All” (Jomtien, Thailand 1990). These recommendations, later consolidated in the second world conference held in Dakar (2000) favoured a pedagogic shift towards increased democratic educational practices. As discussed in Chapter 2, global aims to democratise the learning process have generally translated into project-based constructivist curricula to transform knowledge relations (Tabulawa 2003). Equally, democratic knowledge relations cannot be achieved without democratised social relations, hence intercultural education is included to address issues of cultural diversity and discrimination.

The reasoning behind this pedagogic logic stems from an understanding of a globalised world characterised by instability and change (see Chaps. 2 and 3). The assumptions are, therefore, that to survive you need to acquire the skills/competencies of a “self-programmable learner” (Castells 2004). Knowledge integration (project work) is crucial to developing these skills. As Tabulawa (2009) points out,

“It is difficult to justify context bound knowledge in a globalised world characterised by rapid knowledge decay” (Tabulawa 2009:97).

Collaborative learning, research-based learning, child-to-child tutoring, classroom dialogue, presentations and activities to promote independence and critical thought,

promoted usually at the primary level via project-based research, are essential to this vision of the world.

Instructors, as noted above, however, fail to engage with this reasoning and the attendant organisational practices. Instead, they complain about the lack of time for teaching real skills, reading and writing, and describe project work not only as “a waste of time,” but also as a considerable obstacle to developing basic literacy. Significantly, none of the instructors seem to connect project work with literacy teaching.⁴⁵ That is, none of the instructors recognise project work as a vehicle for an integrated curriculum where literacy acquisition can be incorporated at any point in a cross-curricular context.

The implications for policy goals, suggested by this data, cannot be understated. Curriculum integration is the principal pedagogic tool for realising MEIPIM’s intercultural/constructivist world vision. As described above, MEIPIM aims to achieve immediate and meaningful connections between school and home, academic work and play, knowledge and solutions to everyday challenges. The data suggest, however, that, instead of the official child-centred intercultural practices described in the policy literature, instructors were applying teacher-centred practices that rely on intensive copying and are devoid of contextual relevance or application. Copying appears to substitute for knowledge construction and application, and memorisation and recall of copied material substitutes for the imaginary teacher-child dialogue embedded in MEIPIM’s policy rhetoric. Perhaps the most worrying aspects, suggested by this data, are the challenges that instructor and tutor-resistance to project work presents for children’s literacy. These challenges, discussed frequently by both instructors and tutors outside of the official learning context, seemed to lack an adequate teaching response, in the classroom.

⁴⁵A questionnaire distributed during the pilot stage of my research asked participants which aspect of the programme they would change. All fifteen participants replied that they would change project work.

6.5. MEIPIM's global/ local dialectic: gaps, contradictions and paradoxes

The epistemological and pedagogical confusion suggested above was not limited just to unfamiliar organisational practices, such as project work. The confusion generated by MEIPIM's pedagogical world vision and concomitant curricular practice was exacerbated further by another of its organisational practices: an elaborate and demanding planning and evaluation procedure.

It is worth noting that evaluation barely warrants a mention in the policy literature. Bonilla et al. (1999) describe project evaluation as "continual, contextual and based on classroom observations" (p.107). In the literature they reject standardised evaluation procedures preferring a more "dynamic," process with an immediate, relevant and intentional intervention/application for the child (p.107). Referring specifically to the evaluation of skills across the entire programme, they emphasise the contextual and integral nature of evaluating competencies, stressing that competencies cannot be standardised or measured:

"MEIPIM does away with traditional forms of assessment that emphasise standardised and homogenised evaluations that have contributed to school failure in the past" (p.77).

To comply with these evaluative processes, instructors are to be issued with notebooks to record contextual observations (Bonilla et al. 1999: 78).

In practice however, as the data below suggests, the contextual forms of assessment and evaluation described in the literature, appear to translate into fixed and tightly systemised evaluative criteria, based on the predetermined and pre-specified skills that are applied across all CONAFE's basic education programmes. Also, as discussed below, MEIPIM is also required to apply the standardised national examinations for Spanish, Mathematics and Science. The results from these exams are published in

national league tables. These external forms of assessment, as noted above, are not referenced in policy literature.

These “add-on” or additional evaluation structures to MEIPIM policy resonate with Tabulawa’s (2004, 2009) critique of generic policy migration and the resulting global/local dialectic. Referring specifically to education reform in Botswana, he cautions that while “policy migration or policy borrowing” does not impose global discourses on countries; it is, however, mediated by the cultural and political conditions which prevail in any given context.

“Thus, although it is important to draw upon global influences in trying to understand educational policy directions in Botswana or anywhere else, it is essential to recognise that the ultimate shape policy assumes is also a function of local circumstances and concerns. It is this mediation of the global by the local that gives globalisation its contradictory and paradoxical character, this in turn leading to gaps, contradictions and paradoxes in policies that emerge as a response to it” (Tabulawa 2009: 94).

The displacement of MEIPIM’s holistic and contextual evaluation discourse by a tightly regulated and systemised list of generic skills and national exams could be described as the “contradictory and paradoxical local response” to global policy that Tabulawa is referring to. The following sections use data to explore further the paradoxes and contradictions that emerge from the local/global dialectic shaping generic policy enactment with migrant agricultural communities in Veracruz.

6.5.1. Securing the learning evidence: strategy teaching for evaluative purposes

Evaluative procedures, linked to planning procedures, were strictly monitored by the tutors during fieldwork; failure to meet official planning and evaluation requirements

could incur loss of salary or even dismissal. In this section I use data to describe how instructors negotiated, resisted, reshaped, and in some cases rejected these procedures.

In August 2003, just as I was completing my pilot research, the tutors were asked to produce a systemised evaluative account of their experiences as teachers on MEIPIM. On page 20, with reference to MEIPIM's assessment and evaluation procedure, they wrote the following;

“Proposal: On the subject of evaluation, it is necessary to focus on what MEIPIM really is and apply an evaluation in relation to the characteristics that define this (agricultural migrants) community. This perhaps, may imply a 180 degree turn because in all probability it requires changing the map to focus on those competencies that the children really need to achieve. We need to compile and develop activities that teach the necessary competencies in relation to the small amount of time that they (migrant children) are on the farms. On the other hand we need to apply a Spanish evaluation for level 1 that addresses Communication Competence no. 7 to support them on the long journey of learning to read and write in a conventional manner”

(Informe General Del Ciclo Escolar MEIPIM 2002-2003: General report of MEIPIM school year 2002-2003)

Notwithstanding their strict adherence to official evaluative procedures throughout the year, this report suggests that the tutors were not unaware of specific shortcomings associated with MEIPIM's curricular approach and evaluation process.

After I received a copy of the report I asked them what they meant by a 180 degree turn. Roxana and Eugenia said that the 180 degree turn, suggested in their proposal, stems from an observed tendency by the instructors to prioritise the collection of official evidence for the children's learning records,⁴⁶ over and above the children's more

⁴⁶Instructors were obliged to bring folders with children's work to monthly in service sessions as evidence of skill acquisition.

immediate and contextual learning needs (Fieldnotes, orange notebook 2003). As implied in their report, this often resulted in failure to teach basic skills. Hence the tutors' recommendation that more time needs to be devoted to Competence no. 7, "to discover how to write and how to use writing to communicate" (Competencias: Preescolar Comunitario y Primaria Comunitario: Competences: Community Preschool and Primary School, CONAFE 2001: 76).

This observation, recorded by the tutors, is corroborated by research data collected during participatory observations in the classroom, both on the farm and at the place of origin. The data suggest that securing learning evidence for in-service sessions seemed to structure the teaching/learning process in most of the observed classes. The tutors make this point more explicit later in their report. Referring specifically to MEIPIM's 'community newspaper' and 'community letter writing' activities they make the following observations.

For some of the instructors, it is a case of meeting the evaluation requirements and nothing else; given that they are worried about having the evidence before the next in-service training session. Because of this they don't teach the basics of letter writing nor do they value or recognise the children's culture during the writing process. Also, they don't teach the most important thing which is to promote the child's understanding of what they are writing. . . The greatest difficulty for the instructors using these tools was that the majority of the children cannot write and so they only did drawings.

(Informe General Del Ciclo Escolar MEIPIM 2002-2003: General report of MEIPIM school year 2002-2003: 23).

Given the brevity of the two hour teaching session,⁴⁷ frequent teacher and pupil absences,⁴⁸ literacy challenges and the necessity to secure learning evidence for

⁴⁷ The recommended school period to complete the required work is two and a half hours. During field work the teaching period was almost always reduced to two hours.

⁴⁸ Limited time to secure official learning evidence is also exacerbated by extended absences of teachers which tended to occur prior to and immediately after the in-service sessions. These extra

children's records to present at in-service training sessions, it is not difficult to understand why the instructors might use their time in this way. One of my earlier visits to the coffee farm recorded in my field notes demonstrates how instructor anxiety in relation to evaluative procedures unfolds in the classroom. The observation was carried out in early December, the busiest period for coffee harvesting.

. . . There are only three children; the others are still working in the fields. The instructor is doing the welcoming activity. Children look exhausted. The teacher is doing community letter writing as the welcoming activity to save time. Teacher writes the three points that structure a letter on the board; Greetings, Development and Letter Endings. The children are being asked to copy them and fill in each part. Juan Carlos complains that he doesn't understand and he can't read. She tells him to choose whatever letters he likes and put them together. Melissa and Fatima copy the three titles. They are writing on loose-leaf paper and drawing lines free hand (The work must be for their records). None of children know what to write (even Melissa and Fatima look confused,(the two oldest), Melissa has just arrived. She asks for ideas. The instructor tells her to write anything.

(Field notes, Blue notebook: 33-34)

This classroom observation reveals a certain logic that seems to resonate with the laborious and often senseless copying of lesson outlines, observed in most of the project classes. In this class the children spend their time copying the lesson outline. In other words, the lesson outline, originally designed to guide lesson development for the teacher, substitutes for learning content in this observed class. I suggest that copying the key points that structure the lesson format seems to be a more effective method for instructors to secure the necessary learning evidence for their in-service session. Hence, the three titles, 'Greetings, Development and Letter Endings' appear to be more

days, combined with the in-service days, often meant that teachers could be absent for up to a period of ten days.

important than the information shared in the letter, (*Write whatever you want but copy these titles*).

Lessons structured in this way, as demonstrated above, rely on a labour intensive copying process which, given the time restrictions, appears to exclude opportunities for basic literacy input (see Juan Carlos' plea for help), or opportunities to engage with the children's lived experiences (see Melissa's request for ideas). Instead, they are told to write anything. In this particular session, I suspect the pattern is more pronounced given the proximity of the first in-service meeting due to take place the following week, where children's and teacher's records will be thoroughly checked for correct planning, evaluation and learning. Equally, the reduced class size, due to work commitments, may well have been an additional anxiety in relation to this issue.

The ritualised class performance described in this data, where a lesson outline displaces learning content, seemed to mediate most teaching contexts observed throughout fieldwork. My data suggest that the promotion of increased democratic social and knowledge relations, across an integrated curriculum, did not seem to be a priority for any of the young instructors. Instead they appeared to have developed a form of instrumentalised teaching to address their more immediate needs, thus securing learning evidence for planning and evaluative purposes.

This kind of strategy teaching however exacts a high price in terms of children's learning. Firstly, as noted above, literacy needs rarely seemed to be addressed during these ritualised classroom lessons. Secondly, this kind of instrumentalised teaching appeared to exclude the children's real world experience and knowledge from the learning context, ironically, the exact opposite of what MEIPIM's constructivist intercultural epistemology and pedagogy officially aim to achieve. As a result, project themes, such as "Children's Rights," included for their relevance to the children's lived reality, were also reduced to copying exercises rather than meaningful critical engagement with the daily challenges experienced by these communities.

Below is an account of one such class. The following data were gathered during a classroom observation on the coffee farm where the instructors were introducing a project on “Workers’ Rights.” I quote the classroom observation in full in order to demonstrate the range of factors that might mediate instructors’ interactions with MEIPIM’s discursive and organisational practices.

Arrive Farm A: (6pm): There are only 5 children. (Twenty children are registered). The two instructors, Maria and Rosalinda, are pleased to see me as they want to go to Xalapa after class. A small boy arrives but refuses to come in. He seems embarrassed. The instructors are ignoring him. He goes away. I ask Maria about him and she says that a group of families have arrived today from Puebla. I ask where the others are. Maria tells me they are picking coffee quite far from their living accommodation and will probably arrive late for the rest of the week.

She is writing the date, the project title “El Trabajo” (Our work) and the project question to be investigated on the board.

Pregunta: Como podemos defender nuestros derechos de trabajo? ” How can we defend our working rights?

The children were told to copy the work onto a page. They have spent approximately twenty minutes writing the title and the project question. Fatima and Diego⁴⁹ are the only children who can read. The others can’t read and are having a lot of difficulty. Rosalinda (the instructor) is at her desk working on what appears to be an unrelated activity. Diego is getting restless. Maria is at the board. She reads out the question, she asks the children to respond. Fatima: “We have the right to a good salary”. What else? (Silence). She tells them to investigate. “Use the books to investigate and find out more” The children move towards the shelf of books. The room is too dark to read. . Why don’t they get a brighter bulb? (There is only a 30 watt light bulb

⁴⁹ Fatima and Diego now live permanently on the farm and have participated on MEIPIM for four years. They are familiar with this procedure.

hanging from an extension lead in the middle.) The children are huddled around the bookshelf flicking through the books. They are unable to read them because of insufficient light and because they can't read. They are not sure what they are supposed to do. Even Diego and Fatima don't look like they can read them. They look uncomfortable and unsure. Rosalinda is at the bookshelf. She is not helping the children. She removes another book and goes back to her seat. Maria is fiddling with a cell phone at her desk. The children are turning the pages but not reading. Fatima has found something, I think. Instructors are talking amongst themselves. Something to do with the book that Rosalinda has. Fatima is back at her desk. I ask her what she found. Nothing. She asks me what rights I have in my work. I tell her I have the right to a good salary. I ask her about her rights as a worker. "We don't have any." The other children are still shifting around uncomfortably at the shelf. Maria is asking them to answer the question. "We have the right to learn," says Fatima. Maria says that is not related to workers rights. She says that this is for children and asks them to think about adults instead. Diego says the right not to be scolded. Maria doesn't say anything. Rosalinda doesn't participate. We have the right to respect says Jose.⁵⁰ The teachers are no longer listening and are trying to find information in the book that Rosalinda removed from the shelf. Children are still holding books at the bookshelf. Maria finds what she is looking for in her book and is back to the board. Children go back to their seats. She erases what she has written. The children protest because they haven't finished copying. She leaves the original question and writes the following on the board copying from the book.

Rights: Something which belongs to us which no one can take away because if they do they will have broken the law.

Workers rights: We all have the right to receive loans, paid holidays, annual bonuses, adequate equipment and medical attention.

⁵⁰ As noted above Fatima, Diego and Jose are siblings who reside permanently on the farm. Hence, they have participated on MEIPIM from its initiation. I suspect that the answers being rehearsed here stem from work done in previous years related to the project "The rights of the child."

Jose is asked to read what is on the board. He says he doesn't understand anything and is just copying. Maria is telling him he can read and that he is just lazy. Nothing is happening. They are insisting; he is refusing. I intervened and offered Jose some support with sounding out. Rosalinda has taken over with reading support. The other children are still copying from the board. Jose has finished sounding out. Maria explains what it means. (She doesn't mention that none of their parents have this right.⁵¹ She asks them to repeat what she has said. They repeat: We have the right to a loan. I interrupt and asked if their parents have this right. They said no but no one followed up my question.

Maria asks them what they would do if they had been working for three years and didn't receive an annual bonus. (Silence) Fatima says go to the police. A small boy (arrived late) approaches the table. He can't read or write. I help write his name and begin to teach him the letter names. Maria takes over and writes and sounds out an alphabet for him. Its eight o'clock. Maria asks them; "so what have you learned?" Fatima repeats what is written on the board. "If labour rights are not respected then we can go to the police." Marie José looks perplexed. She still doesn't know what a right is after all this?

(Field notes, Blue field notebook 2: 37-40)

This class follows the teaching pattern identified above. The writing and copying of the date, the title, the question and sometimes even the methodological moment, expressive or investigative,⁵² is written on the blackboard. This is followed by intensive copying by children. Of note in this observation are the physical as well as the academic obstacles to copying material which the children can neither read nor understand. Poor lighting, tiredness and incomprehension resulted in children simply giving up, or as in the case of Jose, rebelling and refusing to even try to sound out the words on the board. Even those children with comparatively better reading and writing skills have difficulty because of

⁵¹ I wrote this in the margin of my notes.

⁵² The methodology outlined in the instructors guide identifies two chronological teaching periods for project work described as Expressive and Investigative. Each of these periods contains three individual learning moments: expression, analysis and sharing for the former and investigation, analysis and sharing for the latter.

inadequate lighting and tiredness. Also of note is how the investigative/analytical component, described in the MEIPIM literature as the second learning moment,⁵³ is performed. Children are asked to retrieve information from a set of books which appear to have little relevance to the subject matter, even if they could read them. Opportunities to reinforce literacy or introduce information retrieval skills for more literate students (Diego and Fatima) are not recognised during this activity. Finally, notwithstanding the relevance of the topic to the children's daily experiences, opportunities to use project work to make meaningful connections with the child's lived reality are refused.

In this class, the children's attempts to respond with information on children's rights are treated as irrelevant (see Fatima's response). Knowledge construction and teacher/student dialogue was symbolically represented using a memory/recall format where the question is formulated by the teacher and the children respond with an official predetermined answer which the students are required to memorise. In the above class, the question of what to do if our rights are not respected, the correct answer is a chorused response: employers who fail to meet workers rights will be in trouble with the law. Their working rights, as waged child labourers, are not discussed. Nor do they question the fact that their parents do not have any of the legal rights that the instructor wrote on the board.

The following day, when I arrived at the farm, the instructors were using the teaching period to produce a book on worker's rights and federal law. The children copied the project question and the chorused response from the previous day. Rosalinda wrote the response on the board during a memory recall session to reinforce what they had learned.

⁵³ This is the learning moment when children are visualised as carrying out independent research to find information on the topics that they choose, in dialogue with the teacher, during the first learning moment (expression).

I saw the book on display at the following in-service session. The irony of this class, in relation to the exploitative labour relations defining migrant agricultural workers, need hardly be elaborated.

In a similar way, during an observed teaching session on the same farm to introduce the project, “The Rights of the Child,” securing learning evidence, rather than critical engagement with children’s rights, seemed to determine a mainly didactic teacher-centered practice (Field notes, blue notebook : pp 57-60). Children’s rights were reduced to a sentence written on the board, and the children were asked to copy the sentence on loose-leaf paper, a sure sign that the work is destined for the children’s records. Clara and Melissa, two sisters who had been taking turns for the past week to attend school on alternate days because of their work commitments⁵⁴ were the only two children of the seven that were present, who seemed to be able to read the sentence: “Children should be respected and treated well.” After they copied the sentence the children were asked to write another sentence similar to the first, relating to their rights. Melissa wrote: *Children should be well respected because they are the future of Mexico* (ibid: 58).

Notwithstanding Melissa’s shyness, I suspect that this sentence reflected more than a mere model of the first one. Nevertheless, during this session, children’s work commitments as an obstacle to meeting most of their basic rights, including the right to education, was not addressed. Clara and Melissa might have dialogued with the instructors about having to attend school on alternate days because of work commitments on the farm. Equally, the children might have discussed their interrupted academic year in relation to their lived reality as waged workers (coffee harvesting is November to June). However, as far as I could determine, critical engagement with these issues was not an option during the teaching of this project.⁵⁵ As in other

⁵⁴ School is changed to the morning when coffee harvesting is almost finished. This presents significant problems for the children who remain on the farm. They are often required in the fields for clearing and planting which makes it difficult to attend school in the morning. Clara and Melissa are sisters and were able to make their own arrangement to accommodate both work and school.

