Ethnic Identity Formation beyond Language: Reflexive Identification of Indigenous Children in Urban Schools

Formación de identidad étnica más allá del lenguaje: identificación reflexiva de niños indígenas en escuelas urbanas

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in two urban schools in Jalisco, Mexico. By studying the processes of identity formation, I focus on understanding how indigenous children represent themselves within wider social discourses and dynamics of power that attempt to erase cultural differences. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in two urban primary schools over a period of 14 months, the paper foregrounds indigenous children's voices to illustrate their complex processes of self-identification. The article demonstrates how children's social and family networks, such as compadrazgos, shape ethnic identities. It also highlights how indigenous children feel a stronger attachment to their communities when they have the opportunity to participate in agricultural activities during holidays and learn from their grandparents and other family members. The analysis also highlights the silences, racism, and ethnic blindness that indigenous children face in urban schools. The paper calls for a reframing of educational services so that they recognize and reinforce ethnic identities rather than obfuscate them through the discourse of "equality". Significantly, children's voices open up a dialogue with those responsible for educational and social policies, in order to challenge racism in Mexican urban schools.

KEY WORDS: identity, indigenous children, racism, ethnicity

RESUMEN

Se analizan los procesos de formación identitaria de niños y niñas de origen indígena en dos escuelas urbanas en Jalisco, México. Al hacerlo, me concentro en entender cómo se representan a sí mismos los niños y las niñas indígenas dentro de discursos sociales más amplios y dinámicas de poder, que intentan borrar sus diferencias culturales. A partir de una metodología etnográfica llevada a cabo en dos escuelas primarias urbanas en un periodo de 14 meses, este artículo se centra en las voces de los niños y niñas indígenas para mostrar la complejidad de sus procesos de auto-identificación. Se demuestra cómo las redes sociales y familiares, incluidos los compadrazgos, dan forma a sus identidades étnicas. También se subraya cómo los niños y niñas sienten un fuerte vínculo con sus comunidades cuando tienen la oportunidad de participar en actividades agrícolas durante las vacaciones y aprenden de sus abuelos y de otros miembros de sus familias. El análisis también destaca los silencios, el racismo y la ceguera étnica que muchos niños y niñas indígenas enfrentan en escuelas urbanas. Este estudio busca contribuir al replanteamiento de los servicios educativos de modo que reconozcan y fortalezcan la identidad étnica en lugar de negarla bajo el discurso de "equidad". De manera significativa, las voces de los niños y niñas invitan al diálogo con los responsables de las políticas sociales y educativas, con el fin de retar el racismo en las escuelas urbanas mexicanas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: identidad, niños indígenas, racismo, etnicidad

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I analyze the narratives of indigenous children about their identity formation processes in order to highlight the need to develop equitable and inclusive public educational policies. It is especially important for the purposes of this research, the category that I call "reflexive identification", considered a finding from the research data. First, I present the objective of the research and its ethnographic methodological approach. Second, I present the analysis of the children's voices throughout an examination of their daily experiences of structural racism within schools and within the Mexican society as a whole. Finally, a general discussion is presented that seeks to open up a dialogue on the implications of placing children's voices at the center of the ethnographic research in order to challenge inequalities within an educational system that is neglecting and silencing indigenous voices and, therefore, reproducing racist relationships.

This paper aims to examine the tensions and negotiation that emerge in children identity formation processes of children of indigenous origin who attend urban schools in Jalisco, Mexico. It aims to highlight the importance of analyzing the nuances of daily lives of children within the dynamics of structural racism in Mexico. The paper is one of the products of a broader analysis aimed to explore indigenous children's schooling experiences in urban schools in the same Mexican state.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides some key concepts that informed and framed this study on identity formation of indigenous children. The theoretical foundations addressed hereby include discussions on the following constructs: habitus, habitus tug, structural dimension of ethnicity, territory, kinship and what I call "reflexive identification".

A fundamental aspect of identity formation of indigenous children is habitus. Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus is a powerful analytical tool to frame the study of identities helping gain understanding of how it is constructued. As defined by Bourdieu (1990), *habitus* is a product of the objective life conditions

in early life, which frame those practices considered posible or unthinkable, aceptable or prohibited. In contrast to reproduction, which is sometimes considered deterministic giving Little space for the individual to transform their lives, habitus can be a powerful analytical tool in the study of identities under asymmetrical conditions of power and wealth. I have to admit openly that using habitus for my research analysis was a challenging endeavor. I questioned myself constantly about its effectiveness when analyzing asymmetries between ethnic groups, especially because it was a concept developed in France, a society with profound class differences and a significant colonial power. Rather than a total framework for my research, I prefer to see Bourdieu's conception of the habitus as proposed by Bennett *et al.* (2009, p. 36): "an umbrella term for a range of different cultural assets rather than according to the logic of a single capital form that operates in the same way across all class positions".

The concept of habitus provides a strong analytical power to the processes of identity formation. Habitus is a dynamic that shows the fluidity of the individuals' choices in life by looking simultaneously at social structures and individual agency. Reay *et al.* (2007, p. 22) argue that habitus is the conceptual tool that Bourdieu uses to reconcile the dualisms of agency versus structure: "According to Bourdieu it is through the workings of habitus that practice (agency) is linked with capital and field (structure)". In this way, habitus can lead to different social practices, even within the same field, practices that be both either constraining or transforming. Habitus changes throughout life's trajectories, it is not a static concept learned only within childhood influences (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).

The concept of habitus is 'multi-layered', and it is not only individually constructed, but is the product of social conditionings, it can be endlessly transformed. Habitus is the product of a colonial history too, which might be challenged and transformed by the agency of individuals and collectives in order to construct an additional layer of the present. It is for this reason that school is often regarded as the site of these social conditionings: "the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences… and so on, from restructuring to restructuring" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 134). And, in

the case of Mexican schools, a habitus of mestizaje has been developed, obscuring ethnic differences among students since colonial times.

Indigenous children attending school in Mexico face each day a persistent habitus tug (Ingram, 2011), in the attempt to reconcile their ethnic identity with the mestizo identity. Indigenous children respond to this tendency to homogenize cultures at school with considerable ambivalence without feeling indigenous or mestizos. They struggle with the changing sense of ethnic identity in the wake of promises of upward mobility and individual success. However, this ambivalent status of their ethnicity has a structural dimensión as well: successful economic and political struggles under capitalism, the offensive of capital in the countryside to exploit natural resources and land dispossession for decades.

