

Lineage and Linkage: Huichol Youth Education and the Pan-Indigenous Movement in Mexico

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in International Development Studies

Saint Mary's University

June 14, 2004

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Gary Malcolm

July 14, 2004

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the links between nascent bicultural education programs initiated by the *Huichol* of central Mexico and the broader social movement for cultural, economic and political rights of indigenous people in Mexico. A theoretical nexus is constructed between various theories of development, education and social movements to make sense of 'why' and 'how' locally based education programs are affected by, and contribute to, social change. The concomitant research suggests that the education programs in question are, on the one hand creating, solidifying and growing a social base that is linking with established movements for social change and, on the other hand, are capable of challenging the broader economic and political activities of the state, while maintaining a locally historic integrity. Therefore, community-based youth education initiatives are a necessary component of the broader efforts of indigenous people in Mexico to achieve more autonomy and manage social change.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to recognise the love and support that Reka gave me throughout the entire process of completing this thesis. Without her flexibility, intuition and commitment this would not have been possible.

I would also like to sincerely thank:

- the members of the community of *Tateikita*, and especially the students with whom I worked, for their friendly hospitality.
- the members of UACI for supporting my research and their important activism.
- Dr. Henry Veltmeyer for his leadership and support over the past three years.
- Dr. Anthony O'Malley and Dr. Robert Sargent for their intuitive perspectives and comments.
- all my classmates for sharing their experiences, passion and intellect in a memorable time of camaraderie and scholarship.
- The Canadian International Development Agency for its financial support.

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List of Acronyms

AJAGI – *Asociación Jalisciense de Apoyo a las Grupos Indígenas* (Association of Support for Indigenous Groups in Jalisco)

AI – *Acción Indigenista* (Action Indigenous)

AMC - Autonomous Municipal Council

CNC – *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasants' Confederation)

CNI – *Congreso Nacional Indígena* (National Indigenous Congress)

CNPA – *Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala* (National Coordinator Plan of Ayala)

COCOPA – *Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación* (Commission for Concord and Pacification)

CONAFE - *Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo* (National Council for Promoting Education)

EZLN – *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista National Liberation Army)

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

FTAA – Free Trade Agreement of the Americas

INI – *Instituto Nacional Indígena* (National Indigenous Institute)

ISI – Import Substitution Industrialisation

ITESO – *Instituto Tecnológico para los Estudios Superiores del Occidente* (Technological Institute of the Occident for Higher Learning)

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OPEC – Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries

PAN – *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party)

PNR – *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party)

PRD – *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Party of the Revolution)

PRI – *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

SAP – Structural Adjustment Program

SEP – *Secretariat de Educación Publica* (Public Education Secretariat)

TNC – Trans-National Corporation

UCIH - *Unión de Comunidades Indígenas Huicholas* (Union of Indigenous Huichol Communities of Jalisco)

UACI – *Unidad de Apoyo a las Comunidades Indígenas* (Unity of Support for Indigenous Communities)

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Thematic

This thesis is ostensibly about innovative indigenous led formal youth education programs that have been formed by the *Huichol*, an ethnically distinct meso-American culture, high in the *Sierra Madres* of central Mexico. A combination of influential external social pressures and a local desire to maintain their cultural integrity led to the formation of these educational initiatives. Throughout this thesis I will breakdown these factors in order to determine how formal youth education *Huichol* style is impacting the broader movement for cultural, economic and political rights in Mexico and internationally by including indigenous cultures and their world-views into broader culture. I had one main philosophical question and two main research questions that guided me through this thesis project. First, how does a marginalised, yet cohesive, community address imminent cultural pressures that diminish its ability to manage social change? Second, in the context of *Huichol* culture, the base for this case study, what were the factors influencing the creation of the formal youth education programs in *Huichol* communities? Alternatively, ‘why’ and ‘how’ did these education programs form? And third, do these initiatives have any correlation to the broader pan-indigenous movement for increased cultural, economic and political rights in contemporary Mexican and global society?

I have attempted to make my analysis as objective as possible, despite my relatively limited understanding of what *Huichol* culture really is. I am not a *Huichol*, nor do I

pretend to think any of my experiences external to that of the *Huichol* could ‘affect’ their struggle. However, their determination for cultural cohesiveness and spiritual connection with the natural world had an ‘effect’ on my personal perception of the human condition, which I will convey in this thesis. From the beginning of this project, and throughout my research and writing, I attempted to balance the impact of subjective experience (the *Huichol* directly, and my own indirectly) with data that is objectively verifiable. Despite having some pre-disposed biases towards mainstream culture, my desire is to better understand how humans, in whatever minute way, are contributing to affect change in the world. Therefore, I have an implicit social statement to make within the framework of an objective analysis that can be summed up in a statement made by Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire (1984, 49), “[T]rue revolutionary transformation takes place ‘with’ the people, not ‘for’ the people”.

1.1.1 Development Field – Education

Researching and writing a thesis on such a broad topic as ‘development’ can be daunting. It was crucial for me to narrow down my focus to a practical field of development with which I could relate well. In the context of social change taking place among the *Huichol*, I used the concept of education as the main disciplinary focus. That is, the indigenous education programs in question are a locus of where development is presumably taking place. It is the lens through which I looked to understand how social processes interact to improve or hinder the well-being of *Huichol* communities. Education, from a sociological perspective, can be envisioned as a microcosm of the broader debates in development processes. Generally thought of as means to improve the quality of life in

the long-term for an interconnected society, education can take many forms that are complex and fluid. No one analytical method can totally justify the positive contributions education programs factor in to society, nor can they fully explain any marginalisation that takes place within the same system. Learning can take place in a multitude of environments, each with their own set of circumstances for existing. In the context of this thesis, I will link the locally driven education programs of the *Huichol* with the social mobilisation taking place through indigenous cultures in Mexico.

1.1.2 *Theoretical Focus - Social Movements*

The ideas that make up ‘development’ discourse are essentially a discussion about how to manage social change. However, it is important that some theoretical discussion take place in order to make specific points and avoid ambiguities. Theories of social mobilisation are useful for this thesis as they link local initiatives with a broader social movement that has potential to affect change on mainstream society. The nature of the change that actually does take place remains to be seen. The social field is complex and dynamic. As a result, local initiatives do not exist in a vacuum, but are inclusive of external factors including well established movements for social change such as the anti-globalisation phenomenon. Local organisation forms in association with the recognised discourse of the known protest. At issue in the present debate regarding social movements are the marginalising structures of global capitalism, as well as the social spaces it has created, particularly in its current neo-liberal form.

1.1.3 Personal Theme

It is worth mentioning early in this thesis that the work of Freire provided a significant frame of reference for how the research evolved. My personal interest in education combined with the frustration of seeing ‘development of’ marginalised people fail over and over again naturally drew me to Freire. Formal education has been an ubiquitous component of development strategies. However, Freire (1984, 35) notes that “[P]edagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors and makes the oppressed objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression ... an instrument of dehumanisation (of both the oppressed and the oppressor). Therefore, this pedagogy cannot be developed by the oppressors”. Ironically, yet sagely, he had a vision for overcoming a marginalised condition, or in his words ‘oppression’, where “[T]he great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed is to liberate themselves and the oppressors as well without becoming oppressors of the oppressors” (Freire 1984, 26). It is the people who have been subjugated to the mores and methods of a dominant culture that must recognise its causes in a first step toward creating a ‘new’ situation. As Freire states, “[T]he oppressor, who is himself dehumanised because he dehumanises others, is unable to lead this struggle” (1984, 29). I, therefore, see myself as an advocate for change within my own native culture, rather than a development prophet for the needs of marginalised cultures.

Ultimately, this thesis is about the nature of social change, who manages it and for what ends. But how do you judge liberation or ruination? Cultural change is a slippery phenomenon, bringing with it a collection of trade-offs that are not necessarily obvious at first glance. The field research from this study highlights some of these trade-offs and

integrates them with the work of development researchers and academics who have varying approaches to explaining why and how social change takes place.

1.2 Problematique

The following section introduces the research topic as an intellectual project in which I outline what I deem to be important issues worthy of scrutiny. The first section is the noesis of the study, which comes in two parts. First, a brief historical context which led to the formation of the youth education programs outlines the structural nature of the situation. This process identifies the selected *Huichol* communities for research within a broader space and time context. Essentially, the macro forces that have an effect on the communities will be outlined in order to be dissected and objectively explained in Chapter 3. Second, a short particularistic evaluation describes the internal forces within the community that project agency forward into available social spaces. The motivations and desires of close-knit populations to act are a vital point of an analysis of the subjective forces forming new social structures.

The second section of the *problematique* will highlight the theoretical positions that underlie the sociological debates around development, education and social movements. These are all extremely broad categories with extensive literature, therefore, I have selected a body of literature that is interrelated in an attempt to create a theoretical nexus that relates to my field research. The ultimate goal of this thesis will be to tie context, theory and field observations together in order to understand the forces that promote or impede social activity. The following section outlines the specific issues that will be addressed in this thesis and will ultimately lead to my main thesis statement.

1.2.1 Noetic Focus

In order to direct any form of social research, there must be a perception of a critical issue based on the experiential and intellectual knowledge of an observer. This section briefly outlines the specific context of what will be discussed in this thesis.

1.2.1.1 *Historical Context*

Mexico has a long history of social and economic development and crises that have penetrated all layers of the social fabric of national life. The resulting struggles have been characterised by emergent movements for social change that have challenged the dominant autocratic power structures of the state and elicited new forms of social construction. Historically, social movements in Mexico have manifested in several different forms bringing about outright revolution and civic revolt as well as more docile, yet intellectual forms of protest to improve the democratic integrity of the national culture.

Indigenous cultures have long been at the centre of these social struggles having born the brunt of colonial injustices, the manner of their marginalisation evolving over the centuries. Their grievances stem from discriminatory educational programs, economic incapacitation and assimilationist political projects that have negated the native meso-American cultures. Furthermore, land takeovers have relegated indigenous communities to remote mountainous locations while development strategies designed to feed the metropolitan centres of Mexico and the world have imposed ever-changing agro-technology, exhausted arable land, deforested dense jungles and introduced non-nutritious junk foods and alcohol that also create large amounts of garbage. These foreign incursions have affected the most basic elements of indigenous culture economically by limiting the

availability of natural resources for native use, politically by structurally excluding indigenous people from the dominant power centres and culturally by challenging and breaking the social bonds that keep communities cohesive. However, indigenous groups in Mexico, and above all the *Huichol*, have conserved elements of their culture that are traditionally ceremonial and in harmony with the natural environment despite the threatening pressures of capitalist society to assimilate to individualistic consumerism. Moreover, there is a significant concern in Western culture over the sustainability of the dominant economic paradigm both environmentally and socially as the global economy continually increases its exploitation of natural resources and labour. Many indigenous populations still contain knowledge and spiritual views which are based in a connection with natural cycles that can contribute to changes in dominant occidental society. Consequently, it is important that the development of indigenous educational proposals recognise and link local knowledge that the native people have built, and use these elements in the search for a new society where cultural differences are valued and the natural environment is not destroyed.

Contrary to the maintenance of meso-American traditions, formal youth education has long been a highly centralised institution that has been imposed on the remotest indigenous villages of Mexico. *Benito Juarez*, a former president and *Indio*, was the first leader to implement a centralised education policy in the 1870s. The intention was to assimilate the two dominant ethnic groups, Indian and Spanish, into one homogenous *Mestizo* culture. Teachers were trained in Mexico City and positioned in remote areas, armed with textbooks and a set curriculum to solidify a single Mexican identity. This process was indicative of 'nation-building' policies that were proliferating throughout Latin

America. Ultimately, *Indio* populations have existed in a strict structural relationship with the elite *Mestizo* classes. While these cultures evolved over the years, their relationship to each other changed very little. In fact, ancient indigenous cultures are largely extinct today due to their close relationship and resulting subservient interactions with the *Mestizo*, but the sense of inferiority still remains. The term '*Indio*' even has a negative connotation among native cultures to the point of being an insult. The lowest form of *Indio* is that of impoverishment and dark skin.

It is from this backdrop of persistent marginalisation, including the past twenty years in which the political landscape of Mexico has gone through unprecedented change, that the youth education programs arose in the selected indigenous communities of central Mexico. Global forces, external to the federal government, have exacted significant changes in the economic and political governance of the country. Economic liberalisation and an increased public awareness of social imbalances have required the ruling elite to alter the way it grips power. It is under these new economic circumstances and increased social transparency that indigenous groups are attempting to recreate their own social structures largely through education.

1.2.1.2 *Local Context*

The highlands of the *Sierra Madres* in central Mexico are home to several indigenous cultures including the *Huichol*. Their existence is largely based on meagre subsistence agricultural practices. They have occupied these lands throughout the history of Mexico as a nation, being pushed there by landowners connected to the Mexico City elite who needed the prime fertile lands, mostly for cattle grazing. The *Sierra Huichol* is a

harsh, dry mountainous region that borders four states in central Mexico and is occupied by a scattering of *Huichol* villages and hamlets. Today, the *Huichol* continue to face social, economic and political pressures from the outside world. These forces are powerful and are entering the community in several incipient forms. Their struggles, which take the form of cultural preservation in the economic and political spheres, are also a fight to prevent the impoverishment and immiseration of the people as has been experienced by other like indigenous groups in Mexico and around the world.

The *Huichol* are an important point of reference in the indigenous movement in Mexico for increased cultural, economic and political rights. Therefore, social initiatives that take place in the *Sierra* have an impact, not only within the *Huichol* community, but also on other indigenous communities throughout the country. Community leaders in the *Huichol* territories are very concerned with their cultural preservation and are undertaking several projects to buffer the impending influences of global capitalism. The *Huichol* maintain a form of social organisation based in spiritual beliefs connected with their natural environment that were formed as a part of a broader meso-American culture hundreds of years before the Spanish colonisers arrived in the middle of the 16th century. Since the arrival of the Spaniards an omni-present characteristic of *Huichol* existence has been one of cultural survival, which has been remarkably successful largely due to their resolve to remain connected to the land and Gods that give them life and to the remoteness of the community high in the rugged mountains of central Mexico.

One of the recent strategies the *Huichol* have used to combat external social pressure has been to create bi-cultural education programs that incorporate traditional and occidental pedagogies for the youth of the community. The heart of these programs is in

their centeredness in the community, in spite of being recognised by the state bureaucracy. All the teachers come from the community, the class subjects to be taught are determined by the community and the curriculum is formed with *Huichol* language, culture and history at the centre. These strategies have been designed to meet and understand external cultural pressures so that they can be managed and filtered in order to protect the fabric of their culture that binds the people together and provides the best environment for the development of their culture. Furthermore, other indigenous groups have expressed interest in *Huichol* education practices with the possibility of the schools becoming a model for other indigenous communities throughout Mexico and Latin America.

Despite being a small population, *Huichol* communities are not homogenous. A main component of my research was to compare and contrast how education programs are operating in differing villages in the *Sierra Huichola*. External influences on cultural, economic and political activity in the *Huichol* region vary largely according to the physical distance between a *Huichol* settlement and *Mestizo* towns. Some *Huichol* villages have electricity and running water, others do not. Some *Huichol* villages are serviced by paved roads and a public bus system, but most are not. As a result, the *Huichol* villages located closer to the outside world have already seen their culture become radically changed where their altered economic and political structures have been accompanied by a deterioration of the language and traditional ceremonies.

The analysis of the local context of the *problematique* (chapter 4) will recognise the unique conditions of *Huichol* culture. The particular circumstances of one community may have little relevance to other like communities, which frustrates any attempt to completely understand the nature of the youth education programs with universalistic

explanations. The grassroots character of these programs is dependent on the initiative and leadership of the people who direct the community politically and economically. It is simply one local situation in a diverse world. It is the nature of these micro-level interactions to produce changes according to the external pressures exerted on the community and the internal fortitude to forge change. The unique circumstances of one community often make their strategies incommensurable with other small communities. However, similarities between locales cannot be excluded, such that social links and political networks between communities, when formulated, can provide a broader umbrella to insulate or filter external social pressures.

Due to the amorphous nature of theorising subjective experiences, collecting empirical data is much messier than doing broad macro analyses. Field research was crucial to getting a sense of what was motivating local *Huichol* initiatives. In this dissertation I outline their motivations for creating new youth education programs and how they connect with the broader movement for cultural, economic and political rights. Being a marginalised population for so long there are still many obstacles to overcome in order to meet development challenges _ not least of which are reforming national policies that negatively impact the ability of the community to meet its goals as well as educating local actors who have the skills to manage the pressures exerted by mainstream society. The education programs in question address both of these issues through the incorporation of a Western-style skills based curriculum while objectively learning traditional customs and economic practices. This thesis will investigate the nature of these nascent programs and their effect on the development landscape of rural, indigenous Mexico.

1.2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

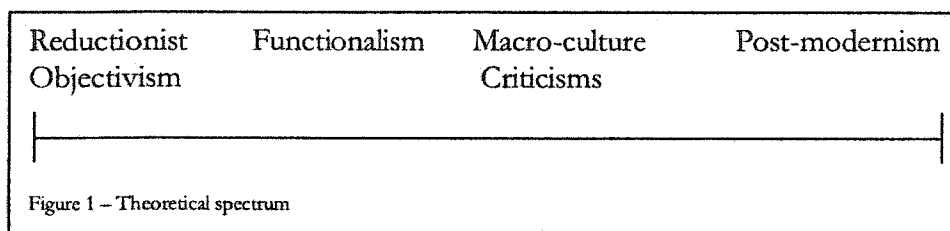
It has now been established that the unique circumstances of the youth education programs in the *Huichol* communities of central Mexico provide an interesting locus for development analysis. The next section will outline the theoretical perspectives that contribute to an explanation of the *problematique*. That is, 'why' and 'how' have these education programs come into existence?

1.2.2.1 *Development Discourse*

The main intent of my thesis project is to present an analysis of indigenous education initiatives in Mexico in the context of development studies. The empirical data that I locate will be framed in such a way that it will support or refute broader development debates. I have chosen to approach the issue of development as discourse, rather than a specific concept. Ideas, concepts and words in regards to development have formed, evolved and been co-opted. So much so that it is possible that concepts such as 'civil society' or 'community' have different meanings depending on the perspective of the author. This often misleads the reader. As a result, I intend to address the development concepts that are relevant to the research and describe them specifically in order to avoid ambiguity in the conceptions I am trying to communicate.

Development theorists fill a broad epistemological spectrum; one end projects highly reductionist objectivism which blends into concrete forms of functionalism through to macro-culture criticisms and eventually the idealist pole of postmodernism (figure 1). I will attempt to transcend these epistemological perspectives in my analysis depending on the time/space relationship of the data. On the one hand, broader theories of reductionist

objectivism that lean toward universalism paint broad strokes over social reality under given circumstances, but tend to ignore diverse cultural shifts over time in response to the initial parameters.



Theorists from this school are searching for a universal reality. As a result, competing theories end up playing a game where the rules are rather fixed as they contend for that one truth. On the other hand, the extreme cultural relativism of post-modernism recognises a constantly changing, infinitely diverse and subjectively incommensurable global reality. Different realities equate with dissimilar truths. Consequently, rules are thought to be made by those with social power and discourse is ultimately controlled. Therefore, the key to successful development is to focus on the local and avoid grand theories of social construction. However, this school of thought, in choosing to ignore the structures, networks and social bonds that somehow allow humans to organise themselves on a global scale, limits the agency of the marginalised to scale-up deal with the real macro-pressures that are imposed on them by other cultures. Social discussion in the fields of social movements and education both fall into the same spectrum. Due to the broad and extensive literature in these areas, I will be looking for a theoretical union between the three disciplines of development, education and social movements.

1.2.2.2 *Education*

Analyses of ‘why’ and ‘how’ education exists are largely centred around the role of the state. ‘Formal’ education is generally perceived to be a process of cultural unification directed by state control. Therefore, political leadership and critical academic literature frequently address the nature of formal education from a macro perspective, resulting in the reductionist tendency to objectively universalise the processes taking place. ‘Nonformal’ education is a form of education that operates outside the realm of the state, lending to the sense that it is the anti-thesis of formal education. Due to the diversity of nonformal education programs and their proximity to those who have been socially marginalised, subjectivity undoubtedly plays a greater explanatory role in describing what nonformal education programs are and how they form. Less theorised is the concept of ‘informal learning’ due to its virtually pure subjective nature. This type of learning is still dominant in respect to formal learning opportunities in many traditional societies.

A crucial component of this thesis project is to relate the parallel theoretical justifications and criticisms in the education literature to what is happening in the youth education programs in the communities in question as education and learning shifts to formal and nonformal methods. Furthermore, I will link this analysis with concepts of social mobilisation for social change to arrive at the nature of development taking place.

1.2.2.3 *Social Movements*

For analytic purposes in this study, theories of social mobilisation were used to link the sociological perspectives of education to ‘development’ discourse and debates. The questions of ‘why’ and ‘how’ social movements unfold are at the roots of this

theorising. Understanding who has control over educational structures, whether it is the state or local leadership, proves to be very informative as to the nature of social change taking place both locally and within mainstream society. Structural analysis and post-modern critiques, although epistemological opposites, provide the poles of thought for the forum of discussion to determine the social forces and processes, as well as the agency for change, behind social movements. Ultimately, I will use the education initiatives in the *Huichol* communities as a model for how the scaling-up of social movements is occurring under the structural context of why these programs came into existence.

1.3 Methodology

The main, broad goal of my study was to investigate the conditions and motivations for creating youth education programs that had been developed from within a community in the face of other education programs offered by the state. The programs initiated by the *Huichol* fit this description. Therefore, I set out to understand and explain why these schools formed in the context of the cultural, economic and political environment in which the *Huichol* find themselves within broader Mexican and global society.

To achieve this goal I had a series of objectives to realise in my field research. First, I familiarised myself with my host organisation, the *Unidad de Apoyo para Comunidades Indigenas* (UACI), since they have significant influence in regards to consultation and facilitation of projects in *Huichol* communities. This process involved getting to know the individuals who work with the *Huichol* (including one *Huichol* lawyer) and more specifically with those who contribute to the education programs. Furthermore, I

had to understand the mission and objectives of the UACI. The UACI works in support of internal projects in indigenous communities in the state of Jalisco as well as work on behalf of *Huichol* and *Nahua* communities in negotiations with the state and private institutions.

Second, I researched the Mexican literature both on the indigenous condition in Mexico and on *Huichol* history and culture. This information, for practical reasons, could only be accessed from the University libraries and book stores in Guadalajara and provided a deeper knowledge of the background of education in *Huichol* communities.

The third objective was to visit *Huichol* communities in order to get a personal understanding of how the communities were socially organised and visit the schools in question. This experience allowed me to communicate personally with the people who are involved in preserving *Huichol* culture and directly observe the positive and negative consequences of having a radically new mode of youth education in the communities.