⁵⁵ The instructors worked with this project for four sessions.

observed classes, opportunities to apply MEIPIM's constructivist philosophy to dialogue with the children about their lived experiences as child workers were not made available.⁵⁶

6.6. The exchange value of instrumentalised teaching: whose needs are being met?

So far the data seem to suggest that notwithstanding MEIPIM's constructivist and intercultural discourse, the strongly-regulated planning and evaluation system generated an instrumentalised engagement with these pedagogic practices. MEIPIM's carefully planned lesson outlines, to facilitate learning autonomy, are re-interpreted as lesson content; outlines substitute for content. Likewise, project work designed to address diversity and narrow the gap between knowledge production and application, is re-articulated as a pre-determined question/answer exercise, based on memory/recall. Finally, pending in-service sessions, which seemed to be more concerned with teacher surveillance and control than on-going professional development, shaped a form of teaching that appeared to be more focused on securing the requisite teaching/learning evidence than providing a space for the social construction of knowledge and intercultural communication. As a result, observed classroom practices appeared to be fragmented, incoherent and often tedious processes.

A generalised definition on workers' rights, copied verbatim from the Constitution, substitutes for knowledge construction and critical engagement with social reality. Democratic learning relations and independent problem solving are symbolically represented by literacy-challenged children standing beside a bookshelf, flicking through books that they cannot read, however relevant these books might be to the subject matter. A suggested outline taken from the instructors' guide on how to teach letter writing is used to substitute lesson content. Finally, labour-intensive copying by mostly illiterate children, the glue that holds it all together, provides the much-needed

⁵⁶ During participant observation on the coffee farm, absenteeism because of working conditions was more than 50% for the regular children, yet when they did their project on children rights the instructors failed to use this opportunity to encourage critical dialogue about their roles as child labourers.

learning evidence required for the in-service sessions where planning and evaluation are tightly regulated and controlled.

The data appear to suggest, therefore, that bureaucratic concerns, rather than curriculum content, or the students' interaction with that content, determine the teaching and learning processes observed above. The issue here, as Luykx (1999:200) elaborates, "is not whether one's work is remunerated or its inherent ease or difficulty, but rather what and whose purpose it serves?"

To address this question in the context of MEIPIM, "what and whose purpose might be served by the ritualised classroom performances described above," it is important not to lose sight of the material circumstances that determine instructors and tutors participation on the programme. As described in Chapter 1, they are predominantly young people from rural areas, unable to complete their education because of financial difficulties. Aged between sixteen and twenty-one, they are struggling to access upper-secondary or university education.

In these material circumstances, CONAFE and, more specifically MEIPIM, offer a three-year continuing education grant to the instructors, when they complete one year of teaching. From this point of view it might be argued that the stakes are high. The end-products of instrumentalised strategy/teaching, the learning artefacts presented at in-service sessions can be used to address MEIPIM's strongly-framed planning and assessment structures and the attendant institutional bureaucratic requirements. As a result, the exchange value of the instructors' labour is not measured by its relevance to educational equity for agricultural migrants; rather, it is measured in relation to the degree of institutional compliance which will secure a salary, a three-year continuing education grant and *de facto* an imagined future.

In these circumstances, it might be argued that the material and social relations determining their participation obliges the instructors "to sell their labour power" (Marx cited in Luykx 1999:195). This begs the question, therefore, posed at the beginning of

this section: what and whose purpose might be served? Do these rituals have a surplus value? In other words, who else might benefit from the ritualised classroom performances that produce learning artefacts (manufactured evidence of skill acquisition) described above?

I suggest that, when learning evidence is correctly produced to meet official measurement criteria, it can be used to demonstrate Mexico's compliance with international educational development requirements and, de facto, increased democratisation. In other words, Mexico is seen to have addressed the international educational requirements for educational equity (access, retention and completion) thereby strengthening Mexico's position in the global capitalist system. In this sense, as Tabulawa (2009: 93) argues, child-centred constructivist pedagogies can be described as the "nexus between education and the broader political principle of democracy."

The conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis are worrying. Instructor negotiation and re-articulation of MEIPIM's intercultural policy into a mostly teacher-centred, authoritarian practice embedded in copying and rote-learning, appears to function to address instructors' material needs, local institutional and bureaucratic demands and wider national and global requirements. However, as the data above suggest, instructor enactment of policy fails to address classroom diversity, educational equity and social justice for migrant communities in Veracruz.

6.7. Symbolic violence and the exclusion of real knowledge from the official learning context.

The data analysis so far explores "what and whose purposes" might be served by the kind of instrumentalised teaching described above. While this sheds some light on how local enactment of policy unfolded, it does not tell me very much about why this happened, that is, why instructors and tutors choose to negotiate MEIPIM's official organisational and discursive practices in this way. The data categories explored in this

section, therefore, allow for greater understanding as to why instrumentalised teaching mediated MEIPIM policy enactment.

Further data analysis suggests that the high costs of MEIPIM policy enactment in a local context are reflected in the children's low level of achievement. The instructors often commented on the children's underachievement. Lili, concerned that the older children in her group would not be able to re-register the following year because of their age, worried about their future. During a semi-informal interview she asked the obvious:

Why, if they had so many years on the programme, didn't they make any progress? When I started to work with them they didn't know how to multiply, take away, basic things that in second level you should be able to do

(Recorded interview with Lili: Disc One)

Jorge, the academic assistant during my pilot research and returning for a third cycle, made the following comment in relation to low achievement:

This school cycle, first and foremost, we need to put something into the instructor's head; we're not here to play school .

(Recorded interview with Jorge: Disc 2)

Referring specifically to Farm A, he continues:

When I visited Farm A at the end of this year, I asked myself, how is it possible that these children have been in 3rd level for a full cycle and they can't multiply or divide? This is a serious reflection on our (tutors') part. Perhaps if I had supported them (instructors) more throughout the cycle, they might have graduated this year; but as it is I'm not sure what's going to happen

(Recorded interview with Jorge: Disc 2)

The classroom observations described above suggest that these are valid concerns. Equally, notwithstanding official accreditation,⁵⁷ my field notes persistently indicate an overall absence of any systematic structured learning content or literacy input. As described above, organisational practices, such as project work, collaborative learning, learning investigations, peer-tutoring, critical engagement and intercultural exchange are reshaped into a predominantly teacher-centred memory/recall classroom practice characterised, for the most part, by senseless copying exercises. Equally, the instructors viewed these practices as obstacles to basic literacy teaching.

Early data analysis, performed midway through the first full year of fieldwork, suggested at first glance that instructor resistance and re-articulation of official organisational practices stemmed principally from the exclusion of their “real knowledge” and experience from the official pedagogic context. In this sense, Bourdieu’s (1977) conceptual understanding of “symbolic violence” seemed to offer the most useful theoretical construct to make sense of emerging data categories.

Bourdieu (1977) describes pedagogic action as the labour required to conceal the functioning of *doxa* - that which is beyond question. At stake here, in Bourdieu’s theoretical prism, is the struggle of the dominant classes to impose a seemingly arbitrary classification of knowledge. Bourdieu describes this type of pedagogic action (the labour required to conceal the functioning of *doxa*) as a form of symbolic violence, in-as-much-as it devalues the *doxa* of dominated groups in society. Thus, he concludes: “All pedagogic action is objectively symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary” (Bourdieu 1977).

The devaluation and exclusion of instructor knowledge from the classroom context and the symbolic violence that this enacts cannot be dismissed. The consistent pleas, across three generations of instructors, to teach literacy using a teacher-centred phonetic

⁵⁷ The pass results given to the children did not reflect their low academic level. These results were almost always rejected by the public school in the place of origin. I was unable to identify a case of a CONAFE student moving to a SEV/SEP school.

approach “the way we learned,” rather than MEIPIM’s holistic “*reading by reading*” approach based on using real books is testimony to this.

Data collected later in the research process, however, suggest that instructor negotiation and re-shaping of MEIPIM’s constructivist/intercultural epistemology goes beyond a straightforward dominant/dominated analysis. Undoubtedly, the inherent power relations concealed in MEIPIM’s organisational and discursive practices did function to exclude instructors’ “lived experience and real knowledge” from the teaching/learning experience, thus enacting a form of symbolic violence in the classroom. The data categories discussed below, however, seem to suggest that official policy had failed to impose an unquestionable common-sense *doxa*.

When the gap between the imposed *doxa* and the dominated *doxa* is wide, Bourdieu’s analytical determinants allows for the imposed *doxa* to be perceived as artificial and fragile (Bourdieu 1977). In this research, arguably, the gap between the lived social and material reality of migrant communities and the world vision invoked by the liberal democratic socio cultural values embedded in MEIPIM’s pedagogical device is so wide that it can only but appear fragile and artificial. Based on categories that emerged from interviews, I suggest, therefore, that the supposed common-sense, taken for granted elements of MEIPIM’s ‘cultural arbitrary’ is not misrecognised by the instructors. Instead, it is perceived for what it is - mythological - or as the following interviewee puts it, “a fantasy.”

Sharon: How do you relate this to the idea of rights? The programme focuses on the rights of the child. How do you see their (the migrant children) future in relation to their rights?

Alfredo: It’s a lie . . . apparently these children have rights, but they don’t have rights. The only rights that the children from rural areas have are a slap or a thump. In the city you might be able to talk about the right to enjoyment or to freedom, but these

children have no idea of their rights. Rights only exist for the government, but they don't exist in reality. You don't see them because they are only in the books. There is a right that talks about the right to liberty or the right to play or the right to study. What? These children work or they die of hunger. So there are no rights. It's just a government fantasy that talks about the rights of children, teachers, citizens; but here practically there are no rights, no democracy and no rights, and even less for these children, much less for these children. If there are no rights in the city, can you imagine what its like in rural areas?

Sharon: So your perception of these communities . . .

Alfredo: They live in the worst of the worst.

(Recorded interview with Alfredo: Disc 2)

The level of critical engagement with MEIPIM's rights-based curriculum and pedagogic practice, suggested by Alfredo in this interview, is also evident in conversations and interviews with other instructors. Maria, the instructor, in the class lesson quoted above on workers' rights, referred to these communities as:

"Forgotten by the president and the country"

(Recorded interview with Maria: Disc 1).

Maria points out that they have access neither to medical clinics nor to permanent schooling. When instructors were asked to talk about the children's future during the interviews, they all described the future in terms of social and cultural reproduction:

More of the same, go to pick carrots, go and pick watermelon, go and pick the coffee.

(Recorded group interview with three instructors: Disc 2)

When asked what they would do to provide possibilities for these communities, the level of critical engagement touched on better schooling with a permanent teacher for the duration of the entire academic year, educational facilities for parents and access to

health facilities.(Recorded Interviews with instructors from second generation: Disc 2 and 3)

Another instructor, who had complained about project work and was told that she was obliged to use it as it was designed by experts, told me:

They may have been experts then, but that was another era and it doesn't work now
(Interview with Gina : Disc 3)

In a similar way, their opinions on social constructivism and child-centered pedagogies, expressed during interviews and informal conversations, also demonstrated a critical grasp of the constructivist/inductivist debate. In fact, they often suggested pedagogic improvements that resonated more with constructivism and child-centered pedagogic models than with the instrumentalised teacher-centred rote learning practice they enacted in the classroom. Alfredo cited above on children's rights, suggested activities to raise self-esteem, opportunities for play and ongoing affection (Recorded interview Alfredo: Disc Two). Maria talked about the children's suffering and the need for patience and understanding of their particular circumstances, as well as the need to address their affective rather than cognitive needs (Recorded interview Maria: disc 3). In a similar way when debating literacy approaches, they seemed to have a basic grasp of the epistemological positions framing traditional and holistic approaches. As a result, interview data suggest that resistance to MEIPIM's holistic reading approaches stemmed more from the lack of resources, time and accountability pressures than from symbolic violence.

In sum, while Bourdieu's analytical distinctions for symbolic violence were useful for early category analysis to interpret instructor disaffection and alienation from MEIPIM's organisational practices, symbolic violence didn't address sufficiently the level of critical engagement and progressive pedagogical dispositions that were emerging as data categories in later interviews. These later categories suggest that what was happening in the classroom did not stem from an imposed and

unchallengeable common-sense *doxa* or, for that matter, from outright resistance to an artificial and fragile *doxa*. As noted above, during interviews and informal interactions the instructors and tutors referred often to the affective and circumstantial needs of the children.

To understand better instructor resistance to MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices, I felt it was time to look beyond the conceptual framework provided by symbolic violence and search for alternative analytical determinants. In the following section, therefore, I describe how Bernstein's analytical distinctions to distinguish between performance and competence pedagogic models permitted deeper insights into why instructors and tutors were choosing to negotiate, interpret and rearticulate MEIPIM policy logic as a form of instrumentalised strategy teaching to secure teaching and learning evidence.

6.8. A contradictory pedagogy: *what exactly is the purpose of project work?*

Further analysis revealed a more fundamental issue embedded in interview/field notes data. Revisiting earlier, more descriptive, data categories related to classroom practices, "*project work is a waste of time; cutting and sticking; children can't read, more of the same,*" etc., a broader interpretive category evolved which seemed to provide the missing link between these earlier categories and later data categories that emerged from interviews. This broader interpretive category denotes an overall frustration, identifiable in instructor/tutor interview narratives, with perceived pedagogical contradictions in MEIPIM policy. I labelled this category *pedagogical conundrum*.

MEIPIM discourse, as described throughout the thesis, is structured by a competence based child-centred, intercultural pedagogical approach to address learning and cultural diversity. Yet, as the earlier data in this chapter describe, the instructors appear to engage more with the strongly-regulated curriculum, planning and evaluation parts of the programme. As a result, they often expressed their frustrations with trying to

implement two seemingly incompatible organisational practices: a highly controlled assessment and evaluation procedure to monitor the teaching of pre-determined skills juxtaposed with constructivist aims to encourage teacher creativity and increased teacher and student control over a seemingly “weakly framed” pedagogy and curriculum

Rosalinda: What I don't like are certain parts of the project work; or should I say that I don't agree with project work because, if the project is used to achieve competencies (skills) then it would be better to work directly with the competencies, if this is what they want to achieve. It's not logical. If they want to work with competencies, then why don't we work directly with them? Why bother with project work? They are always going to draw or cut something and they don't learn anything.
(Recorded interview with Rosalinda: Disc 2).

Lili: What I don't understand is the purpose of project work. It really doesn't have a post-project purpose. . It doesn't take you anywhere useful - Health, Rights, My Work, maybe (pause) but the rest . . . Festivals, Organising the Classroom (project topics). We should do these when they happen in real life. There is no necessity to do them as a project just to show competencies. They are part of life.

(Recorded interview with Lili: Disc 2)

While the instructors may not be conversant in the official epistemological vision underpinning MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices, these comments go some way towards questioning what the instructors understand to be a confused and contradictory reasoning behind MEIPIM's discursive and organisational logic. Viewed through their sense-making prism, using project work to teach pre-determined competencies is illogical. Or, alternatively, teaching competencies in a project format to meet official learning targets that are reinforced naturally through daily activities (*they are part of life*) doesn't appear to have a post-project application other than producing learning evidence for skill acquisition. According to this reasoning, if

competencies are the official criteria to measure the programme's success, then let's get to the point and teach competencies, not projects.

These types of commentaries, embedded in most of the interview data, seemed to suggest that instructor engagement, in the form of strategic instrumentalised teaching, did not stem solely, as I first thought, from the symbolic violence of a dominant common-sense *doxa* which excluded their "real knowledge" from the official learning context. Neither did it stem solely from an artificial or fragile *doxa* trying to impose 'out of place' socio-cultural values, more specific to a liberal middle-class school than an under-resourced rural Mexican context. These are, of course, important factors that played a crucial role in instructor negotiation and enactment of the programme, but they do not provide the whole story. The data described below suggest that instructor resistance to MEIPIM's organisational practices evolved from their struggle to reconcile a learner-centred pedagogy with a performance-based planning and evaluation system: *either we are teaching competencies or we are doing projects, but we can't do both.*

Unable to resolve this tension, and given the exchange value of their teaching outcomes analysed above, the young instructors appear to be faced with a dilemma: struggle with a contradictory discourse and practice, or throw in the towel and devise a strategy that might allow them to manufacture the requisite evidence for competence acquisition. This evidence can be exchanged for a three-year continuing grant and a de facto imaginary future.

Arguably, neither of these options bode well for the educational needs of migrant children. In this sense, the data analyses below suggest that their construction of MEIPIM policy might be described in the following way: unable to meet the children's needs with the (*illogical*) official tools that have *no post-project purpose*, they may as well reshape those tools to address their own immediate and future needs. The following section explores further the implications of instructors' "cultural production of meaning" (Levinson 2001, 2011) for policy enactment and the implications of local enactment for diversity, equity and social justice for agricultural migrant communities.

6.8.1. The illogicality of an exam

The contradictory nature of this ‘pedagogical conundrum,’ and the tensions, gaps and paradoxes it generated was particularly intense towards the end of the year when the instructors were required to apply the national examinations. The official reason for the application of these exams is exclusively a national concern and unrelated to MEIPIM policy. As discussed in Chapter 5, these exams stem largely from global, rather than local recommendations and criteria. An official agreement between the Department of Education and CONAFE, to validate qualifications, stipulates that national exams must to be applied to all CONAFE’s compensatory education programmes. This agreement is legislated in Agreement 200 of the ‘Plan y Programas de Estudios de Educación Primaria’, PNEB (National Primary Education Programme and Plan) which stipulates that a child can move to the next level only when he/she has a pass grade in Spanish and Mathematics (CONAFE 2004). Migrant children, who attend school for the duration of the harvesting season, are significantly disadvantaged by this national policy. The authors of MEIPIM, however, appear not to have addressed this concern in policy literature. The following interview excerpt describes the frustration and perplexity that this confusion generates for instructors who are already struggling with pedagogical confusion:

Carmen: When I arrived at Farm C, the children knew nothing. Well, I consider myself to be strict and I wanted them to read, so I taught them letters, numbers, how to add, take away, how to write their names.

Sharon: Did you follow the programme?

Carmen: No. I used my common sense. That programme teaches you nothing. In pre-school they give you projects that are far too difficult for the children.

Mabel: And also in those conditions.

Carmen: Exactly, the conditions

Lili: More than anything, some things in this programme I noticed, well not just me, various people noticed that this programme isn’t just for migrant children, it’s also used for children who go to school regularly, that is, for the entire school year.

Sharon: Yes, I didn't understand that.

Lili: So the difficulty that this programme has and what they should improve is this . . . No . . .? There should be a programme strictly for them (the migrants) that they can use. For example, you know the children in Farm D, Sharon. They are intelligent. If they had a teacher for the whole year, from August onwards, who migrates with them and returns with them to the community, then they would make better progress. But it's the opposite. For example, if I hadn't taught them various things about history and other things that were on the exam, that aren't included in the projects, then they all would have failed.

Carmen: We told Hector, why are you giving us an exam that isn't for these children. This is an exam for children who go to school all year. Our children haven't seen these projects.

Sharon: So what did Hector say?

Lili: That they don't make the decisions, this is what they are told to do . . . many things and quite honestly.....

Carmen: Ay . . . there are many anomalies.

Sharon: From what I have seen, it's difficult to cover the whole programme, and the exams are very comprehensive.

Lili: I put this to my tutor. Why are you giving us an exam? Why not let the instructor design an exam based on what the children have learned, and then you, the tutors, can check it. That way the children would pass; what they have learned they know.

Carmen: You heard the polemic that day, Sharon, about the exams and grading⁵⁸. . . we are supposedly evaluating the competencies but now it turns out that we have to follow an official grading system for an exam . . . they are not grading competencies after all, which for me is, well, illogical.

Mabel: Everyone fails.

⁵⁸ I participated on in-service sessions to introduce the use of an exam according to MEIPIM's educational criteria.

Lili: Practically. As I said, some of my children can't read, and those that can, it is based on the competencies that we looked at during the school period, so not grading competencies is illogical.

(Interview with Carmen, Lili and Mabel: Disc 2)

It would be all too easy to dismiss these glaring contradictions as paradoxical or, as expressed by the instructors, as *illogical or anomalous*. To do so, however, would be to do a disservice to the young instructors who struggle to reconcile what is, to all intents and purposes, a contradictory pedagogical position.