This structural dimension of the ethnic formation (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008) brings together the economic differences between the cities and the countryside, the lack of labor opportunities, and the collective habitus of solidarity and community work. This awareness of the differences between the lifestyle between two different places goes along with the often-contradictory family messages regarding the language use and its value. Even though indigenous children are aware that life is harder in their place of origin, they desire to go back and live there, although this desire is not a real aspiration because the structural possibilities are so much reduced. After all, when studying identities of indigenous peoples in Latin America, notions of territory play a crucial role. Indigenous immigrants move from a territory to another in search of better life opportunities. Indigenous migrants are a group that is regarded with ambivalence. They are recognized as members of the nation, but they lack specific rights. They live in the cities, but are threatened to go back to their communities of origin. They have free transit, but their presence in the cities is a source of conflict (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). Gilberto Giménez (1999, 2003, 2005) talks about the dimensions of identity and the relationship with the notion of territory. Indigenous peoples experience identities in opposition: they experience a dichotomy between living an ideal of urban progress and, at the same time, feeling "backward" because of their agricultural background. Indigenous identities are embedded in processes

of socio-territorial attachment and belonging (Czarny, 2006). They are communities in diaspora or in exile (Oehmichen, 2005).

This all reveals the cultural/symbolic dimension of cohesion, belonging and roots that territory has for indigenous migrant children. Despite the fact that they and their parents have incorporated and participate fully in the dynamics of the city, many retain and reconstruct their identity. They are now part of "moral communities" that are reproduced inside the families, in the coexistence with the countrymen or under the guidance of a moral authority recognized by all (Martínez-Casas & De la Peña, 2004). Although indigenous children and their parents have emigrated from their territory, they did not leave behind their ethnic identity and in the city recreate a cultural collective in which its members share common symbols, the same origin and kinship relations. They are, in this case, extraterritorial communities, aware that the survival of their ethnic group, with all its positive values, its own knowledge and its practical life, necessarily goes through the defense of the persistence and integrity of their original territory.

This is also an interesting characteristic of the habitus of indigenous peoples; kinship goes far beyond the nuclear family archetype; in indigenous communities, children consider their grandparents' siblings as grandparents as well. This is part of the collective dimension of ethnicity that Gutiérrez Martínez (2008) suggests, and shows the intertwining of the dimensions of ethnic identity. Family relations or kinship are one of the main elements in the process of identity formation. These relationships go beyond blood ties; they are also strengthened by relationships of compadrazgo (godparenting). Indigenous peoples, most of them from the same communities of origin, become compadres (godparents) in the city to strengthen the family relationships. Links of *compadrazgo* accompany almost any important family occasion such as baptisms or kindergarten graduations. The process of developing an attachment to the community of origin is, as will be discussed later, a product not only of maintaining the relationships with the grandparents or with the people who 'stayed' there, but also relationships through compadrazgos (Czarny & Martínez, 2013).

Without diminishing the importance of language, it must be emphasized that, as this paper will show, ethnic identities are more

complex than the use of indigenous language within the family (between parents, with parents or grandparents or between other family members). All of the concepts I have just defined help in the understanding of the ethnic identification of indigenous children when critical ethnography is used as a method of inquiry of this process. The articulation of each and every one of these pieces lead to the process I call 'reflexive identification' by which children express affirmations and denials at different moments of the fieldwork regarding their ethnic identification. At the beginning of the process, children did not recognize themselves until a linguistic detonator (question or reflection in the conversation) made them change their mind and, later on, identify themselves as indigenous. This category was constructed through the changes in children's perceptions once they had the space to reflect on their own ethnicities within an environment of respect and cultural validation. This analytical category is very helpful in highlighting the power that school agents might have to strengthen or weaken children's ethnic identities. After several conversations with some of the children, their perceptions regarding the richness of their ethnic identities became stronger and more secure.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was critical ethnography, which attempts not only to recognize the inequalities of the world, but also to provide a critique of the white privileged elite (Scheurich, 2002). Critical ethnography, unlike traditional ethnography, does not assume the neutrality of the researcher (Coffey, 1999; Coffey & Delamont, 2000; Reay *et al.*, 2007; Scheurich, 2002).

Critical ethnography avoids the danger of "judging" from a deficit perspective or, as Foley (2002) calls it, from "deficit thinking". In critical ethnography, "ethnographers can and should try to escape the recurrent allegorical genre of colonial ethnography –the pastoral, nostalgic, redemptive text that preserves a primitive culture on the brink of extinction for the historical record of its Western conquerors" (Foley, 1997, p. 147). This research tried to move away from this approach by trying to implement collaborative research techniques to elicit children's voices. As Peter Wade (1997)

suggests, ethnographic fieldwork is the research method that allows us "to see" the discursive constructs and social practices permeated by colonial histories of oppression and discrimination, discourses that might also be present in our own prejudices and unconscious practices being part of the mestizo majority and social elite within a country with a colonial history.

Ethnographic fieldwork was carried on along a year and a half in two urban primary schools –one private and one public– in the state of Jalisco. Both schools are located in a marginalized neighborhood where many indigenous groups have settled for the last 20 years. I selected 44 students (22 of indigenous origin) to take part of the study and the selection was balanced by gender and grade (3rd to 6th grade). Based on an initial questionnaire applied to both schools, I was able to identify children from four different ethnic groups: Mazahua, Purepecha, Totonaca and Nahuatl.

Two main research methods were chosen for this ethnographic study: participant observation and interviews. While both methods require a great deal of rapport and well-developed research and relational skills and although any interview is observational as well, they also differ slightly between each other and took different forms when applied to different age populations (Behar, 1996; Coffey, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). In order to adopt a more inclusive framework for strong involvement of all relevant research actors, I took into account these differences to ensure genuine participatory data collection. I looked at children's voices through the lenses of critical and decolonizing theories, to try to understand the processes of identity formation within children's narratives.

Participant observation was a constant method during the research. I observed lessons, playground interactions, civic ceremonies, teachers' classes and interactions with children, family meetings and any other special occasions in school life, in an attempt to observe interactions, attitudes, and conversations related to the ethnicity of the students and their families. I also visited the children's neighborhoods on several occasions, just on informal walks, to talk with their parents at their homes or to visit personnel from the government offices.

I tried to use a participant-friendly approach during the interviews. I used methods from the visual anthropology field such as

photographs and drawings to involve children not as passive agents but as active participants negotiating their own roles in the research process (Fraser, Lewis, Ding, Kellett, & Robinson, 2004).