Fourth, I conducted interviews with people associated with indigenous education that work outside of the community. This resource included academics, NGOs and government agencies that all have a stake in various education projects in different parts of the *Sierra Huichola*. These participants all contribute to the dynamic changes that are taking place with youth education in *Huichol* communities.

1.3.1 Methodology and Implementation

The methodology for this research project required a significant amount of flexibility in order to gather the information I needed. The remoteness and traditional nature of *Huichol* culture has attracted academics for many years. The *Huichol* have seen many foreigners enter their land in order to change them under several different guises

since early colonial times. Military invasions, religious missions, ranchers in search of land, development experts and anthropologists have all tried to expand their individual pursuits by exploiting natural resources on *Huichol* lands and manipulating their culture. Despite these incessant incursions, the *Huichol* have been able to maintain a close connection to the land and to a concomitant spiritual perception that is leery of occidental civilisation's historical destruction of alternative methods of social management that are not based on economic advancement. As a result, the *Huichol* only allow official academic research to take place once permission has been granted in a lengthy process that culminates in a consensus at a regularly scheduled, but infrequent community meetings. Since my time was limited, I had to accept the fact that the bulk of my research would have to come from outside the community. In the end I do not think this limited or compromised the depth of the research. There has been a significant amount of research done on *Huichol* culture in general, and more specifically on the youth education initiatives, by the academics and institutions involved in the implementation of various projects.

My methodology, therefore, focused on two different but complementary dynamics. One point of focus was involved in investigating the impacts of the new youth education programs within the community, while the second was concerned with the activities of people working outside the community that connected the *Huichol* initiatives with the broader movement for more acceptable cultural, economic and political rights in Mexico.

1.3.1.1 *External Data Collection*

A significant and crucial aspect of my research involved accumulating, reading and analysing literature about *Huichol* history and culture as well as essays and journal articles about contemporary projects. These sources provided a wealth of information, but they tended to be very descriptive in nature and lacked in analysis. However, I used this information in order to analyse the data previously collected and connected it with the theoretical literature of the social sciences. I used three main sources to gather information, namely the libraries and the University of Guadalajara, the ITESO and at the UACI. I also found several relevant books at bookstores that supply the universities in Guadalajara.

To deepen my research on external sources I also accessed government web sites that outline government policies in regards to indigenous education. This information rounded out the literature that was available concerning youth education in the *Huichol* region.

1.3.1.2 *Ethnographic Observation*

This anthropological technique of gathering information provided a significant and crucial aspect of my research. I was provided an opportunity to visit and integrate myself into a *Huichol* community as an English teacher through a UACI project. Despite the fact I could not conduct formal research through personal or group interviews, the community leaders were aware of my research objectives. I was able to use my time in the community to get a rudimentary understanding of *Huichol* culture and participate directly in an education project. This time proved to be very valuable both from a research perspective and as a personal experience. Through my teaching I was able to interact directly with

students and learn about their goals and perspectives as well as their motivations for undertaking formal studies. Furthermore, my time outside of the classroom was spent talking with community members (including the village shamen and parents) as well as teachers and students from other schools in the village. I was able to witness the rapid changes that are taking place in the village and hear directly from the people about their concerns and aspirations in this time of social transformation.

Throughout my time in the community I meticulously took notes, both in private and in the presence of others. Interestingly, after reading the comments of one of the teachers in a journal article, I found that some community members were suspicious of foreigners that spent time writing in private, thinking that when the researchers write in this fashion they are concocting lies in order to progress their own individualistic objectives. As a result, I wrote in my journal out in the open and frankly discussed my observations with those who cared to ask. This proved to be a very fruitful exercise as it stimulated conversation and created a bond of trust between myself and some of the community members.

1.3.1.3 *Personal Interviews*

A large portion of my research took place in Guadalajara interviewing people directly involved with youth education programs in the *Sierra*. These interviews included the directors of individual programs from the communities, UACI participants in charge of education, ITESO participants involved in their own programs, *Huichol* activists living outside of their native community, government officials in the Secretariat of Education, anthropological researchers and *Huichol* university students. These interviews provided

information regarding the nature of the programs and their impact on the communities as well as how these programs connect with external advocates within the broader indigenous movement for cultural, economic and political rights.

1.3.1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the research project I was continuously evaluating the information I had received and adjusted my research methods. I was faced with obstacles described earlier concerning the inability to conduct formal research while in the field. Furthermore, as I learned more about the situation I was able to adjust the nature of my questions and present a more educated series of questions in the interviews. I received a good response from all those I interviewed and found the exchanges to be mutually beneficial.

1.4 Thesis Statement

This thesis will show that the cultural, economic and political structures of Mexico have marginalised indigenous people since the beginning of the colonisation period of the 1500s (Chapter 3). This marginalisation process has been carried out ‘explicitly’ by the dominant culture which has objectively made the cultural, economic and political existence of indigenous cultures secondary; and ‘implicitly’ by not ever permitting a social buffer to form that would filter out negative influences on their cultural, economic and political identities. Indigenous youth education programs, such as those being carried out by the *Huichol* and their civil society advocates in central Mexico, have ostensibly been created to provide such a buffer with the long term aim of preserving traditional modes of social organisation, as well as managing their own social change. It will also be demonstrated

that these programs are, on the one hand, creating, solidifying and growing a social base that is linking with established movements for social change and are, on the other hand, capable of challenging the broader economic and political activities of the state, while maintaining a locally historic cultural integrity. Therefore, community-based youth education initiatives are a necessary component of the broader efforts of indigenous people in Mexico to achieve more autonomy and manage social change.

1.5 Structure of Argument

This thesis has three major chapters that are book-ended by the introduction and conclusion. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical concepts and vocabulary that are used in the analysis of *Huichol* formal youth education programs. This theoretical framework has three main foci: development, education and social movements. Each of these elements has extensive bodies of literature. Therefore, I will outline a synthesis of the literature in order to link each of the themes.

Chapter 3 is a description of the context of the study. I begin with a history of the social structures of Mexico including the forms of domination and struggle that marked this era. This sketch will be augmented by looking at moments in history that relate to this thesis. One component will be an outline of formal education within the Mexican state which will be followed by a glance at the impositions, actions and resistance of indigenous cultures throughout Mexican history. Finally, this chapter will hone in on the history and complexities of *Huichol* culture by outlining and contrasting their traditional methods of social organisation with the haunting shadow of an incipient occidental culture.

Chapter 4 is a more specific account of current life in the *Huichol* village of *Tateikita*, especially that of students involved in nascent education programs initiated by the community. This information arose from the field research I conducted over a ten week period in the summer of 2003. This chapter outlines the social changes taking place in the village, both in response to the encroachment of external culture, as well as in response to having new methods of youth education. I will enhance this information with data recorded in other parts of the *Huichol* territory and other indigenous communities in Mexico. Furthermore, information gathered through individuals working as advocates for *Huichol* education lend to a depiction of how the education initiatives link with the broader movement for cultural, economic and political rights of indigenous people in Mexico. The conclusion of this chapter is a discussion of the previous chapters in an attempt to link the analytical framework laid out in Chapter 2 and the data outlined in Chapter 4 within the context described in Chapter 3. It is essentially a broad summary of the thesis.

The final chapter is the conclusion. I found that the information gleaned from the research supported my original thesis statement demonstrating that managing social change through locally led education initiatives are crucial in creating, solidifying and growing a social base that is able to link with established movements for structural change by challenging the broader economic and political activities of the state.

CHAPTER 2

Development Discourse and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Essentially, in philosophical terms, 'development' is about managing social change and is universal in the sense people plan and work to better their lives. Beyond this statement, there are several perspectives of what development is and how it takes place. Coming from the West, the concept of development is intimately tied with economic growth and stability. However, despite concerted efforts by Western governments to facilitate development in less wealthy nations, the percentage of people living in poverty and hunger are at unprecedented highs. This predicament has created a complexity in the global development process that makes the intentions of development theorists difficult to explicitly define and, more importantly, awkward to justify. Global sociological forces based in contemporary neo-liberal ideology are pushing the extremes of this dialectic. Poverty, the residue of modernity, is more prevalent than ever with 1.3 billion people living in severe poverty (UNDP 2001); yet, today there has never been more intense pressure to continue with the modernisation of human society. Since this thesis addresses fundamental issues of development through the experience of a marginalised group of people, I have given some space to discuss the issues and vocabulary relevant to the case study.

It is extremely difficult for distinct cultures to isolate themselves from external pressures. This is largely due to the fact that there are six billion people trying to share a finite amount of space and resources. Also, it is important to note that modern

communications disseminate information and knowledge at unparalleled rates. Human relations have never been more complex. In time immemorial, the extent of an individual's interaction with other people and awareness of the past depended on how far a person could travel by foot and the stories they heard. News of critical events would take days or weeks to reach those few who had the power to make decisions. Today, people can communicate instantly at the click of a mouse. Television journalists report on crucial events, such as wars, as they take place making the world an immediate and open forum for debate and reflection. However, the broadcasting of visual perspectives does not offer a radical scope for analysing diverse realities. The media is a favoured tool of communication used by the powerful to propagate a narrow agenda. As a result, people in dominant cultures cannot embrace a more equitable world because vague language and filtered knowledge cloud their window to the world. According to Ivan Illich (1980),

“... just as the commons of space are vulnerable, and can be destroyed by the motorization of traffic, so the commons of speech are vulnerable, and can be easily destroyed by the encroachment of modern means of communication.”

Due to this ambiguity of language in conjunction with diverse social realities, the objective process of development has become a discourse rather than a universal concept – an interesting paradox. This chapter will highlight relevant development constructs in order to clarify meaning and intent as well as outline a theoretical framework based in theories of education and social movements to support and/refute findings in the case study.

The first section of this chapter will deal with epistemological perspectives of social perception. These viewpoints have two distinct poles; one pole being the scientific paradigm of realism where theories compete for one objective truth; the other pole being a

post-modern approach that reifies diversity and eschews objective explanations of reality in favour of subjective narratives upon which knowledge is based. The second section outlines several key concepts common to development theorising. Each of these conceptions is relevant to the social situation in the *Sierra Huichola*. Finally, I will outline the theoretical issues concerning education and social movements to provide a framework of analysis for my field research.

2.2 Epistemological Perspectives

Since this thesis is ultimately an analysis of a 'development' issue, I will outline the epistemological perspectives that dictate the discourse of development. These schools of thought also flow through the other sociological disciplines used in this dissertation: education and social movements. The dominant approach to development in the modern context is a reductionist project based in the scientific method. Neo-liberalism is a vision of a world that produces goods efficiently and exchanges them simply on unhindered international markets. Individual rights and property are protected through the rule of law. Individuals are encouraged to act in their own self interest, which, in the macro picture, leads to the betterment of society. The role of the state becomes that of an enforcer, protecting individual rights while pressuring nonconformist societies to reform their social organisation and realise the benefits of a 'free' society that only capitalism can provide. It is considered to be taboo for governments to enter the realm of business since bureaucracies are inefficient producers of goods; private interests manage the intricacies of the market eminently more effectively. The magic of the market is the mechanism that will

ultimately disperse the proceeds of economic growth throughout the population as production at the micro level becomes increasingly more diverse and efficient.

Opposition to this grandiose plan is widespread throughout the globe. However, these disagreeing masses are largely unorganised and fragmented and do not offer plausible solutions on the large scale. Capitalism's historical counterpart had been socialism. These two ideologies dominated the geo-political landscape for most of the twentieth century, competing with each other to garner the faith of states that popped up all over the so called 'Third World'. This competition for the human imagination essentially took place on the same epistemological scale by claiming to improve the human condition through social policy based in realism. Capitalism won the battle of the ideologies. The socialist alternative came crashing famously down in the late 1980s and today has little theoretical ground on which to stand. Western society seized this victory with fervour, centred the pressure of its virtue upon less-fortunate nations and demonised the obligation of the state's inherent responsibility for social welfare. Multinational organisations broadened their influence, privileged with the backing of extraordinary wealth and military power. The authority of this capitalist system ran largely unchecked for a decade through the 1980s, yet the underbelly of the insidious beast was beginning to show. Millions of people on the bubble of capitalist centres have visions and dreams for material prosperity, seemingly tangible on their ubiquitous, inexpensive television screens and magazine pages. Yet, inequality still widens, poverty spreads and discontent grows. People in diverse positions are working in the cracks of capitalism, forming bonds in increasingly chaotic and dire circumstances.

Alternatives to the seemingly omnipresent neo-liberal agenda have arisen on a fundamentally different epistemological scale. It is thought that the mechanisms of development, from the social perspective, should increasingly be pushed down, out of direct need, to the local level. This would imply a modicum of autonomy for social organisation at diverse local centres. However, it is difficult for broad-based power centres to de-centralise their power. International organisations and federal governments, who claim to have the interests of the poor and weak at the heart of their policies, tend to degrade the essence of grassroots movements since the powers that be maintain control over funding. Consequently, those individuals and communities who have been left out of, or do not wish to join, the neo-liberal version of the modernisation process have had to devise plans for their own development in spite of the state. The business community, led by multinational and transnational corporations, favours this liberal philosophy, as it is able to eschew the responsibility for paying for social services. Since political decisions are essentially made in the interest of the business community, the state has taken the role of appeasing the greater portion of the population largely through the co-optation of language that was originally formed to express the needs and wants of grassroots movements. The struggle that exists today, and which continues to grow, is between national governments intimately linked to global structures and the desired autonomy of people marginalised from the dominant structures who see little hope in the contemporary globalisation agenda. From this context, I will briefly outline the philosophical perspectives that wrestle to shape and guide the various types of micro, meso and macro development activity.

2.2.1 Reductionism

A reductionist perspective of social life is dominated by the search for an objectifiable reality. Based on a scientific (alternatively mechanistic, Newtonian, technocratic, empirical, Euclidian or positivistic) paradigm, reductionism is a school of thought that investigates information in order to find stability in knowledge and concrete explanations of culture. Capitalist and socialist thinkers both fall into this category by attempting to break reality down into its parts in order to understand the working of the whole. Through this scientific process, humans separate themselves from nature and, therefore, attempt to conduct a mastery over it. Essentially, the world gets divided into separate cultures, species, environments and countries, each to be studied on its own. This type of thinking follows the path of the predominant monotheist religions that reduce fundamental reality to 'One'. There is little focus on diversity and linkages. Consequently, in the social realm, divisions and borders are accepted as preordained. The nation-state is seen as the central actor governing these objectifiable dominions where the governments of the state make social policy. Therefore, political aspirations are frequently and increasingly devoted to holding state power. Moreover, economic motivation is the defining feature of the individual. For the purposes of the discussion in this thesis in regards to social change in indigenous communities, a reductionist methodology helps locate specific external cultural, economic and political factors that exact pressure and influence decision making in smaller communities.

Sociologically, the functionalist approach is essentially the school of thought based in reductionism that best explains how the concept of development has evolved to its current pragmatic mainstream form. Borrowing from the natural sciences, social science

attempts to analyse societies as biologists study organisms. It generally confers a realist interpretation of 'modern' social organisation that is teleological in nature. Society, in intellectual terms, is dissected into specific functions that can, in turn, be studied as to their contribution to civilised order within an easily identifiable state. The state is the arbiter of the polity, yet society is thought of as an independent entity that is external to human agency such that society shapes people and cannot be changed by them. Ultimately, society is deemed to be greater than the individual to the extent that it controls and dictates how people should act through 'socialisation'. In this regard, society can be known and understood through empirical observations and scientific studies that determine 'social facts' such as moral systems and collective values.

The structuralist approach to development, rooted in classical Marxism, offers a universalistic critique of what is occurring in contemporary capitalist societies. Human beings are deemed to behave with a fundamentally economic instinct. In the capitalist system, the population can be identified according to their ability to access the means of production. A class system has resulted whereby those who control capital dictate the political arena, marginalising those who do not have significant economic power into a state of underdevelopment. The state, in this context, is regarded as the mechanism for maintaining the status quo; that is, one of elitism and dependency. Essentially, structuralism has a deterministic philosophy such that objective processes establish the principles and ideals by which people live. This general epistemological conception of social evolution is similar to that of functionalist thinking. The social world can be studied and known with grand theories in the same way nature can be explained. This method of understanding the world leads to dichotomous perceptions that subsume diversity under

basic themes such as man/nature, nature/culture, mind/body, self/other, public/private, reason/emotion, primitive/complex, bourgeois/proletariat _ the list is infinite (Hale 1995, 502). Coming from a reductionist viewpoint, structuralism also has a solution to the ills of capitalism, namely revolution by the seizing of state power which will ultimately lead to a centrally planned economy.

2.2.2 Post-modernism

Post-modernism is a tricky concept to define since it is used differently depending on the context. It began in the realm of art and literature in the 1950s (Rosenthal 1992). Later, the term was embraced as a philosophical creed by French intellectuals such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard who critiqued modernity from the perspective of a subjective epistemological base, spawning an era of post-modern social analysis. This theoretical scrutiny targeted the meta-narratives of reductionist thinking that attempt to explain social patterns underneath the chaotic appearance of diversity, contingency and confusion (Hale 1995). Cultural realities are deemed to be incommensurable such that social reality is told in diverse stories from the multiple perspectives of, *inter alia*, class, ethnicity and gender about the subject positions of individuals and small groups.

From a development perspective, post-modern thinking rejects grand-narratives of Marxism and Liberalism as plausible theories for governing human interaction. Rather, as Munck (2000) elaborates, global society is in an era of socio/economic/cultural dispensation where there are no global answers in an arena of political disenchantment and fragmentation. Susan Eckstein (2001, 353) proffers that post-modern thinkers focus largely

on “local resistance and local variability because of disparately held beliefs and norms”. Ultimately, a post-modern explanation of human agency rejects all theories that imply universalism, homogeneity and objective Euro-centric discourse and favours mini-narratives that are situational, provisional and make no claim to universality.

For the purposes of analysis in this project, postmodernism offers a contradictory epistemological stance to that of functionalism and structuralism. Postmodernism questions the issue of what knowledge is, and how it is constructed. While thinking from the reductionist paradigm gravitates down through society exerting external pressures on diverse social groupings, post-modern thinking begins with a localised perspective that deals with the specific responses to external pressures in order to maintain cultural integrity. The successes or failures of one marginalised community to manage their own social change may or may not be relative to the social situation of another marginalised community that desires the same. The specific conditions in which people act are deemed to be constantly changing and the social actor is inseparable from their subject position (Touraine 1992). In other words, recognising subjectivity and not reifying structures should be the intellectual contribution toward democratic transformation.

2.2.3 Structuralist Response

The main point of contention for structuralists with critiques of post-modern social theory is that the discursive nature of post-modern thinking does not provide any relationship between the categories of analysis and the real world (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001). According to _i_ek (2000, 229), there exists in post-modernism “an unreflected gap between the descriptive and the normative”. As a result, post-modern thinking, as an

analytical framework, does not explain the dynamics of social and political struggles. Moreover, it fails the historically marginalised since the process of simple deconstruction does not actively speak for people who suffer oppression. In reducing all social relations into language games, post-modernism seems to deny the reality of experiences of the exploitation in colonialism. As Larrain (1994, 312) points out, sceptical stances such as those taken by post-modernists deny the possibility of solving societal problems or working toward a better future since opposition is paralysed. Marxist critics argue that an appeal to cultural relativism does not give the oppressed a voice when the only way to free people subjugated to colonial exploitation is through the transformation of the relations of power by using the discourse of the 'subject' to represent social consciousness as a resource that will strengthen the economic/social/political position of the previously oppressed (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001).

In regard to the ability of social actors to mobilise against repressive regimes, the structuralist school claim that a lack of objectivity in the post-modern analysis of social mobilisation has had detrimental effects on the poor by playing directly into the hands of the neo-liberal power brokers. By not recognising that social movements are embroiled in a modernist struggle of an economy dominated by capital, structuralists think that post-modern analyses have further weakened the ability of the poor to address the structural problems that dominate society. Furthermore, post-modern ideas that reject any notion of revolutionary global/national change, have implicitly accepted the neo-liberal, democratic capitalist framework (Uek, 2000). Tom Brass (1991) is particularly blunt about a perceived naivety of post-modern theorising toward by linking the post-modernists penchant for identity politics with the politics of the far right-wing. His focus on peasant

movements in Latin America concluded that the same language used in the post-modern project has been co-opted without opposition by the neo-populist rhetoric of explaining politico-ideological essentialism and identity. The power holders in these countries gladly use this language to mask their intentions and keep a previously contentious popular culture in check.

The challenge for the discussion of this thesis is to draw on the critical strengths of post-modernism while recognising its limitations pointed out by the structuralist perspective. To do a proper analysis, one cannot rely solely on the naïve idealism of the post-modernist claim that reality is simply a language game. I attempt to go beyond the closed circle of textual analysis to explore how the discourse is socially constructed and, importantly, how power relations are entrenched in these meanings. Post-modernism has shifted the study of culture and the subject from the periphery of analysis to centre-stage by highlighting presuppositions that have a human element. The meaning of words and ideas must be deconstructed to bring inherent assumptions about language to the surface in a process that politicizes and democratises the process of reading itself (Agger 1991, 114). The remainder of this chapter deals with clarifying the language of development discourse in order to proceed with the theoretical framework that will address the specific issues of the case study.

2.3 Development Discourse

The evolution of 'development' has partially been realised through a dialectical relationship between mainstream discourse of both the state and multinational organisations, and through alternative practices created on the fringes of global economic

centres. Development became a scientific project in the post World War II era as the United States, in the climate of Cold War politics, attempted to exert influence over industrially undeveloped countries. This process has had mixed results, but what it did do over the years was create a truly international/intercultural discussion of what development is and who should lead it. What has resulted is a jargon of often vague connotations which, at the macro level, make up the language of 'development speak'. The language of the World Bank, United Nations and Aid agencies of wealthy countries are laden with terms created out of the experience of development. However, these grand forces that incorporate the essence of popular reactions into mainstream policies ultimately corrupt the fundamental nature of micro-level development that was taking place. From the post-modern perspective, this is a language game; and it is facilitated, paradoxically, by the technocratic intellectuals who have the capability of disseminating ideas globally.

Structuralists see development speak as a barrier to social movements and development in general – in fact it is a phenomenon that creates underdevelopment. Bottom-up approaches for social change often become the subject of promotion by pre-existing government programmes, ultimately co-opting the language and corrupting the essence of grassroots development (Gow and Vansant 1983). Moreover, this transfer of language into the rhetoric of top-down structures centralises control over the discourse, which has been in the interest of many national governments wishing to maintain low-educated work forces. Multi-national industrial companies based in Western countries increasingly depend on the low wages that are provided by the millions of workers who have been displaced from their agricultural livelihoods in unindustrialised countries. The educated elite in countries of the South maintain their social status and freedoms by

exploiting the cheap labour in their countries, despite high levels of poverty in a large percentage of the population they are governing. By dominating political structures and controlling economic resources this elite in both rich and poor countries does not have a great interest in seeing the impoverished masses develop and share their wealth.