We are supposedly evaluating the competencies, but now it turns out that we have to follow an official grading system for an exam . . . they are not grading competencies after all, which for me is, well, illogical,

These data suggest that the instructors are unable to engage with what Bernstein (1996: 52) calls “the internal grammar of the pedagogic device,” or what Popkewitz (2002: 24) identifies as “the reasoning informing the pedagogic logic.” Denied access to this ‘reasoning or pedagogic grammar’, their interview narrative suggests that they apply their own ‘local’ reasoning or ‘sense-making processes’ (Levinson 2001:325) to make the best possible decision for all involved; a moral position that justifies their resistance to the programme.

For example, in the above interview, the instructors outline a personalised pedagogic logic based on their ‘local’ reasoning that these are intelligent children. On the basis of this reasoning, it would follow logically that if they had a teacher all year that travels with them, then they would learn. Following on from this line of reasoning, the instructors argue that, if they had an exam designed by the instructor, based on what they have been taught there would be a fairer evaluation of the children’s learning achievement. After all, “*what they have learned they know.*” However, unable to access the global reasoning that informs MEIPIM’s pedagogical logic and concomitant organisational practices, the instructors are powerless to debate this logic at an

institutional level. Consequently, unable to challenge officially the illogicality of the implementation of an exam not based on their teaching input, they use what Carmen refers to as “common-sense,” that is, they abandon the programme to teach to the exam.

As these data suggest, the failure of MEIPIM’s global logic to address the local logic of a national exam, presents significant challenges to how local actors might enact policy rhetoric. Carmen dismisses the programme as “teaching you nothing” and repositions herself as a more traditional teacher, “I am very strict.” As a result, she uses what she calls ‘common-sense’ to teach the children basic numeracy and literacy skills. Lili also abandons the programme to teach for the exam which the children would otherwise have failed. I might add that Lili was more fortunate than Eugenia, who also decided to focus on exam preparation. Unfortunately, an unexpected visit from a tutor revealed that Eugenia’s planning and assessment records lacked the requisite planning criteria.

It is supposed to have contextual comments, identified competencies and dates. Eugenia’s only had dates. Also her planning didn’t show that she was working on the projects.

(Explanation from Laura, her instructor colleague at the sugar cane Farm B; Blue notebook: 57)

According to Laura, Eugenia was dismissed from the programme for this reason.⁵⁹ Worryingly, the implications of this unfortunate incident extend beyond Eugenia’s immediate needs and future concerns. The children she worked with were unable to sit the exams because of an early harvest that allowed the migrants to return to their place of origin earlier than intended.⁶⁰ Prior to her dismissal, Eugenia was negotiating an early application of the exams for the children involved. Her worries were two-fold. Without the exam, the boys would be required to repeat the same level in MEIPIM the

⁵⁹ I was unable to corroborate if this was the official reason for Eugenia’s departure. I was aware of personal issues impacting on Eugenia’s professional role as an instructor that may well have contributed to her leaving MEIPIM. However, according to the other instructors, she was asked to leave for the reason given above.

⁶⁰ In this case MEIPIM policy to accompany migrants to their place of origin was not implemented.

following year. More disturbing, however, were the bureaucratic implications for their parents' involvement with *Oportunidades*, Mexico's much-flaunted poverty alleviation programme.⁶¹ To receive the financial support offered by this programme, the parents must comply with the health and education requirements required by *Oportunidades*. The programme stipulates that children registered in school need to demonstrate educational continuity and progress. That is, they must achieve the necessary qualifications to graduate to the next academic year group. I was unable to confirm if her fears were realised.

The tensions, gaps and paradoxes described by these data, and the *illogical and anomalous* outcomes described by the instructors, need to be examined. The consequence for programme aims to achieve educational equity is serious and should be questioned.

In the following section, therefore, I complete this chapter by suggesting that the reasoning informing MEIPIM's epistemological world vision and pedagogical logic is neither "*illogical nor anomalous*." On the contrary, it is entirely logical, if it is analysed according to the global criteria and associated socio-cultural values that shape policy formulation at global level.

I also argue that while formulated at the global level, the socio-cultural values that inform MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices are far from global and universal. They are instead class-specific in-as-much-as they are

“ . . . particular capabilities drawn from particular groups who have the power to sanctify and consecrate their dispositions as those appropriate for the whole society” (Popkewitz 2000:16).

⁶¹ A poverty alleviation programme based on targeting vulnerable communities. For further information see website link in bibliography.

Hence, their out-of-place articulation in a local rural Mexican context. As a result, as Ball (2000) argues, institutional ordering and educational policy are potentially classed. They reflect the social and economic interests of the middle classes. Thus as Ball (2000) points out, classed policy becomes naturalised and common-sense; in other words, classed policy is simply good policy (Ball 2000).

6.8.2. Challenging the reasoning behind MEIPIM's pedagogical approach

Thomas Popkewitz reminds us that the task of the educational researcher is to “challenge the reason of the logic as opposed to the logic of the reason” (Popkewitz 2000: 6). He counsels that failure to do so simply reproduce, on the part of the researcher:

“The assumptions of the commonsense of schooling, yielding a recapitulation, rather than a critical analysis of changing government patterns in social control and the social administration of the individual” (2000:6).

Interrogating the reasoning behind MEIPIM's pedagogic logic, therefore, “is not about the inherent goodness or badness” (Popkewitz 2000:6) of an intercultural/constructivist epistemology; instead, it is about the changes in social relations (interculturalism) and knowledge relations (constructivism) embedded in the pedagogic logic that emerges from this pedagogic world vision. It is also about the power relations that mediate these changes: “who teaches what to whom and under what conditions?” (Bernstein 1996:27) It is also about analysing those changes as part of the changes in the social administration of the individual in other social fields (Popkewitz 1998). Approaching intercultural education from a critical ethnographic perspective, therefore, this research study broadens the scope of enquiry beyond policy frameworks to offer accounts of teacher negotiation of intercultural education as a contested cultural space (see Chap. 4).

In this sense it is important to examine MEIPIM's reasoning in relation to the role it plays as part of a broader hegemonic project to reconstruct a liberal multicultural/intercultural Mexican identity and subjectivity, conversant with global capitalism.

Revisiting the principal arguments framing the thesis, therefore, global education development policy, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is formulated according to generic international educational criteria; usually framed in cost-efficient practices linked to international aid and structural adjustment policies. While the precise format of these generic models varies from country to country, the criteria converge around the idea of making learning more contextually relevant, democratic and rights-based. In this sense, they can be seen to represent a nexus with the political-economy (Tabulawa 2009). In addition, I also argue that this pedagogical and epistemological approach converged with an international response to the international indigenous movement's demands for a culturally appropriate indigenous education; hence, if indigenous rights appear to be an issue in the targeted newly-developing democracies, then intercultural education, merged with democratised constructivist education policies, function as an ethno-development policy to address these issues.

However, while generic ethno-education development models articulate progressive pedagogies to democratise the learning process, they are also formulated according to a neo-liberal philosophy. As a result, while aiming to incorporate and respect contextual knowledge through child-centred pedagogies, they also aim to provide students with the necessary skills and attitudes to meet the demands of the global economy and reconstituted transnational capitalism (Castells 2008).

The international consensus, as noted above, favours an official policy shift away from traditional teacher-centred models towards more progressive child-centred models (Tabulawa 2009). Child-centred pedagogic practice is considered to be more amenable to achieving the required skills for survival in a rapidly changing global context (Barrett

2007). On the other hand, however, in these specific conditions of increased competitiveness and marketisation

“Pedagogic practice must give rise to explicit and specific criteria which lend themselves to measures of output and the evaluation of the costs of input” (Bernstein 1994: xx).

As a result, competence based child-centred pedagogic models, historically associated with non prescriptive evaluation modes,

“. . . have been rearticulated into cost-effective and outcome-based education programmes in a context of globalisation and intensified marketisation” (Apple 2005).

Accordingly, the discursive subjects of global education development discourse are imagined to be actors in need of the necessary skills to function successfully in a post-Fordist capitalist context, characterised by intensified marketisation and increasing competition. As Tabulawa (2003:89) explains, the idea is that “with better-prepared students, we will be better prepared to excel in the globalised market.” Thus, the reasoning that informs MEIPIM’s constructivist and intercultural logic and prescribed competencies, pertains to the preparation of students for a world that is increasingly governed by the relations of an ever more competitive new capitalism.

6.9. Generic pedagogic models: competence and performance modes combined

Emerging from this reasoning is a pedagogic mode which appears to combine features from two opposing pedagogical models. Basil Bernstein (1996) described such a mode in ‘Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity.’ Referring to this pedagogic mode as ‘performance’, he describes it as complex, in-as-much-as it shares the fundamental features of a competence mode. Describing it, therefore, as ‘a generic mode’ he writes:

“Thus generic modes and the performance to which they give rise are directly linked to instrumentalities of the market, to the construction of what are considered to be flexible performances. From this point of view their identity is constructed by procedures of projection, despite superficial resemblances to competence modes” (Bernstein 1996: 66-69).

Bernstein associates these pedagogic models with trainability, tracing their origin to the Manpower Service Commission and the Training Agency. He argues that their underlying features, described as competencies, silence the “cultural basis of skills, tasks, practices and areas of work” (Bernstein 1996: 67) that structure this pedagogic mode.

While mindful that Bernstein’s notion of ‘generic modes’ (performance with a superficial resemblance to competence) emerged in the mid-nineties in response to changing pattern of education in England, I suggest that Bernstein’s analytical distinctions for generic pedagogies might be useful in this research context for understanding and making sense of the incongruities and contradictions that seem to mediate teacher negotiation and local enactment of global intercultural policy.

Bernstein has often pointed out that competence-based pedagogic devices and the weakly-framed child-centred practices that they generate have generally been problematic for teachers (Bernstein 1996). Their weaker framing and classification generate an implicit ‘invisible pedagogy’ which present significant problems for teachers more accustomed to clearly-defined hierarchical social relations in the learning context and greater social control over knowledge acquisition. MEIPIM, as the empirical data demonstrates, is no exception: *these projects don’t have a purpose; why can’t we use traditional methods to teach reading and writing?* On the other hand, however, even more problematic for these teachers was the level of teacher surveillance

and control embedded in the highly framed evaluation and assessment procedure that structured the weakly-framed pedagogy and project based curriculum.

The data described above seem to suggest that enactment of intercultural education policy as a local practice was structured more by the pedagogic contradictions embedded in MEIPIM's 'generic pedagogic mode,' than by the symbolic violence of socio-culturally incompatible values. That is, organisational practices to measure teacher performance (strongly- framed), juxtaposed with a child-centred project- based pedagogy and curriculum (weakly-framed), generated a level of confusion, contradiction, paradox and resistance that gave rise to the instrumentalised teaching strategies described above. As a result, instructor/tutor enactment of official policy aims to democratise social and knowledge relations, involved hierarchical and authoritarian teacher-centred practices, based on cutting and sticking, memory and recall and hours of copying that appear to be having tragic consequences for educational equity and learning achievement for agricultural migrant communities.

6.10. Conclusion

The 'symbolic violence' of an abrupt and challenging paradigmatic pedagogic shift toward child-centred constructivist learning undoubtedly triggered inevitable tensions, contradictions and resistances in the pedagogic context. The data analysed in this chapter, however, suggest that a far more significant obstacle to the successful implementation of MEIPIM policy resides in the pedagogical confusion triggered by the combination of a competence-based constructivist approach with a performance-based planning, assessment and evaluation structure, essentially contradictory and diametrically opposed pedagogical devices (Bernstein 1996). The data suggest that MEIPIM's generic pedagogic mode had a two-fold impact on local practice. Firstly, the strict accountability processes- increased framing -seemed to exacerbate, rather than democratise the traditional authoritarian and hierarchical relations mediating the instructors' relationship with the institution responsible for implementing MEIPIM. As a result, ill-equipped to implement MEIPIM's organisational practices, they chose to

prioritise learning outcomes rather than learning processes. This resulted in an instrumentalised teaching practice that reinforced traditional teacher-centred non-dialogical and memory/recall classroom practices. Secondly, this pedagogical conundrum, when viewed through instructors' meaning-making prism, was perceived by some as illogical. Thus, those who might have had constructivist leanings were often frustrated in their attempts to realise these ideas. The children's massive underachievement in basic literacy and numeracy appear to be directly linked to these two issues.

I suggest, therefore, that the neo-liberal global-reasoning informing MEIPIM policy development is logical when viewed through a global prism that reflects a global world characterised by instability and rapid change. It is also logical when understood as "classed policy" (Ball 2000) with embedded capabilities drawn from particular groups (Popkewitz 2000:16). In a local context, however, targeting migrant agricultural labourers, where arguably pre-industrial labour and social relations might still prevail, global policy reasoning appears illogical, and at times incompatible with local concerns and circumstances. As evidenced in this chapter, human rights projects might be placed under wraps, so as not to disturb the status quo or teachers may manufacture learning evidence so as to secure their continuing education grants. As the data demonstrate, these practices do not challenge or transform prevailing undemocratic social and knowledge relations in the classroom.

Perhaps the most important dimension to be emphasised from the above data analysis is that, if global education development policy procedures continue to enact consultation processes with local communities, as a form of educational technology to confirm and refine a pre-determined global educational agenda, then in all likelihood they will fail to realise policy aims on two accounts: Firstly the reasoning behind their logic will not be accessible to local actors; and, secondly, this in turn will force local actors to make sense of policy according to their own local reasoning. As the above data suggest, this may well result in a flawed dialectic, mediated by tensions, incongruities and paradoxes.

The implications of this flawed local/global dialectic for educational equity should not be ignored. Mexico may well strengthen its position in the global economy through programmes like MEIPIM; however, as the data suggest, it is doubtful that agricultural migrant communities in Veracruz will acquire the necessary skills/competences to achieve educational equity and enact transformative social action.

Chapter 7

Intercultural education reconfigured: structure, agency and an historical-institutional context

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to use the data to explore further the “meaning-making processes” used by instructors and tutors to negotiate MEIPIM’s intercultural discourse. Using data taken primarily from in-depth interviews and conversations conducted outside of the official pedagogic context, this chapter focuses less on how knowledge and social relations are structured in the pedagogic context and more on how broader ethnic/race/class relations in Mexico might mediate instructors/tutors’ negotiation of, and resistance to, MEIPIM’s intercultural ideology. Drawing on critical theoretical frameworks offered by ethnographic scholars influenced by Gramscian concepts of subjectivity and agency, I suggest that the embedded social relations mediating instructors’ meaning-making processes re-articulated MEIPIM’s liberal intercultural ideology as a largely discriminatory and racist local practice. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to examine data that provide insight into what MEIPIM’s intercultural epistemological world vision might look like when filtered through the historical specificity of social and material relations shaping instructor and tutor subjectivities.

The chapter proceeds as follows: using data from both parental and instructor interviews, I describe what community/instructor relations might look like. As discussed in Chapter 5 community participation is central to achieving MEIPIM’s constructivist pedagogy. I use the data in this chapter, therefore, to explore how migrant groups are positioned as the non-urban uneducated other by the community instructors; a practice that appears to be central to the identity constructs embedded in

their imaginary futures. I then present data taken from tutor and instructor training that suggests that opportunities for constructive dialogue around embedded gender, ethnic and class relations were displaced by an official rhetoric that relies on traditional cultural markers to signify migrant agricultural communities. Finally, I use data to explore instructor and tutor resistance to MEIPIM's intercultural discourse and to analyse how resistance was both enabled and constrained by the material relations determining their involvement with MEIPIM.

7.2. Structure and agency: the ongoing debate

While the analysis in the previous chapter described how instructor resistance, negotiation and re-articulation of MEIPIM's child-centred constructivist pedagogy determined a series of unintended outcomes in the pedagogic context, it did not tell us enough about the complex, contradictory and interacting lived relations informing instructor and tutor subjectivity and agency.

The specific aim of this chapter, therefore, is to use the data to provide a more in-depth understanding of how the antagonistic lived relations constituting instructor and tutor subjectivities, mediate their social interactions both with the communities and CONAFE/MEIPIM institutional structures. The data suggest that institutional and community relations are mediated by an often-contradictory consciousness, positioned, as they are, on the interface of conflicting world visions: rural/urban, uneducated/educated, student/teacher, indigenous/mestizo. Viewed from this perspective, instructor and tutor subjectivities and identity constructs are complex and require close examination. Exploring the antagonistic lived relations informing their contradictory consciousness, therefore, is crucial to understanding both how and why MEIPIM is re-articulated as a local practice and the possibilities and limitations for educational equity offered by this local re-articulation. .

The debates that inform structure and agency in critical social theory have been extensively recorded and don't need to be repeated here. However, as a critical

ethnographer, I consider it important to clarify my position in relation to these debates. As has been made evident throughout this thesis, my analysis appears to have privileged material and socio-economic determinants over and above human agency. In Chapter 5, analysing MEIPIM's documentary narrative, I suggested that relations of power, rather than relations of meaning (Giroux 2001), constitute the migrant agricultural identity constructed in the literature. Equally in Chapter 6, while analysing instructor negotiation of policy in the pedagogic context, my analysis privileges the over-arching power relations that determine MEIPIM's pedagogic logic and the instructor and tutor enactment of that logic.

Emphasising material conditions and power relations, however, does not mean that I position human agency as a deterministic outcome of these structural determinants. To do so would be to close down the dialectic between consciousness and structure and the hope that this dialectic suggests (Giroux 2001). Instead, given the extreme poverty characterising migrant agricultural communities and the socio-economic vulnerability of the instructors and tutors involved, in the context of this research my position might be better described in terms of a hierarchy of interacting determinations in relation to human behaviour. While prioritising the social and material relations in this hierarchy, I also acknowledge the lived antagonistic relations that constitute the complex way in which subjectivities and agency are constituted (Luykx 1999). From this perspective, subjectivity and agency are crucial to my analysis, both as resources of hope and as a central component of radical critical pedagogy (Giroux 2001). However, I do not allow agency and the hope it offers to devalue the importance of material relations in this research context. I suggest that to do so would be both unethical and analytically unsound.

In sum, in the context of this research I understand complex, shifting subjectivities and often-contradictory subject positions to be both "enabled and constrained by broader social structures" (Giddens cited in Levinson 2001:339). In this thesis, therefore, instructor and tutor subjectivity is understood to be the interplay of the broader social order in Mexico with their contingent and contextual personal life experiences. The data

I use in this chapter is viewed and analysed according to this on-going interplay; the dialectic between subjectivity and structure in a context where structure and agency presuppose each other.

“Conceiving social structures independently from social actors, or vice versa, is not fruitful. The actors are born into and socialised amidst pre-existing structures, that will pre-figure their specific cultural practice; but that in turn will be actively reproduced, modified and adapted by these same actors according to changing interests, identities and contexts”(Dietz 2009: 113) .

Analysing data, largely derived from instructor/tutor interview narratives, I engage with their hopes and desires, their construction of the past and of their imaginary futures, their perceptions of and feelings towards the communities and the reasoning (accounting devices) that they offer to justify and legitimate these views. I also explore further the conflicting levels of determinacy informing some of their meaning-making processes-cultural production of meaning- in the institutional and broader social context.

Understanding the contradictory ways that instructors and tutors appropriate, re-work or reject MEIPIM's intercultural subject positions provide valuable insights into how MEIPIM's cultural (intercultural) politics are being enacted at the local level. As discussed earlier (see Chap.2), ethnic relations in Mexico are defined largely by the historical political-economic trajectory that has struggled to define the place of indigenous peoples in the nation state since the conquest; schooling has been a powerful instrument in this broader project. In this way, the struggle over cultural values in global intercultural educational policy is deeply imbricated at the regional and local level with issues of economic oppression, capitalist relations of production, corporate power and a violent colonial legacy (Macedo and Bartolome 2000).