Many critical theorists have discussed the power relations exercised by the researcher through interviews (Rouch, 1995). Power relations in the process of interviewing children must be given serious consideration. I endeavored to follow Greene & Hill's (2005) suggestion of using rehearsing strategies for dissent and disagreement with children to lessen power relations. I asked children to feel free to stop the interview at any time and to refuse to answer questions that might make them feel uncomfortable. Resistance sometimes took the form of attitudes rather than straightforward verbalizations, so I had to be constantly aware of the child's behavior, and respect it accordingly, by ending our conversation and not insisting on their participation in the research project. As suggested by Greene & Hill (2005), I found myself trapped by the children's pace, the time allocated to the interviews and the location at which these interviews took place. There were children who had a very clear idea of the topics they wanted to talk about. After interviewing a Purepecha girl, for example, I wrote in my field diary:

> This first interview began to be practically directed by Ana Rosa,[1] regardless of my asking the questions. She was very clear about the story she wanted to talk about. It was very interesting to see myself submerged by the world she wanted to recreate [and how it] put aside my research agenda for a moment (FD, January, 31, 2007).

As a researcher, I was aware of the power dynamics during the interviewing process. These power dynamics were not necessarily verbal and, therefore, they were difficult to report and analyze. Even though it was my desire to build more horizontal relationships with children, the power dynamics were always present. Firstly, I was considered to be someone with a counselling orientation, since I was frequently seen in the playground talking to students. Some children, who were not familiar with my research, thought that I was a psychologist. Secondly, there is a strong tradition in the

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[1] All children's names are pseudonymous they themselves chose.

public Mexican school of calling almost any adult who is involved in the daily life of the school a "teacher". From day one, children referred to me as such. On one occasion, some students tried to call me by my name, and the principal corrected them and requested that they called me 'teacher', highlighting the importance of addressing adults respectfully. This limited the possibility of having a different type of relationship with children. However, I was able to develop a more familiar and informal approach with them by playing, reading and drawing with them during the school recess. Having informal conversations with children where we were able to openly discuss and share aspects of their ethnicity, open up spaces of trust that promoted an environment of self-identification, as a back and forth process by which children continuously changed their perceptions. For example, after they reflected themselves and had conversations with their family members about their own histories of migration.

As a middle-class mestiza researcher, I led the discussion with the children using academic terms, like 'indigenous', that were definitely strange and even uncomfortable for them to use. This contradiction is what Dietz (2003) and Bertely (2000) call the "emic" and "etic" perspective of ethnographic work. The "emic" perspective is the analysis from the point of view of the actors, from the voices of the same children; while the "etic" perspective is the academic metadiscourse about the actors.

Summing up, the theoretical approaches of critical inquiry, post-structuralism and decolonialism helped me to look at children's experiences through the lenses of unequal relationships of power. However, I acknowledge that including children's voices in the research process was not an easy task. To highlight children's voices was the priority of this research; therefore, I did not want to drown them in theories, in my own voice as a researcher, or in other voices that may have more power in the field (teachers, principals, among others). I tried to do this by analyzing the data using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section of the paper presents my analysis of the children's data. The category of self-reflection was constructed through the changes in children's perceptions once they had the space to reflect on their own ethnicities within an environment of respect and cultural validation. This analytical category is very helpful in highlighting the power that school agents might have to strengthen or weaken children's ethnic identities. After several conversations with some of the children, their perceptions regarding the richness of their ethnic identities became stronger and more secure.

"They feel proud because they are not from that race": Hugo

Hugo's case is one of the examples of the reflexive identification that I was able to find within the children's data. In our first interview, Hugo said that his parents have not talked to him about language or ethnic matters, and even though they both speak Purepecha, he does not self-identify as such. In addition to this, Hugo's quote suggests that being indigenous is a thing of the past.

> Interviewer: And are your parents indigenous?
> Hugo: Mmm, indigenous, indigenous, indigenous, no…
> Interviewer: No, why not?
> Hugo: Because … they haven't talked to us about that and that's why I say no. Interviewer: So, even though they speak the language, they are not [indigenous]? Hugo: No, I believe [they are] not.
> Interviewer: Who would you say is an indigenous person?
> Hugo: Eh, [someone who] speaks a different language, that we don't understand but that [language] comes from many years ago, but that [he/she] has relatives and they are also indigenous[2] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old).
> In Hugo's definition, being indigenous is not only a matter of

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[2] Interviewer: ¿Y tus papás son indígenas? –Hugo: Mmm, indígenas, indígenas, indígenas no…– Interviewer: ¿No, por qué no? –Hugo: Porque … no nos han platicado de eso y por eso yo digo que no. Interviewer: ¿Entonces, aunque hablen la lengua no son? –Hugo: Yo creo que no. –Interviewer: ¿Quién dirías que es una persona indígena? –Hugo: Eh, habla así, otro idioma, que nosotros no entendemos, pero que viene así de muchos años ya, pero que tiene parientes así y también son indígenas.

speaking the language but also the transmission of the historical tradition or indigenous cultural capital what counts. After Hugo listened to his own definition of an indigenous person, he corrected himself and said that maybe his parents were indeed indigenous and he also added the element of traditional clothing. This happened after a process of self-reflection based on listening to voices, in this case, my voice as a researcher, regarding their own cultural experiences. In this way, some children, like Hugo, seem to have positively redefined their own ethnic identity when they were positively reinforced. This shows the fluidity within the construction of ethnic identities.

> Hugo: Well I'd say that maybe my parents are [indeed] part of those, of the indigenous, and then I would also be if I'd learned the language …
> Interviewer: So [you are saying] that if someone does not speak the language, he/she is not indigenous anymore?
> Hugo: Well, yes, the way of dressing, like my grandma does, she wears a blouse with figures like this, like the ones in the photographs we saw about Patzcuaro and all that, and she wears like that and then my other [grandmother] is from here from Guadalajara and that's why I think that it's because of the way they dress, the skirts they wear. [When] we go there and also here we have the tradition of dancing, like my brother and I dance on "La 21 de marzo" and my sister wears clothes like that, blouses with figures, the skirt like folded and all, and with ribbons, and colored laces like in Patzcuaro[3] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old).

From Hugo's statements, it is possible to see that he might be experiencing a contradictory sense of his own ethnicity based not only

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[3] Hugo: Pues yo digo que a lo mejor mis papás sí son parte de esos, de los indígenas y, pues, yo también, si aprendiera esa lengua –Interviewer: O sea, que, si alguien ya no habla la lengua, ¿ya no es indígena? –Hugo: No, pues sí, la forma de vestirse, como mi abuela anda así como se pone una camisa así con figuras, como las de las fotografías que vimos de Pátzcuaro y todo eso, y se pone así y luego otra que es de aquí de Guadalajara y por eso pienso que así es por la forma que visten, las faldas que traen y como vamos a veces para allá, aquí tenemos la costumbre de bailar yo y mi hermano para el 12 de marzo y mi hermana como se pone la ropa así, camisas así con figuras, la falda así como doblada y todo y con moños, listones de colores como en Pátzcuaro.

on a generational shift but also on his experiences when he went to the community of origin and was able to compare and contrast the traditions there with those in the city. He used the pronouns *we* and *they* to refer to indigenous peoples, showing the similarities and differences embedded in a process of ethnic identity formation.