The following sections of this chapter will deal with specific concepts of development speak in three categories: mainstream dominated language, discourse of the local and co-opted concepts.

2.3.1 *Mainstream Dominated Language*

The first set of terms that frequent development discourse highlighted here, although seemingly innocuous, are largely used by Western leaders and corporate media to propagate the status quo. These terms are often perceived to be inevitable and indisputable. Therefore, their use has powerful consequences of control and manipulation.

2.3.1.1 *Democracy*

An outwardly promising strategy for development is the participatory/democratic restructuring of society that encompasses all levels of human organization from educational and social networks to the workplace and governmental agencies. However, contemporary methods of application tend to water down this definition and objectify issues according to the cultural experiences of the wealthy and powerful. The World Bank, for example, personifies this imperialistic process as it promotes democratic initiatives within its lexicon in order to justify its neo-liberal agenda to the masses. The fact that democratic participation is on the table at World Bank meetings is owed to the success of NGOs who

represent marginalized people in garnering enough influence from the objecting corners of civil society. The people striving for development need to have increased wariness of World Bank strategies and language as the neo-liberal world order seeks ways to maintain and strengthen their adherence to open markets and financial deregulation. Whatever strategies are adopted, critics must not fall into the trap of believing, for example, that people's participation in development/aid projects is the only key to successful social improvements. It may contribute to the subjective improvement of livelihoods in some cases; however, success in these projects is far from universal such that the structural obstacles that maintain marginality must continually be critiqued and addressed. If the resource base of the dominant powers can be weeded down enough through education and genuine participation in dealing with social change at the local level, the emergence of a democracy in a truer sense of the word may occur.

Another problematic in the discourse of democracy is the use of the term 'participation' by donor agencies such as the World Bank and central governments. This usage presents two problems. On the one hand, participation refers to the inclusion of the poor in donor projects. In reality, local participation takes on a superficial role in the project cycle. Development experts from the North dominate both the initial identification stage and the final evaluation stage of projects. Furthermore, local actors are involved in only approximately one third of the design stage and implementation stage (Long, 2001). Community participation is cursory in World Bank projects and should therefore be used with caution as a true grassroots process. On the other hand, the World Bank and central governments have touted government decentralisation as a vehicle for grassroots empowerment by increasing local participation in the political process. This presumably

democratic concept is also laden with obscurities. Power is often devolved down to the municipal level¹ rather than to what could be deemed as a real community, which would imply increased political participation of the poor (Ghirme 2000, Veltmeyer and Petras 2001). The connection between the two is spurious. As a result, the capacity of people to participate in the political process at the local level becomes watered down and is given little power to effect change on the larger structures. Rather, the issue of democratic empowerment is most efficiently addressed when internal power holders are accountable to their community as much as external political interests.

Bowles and Gintis (1988) further the discussion of contradictions that exist between the conceptions of what a democratic society is and what a capitalist society is. Political democracy is based on rights invested in the individual. The central problems for democracy concern how to maximise participation in decision-making, how to shield minorities against undue majority prejudice, and how to protect majorities against undue influence of an unrepresented minority. Conversely, capitalism is based on the principle of rights invested in property. The central problems are how to minimise participation of the majority (the workers), how to protect a specific minority (capitalists and managers) against the will of the majority, and how to subject the majority to the will of an unrepresentative minority. Governmentally led institutions like education get stuck in the middle of this paradox, highlighting the fact that levers of power can be objectively known and are a social space of contention.

¹ The municipality is considered to be an objective administrative unit for social organisation.

Relative to the study of education in *Huichol* communities, Ghimire (2000) points out that improved education and social awareness among the rural poor is the key to achieving an understanding of the nature of power relations and having the ability to articulate how resources could be used for the benefit of the community. However, this type of education is often contentious since it addresses the problem of power and how it is distributed. Traditional power-holders often do not relinquish this power easily. Yet, if existing power struggles can be overcome in the decentralization process resulting in the true democratisation of institutional activity, education is the basis from which long-run social standing and decision-making ability will form.

2.3.1.2 *Modernisation*

Functionalist thinking offers a well elaborated pole from which the concept of 'modernity' is debated. It begins with a conception of the parts of society such as the family as the root and grows into religion, education, and political and economic structures, all of which are investigated in terms of their functions or contributions to the whole system. Parsons (1978) outlines a system of control and communication within this hierarchy of human interaction. At the top of this chain is the 'cultural system' that comprises the beliefs, rituals, values and symbols (including language) that people use to guide themselves when answering questions about reality. Hale (1995, 327) points out that cultural systems are ultimately religious as human reality has to deal with the meaning of good and evil, and life and death. Furthermore, many societies share one cultural system such as a religion or economic order, while some broader societies embrace more than one cultural tradition.

Parsons, then, considers modernisation to be a progressive differentiation of structures where the role of the family recedes in favour of institutional management; a movement from the particular to the universal (Pieterse 1991). Economic activities, for example, move outside the home and into factories and offices. Societal integration is controlled by a legal system and political 'institutions', within which youth socialisation is largely carried out in schools run by the state. This distinction fundamentally separates traditional societies from those in modern advanced industrial societies since traditional societies are largely based on kinship and affective roles while modern societies are characterised by differentiation and the specialisation of roles (Hale 1995, 332). From a development or social change perspective, functionalist thinking conceptualises modernisation as natural societal evolution; that is, a unilinear process of differentiation and specialisation towards more complex and centralised organisation. From this logic, traditional societies are deemed to be backwards due to their antiquated cultural values and must embrace objective changes of economic and technological innovation similar to those of industrially developed countries in order to eliminate the cultural lag.

Neo-Marxism arose in the wake of the rich world's attempt to modernise apparently backward countries, which amounted to newer forms of colonialism. Their analysis of global structures attempted to expand on the functionalist description of modernity and explain why some societies are more advanced historically than others. As a political economy analysis, neo-Marxism shifted the focus from the internal organisation of poor countries to the functioning of the world economic system. The lack of modernisation and poverty were deemed to be systematically related to economic/political dependency within the structures of colonialism. This idea led to the popular conception

that Third World countries are not simply 'undeveloped', but are 'underdeveloped' (Frank 1972, 3). In other words, backward societies do not have the means to modernise because of their social position on the periphery of economic and political powers. Their resources have been plundered and their labour has been exploited _ factors that undermine the internal economy's ability to grow. Consequently, the remedy to this problem of dependency is to restructure the global economy by allowing previously disadvantaged countries to develop the sectors in which they have a competitive advantage by blocking imports and substituting them with locally produced goods. Epistemologically, this perspective of modernisation is comparable to capitalist development since it is the role of the state is to control this process.

Post-modernism, as its name implies, rejects the notion of modernity as a means of bettering peoples lives by 'deconstructing' its objective assumptions of history. Tetreault (2001) outlines these assumptions that have implicitly served as the foundation for Western society. First, post-modernism challenges whether science and reason can be applied to discover etiologically universal truths about the natural and social world. Second, it is deemed doubtful that these truths produced by the sciences can be manipulated to realise cultural, economic and political progress. Third, the discourse that has arisen from the modernity project to disseminate ideas is truly an objective representation of reality. Accordingly, modernisation is in essence social engineering from above and an exercise of political containment, rather than democratisation. Consequently, modernisation, as a social project to master and control human nature, is doomed to fail.

2.3.1.3 Globalisation

The concept of globalisation and its impact on social change in *Huichol* communities is important to grasp in order to recognise how youth education links with broader social mobilisation for improved cultural, economic and political rights. The perceived inevitability of global social integration has been a tool of the neo-liberal order to implement economic strategies that open all types of markets from commodities to arbitrage. Consequently, globalisation is frequently related to modernity. It is commonly perceived to be a shift in power from communities and nation-states to international institutions such as transnational corporations and multilateral agencies. Globalisation, as a project, is tied to the increasing transnationalisation of economic processes, where homogenisation trends are highlighted (Martinussen 1997, 120). Capitalist globalisation, a product of enlightenment philosophy that spawned an intellectual order (economics) to help understand the social nature of the world that is governed by individual rationality, is a unilinear deterministic model in which industrialised countries model the parameters towards which all other countries will evolve. These processes are seemingly dominated by markets, but it is crucial to note that there are spaces for the subaltern as well to interconnect and shape reality.

The idea of individual economic gain and the market forces which underlay it became so firmly rooted that Western mainstream society has come to vigorously affirm that *homo economicus* (economic man) is an eternal and omnipresent part of human nature. To moderate the argument, it should be noted that markets have always existed, whether they be exchanges between primitive tribes where or travelling merchant fairs of the middle ages. However, today the market system is not just a means of exchanging goods; it is a

mechanism for sustaining and maintaining an entire society. Heilbrenner (1992, 18), in what he calls an unplanned revolution, notes that liberal capitalism replaced two other methods of maintaining social order: tradition and authoritarianism. Tradition, which still governs many cultures in the unindustrialised world, hands down the varied, but necessary tasks from generation to generation according to custom and usage. Authoritarian rule ensures economic survival by the edicts of one authority and by penalties that a supreme authority sees fit to issue. In their place, capitalism has ripped apart the mould of custom and torn away the practicality of tradition with forces that continue to trickle into cultures that have managed to maintain communal forms of traditional social organisation.

By marketing the globalisation project, neo-liberal advocates have been very efficient at manipulating the imaginations of broader civil society into interpreting capitalist globalisation as an inevitable process. However, as the anti-globalisation title would indicate, contemporary discontent with global structures are positioned counter to the neo-liberal version of global social integration demonstrated by recent trends of social mobilisation at both a global and at a local level. From McMichael (1994, 278),

... globalisation is more fruitfully understood not simply as a patterned and restructured outcome, but also a mechanism of restructuring ... the essence of global structuring is precisely this differentiation. That is, we perceive globalisation as the subjection of historically uneven places to internationally competitive forces, where national regulatory systems have been eroded, creating social and economic disjunctures.

Also useful is Giddens (1990, 64) definition of globalisation “as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. Here globalisation encompasses a variety of processes and social actors, and therefore relates directly to local

transformations. Therefore, for purposes of discussion in this thesis, I treat contemporary globalisation as an influential top-down project that has a direct impact on localisation processes. Locality, in this sense, refers to not only a geographical notion, but also to a specific social space; the context in which social action acquires and reinforces specificity. From Van der Ploeg (1992, 21), locality and heterogeneity are being reconstituted, they are not simply repetitions of former expressions. They re-emerge as a repertoire of new, strategic responses to the now dominant tendencies and relations containing an undeniable 'blueprint' for homogenisation. In this sense, the analysis of the strategies and negotiations with which the *Huichol* respond to global social pressures will be a contribution to understanding the local expression of global restructuring. Wider economic and social development is not only determined by external social pressures, but also through the specific socio-historical situations from which social actors derive their strategies and add local meaning in response to globalisation processes.

2.3.1.4 *State/Nation*

The 'state' is a frequent reference point when studying the social dynamics of Mexico (outlined in Chapter 3). It is an essential mechanism in the modernisation process that arose out of feudal Europe in order to promote the ever increasing need for wealth form mercantilist trade. State sovereignty is an assertion of immunity from external involvement in the application of domestic power. It is a constitution of human imagination, yet its power envelops the identities of individuals into assuming a biological connection between what are fundamentally different cultures. Therefore, the state has long been the point of contestation of struggling interests. Marx's critique of the state as a

mechanism of the *bourgeoisie* to safeguard interests and property is still relevant today.

The state maintains social order and controls the potential for revolt by monopolising the legitimate means of force in society. It is important to note that, in this function, the state in a capitalist society is a separate entity that exists independently from the community.

This distinction divides groups of people geographically and organises them by making all property private (Hale 1995).

The acknowledgment of state sovereignty later developed to include the notion of 'nation'. Biglow (2001, 65), in his thorough description of education in the *Huichol* community of *Tateikita*, usefully incorporates the concept of nation into the definition of the state. He uses the definition of a nation as "an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up, manifested in a common culture." The key to this definition is the role of the political within the structure of the state, which claims to represent the 'nation'. Ultimately, the political element of the state tries to assume and shape the cultural continuity of the 'nation' by objectively linking and guiding what are otherwise diverse groups of people. As a result, the idea of a 'nation-state' becomes an acknowledged entity with certain rights along side its conceptual partner, the individual. The conundrum lies in how the ethnic group, or nation, should change its social functioning in order to influence, or even control, mainstream political power to retain their culture.

The role of the state in contemporary global culture has gone through some significant changes. However, the state remains, as is frequently argued, as the arbiter of justice on behalf of the interests of small elite. Formal social policy that drives social change from the top has been institutionalised in global structures managed by

organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Pieterse (2002, 1039) notes that, “[s]ocialisation has increasingly become the imposition of disciplinary regimes, as in IMF conditionalities, World Bank structural reform and WTO stipulations.” As a result, the individual state is subject to a broader power and is therefore not as independent as in the past. The ability of a government, such as that in Mexico, to manage social issues is diminishing since their domestic policies are subject to the scrutiny of an international bureaucracy. Furthermore, the struggles of marginalised people to grasp the reins of any sort of political control over the forces that shape their lives move further away, making their plight even more complex since their efforts require linkages with other actors fighting distinct local battles in different countries.

2.3.1.5 *Class*

One of the conundrums of social analysis deals with how actors react to social differentiation. It is fairly well recognised that the bases for socio-economic differentiation are found in economic structures that allow for the exploitation of natural resources and labour. Nevertheless, there are other cultural aspects that intercede in this process. While ‘class’ is still a regularly used tool of analysis in academia, its dominance has been watered down. Cultural attributes such as sex, age, education, familial structures and access to social networks are now frequently involved in explaining how capitalist structures marginalise people and why social movements form. Moreover, the analysis of social classes in rural indigenous areas is further complicated by the multiplicity of relations that are not directly tied to economic production such as kinship and ceremonial rituals.

The original Marxist conception of class arose out of the working conditions of the industrial revolution. Laclau (1985) outlines three main characteristics that described these traditional Marxist conceptualisations of social conflict. First, specific social structures determined the 'identity' of the agents of the people involved. These groups were labelled as 'peasant', 'bourgeois' or 'petit-bourgeois' which designated the social agent as a "referent and an assumed *a priori* principle of unity between the agent's various positions" (Laclau 1985, 28). Second, as a teleological/evolutionary concept, class determined the 'kind of conflict' in terms where the meaning of 'every' struggle became objectively identifiable. Therefore, the consciousness of the agent was deemed to be moot in the historical transformation from a traditional society to a mass society. Third, the plural nature of social conflict was reduced to a 'unified political space' based on a collective representation of interests. In this reductionist view, social classes existed independently of social knowledge and could be defined through an 'objective' identity. This identity was defined by external structural references that confined individuals into similar structural locations. This thinking follows from one of Marx's main tenets of 'historical materialism' where people in the process of social organisation enter into relations that are "indispensable and independent of their will" which are determined by the objective conditions of their social existence (Veltmeyer 1997, 160).

Recent analyses of social resistance have attempted to move beyond class in order to include *inter alia* ethnicity, language group and religion. Class may be applicable in some situations, but it is not the all encompassing factor of a Marxist's compositional analysis that describes structural forces while superseding the experiences and knowledge of people in the shaping of political interaction. Some theorists have pointed out objections

to this basic tenet of Marx in the context of contemporary society (Foweraker 1995; Melucci 1992; Slater 1994; Calderón et al. 1992). A post-modern approach outlined by these authors formulated arguments that have lent to the idea of 'new social movements' (NSM); a qualitatively different form of movement that requires updated tools for analysis. The theorising that took place about NSMs looked to either refine, or even to completely abandon, class analysis. Melucci (1980) offered an early critique in favour of a newly constituted approach to analysing the class struggle where class domination transcends the social realm of society. Consequently, social conflicts are not manifested in the realm of a single, objectively defined class. Melucci (1980), however, did not eschew the concept of class struggle all together since referents of oppression could be objectively recognised. His thinking simply called for a more in-depth analysis of the subjective nature of diverse of social struggles and the validity of identity as a motivating factor to mobilise centres of discontent. Despite the absence of a leading actor, which differs from economic actors in classical Marxism, NSMs could still be considered as having characteristics of class struggle.

Other authors have taken a much harder line on class analysis (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 2000). To them, capitalism in its current neo-liberal form is a global system from which only few people can escape. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 159) noted that there is virtually "no domain in life (individual or collective) which escapes capitalist relations". Many aspects of life have been modified that not only includes the labour market, but also other social relations that have been subjected to the whims of capital such as: culture, leisure, illness, education, sex and death. Laclau followed upon this initial analysis fifteen years later by stating that society is structured in an imperialist form such that,

“... crises at one point in the system create dislocations at many other points. This means that many sectors are threatened by the capitalist logic and antagonisms not necessarily related to the relations of production” (2000, 203).

As a result, diverse sectors of society are subject to marginalisation due to capitalist logic. Other identities have been added to the analysis in order to expand beyond the experience of class to include concepts such as race, gender and ethnicity among others. Laclau posited that class simply becomes one link on an ‘enumerative’ chain. However, the traditional notion of class in Marxist terms is supposedly universal and would therefore lose its meaning when incorporated into an enumerative chain. In other words, as an analytical tool class alone becomes a ‘floating signifier’ with no intuitive content.

Naturally, theorists from the structuralist perspective have responded to the intellectual inoculation of class analysis. _i_ek (2000) relates that the left, being disjointed in recent history, must find a new imaginary within the framework of class struggle as an alternative to capitalism in its current form. Ultimately, structuralists would like to see a “renewal of socialist praxis that link cultural autonomy and small-scale production with control over the strategic heights of the economy” (Petras 1997, 47). That is, there would be a re-constituted dialectical unity between marginalised actors and the imposed economic and political structures. Such groups “retain and develop Marxism in new circumstances adapted to new class actors engaged in novel types of struggle with the clear perspective of changing the national, if not the international, structure of political and economic power” (Petras 1997, 47). The poor and marginalised must be conceived as modern actors and catalysts for anti-systemic change (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001). According to Veltmeyer, it is from this perspective of comprehending and explaining the dynamics of social and political struggles, in the context of the omni-present neo-liberal order, that the recent post-

modern contribution of intellectual immobilisation and political demobilisation can be overcome (Veltmeyer 1997, 141).

2.3.1.6 *Marginalisation/Oppression*

The concepts of 'marginalisation' and 'oppression', while subtly different, have a symbiotic relationship that describe the psychological and structural existence of people who do not have access to the political levers and/or world view of the dominant culture. To be on the 'margins' of society implies a physical place or abstract social space disconnected from the mainstream, while being 'oppressed' indicates limitations in autonomy that are imposed down through the structures that distinguish these places and spaces. Hall (1999, 89) offers a useful definition of marginalisation as being;

“...the peripheralisation of individuals and groups from a dominant, central majority. Marginalisation is created through social structures that form boundaries (physical or geographical) that differentiate people. This differentiation gives power and control of knowledge to some and not others which limits the voice of the oppressed as they are silenced by the dominant myths.”

This definition implies that marginalisation is inclusive of oppression, but it is also the consequence of oppression. For Young (1990, 42), oppression refers to “structural phenomena that immobilises or diminishes a group”. Marginalisation and oppression are the results of unequal distribution of power, which often leads to exploitation. A major source of this powerlessness derives from the economic marginalisation of a large part of the population, but also from structural inequalities related to, for example, education, access to information and health care.

Marxist theory, being the cornerstone of most critical theory, emphasizes not only the economic exploitation, but also the dehumanising disregard for the worker's experience

and contribution to the world leading to *inter alia* malnutrition, starvation and substance abuse. The roots of resistance are found in the exploitation and alienation of the capitalist system. Alienation refers to the dehumanising character of unequal social relations. Freire (1984) does not limit the idea of dehumanisation to simply the oppressed. Humanisation and dehumanisation mark those who have had their humanity stolen, and in a different way, those who have stolen it. The oppressor is dehumanised because their behaviours dehumanise others. Consequently, oppression is domesticating since an oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Social policy which "... begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors and makes the oppressed objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanisation" (Freire 1984, 36). Moreover, this oppression is structural since dehumanisation, although a concrete historical fact, is *not* a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanises the oppressed.

Post-modern views resonate through the characteristics of marginalisation. A post-modern perspective sees the multi-experience of indigenous realities as an avenue for previously silenced groups to be heard. Hall (1999, 92) notes that marginalised people are different and are watched closely in society. Through the work of Foucault, Hall implies that marginalised people are more prone to be punished. "The network of power dominates social structures and extends punitive treatment to the marginalised even if they are not cognizant of their perceived deviance. Without being aware of it, a person's behaviour is shaped towards 'conformity'". Punishment in the case of indigenous cultures implies a

lack of power to shape their own reality, based on their historical world-view, not to mention their virtual inability to participate in the economic activities of the mainstream.

Deconstructing power structures affirms the existence of the marginalised. Yet, it should be recognised that the abstraction of the post-modern perspective fails to address the reality of the oppression. Simply claiming a valid marginalised reality detaches the local from others who are subjected to similar cultural impositions and does not allow for, as Freire (1984, 32) promotes, an objectively verifiable resolution to the contradiction of dehumanisation. Both Freire and Hall propose taxonomies of marginalisation/oppression that are useful in identifying the paradoxes in the case study of this thesis. Freire (1984, 43-47) offers the following characteristics of the oppressed: fatalism, indicating docility towards the historical and sociological situation; horizontal violence, demonstrating an attraction to oppressors; self-deprecation, highlighting the internalisation of the opinion that the oppressors hold of them leading to a feeling of inferiority, reliance on others to think for them and a lack of confidence in themselves; and finally dependency, which implies a lack of control over one's own life. Hall (1999, 98) tenders the following properties of marginalisation: exteriority, the condition of being outside the dominant system beyond societal protections and resources; constraint, denoted through entrapment in violent environments and physical intrusion; eurocentrism, signifying the pervasive ideology and interpretation of history that holds European and North American values and technologies as superior to those of exteriorised people; economics, involving the set of contingencies that affect marginalised peoples' access to resources of all kinds and the reductionist belief that economic development automatically brings social improvement; seduction, the manufactured desire for material objects and an unrealistic physical self-image which

hinders authentic reflection on socio-political and interpersonal life; and lastly hope, which in activist terms, reflects a positive view of the future based on concrete efforts toward socio-political transformation.

