

People in Motion: A Look at the Indigenous Cultures in Modern Michoacan¹

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Abstract

This text presents some of the reflections done on the indigenous people in their role as migrant workers. We begin using critical social psychology as a theoretical frame possible for the reflection, not only on the conditions of exclusion that these people experience, but especially, from the intention to reconfigure a possible critical vision of their psychology, from which it can be possible to think of poverty, exclusion, learning, social subjects, infancy, infant development, school, farm work, family, indigenous life and, in general, all of the elements that characterize the complexity of a transcendental phenomena historically determined as is migration and the farm worker. We have presented several key aspects around the indigenous identity. If it is true that the text originates in the school and learning process, from the vision of an infancy that has been educated, it is not the intention to legitimate school, per say, and it is not the intention to value the indigenous for itself or to legitimate psychology only as the producer of valid knowledge. The intention is to place on the table what it means to be a part of an immigrant, indigenous, monolingual *triqui*, *p'urhépecha* or *mixteca* family, and to travel through the farm working fields of this country and at times, even all the way to the United States as a collective group that colors the country and provides our tables with the fruits and vegetables that we consume.

Keywords: *Indigenous Peoples, identity, education, critical psychology.*

Introduction

Mexico currently has more than seven million people that are considered indigenous because they speak one of the many indigenous languages from the country. They live all around the national territory, but notwithstanding, it is in the south of the country where the majority

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resides, and where the poorest communities of indigenous people can be found. These people have been coerced to move from their own lands and to continuously reorganize because of the conditions of their farm lands. They are farm workers and they work in the production of farm products; therefore, to survive, they must find land where they can cultivate peppers, cantaloupe, tomato, onion, strawberry, blackberry, flowers, lemons, and tobacco, among other products. Some of them move so often, that now it is not so much a matter of migrating, but a “*life of migration*” within their own country or towards the country in the “north”.

To identify themselves as part of a group, these people must hold an identity and they must be part of it. They must share and reconstruct their identity from day to day and reorganize themselves in terms of how they travel (as a family, with various other families, or as individuals); the group to which they belong (*Triquis, Tlapanecos, P’urehépecha*); the cultural practices that they claim as their own; and how these are viewed from the experience and contact with other groups, with groups of *others*. In this same way they configure themselves from the viewpoint of other communities who label them as “*oaxaquitas*” (a native of Oaxaca, a term used in a pejorative way to designate most of the boys and girls,² regardless of which group they belong to, just because they have dark skin, speak a different language than the dominant one, and are poor). They take on this label, even if they are not from the area of Oaxaca, and it is used in disdain towards those that are from that area so they can exclude them from their group.

School is presented here as an opportunity for inclusiveness and institutionalized integration. However, because there isn’t a regular school for them, it might seem as if what they are looking for is to maintain exclusion, exactly what the program for elementary education for children of migrant farm workers, PRONIM (*Spanish initials*) has been questioning and reconsidering. To have an inclusive school means that the school is open to everyone; open most of the time, open in its practices and the training of teachers. A school where they not only can learn to read and write, but a school where they can learn about human rights and labor rights, where they learn to take care of themselves, with prevention programs against possible mistreatment and abuse. This would be a school where they learn to share with others and to recognize themselves as *Triqui* Indians, because there are others who are *Tlapaneco* Indians; also, where they can recognize their migratory tradition, their routes, and their specialties (those who work on the pepper fields or onion fields).

Migration is a complex phenomenon with many dimensions that determine and maintain it. Some of the more relevant dimensions are poverty and a lack of gainful employment. A *life of migration*, for many families, represents an option in life that has been learned during the first trips in their childhood, which allows them to live and to be recognized.

The work of a number of psychologists working through the different projects of the PRONIM organization has resulted in close collaborations aimed at improving the life conditions of the migrant workers. At the same time, it has created visibility and recognition for them as Mexican nationals, although many times, the state may not recognize them because they don’t have legal documents that show their identity, nationality of marital status.