The pull and tug in Hugo's habitus (Ingram, 2011) is shown by his perception of the school setting as a place where teachers are not interested in knowing about their cultural origins. Hugo said that he felt proud that his parents spoke an indigenous language but he did not share this linguistic capital in his school:

> Hugo: No, because like the teachers don't talk about that. It is like they are only interested in things like we learn about Spanish, science and those things about life and nature and like the history of the past, but like they don't want to know where we come from, only what our birth certificates say, that's how they know[4] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old).

Hugo's account was very powerful in showing how schools undermine the ethnic identities of indigenous children. Indigenous children have learned through their families and through the teachers' messages that schools are not safe places to share their ethnic distinctiveness. Mexican schools openly and systematically neglect the multicultural condition of their classrooms; the curriculum is focused, as Hugo highlights, on subjects and not on the sociocultural background of their students, thus contributing to the negation of children's ethnic identities and therefore to the homogenization of their differences. This is also part of the pulling forces of the "habitus tug" of indigenous children (Ingram, 2011). In our second and third conversations, Hugo was one of the indigenous children who elaborated more about the unequal relationships between mestizos and indigenous peoples; he even used the concept of race to describe it:

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[4] Hugo: No, porque, así como que los maestros no platican sobre eso. Como que a ellos nomás les interesa así las cosas que aprendemos sobre español, naturales y esas cosas de la vida, la naturaleza y pues la historia de antes, pero como no quieren así saber de dónde venimos, nomás de lo de nuestras actas de nacimiento, nomás con eso ya saben.

Interviewer: Do you think that non-indigenous people value in-digenous people?

Hugo: No, because like they feel very proud about themselves be-cause they aren't Indians, that they are not from that raceand that they are very different [in] how they dress, like how they look or something like that...

Interviewer: And what do you think about that?

Hugo: Like they say, we are all equal, from the little children to the oldest, we are equal, everyone, we have the same customs, we are identical, well, not in everything, but we are equal, there is nothing different.[5] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 10- year-old).

Hugo's account shows the structural dimension of ethnicity (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008), one that shows inequalities and power dynamics based on visible attributes such as looks and dressing. Hugo, like many other indigenous children in my research, is able to identify the attributes that must be hidden in order to avoid be-ing identified as indigenous: traditional clothing and language as the most visible ones. This is part of the navigational capital that Yosso & Solorzano (2005) suggest allows children to adapt to the main-stream field; however, this process works to the detriment of being able to fully develop and enrich their ethnic identities.

Most children use this strategy of denying their ethnic identi-ties to avoid being discriminated against, which is also detrimen-tal to the linguistic and cultural strengthening of their own capital. Hugo has learned that the use of an indigenous language at school is a trigger for bullying, so he prevents this by saying that he is not indigenous because he was born in the city and he feels that he is both indigenous and non-indigenous, because he does not speak the language very well. However, he recognizes his indigenous lineage.

Hugo: Those who aren't indigenous start saying things [like]: "no, you go to the place you were born, you are…"; they think things

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[5] Interviewer: ¿Tú crees que la gente que no es indígena valora a los indígenas? –Hugo: No, porque como que se creen acá mucho de que no son indios, que no son de esa raza y que son muy distintos cómo se visten, que son fachas o cosas así… –Interviewer: ¿Y tú qué opinas de eso? –Hugo: Que, como dicen, que todos somos iguales, de a partir de los niños chiquitos hasta los más viejos somos iguales, todos, tenemos las mismas costumbres, somos idénticos, bueno, casi en todo no, pero somos iguales, no hay nada que haya diferente.

like that, like, my mum is indigenous and she says that when she was little she used to work, she went to the mill and all that, and that is why I think, since they were little, since they are five years old they start working from seven in the morning, I think that is because they have a different way of thinking, [indigenous peoples] think about their families and all that, but the rest of the people think in making, in making them cry and they feel sad (Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old).

Hugo highlighted the collective dimension of his ethnicity and one of the most important characteristics of the collective habitus of indigenous peoples: the importance of family relationships and hard work. Hugo was able to see a difference between his own habitus and that of the mestizos groups, which in his opinion did not have the same sensibility and respect.

"I am too": Monica

The case of Monica shows another conflicting process of identity formation that later turned into a positive self-description. Her account showed a process of self-reflection in her identity formation at the same time that she analyzed the structural complexities of her life as an indigenous person. She had a sound knowledge of her Purepecha culture, but she opted to keep this secret at school. At the beginning of the fieldwork, she seemed nervous and uncomfortable when talking about ethnicity and indigenous language. The common answer to a question related to her parents' language was: "I don't know". Monica had an aunt from Pama, Michoacán, who recently migrated and lived with her. She spoke Purepecha with her mum and dad, but she said that she did not understand very well.

Months later and after several conversations, she felt at ease, open and proud to tell me about the celebrations in her community of origin. She even gave me a videotape of one celebration of Santo Santiago in Michoacán, to share with me the beauty of the traditions. In every interview, Monica shared more and more about her family's heritage and it seemed to me that along this process, she was reinforcing her own ethnic identity.

Interviewer: So, Monica, are your parents indigenous?

Monica: Well, yes.
Interviewer: Yes, and you?
Monica: Well, [I am] too[6] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old).

I call this process a *reflexive identification*, by which children feel secure and reinforced to explore their own cultural roots in a reflective interaction with others, within a context where they feel respected and valued. One day, I was in her classroom with her teacher, and the teacher asked whether someone knew how to speak an indigenous language. Monica did not raise her hand, instead she only looked at me with an unconformable or uneasy look and she kept silent. Later on, I asked Monica about this incident and she explained:

Interviewer: Do you remember the day I was in your classroom and your teacher asked whose families speak an indigenous language?
Monica: Yes.
Interviewer: Why didn't you raise your hand?
Monica: Because I don't speak very well, and like the teacher said that there were like three or four in the classroom and I didn't raise my hand.
Interviewer: And the first time your teacher asked, did you raise your hand? Monica: No, because I didn't know the name of the language, that's why.[7] (Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old).