2.3.2 *Discourse of the Local*

After having outlined the theoretical concepts and terminology that arose from reductionist perspectives, I will now address concepts that have a more local flavour. It is not to say that these ideas do not have a macro connotation, but they simply have arisen to explain the diversity in which 'development' is taking place. From a theoretical perspective, these concepts have added a complexity to the arguments, that when used flippantly leads to ambiguity. On the one extreme, the post-modern perspective of the local denies any commensurability between cultures. Therefore, when language is used from this particularistic slant it is largely descriptive and focuses on the diversity of social organisation, rather than what is similar. On the other extreme, the reductionist outlook completely ignores the humanness that makes every culture distinct, and wraps social discussion within one constrictive blanket. Confusion, particularly at the policy level, becomes apparent when discussion takes place and the two perspectives interpret the same word to have two different meanings. What follows is a brief discussion of the local development concepts that relate to the tone of this dissertation.

2.3.2.1 *Identity*

The notion of identity is the most fundamental concept when theorising about human social interaction. Agency is carried out through the conduit of the individual and it

is through this agency that social groups form, rules and laws evolve, and institutions materialise. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how identity is formed in individuals and the role it plays in the abstract cultural formations. The consideration of identity as an object of social inspection has its foundations in social psychiatry. Abraham Maslow was one of the first philosophers to attempt a theoretical explanation of what he called 'self-actualisation'. There is some debate of the empirical validity of his theories, but his ideas chartered a course for other thinkers about the psyche that many still refer to today. His initial model, and most famous contribution, outlines a hierarchy of needs that an individual must pass through to reach self-fulfilment. The most basic of needs are those that contribute to the physical functioning of the body like food and water. The second level of achievement is a need for a sense of security and safety. Once this is achieved, the individual has a need for love and affection and a place in a group. Now in the emotional realm, the individual strives for self-esteem, self-respect and a feeling of adequacy and strength. Finally, the individual enters the domain of self-actualisation and self-fulfilment (Daniels 1982).

According to Maslow, once self-actualisation is attained there exists a freedom is self-expression since the individual has comprehended his/her own fundamental personality and the fulfilment of his/her potentialities. Moreover, the use of these capacities results in the tendency to be the most that an individual is capable of being (Daniels 1982). This process is entirely subjective and one of the reasons why Maslow had difficulty in fully developing a consistent and coherent theory of self-actualisation. The criticisms of his work noted that his model lacked an empirical base. However, this may simply reflect the complexity of the subject as a unit of analysis. It is a problem not uncommon to other

noteworthy subjective processes included in the field of development studies such as community development where analytical concepts fail to hold together as an explanatory narrative.

Contemporary theorising about identity has included the idea of external forces influencing the internal processes of becoming as outlined by Maslow. The base of individual selfhood is founded in the initial, and continuing, dialectic between the internal and the external. Jenkins (2000, 9) outlines this dialectic first by describing the internal and external processes of creating the self. The individual is constituted in an 'I' and 'me' distinction. "The 'I' is that active aspect of the self which responds to others. The 'me' comprises the attitudes and responses of significant others". This conceptualisation embodies the individual in a social setting. Jenkins labels this process as a 'categorisation' where self-image and public-image interact. Self-image is the way people see themselves and the way they would like to be seen by others. Public image is the more fearful attempt to comprehend how other people categorise the individual. Identification becomes a process of identifying with and through another object — an object of otherness. Essentially, identity in this context is about belonging, about what people have in common with some people and what differences they have with others. It is a sense of personal location — a stable core of individuality (Weeks, 1990).

As has been noted, the internal/external, self/group dialectic infers that categorised groups of people that are exposed to the terms of which another group defines it tend to internalise that categorisation as an element of its own self-identification. Jenkins (2000, 73) posits how this external categorisation becomes internalised within the individual in five possible scenarios:

- (1) If the external categorisation is the same as, or approximates to, an aspect of existing group identification, they will simply reinforce each other. Some external recognition is probably necessary for the successful maintenance of any group identification. This suggests that categorisations may be less likely to 'stick' if they differ markedly from existing identifications.
- (2) Long-standing, but relatively unproblematic, contact between groups may produce incremental and mutual shifts in identification. We may gradually and imperceptibly come to define ourselves somewhat differently in the light of how they appear to define us, and how they treat us (and vice-versa).
- (3) External categorisation may be received as legitimate, implying some shared political framework and understanding of authority.
- (4) The internalisation of an external categorisation may result from its imposition by power (physical force or its threat).
- (5) Finally, the categorised may resist. Striving for autonomy of self-identification, is, however, every bit an effect of categorisation.

Self-categorisation, as was outlined by Jenkins, demonstrates a dialectical process between external social forces and the subjective response to the external stimuli. Consequently, responses to external pressures vary depending on the strength of the structures and the social location of the marginalised.

Capitalism and socialism, both universalistic concepts, are the most extensively articulated and dominantly used social theories that have been operationalised, for the most part, in every country in the world. As a result, attempts to understand the nature of identity formation is not a new endeavour. It has been hidden in corporate advertising strategies that tap into the subconscious of individuals in order to infuse an identity connection between individuals and various products and services. Popular consumer culture is at the height of this trend. Many people around the world identify themselves with the shoes they wear, the team they support, the car they drive, or the music they like. A social hierarchy

has been established based simply on the consumer goods a person is able to possess. Culture has been commodified and, therefore, is valued based on what the 'market' interprets. Capitalists, in their contemporary mentality, have truly capitalised on the human psyche and are continually seeking out new markets. However, millions of people have been excluded from the benefits of this branch of capitalism, as well as other areas (industrial production, natural resource extraction or currency trading to name a few), such that these marginalised people are the roots of the system — steadfast in the Earth — feeding the upper limbs.

Despite being a theory that thrives on the macro-management of economic, and, consequently, social interactions, the most fundamental aspect of capitalist thinking revolves around the individual. This unitary actor is deemed to be a 'utility' maximizer, continually seeking out the best possible way to satisfy his/her material needs. This tacit assumption reduces a person into being an objectively defined consumer and producer that ultimately has little impact on the grander functioning of macro-economic activity. The 'invisible hand' and *laissez-faire* mentality are both considered to be the forces that guide a functionally efficient market. Therefore, economic activity must be managed with as little impact as possible to the free movement of goods and services. In political terms, liberal policies are generally managed by a right-wing agenda. The resulting policies, despite their promotion of individual freedom, tightly control who has access to sources of economic wealth and impose social values that allegedly heighten economic efficiency. Due to this propensity to impose control on society, the Right has a proclivity to appeal to the limits of the individual's personal fear and anxiety. At the centre of its hegemonic politics are strategies to mobilise masses of people onto one side of racial, sexual and national politics

(Rutherford 1990). Even as it claims the universal nature of its constituent identities, the Right's struggle to maintain the cultural dichotomies of 'self' and 'other' make and reproduce social formations of domination and inequality. The resulting attitudes present a strong external force on identity creation and an equally torrid defence against difference.

Paradoxically, recent forms of capitalist thought have gained an attachment to the notion of difference. Largely due to marketing strategies, capitalist markets are, on the one hand, continuously seeking out new niches for existing products and, on the other hand, are attempting to create new industries and markets. Ultimately, marketing is about modifying human behaviour. That is, its central objective is to not only to create an awareness of products, but also to get people to develop an emotional attachment to the products. Furthermore, understanding the distinctions between various social identities generates predictions toward a number of attitudinal and behavioural realms (Andreasen 1995). Marketers are well aware of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in their attempts to overtly, and subliminally, tease the triggers of internal identity formation towards a personal identification with the products they promote. Substance is marginal, image is crucial. Under contemporary capitalist values, people define themselves more by what they consume than by what they produce – a very unstable basis for identity formation. This leads to a desire to consume increasingly more authentic products in a market that seemingly has an infinite ability to expand and accommodate higher and higher levels of consumption. Consequently, identity formation is significantly shaped, manipulated and controlled.

The anti-thesis of the capitalist vision of society, in terms of Enlightenment-based philosophy, is socialism. With its theoretical roots in Marxist thinking, socialism offers a

meta-narrative that also objectifies the individual. The basis of Marxist analyses is the concept of 'class', which, as was mentioned previously, objectively defines the relationship that people have to the means of production. The individuals who control the means of production become aware of each other and form bonds, as do labourers within their own group. They identify with each other and work together for their own cause. Often the two sides have contradictory goals so there is a class contradiction, antagonism and struggle. These compositional analyses describe structural forces that supersede the experiences and knowledge of people in the shaping of political interaction. Identities are defined by external structural references that confine individuals into similar structural locations. This thinking follows one of Marx's main philosophical tenets _ historical materialism. That is, people in the process of social organisation enter into relations that are indispensable of their will and are determined by the objective conditions of their social existence (Sztompka 1994). It is through this process of historical materialism that Marx envisioned society passing through the stages of capitalism to socialism to communism. Despite putting the individual in the spotlight as an agent of change, political agency is objectified by socialist societies creating, constructing and categorising the individual. Identity formation is thought to be powerfully influenced by macro forces of society that direct the path of social evolution.

As with capitalism, this manipulation is powerful enough to impinge on the subjective psyche of the individual. Moreover, capitalist and communist regimes both used a series of tactics to influence individual behaviour. History has shown that highly structured societies not only attempted to legitimate external categorisation in the political framework and conceptualisations of authority, but also overtly entered the realm of the psychological, using physical force and threats to enforce the external categorisation. In

both systems, the desire for a homogenous macro-understanding by the people in general permits those who control the levers of power to infiltrate the consciousness of the individual, often for the sole benefit of the power-holders.

Sociological theories and explanations for the actions of people and the groups they form have largely been dominated by objective reasoning based on a scientific epistemology that has its roots in the Enlightenment. Modernity is the result of this experiment, dominated by liberal and Marxist theories. However, through post-modernism, a strong intellectual base formed that gives more weight to subjective processes by critiquing the technocratic method in which knowledge is processed in a purely scientific world. Post-modernism brought the concept of identity to the surface of development discourse. It arose as a counter-point to the capitalist mentality in the vacuum vacated by Marxist critiques of the dominant system when the communist regimes collapsed in the 1980s. One point of attack by post-modernists on Marxist interpretations of identity was the construct of 'class'. This disparagement arose in response to the traditional class analysis, which was considered to be an antiquated and insufficient explanation of collective action within the multiple and diverse social conflicts of post-industrial and post-modern society. Interest in the 'subjective' nature of agency, which was largely ignored by Marxism, counterpoised the seemingly Marxist obsession with economic production and the labour market. The post-modern response attacks the notion that class as a universal concept since there are antagonisms that are not necessarily correlated with the relations of production. Other identities have been added to the analysis in order to expand beyond the experiences of class to include *inter alia* concepts such as race, gender, and ethnicity.

Consequently, the fundamental concept of post-modern thinking is that of 'identity'. Yet, building up from the post-modern interpretation of identity does not reduce it to Maslow's subjective model of self-actualisation. Rather, the focus of analysis is on cultural aspects that arise from local influences as well as alienation from self-fulfilling processes. The preoccupation with identity is a result of an increasingly fragmented, pluralistic and global social reality where external forces intrude on a shared experience at the community level impacting on individual identity. Furthermore, the focus of inquiry is turned to the processes that link subjects according to their culturally relevant identity, rather than objective groupings that already exist. Rippberger (1992, 11, 80) notes that cultural identity adapts to dominant, mainstream cultural patterns in an interactive process, rather than being a part of an overarching structure that follows a static set of beliefs. She follows Geertz's definition of cultural identity as a learned and shared meaning which highlights the importance of the mental and interpretive nature of culture. This perspective of identity is useful since it recognises structural influences on the identification process of individuals, but through the lens of a common bond or experience.

Due to the vast influence of the scientific/reductionist outlook on reality that emanates from Western culture, it is worth looking closely at how external forces influence identity. When the individual becomes an 'object' in the eyes of society, he/she is subjugated to significant pressure to identify with abstract, reified concepts. When these pressures become ingrained within a society, they tend to manipulate the self-actualisation process and shape individual identities that conform easily to regulations of technocratic institutions. From the objective standpoint, identities are deemed to be malleable and can be manipulated diluting the essence of democratic power. Furthermore, particularly from

an educational outlook, understanding the nature of identification helps inform educators about the influences that are present in order to shape pedagogy and curriculum. Identities, from the subjective view, are not neutral. Behind the quest for self-identification, it must be recognised that people are different often having conflicting values.

2.3.2.2 *Ethnicity*

The analysis of ethnic relations is intimately related to the discourse of identity. Both functionalist and Marxist theorists have forwarded their interpretations; but these perspectives have been challenged since the concept of ethnicity is closely related to the subject's ties with ancestry and kinship. Ethnic identification is of particular importance in social analysis when dealing with native cultures that have been subjugated to several generations of colonisation.

In functionalist theory, ethnicity is fundamental to personal identity. Geertz (1973, 259) uses ethnicity as a given within an individual's social existence that stems from being born and raised in a particular religious environment, language and social structure. Opting out, if even considered, is extremely difficult since it implies reneging on obligations that are deemed to be inherent in the community. Consequently, the primordial attachments of kinship and, of special note to this research, home territory have profound emotional attachments that arise through the experience of self-identification (Hale 1995, 432). In the political culture of colonialism ethnicity becomes problematic since ethnic groups have values that are incomprehensible to the cultural consensus of the majority. These social discrepancies are of concern to the powers that be since, in the technocratic tradition, society is more difficult to manage. Therefore, objective acculturation takes place which

presupposes domination by an elite cultural group while marginalising another. Rippberger (1992, 10), in the context of education policy, furthers this discussion by noting that many of the 'official' terms used to describe the group for whom bilingual education is created (*minority, disadvantaged, ethnic, target, culturally different*) are not coined by the subordinated groups. This dynamic implies a secondary status, one in which the labelled group lacks control. A term such as 'ethnic group', for example, indicates that the politically dominant group has 'no' ethnicity, but is the 'standard' for other (presumably non- or substandard) groups to emulate.

Marxist thinking links the just mentioned cultural superiority to the economic institutions that impose a hierarchal structure to society. Cultural patterns are deemed to reflect the social and economic conditions in which people live as they adapt to external impositions. As a result, social policy is constructed by a ruling elite to eliminate the possibility of social interference in economic exploitation. Indigenous groups were especially subjugated to racist doctrines in order to secure cheap indentured labour and slaves, as well as access to resource rich territories. While it may have been certain that traditional hunting and gathering cultures would decline due to the intrusion of Western culture, as Hale (1995, 429) points out, it was not inevitable that Native peoples be subjected to brutal exploitation, plunder of economic resources and relocation to lands unsuitable for productive agriculture. These were socially constructed conditions dominated by an elite class in order to maximize their economic return. As such, the concept ethnic affiliation is shadowed by a broader class structure.

More progressive perspectives of ethnicity flip the Marxist position of class around by pointing out the fluidity in the nature of ethnicity. This view changes ethnic groups

from observable entities into 'ethnicising' processes through which ethnic claims emerge (Hale 1995, 432). This alternative perspective arose due to the perceived tenuousness of ethnic identity, depending on the situation. Hale (1995, 433) highlights that internal group self-definitions and extra-group categorisations continually shift in response to changing political contexts. Ethnic group ties do not persist automatically since there is no certainty that ethnicity will be associated with any strong attachments. Internally, profound disagreements emerge over what constitutes the supposedly shared cultural norms. Externally, ethnic characteristics are even deemed to be invented, or, as Friedlander (1975) claims, 'forced' by Westerners upon native people to romanticise native cultures.

Von Groll (1999, 33) separates the internal and external forces of ethnic determination into two processes: paternity and patrimony. On the one hand, paternity refers to the expressions of the memories of ancestors and is transmitted through blood carrying a moral obligation that will ensure the ownership and caring of their roots, maintaining them without alteration. On the other hand, patrimony displays an impact of intense change that emerges in actuality and consists of the daily expression of cultural codes. According to phenomenology, ethnicity is closer to paternity than patrimony; that is, ethnicity is more the substance of social understanding than the actions or perceptions that dictate their structural reality. This sentiment indicates that the elements of being indigenous are maintained in an invisible, subjective field where paternity is the key to individual ethnicities. However, the observer's understanding is manifested in patrimony, the key to perceiving ethnicity in others. In the face of making what is the 'other' exotic, differences, rather than similarities are highlighted which promotes limited understanding

of foreign cultures. This limitation impedes cultures from approaching each other as well as preventing the possibility of including 'others' in the actual world.

Biglow (2001) presents the concept of 'symbolic ethnicity' in his anthropological discussion of *Huichol* culture. He offers that symbolic ethnicity is a means at looking at the identity of indigenous people who are several generations removed from their native culture. Symbolic ethnicity arises among individuals who no longer contribute to local production and governance, mostly because they have moved away from their ancestral homelands. As Biglow (2001, 53) points out, it is largely a situation in which urban dwelling natives,

... who in response to continual contact with a dominant culture and society, must 'negotiate' their identities, becoming truly 'bicultural'. These 'bicultural identities' are in constant renegotiation as one adapts to societal change."

This concept has relevance to the discussion here, not in an urban context, but in that *Huichol* identities at the community level are being negotiated and are changing on an epistemological level (see chapter 4). Furthermore, symbolic ethnicity has implications for broader social mobilisation as native peoples from varying locales create connections based on perceived cultural similarities that blur ethnic lines and create an identity based on common beliefs and goals in relation to oppressive societal structures.

In summary, the ethnicity of ethnic groups is a vehicle to take and define their place as an historical subject that is in constant change. In a society of change, where the cultures are not separate entities, but are modes of managed change, ethnicity is what permits a distinct profile of the other — a profile that is in constant construction and is

independent of our own cultural imagination where living a double life is a daily task. A 'double task' meaning living an individual life and living a life as other people see it.

2.3.2.3 *Indigenous*

The term 'indigenous' is a relatively new concept to describe what has ultimately been the group of people who have been subjected to external development projects since early colonial days. It has arisen in the discourse to replace the term '*Indio*', or Indian, which had a negative connotation in both the circles of the elites and from within native cultures (Friedlander 1975). Having dark skin and being unemployed signified the lowest social rank and was described with the derogatory term '*Indio*'. Consequently, the term 'indigenous' arose as a politically correct moniker in the lexicon of development practitioners and theorists, which indicates that the culture in question originated, and at one point in time existed symbiotically, in the natural environment of a particular region. From this perception, the notion of 'indigenous knowledge' became vogue as a means to developing impoverished native cultures.

A common source for a working definition of 'indigenous' comes from the United Nations and is enshrined in Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation. The UNDP cites:

“... indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or part of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to reserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.”

Indigenous people are the disadvantaged descendants of cultures that inhabited a geographical region before the colonial era and they are defined by the social characteristics that relate their identity of a particular culture that distinguishes them from other peoples. Indigenous people are considered to have prior rights to their territories, lands and resources which in many cases have been taken away from them. Notably, indigenous people's self-identification as indigenous is a crucial part of their identity (IWGIA, unknown date).

The term 'indigenous' cries out to the dominant culture to be less objective and judgemental about native cultures. It is a distinct term that separates one group of people from another hinting at marginalisation. However, it calls out the dominant culture to investigate what different world views have to contribute to broader society. Von Groll (1999, 34) discusses the complexity of the meaning of being indigenous through the subtle elements of experience and expression of ethnicity. She notes that it is important to change the concept of cultural 'evaluation', a concept introduced for the indigenous, to that of 'making'. This switch will initiate the process of decolonisation to a verbal level in order to manage change while looking to the future and not be constantly referring to the past which is a static phenomenon. Being a traditional society does not imply that social change is to be avoided. Traditional societies have always been in constant motion and evolution depending on the external environment; but in times of isolation the culture arose and was managed from within. Contemporary indigenous peoples are the inheritors of several generations of colonisation, which has limited their capability to manage their own social change. However, ancestral and ceremonial lineages still exist, lending to the unique subjective qualities that give meaning to being indigenous.

To deepen the understanding of what it means to be 'indigenous', Von Groll (1999, 29) introduces the concept of 'interculturalism', which refers to the space between cultures and implies a search for a bridge between the 'other'. From a theorist's perspective, it is necessary to expand one's own frame of reference and methodology to build a dynamic communication that will permit the creation of a new field of action within a multi-cultural state with an emphasis on the efforts to make a positive and creative contact between dominant and minor ethnicities. This philosophy is related to Freire's (1984) pedagogy which promotes the process of creating an intercultural space in order to adopt a more democratic, equal posture that mitigates centralised power. This implies learning to move toward the 'other', leaving our masks behind _ an essential condition to realise a mutual knowledge. The strong tendency in social analysis is to look for differences before similarity _ the distinct and not the common _ making it extremely difficult to deal with indigenous communities unless an intercultural space is idealised and constructed (Von Groll 1999).

'Indigenous knowledge' has a practical and an epistemological application in terms of managing social change. In practical terms of development theory, indigenous knowledge has had the connotation of being an inefficient, inferior obstacle to development. However, after continuous cycles of marginalisation, theorists and development practitioners have questioned this perspective and attempted to boost indigenous knowledge to the forefront of development practice. There is a fear that indigenous knowledge has been undervalued and is disappearing, which constitutes a significant loss to humanity. Yet, categorising indigenous knowledge as 'distinct' could limit the pursuit of worldwide development (Agrawal 1995). As Agrawal (1995)

concludes, creating distinctions in terms of indigenous and western knowledge is amorphous, since knowledge in whatever form becomes useful to those who have power to manipulate it. Therefore, using indigenous knowledge as a 'distinct' construct to discover a means for counteracting poverty will only contribute to the structures that exacerbate marginalisation.

More useful for the analysis in this dissertation is understanding how knowledge can be used to safeguard the interests of the disadvantaged. It is necessarily a political undertaking since, as Agrawal (1995, 431) notes, generating, organising, storing and disseminating knowledge:

... presupposes certain relationships of power and control. Ignoring these relationships will disadvantage those who do not have access to international travel, western languages, or technical expertise in computer based information storage _ in short, indigenous people.

Indigenous knowledge is contextual and is perhaps fated to disappear in a global world of modernisation and cultural homogenisation. Local knowledge cannot be saved in an archive if the people themselves cease to exist. The diversity of knowledge must be respected in order to make it useful since it is anchored in organisational structures. Agrawal (1995, 433) thus joins Von Groll by visualising an intercultural space that avoids the sterile dichotomy of 'indigenous' and 'western' to initiate a productive dialogue with the objective of safeguarding the interests of those who are disadvantaged.

2.3.2.4 *Autonomy*

The desire and necessity of self-determination arose out of the self-consciousness of the Enlightenment. Social and individual autonomy are a significant component of the capitalist ideal that has shaped the whole of social life in Western cultures including

education. The pursuit of reason, which Castoriadis (2001, 22) describes as the distinction between 'fact' and 'right', was justification to abandon tradition as a means of organising society. It is interesting, then, that as discourses of human and cultural rights have progressively become globalised, indigenous groups, for example, have increasingly pushed for autonomy in their struggle for greater legal recognition within the state and/or autonomy from the state.