² Since in the Spanish language there is no word equivalent to “children”, in the academic language the definition normally used would be “boy” and “girl” to place emphasis in gender equality. For this reason, this article will use the term “boys” and “girls”.

Indigenous Identity

Indigenous identities, in plural form, assume first of all the diversity in the various ways of being and doing that are present in different social groups, and that are located at the base of the individual and collective dynamics in a variety of contexts, as well as beyond the communities from where they originated. They are to be found in the street markets and the peripheral areas of the big cities, in the farming fields of Mexico and of the United States, and of course, in the emerging institutions that are dedicated to the protection and promotion of human and collective rights of individuals.

On the other hand, any attempt to reflect on the above will entail revision of three successive moments that are social and historical, and which correspond to three different positions around the idea of what is considered *indigenous*. First, that its origins could be pinpointed at the time of the Mexican conquest, where the concept of the *indigenous* individual was invented for already known historical reasons. It was at this time that the pejorative idea of the term was born, and in which form it was reproduced during the many centuries: a false “ideological invention” of an ungraspable thinking process that is deep and dark, tied to that which is primitive, and which relies more on blood than on reasoning (Villoro, 1999, p. 15). If we play with the metaphor of the generations, this phase can be thought of as that of the *elders*, who were part of a historical phase in Colonial Mexico when there was a search for the possibility of independence and during which all that was indigenous formed a part of the overall homogenizing of ethnic groups, languages, thought, and education. It is during this historical phase that the attempt is made to make indigenous history disappear.

Next, staying with our metaphor, we may refer to the fathers and mothers who are the children of that hopeless past, of that captive history. What follows is a moment in the political life of the country where the indigenous is strongly linked to a different social class, one marked by economic and patrimonial poverty, as well as by the poverty of educational and social support. As an example, Lopez (2006, par. 2) demonstrates with data that children from indigenous families receive only a third of what other children receive in the public school system.

It seems that during this second phase a *status quo* was established and sustained with respects to the indigenous nation, and it is in this context that we find the parents who learned what was emerging at the time of their elders: the development of scorn for indigenous languages and the construction of cultural scripts that govern the indigenous belonging to each region, culture, or town. These scripts relate to the manner in which men and women interact, how they assume power, how they are linked to nature and to an external world built by those who are *not indigenous*; and they introduce a sterile differentiation, including the idea of mestizo homogeneity.

There is a third phase to be found in the metaphor of the generations which refers to the children and to the grandchildren. This is a moment that is in continuous process, which corresponds to these children, who may see the possibility and the need to re-signify that concept of what it means to be indigenous. This is a possibility to separate from the previous points of view, not necessarily to deny them, but to rebuild them, in the knowledge that one’s identity is always under construction, in crisis; and from there, the responsibility is placed, not only within the culture, or the parents, or the grandparents, but with those who are now indigenous and who consider themselves indigenous.

It is indeed possible to assume a process of re-signification which will help to de-colonize the concept of indigenous identity; and from there, to de-colonize contemporary culture, which includes usage and costumes, spaces, forms of government and objects. This is the only possible way to acknowledge that there are elements that have become scripts within the culture itself and which do not correspond to that which is our own, but to the external – as in the dress, the transportation, the food, the dreams, and the music. Notwithstanding, there are other elements within the culture that have always been part of these, like the elements which give birth and power to the identity, as found in religion and music. And on the other hand, there are demands of the groups themselves as far as change is concerned, to *be as* or to *look like*, suggesting that people don't have to strive to maintain the vernacular language, or dress, or ideas, all of these from a variety of processes that make a difference between being oneself and being part of a wider context.

And then again, members of various original cultures can be heard saying that it is not important to express the culture to others, leaving behind, in an uncritical manner, specific practices of that culture, such as the case of traditional dress, where even though women wear it as their everyday garment, men have stopped using it.

It has to be considered that in an attempt to separate that which is indigenous from that which is mestizo, there has been an unwilling internal separation of the indigenous from the indigenous. There are instances, for example, amongst the boys and girls of the migrant farm working camps, where cultural identity elements are maintained in an attempt to protect the group but without a deliberate intention to differentiate. However, there are often discursive practices among the indigenous children that tend to be aggressive and discriminatory towards other indigenous children, which thus imitate the negative behavior of the mestizo towards the "Indian".