Unfortunately, generic intercultural ethno-development education policies have largely ignored the historical specificity of the way conjunctural relations in the local context will distort and fragment international and national efforts to restructure national identity. Equally, they have also failed to take into account how national or regional institutions, responsible for administering these policies in the local context, embody specific histories embedded in political economic hierarchies that mediate local bureaucratic needs and interests (Cho and Apple 2003). Notwithstanding Mexico's much-lauded new democratic phase (Ornelas 2000), global education policy concerned with re-narrating the knowledge and social relations that constitute an imaginary national intercultural identity must first pass through the internal logic of an institution mediated by post-revolutionary corporate values (Posner 2002), prior to emerging as a local practice. This is what Levinson would call the "cultural production of meaning" process, in a local/institutional context (Levinson 2002:327). More recently referring specifically to Latin America, in relation to citizenship education development policies for increased democratic practices, Levinson counsels that any anthropological attempt to understand these programs must first reckon with the historical-institutional context in the region. He asks that researchers problematise the following:

"How democracy is implicitly or explicitly defined and conceived by actors in different roles; what kinds of knowledge competencies values or dispositions are highlighted over others; finally, how are policy goals transformed or translated into practice" (Levinson 2011:291).

Similar advice might also be applied to anthropological research on Intercultural Education in Mexico. As evidenced in the previous chapter, the specificity of institutional relations in provincial Mexico informed, re-shaped and re-articulated constructivist knowledge relations as a traditional authoritarian teacher-centred practice based on a meaningless copying process. This re-enactment of policy functioned to secure the learning evidence required by the administrative institution; however the data suggest that this negotiation of policy undermined the children's literacy and numeracy

achievement. The data examined in this chapter suggest that a similar re-articulation of policy enactment re-shaped MEIPIM's discursively imagined democratic intercultural relations into a local practice that appears to support and sustain the endemic racist and discriminatory attitudes that have positioned indigenous and rural communities as "the other" throughout the post revolutionary period (Schmelkes 2010).

7.3. Intercultural dogmatics and local pragmatics: the graduation party

At the end of June 2005, I was invited by a group of instructors to a graduation ceremony for the Level Three children (grades 5 and 6) in their school. The ceremony was organised by the instructors and was to be held at the community's place of origin where the instructors had been working since the beginning of May. I arranged to collect three instructors at 9.00 a.m. in the CONAFE offices. They had spent the week organising the children's evaluation folders, required to determine the official school status and corresponding certification of their pupils. As discussed in the previous chapter, without this evidence, neither instructors nor their students can progress educationally. Instructors need to show that their pupils have progressed in order to receive continuing education grants to complete their upper-secondary or university education, while their students need official certification of completion to move into the next grade. Equally, school certification allows migrant agricultural families to continue receiving financial support from *Oportunidades*. In this sense, both instructors and families can be said to participate in a payment by results, educational process.

The journey to the village usually takes three hours. However, by late June the rainy season is well under way, and I anticipated problems arriving by car. I was not disappointed. After two hours of driving on barely passable roads because of a particularly wet rainy season, we finally turned off the main road onto a mud track leading up the mountain to the village. The torrential rain from the previous week had caused a heavy mud slide which had not yet subsided. Consequently, after slipping and sliding for a few hundred metres, we decided to abandon the VW bug and walk.

Unfortunately, I had chosen this particular day to deliver three bags of clothes that I had collected for this community. We also had all the food for the party, including a rather large cake. The instructors appeared unperturbed by our heavy load as they began the long trapeze up the muddy mountain carrying bags of food, drinks, clothes, personal belongings and a cake. I noticed that they distributed our various bits and pieces in such a way that I had the lightest load -- the rather large cake. In other circumstances I might have protested, but in this context I was forced to recognise my limitations. I consoled myself by measuring our age difference.

It started to rain. After an hour's walk we were wet, tired and cold. Just when I thought I could not take another step, a small truck slipped and slithered around the bend where we had stopped to take a rest. The instructors recognised the driver and flagged him down to ask for a lift. In the back of the pick-up truck, enclosed by a few wooden planks, was a small pig. The girls struggled into the back with the pig, graciously offering me the front seat with the driver. I was too tired and wet to protest; at this point I had invested heavily in my ageist narrative. I need not have worried, in any case, since after five minutes of spinning tyres, the truck lurched off the mud path and keeled into a deep rut at the edge of the road. We were now firmly entrenched at a 45 degree angle against the side of the mountain. The mud encasing the front tyre was level with the door that I was now squashed against. I was so grateful that we had slipped to the right and into the rut rather than to the left and off the mountain altogether that I felt immediate relief. The laughter coming from behind as the instructors tried to climb out of the back of the truck, without landing in the muddy trench or on top of the pig, reassured me that they too had survived our accident intact. Amazingly the cake I was clutching was also still in one piece⁶² (based on notes from Blue Notebook 2: 12th July 2006).

⁶² I do not relate the above tale to indulge my story-telling tendencies, nor to demonstrate ethnographic challenges, but simply to permit insight into the daily reality of instructors' lives. While I was making the journey for the first time, the instructors I was accompanying had been making this journey weekly for almost two months, carrying food, water and school materials along with their personal belongings. The rainy season had come early that year, so the conditions we faced on the day of the party were not dissimilar to the conditions they negotiated weekly. The material challenges involved in working on the programme extended far beyond the access difficulties described above. The data used in this chapter describe, amongst others, insufficient

We finally arrived with the community some two hours later, after a long and tedious process of rescuing the farmer's vehicle from the ditch. The heavy rain that had continued for the duration of the rescue process and for the remainder of the trek up the mountain had just begun to recede as we approached the village. The parents and the children, undeterred by our lateness had rigged up a music system under a small plastic awning and the party went ahead as planned.

Once the teachers had presented the children with their leaving certificates and the party was in full swing, one of the instructors and I went to Dona Teresa's house where most of the cooking was taking place. Various mothers came to help with the preparation as well as two fathers who came to eat. I had accompanied these parents on their visit to the museum; as a result I had gained a degree of confidence that I didn't have with other communities. Prompted by my questions, they began to talk surprisingly freely, in comparison with earlier attempts at parental interviews (see Chapter 4), about their experiences, opinions and expectations of MEIPIM. The parents granted me permission to record the interview. The following is a synopsis and transcript of some of the conversations that I had with several parents in Dona Teresa's house on the day of the graduation party.

7.3.1. They teach them to play and to draw, and we want them to learn to read and write

A major point of contention for all the parents in relation to MEIPIM, as evidenced in the previous chapter, is the constructivist teaching methods that the programme uses. The didactic benefits of play were not made clear to parents, who persistently emphasise

food and money, inadequate sleeping arrangements, poor hygiene facilities and issues of personal safety. These physical challenges to the instructor's personal survival, coupled with the malnutrition, child labour and the associated work commitments, work related diseases and oppressive social and labour relations characterising the migrant communities, were significant challenges to programme implementation on all levels. This is discussed further in the section on poverty and educability below.

that the children need skills to address their social reality: “to read, so they can migrate without getting lost, and to count so they won’t be cheated” (see Chapter 5).

Sharon: There is something I would like to ask you. Are you happy with the programme?

Tomas: We (pause) . . . these teachers have made an effort, but two years ago we had some who did nothing except teach them to draw.

Sharon: You didn’t like that. Did you want something more?

Tomas: Or they took them out to play and what we wanted is that they would learn to read so they won’t get lost. A person who can’t read is like someone who can’t see.

Sharon: So that is what you want your children to learn?

Tomas: Yes, it is what we are interested in - their needing to learn.

(Recorded conversation with Don Tomas: Disc 3)

Sharon: For you, what is the importance of school?

Eduardo: That they give them the studies, because I didn’t have school and I can’t go anywhere alone. I go to Mexico City, but I have to go with the others. I don’t know why but it’s really hard not having the letters (alphabet). That’s why I want them for my children. I want them to study so that if they arrive in the city, they won’t have the problems I have. They will know how to read. If they are able to explain the letters and they know what the name of the place then they won’t get lost because they will know how to read.

(Disc 3: Recorded conversation with Don Eduardo)

While conflicting home/school pedagogic expectations can probably be generalised across the educational context, in this instance the conflict is more pronounced, given the reiterative literacy and numeracy markers used by parents to define their schooling expectations. As evidenced in the previous chapters (5 and 6), parental requests for functional Spanish literacy were not addressed. Instead, MEIPIM discourse re-contextualised parental expectations for basic reading and writing skills into a holistic ‘reading by reading’ approach reliant on real books, an unrealistic expectation in this

context. The data suggest that the instructors were unable/unwilling to implement this policy. As a consequence literacy levels for children, who had completed six years of primary education with MEIPIM, were barely functional.

Structured play, project-based learning and non-phonetic, holistic reading approaches are complex and require long-term training. As demonstrated below, cascade dissemination training could not provide the necessary input. As a result, instructors viewed project work as an obstacle to literacy teaching; they also resisted reading by reading approaches given their school experience of learning to read Spanish. Written Spanish is almost completely phonetic and traditionally reading has been taught using a highly-systemised technical approach based on phonics. Likewise, holistic reading methodologies, as well as being unfamiliar and ineffective in this context, have important resource implications that cannot be met in these communities.⁶³ It is also important to emphasise, based on parental perceptions described in the data used above, that this pedagogic approach appears to be culturally inappropriate. Home pedagogies in these rural communities, as in many rural communities, are generally hierarchical and authoritarian. The pragmatics of everyday survival determines that children are expected to do as they are told; there seems to be little space for dialogue.

7.3.2. If I had reported them they would have had to accept us; but I didn't

The grievances harboured by the parents who came to eat with us the day of the party also related to bureaucratic anomalies and the community's powerlessness to challenge them. Dona Teresa had tried to place her children and grandchildren in the local public primary school using documents provided by MEIPIM. The school had refused to accept the children.

⁶³ The socio-cultural notion of immersing the child in a literacy environment where books are readily available was unrealistic both in the school context as well as at home. .

MEIPIM, as discussed in Chapter 5, is administered as a compensatory programme by CONAFE, a sub-system within the Department of Education (SEP). The local primary school is a regular public school managed and funded by the Department of Education. MEIPIM certification, in theory, should be valid in a public primary school. Institutional relations, however, between CONAFE and SEV (Veracruz Department of Education) are complex. During the research process, I was unable to identify a single case where a child had been successfully admitted/re-admitted on return from the farms. As evidenced in the data quoted below, the local school in this area appears to have an unwritten policy of no admission for migrant children who attend CONAFE programmes.

Dona Teresa: They give us papers to present to show that they (the children) are studying. And so when we arrived here and we went to admit them we took the papers to show that they are studying (pause) because I didn't want to go to Town A . . . but if I had, they would have had to accept the children. Just look, they are eight that we wanted them to teach and they didn't want them in the school

Sharon: But surely it is obligatory . . . I don't understand. I thought CONAFE and SEV have an agreement.

Dona Teresa: I went to those teachers in the primary school three times to beg them to take the children and they refused

(Conversation with Dona Teresa: Disc 3)

While Dona Teresa didn't explain why she decided not to report them, I suggest that going to Town A (a nearby town with education offices) was simply not a viable option. The journey to the town is more than a full day's walk or two bus rides. The money required to go there and to come back is equivalent to a half day's salary on the farm.⁶⁴ I suspect, however, that over and above the financial constraints, Dona Teresa's threats,

⁶⁴ Dona Violeta told me that day that she had lost twelve infants between the ages of three months and two years, to what she described as "breathing problems." They didn't have the economic resources to go to Town A to get medical help. One of the reasons, therefore, for family migration was easier access to medical services from the farms close to Xalapa. Of her sixteen children, only four survived to adulthood; she attributed their survival to access to doctors when residing on the farm.

which were repeated many times that day, are more representative of an imaginary self in the world than of her social reality. Two issues inform this perception. The local teacher's position in relation to CONAFE, while indicative of discriminatory attitudes toward migrants, is informed by a historically acrimonious relationship between the two departments.⁶⁵ Secondly, as an indigenous/rural woman in Veracruz, Doña Teresa would have realized that the possibilities of having her voice heard on educational matters, even if she were physically able to get there, would have been remote. She didn't volunteer an explanation as to why she didn't go, and I didn't feel comfortable pursuing the issue any further. She did, however, tell me that school refusal reversed the family's decision not to migrate; and they all returned to the coffee farms that year.

These data suggest that notwithstanding policy rhetoric on community involvement in the learning process and the broadening of democratic participation to facilitate intercultural relations, the parents in this community saw themselves as excluded from their children's education and powerless to influence either curriculum content or schooling continuity.

7.3.3. Mal ojo: Giving the children the evil eye

Exclusion from the learning process wasn't limited just to parental perceptions of unfamiliar learning processes and undefined bureaucratic procedures, but also included perceived discriminatory and racist attitudes towards them by the MEIPIM instructors. They described this exclusion as instructors being disgusted by them and refusing to eat their food. They also suspected that the instructors were looking at the children in "a bad way."

⁶⁵ This is an undocumented opinion. I have heard it from multiple sources during my years living in Mexico. I also heard it from the instructors /tutors during the research process. I observed that while the local schools are legally obliged to accept the children, they often don't have sufficient places, a situation that creates bad feeling between the CONAFE teachers and the SEV teachers.

Sharon: That's the other thing I wanted to ask you: Did anyone ever come to consult you about the kind of programme the community would like.

Don Tomas: From what I can remember no one has ever come. This is what we have always wanted, that they learn to read and write and do sums. These teachers have behaved well, they teach them and they don't give them bad looks.

Sharon: Has that happened?

Dona Teresa: The teachers that were in Farm X, a year ago, well . . . we talked to them to see what they wanted to eat . . . they just looked at us. We disgusted them . . . the idea that we would give them food. They never ate the food we gave them

Sharon: A year ago?

Don Tomas: Yes, a year ago . . . the ones that came first . . . later others arrived

Sharon: Were they better?

Don Tomas: But those were the teachers that had been in Farm Y and Farm Z that looked at the children in a bad way

(Disc 2: Conversation with Dona Teresa and Don Tomas).

In this cultural context, looking at the children *in "a bad way"* implies much more than a bad look. "*Mal miran*" in Spanish can also be understood as *mal ojo* (the evil eye), a practice in Mexico that can actually do harm to the person receiving the look. When this happens the parents are obliged to find a local healer (curandero/a) to perform what is called *a limpia* (a cleansing) using an incense called copal (Avila 1999). Equally, refusing food is much more than declining an offer to eat. Food often mediates social relations in these communities and can symbolise acceptance or rejection of the community's way of life.

What became apparent in the parental accounts given during the session in Dona Teresa's house is the confusing and contradictory relationship that these parents have with the schooling process and education. A very real and powerful need for Spanish literacy, contextualised in the ability to read signs, to know where you are, to not have to ask and not be lost, mediates their relationship with this process. They also have clear ideas as to how this process is structured. Dona Teresa shared with me that she

had gone to school for a year as a child, but had learned very little “of the letters,” she explained that she knew how to do small case and upper case but not how to put them together. Eduardo expressed anger when he explained that when he was a child labourer, the education service wasn’t available. As a result of “not knowing the letters” he feels unable to travel alone. What he wants for his girls “is that they study so that when they arrive in the city they won’t have difficulties to move around since they will know how to read.” Access to literacy in these accounts structure parental hopes and aspirations for their children as a form of empowerment. On the other hand, to access this empowerment, they are required to negotiate what they understand to be unfamiliar organisational classroom practices, discriminatory bureaucracy as well as discriminatory teachers. While they complain bitterly about these obstacles, they appear to be powerless to change the situation.

Arguably pedagogic conflict and challenging bureaucratic procedures are increasingly standard fare in educational practice in many educational contexts across the world. While these are central considerations that must not be ignored, the racist and discriminatory practices described by parents require careful scrutiny in the context of an intercultural education programme. The urgent need for an intercultural practice is obvious in the data described above.

The following section, therefore, using data taken primarily from instructor interviews, describes the often contradictory and confusing subject positions available to them for negotiating the imaginary intercultural community relations described in MEIPIM policy

7.4. How instructors position migrant communities: fleas, cockroaches, bad manners and bad eating habits

The tensions mediating community/instructor relations, evident in the above data, were also reflected in data gathered during instructor and tutor interviews. The data reveal recurrent instructor preoccupation with the communities’ limited educational

ambitions and outlook, bad manners, rudeness, unacceptable levels of hygiene and poverty and bad eating habits.

Sharon: So were you shocked by their living conditions

Maria: Eh! Look at how the country is; quite frankly it's what I was expecting.

Sharon: And the fact that the children have to work

Maria: No. Because when they train us they prepare us psychologically for where we are going to, so there are no surprises. To see the adults, so bad-mannered, (pause) . . . their culture -- well, they don't have a formal education; they don't have anything; they have no level, so they are really bad-mannered, very foul-mouthed. They (the adults) are so rude.

(Recorded interview with Maria: Disc 1)

Notwithstanding MEIPIM's official discourse on community knowledge of herbs and plants (Bonilla et al 1999: 76), their lack of education regarding basic nutrition was also an issue for many of the instructors.

Alfredo: Without being offensive, they are spendthrifts; that is, a lot of Coca Cola, two or three bottles a day. And they are addicted to lotteries, things that should be third place, and the food: fruits, vegetables, things to do with a healthy diet? It's like, if it's there, good, and if it isn't, it's all the same. So I wanted to influence them in an underhand way, the idea of eating blackberries, radishes, you know, fruit, vegetables, but they seldom eat these . . . their attitude to food is, if it's there, good, and if not, then it's a taco with salt.

(Recorded interview with Alfredo: Disc 2)

Instructors usually justified these negative accounts by describing the challenges, generally related to food and accommodation, they encountered on the farms. Carmen and Lili described how, on one of the farms, they had to walk more than an hour to bathe, because the farm's water supply was polluted by discarded batteries. They blame

the community's lack of hygiene, bad education and limited experience of life for these problems.

Carmen: There were larvae and mosquitoes

Lili: Everything

Carmen: Quantities of greenish water and this was the water they supplied us with for bathing.

Carmen: The farm . . .

Lili: For the farm, for everything.

Sharon: Were you surprised?

Lili: Not so much surprise as despair . . . It's just that . . . or it's that, I was in despair because I'm very restless and I don't like to see people so . . .

Carmen: Dirty

Lili: It's just . . . so dirty . . . so . . .

Carmen: Badly educated

Lili: Yes so badly educated . . . Not looking after yourself

Sharon: But....

Carmen: They don't know any better . . . they never get out of there. Their circle is the house and work.

(Group interview with Carmen and Lili: Disc 3)

The challenges Lili describes when she had to eat sitting on the floor is also used to justify her perception that this is an unacceptable practice that simply wouldn't occur outside of the migrant context.

Lili: I am a very picky person, Sharon, but this experience has put a stop to that because they served us the food and put it on the floor and things that if you were to stay in my house, well, there is just no need for it. It's not nice and it's hard to put up with. Imagine that, sitting where there's a mountain of fleas in the earth with your plate in one hand and your tortilla on your knees.

(Group interview with Carmen and Lili Disc 3)

Unhelpful and uncooperative communities, where food and accommodation were denied, were also a frequent criticism made by the instructors during their interviews. During one interview, Claudia described a bureaucratic mix-up that resulted in a group of instructors being sent to various farms where the migrant community hadn't yet arrived. As a result, they were sent to help a colleague on another farm. The community on this farm was unprepared for so many instructors, and as a consequence was reluctant to feed them and to give them accommodation.

Claudia: There was nowhere to sleep and there were many cockroaches . . . imagine arriving from the city and having to sleep on the ground covered in cockroaches. So we went to Alma who was in Farm Y where there's electricity and water. And that's where the problems started; the community got angry. They didn't give us anything to eat, and one night they left our blankets in a locked room where they keep the tools. The men left and they couldn't care less. We had to cover ourselves with newspapers all night. We didn't have any food. We spent the week drinking water and picking the oranges of the trees because they didn't give us anything to eat.

(Recorded interview with Claudia: Disc One)

The above data come from interviews conducted towards the end of my field work, where a greater degree of trust and confidence can be assumed. Nonetheless similar perceptions prevailed in earlier interviews.

Sharon: Has your attitude toward the communities changed?

Belen: Yes, they are people just like us, no more than that, except that they can't read or write, they don't have any education, but, yes, they are just like us.

Sharon: So if someone were to ask you about these communities what would you say?

Violeta: Well, they are people just like us, the only difference is they don't have an education like us, because they come to work and drop out of their studies for economic reason. More than anything they are people that know nothing of life.