In terms of modernity, the state arose as the arbiter of the imaginary construct of 'progress', reifying the belief that technical-material power is the critical cause or condition for human happiness, or in the case of poor, emancipation. Furthermore, the project of autonomy was radicalised, both in the socio-political and in the intellectual fields. Contestation of social structures embraced other domains beyond the narrowly political one including property relations, the organisation of the economy, family, gender relations, education, and the status of the young (Castoriadis 2001). This complexity is a function of, and a result of, the increased capability of humans to communicate and exchange ideas. Paradoxically, Castoriadis (2001, 23) called this era of high complexity a retreat to conformism, characterised by the waning of social and ideological conflict, and atrophy of the political imagination. He claims that modernity still exists in a frantic course laden with the severest dangers for humankind. But insofar as a capitalist's outlook is conditioning the development of the project of social and individual autonomy, modernity is finished. However, the project of autonomy is certainly not finished. But its trajectory during the last two centuries has proved the radical inadequacy, to say the least, of the reductionist programmes in which it had been embodied – be it the liberal republic or

Marxist-Leninist socialism. The resurgence of the project of autonomy means original political objectives and new human attitudes are required.

It is within this contradiction that indigenous groups are contributing to shaping of the concept of autonomy. The post-modern perspective looks solely at the internal makeup of indigenous political culture, which as Munck (1990, 26) claims, is concerned with the autonomous construction at the local level in favour of objective, strategic action. The need for internal autonomy is a crucial factor of social resistance when dealing with external pressures. Autonomy of local linkages and political construction in this case are deemed to be more crucial than the imaginary need to interact within broader culture where domination of knowledge and culture takes place.

Foweraker (1990b, 44) takes a pragmatic approach to the definition of autonomy. Although the theoretical debates about the nature or degree of autonomy are intense, it must be recognised that the real resolution of such debates only occurs in popular political practice. Autonomy is intrinsic to the strategic variations implicit in popular struggle but never an absolute end in itself. Furthermore, while autonomy may have political value, especially in the case of popular movements, it does not describe their practices, which, on the contrary, consistently seek linkage with the political system in order to solve immediate problems and satisfy explicit demands. Autonomy cannot therefore be constructed abstractly as 'separateness' from the political system and as the polar opposite to political representation, but is in fact a concrete condition of such representation. Popular movements may aspire for autonomy, yet they must also seek to survive in the real world of institutional politics. Rubin (1990, 262) furthers this discussion by noting that, on the one hand, there has been

... a change in the practice and ideology of popular movements with the balance shifting away from militant rejection of the institutions and practices of the state and capitalism and away from the insistence on unifying ideologies and vanguard leadership.

On the other hand, the contemporary struggles of popular movements have “emphasised, alongside continuing mobilisation, a process of negotiation with the state and participation in elections” as well as recognising “diversity and forms of internal democracy within organisations and coalitions of organisations.”

At this point, the formulations of Díaz-Polanco (2002) are poignant and useful. He makes a distinction between the concepts of ‘self-determination’ and ‘autonomy’ in the context of the socio-political climate of the nation-state. ‘Self-determination’ implies a desire for political independence and/or sovereignty from the dominant political structures such that a people can decide their own form of government, socio-cultural life and economic organisation. Consequently, political rights can only be freely exercised through political separation from the nation-state (Díaz-Polanco 2002, 45). ‘Autonomy’ assumes that the development of independent social structures will persist and grow within the context of a previously existing nation-state. It takes upon a democratic relationship between two distinct groups where justice and equality are both objective and implied (Díaz-Polanco 2002, 50). Díaz-Polanco (1997, 151) outlines three elements of autonomy: (1) political/territorial foundation; (2) autonomous self-government; and, (3) competencies (skills and knowledge that allow the political decentralisation essential to autonomy). The paradox that arises and causes distress and conflict within a nation-state occurs when the ideological objective of nation-building marginalises groups of people that wish to foster an

autonomous interrelation between themselves and the dominant system but are not willing or able to conform to the dominant cultural, economic and political structures.

In summary, the concept of autonomy has both a political and practical connotation. Its use as a political tool by marginalised peoples requires a group or individual to recognise the structural environment in which they exist, whether it be national or international, since the external social forces provide the contradiction in which the group aims to shelter its people. In terms of indigenous people, the objective goal of maintaining autonomy in the face of external, cultural, economic and political pressures, on the one hand, is to protect the intrinsic dynamics of a culture with a distinct world view. The paradox, on the other hand, is that to maintain traditional means of social organisation, a modicum of 'reason' and participation in the dominant culture is required to challenge repressive structures, which when tackled, ultimately moves the traditional culture closer to the epistemology of its modern counterparts.

2.3.3 Co-opted Concepts

The construction of language is often an endogenous process that forms in specific and unique environments. Vernacular language arises to describe unique conditions of a specific group of people. However, if vernacular language expands out of the original cultural realm the context of words can shift. It can also be objectively adopted by groups of people to present a political agenda that may otherwise be rejected if it the vernacular were not used. This co-optation process is fundamental for post-modern deconstruction of the relationships of power and knowledge. For this next section of development concepts, I intend to outline the terms relevant to this study that are used by progressive actors working

in the margins of society; but are also readily found in the rhetoric of national governments and international institutions such as the World Bank to promote a specific agenda.

2.3.3.1 *Civil Society*

The concept of 'civil society' is common in development literature and is used in an amorphous manner both in academic analysis and by development practitioners.

Depending on the perspective taken, civil society can have subtly different connotations. For example, the right-wing liberal view of civil society regards it as the population that owns private property making it distinct from state. Therefore, it is the obligation of civil society to protect property rights and heed to the needs of the market _ values critical to enhance democracy according to the neo-liberal agenda. It is ironic that leviathans such as the World Bank and the IMF, which are debatably more accountable to the U.S. Treasury Department than to civil society, word their rhetoric to 'include' civil society in development discourse despite these organisations being inherently undemocratic and untransparent.

It should be noted that the World Bank's definition of civil society has gradually changed over the years. The World Bank began working in concert with NGOs in the 1970s on environmental concerns and has increased the number and type of working partners to include a wide range of grassroots organisations. The synthesis of the World Bank with micro-organisations has had an impact on both groups. On the one hand, the World Bank has broadened its perspective and language so as to envelope the social diversity that exists around the world. Project failures have largely occurred because of cultural insensitivities. This dynamic has largely occurred due to the fact that World Bank

projects increasingly bypass the state to work directly with civil society organisations, demonstrating the impact that grassroots organising has had on the levers of macro-control. On the other hand, the World Bank does continue its practice of loaning for large scale projects in concert with governments, imposing conditions of fiscal restraint. It is ironic then that the need for civil society organisation has arisen due to the weakening of the state. The World Bank has created the environment for grassroots organisations to form as coping strategies in the face of cuts to national social programs. While the World Bank has taken up the slack by working directly with civil society groups of its choice, funding for local projects has moved further away from the local leaving a large portion of the people to suffer in dire circumstances due to governmental cutbacks.

From a holistic perspective civil society cannot be described by looking at its parts. It is not a constant, rather it is malleable and is continually evolving _ its roles vary in different contexts and at different levels of economic and social development. Its essence is not in any specific individual or organisation, but in the way groups of people interact, forming and changing nodes of social organisation. Civil society, as elucidated by Swift (1999), can be depicted metaphorically as a place that fills the gaps between the state and the market and is often defined by the voices of those traditionally excluded and unheard. Civil society is a conceptual tool that identifies the synergy of complex societal forces capable of political action whether it be facilitating the conditions for the self-empowerment of the marginalised, or expanding the project of economic progress. It is a politically contested space that, on the one hand, the ruling elite, whether it be through religion, the mass-media or economics, is particularly adept at managing; or, on the other hand, it is a social arena where social activists attempt to transcend radical perspectives into

the broader consciousness of society. The defining factor of civil society is in the individualistic nature of the autonomous actor and the complex diversity of social bonds that exist in contemporary global culture. The affections and allegiances of this social actor is open game to the luring advertisements of corporate identities as well as activism for social justice.

2.3.3.2 *Social Capital*

The concept of 'social capital' is another wide-meaning term in the way it is used in the discourse of development. Various definitions of social capital exist in the literature such as Putnam's (1993, 167) work in Italy throughout the 1980s that provided a commonly referenced definition. He notes that 'social capital' "refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinating actions." It is related to other forms of capital since productivity is higher when it exists, making the achievement of certain ends possible, that would not otherwise be obtainable. Grant (2001, 976) broadens the spectrum of social capital as:

... comprising both horizontal relationships of social support between households and the members of a community and the vertical relationships between communities and government bodies. Alternatively, social capital can be divided into 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital, where 'bonding' capital refers to social cohesion within the group structure, and 'bridging' capital refers to the type that links, or cuts across different communities or groups.

Social capital in these terms is an instrument to develop norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement in order to overcome obstacles faced by social agents in collective action.

Social capital, as is civil society, is used as a tool by both sub-altern groups to fight for political and social autonomy, and by modern technocratic institutions to manage social behaviour. Fox (1996) outlines how the 'thickness' of civil society depends on the uneven emergence of social capital, depending on where the stimulus is stronger. He creates a model of 'political construction' of civil society (see section 2.4.2.3) to contest power and open political spaces in authoritarian regimes. Low levels of social capital exist in situations where the ruling elite are able to violently force demobilisation of social protest. Linkages between marginalised groups and other activist groups are quickly broken with force and coercion. High levels of social capital are present when ruling governments are accountable to the public and they utilise negotiation over coercion to deal with social protest. Furthermore, linkages are created between local actors as well as between external civil society organisations. The interconnectedness between social capital and civil society helps elaborate 'how' social movements form, resulting in a complex synergy between state actors and grassroots social mobilisation in the struggle to curry favour among the general population.

Yet, as with other elusive, yet creative constructs that promote alternative development strategies, 'social capital' is well established in the lexicon of the World Bank and other large donor agencies. It has already been elaborated that these leviathans thin out the meaning of development constructs in order to maintain the status quo regarding larger structures. For the purposes of this thesis, 'social capital' will refer to its potential in strengthening grassroots networks with the purpose of reforming structures that have been previously marginalised from mainstream economic comforts.

2.3.3.3 *Community*

The literature on the role of 'community' in development processes is extensive. In fact, this ubiquitous term requires almost always requires an adjective to qualify its meaning, such as an '*indigenous* community' or an '*urban* community'. For the sake of being concise I will discuss two points of ambiguity that need clarifying before portraying the communal life of *Huichol* (see chapter 3). The first point involves the distinction between the location of 'community' and the dynamism of 'culture'; the second issue clarifies the structural role of the 'municipality' versus the cultural fabric of a 'community' outlined in the first point.

A community can take many forms and generally refers to a social group that shares a locality, historical heritage and/or a mode of social organisation. This dissertation deals with the complexity of indigenous communities and their struggle to manage external cultural influences. The dominant culture tends to have a limited vision of what change should take place in indigenous communities by looking for 'necessities' and locating what is lacking in order to improve livelihoods. As Von Groll (1999, 30) notes, necessity is a concept that invalidates the communal world of the indigenous. She further elaborates that the word 'indigenous' in the discourse is related almost immediately to the concept of community and its distinctness from the dominant culture. In this way it is easy to confuse the words 'culture' and 'community': the first is a construction that is being transformed constantly through the reinterpretation of new experiences and the second is by definition a code of conduct and a set of values that endures time. If we consider both definitions, it is evident that the artificial search for the essence of community is almost a myth in a world where contacts multiply rapidly and isolated cultures are reduced to being communities,

changing dynamism for something more static. In other words, if the dominant cultural form prevails when in contact with an objectified minority, there exists the danger that the struggle of minor cultures for a dignified space will end at the community level demonstrating the subordination of political power. This process limits or negates the possibility of democratically participating in a world of constant transformation. The objective location and historical experience of a 'community' are interrelated making up its cultural fabric and should not be perceived separately both in theory and in the operationalisation of social policy. The dynamics and intricacies of political representation at the micro-level is very complex, especially in communities that maintain traditional mechanisms and hierarchies of social organisation. These traditional social structures usually have to work in conjunction with the 'municipality', a state-led institution that links local politics to national institutions. The role of the municipality is to manage projects and gather information in diverse outposts of a country. Consequently, community leaders conduct local political activity through representation on traditional councils to manage the community, as well as participate in the activities of the municipality. Traditional councils, which have been frequently persecuted by the state in authoritarian regimes, are historically ingrained into the culture, while the municipality is a link to the dominant systems like political parties and the broader national bureaucracy. Veltmeyer (1997, 145) points out that these internal politics of traditional communities can exacerbate exploitive class relations by basing their existence simply on the ideas of mutual benefit, community spirit and a notion of fairness. Peasant leaders who maintain links with larger state structures can exert dominance over their people, all in the name of their ethnic/historical/experiential commonality. Therefore, the municipality is a reference to a social order directly

influenced by grander bureaucracies, while the community describes the social connections that live under the objective conditions of the municipal structure.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The case study of this thesis investigates the contribution of community based education programs to the broader movement for cultural, economic and political rights in Mexico. The analysis of this investigation will be developed from two different poles. The first pole is an examination of the external factors that led to the necessary formation of the programs. The second pole is a discussion of the internal cultural dynamics that come together to forge new educational practices. These heuristic positions are not intended to oversimplify the study, but provide a theoretical base from which an analysis can be made. The reality is much more complex. For example, external actors come in many forms with differing motivations and varying levels of advocacy. Also, the internal dynamics of a community are not static and often have characteristics that inhibit the development of what are deemed to be community led ideas.

I will begin to construct a theoretical framework out of theories of education to explain 'why' and 'how' the education programs formed in the *Huichol* communities. This discussion will then build up to connect the dynamics of education with the literature on social movements. Ultimately, this theoretical construction will help explain why the indigenous movement for cultural, economic and political rights is being manifested through local education initiatives, as well as outline a model for the development of education programs that can be used by other communities faced with similar marginalising conditions as the *Huichol*.

2.4.1 *Education and Development*

Theorising about modes of education and methods of learning are inclusive of the broader debates in development processes. In contemporary times, the state is generally the focus of analysis of why and how education takes the form it does, whether the state is involved directly in the learning process or not. On the one hand, 'formal' education, as promoted by the state, dominates the policy-making energies of political leadership and the critical academic literature. The result is a distinct macro flavour in the analysis with the reductionist tendency to objectively universalise the processes taking place largely ignoring the impact of the subject. On the other hand, 'nonformal' education is a more relational phenomenon that is often situated theoretically as the antithesis of formal education. Due to the diversity of nonformal education programs and its closeness to those who have been socially marginalised, subjectivity undoubtedly plays a greater explanatory role in describing what nonformal education programs are. It is important to note that both formal and nonformal education programs exist to address objective conditions. However, the location of their organisation and the external forces upon them differ. The following paragraphs will outline the literature of where these objective styles of learning takes place to explain the concomitant contribution of education to social alienation as well as the roots of social mobilisation.

2.4.1.1 *Formal Education*

The concept of formal education is usually linked with the framework of a state apparatus. Coombs and Ahmed (1974, 8) provide a useful definition of formal education as being "the highly institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured

education system". This largely objective method of imparting knowledge from one generation to another has been open to earnest critical analysis from varying schools of thought. Social disparities that have existed over the years cry out for explanations as to the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies of schools to mitigate what ultimately alienates a significant proportion of society. Education has most certainly ameliorated the lives of those who have access functioning schools; yet in itself, it cannot be deemed as the panacea to the ills of mankind. Problems are often exacerbated when placed in the context of a state from the developing world. Whereas education systems in wealthy nations of the West evolved together with other social formations, poorer nations have attempted to incorporate western style education models in a short period of time within their nation-building processes. As a result, more empirical evidence has arisen to promote and/or refute earlier debates about why alienation takes place within a formal education system whether taking a functionalist, Marxist or transformative approach. The following section will outline these theoretical insights into the social exclusion that is produced by state-led, formal education systems.

2.4.1.1.1 The Marriage of the State and Education

A brief history of how formal education became intricately entwined in the functioning of the modern state is an apt initial step into the theoretical discussion. As Archer (1979, 19) points out, historical evaluation of education inserts a structural perspective into the analysis. To fully explain the current social context, a description of preceding social structures from which it developed must be made. Prior to the state system, it was largely the church that was responsible for the intent purpose of imparting

knowledge throughout a population. Blackledge and Hunt (1985, 329) note that this form of education was principally a 'private enterprise' as opposed to a governmental establishment of the state system. The churches shaped education to realise their own intentions. As a result, schools as such had little autonomy and were dependent on the church for funds and providing services.

The Jesuit order was a main instigator in creating education programs. As a branch of the Catholic Church, the Jesuits attempted to establish their dogma within people in the face of encroaching Protestantism. Simply preaching, hearing confession and catechising was not doing enough. Therefore, educating the young was deemed to be a crucial step in the struggle for the mastery of the human. The original methods used by the priests can still be seen in current educational practice. For example, students had continuous personal contact with instructors and the pupils were stimulated through various sorts of competition (Durkheim 1777, 98-100). Essentially, education was arising as an institution that gave more attention to the needs of the individual to incorporate him/herself into a broader society at the expense of familial and communal socialisation.

The forces of capitalist production and industrialisation changed the dynamics of social organisation drastically. In pre-capitalist times when the church managed the moulding of souls there was little connection between the motivations of the leadership of educational institutions and the economic system. At the time when capitalist ideals took hold and statehood was in its nascent form, schools were not necessarily co-ordinating the values or skills of their youth with the budding capitalist system. The catechism of the church did not promote the attitude needed to manipulate private property (Blackledge and Hunt 1985, 329). Not surprisingly control of education eventually did pass to those who

held the reigns of political and economic power as the state emerged as the central point of human interaction. The capitalist system simply adapted the previously created private educational structures into the public realm in order to fit the needs of a market economy. However, the political branch of the capitalist enterprise seemingly let education deflate into a more 'neutral' method of socialisation. The intentions of the more modern educational system were not as transparent as clergy led education; the means of shaping minds was subtler. Literature that stems from the functionalist school of thought, which will be reviewed next, attempts to explain this phenomenon.

2.4.1.1.2 Functionalism and Education

Functionalism, as it relates to education in sociological thinking, uses the scientific method created in the natural sciences to develop causal explanations of the nature of human social existence. Similar to living organisms, all societies are considered to organise themselves through the interaction of basic functions in order to survive (Bennett and LeCompte 1990, 5). Blackledge and Hunt (1985, 8-10) encapsulate the theorising of Émile Durkheim, one of the fathers of functionalism, by outlining the teleological and universalistic suppositions of functionalistic thinking. The fundamental establishments of society are seen to be self-containing units that serve the broader needs of the public. A healthy society, from an institutional perspective, is one of equilibrium or stasis _ conflict is deemed to be an illness or an aberration (Bennett and LeCompte 1990, 6). From this perspective, when problems arise within an institution like formal education, the causes are to be found within the institution itself and not from influences outside the educational structure. As a result, strategies to overcome ineffectiveness and inefficiencies such as an

unskilled population, the educated unemployed, unrealistic expectations and exorbitant costs must be overcome by the institution of formal education itself (Rohrbach 1993, 10). Key to a functionalist resolution of social problems, or more correctly institutional deficiencies, is the correlation between the effectiveness of socialisation in the educational setting with the ability of societal institutions to address social anomalies. Consequently, socialisation is a crucial concept in the functionalist school to explaining social cohesion.

The notion of socialisation attempts to explain how social order is maintained. According to Adams (1972, 83) socialisation “may be viewed as the means by which an individual is integrated into his society and involves the adaptation of the individual into his society and involves the adaptation of the individual to the fellow members of his group”. Anthropology has proffered more precise terminology with the terms enculturation and acculturation. ‘Enculturation’, which is often used synonymously with socialisation, involves a process of learning where a person achieves a socially acceptable level of competence with their own culture. ‘Acculturation’ accounts for the changes that take place between two cultures that come into direct contact, resulting in alterations to the initial culture of both groups (Adams 1972, 83). Cohen (1971, 48) furthers the anthropological twist to the concept of socialisation by attempting to broker an evaluation of the more particularistic nature of socialisation within the family unit and with kin relations. He places the behaviour-shaping effects of the family in contrast to the more universalistic values of an education system. According to Cohen (1971, 22), at the psychological level within the family or community, motivational and cognitive patterns are ongoing and ‘spontaneous’ interactions, whereas education “is the inculcation of ‘standardised’ and stereotyped knowledge, skills, values and attitudes by means of

standardised and stereotyped procedures". The influence of education on the young, in Cohen's terms, rises with the failure of familial bonds to foster a network of personal relations. Since parents are shaped socially through an enculturation process within the social institutions in which they interact, inevitably the particularistic attitudes they pass on to their children are heavily influenced by broader society. In that respect, distinct conceptualisations of socialisation and education highlight fundamentally different perceptions, yet the two are intimately linked. Every society has particularistic and universalistic links in the shaping of young minds with the ultimate goal of attaining a semblance of order and cohesion where the means to do so are the "mechanisms of adaptation to the socio-cultural environment" (Cohen 1971, 48).

Due to its reductionist epistemology, the literature on socialisation from the functionalist standpoint does not draw a separation of the school from education. Education is simply seen to be a structure that inculcates the attitudes, values, skills and norms of society in order to maintain social cohesion through successive generations (Bennett and LeCompte 1990, 6). In this regard, education is seen as a teleological concept that has come into existence to relieve society of the problems of disequilibrium. Society in general is deemed to be moving in a linear direction where education is one of the institutions used manage knowledge (Blackledge and Hunt 1985, 103). Nasaw's (1971, 40) recapitulation of the history of schooling in the United States acknowledges that formal education has acted as an explicitly political function that exalted the inherent virtues of its political institutions. This analysis coincides with the four principle functions of education as presented by Bennett and LeCompte (1990, 8). First, schools educate future citizens for appropriate participation in the given political order. Second, they promote patriotism _

note the link to the state _ by teaching myths and particular versions of history. Third, immigrants² are assimilated into the domestic culture. Finally, students are assumed to acquire a sense of social order in order to demonstrate public civility and conform to laws. To apply these observations to the functionalist framework, the desires of the individual are less important than the institution of the school. Interestingly, Blackledge and Hunt (1985, 21) point out that the functionalist's perspective is a reification of society as having the characteristics of God by reducing reality to the 'One'. Society, being independent from man and having its own laws of development, has a distinct reality that shapes man through socialisation, according to its own requirements.