Social science must recognize a permanent status that trembles in light of the social alterity which the economic, political or educational systems attempt to hide. Crises would have to be assumed, of which psychology is a part of, and thus, from there, allow the thinking processes and the heuristic elements of the various theories to question the ancient idea of the theoretical certainties. Critical psychology certainly emerges in the context of modernity and post-modernity, questioning the already existing practices to build knowledge, and at the same time, questioning the objectives and meaning. Ibáñez (2001, pp. 222-223) presents this issue from this perspective: *tell me what are the consequences of your discourse, what practices it suggests, and I will tell you then if I agree with it or not*. He argues that the scientific discourse will have to be questioned from the point of view of reality itself and with it, recognize that the scientific is also there.

The original discourse of critical psychology questions psychology itself in the sense that it doesn't achieve the demands of modernity: progress and social well-being, assuming the emancipation and liberation of minority and oppressed groups, as the effect of the previous. Since this doesn't happen, there is a need to reconstruct. Thus, social psychology, in the words of Ibáñez, not only would be focused on the production of knowledge, but on making social life something less *wicked*. This would entail the disruption of the theoretical and disciplinary *status quo*, as well as those established and maintained within the communities, institutions, or interventions of the same and that have been sustained as scopical viewpoints in the doing and thinking of existence or discipline.

All of the above frames an attempt, or rather several attempts from various cardinal points, to establish the basis for the creation of *alternative* forms to do and to think about discipline, and even to present discipline in relationship with others, which would make for implications that are ontological, methodological, ethical, and political. In this document, some ontological elements will be presented about the “alternative” postures explained for the work with indigenous and migrant communities.

A possible starting point to think about these contexts of exclusion is to speak of the groups of migrant farm working families, and of boys and girls who are bi-nationals. Many of these are indigenous and they belong to whole groups of families, entire towns in motion, in search of spaces where they can have a place of access to basic goods and services and a place to recognize and reposition themselves as active and collective subjects from another place that is not only “because they are Indians.” Critical psychology has taken into account these spaces that escape the social control, but at the same time, being outside of it all, these children live without access to the basic goods and services, without permanent employment, and if there is such, it doesn’t provide the minimal requirements to facilitate the constitution of subjects.

Thus, *social pains* within the farm working camps invade the subjectivity of those who experience them. They are pains that exceed any interpretation around themselves, in other words, these are pains that occur because of the lack of exercise of the most basic rights of the human being, related to lack of food and little access to health and education services. In this environment, when a child gets sick, and if there are not identification documents, the child will not be taken care of, since this child *doesn’t exist* in the *system*. And if this child dies, his death isn’t recognized in any institution, because since he is not part of the system, his reality is not a part of anyone except of those who live around him.

Adriana Gil (2005, pp. 211-212) explains that the pain can be felt in various degrees, just as the spectrum of color; in other words, it is possible to see the color blue or red, but at the same time it is possible to distinguish different hues of the same color. These hues must be placed in a discussion to be able to share them, so that people can talk about their perception of their hue, as well as the multiple possibilities when observing the same color. This author recognizes that in the identification of these colors can be a space for possible conflict, and this is what dialogue is all about: to present each one of the perceptions or postures, which have no reason to be the same.

Gil (2005) further establishes a metaphorical link between color and pain, which gives us the possibility to go deeper into the topic of social pain and the relationship it has with a certain type of monolingualism³ of the sciences and knowledge.⁴ The indigenous individuals that make up the migrant farm working camps (made up of whole families with young couples and several children) and transnational or bi-national children have different pains: from the lack of inclusion in the school system to the lack of decent health systems and working systems. These pains also have a variety of colors, but the lack of an ear for these social pains doesn’t allow them to be recognized. Some institutions and disciplines listen to those pains,

³According to the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, this refers to those who speak only one language or to that which is written in one language. This definition tries to expand to the writing of certain types of knowledge that works with a univocal and lineal reality, in which realism may seem to leave no space for disagreeing realities.