(Recorded interview with Belen and Violeta; first generation: Disc 1)

7.5. Precarious identity constructs: the urban/ rural dichotomy and “*being someone*”

The above narratives give us some idea of what MEIPIM’s intercultural epistemology might look like as a situated practice. The data do not, however, tell us why the liberal intercultural subjectivities, embedded in MEIPIM’s discourse (see Chap. 5) are resisted and re-configured by the instructors into the discriminatory relations described above.

Giddens (1991) describes local practice as agency and structure performing together to produce social meaning. To understand the social meaning embedded in these accounts therefore it becomes necessary to analyse these narratives

“. . . not only for what was said (substantive information) and how it was said (constructing meaning), but also for showing the ways that the what and the how are interrelated and what circumstances condition the meaning making process” (Holstein and Gubrium 1995:79).

Firstly, these instructors are enmeshed in a complex matrix of historically constituted class, gender and ethnic relations that act as filters to their attempts to make sense of MEIPIM’s world vision. They are also negotiating a local institutional culture that distorts and fragments further their meaning-making processes in relation to MEIPIM’s intercultural epistemology. Finally, they exist and subsist within the contingent conditions of their personal lives and the material relations that mediate their personal hopes and aspirations.

With few exceptions, these instructors come from rural communities and families who lack the socio-economic resources to support their education. All the interviewed instructors from the second generation and those from the first generation who

participated in filling in a questionnaire⁶⁶ said that their decision to work with MEIPIM was based on their securing a continuing education grant. In this sense, the material conditions mediating their narratives are axiomatic to their meaning making processes.

The on-going tension mediating the dialectic between the material relations of their lived reality (structure) and their personal hopes and aspirations for the future (agency) was evident in most of the instructor/tutor narrative accounts. This tension eventually emerged from the data as an overall interpretive category that I originally labelled as “Being Someone.” This category seemed to evolve naturally from an embedded dichotomy that appeared to structure interview narratives and informal discussions about their relationship with the communities.

The label for this category emerged during a training session with a school psychologist who came to work with the instructors. When she asked the instructors reasons for being in the programme, many of the instructors said that it offered possibility “to be someone” (psychologist session: Blue Notebook 1: p 15). Revisiting my data, the descriptive categories I had identified seemed to suggest that “being someone” was encoded in a binary relationship with “being no one.” And in the context of these narratives, “no one” is represented by the rural/indigenous agricultural migrant workers that MEIPIM aims to empower culturally.

As noted above, these young people straddle the interface of conflicting world visions: rural/urban, uneducated/educated; student/teacher, indigenous/mestizo. Instructor subjectivity, therefore, is structured by the communities that they criticise for being poor, uneducated, rural, and indigenous and without ambition or life experience. Subjectivity is also structured by their emergent hopes and aspirations for a future identity based on the educational opportunity, urban lifestyle and a socio-economic mobility that MEIPIM’s continuing education grant might offer them. In this way, they can be said to be balanced precariously between an identity construct that they actively

⁶⁶ I applied a questionnaire during the pilot phase of this research (see Chap. 4)

seek to leave behind and an emergent identity not yet consolidated, and dependent on their successful completion of MEIPIM.

As a result, the repositioning of indigenous and rural cultural identity as a valuable learning resource, worthy of recognition and empowerment, is complex and challenging for these young people. The instructors are being asked precisely to value those aspects of their life that have structured the oppressive material and social relations that have, until this point in their life trajectory, maintained them in poverty and oppression, unable to access social mobility. The prejudicial ethnic, racial and social relations reflected in their interview narratives above, therefore, need to be understood as part of their process of constructing a new urban educated identity. That is part of the process of “becoming someone.”

The rural/urban binary that appears to structure their discriminatory enactment of MEIPIM’s intercultural discourse, as a situated practice that positions agricultural migrant communities as the “uneducated, unworldly other” featured prominently in gender-related narratives. These narratives are analysed in the following sections.

7.5.1. Negotiating Gender relations

The complex web of broader oppressive social relations and how they mediate contradictory and complex instructor subjectivities was particularly evident in narratives where oppressive gender and material relations converged to mediate relations with the community. After questioning further on the situation in which the instructors said that the community had refused to feed them, they explained that the community’s reaction was based on a perception of female instructors as a threat to community marriages.

Carmen: They couldn’t come to an agreement. It’s a double-edged knife, you are a public figure as Hector (Academic Coordinator) says, and you know your place and are respectful. But there are girls who don’t do this and they go out with the men who are picking the coffee. They take away the husbands, and that’s why they don’t

like having female instructors. The instructors before us did that and that's why they didn't like us.

(Carmen and Lili group interview: Disc Three)

Positioning herself as a public figure, Carmen suggests that she is not implicated in the deviant gender-related behaviors that produce negative community reactions. Her female colleagues, however, are excluded from this dispensation. Failing to recognise the symbolic power embedded in their public roles, in Carmen's account these young women continue to behave in unacceptable gender-related ways, which exacerbate already-established oppressive gender relations within the community. This complex and contradictory convergence of oppressive material and gender relations, functions to legitimate her description of a community that refused to feed them or provide adequate accommodation.

A similar convergence of broader oppressive relations was also embedded in Amelia's account of an inhospitable community. This time, the situation involved a male instructor who provoked jealous husbands:

SD: Were you surprised by the poverty?

Amelia: Because we already know those rural communities are rural, and where it's rural there is poverty. Of this I am conscious, and I know where I am going to. But there is also the issue of how they treat you. Even though they gave me beans and tortillas to eat every day, if they had treated me well it would have been more than enough. Where we stayed was in the house of the president and the men are really jealous. And because of that they don't like the male instructors. It's to do with the previous circumstances of the last instructor. Every community has its story.

(Recorded interview with Amelia: Disc 1)

Once again, oppressive material relations merge with oppressive gender relations to justify an account of an ungrateful and abusive community. In this account, poverty is positioned as a synonym for rural and described as a fact of life. Consequently, when

oppressive gender relations are viewed through this normative/evaluative, poverty/rural prism, Amelia's "meaning-making" process enacts MEIPIM policy and intercultural discourse 'as a community that mistreated her'. Beans and rice are acceptable, but beans and rice and jealous husbands are not. What is interesting in both these accounts is that the instructors justify their discriminatory views by displacing cause and blame onto other people: it's not our fault, we didn't cause it; it was those who came before us. In other words, they legitimate racist subjectivities by referring to their predecessors.

That said, Maria, who described the men as foul-mouthed, (see above) doesn't attempt to displace blame. Instead she negotiates her racist subjectivity by referencing the socio-cultural values that inform community culture.

Maria: That they are foul-mouthed, they are foul-mouthed. The adults, how can I make you understand, education begins with the children, and if they begin from when they are small, to have this idea of the woman and the man with his crap then that's how they will grow, and that's how they will be when they grow up

(Recorded interview Maria; second and third generation: Disc One)

7.5.2. Urban myths

Finally, the discriminatory and racist subjectivities apparent in the narrative accounts above were bolstered further by a series of gender-related incidents/stories that I categorised, somewhat inappropriately given their rural context, as urban myths. These stories resurfaced each year for the duration of the research and inserted themselves into the instructors' narratives, usually as legitimacy devices to justify a negative, discriminatory or racist perception of a community. They were always gender-related and often served as a justification for an instructor refusing to continue working on a farm. I first heard one of these stories towards the end of my pilot project, in June 2003. While I was visiting an instructor on the sugar cane farm, she told me that she no longer slept on the farm, choosing instead to commute daily from Xalapa. I asked her why she

had made this choice. She said that she was too scared to stay alone because one of the sugar cane cutters had murdered a local woman from the village. In her version of events, the men went out to drink in the village bar. One of the men asked a local woman to dance and she refused. The man was offended and took out his machete and killed her. Needless to say, I was shocked by the instructor's account and reassured her that she had made the right decision. Two years later, however, when I returned from London and was finishing my field work, I heard the same story from a different instructor working on the same farm. This time the incident was related as having occurred during her time on the farm (Field notes: Bluebook 2: Conversation with Claudia).

Around the same time that I heard the first story, I was also told a similar, recurring type tale by a group of instructors working on the coffee farm. Again the story involved an incident that implied physical danger for the instructors, the attempted rape of a female instructor. (Field notes, Blue Book 2, Conversations with instructors, July 5 2003). Two years later, I was told the same story by another group of instructors on the same farm (Field notes, Blue Book 1, conversation with Rosalinda and Maria, Jan 10 2005). I also heard various tales from local people who had experience of MEIPIM, either as previous employees or who knew someone who worked there. One of these rumours concerned an inverse gender incident where a young male instructor was murdered by a jealous husband (Field notes: Orange notebook, conversation with Janet, ex. instructor).

These stories are worrying on two levels. While I was unable to confirm any of the above described incidences, they served, on one level, as cautionary tales to highlight the vulnerability, particularly of young female instructors, on isolated farms. They are also worrying, as observed above, inasmuch as they are crucial signifiers for mediating community relations.

While these urban-type tales remain uncorroborated, the fact that they are embedded across two generations of instructors' narratives makes them significant analytic points

of departure for examining the historically- and socially-constituted social relations mediating their construction (see Chaps. 2 and 3).

Also, bearing in mind that these stories are discursive structures that reflect cultural norms, it is important to ask whether these tales, as well as the discriminatory subjectivities embedded in the interview narratives, inform and structure MEIPIM teacher training. Are opportunities provided for constructive dialogue during training to address the broader ethnic, gender and class relations that might mediate MEIPIM's intercultural epistemology and pedagogy in a local context? Are critical pedagogic skills made available so the young instructors might engage critically with their positioning of agricultural communities as the "rural uneducated other?" The data used in the following section suggest that this was not the case.

7.6. Herbal teas and tummy aches: negotiating liberal intercultural education

MEIPIM's cascade dissemination model begins with tutor training. As noted in previous chapters, tutors are instructors from the previous year who are responsible for training the new intake of instructors. Tutor training, therefore, begins mid-July, two months prior to instructor training, and finishes at the end of August. The cascade dissemination model, used during MEIPIM teacher training, aims to replicate the pedagogical and organisational structures that the programme introduces into the classroom. For that reason, both tutor and instructor training requires participants to work collaboratively in groups, to demonstrate learning autonomy through researching topics and doing class presentations, to peer tutor and to construct knowledge from classroom dialogue with each other and with the facilitators (Guia para el Instructor Comunitario MEIPIM)

Consequently, during tutor training, all trainee tutors prepared simulated classroom activities using pedagogic strategies from the official training literature. I observed, amongst other activities, simulated interviews with parents and grandparents, research activities using material gathered from newspapers and magazines, theatrical

presentations to reinforce an aspect of the project work and story writing to reinforce intercultural relations. These presentations were often very entertaining and always meticulously prepared, but their exclusion of the lived social and material reality of migrant communities, was often quite astounding (Purple and Orange field notebooks)

Children's literacy levels were never referenced; neither was their parents' illiteracy. For example, no one challenged the notion that the literary resources, assumed to be available in the home environment for research-based homework, was a cultural imaginary on the part of the programme writers. By the same token, the children's working hours, usually a ten-hour day, followed by two hours of school prior to bedtime, was not acknowledged as a significant obstacle to doing any kind of homework, let alone research-based homework. All told, the material reality of the lived conditions on the camp was ignored. Instead, both trainees and trainers (academic coordinator and assistant) performed tutor training as if their target population were a middle-class suburb in Xalapa. Seldom deviating from the script (the training guide) they systematically read each section, preparing the programme activities, without questioning the socio-cultural and socio-economic assumption embedded in the activities. If tentative challenges were made on the basis of their lived experiences on the farms, they were rarely sustained and generally side-stepped using programme rhetoric. As a result, the tension mediating the tutors' or instructors' lived experiences with the communities and the imaginary social relations embedded in MEIPIM's intercultural rhetoric often structured trainee/trainer dialogues. The following transcript was recorded during the second week of tutor training. The dialogue is fragmented and stilted, reflecting the power relations mediating these antagonistic lived relations. The Academic Coordinator, a permanent employee with CONAFE, acts as an institutional filter for the social reality being referenced by the trainee tutors (ex-instructors) and the assistant academic coordinator, an ex-instructor-tutor.

Amelia (Trainee tutor): What strategies can you give us to help address the children's diversity, because here (referring to the training guide) it's very nicely expressed. But when you are on the farms, you have no idea what to do and the tutor doesn't know either, so we should develop some ideas to give them.

Academic Coordinator: to address . . . what? (She didn't seem to understand the question)

Jorge: (Academic Assistant): We need to promote it using project work, collaborative learning and by using the book of languages.

Academic Coordinator: So how did you promote respect among the children?

Jorge:: With all the difficulties that we mentioned,⁶⁷ we have to try to achieve this aim using the second period in project work (where the children work together). If they are not working in teams, then they are not achieving the aim of this period. And we need therefore to analyse the methodological sequence and modify it without losing sight of the original aim.

Academic Coordinator: We need to have respect for difference and respect the fact that they are different. What I like about MEIPIM is the community newspaper, where they can exchange ideas, different languages or recipes for tummy pains.

Jorge: Yes, but we mustn't lose sight of the aim, otherwise it just becomes an inter-exchange and nothing else.

AC: This seems very interesting to me, this exchange of cultural ideas

Christina(Trainee Tutor): It lends itself to this because they are migrants who have been to many different places.

Jorge: Yes, but it's very complex because if the children don't get along, I can assure you it's because their parents don't get on.

Christina: If the father doesn't get on with so-and-so then the children don't get along.

Jorge: We have to teach them that just because my dad doesn't get on with this family then I can still be friends with them.

Christina: That's right because they don't know why they don't get on.

Academic Coordinator: Group work will help to resolve these problems

⁶⁷ He is referring to a conversation I started the day before about interculturalism.

Jorge: We have to promote interculturalism with all the tools that we have: I believe that we can. We just have to be determined.

(Tutor Training Session recording: Disc 2)

In this discussion, opportunities to engage with the complexity of social relations on the farms are denied. Amelia's original question is challenging, but the academic assistant's response appropriates MEIPIM's pedagogic rhetoric to formulate an answer which deflects critical engagement. This is followed by the Academic Coordinator's intervention, which shifts the discussion away from the real world of antagonistic lived relations, back to an imagined, culturally-reconfigured world, where herbal recipes and linguistic diversity, abstracted from the ethnic, social and material relations structuring endemic racism in Mexico, function to dissolve conflict.

It is interesting that the Academic Coordinator's appropriation of intercultural rhetoric, a community newspaper to share herbal recipes for tummy ache, provokes a reaction, albeit restrained, from Jorge, the academic assistant. This is Jorge's fifth year with MEIPIM. Referencing family feuds, he suggests that intercultural relations are more complex than the exchange of herbal recipes might suggest. The brief insight he provides on social reality in the communities is not sustained, however, and given the institutional power relations mediating his relationship with the Academic Coordinator, he concludes that intercultural relations can be achieved, if we use the tools, adding rather vaguely that we just need to be determined. The tools refer to MEIPIM's pedagogic practices: community newspaper, the book of languages, community post, collaborative learning, etc.

The following week, Amelia presented a short story that she had written as a follow-up activity to this discussion, to demonstrate how intercultural relations might be established on the farms. The object of her story was to show how identity, culture and discrimination mediate cultural relations between a migrant community and a farm manager's family.

The story is about two children, Rosa and Felipe. Rosa is the daughter of a migrant family that comes to work on the farm. Felipe is the son of the farm manager and is forbidden to play with Rosa because she is dirty and dresses differently. However, when Felipe gets sick, Rosa makes him an herbal tea to cure his stomach, and with the blessing of Felipe's father they become good friends. Amelia's story concludes that identity is when "Rosa goes to another village and she is dressed differently. Discrimination is when Felipe's father doesn't permit Felipe to play with Rosa; and culture is when Rosa cures Felipe's stomach with an herbal tea" (Tutor training recording: Disc 2).

The intercultural signifiers used by Amelia to value and affirm migrant culture and to address discrimination were not challenged by her colleagues. I might add that the Academic Coordinator was delighted with the reference to herbal teas which, along with festivals, appeared to be her sole resource for negotiating intercultural relations for the duration of tutor training.

With the exception of the above altercation where Jorge questions the Academic Coordinator's assumptions about the community newspaper, direct challenges to MEIPIM's cultural re-configuration of migrants and migration as a valuable learning resource were rarely expressed. Instead, the tutors, and later the instructors, appropriate the rhetoric in the official context to complete the tasks that are assigned during their training process. Given that the trainee tutors are selected on the basis of their compliance with programme criteria, their instrumentalised use of the intercultural signifiers embedded in MEIPIM policy is really not so surprising.

Similar tensions were apparent during instructor training. Critical engagement with the relevance and compatibility of MEIPIM's organisational practices for migrant communities' lived reality, was consistently refused. During training the instructors also commodified official policy rhetoric, appropriating the available discursive resources to complete their assignments and to negotiate continued participation. Logical connections to the overall pedagogical and epistemological approach, as

discussed in Chapter 6, were refused. Apart from a few feeble interventions about children's tiredness after a day's work, critical dialogue to examine the material and social relations structuring engagement with these communities, was mostly absent from the training context.

All the above data suggest that critical opportunities to engage in constructive dialogue were not available in the institutional context. As a result, opportunities to explore the complex and often contradictory subjectivities mediating their relations with the communities appeared to be excluded from their teacher training. Opportunities for critical dialogue were almost always displaced by an instrumentalised passivity and compliance. Hence, intercultural signifiers, such as herbal tea, seemed to mediate discussions on managing cultural diversity, rather than the discriminatory views described in the above data. Consequently, the antagonistic lived relations, evident in their interview narratives quoted above, are not addressed. The absence of constructive dialogue in the official context may well have contributed to the frustrations and the struggles expressed during their interviews and conversations with me.

7.7. Is there hope? *“More of the same: go cut coffee, water melon, and sugar cane.”*

The data categories used above describe what intercultural education policy might look when enacted as practice in a local context in rural Mexico. The data suggest that the dialectic between broader structural power relations and personal agency (Giddens 1991) structured racist and discriminatory subjectivities that positioned the communities as the rural, uneducated 'other.' The question that needs to be asked at this point, therefore, is what are the implications of policy enactment as local practice for educational equity for migrant agricultural communities? Is there hope?

For the instructors, the answer to these questions is clear. When I asked them about their hopes and expectations for the children's future after MEIPIM, they all replied “more of the same, go cut coffee, water melon, and sugar cane,” and their justification

for these views was: “basically, these children are going nowhere because their parents are going nowhere.”

Sharon: And the future for these communities; for these children, how do you see their possibilities?

Alma: More of the same – go to cut carrots, go to cut water melon, go to cut coffee
(Recorded interview Alma: Disc 2)

Lili: For the education of migrant children there isn't much future. What happens is the parentsbecause sometimes they (the children) want to see beyond . . . but the parents are behind . . .you are not going to be able to because we have to go to pick coffee, or cut the sugar cane. Because as you know, Sharon, the question, what purpose does a school have? Well, to read, to not get lost, these are things that at least for me, they disillusion, nothing else but read and not get lost, it's like their vision doesn't go beyond that.

(Recorded interview with Lili: Disc 3)

Sharon: And the future of these children, how do you see it

Alfredo: Very difficult. The childrenhmm, here they will stay. Children are children and they don't have illusions because their parents will say, if my child learns his name and how to go on the bus from here to Xalapa or from here to Community B., it's enough. The child has this in his mind and it's difficult to oblige the child o make an effort.

(Recorded interview with Alfredo: Disc Two).

If, as these narratives seem to suggest, MEIPIM is irrelevant to educational equity for migrant communities, the next question that needs to be asked of MEIPIM is: what purpose does it serve? If it is not addressing the educational needs of agricultural migrant communities, then what is it doing?

To address this question it is necessary once again to engage with the underlying broader political-economy. MEIPIM is part of an institutional organisation (CONAFE) which fulfils two functions: it aims to address the educational needs of small rural and vulnerable populations; it also provides financial incentives to address the educational needs of the young people participating as instructors on their programmes. It might be argued, therefore, that, while MEIPIM/CONAFE fails to address the educational needs of the targeted community, it does succeed in addressing the educational needs of the instructors.