Monica assumed that there were other children who were indigenous speakers in her classroom and she did not want to be the same as them. She felt she was not proficient enough in Purepecha to be considered indigenous. However, she did not mention her family's language either. Monica might also have anticipated a discriminatory reaction of her classmates during the following days and months, and the benefits of sharing the language of her family would not bring her much benefit after all. According to the field children are in, it is seems to be a mix of insecurity about their ethnic identity for

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[6] Interviewer: Oye, Mónica, ¿y tus papás son indígenas? –Mónica: Pues sí. –Interviewer: Sí, ¿y tú? –Monica: Pues también.

[7] Interviewer: ¿Te acuerdas del día que fui a tu salón y la maestra les preguntó que quienes de su familia hablaban lengua indígena? - Mónica: Sí - Interviewer: ¿Por qué no levantaste tu mano? - Mónica: Ah, porque casi no hablo bien, bien, como ya estaban… dijo la maestra que eran tres o cuatro en el salón y por eso no la levanté - Interviewer: ¿La primera vez que les preguntó levantaste tu mano? - Mónica: No, porque yo no sabía cuál lengua era, por eso.

not being language proficient, and at the same time a certain fear of opening up the cultural differences they internally value.

"I want you to be more than us": Marcos

Comboni & Lucas (2012) also found that territory is one of the main categories in the formation of the ethnic identity of indigenous children. The physical space is a symbol of socio-territorial belonging, but it is also assessed in terms of the cultural capital of each individual. The positive or negative associations made to the territory, or in Bourdieu's (1999) terms, the symbolic value, is associated with the power relationships in the economic and social fields, in both the present and the past (Giménez, 1999). The reasons for migrating are not just economic –there are also cultural issues, especially for women, that make them decide to look for broader opportunities outside the cultural and social expectations of the community of origin, as in the case of Marco's mother. Comboni & Lucas (2012, p. 274) conducted a study in Zozocolco de Hidalgo, Veracruz in a tele-secondary with Totonaca children. They found that within the Totonaca culture: "activities understood as cultural practice, ethnicity, local histories, gender and religion" were fundamental pieces in cultural and identity formation. Gender inequalities and discrimination are especially accentuated in women who were born in rural communities away from the municipality ("the center"). Marcos explains the reason for his parents' migration as follows:

> Marcos: …they say it is almost the same [here and there], but there it's harder to earn the money than it is here. And there like… they wanted to have more, learn more too. And there like, women, like my mum, were hardly able to finish primary because her mum and her dad didn't allow her to finish because… like… there they only have to learn to cook and to mend the clothes and like… they work at home and the men grow corn and everything… it's what they do there and they decided, my mum rather [came here] because she was going to start secondary school but she couldn't there and then she came here with her uncle instead[8] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old).

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[8] Marcos: … es que dicen que es casi lo mismo, pero allá es más duro ganarse el dinero que aquí. Y allá pues… querían tener más, aprender más también. Y allá pues, las mujeres

Based on the parent's experience, there is a strong message for children to keep on studying and reach higher levels of schooling and try to achieve a university degree in order to have different conditions of living from the ones their parents had back in their communities of origin, as Marcos explains:

Marcos: when she was little, my mum was like the indigenous and they didn't allow her to study and she finished primary school, finished primary and she came here, she came with a grandma because there you see how they have to make nixtamal[9] and all that...[10] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old).

In Marcos' account, it is possible to see the contradictory value of the indigenous identity, as if the conditions of urban living were better than when his mum was living in her community and she was "like the indigenous". Like Marcos, many other indigenous children's narratives in the study gave accounts of the struggles their parents had faced to continue studying because of poverty and lack of opportunities in their communities of origin.

However, indigenous people's aspirations to improve their living conditions when migrating to the cities are shattered as a product of the symbolic violence of the system; where more than 80 per cent of indigenous population in the country still live in conditions of poverty (Coneval, 2012). If it is difficult for indigenous children to finish secondary school, then the possibilities for them to finish a university career are minimal.

Nonetheless, the family message is still strong: to take advantage of the opportunities they did not have back in their communities of origin:

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con esfuerzo, mi mamá pudo terminar la primaria porque su mamá y su papá no la dejaban terminar porque...este... allá nomás se tienen que enseñar a hacer de comer y a remendar la ropa y ya, este... y se dedican a la casa y los hombres a cultivar el maíz y todo... allá es lo que hacen y se decidieron mejor mi mamá porque allá iba a entrar a la secundaria, pero no pudo porque allá no pudo ya, y ya mejor se vino con su tío.

[9] Nixtamal is the preparation of corn (maize) by hulling, soaking and cooking.

[10] Marcos: es que cuando era chiquita mi mamá eran como los indígenas y pues no la dejaban casi estudiar y terminó la primaria, terminó la primaria y se vino aquí, se vino con una abuelita porque allá, ya ve que tienen que hacer el nixtamal y eso y ya...

Marcos: Yes, they say that they don't want me to be like them, that they only studied until secondary school, so they want me to have a career … I don't want you to be like us, who didn't learn much and I want you to be more than us[11] (Totonaca, 6thgrade, 11-year-old).

Marcos' parents do not want their children to be like them, as a judgement based on the educational opportunities they were not able to have. As Bourdieu (1999, p. 507) points out: "the transmission of inheritance depends on the judgements made by the school system; they act as a brutal and powerful reality principle which, by intensifying competition, is responsible for many failures and disappointments". In Marcos' case, it is not the competition the source of disappointment, but the lack of educational opportunities his parents faced. As Bourdieu (1999, p. 507) argues, these experiences contribute to the construction of an identity where schools very often are at the "core of suffering of the interviewees, who have been disappointed either in their own plans or in their plans for their children or by the ways the job market has reneged on the promises and guarantees made by the educational system". There is a clear message of leaving behind part of their past, sacrificing part of the parent's histories, maybe "asking the impossible" of children. During the collective research task where the children were shown different photographs of children around the world, some indigenous children made reference to the differences in clothing and language and said that some of those children, especially those from Mexico, probably had different traditions as well. When I conducted this activity with the 6th grade students, I asked whether some of them were indigenous. All of the children remained silent. I asked whether they knew somebody who was indigenous and Marcos said that his grandfather was indigenous. However, he did not seem comfortable sharing with the group any more details about the ethnicity of his grandfather, who speaks Totonaco and lives in Veracruz. In the group discussion, I asked Marcos whether he considered himself

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[11] Marcos: Sí me dicen que no quieren que sea como ellos, que nada más estudiaron hasta la secundaria, que quieren que haga mi carrera … no quiero que seas como nosotros que no aprendimos mucho, y quiero que seas más que nosotros.

indigenous, since his grandfather was. He nervously laughed and chose not to answer the question by saying: "Who knows?"