⁴ An idea that is taken from one of the title of the text from García (2004), *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados, mapas de la interculturalidad*.

but they are lacking context and understanding, and this is where it has to be recognized that the point of view of the discipline is what will speak for them, is what will give them a name and make them visible. This is what will give them a name, will make them visible and will regulate to the support, the assistance, the urgency and the treatment that they will get, as well as the response that they themselves will give as a collective body.

It is here where monolingualism appears in several disciplines, and not only because it assumes that a large portion of disciplinary discourse have to be constructed from the academic perspective. A discipline is truly monolingual if, while working with a multilingual community, it only reads the “occidental”. Therefore, it is left with no possibility to express the various hues of pain, and thus, of language, of multiple languages, which is the very point where reality can be problematized from the point of view of reality itself. The possibility to recognize, first of all, that pain humanizes, not only those who experience it, but also to those who listen to it, means that it is language that can distinguish between forms or hues of pain. This entails everything from language, practices, viewpoints, dispositions, and others, which allow us to recognize that institutions have created orphans, and that sometimes, psychology has been involved in that.

In times of social crisis, disciplinary crisis takes on an idea of crisis is a sharp form of change that might lead to either improvement or deterioration; a situation of relatively organized changes, but nonetheless unstable, which should be subject to an evolution, and which recognizes that subsequent steps would be related to a revolution. This is how a type of revolution has been framed with an *alternative* posture around various forms of thinking, writing, and doing psychology. However, that which is alternative becomes that which is foreign, and not that which can be described as alterity. In other words, when attempts have been made to act from the *alternative* position, things begin from creative processes outside of the community without taking into consideration the bilingualism or multilingualism from within. Being critical with one’s own positions around that which one works with, and that which one thinks about, must be done without allowing any ethereal mixtures that end up giving contrary results to those thought of in the beginning.

That which Ibáñez (2001, p. 223) explains about crisis in psychology must be recognized, since it cannot be assumed that knowledge is good for the simple fact that knowledge may be psychological, sociological, or any other discipline one belongs to; but rather, the author argues, during times of crisis one must ask: *...what are the consequences of that discourse, what are its results, what practices does it suggest, and that is the only way to know if one agrees with it or not...*, and this is why it is important to ask of those discourses that are produced intra-disciplinarily: what are the ties they are trying to break; what militancy do they have; what interests do they promote?

This is the case with various discourses employed in the contexts of indigenism, ethnicism, exclusion, and inequality in several of the social sciences. Institutions have taken this on as discourse of truth to construct forms and intervention or planning practices with devices of a supposed listening process that, unfortunately (in some cases), has created institutionalized forms of this type of exclusion.

In these situations, as found in the social reality of the state of Michoacan, the migrant workers, those *without papers*, have not been heard and have not been engaged in dialogue. Sometimes this has happened because of the language barrier, which would be the least of their problems; but beyond that, there is no dialogue with them because it is believed or

perceived as not needed, as if from the knowledge of folklore, their own point of view could be assumed around a reality designed by them, as how they would like to un-design it, and design it over and over with various forms and colors.

Ramírez (2007, pp. 77-78) argues that it was the idea of a supposed identity norm allocated to the *self* that relocated the *different*. And thus, suddenly the *different* began to find its place within *our own* society. Strangely, that aspect of the different was found – and remains in place – within the marginal: the indigenous, the migrants, the minority cultures, etc. It is necessary, then, to recognize that terms like identity or ethnicity are not enough when there is an attempt to discuss the various colors that make up the reality of cultures.