At this point it can be clearly seen that the state is the central figure in functionalist thinking. Socialisation takes place to justify state structures where even the family is considered to be an institution that is subservient to the state. Education is institutionalised in the form of schools, giving the nature of knowledge acquisition a distinct universalistic tone. As a result, education is a preparatory stage for people to serve the needs of the state. Ultimately, the local is subverted into a behavioural path requiring conformity and cohesion as established by the ideology of the state (Cohen, 1971, 40). These behaviours are guided by the values dictated by society and by the necessity to find a role, or occupation, that the state considers being a positive social contribution. Consequently, people develop commitments and capacities important to carrying out their social roles in other institutions and work agencies (Blackledge and Hunt, 1985, 73).

Formal education projects have been a fundamental development strategy for poor nations from times long before 'development' theories emerged in the 1950s. Nation

² Native or indigenous populations can be easily adopted into this category.

building through the economic and cultural modernisation of state institutions has taken place in the functionalist tradition in government initiatives to inculcate the population within a national identity. However, the modernisation process became the explicit intent of development theorists from the Western world in association with economic growth theories. Structural changes, including those that implanted Western values in the place of 'backward' traditional, was largely left in the charge of educational institutions. Ultimately, development was deemed to be a modernisation process sustained by the 'functions' of an active state apparatus (Matinussen, 1997, 38).

Adams (1972, 20, 106) outlines how education systems gel into the functionalist conception of a modern society. He states that individual success and social mobility are not as likely to be correlated with family, sex or race, but rather will be the product of individual capacity, qualification and achievement. For an emerging state, functional independence requires a loyalty to a polity that transcends the family, clan or village by establishing new roles and statuses for a larger proportion of society; that is, the creation of a middle class. Broader society demands that schools foster norms, such as independence, achievement and universalism, in the search for economic efficiency and equity. Educational development, being a measurable object, will naturally lead to improved social indicators such as increased social mobility and improved literacy rates.

2.4.1.1.3 *Marxism and Education*

The Marxist perspective of education is based in the perceived conceptions of structural stratification in capitalist society. While functionalist theory proposes that the institutional role of schools is primarily to reproduce the dominant ideology and culture,

structuralists focus on how schools reproduce the social relations and division of labour in production (Bowles and Gintis 1988, 115). Formal, state-run education is deemed a direct consequence of the nature of its economic system where the economic base and education system shape each other dialectically. However, the economic system remains dominant which exacerbates the relationships of exploitation as an apparatus of the state. The mechanisms of exploitation are very subtle, largely due to the state's practice in neutralising labour movements. Apple (1995, 10) surmises that the expertise of the ruling elite integrated a culture of submission into the education system which legitimises an economic system that reproduces inequality.

Bowles and Gintis (1988) demonstrate that the liberal conception of education _ as put forward by Dewy _ within a supposedly democratic state system is incompatible with capitalism. The three fundamental goals of liberal education are to develop the full potential of the individual student, to promote equality through common public schools and to ensure social continuity by preparing students for adult roles. Bowles and Gintis argue that these three goals are fundamentally incompatible since the school cannot promote full personal development and social equality while integrating students into alienating and hierarchically ordered roles within the economy. Instead, these patterns of social reproduction serve to reinforce a class consciousness that marginalises people on the fringes of the dominant economic system.

2.4.1.1.4 *Transformative Education*

A transformative approach to education looks at how education programs develop in particularistic circumstances and integrate with other programs with similar characteristics.

The focus of analysis lies in how schools form with the ultimate aim of disconnecting from broader institutions that regulate local education programs. While the Marxist critique of capitalism may be accepted, structuralist interpretations of education are deemed to be reactionary and support the status quo since actors have no space to change the situation. Consequently, by focusing on the roles of teachers, students and community leaders in carrying out education programs, curriculum can be tailored for the reality of diverse groups of people and place learning in a local context, rather than subjecting an already marginalised population to foreign mores. Some authors (Illich 1971, Esteva 1998) call for an end to formal schooling and the commencement of nonformal educational linkages that are ingrained in society, rather than being objectifiably separate. They challenge the modern certainty that education is a universal good and a 'human right' _ concepts that justify the involvement of foreign institutions in the cultural aspects of social groups everywhere.

Rippberger (1992, 19) discusses the democratic possibilities of autonomous education development. She argues that locally based participation in the development of bilingual/bicultural programs involves the reclamation and self-direction of individual and social identity. Therefore, local community participation in educational planning is important, where those who are most directly affected by education influence the philosophical basis of education, and its planning and implementation. In doing so local groups may create an educational program which is more relevant to their own needs and culture, just as mainstream groups have done regularly for their own children's educational needs and aspirations. Moreover, the social requirements that are passed from generation to generation in education programs in dominant cultures often do not have relevance in

marginal cultures. Implementing the processes and mechanisms is simply another step in the alienation of already oppressed cultures.

Bicultural education programs are representative of transformative learning processes. As presented by Mezirow (1996), transformative learning outlines a synthesis of the values needed for effective educational development. On the one hand, the 'objectivist paradigm' is the traditional western model where learning is considered to be biological and the teaching methods are didactic. On the other hand, the 'interpretist paradigm', is particularistic focuses on the cognitive and social nature of learning. Transformative learning embodies a synthesis of both models by promoting an understanding of the self and the environment around oneself. Instrumental learning is still considered to be an important part of the learning process and is complimented by a more communicative style of learning. This balance promotes a view reality with the learner at its centre, which is essential for developing skills based on trust, tolerance and openness. As a result, this process is deemed to incorporate the concepts of freedom, justice and democratic participation necessary for enhancing the development process.

2.4.1.2 Nonformal Education

Nonformal education programs, as the label implies, is something that formal education is not. For heuristic purpose, non-formal education is the structured learning that takes place outside of the state-led system. Coombs and Ahmed (1974, 8) offer that nonformal education is "any organised, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups of the population, adults as well as children". The distinctions between the two

systems demonstrate a political disconnection, helping to explain 'why' non-formal education programs form, but there are often epistemological differences describing 'how' the programs develop. Van Riezen (1996, 83) notes, the goals of nonformal education are at once practical and culturally specific where the organisational structure has no hierarchic design. Furthermore, the organisation of nonformal education projects are community endeavours where participation is not limited to a small administration catering to the objectives of external stakeholders.

Brennen (1997) offers a useful conceptual model of nonformal education. He offers three types of nonformal education, noting their relationship to formal education in origin and purpose, yet outside formal education structures due to their varying objectives. The first nonformal education sub-type acts as a 'complement' to the formal system and is for those whom formal education has not been able to deliver its educational purposes or has not been able to perform functions that the formal education was designed to fulfill in whole or in part. School dropouts and illiterate adults are examples. Brennen (1997, 190) notes that this type of nonformal education is the most commonly recognised as it accepts the Western method of learning as the means to improving livelihoods and can be thought of as a 'catch-up' strategy. The second form of nonformal education acts as an 'alternative' to formal education. It emerges when colonial educational administrators fail to accept and/or recognise that there are pre-existing learning structures and processes that contribute to the social stability of indigenous cultures. Therefore, the objective of alternative forms of education is to establish, or re-establish, a link between learning and culture. If learning is a cultural experience then nonformal education can contribute to an understanding of 'why' and 'how' marginal social conditions exist as a prerequisite to acquiring cultural and

political autonomy. The third extant of nonformal education consists of programs that 'supplement' formal education. The need for supplemental education arises in times of rapid change where the formal education system is too slow to respond. Examples of this type of program would be English as a second language schools that are ubiquitous around the world, or technology schools that teach specific skills in a rapidly changing industry.

'Popular education' is a common nonformal educational strategy employed by groups of people who consider themselves to be on the margins of society. It is frequently used as a tool for establishing identities whether they be ethnically or class based. As a form of 'alternative' learning, popular education programs have arisen in diverse locales, lending to Hammond's (1999, 69) definition as being a means of education by and for the people, organised at the community level outside of the control of the official education system. These programs are necessarily political and often follow Freire's pedagogy for poor people that make learning a part of the process of liberation. Learning materials are derived from the real lives of people exuding a political attitude and embodying a community spirit.

La Belle (2000, 25) uses specific cases of popular education in Latin America as modes of nonformal education. Popular education emerged as a means of incorporating consciousness raising processes into social action in order to make reforms at the community level, and thus was intended to lead to a more egalitarian and classless society. LaBelle (2000) makes theoretical links to individuals like Gramsci who argued that economic, ideological and political actions should be taken in an effort to organise workers and enable them to increase their own cultural values while building a base for cross-class coalitions and greater economic and political power. Consciousness raising and popular

education were crucial components of the revolutionary movements occurring in various stages in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1970s and early 1980s. LaBelle (2000, 33) furthers the discussion of why popular education programs form by noting that action is taken when the tradition of political parties functioning as representative links between the civil society and the state is fragile, if not absent. Consequently, networks are made between marginalised groups in their own struggle to influence an otherwise unaware civil society of the cultural, economic and political marginalisation, and to exude political pressure at the higher levels of government. Contemporary political regimes are deemed to be doing little to prepare the population for citizenship roles in a democratic society, and these holes are filled by nonformal education.

In summary, education is one aspect of the development of marginal cultures that addresses the locus of where social powers are centred. When dealing with social change in the face of external cultural, economic and political pressures, transformative bicultural education in indigenous communities can be analysed through a synthesis of these objective circumstances with internal social capital that already exists. Long-term management of social change of the marginalised will only take place if the oppressed are able to manufacture a resistance, largely through education, that not only maintains a certain degree of cultural, economic and political autonomy, but is also able to expand and influence and alter the external cultural, economic and political structures. Therefore, by incorporating social movement theory, which will be examined in the next section, into the analysis of education programs, local initiatives are not simply education for education's sake. These education programs have broader implications, which make this a true study of development.

2.4.2 Introduction to Social Movement Theory

What is a social movement? As with other terminology addressed in this thesis, the meaning of 'social movement' and how it is studied is variable. The literature on social movements is diverse attempting to deal with what are ultimately incommensurable debates. On the one hand, the classical Marxist understanding of social movements is strictly structural where social actors are inexorably linked to their class status and ultimate political control is manifested through the state. On the other hand, the post-modern perspective eschews objective linkages while focusing on subjective identity connections as the *raison d'être* of participation in social resistance. Separate conceptualizations of these two poles of thought do not expand intellectual debate, but inoculate what is otherwise a fundamental discussion about the nature of social change.

To clarify distinctions in forms and types of social movements, I will consider popular movements to be a category of social movement phenomenon. Consequently, I will deconstruct the definitions and nodes of analysis of social movements in order to synthesise the two poles of thought and place the reality of popular movements somewhere on the axis between the two extremes. Furthermore, Mexico provides a lucrative stage for social analysis in order to evaluate social mobilisation. Multiple social movements in Mexico, including the struggle for indigenous rights, have provided a locus for debate about the central questions of 'why' and 'how' social movements unfold. I will begin with a brief historical evaluation of social movement theories and then I will discuss the contribution of structural theories to answer 'why' social movements form and the intervention of post-modern perspectives to discuss models of 'how' social movements arise.

2.4.2.1 *Historical Context of Social Movement Theory*

In order to fully understand the historical background of social movement theory a closer look has to be taken at the events that shaped them. Theories of social discontent arose along side the industrial revolution through the work of Marx and his vision for a classless communist society. However, Marxist theories began to be seriously re-evaluated after the societal re-organisation of the post World War II era. Academics began to question why the expected socialist revolution never took place, and as a result, they attempted to re-constitute the logic and methods of Marxism to fit contemporary capitalism that had become very effective at forestalling revolt and maintaining mass support. This re-evaluation expanded the realm of analysis by gradually increasing the significance of culture and subjectivity within the widely accepted structural framework.

Althusser (1971), although not breaking too far from the structuralist perspective, recognised 'subjectivity' or a socially produced sense of identity in individuals. He argued that the ability to freely choose identities is a powerful myth used to support notions of individualism and free enterprise that underlie capitalist interests. Institutions such as schools are deemed to be ideological apparatuses of the state that are as important as economic structures in managing social behaviour. Therefore, for Althusser, there is still no room for human agency in relation to culture and social change because the individual is determined by culture. However, the theoretical predominance of classes within economic structures above all else in Marxist thinking had been broken.

Other traditional Marxists continued on the path of studying cultural influences and subjectivity in social change more rigorously. Rejecting Althusser's extreme structuralism as being too deterministic, intellectuals such as Gramsci proposed more flexible

conceptions of ideology and culture. Gramsci (1971) envisioned culture as a site of continuous and ever changing struggle between classes. The cultural meanings that dominate in capitalist societies are never totally the meanings of the dominant capitalist class. Mass culture is a contradictory mixture of meanings, at once being dominated and opposed or determined and spontaneous. It is through this evaluation that he developed the notion of 'hegemony' to signify the way in which the capitalist system achieves consent of the subordinate classes. Hegemony is a process of negotiation and co-optation that continually seeks active participation of the broader population within the dominant economic structures. This approach maintained research interests in Marxist theory, but distanced the analysis from the reductionist notion of pre-determined class position while accepting other dynamics of change within economic and social structures.

From this point on, the constitution of social dissent and popular organisation has become increasingly diversified. A new social order formed and was characterised by the spread of capitalism and the subordination of social relations to the pursuit of profits (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). In this era, theorists like Touraine (1981, 1992) and Melucci (1980, 1988) further turned to the 'subject' as the driving force of social change. Means of control such as the use of language were deconstructed, enhancing the epistemological shift in social analysis. Questions of 'how' manipulation and contestation was carried out became more important than the 'why' questions of structuralist. Furthermore, in terms of unindustrialised nations such as Mexico, this transition period saw the idea of 'development' emerge from Western nations where so-called 'poor' and 'backward' nations were encouraged to join the modernisation project and reap the benefits of economic growth. Up to this point in time, the study of social movements had been Eurocentric (Foweraker 1995, Escobar 1992). However,

with the increasing inclusion of poor nations within the realm of social policy in rich nations, social analysis expanded to include activity in marginalised regions of the world. This broadening of the field of analysis lent to the post-modern penchant for reifying diversity and process over structure. The world was deemed to be infinitely more complex than the social world of the industrial revolution. Disenchantment with the highly academic and structural Marxist approach led to the concept of 'new social movement' theory, a perspective that assumes social movements form through the individual's identification with a movement itself, regardless of what the movement is contesting. Objectivity has little relevance from this view.

2.4.2.2 *'Why' Do Social Movements Exist?*

This question begs for a definition to encompass the broad array of forms of social protest. The complexity of finding a salient definition lies in the emergence of seemingly new forms of social protest. Contemporary social mobilisation is fragmented and does not necessarily seek structural change. Historically, the object of popular resistance has been the 'state', but even this statement has ambiguities. Is the goal of the movement to take over state control, or are they 'reformists' attempting to work within the pre-existing legal frameworks to claim their autonomous rights without actually changing the political structures? Or perhaps the state is not a factor at all. As with the so-called 'new social movements', some social mobilisation targets civil society as the object for change, with the hopes of changing cultural attitudes and mores without addressing structural and legal impositions. This post modern position eschews any objective reality. As Durand (2002, 15) points out, the new articulation of social movements is found in the identity of actors to

the struggle. The water is further muddied by taking a broader international perspective that diminishes the value of the state, especially in poor countries. As Zapata (2002, 62) notes, contemporary movements are phenomenon of collective action that exercise critical citizenship that denounces an ever more distant elite. Many live in states that do not have the ability to confront the forces of neo-liberal globalisation and they maintain a collective consciousness in spaces where the dominant political system has lost centrality and is transforming discontent into the anti-globalisation movement.

One problem in the theorising has been to conflate the identity component of social movements of wealthy countries to that of poor countries. The politics of the gay movement, for example, in North America and Europe for equal cultural recognition is fundamentally different than the identification of indigenous people to their heritage in their struggle to deal with issues of extreme poverty. As Veltmeyer (1997, 151) warns of indigenous communities, “the dynamics of social penetration have a class dimension that cannot be overlooked. The conditions encompassed by the term ‘marginality’ are correctly viewed as the product not of the marginal status of indigenous communities, but of the specific form of their relationship with the broader society.” Comparing the gay movement to the indigenous movement in theoretical terms is like comparing apples with oranges. There are distinct objective differences in why they exist.

It is quite clear that social movements are not homogenous and neither are the epistemological perspectives of the theorists. The structuralist perspective offers explanations of why social movements are new (Petras, 1997; Veltmeyer, 1997; _i_ek, 2000). However, their newness is deemed to come in the form of the class struggle in which they engage, rather than as an explanation for human agency that post-modern

theorists tout. Petras (1997, 43) states that social movements in the Latin American context:

... retain and develop Marxism in new circumstance adapted to new class actors engaged in novel types of struggle with the clear perspective of changing the national, if not international, structure of political and economic power.

Veltmeyer adds to this analysis by noting:

It should be possible to analyse the social bases of the new social movements in class terms ... defined as the 'new working class' that has evolved in a radically different form from that analysed and theoretically constructed in traditional Marxist analysis (1997: p. 149).

Finally, _i_ek (2000) follows this line of thinking when he relates that the left, being disjointed in recent history, must find a new imaginary within the framework of class struggle, as an alternative to capitalism in its current form.

Ultimately, structuralists would like to see a "renewal of socialist praxis that links autonomy and small scale production with control over the strategic heights of the economy" (Petras 1997, 47). That is, there would be a dialectical unity between the actors who are as aware of their own consciousness as they are subjected to economic and political structures. The poor and marginalised must be conceived as modern actors and catalysts for anti-systemic change (Petras and Veltmeyer 2001). According to Veltmeyer (1997, 141), it is from this perspective of comprehending and explaining the dynamics of social and political struggles in Latin America than the post-modern contribution of intellectual immobilisation and political demobilisation can be overcome.

2.4.2.3 *The Definition of Popular Movements*

Popular movements are linked with the struggle of marginalised groups intending to gain a political space within the structures of the dominant society. The objectives of a popular movement define what the movement is about. Foweraker (1990a, 5) labels popular movements by their political practices toward state institutions and other actors in civil society. Therefore, they are defined not by the interests they represent, but by the demands they make through strategic choice. The distinction of popular movements from broader social movements comes from the struggle of a 'people' to constitute themselves in a process that creates political subjects. These subjects seek institutional recognition in order to get material improvement, which, in opposition to revolutionary rhetoric, pursue these ends through political exchanges and gradualist strategies. Furthermore, popular struggle challenges clientelistic patterns of political control making them both 'institutionalist' and 'nonconformist' (Foweraker 1990b, 11).

Popular movements frequently use 'autonomy' as a goal of their political organisation. Although autonomy may have political value, it does not indicate separateness from the political system; but rather the struggle for autonomy demonstrates the quest for linkages to the political system in order to satisfy concrete demands. Furthermore, the goal of social autonomy does not exclude the advocacy and institutional support of civil society. Linkages with broader society give the sense of 'social' in popular movements. Horizontal coalition building with other national and international popular movements that have like identities or demands also extends the social element of popular movements. While the state is still a target of political energy, transnational social movements are inclusive of many popular struggles. As marginalised groups recognise the

distance from which external social pressure is arising, social networks are increasingly crossing borders giving further momentum to local initiatives (Delgado 2002).

2.4.2.4 *'How' Do Social Movements Form?*

The evolution of social movement theory, as outlined above, has increasingly questioned the processes that describe and explain 'how' social movements form. This transformation has blended theoretical pursuits with political activism. Deciphering how social movements form is inexorably linked with the subject, which intertwines the theorist with the movement itself. Perceiving a marginalised status requires education and objectivity while theorising about social movements attempts to understand and expand methods of liberation. The result of this process is to construct salient strategies to deal with the apparent injustices. Barros Nock (1998, 31) uses an actor-oriented approach to define 'strategy' as stemming from everyday practical consciousness. Strategies enable social actors to cope with unforeseen events and changing circumstances. This concept addresses the ways in which people attempt to resolve their livelihood problems and organise their resources. Strategies are socially constructed and some are passed on from generation to generation, each generation learning from the previous one and transforming this strategy by adding new elements. In order to finalise a theoretical framework of analysis for this thesis, I will 'build up' the strategic construction of how social movements form through popular movements.

The ultimate goal of a social movement is to impress change, whether it be cultural, structural or legal, upon broader society in order to shift a group of people from marginal status. These actors do not achieve their goals without developing a consciousness from

within and expanding to broader society. Arcos García (1998, 37) utilises the work of Hugo Zemelman in her analysis of the indigenous movement in Mexico. She uses three constitutive elements to outline the process of generation of collective subjects. The first element is 'necessity', the most basic element that articulates the deficiency of values and power to solve problems. It is a notion that promotes education and self-awareness beginning with the rescue of cultural, economic and political identities and the ruptures that led to the situation. In this sense, the definition, ranking and description of the collective needs such as the forms and mechanisms of resolution gives rise to the possibility of reforming the constitution of the socially marginalised subject. Locally managed transformation in the present materialises through the capacity of human intervention over their reality according to their ability to manage the different spaces of autonomy that they have in respect to their economic determination.

The second factor is a sense of 'utopia', which is an ideal world that is understood as an expression of social subjectivity. It incorporates the dimension of a future through the potential of the present. It is here where the social imagination unfolds forming and reformulating the relation between what is possible in the present and the future. The utopian element transforms the historical horizon of the present but does not guarantee the capacity to construct options and exercise power to make their own reality. The third element is 'experience', which is necessary to realise transformation and the creation of new realities. It is the recognition of options given certain cultural, economic and political limitations and the formulation of strategies, alliances and initiatives which transforms shared utopias in shared projects giving direction to the present. Formal education is a planned and condensed experience that quickly imparts information that was otherwise

gathered during the day to day existence of several generations. The collective identity supposes a shared elaboration of a common historical horizon and a common definition of the group. This does not mean that the individual is negated, but remains a micro-dynamic part of what constitutes subjectivity (Arcos Garcia 1998, 38).

Successful acceptance of collective action into broader culture will ultimately be the measuring stick of any given social movement. This process implies linkages and networks with like communities, broader civil society and the state. Fox (1996) uses a 'political construction' approach with three conceptual building blocks to account for the uneven emergence of various social movements in the less than democratic political environment of Mexico. They include: political space and opportunity, horizontal sharing of ideas and social energy throughout civil society, and scaling-up local representation through independent production of social capital.

Fox (1996, 1090) recognises that the convergence of state and civil society is dependant on several factors. Political conflicts between the ruling elite and marginal groups of civil society have an independent causal effect on the capacity of sub-altern social organisation depending on the state's willingness or capability to dismantle social capital. The state and/or global actors can either provide positive incentives or negative sanctions for collective action. Infrastructure may be provided if certain guidelines are followed, or a culture of violence may repress local initiatives. Moreover, external influences can take a more subtle form if advocates within broader political and economic structures 'buffer' negative sanctions that were usually deployed against autonomous social organisation. These 'official' reformists have the power to legitimise autonomous decision-making powers providing a measure of protection for scaled-up collective action.