My contact with the first two generations suggests that the majority do return to an educational context. Nonetheless, of the forty-three instructors in the first two generations, only three were accepted into the public university. All the others who applied failed the entrance exam. As far as I could determine⁶⁸ between five and ten ex-instructors were later accepted into one of the smaller private universities that have experienced exponential growth in the state of Veracruz since NAFTA and the subsequent decentralisation and privatisation of the educational sector.⁶⁹ It is difficult to provide an accurate figure of the remaining instructors. Some went back to finish upper-secondary while others, unsure about their futures because of family circumstances, decided not to make use of the grant that year. The grants are valid for up to five years after they complete their service with CONAFE. Some of these young people were also considering migration to the United States.

Notwithstanding access to further education for some of the instructors and tutors, the data suggest that overall their futures remain precariously balanced. A recorded interview with Alfredo serves as a cautionary reminder of the structural limitations determining their hopes and aspirations “to be someone,” to realise the imaginary urban future that MEIPIM offers. When I asked Alfredo how he saw his future he told me the following:

⁶⁸ On-going transfers, particularly towards the end of the academic year, which coincides with the end of the harvesting period, made it almost impossible to maintain contact with all the instructors. Once they were transferred to another CONAFE programme, I almost never saw them again. .

⁶⁹ For further information on the privatisation of higher education in Mexico (see Ornelas 2000).

*Look, life changes, Sharon, and sometimes we don't, but at the same time you do things, but they don't work out as planned. That is, perhaps sometimes I have the illusion that in the future I might have a college degree, but I turn around and look behind and I see where I am coming from and I realise that to have a degree you need to have money and that is what I don't have. So to be able to go forward you have to have enough. So you see the future and you don't see it. You can't imagine that you might have a degree when the things in the family are the way they are. . . .*⁷⁰

(Recorded interview with Alfredo: second generation: Disc Two)

Despite the fact that the data analyses so far suggest that teacher negotiation of MEIPIM functions to address instructors' needs, over and above the children's needs, Alfredo's narrative illustrates the structural limits of this argument. The continuing education grants that they will receive, if they complete the academic year, will not be sufficient to pay fees at one of the small private universities in Veracruz while their formative education in rural areas means they are unlikely to have the academic level to access the public university of Veracruz. While it is important to emphasise that agency cannot remain the captive of structural determinants, neither can we lose sight of, nor devalue, the importance of material relations for empowered personal agency. The struggle embedded in the instructors' negotiation of MEIPIM, a struggle that involves looking forward to the urban (agency) while looking back to the rural (structural limits of agency), does not guarantee the former. Material conditions, as Alfredo suggests "*you see the future but then you look back to where you are coming from and you don't see it*" will play a crucial role in determining the future that MEIPIM's continuing education grant appears to offer.

In sum, the data analysis in this chapter suggest that the interplay of the instructors' hopes and aspirations with the structural limitations of their material conditions

⁷⁰ Alfredo was one of the instructors from the second generation with most the financial challenges. He was also one of the three instructors in his generation who had entered MEIPIM with the minimal secondary education requirement. Most had already begun upper-secondary and some, particularly in the third generation, had already started university. His father had died when he was a baby and he lived with his mother and aunt. Tragically his aunt died from throat cancer while he was working on MEIPIM. His continuing education grant is sufficient to pay fees, but not to cover accommodation in the city and to maintain his mother.

produced contradictory subjectivities and practices which re-configured MEIPIM's intercultural world vision as a largely discriminatory local practice. Engagement with the communities was structured by their rejection of what their rural uneducated past signified and what their urban-educated future offered. From this perspective, teacher enactment of MEIPIM policy might be described as reproducing oppressive ethnic, class and gender relations, while simultaneously appropriating official intercultural policy rhetoric to negotiate historical-institutional context and imaginary futures.

7.8. A final note on agency and socialised subjectivity

This conclusion might have left this research without hope; without the possibilities that the as yet “undefined space,” generated by the global/local dialectic, might offer (Garcia 2004). It is important to remember, however, as Luykx (1999) argues

“ . . . the maintenance of symbolic resistance, even if it is only symbolic, holds open an ideological space in anticipation of the day when it may become something more” (Luykx 1999 :286) .

The data used in this final section of the chapter suggest that instructor resistance of MEIPIM might, as Luykx suggests, “hold open an ideological space in anticipation of the day when it may become something more.” The data emerged from a fortuitous encounter with a young instructor, which led to an unplanned extension to fieldwork. While the data is limited to participant observation and interviews from two in-service sessions with a third generation of instructors and tutors, it triangulates with data from previous generations. The key informants are two instructors from the second generation, now acting as tutors. Interviews with third generation instructors are used, but, given my limited interaction with these participants, I use these sources only to triangulate data with the tutor interviews. The two tutors are both from rural areas in Veracruz; Maria and Jorge are completing their second year with MEIPIM. I had

interviewed Maria twice during fieldwork, once during instructor training and also at the end of the academic year after she had completed her teaching service on Farm A. I had also interviewed Jorge during fieldwork with the second generation, at the end of his teaching placement. They have both completed the first year of upper-secondary and hope to use their MEIPIM continuing education grants to complete the second year, required for university entrance. The six third-generation instructors that I interviewed informally are from areas close to Xalapa; four of them were already at university.

7.8.1. A University identity: increased agency

I first met Itzel (third generation instructor) early November 2005 at the Coffee Farm where she was teaching.⁷¹ I met her again in early December of the same year, but this time at the university. I was surprised to see her, since December is generally the busiest time on the farms. I invited her to have a coffee and she told me why she was no longer on Farm A. The following is a synopsis of what I wrote in my notebook:

Itzel was placed on Farm A after her training. She quickly became disillusioned with MEIPIM's pedagogical practices so she decided to talk to Hector, the Academic Coordinator, about making some changes. Itzel's account describes Hector as becoming angry and telling her that if she wanted to change the programme she should go and talk to the director of CONAFE. When Itzel said that she would like to do this, Hector told her that he would never send someone with a university education to talk to the Director, because the university filled young people's heads with strange ideas. He told her not to go back to the farm and to stay at home until they decided what to do with her.

After she finished talking, I asked her permission to use the conversation as research data; not only did she agree, but she also insisted that I participate at the in-service training the following weekend. She was anxious for me to meet her colleagues, who, according to Itzel, were equally dissatisfied with MEIPIM.

⁷¹ I had already finished fieldwork, but had returned to deliver bags of clothes.

I arrived at the school where the in-service was being held. Maria, now a tutor, was pleased to see me. Itzel was not there, however, as I observed the session I realised that the challenges to the programme were not exclusive to Itzel. There seemed to be a generalised resistance across the group. The instrumentalised passivity and compliance described above, based on data collected from the first two generations of instructors, appeared to have been replaced with a more direct contestatory and challenging form of resistance to the programme.⁷² During the next two days I conducted informal interviews with three instructors. Maria had already introduced me as someone who was doing research for my doctoral programme, and unlike other generations of instructors, they were very keen to share their views on MEIPIM. I used the interview guide that structured interviews with previous generations (see Chap. 4). The following data suggest that my initial perception that the instructors were using a less compliant and passive form of resistance was confirmed.

Sharon: What is your impression of the programme?

Angel: When we started this programme we were told, 'you are not here to play school; this is for real.' As far as I am concerned they (Academic Coordinator and Administrative Staff) are the only people who are 'playing school,' drinking coffee in their office. I am not here for the money. I want to do something to help. But, quite frankly, you can't. They stop you from doing what really matters.

(Interview with Angel (third generation): Disc 4)

Enrique: I told Hector (Academic Coordinator) that this programme doesn't make sense, and he told me 'you can't just do whatever it is that you feel like. I have been here for many years and I know how it works.' So I told him, "I don't care how many years you have been here. What interests me is my work and what we are doing."

(Interview Enrique; third-generation: Disc 4)

⁷²I have sometimes wondered if the bulk of my research had focused on this third generation, might I have produced a very different thesis from the one I am presently writing.

On the second day after the in-service training had finished I had an in-depth conversation with Maria and Jorge which I had permission to record. Maria and Jorge also confirmed my perception that this group of instructors was openly resistant to MEIPIM's epistemological and pedagogical assumptions. Maria told me that these instructors had refused to use project work on the basis that it didn't work on the farm-school because of lack of time. She also told me that most of these instructors are at university and she did not feel qualified to challenge their opinions.

Maria: These are young people who have university education. They have a totally open mentality. So how am I supposed to keep them quiet? 'Oh no, here it's not like this, here we do it this way!' They are not going to be quiet, are they? That girl over there, Louisa, she is studying law and labour rights, so she has a lot of knowledge. I can't keep them quiet, not with a report or threatening them with suspension of pay. They are not interested in pay. Look at Juan Pablo (an instructor who was sacked); before he was sacked he told Hector, "I am not interested in the pay. What I want is my farm and my school so I can work with the children. I am not interested in anything else." How am I going to threaten him with retaining his pay? You tell me. You noticed, Sharon, with previous generations they stayed for two or three years and never said a thing, because they were afraid. They knew what would happen if they said anything. But these ones – if you sack me I am sacked, if you report me you report me. If you suspend my pay I don't care. I will say what I have to say

(Recorded conversation with Maria: Disc 4).

I asked them to tell me about Juan Pablo's dismissal

Maria: Hector told him "Look you are here just passing through. Just do what you have to do and nothing more; the rest is of no interest to you." And this young lad (chamaco) told Hector, "You are right, I might be passing through, but precisely because I am passing through I want to leave a footprint. I want to leave my work well done; and if I am passing through, I want to do the things properly."

Jorge: And when he left, he told Hector the truth: “the only one playing school here is you.”

Maria: It is a complicated situation . . . (pause), but at least he (Juan Pablo) got to say those things.

(Recorded conversation with Maria and Jorge: Disc 3 8th December 2005)

The categories that emerged from the data (they are university educated) collected during this first in-service session with the third-generation of instructors suggest that the more direct forms of resistance, evident in their interviews and in their interactions with the tutor, seemed to be linked to their identity construct as university students. Both Maria and Jorge had referred to their university education to account for their resistance to the programme: “They’re university-educated and have an open mentality; therefore we can’t tell them anything.” In Itzel’s account also, the Academic Coordinator had told her that “a university education fills your head with strange ideas.”

7.8.2. Playing school

It is difficult to ascertain whether the instructors’ university/academic identity, as suggested by Maria, mediated their challenging and contestatory subjectivities. The correlation between increased agency and increased cultural (educational) capital is, in most cases, a correct assumption to make. It might, however, also be correct to assume increased agency because of the material and social conditions that in all likelihood facilitated their access to a public university. While the collected data doesn’t offer definitive insights into why the third generation of instructors embodied increased agency, the data does describe the resistance that increased agency permitted, what it looks like and how it functioned to challenge institutional power relations in a more direct way.

Traditional institutional practices for example, such as suspension of pay, reports, and even sacking, as Maria points out, could no longer be used as disciplinary measures to secure the requisite learning evidence. This is important as these institutional practices

had structured forms of resistance such as the passive compliance and instrumentalised strategy teaching among the first two generations (see Chap 6).

Another important data category that emerged from the third generation fieldwork was one I labelled “I am not here to play school,” a phrase taken from the interview with Angel. The university educated instructors often invoked this phrase to sustain their criticism of the programme. The phrase suggests: We are here, albeit for a short time, to do something real, to leave a footprint, to have an impact. In other words we are not playing *la escuela* (we are not playing little school).

I suggest that this phrase, which seemed to acquire a mantra status among the third generation of instructors, structured an overall resistance and challenge to the programme. It functioned to enclose instructor engagement with the programme into a binary relationship with a “real educational process”. In other words, we can play or we can do something real . . . and we are here to “leave a footprint.” As far as these instructors are concerned, MEIPIM’s organisational and discursive practices, divorced from the social reality of the farms, structure a form of “playing school.” To achieve something real therefore, to be able “to leave a footprint,” they need to challenge MEIPIM’s organisational practices. Unlike their predecessors from previous generations, their increased agency facilitated challenges, not just to the tutor, but also to the Academic Coordinator, and even attempts to go to the director of CONAFE.

7.8.3. Socialised subjectivity

As noted above, it is difficult to ascertain why the third generation possessed a level of agency that appeared not to be constrained by structural limitations (*sack me if you want to; I am not interested in money; I am interested in doing something real*). What can be explored with the available data, however, is the impact that a more direct form of ideological contestation had on instructors from previous generations, who were more constrained by structural limitations.

Not all the instructors at the in-service training were at university. There were twelve instructors; only five were attending university. I decided therefore to focus on the impact that these direct forms of resistance were having on Jorge and Maria. This decision was based on two considerations. Jorge and Maria are the tutors; institutionally they are more empowered. Secondly, as noted above, I had worked with both of these young people the year before. Both had enacted a form of resistance that reflected the instrumentalised strategy teaching, described above.

Interestingly, the data analysis suggest that both Jorge and Maria, while not yet directly contesting the power relations embedded in MEIPIM's institutional practices, were beginning to adopt imaginary subject positions where they were empowered to do so.

During a recorded conversation with Maria, she recounted her participation at a national conference. She had been asked to participate during tutor training. Her narrative account focuses mainly on why she didn't participate actively at the conference, choosing instead to remain silent. Her initial justification for not speaking focuses on her lack of experience; after all she was still in training as a tutor at that time. She told me, however, with perceived annoyance, that Hector, the Academic Coordinator had congratulated her for not speaking. In her account of the interaction, he had told her that, -- "me quedaste bien" (you didn't let me down). She concludes this narrative account with a description of her imaginary self going back to the same conference to tell them the truth about the programme.

But now I regret it. Because in that moment I couldn't talk, because I didn't have the experience as a tutor; however, now I would like to go again and tell them the truth/ Even the psychologist told me that I should have said something.

(Recorded conversation with Maria: Disc 4)

Jorge also described a similar imaginary subject position after he had been told that he might be transferred to another CONAFE programme. He recounted the following:

If they transfer me, I am transferred. But before I go I am going to tell them the truth about this programme. I am not here to play school.

(Recorded conversation with Jorge: Disc 4)

The imaginary subjectivities evoked in these narratives were not available in interviews/conversations conducted with Maria and Jorge during the previous years.⁷³ The desires and fantasies embedded in these alternative discursive subjectivities, as Maria and Jorge imagine how they might be in the world, that is, telling the truth about the programme, or being able to tell the truth to those in charge without worrying about the consequences, suggest a significant shift from the mostly compliant and passive subject positions they had used previously to negotiate MEIPIM.

I suggest that these emerging imaginary subject positions can be analysed in relation to what Bourdieu describes as socialised subjectivity, “an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences and therefore constantly affected by them” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). From this analytical viewpoint, subjectivity is understood, not as a product, but rather as “an ongoing production of identities in relation to other groups engaged in the same kind of identity work” (Hall cited in Levinson 2000:344). It might be argued that Jorge’s and Maria’s imaginary subjectivities, involved in more direct forms of resistance, emerge from their social interaction/socialised subjectivity with the university educated instructors.

If this is the case, then Bourdieu’s notion of socialised subjectivity, and the ongoing processes of identity construction that socialised subjectivity suggests, allow for a more hopeful analysis of the symbolic resistance enacted by instructors from the previous two generations. The strategic passivity enacted by instructors with reduced agency, to address their personal needs, while undermining educational equity for migrant communities, can now be interpreted as maintaining “an ideological space in anticipation of the day when it may become something more” (Luykx 1999 :286).

⁷³ I had interviewed Maria twice the year before and had conducted unrecorded interview sessions with Jorge.

In which case, it is possible to speculate that the more direct oppositional forms of resistance enacted by the university-educated instructors trigger an internal dialogue with the residual feelings embedded in the strategic passivity and compliance used by instructors with decreased agency.

This internal dialogue, as Apple (2003) argues, produces a space where ideological contestation begins to formulate, a space in which Maria imagines herself telling the truth about the programme at a national conference, or where Jorge refuses to accept a transfer to another programme, preferring instead to tell the truth about MEIPIM. In sum, it produces a space where they can imagine themselves no longer “playing school.”

As Apple asserts with some cautious optimism,

“While we do not want to overstate the case as some postmodern theorists have done, it is still the case that dominant ideological systems are unstable to the extent that there are residual feelings and desires. Often such residual feelings and desires speak to the potential of opposition. . . . Fantasy and desire represent one of the many spaces where ideological contestation occur, where it is worked through and where Williams (1989) would say ‘resources of hope’ may be found” (2003: 163 Apple).

In this sense, to dismiss Maria’s imaginary self, saying the things that she failed to say the first time round, as a form of escapism, or Jorge’s bravura as an empty threat is to overlook the potential of opposition, and the possibilities for transformative social action embedded in this potential, however remote that potential might be.

It is important to remember, however, that while increased agency and the residual feelings of fantasy and desire related to socialised subjectivity in these analytical

categories may suggest a space for ideological contestation, this is unlikely to occur without some change in instructors/tutors material circumstances.

That said, these analytical categories can be understood to offer “a potential of opposition” (Apple 2003:163) that might otherwise have been overlooked. This “potential” is significant in a research context concerned to understand the implications of teacher negotiation and enactment of generic intercultural policy for educational equity in rural Veracruz, Mexico,

7.9. Conclusion

By analysing data that illustrate how the broader historically-constituted social and material relations in Mexico influence meaning-making processes and subjectivities in the local context, this chapter has aimed to show how teacher negotiation of MEIPIM’s cultural politics function to reconfigure intercultural relations as a discriminatory practice.

The data demonstrate that teacher negotiation of MEIPIM’s intercultural ideology made use of embedded class, gender and ethnic relations to position migrant communities as the uneducated and unworldly “other,” that is, those who have not yet made it in the heart of Mexico’s democratic experiment. I suggest in this chapter that this functioned to regulate and affirm the instructors’ embryonic non-rural urban identity formation processes.

Failure to provide opportunities during teacher-training for critical dialogue that might have addressed the broader social and institutional structural conditions mediating these discriminatory subjectivities resulted in an instrumentalised passivity, which appeared, once again, to address instructors’ needs while denying intercultural justice to migrant communities.

The implications of this analysis appear to relate to MEIPIM's broader organisational practices. Cost-efficient measures, such as using marginalised, unqualified instructors with limited agency and dependent on continuing education grants, appear to be directly related to the ways instructors enact MEIPIM policy. I argue that instructor/tutor lack of agency and the material and social conditions constituting their lived rural reality converge to produce a discriminatory practice to affirm the emergent non-rural identity constructs mediating their participation on MEIPIM.

Thus, while Chapter 6 argues that pedagogical inexperience and material conditions reconfigured the pedagogic device to produce a form of instrumentalised teaching, seriously compromising children's literacy levels and overall learning achievements, this chapter suggests that their socio-economic marginalisation re-configures MEIPIM's discursive intercultural relations as a discriminatory practice to regulate and affirm the imaginary urban futures embedded in their education grants.

Following on from this, the data collected from fieldwork with a third generation of instructors, albeit limited, suggest that instructors with increased agency enabled a level of oppositional resistance that seemed to prioritise the lived reality of migrant communities, over and above instructors' personal hopes and aspirations. Instructors with increased agency on the programme also appeared to expose those with limited agency to what Bourdieu refers to as a form of "socialised subjectivity." Socialised subjectivity appeared to generate a level of ideological contestation in local actors who in previous years had chosen a symbolic form of resistance based on passivity and compliance.

While these less-indirect forms of oppositional resistance can hardly be construed as a form of counter-hegemonic resistance, it is important to remember that they do "give rise to critiques and penetrations of dominant ideology that can be linked to what a just society might make possible and keeps alive a vision of what might be" (Luykx 1999:282).

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to bring together the principal strands of this thesis which endeavoured to make sense of the “sense-making-processes” that teachers might bring to their involvement with generic intercultural education policy in Mexico. Researching teachers’ ‘sense making processes’ is part of an overarching aim to explore if and how teacher negotiation of the global transference of generic intercultural education policy promotes or inhibits educational equity when enacted as a local practice. I use this chapter to relate my arguments to the empirical findings that emerged from my ethnographic involvement with MEIPIM: An intercultural Educational Model for the children of Migrant Agricultural Labourers. I also use this final chapter to identify the empirical and theoretical contributions made by this study to the field of intercultural educational development policy and practice. I conclude by addressing the limitations of the study and by considering possible areas for additional research in this field.