> Interviewer: So, your grandparents, only your grandparents are indigenous? Marcos: And my parents too…
> Interviewer: And, are you indigenous?
> Marcos: Who knows…? (He and the rest of the children laughed)[12] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old).

This instance offers also a good opportunity to show critically the role of the researcher in perpetuating dominant stigmas around indigeneity. I intervened after this incident by showing my admiration and respect for indigenous cultures to decrease tensions among children; however, the fact of asking the question about "being or not indigenous" was a way to reinforce dominant relationship of oppression from the very beginning.

Like Marcos, other children seemed uncomfortable discussing these topics in front of their classmates. Influenced by their families or by their own or others' experiences, indigenous children seemed to decide that it was better not to discuss their ethnicity in the school in order to avoid conflict and stereotyping.

"If I learned Totonaco like my parents, I would also teach it to my children": Marcos

Later on, in an individual interview after some months of fieldwork, Marcos reflected a little more on his ethnic identity and said:

> Interviewer: Do your parents consider themselves indigenous?
> Marcos: Yes.
> Interviewer: And you?
> Marcos: I'd say yes, because my parents are indigenous. Interviewer: And your children?
> Marcos: I won't know very well, because if I marry an indigenous [woman] then yes, they will be indigenous, but if [she] is from here, from Guadalajara, then not quite. And if I learned Totonaco

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[12] Interviewer: ¿Entonces, tus abuelos, nada más tus abuelos son indígenas? –Marcos: Y mis papás también. –Interviewer: Y tú, ¿eres indígena? -Marcos: Sabe… (se ríe y los demás niños también).

like my parents, I would also teach it to my children. It would be like a legacy that my mother leaves me[13] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old).

Marcos' quote illustrates another important element of ethnicity which is the legacy of the parents. Legacy and tradition are crucial elements in the formation of ethnic identity of indigenous children even within the contradictions of their own ethnic identity formation based on their parents' messages (Bourdieu, 1999). Marcos recognizes that learning Totonaco and passing it on to his children is continuing his mother's legacy. However, Marcos is only expressing this idea as speculation and not as a real possibility. At the end, learning an indigenous language is not part of the dominant cultural capital that is valued in the cities and he might be aware of the difficulties implied in wanting to learn Totonaco and bequeath it to his children. In addition to this, the diversity of opportunities that the city brings in terms of forming an ethnically mixed family represents for Marcos the possibility to marry a non-indigenous woman; however, the legacy of his family seems to be strong enough to maintain his own ethnic identity.

Legacy is also related to the attachment to their communities of origin. Marcos and Luis Miguel, his brother, had inherited a piece of land in their community of origin. Having a piece of land in the community gives children a feeling of collective duty, a visit that seems to have a meaning beyond spending the holidays and seeing the family. Marcos explained:

Marcos: ... my granddad grows corn and he sells, he sells bananas and pineapples, he grows pineapple and banana and that's why ... they don't live in the house they used to live anymore, they bought another land and now my mum bought land and my mum says that she will give it to me as my inheritance, she says, there is banana and avocado already...

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[13] Interviewer: ¿Y tus papás se consideran indígenas? –Marcos: Sí. –Interviewer: ¿Y tú? –Marcos: Yo digo que sí, pues mis papás son indígenas. –Interviewer: ¿Y tus hijos? –Marcos: No voy a saber muy bien, porque si me caso con una indígena, pues sí van a ser indígenas, pero si es de aquí, de Guadalajara, ya casi no. Y si aprendiera el totonaco, así, como mis papás, les enseñaría también a mis hijos. Sería como una herencia que me dejaría mi madre.

Interviewer: Do you know how to harvest?

Marcos: More or less. When I go to clean the corn, when I was little I went and I didn't know very well because I used to take down everything, even the [plant], you see how [the corn] is small, I took everything down, and they told me: no, those [plants] grow with sorrow and effort because you see how we grow a whole field and half of it is eaten by the birds and rats, they said, and that's what they do…

Interviewer: Would you like to be in charge of that land that your mum bequeathed you?

Marcos: Yes… to stay there for a while, to know how their traditions are and what they do over there, what they eat and what they do…[14] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11- year-old).

There is a learning process that children are aware of if they want to adapt to the life of the communities of their parents. Marcos refers to a community habitus that he needs to learn.

"I rather don't say anything, because I see what it looks like and one must feel bad": Marcos

Marcos, like many other indigenous children in this study, encounters a climate of hostility within the field of the school if they share their ethnic origins:

Interviewer: Have you noticed any difference in how people treat indigenous speakers?

Marcos: No, because I hardly ever tell my classmates because they make fun of you, they say I don't know what and they start telling you things, I better don't say anything…

Interviewer: Have you never told them?

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[14] Marcos: …mi abuelito, como siembra maíz y vende, vende plátano y piña, cultiva piña también y plátano y ya por eso … ya no viven en la casa donde vivían antes, ya compraron otro terreno, y ya pues, mi mamá compró un terreno y ya y me dice mi mamá que ése me va a dejar de herencia, dice, ya allá hay plátano, aguacate… –Interviewer: ¿Tú sabes cultivar? –Marcos: Más o menos. Cuando voy a limpiar el maíz, cuando estaba más chiquito iba y no le sabía muy bien, porque tumbaba junto con la milpa, ya ve que está chiquita, lo tumbaba todo y me decían, "no, ésas, con la pena y el esfuerzo crecen, porque ya ves que sembramos todo un cultivo y la mitad se lo comen los pájaros y las ratas dice, y es lo que hacen ellos… –Interviewer: ¿Te gustaría hacerte cargo del terreno cuando tu mamá te lo herede? –Marcos: Sí…estar allá un buen tiempo, para saber cómo son sus costumbres y qué hacen allá, cómo comen allá y qué hacen…

Marcos: More or less, I only tell them that they live in Veracruz and speak Totonaco.

Interviewer: Did you decide that or your parents recommended it?

Marcos: No, I decided it, because they made fun of a classmate and that's why I don't want them to make fun of me and that's why I haven't told them.

Interviewer: What type of mockery did they do?

Marcos: They say that your parents I don't know what and they start speaking, you see how in the TV they [speak] like that, and they start speaking like that and they say, they make fun of it, that's why I rather don't say anything.

Interviewer: Have they made fun of you?

Marcos: No, that's why I rather don't say anything, because I see that it looks and one must feel bad, how it looks that [others] make fun of you, and I don't want to feel like that…[15] (Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old).