Collaboration between local and external civil society organisations is the second component of the political construction model. It involves taking actors, their ideas and motivations into account to explain how groups of people respond to political and economic opportunities. This concept has theoretical limitations since, as Fox (1996, 1090) points out, the ways in which actors respond to positive and negative incentives for collective action do not respond in automatic or unidirectional ways. For various reasons, often through violent coercion, social movements fail or disband. Hirshmann (1984) notes that the aspirations of social actors for societal change often become active again, albeit through different forms of popular organisation, by using a pre-existing 'social energy'. This implies that successful movements can arise out of defeated attempts for change. Conversely, Putnam (1993) developed a model of 'social capital' that grows out of successful communal projects. Bonds of trust and feelings of civicness grow as groups of people achieve objective ends by working together. Fox (1996) postulates that the ability to regroup social energy and foster the growth of social capital is dependant on linkages that the group has made with external national and international allies. The state has the ability to violently disband social movements when the ruling elite feels its power is threatened by certain types of social resistance. Non-partisan networks with broader society provide key allies that 'thicken' society through 'societal co-production'. These networks provide a buffer similar to that of official reformers within the state apparatus. Yet Fox (1996, 1096) notes that this process is highly uneven since the internal dynamics of these alliances can vary greatly, often demonstrating elements of clientelism, which maintains structural dependency that limits autonomous development of social capital.

The third tool in the political construction approach allows for independent production of social capital through sustained collective action by autonomous localised social movements. Without establishing a strong base at the local level, the social movement has little chance of 'scaling up' and gaining acceptance in broader society. Freire's (1984) contributions are relevant to this dynamic, since education and conscientisation are the fundamental components of developing this base. Identity generation and ethnic affiliation grow when groups of people have the social energy and political space to manage their own social change. However, these social spaces are diverse and highly disputed. Fox (1996, 1092) recognises that, theoretically, regional collective power is necessary to challenge the power of authoritarian elites, but these movements are the type of social organisation that the state targets for repression. Moreover, it is empirically difficult to determine the relative weight of repressive factors and local cohesion in social environments that are constantly changing.

In summary, the conceptualisation of social movements requires the theorist to wear several hats. For heuristic purposes, I have broken down social movement theory into two categories: 'why' and 'how' social movements form. Understanding why popular organisation arises is a necessary step for marginalised people to overcome injustices. Making the connection between the structures of domination and the limitations placed on autonomous living allow groups to construct effective strategies to confront the beast. Investigating how popular organisations form in the face of oppressive structures analyses these strategies to create models of social action. The experiences of the actors in struggle can be passed on within the group or to other groups in similar circumstances. Formal education speeds up the pace at which this information is transferred.

2.5 Conclusion

The conceptualisation of a group of people acting autonomously as a popular movement to challenge cultural, economic and/or political structures has both micro and macro components. At the base of any movement is the individual actor's desire to improve their standard of living. In the modern, individualistic society the goal, which is often subconscious, is to reach what Maslow called self-actualisation. This conception can be problematic when dealing with traditional indigenous cultures that do not have an individualistic nature. However, marginalisation in many communities penetrates the human psyche deeply, often challenging the ability of people to satisfy their most basic of human needs of physical nourishment and a feeling of security. Poverty exacerbates both conditions. Further, at the micro level (as per Jenkins in chapter 2.3.2.1), individuals living in marginalised communities do not have the same cultural identification as mainstream society, which causes ruptures and imbalances between the two groups. It is when the struggle for local autonomy becomes central in the identification of a group that a popular movement emerges.

The global placement of many social movements is objectively constituted. For Freire (1984) people must first critically recognise the causes of their oppression before they can initiate transforming action. This does not dismiss the role of subjectivity in the struggle to objectively change societal structures, but highlights the dialectical relationship between identification with a struggle and the external forces that promote or hinder the cause. Currently, popular struggles exist within the framework of global system dominated by a hegemonic economic structure that is unprecedented in its reach into diverse communities and cultures (Veltmeyer and Petras 2001). Therefore, individual identities in

marginal cultures are partially constituted by this relationship with external culture. Moreover, social movements, as they grow, make links and networks with civil society. These connections with broader modern society inexorably draw social movements into the epistemological perspective of the dominant culture. The result is a dynamic of internal struggle (described in the paternity/patrimony dialectic outlined by Von Groll in chapter 2.3.2.2) as actors within social movements at once attempt to preserve local cultural perspectives and mores while increasingly interacting within the epistemological framework of mainstream social structures.

While popular movements are deemed to be a significant point of contention in the political domain, it must be recognised that recent social movements have imposed little change on the perspectives of the dominant culture. Castoriadis (2001, 23) notes that the last 40 years have witnessed important movements with lasting effects on cultural relations (minorities and women for example). Yet, none of these movements have been able to propose a new vision of society and directly address the overall political problem as such. The project of autonomy seems totally eclipsed due to the growing weight in contemporary societies for privacy, de-politicisation and individualism. Although popular movements continuously arise, social movements are subsumed by the dominant culture, largely by making small changes to its policies and language without fundamentally changing the structures that are the true oppressive factors, while at the same time claiming to be progressive negating the work done at the grassroots level.

This is not to say that the work done by actors within social movements and theorists of social movements has been in vain. New points of entry into the struggle and challenges to the mainstream way of thinking must continually be addressed. Under-

theorised are questions of the nature of leadership and education. It is within these two realms that co-optation of struggles frequently takes place. In questions of leadership, it is necessary that social transformation is carried out with the people, rather than for the people both within the marginalised culture and within the dominant culture (Freire 1984, 49). Leaders often talk about their people but they do not trust them with the fear that they may lose their privileged standing. This is a problem when trusting people and developing social capital is an indispensable precondition for generating the collective subject.

Educational methods are also crucial. Education for education sake by simply using the epistemological methods of the oppressor nullifies the efforts of social actors to export change. Conversely, the struggle of the marginalised requires solidarity between social actors in the dominant culture. Ideas and perspectives must travel against the grain so that the marginalised are not seen as an abstract category in the dominant culture, but are seen as humans that have lived under unjust societal structures that are derived in the dominant ideology. Popular education, whether formal or nonformal, is an instrument for the critical discovery that, in Freire's (1984, 30) words, "the oppressed and oppressors are manifestations of dehumanisation." It is from this standpoint that localised bicultural education programs provide a crucial component of the development of popular movements that struggle for autonomous management of social change and link with the broader national and transnational social movements.

Finally, to frame the analysis, I employ different theories according to what is being discussed. In regards to the indigenous movement, I use structuralist analyses to locate the objective conditions in which indigenous peoples in Mexico find themselves and explain 'why' the movement has formed. However, since a structuralist analysis tends to ignore

the subjective factors within individual agency, I supplement the investigation by describing the particularistic conditions of the local culture and identities. The discussion of 'how' the *Huichol* are managing their participation in the broader indigenous movement requires a locally based perspective to understand the assets and tensions that led to the development of the schools, and will ultimately be a model for other indigenous communities. In regards to the nature of the education, the functionalist perspective will explain the objective direction of the school and its formalised practices, while theories of nonformal education fill in the gaps where the education programs drift away from the strictly state-led institution.

Chapter 3

The Structural Context: Nation-Building and Resistance

3.1 Introduction

The history of indigenous peoples in Mexico and throughout the Americas is one of cultural, economic and political marginalisation and social assimilation. The ebb and flow of meso-American cultures received a drastic shock with the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 16th century. Occidental modes of organising society were rapidly established at the expense of all meso-American cultures. The dominant social project of wealth creation by exploiting natural resources and cheap labour has remained remarkably consistent throughout the centuries. Mexico as a nation, while following this dominant economic paradigm, has historically been behind other countries in the race to modernise. So much so, that domestic economic development is largely dependant on external powers. In the same way that Mexico has been subordinated within the global system since the conquest, so have the indigenous been on the bottom rung of the social ladder, unappreciated, negated and forgotten. The intolerance and devaluing of distinct cultural conceptions that has characterised the Western world-view is what has provoked the domination and marginalisation of indigenous peoples. However, in several disparate locales, indigenous elders have been able to establish territorial protection as a priority to defend their lands, traditional agricultural production and sacred sites. Through this battle they have been able to unfold their imagination and force in order to defend their culture and achieve control over their communal economic systems and traditional governing

structures. The first section of this chapter begins by outlining the political structures that have dominated the landscape of rural Mexico which indigenous communities are still attempting to overcome. The second section highlights the development strategies characteristic of modernising Mexico, the concomitant cultural assimilation of its indigenous peoples and locates the spaces of social discontent particularly from the perspective of nationally coalescing indigenous organisation to combat the ever increasing imposition of the capitalist mentality. The final section gives a description of life and history of the *Huichol* people to finally set the context for the nascent youth education programs in the *Sierra Huichola*.

3.2 Political Structures of Modernisation and Marginalisation

Contemporary political structures in Mexico are deeply rooted in the psyche of the population and the institutions that carry out government programs. The country is socially managed through a 'presidential' system that emerged and has evolved from the political and economic chaos of the battle for independence from Spain in 1810. Despite expelling all Spaniards from Mexico in the 1820s, the social project has been the same: economic expansion and social homogenisation in the name of 'nation-building'. Consequently, Mexico's geographic proximity to the capitalist ambitions of the United States has conditioned the emergence of Mexico from its colonial ties. The United States continues to be the archetype for the aspirations of Mexico's middle class. This section will refer to Mexico's relationship with external cultural, political and economic forces, as well as the internal dynamics of continual adjustment at the local level to changes in the national structures.

3.2.1 Historical Background

The post-independence era saw a significant shift in the social structure of Mexico. The expulsion of the Spaniards not only eliminated the aristocracy, but deprived the economy of an important source of capital. This power vacuum was filled by aspiring *Creole* landowners and commerce driven professionals who profited greatly from gradual economic recovery throughout the 1830s and 1840s. Poverty persisted among the vast majority of the population. The peasantry was large and growing principally consisting of *Indios* working meagre plots of land or leaving their sedentary life to find work on large *haciendas* or in the big city. The existence of this large subsistence peasantry provided a useful labour force for the burgeoning capitalist class.

Cheap labour and access to natural resources were the two key factors for economic expansion of the domestic economy. Consequently, the newly established political elite created a federal republic by drawing up a constitution in 1824 and promoting the 'state' as being the centre of social organisation in order to modernise and maintain political control. The process of nation-building began as education programs were extended to indigenous villages to 'nationalise' the culture. Nation-building was seen to have a material and an ideological component. The emphasis of social policy was not only to mobilise and develop the country's resources, but also to achieve an ideological consensus to bind the people together with shared values and goals. Education of the poor and culturally 'backward', and military coercion were the two tools used to indoctrinate the broader population and repress any revolt. This plan was carried out through two bases of power: the church and the military.

The church was well-established throughout Mexican territories and was experienced at using education as a means to change social perceptions. It also came out of the war for independence with its immense wealth intact by maintaining its landholdings and running an extensive banking program. As a result, the church was a principle lender to large landowners which fostered an intimate link between the two groups (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 220). The second power base was the military that extended its presence through the vast lands by using paramilitary groups called *caudillos*. Initially, the *caudillos* were entities of defence as different factions rose up against national powers in order to improve their own wealth. However, these uprisings gradually diminished as the central armies became increasingly powerful through the presidential eras of *Benito Juárez* (1861-1872) and *Porfirio Díaz* (1876-1911), who offered the *caudillo* leaders sufficient wealth to convince the people in their charge to heed to the greater goal of nation-building.

The regimes of *Juárez* and *Díaz* also expanded the modernising project of liberal ideology. These changes did not go unchallenged by more conservative factions of the elite, but gradually the state was able to wither the power of the church and military from the social realm and establish laws and institutions that catered to capitalist growth. For example, new laws prohibited ecclesiastical and civil institutions from owning property not used in day to day operations. This move not only impacted the church's vast holdings, but also took lands from indigenous groups that were auctioned off to wealthy *hacienda* owners. The resulting incursion of loggers, ranchers and miners pushed indigenous peoples from their traditional territories, forcing them to move to less agriculturally productive land, often high in the mountains. Furthermore, the path of modernisation required external and internal stimuli to improve the functioning of the economy.

Externally, foreign investors were sought out, largely from the United States and Britain, and given lucrative concessions. Domestically, the state initiated education reforms that would ideologically train students to be efficient contributors to the burgeoning liberal economic system. Economic expansion was impressive during this liberalisation era despite the balance of payments burden of paying for the foreign investment through interest and dividends. Modest industrialisation took place, but the bulk of the economic growth came from exploiting the natural environment and exporting the raw goods while the credit worthiness of Mexico in the eyes of foreigners remained positive due to the government's economic policies (Skidmore and Smith 2001).

The social discrepancies created by the unequal distribution of wealth and political power gradually fomented discontent throughout Mexico creating turbulence both within the ruling elite and the broader population. By 1911, rapid structural change began to take place beginning with the Mexican Revolution. *Díaz* was chased out of power after the corrupt 1910 presidential campaign, and replaced by the reformist, *Francisco Madero*. However, the spirit of change emboldened the cavalier leaders of workers and peasants to further challenge *Madero* to improve working conditions and recoup traditional territories from the *hacendados*. Notably, *Emiliano Zapata* led the revolutionary peasant movement from southern Mexico, whose followers became known as the *Zapatistas*. A full revolution was finally in place by 1913 after *Madero* was killed by his own military advisor *Victoriano Huerta*, who wished to return to the hard-line methods of repressing revolts used by *Díaz*.

Huerta faced several challenges to his leadership and had to fight battles on several fronts. His armies fought the rebel challengers on northern and southern fronts. He was

also challenged from within. *Venustiano Carranza*, a reformist from the ilk of *Madero*, solicited the support of other Mexican senators and the United States government to discredit the legitimacy of *Huerta's* regime. The U.S. responded by sending troops in response to a conflict in *Vera Cruz* where the U.S. navy had been challenged. By 1914, *Huerta* resigned his position after fighting battles on too many fronts. *Carranza* took the reins of power and continued on the reformist path of *Madero* by pragmatically dealing with the rebel forces to the north and the south. He made many leftist concessions and managed to convert some of the rebels to the national cause. This weakening of the movements made it possible to manage the extreme factions of the revolution allowing *Carranza* to assume the presidency in 1917. This set the stage for the writing of a new, radical constitution that is still in place today. In it, the church was further weakened, workers were granted unprecedented rights and the famous Article 27 called for land re-distribution back to peasants and indigenous peoples.

The post-revolution era required political leaders, if not rhetorically, to heed to the ideals of the revolution. Moreover, the political culture and structures of Mexico began to take a form that still influences contemporary national politics. At first, the institutionalisation of the new constitution was slow to be incorporated due to the fractured institutions and economic quagmire of the depression. Significantly, a new party was formed out of the new leadership. The *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) was a step into corporatist party politics which was a functionalist modernising mechanism to enhance liberal ideology, despite being seemingly rooted in the ideals of the revolution. In 1934 *Lázaro Cárdenas* (1934 – 1940) was appointed leader of the PNR and was the first president to fully utilise and reinforce the powers of the presidency. He did so largely in

the interest of the peasants and the workers. *Cárdenas* presided over the distribution of 44 million acres of land to landless Mexicans as well as institutionalising agricultural production through the communal system of the *ejido*. At issue was the ability of the new system to progress past self-sufficient farming in order to feed the urban centres and provide goods for export. While *Cárdenas* earned enormous popularity from the agrarian sectors, his colleagues in the government were increasingly frustrated by inefficiencies and the slow pace of change.

The governments that succeeded *Cárdenas* gradually moved to the right establishing a softer form of authoritarianism than existed in the pre-revolutionary years. This shifted the focus of the government to the macro-economy and the structures that would allow for an intense industrialisation project. Indicative of this change was a change in the ruling party's name to the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). Substituting in the word 'institutional' signalled a turn toward pragmatism (Delgado de Cantú 1995). The party became very powerful extending influence and leadership through the three main social sectors of the country: the peasantry, the workers and the urbanites. As with other countries in Latin America, Mexico proceeded with a protectionist agenda of import substitution to industrialise the country from within. Major industries such as oil and electricity were nationalised and were funded through foreign loans and proceeds from exports in the agricultural industry. As export oriented agricultural production grew and forestry expanded, a friction grew between the PRI and peasant and indigenous groups. The *caudillos* of the pre-revolution years had evolved into *caciques* where the PRI recruited and paid off local leaders to secure the interests of business and the government.

A strong, efficient system of oppression, exclusion and marginalisation had taken over the country-side, and it is here where the roots of contemporary social discontent formed.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Mexican political system went through significant changes. These changes were principally instigated by external factors. Economic troubles due to over-borrowing in the 1970s when interest rates were low brought the economy down in 1982 after interest rates around the world increased dramatically. Accompanied by low oil prices, the Mexican government led by *Miguel de la Madrid* went bankrupt and was forced to accept a rescue loan package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The rescue had its price as Mexico had to heed to the whims of the IMF, which was, and still is, guided by the U.S. Treasury. Social programs such as education and food subsidies had to be cut in order to manage inflation and tariff barriers had to be reduced opening up the domestic economy to international competition on the export markets.

Another policy implemented by the Mexican government due to external pressures after the Mexican economy had been weakened by the debt crisis was the decentralisation of political structures. Political decentralisation and the opening of the Mexican economy exposed the authoritarian political structures of the PRI to foreign and internal scrutiny. While claiming to be an open and democratic party, the PRI had frequently used vote rigging and violence to influence the polls. Advocates for the poor had begun to abandon the formal electoral system and created grassroots organisations to deal with the circumstances of poverty (Fox and Hernandez 1992). With the legitimacy of the PRI at stake, *de la Madrid* began to recognise opposition party victories at small municipal elections. This fissure rapidly opened up the electoral process to transparent inspection

through the presidencies of *Carlos Salinas* and *Ernesto Zedillo* in the 1990s which ultimately saw *Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas* (son of *Lázaro Cárdenas*) of the left leaning *Partido de la Revolución* (PRD) win the mayoralty of Mexico City and *Vincente Fox* of the right wing *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN) assume the presidency. The old system was broken and new competing forces continued the struggle to give direction to the country.

3.2.2 Mexico's Political System

The political structures that were formed out of the Mexican Revolution are still what direct the country in the new millennium. Despite the occasional reform through to the 1970s and the break down of one-party rule in the 1990s, an old political culture that is distinctly Mexican still presides throughout the country. However, the dynamics of this system are going through a phase of rapid change. The federal government no longer has the power to buffer the country from foreign markets and culture and there is increasing pressure to improve regional governance and civic accountability at the local level. These competing forces are interacting within a political system that has three main characteristics: corporatism, centralism and clientelism.

Mexico's 'corporatist' structure was designed by *Cárdenas* with the intention of providing peasants and workers, the sons of the revolution, with a mechanism to voice their concerns with the PRI. Rising out of the functionalist perspective of social interaction, the corporate framework attempted to include all aspects of Mexican society within the structures of the government. Various groups were permitted to participate in state-sanctioned organisations in order to link the people with the ruling party. For example, the peasant sector was given a voice through the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC)

and native people were connected through the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI), which in turn had several PRI sanctioned organisations below them. The combination of all these popular organisations created extensive chains that were ultimately linked up through to the PRI leadership.

The intention of this corporatist structure was to evoke the democratic process throughout the governing party. However, as consequent political leaders became ever dependant on foreign capital for national development, this corporatist structure was ultimately used to limit the demands of peasants and workers, and repress autonomous organisation against the state (Paré 1990, Fox 1995, Ward 1998). This marginalisation was aided by the inclusion of interest groups external to the federal government in high-level policy making. Foreign business leaders, local wealthy entrepreneurs, the military and the Church were all influential in guiding the business of the government despite having no formal representation within the state's corporate structure. Consequently, the democratic power of the population was quickly eroded since the mechanisms of popular representation were muted while powerful interest groups had direct access to the president and his cabinet.

'Centralism' ultimately became the defining characteristic of governance in Mexico in the second half of the twentieth century. Political power was centred not only in the federal government, but in the closed circles of the president within the PRI. Successive leaders of the PRI were hand-picked by the out-going president, eventually being acclaimed as the president of the republic in largely uncontested national elections. Furthermore, the president appointed state governors who in turn had the power to select municipal presidents to be confirmed through the smokescreen of fixed elections.

The hierarchal structure of the PRI reached down into all levels of civic life, while focusing decision-making power in the office of the president. On the one hand, the president was the chief legislator who had the power to amend the constitution as well as rule on electoral and judicial issues. Ratification of the president's policies took place largely without opposition and were applied around the country through the penetrating infrastructure of the state. On the other hand, the federal government also controlled the distribution of public funds. Up until the mid-1990s the president's office managed 85% of the national budget, leaving state and municipal governments to disperse 12% and 3% of public revenues respectively (Cornelius and Craig 1988).

'Clientelism' is the commonly referred to characteristic of Mexican politics that arose out of the corporatist and centralist governing structures. The PRI was able to maintain links to remote areas of the country by handing down ever diminishing power to municipal leaders. The president of the republic was the top of a vertical chain of patron-client relationships where each successive level of decision-making power was dependant on the party structure above it. The high-ranking PRI officials acted as 'patrons' with their political and economic power while providing their 'clients' with political status at the local through benefits such as financing, military or paramilitary protection and political advocacy in exchange for political loyalty, voter mobilisation and control of popular discontent. These interweaving chains of patron/client relationships were all connected up to one point _ the presidency.

This hierarchal system was successful, for a time, in creating economic and political stability. On the one hand, it provided a system to distribute financial and political benefits to the people. At the same time, latent social antagonists were easily overcome by

either excluding them from government programs or by exerting coercive pressure. On the other hand, common interest groups with the potential of challenging the PRI could be divided and made to compete against each other, transferring social discontent away from the state. For example, peasants with land were categorised differently than those without land and unionised workers were dealt with differently than non-unionised workers. Consequently, the political leadership avoided messy broad-based popular demands by fragmenting the opposition and dealing with social issues on a regional, compartmentalised basis. If the case of social uprising or interference with state sanctioned activity occurred then military and paramilitary forces were adept and ruthless in maintaining the agenda of the PRI.

The corporatist, centralist and clientelistic nature of the Mexican political system pushed decision-making capabilities upward and socially marginalised the vast majority of the country. At the local level, participation in the political process was not easily accessible due to a system of *Caciquism*. *Caciques* were run by local strongmen loyal to the PRI who dominated government projects, business activities and extraction of natural resources often through the threat of violence. They were middlemen in the patron/client relationship of the clientelistic structures. At the local level, *caciques* operated as patrons, maintaining low-level political officers and keeping the people in general as clients. On the state and national level, *caciques* behaved as clients receiving paybacks and police support. The *caciques* effectively stripped the ability of peasants and workers to participate in decision-making structures. At the national level, highly ranked political elites determined public policy, often catering to the interests of foreign and domestic capital. These priorities were passed down and administered by *caciques* upon the diverse local sectors.