8.2. Empirical findings

This study was shaped by a central consideration to explore how teacher negotiation of global intercultural education policy might function to promote or inhibit educational equity in a local context. For this reason, the thesis aimed to navigate the complex landscape that shapes the territory in-between global policy development and the local enactment of that policy, providing some signposting along the way. This journey has involved critical scrutiny of the cultural politics of intercultural education policy as they migrate from the global to the local, where they are mediated and re-

articulated by broader social relations and local institutional bureaucratic needs and interests. Instructor/tutor (teacher) subjectivity and identity formation processes played a crucial role in this journey and in shaping the unintended outcomes of local practice.

It was noted along the way that, while the cultural politics of global policy generate theoretical frameworks and discursive and organisational practices to address cultural injustice, they appear to have an undefined and ambivalent relationship with socio-economic injustice and the political economic hierarchies that structure them. Drawing principally on critical social theory, as well as analytical determinants offered by Bernstein and Bourdieu, the empirical findings suggest that policy failure to address social and material relations in the local context generated a series of unintended policy outcomes. The empirical evidence suggests that these outcomes undermined MEIPIM's official aims for increased democratised social and knowledge relations in the classroom. Thus, possibilities for educational equity were not seen to be made available during the course of this research study.

The original research arguments suggested that the embedded socio-cultural values shaping intercultural policy were largely irrelevant to and incompatible with local needs. Likewise, I argued that the pedagogic device (child-centered constructivist teaching approaches) emerging from MEIPIM's cultural politics was both technically challenging and financially prohibitive, particularly in under-resourced development contexts. While both these factors played a crucial role in policy failure, the empirical findings suggest that local re-articulation and enactment of policy was not as clear cut as these arguments might suggest. While multiple factors converged to undermine policy aims, two overarching considerations were identified as being central to this process:

- 1) A contradictory pedagogical device, and
- 2) Cost-efficient organisational practices

Firstly, in terms of MEIPIM's pedagogical discourse, the documentary examination undertaken in Chapter 5 identifies an ethically and epistemologically challenged discursive development. Policy adherence to international recommendations that address cultural injustice seemed to generate a re-codification process that re-configured local needs to reflect the specificity of global criteria. For this reason, community consultations, a largely symbolic process during the policy development procedure, seemed to function to secure data, mostly related to socio-economic injustices, which were later re-signified within a cultural diversity discourse as cultural injustice.

As a result, migratory practices are re-signified in MEIPIM policy discourse as cultural practices in need of cultural affirmation and recognition. This re-signification process triggered two responses that shaped how MEIPIM policy developed:

- 1) It legitimated a pedagogical device to promote cultural diversity and cultural affirmation;
- 2) It established an ambivalent policy relationship with the social and material relations that constitute the lived reality of agricultural communities.

The first of these two responses resulted in a constructivist-intercultural pedagogical approach that was not only methodologically incompatible and largely irrelevant to local educational needs (discussed below), but was also discursively contradictory. The documentary examination identified how this pedagogical discourse oscillated between functional short-term goals for survival skills, implying a disregard for official certification processes, and long-term constructivist goals, suggesting transformative social action in the educational context. The ethical implications of the short-term survival skills are questionable, if educational equity is the aim of policy formulation, while the epistemological implications of a constructivist world-vision remain unaddressed and for the most part, under-theorised in the literature. Transformative social action suggests critical engagement with the underlying political-economic structures that generate socio-economic injustices constituting the lived reality of agricultural migrant labourers. Cultural affirmation approaches, on the other hand,

suggest strengthening these structures by giving increased recognition to the practices that they generate (Fraser in Philips 1998).

Chapter 6 illustrated how these discursive contradictions were negotiated by the instructors and how their negotiation was enacted as a pedagogical practice. Preliminary analysis suggests that MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices constitute a form of a symbolic violence, by excluding and devaluing instructors' and communities' lived-experiences of the teaching and learning process. The inadequate training (human resources) and material resources were central factors in how this symbolic violence unfolded as a situated classroom practice.

While symbolic violence must not be overlooked, a more significant consideration that emerged from the empirical data was an embedded contradiction structuring the pedagogical device and attendant organisational practices. This contradiction stemmed principally from the merging of two contradictory pedagogic modes, that is, a performance mode with a competence mode. Bernstein's analytical determinants for these modes identify the first, a performance mode, as based on predetermined targets and measurements. The second mode, a competence mode, basically operates from a constructivist framework where learning potential, rather than learning deficit, is prioritised. It was the juxtaposition of these two conflicting modes, rather than the embedded symbolic violence, that seemed ultimately to determine instructor negotiation and enactment of policy. As one instructor pointed out "if we are going to test competencies then lets teach competencies and forget about project work," in other words, testing (performance) or project (competencies), but not both.

The tragedy here is that even those instructors who might have had constructivist leanings, even if they lacked the skills and tools to implement them, were unable to do so, because of what they understood as, these 'illogical and anomalous' aspects of the programme. Potentially capable of performing one or the other, but not both, they opted for a form of symbolic resistance that unfolded as an instrumentalised passivity and compliance. The empirical findings suggest that, while the observed strategy-teaching

functioned to address bureaucratic and, de-facto, personal needs, in-so-doing it undermined policy goals in two ways. It reinforced traditional authoritarian and hierarchical teaching relations in the classroom, rather than democratising them; and secondly, at the institutional level, passivity and compliance reinforced and enabled a deep and persisting grammar of historically constituted hierarchical and authoritarian relations.

Finally, the empirical data illustrated how the neo-liberal reasoning shaping the logic of MEIPIM's cultural politics also informed an overall organisational practice concerned with cost-efficiency. This resulted in the programme using mostly poor and rural school students as community instructors. These young people were trained, using what seemed to be, an inadequate training model that relied on a trickle-down cascade dissemination approach. The limited social agency that these instructors brought to the programme, and the irrelevance of the training programme for addressing the broader oppressive ethnic, gender and class relations mediating their contradictory subjectivities, also appeared to contribute to policy failure.

Positioning migrant labourers as the uneducated rural "other," the communities seemed to represent serviceable bodies for instructors to contemplate and regulate their evolving identity formation processes (Morrison 1992), imaginary urban futures and the possibility "to be someone." For this reason instructor enactment of MEIPIM's intercultural goals unfolded as a mostly discriminatory and racist practice.

The inclusion of university educated instructors during the third year of field work suggested that increased social agency might correlate with increased ideological contestation and more direct forms of resistance to MEIPIM policy. These instructors made it clear that they were not here to play school but to do something real, namely, to "leave a footprint." Challenging MEIPIM policy as largely irrelevant to the "real" educational needs of agricultural migrant communities, their more-direct resistance appeared to resonate with the less-direct forms of resistance enacted by instructors from previous generations. I suggested that this kind of socialised subjectivity (Bourdieu

1977), may offer resources of hope for an as yet undefined space (Garcia 2005), where the unintended outcomes of the local/global dialectic keep alive a vision of what might be” (Luykx 1999:282).

8.3. Theoretical and empirical contributions of the study

Firstly, by making visible the neo-liberal reasoning informing the logic of the cultural politics mediating generic ‘top down’ intercultural educational policy, this study may have broadened the central considerations for research in the field. Recent research, resonating with the empirical findings in this research, has questioned the socio-cultural compatibility of constructivist ideas shaping child-centred pedagogic approaches. Research has also emphasised challenges for resourcing these pedagogic frameworks in resource-scarcity development contexts (Sriprakash 2009, Tabulawa 2003, 2009, Vavrus 2009, Barrett 2007). Using Bernstein (Sriprakash 2009, Barrett 2007) these authors highlight the class-specific values embedded in child-centred pedagogies and question the material and human resource implications for the development context. Child-centered pedagogies are, after all, usually considered to be very expensive (Bernstein 1996).

While the findings in this study corroborate the empirical findings emerging from other development contexts by choosing to focus on global policy procedures as a cultural realm where the cultural production of knowledge occurs, this study shifts the analytical spotlight away from local resource-deficit and local-incompatibility discourses toward a global-deficit policy procedure that appears to be conceptually contradictory and discursively confused.

This analytical focus highlights how global logic seems to prioritise global aims for global needs, rather than global aims for local needs. In this sense, the study suggests that discussions on policy failure in the local context might be addressed better if the focus were shifted away from local mediation of incompatible socio-cultural values to

focus on inappropriate global logic and concomitant contradictory policy formulation procedures. If this were the case, then consultation procedures with local actors, rather than functioning as educational technology to confirm an already established global pedagogic logic, would function instead as a “real” (not symbolic) component of policy development. Parental data might be viewed through the critical social theoretical constructs used in this study to analyse the lifeworlds informing parental constructions of the educational process. In this sense, local needs as described by local actors would be analysed in relation to local lifeworlds, rather than global cultural agendas. A global/local dialectic structured in this way would surely move closer to bridging what appears to be, in this study, an unbridgeable gap between policy and local enactment.

Secondly, and directly related to the above, this study may contribute to broadening research parameters concerned to address the tensions mediating market-oriented education policies. Market-oriented policies favour measurable outcomes to address cost-efficiency concerns and increasing competitiveness. Measurable outcomes can also be used, as is the case with MEIPIM, to meet international education criteria for ethnic diversity and cultural justice.

The empirical evidence from this study, however, suggests that cost-efficiency measures can be linked to the unclear and contradictory educational development discourse and the inherently contradictory pedagogic device that it structures. Equally, cost-efficiency measures appear to play a central role in determining how teachers renegotiated policy to enact authoritarian teacher-centred practices. Teacher-centered practices were more effective for acquiring the learning evidence necessary for cost-efficient evaluation purposes. As the data analysis chapters suggest, these unanticipated outcomes were seen to have distressing consequences for educational equity. This study contributes, therefore, to a growing body of empirical research concerned to understand the impact of cost-efficient evaluation procedures for an increasingly marketised education sector.

By focusing on agricultural migrants in rural Veracruz, this study makes a very specific and particular contribution to tensions and contradictions engendered by “high stakes accountability regime” (Rose 2009). Related research studies, particularly in under-resourced areas, has mostly been conducted outside of the developing world. For this reason, this study provides a valuable ground-level view of how these responses might be shaped in a neo-colonial/post-colonial development context where other factors, such as extreme poverty, oppressive ethnic relations, international aid and exploitative capitalist labour relations mediate responses to accountability pressures.

8.3.1. Research on agricultural migrant education policy in Mexico

Research in the field of agricultural migrant education policy in Mexico, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is limited and concerned mostly to evaluate, refine and improve existing policy (Taracena 2003, Bey 2003); this perspective is consistent with the cultural logic of systemised and institutionalised school reform.

Approaching intercultural education, therefore, from a critical ethnographical perspective, this research contributes to broadening the scope of enquiry beyond the narrow aims of policy frameworks for intercultural education,. A critical ethnographic approach de-centers policy and official aims by positioning teachers and communities as historical actors and cultural critics. Focusing on agency as a creative process, without losing sight of the powerful structures and circumstances conditioning that agency, this study identifies a space where knowledgeable actors in contexts of structured power, resist or challenge official versions of policy. From this perspective, the study contributes to research in the field that emphasises the importance of the broader conjunctural relations that mediate teacher subjectivity, teacher agency and the material conditions that constitute their lived reality.

In this sense, this study can be described as a response to Tabulawa’s plea (2009) for increased detailed ethnographic engagement with how teachers and learners in the

development context might be responding to constructivist global/generic education policy framed in neo-liberal accountability criteria.

Equally, by locating the research approach outside the logic of intercultural education as policy, this study contributes to a field of research concerned with broadening the interpretive frameworks for intercultural education. Researchers in this field aim to go beyond the emancipatory/disciplinary dichotomy that encloses interpretive frameworks for intercultural education in Latin America. Instead, by engaging with the multiple interpretations to which intercultural education policy is subjected, these researchers construct cultural accounts of what Garcia (2006) calls, the “as yet undefined space generated by the global/local dialectic”.

Highlighting the correlation between organisational structures pertaining to cost-efficiency and teacher surveillance, and the social limits of teacher agency, the study contributes to this area of research by suggesting that increased teacher agency might be related to more direct forms of oppositional and ideological resistance to generic policy. This contribution, however remote, is where this research identifies resources of hope in the “as yet undefined space” generated by the global/local dialectic”. That is, increased teacher agency may provide possibilities for educational equity in an otherwise unhopeful context.

8.3.2. Using critical social theories of education in rural Mexico

Following on from this, it goes without saying that critical social theory in education was central to my data analysis. Making use of Bourdieu and Bernstein’s largely euro-centric theoretical frameworks, this thesis has contributed to a field of work concerned to demonstrate how these conceptual determinants might be applied in a development context to make sense of global education policy transfer and local enactment of these policies.

Bourdieu's concept of "Symbolic Violence," much criticised for deterministic outcomes of social and cultural reproduction (Giroux 2001), allowed the data analysis to explore the impact of excluding local experiential knowledge from the policy context, and how this exclusion mediated policy enactment. Equally, Bourdieu's concept of *doxa* (the imposition of an unquestionable common-sense) facilitated an analytical exploration of the unbridgeable gap between the lived social and material reality of migrant communities and the imposed cultural arbitrary-liberal intercultural education policy. The notion of "*doxa* in crisis" was useful for making sense of teacher resistance to policy as "illogical and anomalous." Bourdieu's theoretical determinants allowed for greater insight into how the material and social relations constituting the lived reality of these local actors interacted with an imposed *doxa* that was perceived largely as a "fantasy" (Alfredo interview: see Chap. 6: 219). For this reason I suggest that the thesis contributes to the application of Bourdieu's critical theoretical frameworks in an educational development research context.

That said, Bourdieu was not sufficient to make sense of why the instructors and tutors chose to resist in the way that they did. To develop further the data analysis, the research made use of theoretical determinants offered by Bernstein for competence and performance pedagogic modes. While mindful that these analytical constructs emerged in the mid-nineties in response to changing pattern of education in England, this study contributes to demonstrating how they might be adapted to an educational research development context in rural Mexico.

Bernstein's conceptual understanding of framing was particularly useful for analysing and understanding how increased framing, and the associated increased teacher and student surveillance, was happening in a policy discourse concerned to promote child-centred pedagogies and constructivist philosophies. Bernstein's analytical determinants for competence and performance pedagogic modes revealed how increased framing and weaker framing were occurring in a contradictory and confused manner within a flawed pedagogic device. In this sense, this research highlights how Bernstein's conceptual understanding of "framing" might be adapted to a development education context, such

as rural Mexico, to explore further teacher enactment of global intercultural education policy.

8.4. Some thoughts on performativity and surveillance

In sum, while the local/global dialectic has been part of the comparative education research canon for some time (Crossley and Watson 2003), research foci on local enactment of global policy seems to have increased with the introduction of the Education For All (EFA) millennium goals. While greeted initially with much enthusiasm, critics argued that meeting these success indicators has superseded and compromised the quality and the relevance of educational provision. Target setting, according to national and international research, has created blind spots in both analysis and action in the local context (Lewin 2007). For this reason, empirical research to address these concerns has increased in the past two decades.

Equally, research studies to address concerns that EFA targets were producing generic policy and practice also evolved. As early as 2004 Goldstein wrote:

“At the international level, even if unintended, the eventual outcomes of pursuing EFA targets may well be an increasing control of individual systems by institutions, such as the world bank or aid agencies, supported by global testing agencies” (Goldstein 2004:13).

As the millennium has progressed growing control of education systems around the world by international aid, and the influence of global/international testing agencies, increasingly appears to be shaping local responses to these educational reform initiatives. . Mexico’s educational gold standard, imposed by PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), closely linked to OECD, is a case in point. Strategic measures to achieve this gold standard have shifted an unexpected focus onto CONAFE. Programmes such as MEIPIM, appear to be having a negative impact on

national test scores, notwithstanding Carmen's efforts to teach to the test (see Chap. 6:225). This in turn, impacts on Mexico's educational ranking in the world (see CONAFE: link for "educación debate" website). I can only speculate as to whether this critical focus on CONAFE, as concern for international educational ranking, might have mediated some of the measures taken by institutional actors in this study to secure the required learning evidence.

However, more recent moves to address low test scores in rural areas where CONAFE provides educational services to small communities appear to be focusing more on statistical, rather than curricular and pedagogic reform (Chain 2008). While this may address broader institutional and national concerns, it does not bode well for educational equity.

In relation to these concerns, this study contributes to a growing body of detailed ethnographic research that aims to provide "cultural accounts" of how increased surveillance of teachers and institutions (increased framing) embedded in neoliberal education policy, is being negotiated and enacted within the historical-institutional specificity of regional/local development contexts, such a rural Veracruz.

Once again, this contribution points away from local-deficit discourses towards to a global-deficit world vision and policy development procedure. As discussed above, competitive cost-efficient strategies shape cost-efficient organisational practices which include using unqualified instructors. Their negotiation of the programme appeared to be structured by their material needs and the desire to secure a grant (an imaginary future). This in turn, mediated their subjectivities and emergent identity constructs, and their subsequent, mostly discriminatory, interactions with the communities.

For this reason, this study emphasises that intercultural educational programmes, with a specific focus on cultural justice, such as MEIPIM, need to be analysed, not just for pedagogical and epistemological challenges, but also need to be examined in relation to the political-economy and the implications for investment embedded in structural

reform processes. The crucial question here is, whether or not it is possible to “develop meaningful and engaged learning environments amidst onerous bureaucratic administrative requirements and impoverished material conditions” (Levinson 2010:5).

The empirical evidence presented in this thesis suggests that, in all, likelihood, the answer is no. Unqualified teachers with limited agency, hoped for continuing education grants and two months training will not develop the kind of democratised participatory mechanisms that will secure educational equity for marginalised and oppressed communities in rural Mexico. Neoliberal interculturalism may have secured a transformative renewal of discourse; the transformation of educational inequity, however, at least for agricultural migrants in Veracruz, as this study suggest, is still pending.

8.5. Areas for future research

MEIPIM is a national programme; however, the findings produced by this empirical study are limited to how it was enacted as a local practice in a regional context. I am conscious that the historical specificity of structural relations in Veracruz played a significant role in how MEIPIM was shaped as a local practice. I am also aware as the findings clearly demonstrate that even within the parameters of a geographical region there was an inter-generational discrepancy evident in the empirical findings. Given the geographical and regional limitations of this study and the dangers of making generalisations, I suggest that there is need for increased ethnographic research engagement, with local responses to “top-down” generic intercultural education policies.

Intercultural ethnographic research in Mexico has tended to focus on initiatives in higher education. Research in primary education, however, is limited; notwithstanding a discursive emphasis on socio-economic inequality, most research tends to focus on cultural and/or bilingual concerns (Hamel 2010, Jimenez Naranjo 2009). While these

studies are necessary and provide hope in a rather forlorn landscape, their theoretical contribution is limited to cultural and bilingual issues. Equally their over-usage in conferences and publications has made them key signifiers for mediating how researchers engage with intercultural education in Mexico. This is not to detract from their success, but rather to highlight how their presence in the discourse is more suggestive of the limits of intercultural educational research, rather than its possibilities. Future research, especially in basic (primary education), will have to bite the proverbial bullet and perhaps go where intercultural angels fear to tread. It was, quite frankly, blissful ignorance, more than anything else that determined my involvement with MEIPIM/CONAFE. Older wiser and perhaps more Mexican, I have often wished that my research on intercultural education might have taken me to more 'successful' projects but then my contribution might have been in perpetuating the good, but non-generalisable and limited, project specific news.

Bearing this in mind, I suggest that future research needs to engage with how the 'Intercultural Education for All' maxim, (see Chap. 3), that has permeated Mexican intercultural discursive developments in recent years, is being enacted across the educational sphere. This will entail conducting research, not just in rural communities such as those targeted by MEIPIM, but also in urban non-indigenous contexts. Researchers in Mexico need to break the "intercultural education equals indigenous education" template (see Chap. 2 and 3) that seems to have determined research parameters in the field for almost fifteen years. Indigenous-intercultural research projects are important but they limit the intercultural theoretical prism in crucial ways that lean towards a limited cultural analysis. To broaden this theoretical prism, research needs to be conducted in non-indigenous contexts, where challenges for intercultural education cannot be mediated by traditional indigenous cultural signifiers such as language.