Regarding the above, some of the teachers of basic education that we have worked with, argue that boys and girls who are bi-nationals or trans-nationals, or who have had school experience in two or more countries, do not hold an identity. They claim that since they haven't stayed at any one permanent place, they have not been able to recognize themselves. We will take the research of Ramírez (2007) to delve in the discussion with respect to these concepts, assuming that when we talk of identity, we are intrinsically talking about alterity. Besides, identity is construed from disorderly order/orderly disorder, and thus, when we speak of boys and girls who are bi-nationals, or boys and girls who are indigenous migrant farm workers, we can suggest a discussion of alter-identity, built from the various alterities, of various places, or various homes. The author presents the concept of ethnicity from this observation:

On a first level, there is a conception of *ethnicity as a system*, according to which ethnicity refers to the self-reference and self-organizing qualities which, by posing certain limits or frontiers, constitute an internal space while selecting one or various environments that will be significant. This self-reference may vary in terms of its openness and inclusivity, and the *others* that are made references that helps one to differentiate oneself; but does not give us the authority to exclude the *other*. If we conceive identity as a dynamic fact that permanently is seen as variable and multiple, the anchors are found here to construct itself in an ethnic group. A second level to the term ethnicity has a close relationship with the epistemic and analytical distinction of the system/environment. It suggests that from a systemic centrality it can operate inversely, in other words, as an environment of systemic centralities. From here, *ethnicity as environment* can also be conceived. Every system becomes an environment for others, and we can talk about a co-ontogeny of systems, for which it is also possible to have various environments with possible referential potential. In other words, the environment has as much an internal character, as an external one, in the sense that there are certain limits towards those of the “outside” (although they are not always limiting), but at the same time, an identification among those of the “inside” is generated. Thus, from those other environments identities have been constructed historically since, as Vargas (2010) explains, there is a movement that comes and goes between the recognition that others have of me and my own self-recognition.

On a third level of the ethnicity, we can see that a system reached a gravitational power, from which it attracts other systems, and thus it can be said that it becomes an attractor. Often, ethnicity spins around itself other social processes and phenomena, structuring them in a variety of forms, more or less in a permanent manner. The force of this attractor varies according to the levels of complexity, localization, temporariness and social legitimacy. When one objectivizes what has been said so far, is when one can discuss the term identity as a structuring category.

The Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language says that the word indigenous comes from the Latin *indigēna*, which means something originally from the country talked about. This term implies all that is relative to a population originally from the territory it inhabits, which generally precedes other populations and whose presence is sufficiently prolonged and stable to be considered native. But when we talk about the terms indigenism and ethnicity, we can observe that the P'urhépecha ethnic group in any town from the state of Michoacan rebuilds itself and recreates itself in Los Angeles, California, or some other place in New York, creating social networks that are so wide that this cultural recreation goes beyond any geographic borders. Something similar occurs with the Tlapaneco people that come to the farms of Michoacan, where the Tlapaneco language acquires new meaning; as do the festivities, the food, and the stories. Thus the towns like Tlapa, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas, etc., are rebuilt with links that are established from an apparent far away reality.

This, however, doesn't show the various *senses* that have been given to *being indigenous*. There are two of them. First there is the conception of the indigenous subject evident from the official perspective; second there is the way in which this influences the self-recognition of those subjects who are deemed indigenous. In Mexico, 6% of the population is considered indigenous (INEGI, 2011) and the elements taken into account to consider a person as indigenous is the fact that they speak one of the 68 linguistic groupings (INALI, 2010) in the country. This is a fact that doesn't take into consideration many of the cultural elements that continue to characterize whole towns that have stopped using their native language.

Exclusion and poverty

The uneven distribution of wealth, as well as the lack of employment and the lack of access to basic goods and services for survival with dignity, has promoted the idea of multiple poverties, from a sociology point of view. There are certain sectors of the population where there is not only lack of land, housing, patrimony, employment, material goods and services, but also, the gradual loss of the cultural goods that defined these people as collectives with a rich heritage that used to give them a place in the world. Many of these people are the indigenous groups of Triquis, Tlapanecos, P'urhépecha, Amuzgos, Nahuas and Mixtecos, among others.