Marcos had clearly made an individual decision to avoid discrimination by opting not to say anything about his family's language. He identified himself with the territory of his parents and with their language, but he seemed to refuse to be called "indigenous" when he was in the field of the school.

"I feel ashamed of telling them": Luis

Luis also shared with me experiences of discrimination related to his family's ethnicity. Luis was a boy in 3rd grade whose parents were from Pachuca, Hidalgo and were both Nahuatl speakers. He and his brothers were born in Guadalajara, but he spent some months in Pachuca in the kindergarten, while his parents were building his house in Guadalajara.

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[15] Interviewer: ¿Tú te has dado cuenta de alguna diferencia en el trato con las personas que hablan lengua indígena? –Marcos: No porque no les platico casi yo a mis compañeros porque también te hacen burla, te dicen sabe qué y te comienzan a decir así de cosas, yo mejor no les digo nada… –Interviewer: ¿Nunca les has dicho? –Marcos: Más o menos, nada más les digo que viven en Veracruz y que hablan totonaco. -Interviewer: ¿Eso lo decidiste tú o tus papás te lo recomendaron? –Marcos: No, yo lo decidí porque un compañero también le hacían burla y por eso yo no quiero que me hagan burla y por eso no les he dicho –Interviewer: ¿Qué tipo de burla le hacían? –Marcos: Le dicen que su papá sabe qué, y le comienzan a hablar, ya ve que sale en la tele. –Interviewer: ¿A ti nunca te han hecho burla? –Marcos: No, por eso mejor yo no digo nada, porque yo veo que se ve y se ha de sentir muy mal cómo se ve que le hacen burla y yo no me quiero sentir así…

Luis would have liked to live in Pachuca because it was more fun, but he remembered feeling ashamed in his school because he did not know how to speak Nahuatl. However, even though he said that he did not understand the language of his parents, he said that some of his neighbors here in the city made fun of the way he spoke.

Luis: … some children, who live by my house, make fun of me.
Interviewer: What do they say to you?
Luis: They say different things and make fun and say different things. They make up [things] and I don't know what they say… the other day they made fun of me a lot because I went outside to, I was going to, to buy an ice cream and they made fun of me…
Interviewer: What did they tell you?
Luis: They said that, like I don't know what they said, but they made fun. They said, like, they said, they called me "guachuchao" or I don't know how they called me…
Interviewer: And how come these children who make fun of you, who live close to your home, knew that your parents speak Nahuatl?
Luis: It's that they hear them when they are speaking, when they are chatting or when, when [my dad tells my mum] to make him some coffee; they speak in their language, and then [the children] hear[16] (Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old).

As seen in Luis' quote, the neighborhood is not only a site of positive multicultural encounters but also a site of discrimination among different groups, not only against indigenous peoples but maybe against the "different other" in terms of gender, class, (dis) ability, and ethnicity.

Like Luis, for most of the indigenous children talking about discriminatory experiences was a painful event. Most were not able

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[16]Luis: …porque unos niños se burlan, este, que viven cerca de mí en la calle - Interviewer: ¿Qué te dicen? –Luis: Me dicen cosas diferentes y se burlan y me dicen cosas muy diferentes. Ellos inventan y quién sabe qué dicen… y la otra vez se burlaron mucho de mí porque yo salí afuera a, iba a ir a, iba a ir a comprarme este, una nieve y se burlaron de mi –Interviewer: ¿Qué te decían? –Luis: Me decían que, sabe cómo me decían, qué me dijeron, pero se burlaron. Me decían, que sabe qué decían, me decían que, me decían "'guachuchao'" o sabe cómo me decían… –Interviewer: ¿Y cómo es que estos niños que se burlan de ti aquí, que viven cerca de tu casa, supieron que tus papás hablaban Nahuatl? –Luis: Es que a ellos los oyen cuando están hablando, cuando están platicando o cuando, cuando le dice que haga un poquito de café hablan en su idioma y luego los escuchan.

to describe in great detail the insults of the other children, they rathered say "I don't know what they said" or "I don't remember what they said". I noticed a sense of uneasiness during the interviews when children talked about these incidents.

It seems that Luis understood and probably spoke more Nahuatl than he thought he could, or more than he said to me during our interview. He spent some of his early years in Pachuca and he remembered that all the people mostly speak Nahuatl.

> Interviewer: Do you know an indigenous person, Luis?
> Luis: No.
> Interviewer: No?
> Luis: I don't know how to speak.
> Interviewer: Is an indigenous Nahuatl someone who knows how to speak? Luis: Well, yes.
> Interviewer: Are your parents [indigenous]? Luis: Yes.
> Interviewer: Then, are you?
> Luis: No[17] (Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old).

It seemed that he experienced a divided feeling of uneasiness between the communities of origin of his parents and his current neighborhood. Luis also felt uneasy when he went to the community of origin because he did not speak Nahuatl:

> Luis: [I like studying here in the city better], because here they speak Spanish and there they speak Nahuatl, I felt embarrassed because I didn't know to speak like that…[18] (Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old).

Luis felt embarrassed "there" in the community of his parents because he was not able to communicate. He also felt ashamed "here" of sharing that he could speak some words in Nahuatl with his classmates:

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[17] Interviewer: ¿Tú conoces alguna persona indígena, Luis?–Luis: No –Interviewer: ¿No? –Luis: Yo no sé hablar –Interviewer: ¿Únicamente es indígena Nahuatl el que sabe hablar?- Luis: Pos sí - Interviewer: ¿Tus papás sí son?–Luis: Mj –Interviewer: ¿Entonces tú eres?–Luis: No.

[18] Luis: [Me gusta más estudiar aquí], porque aquí hablan en español y allá hablan en Nahuatl, como que tenía vergüenza porque yo no sabía hablar así…

Interviewer: Do you feel embarrassed about saying that you know a little Nahuatl or that your parents speak Nahuatl?

Luis: Yes, because some children [who live] by my house say that I speak like, I don't know how… they make fun...

Interviewer: They make fun, what do they tell you?

Luis: That they are, like: "they speak in another language"…

Interviewer: Have they told you something like that here in the school, too?

Luis: No, because I feel ashamed of telling them, I've only told one classmate whose name is Jose. He [wanted to know] how they spoke and I've said that I don't know…[19] (Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old).

For Luis and his family, schooling was important because he wanted to be "someone in life". Schooling is the access to middle class occupations, as Luis mentioned, and he wanted to become a lawyer, a doctor, or an architect to accomplish his parents' expectations:

Interviewer: Why is it important for your parents that you study?