Future research, therefore, should seek to understand how non-indigenous educational contexts are negotiating constitutional and legislative reform to restructure and promote an intercultural national identity construct. Research in urban primary schools, upper

and lower secondary, public and private, as well as in public and private higher educational contexts, will not only contribute to generating increased diversity of empirical studies, but might eventually break the deeply-embedded grammar that structures intercultural education as an exclusively indigenous phenomenon in Latin America, a research position that that might inadvertently resonate with Hale's (2002) notion of global intercultural education policies as a way of managing, rather than transforming, the historically constituted oppressive social and economic relations that currently structures indigenous and rural diversity in Mexico. Or, as Gustafson puts it

“Contrary to its own rhetoric, neoliberal interculturalism is not a uniform process of inclusion of previously excluded Indians, but rather a set of uneven, contradictory shifts of political languages and institutions that seek to reorder and legitimate changing expressions of social difference, citizen identity, and hierarchical forms of participation. These new tactics of governance represent a transformative renewal of discourses and institutions through which elites seek to insulate centralised power from various forms of indigenous and other popular forms of political engagement” (2002:269).

8.6. A final note

In conclusion, the regional and institutional specificity of MEIPIM suggests measured caution in generalising implications from these findings. Perhaps in this sense, the overall contribution of this study might best be described as providing a detailed critical geography of what intercultural education policy enactment might look like in a local context. There are certainly no grand narratives and as Levinson counsels, the most I can hope for is “the telling of a story that rings true” (Levinson 2002: 5). That said, notwithstanding the contingent and personal dimensions of social action which mediated teacher negotiation and policy enactment within the specificity of this local

space, my 'story' appears to resonate with other narratives emerging from the intercultural research field. These narratives, while differing in detail and focus, demonstrate overarching concerns with the tensions and contradictions that mediate educational development approaches over-reliance on cultural justice, constructivist pedagogies and the market-oriented standardised assessment procedures that frame them. Assessment and accountability are necessary to any institutional context, however, if they are restricted to a set of single criteria in a high stakes international context, then as Rose (2009) points out,

“We will have a focus on an elaborate technology of calibration and compliance, while considerations of equality of opportunity get lost in the machinery of testing” (Rose 2009:14)

Constitutional and legislative reform, emerging from international initiatives to promote intercultural education, has indisputable value. It has brought a brighter focus to vulnerable populations in Mexico and has raised expectations for educational achievement within these communities. In this sense it can be said to be democratic. The evidence provided by this study, however, suggests that the cultural politics of global policy may be generating organisational practices that appear to limit, rather than support, the realisation of these democratic aims. Constructivist-intercultural curriculums are challenging, whether it is middle class London or rural Veracruz, with or without qualified teachers. Ultimately, however, in a high stakes global context, if they are driven by strongly-framed standardised planning and evaluation regimes then teacher negotiation to address these requirements will, in all likelihood, produce the kind of strategic teaching behaviour described in this study; a form of resistance that appears to have serious implications for learning achievement.

It is hoped, therefore, that this critical geography, mapping the inner landscape of intercultural education in a rural Mexican context, may contribute to similar research in the field. If so, then the hope is that these kinds of in-depth critical ethnographic accounts will eventually provide researchers, policy makers and activists with more

complex portraits of how intercultural reform and intercultural educational policy may interact with social and material relations of power to reinforce, rather than transform, ongoing educational inequity.

It is also hoped that this kind of research will provide further insights into how the agency of social actors interacts with the cultural apparatus of intercultural policy and reform to resist, or counter official versions.

The ultimate hope, however, is that these accounts might be broadened and possibly mapped onto policy development procedures, so that intercultural competence-based curricula can engage with a lived local reality, rather than an imaginary local culture. If this were the case, then measures to ensure cost-efficiency might also be framed in more creative forms of planning and evaluation that reinforce, rather than undermine, the democratic cognitive and social goals that inspired MEIPIM, yet failed to have an impact on educational equity for agricultural migrants in Veracruz.

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Appendix 1: Data Analysis

This appendix provides a more in-depth explanation of how the data analysis process was structured and developed.

In this thesis I have worked principally with two sets of data; the first relates to instructor/tutor construction and enactment of MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices to transform and democratise 'knowledge' relations in the classroom; the second relates to instructor/tutor construction and enactment of MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices to transform, democratise and interculturalise 'social relations' in the classroom and in the wider social context. Both sets of data were derived and developed in accordance with my research focus; the implications for educational equity for migrant agricultural communities. Analysis of interview narratives and observations from classroom teaching and training sessions were central to both data sets, as was the documentary analysis.

Using the data examples provided below, therefore, I offer some insights into how the distinctive issues that emerged from these data sets were derived. Using data related to the first data set, 'MEIPIM's organisational and discursive practices to transform and democratise 'knowledge' relations in the classroom', I demonstrate how this data was coded and categorised to generate the overall themes, conceptual determinants and conclusions offered in Chapters 6 and 8.

Analyzing teacher narratives of MEIPIM's constructivist pedagogy and project-based (integrated) curriculum: An example – MEIPIM policy as an undemocratic and authoritarian organisational practice

To illustrate the data analysis procedure for teacher narratives of MEIPIM's intercultural-constructivist pedagogy and project-based (integrated) curriculum I take

the example of how the construct of MEIPIM policy as an undemocratic and authoritarian practice, linked to learning underachievement, was derived.

Stage 1: Based on my research questions interview transcripts were coded in relation to teacher negotiation of MEIPIM policy. This coding process produced a series of labels that I was then able to organise into three overall descriptive categories. These were identified as the following:

- 1) Pedagogical issues;
- 2) Institutional relations;
- 3) Social and material concerns.

Stage 2: Transcripts were then recoded with particular attention paid to the justificatory and legitimatory mechanisms used to negotiate their (instructors/tutors) subjective interpretations of MEIPIM's constructivist-intercultural organisational practices.

Stage 3: Closer attention was then given to the subjective interpretations (cultural production of meaning) made by the interviewees to establish differences and similarities between narrative constructions within each of the above categories.

Stage 4: This more detailed examination revealed that the categories identified above were united by a common theme. Instructor/tutor meaning making processes seemed to be derived mostly in relation to MEIPIM's strongly framed assessment and evaluation regime. Based on this, the preliminary construct of MEIPIM as a strongly framed, (rather than weakly-framed), undemocratic and authoritarian pedagogy was developed (selection and categorisation of interview extracts in relation to this is shown in the examples provided below).

Stage 5: In order to confirm this preliminary construct teacher interview narratives were revisited and examined in greater detail to identify how their 'meaning making processes' justified and legitimated this construct. It became more apparent across the

three data categories that teachers were relating MEIPIM's rigid planning and evaluation practices to the children's learning underachievement. Planning and evaluation was also understood to be a punitive form of teacher surveillance.

Stage 6: Further triangulation with data categories from classroom observations and in-service sessions confirmed the construct embedded in teacher's narratives of MEIPIM policy as an undemocratic authoritarian practice linked to illiteracy and learning underachievement.

Example 1

Carmen: The worst of it is for example, she (her sister) taught Rosa lots of things that the children in pre-school are not supposed to learn. I did the same. I wanted to teach them (the children) how to read and do you know what Amelia (the tutor) told me? **You are not allowed to teach circles, lines and how to hold the pencil because it's not part the pre-school programme.** It doesn't make sense. I don't understand why they won't let you teach the children more things if they are ready to learn it? Why do they want us to stagnate always in the same thing?

The curriculum is constructed as rigid and inflexible with no room for teacher/student control over the learning/teaching process. A strongly framed and classified list of predetermined skills suggests on-going control over knowledge transmission.

Example 2

Sharon: So for you a child needs affection to be able to recognise that he has rights?

Alfredo: Not just affection. We should also set a good example, whether it's with words or with affection, because what these children need is affection; all children need this and when someone tells the child that they are worth less because they are dirty...because many teachers (pause)... I have seen it Sharon, they won't even take their hand because they are dirty. And these are the ones (instructors) who will stay on here as tutors. They will soon find out what they are like. **Or perhaps no, because they will have all their teaching programmes and planning and their journals, in other words, they will look good here. Perhaps what they need to do is chose someone, not just because they have all the correct planning and evaluation and nice hand writing but because they are committed to the children, to making the children feel they are capable and that they can succeed.** But it's the opposite, instead of helping the child they will prejudice the child's learning. **My idea is that instead of looking for the best planning and programming here they should go from farm to farm and see what is really happening.** This is the mistake. Here they bring their best work but on the farms...god help us.

Here planning and evaluation are constructed as a façade; a ploy to distract from real learning and teaching commitment. Equally the construction of planning and evaluation offered here is based on a notion of exchange value; knowledge relevance and application for migrant communities is positioned as being excluded from this process. Social and material relations are also invoked as mediating teachers' lack of commitment and vocation towards these children while MEIPIM's planning and evaluation process is constructed as - an end in itself.

Example 3.

Eugenia: **Sergio (tutor) told me that my language was too advanced for the children. He said we were supposed to relate to their world and use their terms.** But if they say miela (trans: an incorrect form of saying honey) then am I not supposed to tell them that its 'honey', not miela. For example if I use terms such as 'we are going to investigate' am I supposed to say we are going to look for things in books. Or we are going to experiment and they say "teacher what's that?" Am I not supposed to tell them?

Again, this accounts suggests increased control over knowledge transmission and MEIPIMs highly framed pre-determined skills and learning sequences are constructed as an obstacle to learning achievement Transmission is to be enacted as a technical list of what to do and what not to do; teacher is positioned as a technician devoid of creative agency.

Example 4.

Jorge: . . .I never went, perhaps I am making excuses for myself, but, in the whole school cycle, I didn't go to Farm A and I went almost at the end and for example I saw that the children in the third level didn't know how to multiply or divide **Supposedly we are starting with the children's needs and interests so how is it possible that they didn't teach them these thing . . . We need to be more demanding and when we are checking their planning and evaluation we need to check not just that they are putting the date and complying. We need to check that the children are benefitting from this.**

Here, Jorge (the assistant academic coordinator) appears to construct MEIPIMs planning and evaluation as a ritualized symbolic process devoid of application and relevance for the children's learning achievement. He seems to suggest that this organisational structure can be linked to children's underachievement. He also constructs planning and evaluation organisational practices as inadequate to meeting children's real learning needs and interests.

Example 5.

(Informe General Del Ciclo Escolar MEIPIM 2002-2003: General report of MEIPIM school year 2002-2003: 23)

For some of the instructors it is a case of meeting the evaluation requirements and nothing else; given that they are worried about having the evidence before the next in-service training session. Because of this they don't teach the basics of letter writing nor do they value or recognise the children's culture during the writing process. Also, they don't teach the most important thing which is to promote the child's understanding of what they are writing ...The greatest difficulty for the instructors using these tools was that the majority of the children cannot write and so they only did drawings.

This account (taken from the tutors' end of year report) reveals how MEIPIM's strongly framed planning and evaluation practices appear to structure an instrumentalised enactment of MEIPIM's constructivist pedagogy. This narrative also constructs a causal link between illiteracy and planning and evaluation practices.

Appendix 2: MEIPIM and migration patterns

This appendix provides more in-depth detail of yearly migration patterns on the two focal farms used in this study. The appendix also provides detailed information on the pattern of activities that structured the children's day, including the MEIPIM school day.

Migration patterns on Coffee Farm A

As noted in Chapter 2 of the thesis, migration patterns can be categorised as follows:

Pendulum: Migrants leave their villages for 4-6 month periods and then return to their birthplace.

Swallow: Migrants do not have a fixed workplace. They cover different agricultural camps according to work availability.

Established: Migrants reside permanently in the place where they work (Taracena 2003: 302-303).

The migrant workers on Coffee Farm A can be identified as practicing Swallow and Established migration patterns. Within the category of Established migrants there were seven families residing permanently on Coffee Farm A during the research process. All of these families originate from villages in the state of Puebla which borders on Veracruz⁷⁴. They first began migrating from the mountainous regions of Puebla into Veracruz in the mid-1990s in search of employment in the agricultural sector. By the time this research project began in 2005, they were already established on the farm, and returned to their place of origin only for religious festivals.

⁷⁴ Veracruz shares state boundaries with seven other states: Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo, Puebla, Oaxaca, Chiapas and Tabasco.

Coffee harvesting generally begins the second week of November,⁷⁵ however, given the presence of established families - resident workers - on the farm, migrants who practice Swallow migration patterns are not required for the harvest until mid-December. The combination of Swallow and Established migration patterns on this particular farm allows the farm manager to begin harvesting with fewer workers in November, and to delay intensive harvesting until mid-December when the Swallow migrant families arrive. This arrangement also allows the families both Established and Swallow, to be present in their place of origin on the 12th December, the feast Day for the Virgin of Guadalupe. This is Mexico's most important religious festival; only when this festival is over does intensive coffee harvesting begin.

The migratory patterns for Swallow workers can change from year to year. However, for the three years that I visited Coffee farm A, the migrants that arrived mid-December were always from the state of Oaxaca. These workers arrived between the 14th and 16th of December and stayed until the end of February to early March. As far as I could ascertain, once the intensive harvesting finished in March, these families were contacted by *enganchadores*⁷⁶ who provided transport to different crop farms where migrant labour was required⁷⁷ (data from interview with farm manager). Unfortunately, because these families migrate to a different state they no longer have access to the migrant educational services provided by CONAFE/MEIPIM⁷⁸. As a result, the children's school year was limited from mid-December to March. The established migrant families, on the other hand, continued to access MEIPIM until June. In March, once the harvest was over, these families worked to clean the land and prepare the soil for the following year. This was considered to be women's work. At this point also, the school hours changed from the evening to the morning. While this meant that the children were not as exhausted as they normally would be, it also determined that some of the girls had to take turns coming to school because they needed to help their mother with clearing the land (see Chapter 6)

⁷⁵ Some harvesting takes place late October however the established families return to their place of origin for the Day of the Dead celebrations (1st and 2nd November)

⁷⁶ From the verb *enganchar* which means "to recruit "

⁷⁷ They migrated to the north of Mexico to harvest tomatoes

⁷⁸ Each state has a separate Department of Education; therefore MEIPIM/CONAFE cannot provide schooling continuity within another administrative department.

Sugar Cane farm B

The migrant workers on the sugar cane farm practice Pendulum migration patterns. This particular farm has employed the same workers for more than fifteen years (data from interview with farm manager). These workers come from an indigenous community that lives in the mountainous region of Puebla. They all speak Nahuatl. Given the dangers involved with harvesting sugar cane not all these migrants travel with their families (children don't usually participate in sugar cane burning until they are at least eleven). Those who have families are provided with accommodation in the hostel where the school room is located. The women who accompany their husbands have a communal kitchen where they cook together to provide enough food for everyone.

Sugar cane cutting begins mid-December, after the feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Intensive cane burning begins mid-January and continues until March. Land clearance occurs between March and June and by early July these workers return to their place of origin in Puebla. Once again, because they migrate from outside of the state, MEIPIM cannot provide the continuity service that it implements for internal Veracruz migrants.

Low international price quotas for sugar cane exports and corresponding low wages for the cutters determined that most of these men would try to find construction work in Mexico City until the following December (data from interview with farm manager). Since the children do not participate in harvesting the sugar cane school takes place in the morning from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

Coffee farm A: a day in the life of. . .

The following section describes what a community day and a fully-planned research day might look like. It is important to remember, however, that this overall pattern was often interrupted by in-service sessions, instructor absenteeism, instructor transfer, religious

festivals and sometimes weeks without an assigned instructor. It was also punctuated by visits to other less-accessible farms (see Chapters 6 and 7)

On the coffee farm the migrants, including women and children, work in the fields from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Some of the younger children (roughly until the age of eight) stay behind to look after the babies and perform household chores. An adult or an older child would usually stay with them. The children whose families practice Established migrations have accommodation that is fifteen minutes walking from the school. Consequently, when the children worked in the fields it was almost impossible for them to finish at 5.00 p.m., go home, eat and wash and make it to school for 6.00 p.m. As a result, school almost always started between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m. I usually arrived before 6:00 p.m. and would often meet the families walking home from the fields. The children never accepted a ride, as they preferred to go home with their parents to eat something before starting school. I generally used this time to be with the instructors to sort out various practical issues such as food, accommodation and transport. It was also an opportunity to find out what was happening on the farm, their relationship with the farm manager, the families and other issues of interest. If the instructors were very busy I would talk to the farm manager or the women in the *tienda* (small shop). Otherwise, I would use the time to read my notes and reflect on ideas. Most of the children would arrive before 7:00 p.m., and the school session would begin (see below). I generally stayed in the classroom for the session and tried to make myself as useful as possible without undermining the role of the instructor. I would drive back to Xalapa when school finished at 9.00 p.m.

Sugar Cane farm B: a day in the life of. . .

On the sugar cane farm the children's day begins with routine chores. The girls help their mothers to prepare the *masa* (dough) for making the tortillas while the boys search for firewood to build the fires. The men leave before 6:00 a.m. in order to burn and cut as much cane as possible before the heat becomes too unbearable. When they harvest sugar cane the workers must wear two or three layers of clothes (to protect their bodies from

the sharp cane splinters). They also need to burn the cane first. The heat from the fire combined with the heat from the mid-day sun is intense, especially for men who are heavily clothed. By mid-day the heat is almost intolerable. The men usually rest from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. and then work until 7 .00 p.m. when the farm manager collects them and brings them back to the hostel.

I usually arrived before 9.00 a.m. which meant that I had very limited contact with the men throughout the research process. If school hadn't started by the time I arrived I would look for an opportunity to stay and talk to the mothers. The cooking area was outside, so it was a little easier to be with them. These women are very shy, however, and do not speak Spanish. I eventually managed to become friends with a woman who seemed to be distant from the others. We were not really able to communicate verbally but she would give me freshly prepared hand-made tortillas (a rare delicacy these days) and I gave her clothes and toys for her little girl. If Evangelina wasn't around then I would go directly to the school. The children usually followed me, so school would start almost as soon as I arrived. These children do not speak Spanish and the instructors do not speak Nahuatl so often the school day finished early. The children would become restless or hungry and would often leave. When this happened I had an opportunity to stay and talk to the instructors. Since these conversations took place immediately after school, we usually discussed the session that they had just given. Around 1.00 p.m. I would drive back to Xalapa. Quite often one of the instructors would come with me, usually to go to the CONAFE offices. This gave me enough time to do the school run, cook and eat and then drive to the coffee farm .

A day in a MEIPIM classroom

MEIPIMs official school day lasts for 3 hours: from 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. on the coffee farm and 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. on the sugar cane farm. The three hour session is structured as follows ⁷⁹

⁷⁹ This information is taken from the instructors guide pp 90-96

- 1) Welcoming activity.....10 minutes
- 2) Register5minutes
- 3) Project work.....1 hours 50 minutes
- 4) Literacy and numeracy workshops.....30 minutes
- 5) Assembly10 minutes
- 6) Tidying the classroom.....5 minutes
- 7) Story time.....10 minutes

The welcoming activity is designed to integrate the children and also to provide an opportunity for playing a game after a long day's work. Likewise, registration is designed as a circle activity to facilitate group integration. Project work, as described in the thesis, involves three learning moments: expression, analysis and sharing which also facilitates group work and integration. There are fourteen projects in total.⁸⁰

Numeracy and literacy are designed so that children can work at their own level. Peer tutoring is a key aspect of this session. Assembly provides a forum for self evaluation and story time is an interactive circle activity meant to encourage reading and an interest in books.

As described in chapters 6 and 7 MEIPIM's school day was invariably reduced to the welcoming activity, registration and the project session. As noted above, on the sugar cane farm this was a direct result of the children having Spanish as a second language. On the coffee farm, the practicalities of combining work and school determined a much shorter session.

⁸⁰ Organising our classroom, The book of life, How we communicate, Who am I?, Playing and learning, Work, Family, *El Campamento*, Festivals, My Community, Children's Rights, Food, Forms of Communication , Our Health, We are part of Nature, Travelling