In terms of poverty, Michoacan falls into the eighth place nationally, a situation that generates temporary migrations of various groups who do not possess enough means. They produce arts and crafts whose value, per piece, is not even one fourth of a dollar. These are the groups from the P'urhépecha Plateau, the Ravine of the Eleven Towns and the Area of the Lakes and they travel to the farms in the Valley of Zamora, Tanhuato, Los Reyes, and Yurécuaro. Also, laborers from other states of the country, from the state of Guerrero (Mixteco and Tlapaneco) and from the state of Oaxaca (Triquis), travel to these same regions. Families arrive with an average of three school-aged children, where at least one of them will work in the fields, while the other one cares for the youngest one. The fact that the demand for work during the harvesting of farm products is temporary increases the incentive and the need of the family to offer the participation of all of its members. Boy and girls work alongside the adults to guarantee a greater income during the period of the harvest and to have enough resources for the time when there is no paid work (SEDESOL, 2001; PRONIM, 2007, 2009; Méndez et al. 2007, 2008). Under these conditions, it is possible to observe large population groups in continuous mobility, for example, ten families within one community travel from one camp to another like "migrating birds", while another group will travel to one camp in a sort of "pendular" move, back and forth. Three of those families might have more experience as

migrant workers and guide the groups in the trip, while another two families might separate themselves and begin generating new networks or establish themselves where they feel that the job is not temporary. With so much mobility of families in search of work, it is difficult to quantify the exact number of laborers and the exact number of working boys and girls.

Some groups travel to the north, going from camp to camp and settling down in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco (Triquis), or in La Paz, Baja California (Mixtecos), while others reach the United States and some of the children traveling alone might be 10, 11 or 12 years old. Thanks to the work that the PRONIM has done in the schools, the migration dynamics have been able to interact upon families and their configurations, with indigenous groups and their way of life and work, particularly in the area of Tanhuato and Yurécuaro. It is this close and personal relationship that for Tlapanecos, Mixtecos, P'urépecha and Triquis, among others, it is possible day to day to suffer the exclusion towards the shape that poverty takes today, and where there is not a possibility to live with dignity. However, and because of the search to recognize the *other*, it is that each group that interact with one another, demands to see themselves and to see the other. This is how they organize to search for better working conditions, and there is where differences in ethnicity disappear and then reaffirm as they recognize themselves.

The multicultural spaces presuppose diversity, linguistic richness, multiplicity of viewpoints, of their view of the world; these are the conditions from which intercultural dialogue can be generated and space be given to diverse expressions. It is here that the recognition of the *other* as an equal can be achieved, equally in terms of their rights and their responsibilities. However, in these scenarios we instead often see strife, power struggles, confrontation of hegemonic discourse, the end of the dialogue, and discrimination – the latter as a mechanism of human classification charged with values that make no room for the other, and where the wonderment in difference becomes the fear of the different. This is the case in many places in Mexico and in other parts of the world, particularly within the farm working communities and the areas where bi-national boys and girls live; where it seems that the *other* is gone, has turned opaque, pale on the surface and intensely bright in the middle.

The analysis done for the phenomena found in many places and described above requires a variety of viewpoints, some focalized, to be able to search into the heart of human relations produced in those places; others that are integrated so that they incorporate into the analysis the elements of social, cultural, economic, and political context in which these relationships develop.

It is imperative to look into the processes of social exclusion and discrimination, from the recognition of the collective subjectivity, not only understood as the sum of individual subjectivities expressed in behaviors, but as the constant and collective creation of the senses from the part of the subjects in their daily life, in moving scenarios, in changing social dynamics.

Social exclusion and the social dynamics derived from it cannot be thought of as removed from the rational intention to separate what has never been separated, from the intention to conceive and to think of the world dichotomously (Najmanovich, 2001, p. 3). This is an effect of a form of thought that supposes essential hegemonies, that ignores the dialogic as a form of human link, and that as it recognizes the superiority of the scientific discourse it also supposes the superiority of some human groups among others, of some individuals among others.

The effect of the penetration of the hegemonic discourse impacts not only at the discursive level, but also at the practical level, even in spaces where the effects of domination are questioned. Dominant mechanisms are practiced from within the culture itself – the school, the social or political positions – which makes us think that, as we work on the subject of exclusion, it requires an epistemic repositioning, or to find a different place of thought, a place from where the social complexity, the magmatic complexity of its composition and dynamics can be recognized (Castoriadis, 1981).