Luis: So I learn more (he laughs)…

Interviewer: Why do they want you to learn more?

Luis: So, when I grow up, I become someone in life.

Interviewer: What do you mean by someone? Like whom?

Luis: Like a doctor, a lawyer, an architect, a policeman, a soldier, and that's it, I don´t know more…[20] (Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old).

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[19] Interviewer: ¿Aquí te da vergüenza decir que sabes poquito Nahuatl o que tus papás hablan Nahuatl? –Luis: Sí, porque unos niños de por mi casa dicen que hablo como, como sabe cómo… se burlan… –Interviewer: ¿Se burlan? ¿Qué te dicen? –Luis: Que ellos son, que hablan en otro idioma… –Interviewer: ¿Aquí en la escuela también te han dicho eso? –Luis: No porque me da vergüenza decirles, nomás le he dicho a un compañero que se llama José. Me ha dicho cómo hablan y yo le he dicho que no sé…

[20] Interviewer: ¿Por qué es importante para tus papás que tú estudies, Luis? –Luis: Para que aprenda más (se ríe) –Interviewer: ¿Para qué quieren que aprendas? –Luis: Para que cuando sea grande, sea alguien en la vida –Interviewer: ¿Cómo alguien? ¿Cómo quién? –Luis: como doctor, como licenciado, como abogado, como arquitecto, como policía, como soldado, y ya nomás, ya no sé…

Schooling seems to give, at least in discourse, the tools to have access to middle class occupations, and to aspire to a better quality of life; the educational process does not seem to be concerned with strengthening the children's identities and promoting the construction of multiple ways of living or developing individual talents. It seems that the options for success are limited to four or five professions, most of them still associated with men as figures of power. Even though Luis wanted to live back in Pachuca where he said there was no pollution, no traffic, and life was more secure and fun, the city and the aspirations of urban life through schooling offered better possibilities to improve their living conditions.

CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

This paper has attempted to show the complexities of the children's identity formation processes, beyond the use of the indigenous language.

Firstly, the relationships of compadrazgo promote the development of stronger family links between family members who live here and those who live there. The identity processes are re-signified in the cities in an individual and collective way, through social networks and compadrazgos as a survival strategy in new contexts (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). As Chávez (2014, p. 20) argues, "the ethnic groups persist beyond its territorial movements since part of their integration is based on the setting of the kinship relationships. Within the families, all the elements that articulate the ethnic belonging are negotiated and reproduced, especially in those cases where there are processes of urban migration"(my translation).

The quality of the affective relationship within the family is an important indicator in the transmission of the ethnic identity (Chávez, 2014). As it was possible to see in some of the children's interviews, they receive different messages from their parents regarding the value of their languages, and this affects the way children perceive their own identities.

Parents who have a resistance to using the language or do not feel comfortable with their ethnic identity, usually based on discriminatory experiences, seem to have an influence in the way children signify their own ethnicity.

Secondly, it seems that children feel a stronger attachment to the communities of origin of their parents when they participate in the agricultural activities on their family land. Having a piece of land to work on during the children's visit seems to promote a feeling of responsibility and cooperation to take care of the family inheritance. The relationship of the children with their communities of origin is very important in the strengthening of their ethnic identities, however, the territory is also a "symbolic resource" (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 255); it is place that inspires nostalgic feelings, and the identification with a collective identity, with a history that gives them a sense of ownership. It is important to problematize the concept of migrants, as they can be stigmatizing concepts when peoples are outside their communities of origin. Most indigenous peoples have negotiated their extraterritoriality and they assign a membership from the outside, they create 'moral communities' (Martínez-Casas & De la Peña, 2004) within the extraterritoriality. They experience what Bartolome (1997, p. 73) calls a "cultural transfiguration".

Thirdly, visiting the grandparents or other family members in the communities of origin often exposes children to highly enriching cultural experiences that connect them to the origins of their parents. It also provides children with the background to better understand the experiences of their parents and grandparents before migrating to the cities. For some children, however, visiting the communities of origin of their parents also presents facing the challenge of feeling lonely or inadequate because of their lack of language proficiency. Rescuing the indigenous children's mother tongue is a very important element in the process of dignifying and legitimizing their ethnic identity. Most indigenous children expressed their motivation to learn their family's languages and joy for visiting their communities of origin for the aesthetic of the place and the contact with nature, the more relaxed rhythm of life and the security they experience, in contrast with the violence and dangers of the urban city.

Fourthly, the school does not represent a safe place for indigenous children to share their ethnicities. They prefer to remain invisible within a discriminatory environment that is intimidating to cultural and linguistic differences, and this seems to be part of the emotional habitus of indigenous children within urban settings

(Cottingham, 2016; Reay, 2015). The school promotes a kind of homogenizing citizenship in an active way (Bertely, 2006).

According to Bertely (2006), Mexican anthropology was mistaken when considering that citizenship and indigenous identities were mutually exclusive. Education policies should be directed towards reinforcing the identities of all children, not only the indigenous ones, in a way that promotes the recognition and celebration of all types of cultural differences.

Indigenous children learn how to use their cultural capital within the discriminatory context of the school. They use their identities and their languages strategically, but their languages do not have a legitimate visibility in the school space, it is not linguistic capital. "Schools and the life in the city would not annul the cultural and ethnic identity, moreover, it is through [the school] that these indigenous immigrants are able to translate their new situations of life" (Czarny, 2006, p. 255). More research should be conducted to find out how languages operate as linguistic capital in the informal spaces of the schools, among indigenous children.

Finally, as a methodological note I find that critical ethnographic method requires the accountability of the researcher's preconceptions in order to be loyal to the children's voices. This means making bias explicit, since it is assumed in this theoretical perspective that it is not possible to bracket it. By doing so there is a risk of masking or hiding the power influences of the researcher or others in the field. In addition, it was my objective to follow a critical ethnographic approach, not only in the research process itself, but also in terms of the dissemination of the results by making the inequalities within schools visible to a diversity of social groups, including policy-makers, who would not have access to those findings otherwise. This is one of the biggest challenges of conducting urban ethnographies, as Smith cogently argues, "the challenge is not just to find ways to surface these voices but to do so in format and through vehicles where they cannot be ignored, where they are not filtered through researchers' dominant cultures of their theories, and where they promote movements of solidarity" (as cited in Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999, p. 35). I consider this argument to be the main catalyst for keep doing educational research within a sociological and anthropological standpoint. I feel a strong commitment to promoting

spaces that give voice to indigenous children's perspectives in several social and political spheres in Mexico, especially since their schooling experiences are embeded within a strong structure of racism and inequalities.

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