The above offers psychology the challenge of coming down from a place of absolute and essential knowledge to instead advance a pluralist process on social issues. It demands that psychology assumes a different role in relation to the hegemonic, a role in which it acts horizontally and in dialogue with other types of knowledge; not only from a theoretical point of view, but also with a social genesis in various scenarios that are not tied to a physical territory.

The territory for exercising citizenship is not limited geographically, but implies belonging to a historical and social context that is wider than a political boundary. It works with the subject in its active participation for the various contexts. Territory and language are elements that, seen as closed perimeter, make it difficult to dialogue at the intercultural level, because they mark the boundaries and assign authority, ignoring that the division is a metaphor, a form of political organization. In social terminology, culture and language freely move independently of any divisions, without this movement implying a necessary domination. The limitations among cultures and among language are imposed by thought (acting as institutions, practices, rituals, and social objects), for a type of thought whose mythology must be uncovered by the collective dialogue that allows to conceive and construct human relationship forms that are more equal and just.

Thinking about exclusion implies that there is an identification of inequality as a central element of its genesis in social contexts where large segments of the population are not favored in the distribution of wealth and of access opportunities to development. In such scenarios, the unfavorable sectors find themselves in front of two alternatives: collective organization of the process for the fulfillment of their needs; or separation and the individual search to satisfy their basic needs. Thus, in multicultural scenarios it has been possible to observe a movement of retreat towards isolation in various sectors (ethnic groups in the case of the migrant farm worker camps) made up of minorities with visible and invisible borders. These minorities, as they continue in a fragmented manner, disperse their voices, their daily efforts, their demands, as happens with the repatriated migrant, particularly with the children that are expelled and separated from their families.

In such scenarios, the psychologist intervenes by promoting the transformation of the individuals into subjects through the recognition of the *other* and of the *self* in a multicultural space that may be transformed into an intercultural process, where possible ways of being can be identified even from within positions of isolation, and from there such positions can be questioned and in some cases rejected.

The psychologist working from a critical position must look at the order and the social frames of the past and of what could be done in terms of collectivity; it must look for disorder and help reveal collectively the strength of domination and fragmentation present in the institutional and social discourse so that “new forms of collective and personal life can be conceived and constructed” (Touraine, 2000, p. 22).

The democratization of the various spaces in social coexistence imply the possibility of collectively assuming rights and responsibilities as citizens of a globalized planet, interconnected and permeated by normalization devices that are based on discourses that are totalizing, essentialist and dichotomical, such as mind/body, health/sickness, peace/violence, indigenous/occidental dichotomies, amongst others (Najmanovich, 2001, p. 3).

Globalization has been an organizational force, not only of economic exchange, but also of social exchange, and in this sense it is an emissary of discourses and seems to contribute to moving communities away from any possibility of self-determination. It informs a social atomization (Beck, 2003) which creates a society that is deeply individualist. According to Beck, individualization seems to be created as the basic social structure of modern times.

As we stand in front of these realities, it is important that school becomes a space where ways of organization and social relationships can function differently in a place that embraces everyone without distinction. This has to be a space of learning, but not only of academic content, but of the kind of knowledge that teaches to *build a society*, in other words, knowledge that raises citizens whose existence in a particular place becomes something in function of oneself and of the *other* in a horizontal perspective. There must not be any distinctions because of one's origin, a space where discourse is brought out to the light and analyzed, where it supports the superiority of one model of life over another, and it decodes messages, breaking up pretenses, and building counter-discourses. This must be "a space where one learns of the presence of the *other* and the belonging of oneself to society"; in a space like this, it has to be clear what the advantages of cooperation are over those of competition, and to develop critical and reflexive skills that generate creative attitudes (Bustelo, 2007, pp. 87-88).

An important aspect of this type of work in school is to present alternatives to the hegemonic social order; looking for the collective construction of these forms; making visible that which is improper to present to the world in a dichotomic manner. The subject must find its place in such dichotomy that forces them to select one thing or another, and implies the recognition of the other as such, without having to look at their place of birth or language they speak, and that the own concept of each person doesn't look at those elements either, as long as they are seen as something that provides status.

The proposal is a pedagogy that presents the cultural traits of each human being as a part of the same and equal space, without undervalue of one trait and overvalue of others. It would be important to build permanent devices for the expression and recognition of the cultural diversity where all the students can express and build, not only acceptance of others, such as tolerance, but also the recognition of the own identity as something that complements the others. There must be a vision where others are recognized horizontally and not from a vertical perspective, where they may be "accepted". Besides, promoting the permanent contact with what is different allows the person to recognize themselves.

This also makes it possible to understand that the process of education known as "intercultural" is not only referred to the spaces where students of indigenous origin are found inserted in a space where there is one ethnic origin and one dominant language. All aspects of education occur within intercultural contexts, and it is because of this that school must resist becoming a space where discourse and social order is communicated for the presentation of a dominant or preferential culture over all others. The possibility of dialogue amidst the

different points of view will make it possible to give a different color to the daily life of the families that have been excluded since their origins, who even before birth it had been decided that they would be laborers, as many of them will say: “I learned to pick peppers from the womb of my mother”. These same people, now with children of their own, are also teaching this social learning that has determined them, that makes them part of a collective group that lives excluded.

Horizontality as a present perspective in human relations and in educational contexts implies, not only the enunciation of equality, but also the daily experience as diverse cultural and idiomatic expressions are enjoyed. It also implies the possibility of each human being who appreciates the *other*, who develops the ability of an intercultural dialogue in a cooperative context where there is no cultural expression that is hegemonic over the other, not even because of a quantitative question.

School, then, must permanently provide the knowledge, the understanding and the dialogue among the various cultures, whether they are present in school or not, through constant and transversal actions geared so that students can actively participate in the school environment coming from their own culture. These actions must allow for a form of social organization that is more democratic, fair and equal. From a different point of view, school could be seen as a mechanism of control, a mechanism of classification and exclusion, as the system that promotes the occidental ways, the system that works more to value differences than to erase them.

The groups of farm work workers and the migrant international boys and girls search for a space in every place where they arrive and above all, demand the recognition of their labor work, access to employment, without which it would be impossible to have access to the basic minimum necessities. The organizations of farm workers -often themselves highly disorganized because of the breaking up among producers- are now looking to become visible before the labor market, who, apparently could very well do without them, because of the large numbers of workers who are unemployed. However, there is always the possibility of some boycott to the products where child labor may have been used, or where the minimum working conditions are not met for the worker. This possibility strengthens the demands of these organizations, many of which were created just to defend their right to work, to be hired at least for a day. These organizations were not created to demand the labor rights of the workers, but to demand their right to work and to a more dignified way of life.

In closing

The subject, like the discipline, is not someone who just is, although the term human being could be changed to *being* human. Subject can recognize that they are drawn and thus that it is able to dis-draw themselves, and to paint themselves anew with different colors; to play with their own existence, and to explore the way of being which allows them to live more fully. This implies that, if subjects are subject to a moving identity, one that is ethnic, social, mental and even physical, their creativity is also subject to that mobility, to that process of un-design, so that it can be designed again in different forms.

This is achieved when working with boys and girls of migrant farm working families as well as bi-national children. If their reality challenges the geographic, ethnic and cultural frontiers; if their existence challenges the frontiers of a dignified human life when they live in spaces without the basic needed care, then the existence of the scientific practices and creations that

create discourses and that open various postures must also challenge barriers that are inter-disciplinary, inter-institutional and inter-subjective, recognizing each of the actors from their transformative possibility, from the fact that they are a historical subject.

This will also allow for disciplinary knowledge to have as its objective the suggestion of social, educational and school practices that are theoretical-methodological and contextual; that assume a posture of observation and mutual complementarity, in other words, one that moves from the discipline to the minority groups and from the active minorities towards the discipline.

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