As a result, the only form of popular participation, when permitted, came as protest after the fact.

The political restructuring that took place in the post debt crisis era (1982) was shaped by the political culture that defined rural life. Political 'decentralisation' became a part of the government's discourse and was to take place along three abstract axes. The first axis of political reform came in the form of political or 'horizontal' decentralisation, which allowed increased participation of competing political parties at the federal and state levels. The second axis attempted to regionalise development programs in a process of 'spatial deconcentration' in response to the regional disparities that arose from ISI strategies. This process followed the neo-liberal mantra of free-market economics in order to efficiently provide improved goods and services. Ostensibly, previously marginalised regions would be given access to the liberating mechanisms of the market. The third axis offered increased economic resources and decision making power for the states, municipalities and in some instances grassroots groups in a process of 'vertical' decentralisation. This devolution of power proposed to enhance popular participation in issues of national concern by making local levels of decision-making financially independent (Tetreault 2001).

Since the debt crisis in the early 1980s Mexico has been going through a process of exposing itself to the economic policies of foreign powers as well as an expansion and 'thickening' of its civil society. Market liberalisation and political decentralisation are penetrating all levels of Mexican society, including traditional agrarian indigenous communities. At the same time, marginalised groups such as the indigenous peoples have linked with each other and social activists. Before discussing the 'thickening' of civil

society in more detail, I will outline, in the next section, the agricultural structures in which the rural indigenous must interact.

3.2.3 The Agrarian Structure

The *Huichol* are a people that largely subsist through ancient agricultural practices. Therefore, it is important to note the agricultural structures and practices of Mexico in which the *Huichol* must compete and co-exist. Mexico has a land-tenure system that is a direct product of the Mexican Revolution. The capitalist development of the agrarian sector of the Mexican economy in the pre-revolution years was a major factor that spurred the uprising, especially from the South. Landless peasants rose up under the leadership of Emilio Zapata to fight the ever dominant land-owners in order to regain terrain for those who subsisted on the fruits of their own labour. The success of the uprising was enshrined in Article 27 of the 1917 constitution, distributing small parcels of land to peasants from the large private land-holdings. The *ejido* emerged as a mechanism and institution to accommodate landless peasants and still represents a significant point of reference in contemporary agrarian structures in Mexico.

While *ejidos* constitute the largest portion of Mexico's social sector, the *comunidad* is also a recognised institution in Mexico's land-tenure system. In Mexico there are 30,305 *ejidos* of which 2,240 are *comunidades* accounting for 3.8 million people (INEGI 2001). The defining factor of the *comunidad* is an indigenous identity that has claims to land pre-dating the Revolution. The *ejido* and the *comunidad* are both methods of collective land ownership having similar internal governing structures and external representation to the CNC. However, in *ejidos* and *comunidades* that are primarily

indigenous, traditional forms of social organisation have co-existed adding to the complexity of decision-making processes.

Cárdenas belatedly initiated the land redistribution process in the 1930s, several years after Article 27 was written into the constitution during the Mexican Revolution. This process saw many conflicts of ownership and resource usage. In many cases boundaries were poorly defined and often overlapped while some of the promised land endowments were never bestowed. Furthermore, in areas where peasants did settle into stable *ejiditario* and *comunitario* units, *caciques* were able to coercively enter and exploit the natural resources and ranchers frequently expanded their grazing areas into the recognised borders. Many of the current conflicts between indigenous groups and peasants and the state are over financial retribution and land reclamation agreed upon in historical treaties and contracts.

Despite the formal recognition of *ejido* and *comunitario* territories, the economic activities that take place within these structures has never been embraced by federal agriculture policies. In the post World War II period, Mexico practiced Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) granting the agricultural sector secondary status behind urban industrial growth. The agricultural practices of the indigenous and peasantry traditionally have been for subsistence living and have not contributed to the economic growth of the country. Moreover, the surpluses that are produced on community lands often are sold in informal markets in larger towns and cities. These localised practices are contrary to the modernisation model of economic growth where large-scale commercial farming is deemed more economically efficient at providing nourishment for people in the burgeoning urban

areas. Consequently, federal resources that did go to the agricultural sector were designated for large-scale commercial production with the capacity to export.

By the 1970s, Mexico had lost self-sufficiency in producing basic grains and was actually importing these staples to make up the difference. At the same time, peasant unrest was mounting with poverty escalating and continual exclusion from broader development strategies. Several government projects in conjunction with the World Bank attempted to address this issue in order to integrate these 'backward' economies into the mainstream. However, several factors led to failure of these programs, not least of which was the debt-crisis. Corrupt officials were able to skim much of the proceeds and corporate agro-farms also tapped into the resources intended for peasants (Fox 1992). Furthermore, these programs were incongruent with the worldviews of the intended beneficiaries, did not take diverse social structures into account and damaged the sensitive eco-systems in which they were implemented (Tetreault 2001). Needless to say, the agricultural sector in Mexico was in disarray and the government's ability to address the problems was hampered by the financial incapacitation of foreign debt repayments.

The answer to the problems in the agricultural sector, as well with the rest of the economy, was to implement neo-liberal policies of deregulation and privatisation. External support was now needed to keep the country viable, which also meant adopting decentralisation policies dictated from foreign power centres such as the World Bank and IMF. A significant domestic result of this restructuring of the economy was the altering of Article 27 of the constitution by *Salinas* in 1992. The general deregulation of the agricultural economy significantly lowered the price of commodities, making it very difficult for small scale producers to compete against large agro-businesses. Obtaining

modern machinery was out of the question since the cost of mechanisation constantly increases compared to the prices of agricultural goods. Furthermore, subsidies for crop prices and agricultural inputs were gradually decreased and credit dried up (Otero, 1999). These changes put an end to formal land redistribution and gave the right of *ejiditarios* and *comuneros* to alter the status of their landholdings by privatising sections of the previously communal lands and entering into joint ventures with private investors. While this strategy seemingly allowed eager farmers to act on market forces and improve production, in actual fact further class striations occurred. Most peasants were not able to obtain plots of land large enough to be competitive and were forced to sell their holdings to larger agro-businesses. The only option for many peasants was to sell their small holdings and seek wage labour on the larger farms with crops designated for export. These new agricultural policies actually increased the number of landless peasants, which kept wages low, and polarised communities since the economy did not grow fast enough to absorb the increasing labour force (Otero, 1999). Furthermore, by re-establishing class hierarchies and concentrating income and wealth in the hands of a few, internal conflicts were exacerbated in areas where communal living had been a means for survival (Otero 1999, Brown 1996). External forces for social change in the name of neo-liberalism had a drastic impact on the already impoverished rural and indigenous communities in Mexico.

Despite the emergence of a multi-party political system, Mexico continues to be ruled by a powerful political elite that maintains an economic development strategy, inclusive of the agricultural sector, that directs production towards international markets. Yet, the majority of Mexican territories are composed of *ejidos* and *comunidades*. Most of this land is of poor quality producing for subsistence living and informal local markets.

Furthermore, this social sector has long been neglected since it does not contribute to the development strategies of the state. Concessions and projects were granted to these groups to maintain political stability and provide a source of surplus labour (Tetreault 2001, 133). Large-scale commercial farming and ranching is still the preferred mode of agricultural production in order for Mexico to compete on international markets and feed its expansive urban population. Moreover, land redistribution initiated in the revolutionary constitution has been abandoned in favour of private ownership in what Hodges and Gandy (2002) call the end of the revolution.

3.2.4 *The Fomentation of Civil Society*

The breadth and depth of Mexican civil society provides an excellent arena for analysing social change in contemporary global culture. In earlier eras, the corporatism and centralism of authoritarian regimes of both the pre- and post-revolutionary governments disabled the capacity of oppressed groups to maintain any growth of social capital. On the one hand, communication between marginalised groups was problematic due to the vast geographic differences and physical inability to share ideas. On the other hand, when public discontent did arise, the government was quickly able to dismantle the opposition with violent force. Obviously, the masses were able to have an impact on national leadership resulting in the Mexican Revolution. However, this mobilisation was able to rise as it did due to weakness in the leadership at that time (Delgado de Cantú 1995). The ensuing governments that culminated in the PRI became much more savvy in dealing with the demands of the poor and increasingly used the language of the Revolution as a smokescreen to disguise the continued project of economic modernisation.

Ironically, while the economic livelihood of the political elite in Mexico has been predominantly dependant on the policies and consumption of wealthy Western countries, as well as the ability to exploit local natural resources and labour, Mexico's domestic culture has also increasingly been influenced by counterculture protest in the West. The foundation of contemporary activism in Mexican civil society arguably began with the 1968 student protests in Mexico City. Security forces massacred hundreds of students protesting the Olympic Games to be held later that year in a gathering similar to social protests was taking place in the United States. This event was sobering for the people, not only in the fact that it took place in the sanctuary of the national university campus, but also because there was no explanation or inquiry in its aftermath (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 242). The brutal show of force demonstrated that social protest would be dealt with violently, but conversely became a rally point to justify the need to challenge the current authoritarian system.

The student uprising exposed the brutal nature of Mexican rule to the rest of the world. News of the massacre was embraced by the civil society of Western countries, and as consequence foreign governments took notice as well. Ironically, the United States admonished the Mexican government despite being frequently complicit to violent repression of social uprisings taking place in *inter alia* Argentina and Chile. Since the student uprising, the Mexican government has used violent force more subtly and many Mexicans have been able to openly communicate their disparagement with the ability of the government to effectively deal with the plight of the poor. The concomitant decentralisation of political power imposed by the IMF and World Bank in 1982 to formally include the previously marginalised in the modernisation project also opened

spaces allowing for a dramatic increase in autonomous grassroots organisation. These organisations formed in the cracks of the changing structures and worked to either replace or reform the economic and political conditions that were deemed to oppress the majority of the population.

The federal government has continually resisted the growth of autonomous social organisation. Secret assassination of peasant leaders and a strong military presence have explicitly intimidated the people. However, implicit control was maintained as well. The spatial deconcentration and vertical decentralisation of power did not have the promised impact of uncovering new poles of development. Programs were formed, but were never funded sufficiently to have an impact and rural municipalities have never had the manpower or technical capacity to effectively manipulate the power devolved to them (Ward 1998). Consequently, social organisation outside of the structures of the state became necessary, despite the threat of violence. In the aftermath of the student massacre, social activists began to work underground working with the poor in their villages and urban slums (Fox and Hernandez 1992). Increasingly, these activities garnered support from foreign non-governmental organisations emboldening domestic activism to surface acting as links in a growing network of social service.

At the macro-level, the new millennium has seen a change in the role of the state in reference to its function in maintaining global structures and distributing social programs to its population. On the one hand, the domestic elite has become increasingly subservient to social policies of wealthy nations. The United States has strengthened its global position using the IMF and World Bank as tools to exploit foreign economies such as Mexico. The ideology of 'globalisation' has intellectually captured political leaders to accept economic

policies derived from afar despite the extraction of interest payments, the pillage of natural resources and usurpation of private property by TNCs. On the other hand, the increased activity of NGOs has dismantled the national welfare state and the dominance of TNCs has destroyed local economies exacerbating class differences (Petras 1997). The external sources of cultural, economic and political influence on social change on historically marginalised communities have become more distant. Yet, these changes have also opened spaces for autonomous social organisation and the thickening of civil society. Highly centralised, corporatist and clientelistic structures still dominate the Mexican political landscape, but in a changing climate of foreign economic demands and increasing autonomous social organisation.

3.3 Economic Growth and Cultural Assimilation

The arrival of the Spanish into the region now called Mexico caused a collision of two civilisations. That is, two models for society with radically different worldviews were forced to compete with each other for dominance over the future of what would become a common nation forged by the conquerors. The efficient armies of the Spanish crown and the enticing dogma of the Catholic Church were able to pacify the native people so that the natural riches could be extracted and shipped back to Europe. Throughout this colonisation process, the Occidentalists continually affirmed their ideological superiority in all orders of life, which ultimately negated and excluded the colonised cultures. Independence and revolution did not change the Western model of patriarchy which has continued to be one long project. However, the roots of meso-American culture are maintained in various enclaves throughout the country that not only harbour a traditional identity base to combat

the still encroaching foreign culture, but also offer alternative perspectives for managing the human condition in an era when the dominant project is essentially destroying itself through excess consumption.

The colonial split in the biological and the cultural constitution of Mexican peoples is a burning problem and has existed since the 1800s when national education programs were initiated. *Benito Juarez*, a president of native descent was the first leader to formally tackle the problem of native cultures not being able to adapt to modern economic realities. The ruling elite embraced '*mestizaje*' _ the process of becoming Mestizo _ as a biological process that bore the risk of having introduced a flawed vision that was inappropriate to understand non-biological practices such as occurs when two cultures come into contact in the context of colonial dominance (Bonfil Batalla 1994). The resulting historical process of 'disindianisation' destroyed an original society with its own identity and culture, forcing a people to renounce their distinctiveness through changes in their social organisation and culture. Therefore, *mestizaje* was an attempt to objectifiably construct a nation of people by producing pride in the historical background of two distinct cultures, while only using the worldview of one of the cultures to plan for the future. I will look at the historical nation-building process of Mexico in this section by outlining the economic strategies of the ruling elite that exploited and excluded indigenous cultures, the concomitant educational projects designed to assimilate the backward and construct a unitary national identity out of distinct and diverse cultures, and the eventual build up of social resistance.

3.3.1 *Economic Development Strategies*

The emergence of Mexico from its colonial past has been largely conditioned by its geographical and ideological proximity to the United States. Capitalism has been the main development project that has penetrated all regions and social stratum of the country where the urban and modern are deemed to be historically advanced. The competition between wealthy elites to broaden their influence and garner power has maintained a top-down approach to managing the economy and social projects. This process of manipulation and control ultimately led to the reductionist perspective that continues to dominate contemporary ideology. The traditional and rural are considered to be 'backwards' and are consequently not a point of reference in national 'development'. Occidental culture needed to maintain a clear distinction between the colonised (*Indios*) and the European colonisers since if the native culture had been fully incorporated, the ideological justification to culturally dominate would not exist. Segregation and difference are circumstances of a colonial society, whereas the unification of two worldviews would have been an improbable project of fusing two civilisations altering the roots of colonial order. From the ruling elite in the days of the European invasion to the business leaders of today, the occidental project has been maintained where there is no space for the meso-American civilisation.

The Spanish crown directed the economic exploitation of its new territories with little regard for Indigenous concepts of land use or personal sovereignty. Noble families and the military were awarded *encomiendas* that encompassed large tracts of communally held Native land. *Indios*, at the threat of violence, were required to serve the landowners through free labour in agricultural and mining ventures. The *encomienda* system was outlawed by the Spanish crown in 1542 requiring Spanish enterprises to pay for labour in

order to incorporate the indigenous workers into the economy. However, a system of 'debt peonage' resulted which kept the *Indios* in slave-like conditions while Spanish superiority survived.

The Wars for Independence left Mexico in a state of economic disarray and decay. The Spaniards took their capital out of the country causing the mining and agricultural enterprises to fall into disrepair and production to decline. The resulting unemployment was a significant condition in the formation of the paramilitary *caudillos*. The existence of an underemployed peasantry was also the base for rejuvenating the economy. The large surplus labour force was a boon for the new *Mestizo* elite to kick start mining and agricultural production, while using the *caudillos* to incorporate and assimilate the native population.

Foreign conflict also had an impact on the direction of economic policies. Mexico lost large tracts of land to the United States in the early 1800s. By 1848, Mexico lost close to half of its territories that encompassed present day California and Texas. This loss impacted the psyche of Mexican identity, emboldening the political elite to fervently tackle new economic policies of modernisation rather than tradition. Guided by ideologically liberal principles to reinstitute pride in being Mexican, economic power was increasingly put in the hands of wealthy. Indigenous lands were taken away in the name of private exploitation through a charter banning all corporate land-holdings which opened up territories to speculators, ranchers and agro-export ventures. Furthermore, foreign investors were given financial concessions to attract much needed capital to develop the Mexican economy. Economic growth was impressive in the closing years of the 19th century as railways were built and foreign trade exploded. Some modest industrialisation

also took place in textiles and mineral extraction in order to find new sources of income to keep pace with the increased burden of interest payments to foreign stakeholders.

As was mentioned earlier, this economic liberalisation had significant social costs. Labour surpluses kept wages low allowing business leaders to expand their production rather than share the wealth. Poverty was pervasive as the gaping divide between the rich and poor widened leading to the Revolution and to once again disrupt the economic growth of the country.

The years immediately following the Revolution were largely spent institutionalising a new path for Mexico. Once the corporate political structures were established it did not take long for the country to resume a program of capitalist development. However, the strategy of choice was fundamentally different. Trading on open markets was substituted by ISI. According to this strategy economic resources were channelled toward the urban industrial sector by providing national companies with subsidies, tax breaks and infrastructural support, as well as imposing high tariffs on foreign goods. However, dependence on external influences was an essential characteristic of the Mexican economy. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and technological capabilities were still necessary to fuel the economic growth and the agricultural sector grew due to its ability to export on international markets. Mexico was competing full force on the international scene, attempting to develop industrially to catch up and emulate wealthy Western countries.

By the late 1960s, the economic growth strategy of ISI had seemingly exhausted itself. Cronyism and over-protection made industrial production inefficient and unemployment was rising due to an increasing population and a simultaneous spread in the

use of technology to replace wage labour. Furthermore, a global recession in the 1970s reduced export opportunities. Mexico's leap to modernise its economy required consistent growth. When the economy began to falter, the shortcomings of the strategy came to the fore as the smaller domestic markets did not have the strength to support the growth of manufactured goods and they had lost food self-sufficiency. This decline in the economic capabilities of Mexico made it vulnerable to foreign economic policies.

On the global scene, the United States ended the fixed price convertibility of its dollar into gold, which significantly altered the international trading system. Floating exchange rates changed the rules for trade and finance making Mexico vulnerable to currency fluctuations in the world market. This notable event was followed by a series of episodes instigated by OPEC policies that drastically reduced interest rates world-wide. These low rates initiated a process of debt accumulation that would eventually debilitate Mexico in the 1980s. In 1973-74 the world saw an unprecedented rise in the price of oil. Countries that exported oil deposited the larger part of the profits into international banks. As a result, the banks needed borrowers to recycle the funds that had been placed in their coffers. Intense competition between banks meant that attractive loan terms were available with low interest rates. Furthermore, the economies of the industrialized world slowed down significantly. The rise in oil prices had set off an inflationary cycle around the world that put further downward pressure on real interest rates. Mexico was in a position where borrowing money from eager international lenders was the key tool in financing capital formation. Moreover, the country did not have to rely on FDI to promote capital growth, but could finance its capitalist sector with its own resources. This expansion of borrowing was justified as a strategy despite the slow down in the economy since their economic

output was greater than real interest rate on their debts. The increased inflow of cash had two major results. First, unemployed and underemployed resources were tapped which stimulated the domestic economy. Second, as domestic income increased, so did domestic saving. The misuse of these savings became a significant factor in the inability of countries to deal with the up-coming debt crisis. However, in the short run, as long as growth stayed high and interest rates remained low, the burden of the debt did not increase in relation to the size of their economies.

The regional debt more than tripled between 1973 and 1980 (Pastor 1989). This debt burden was met by further changes in the world economy. A second oil-price rise further debilitated the economies of industrialised countries. Western governments reacted this time, however, by tightening monetary policy and allowing interest rates to rise. This caused demand to slow down in the industrialised economies, which resulted in a decrease in the real price of exports in developing countries. Consequently, countries that were relying on low interest rates to accumulate the debt that financed capital development were in a world of rising interest rates and were no longer in a position to sustain capital growth. Foreign banks became unwilling to lend, which squeezed borrowers that relied on the loans for debt finance. Many of these borrowers turned to domestic financing, but this only proved to increase interest rates within the local economy. Moreover, private borrowers also felt the pinch as their profit margins were severely reduced, causing incomes and employment to fall. Foreign banks had even less incentive to loan to developing nations like Mexico. Interestingly, foreign banks were in a compromised position themselves since they could not afford to see developing nations go bankrupt, otherwise they would default on the debts they accumulated over the previous years. Developing nations needed foreign

exchange earnings badly, which set the stage for the World Bank and IMF to increase their profiles and begin the process of restructuring the enormous debt on behalf of foreign stakeholders

Mexico was forced to enter the realm of neo-liberal social policy in the name of macro-economic stability. In other words, Mexico had to keep up their interest payments on its foreign debt to maintain viability as a growing, modernising country in order to attract future investment in its economy. Defaulting on debt payments is a signal to foreign investors that a country is not viable, ultimately isolating it from the global economy. Consequently, Mexico had to play the financial game with the rules written by foreigners. The social costs to meet the IMF commitments were often severe. Not only did unemployment soar, but real wages for those who worked dropped by 42% between 1982 and 1988. Interestingly, by contrast, the income of the wealthiest 10% of Mexico's population increased in the same period (Lustig 1995). The neo-liberal policies of privatisation, deregulation and wage reduction favoured those who had access to capital and could exploit the new rules for doing business. Furthermore, rich Mexicans had been able to put much of their savings into foreign currencies during the worst periods of the debt crisis, exempting them from the drastic devaluations of the Mexican *peso* and actually amplified the power of their wealth when the expatriated capital was returned to Mexican markets.

The structures of the Mexican economy were entrenched even further into the global neo-liberal network during the presidency of *Carlos Salinas de Gortari* (1988-1994) culminating in Mexico's entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada in 1994. The early years of *Salinas's* presidency were spent

preparing the economy for NAFTA. Restrictions on foreign ownership of companies were removed, public companies, banks and *ejidos* were privatised, and social programs were cut in order to establish macro-economic stability and lure foreign investment to initiate economic growth. Ultimately, the signing of NAFTA locked Mexico into the dominant global economic paradigm, limiting the ability of future governments to alter the course of Mexican macro-economic policy.

The *Salinas* government did not completely ignore the impending poverty crisis by using grants from the World Bank to establish a broad array of small-scale development projects throughout the country that targeted the poor. The program, labelled as the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL), was called a success by its supporters due to the large number of projects that were undertaken and the infrastructure that was built. Of course, these grants were conditional on the acceptance of the Mexican government adopting macro-economic reform. Furthermore, the location of the projects became highly controversial as not all regions of the country received the benefit of the funding. It has been demonstrated (Bruhn 1996) that PROSONOL was more a political project than a plan for development. The resources of the program were targeted for regions with the strongest opposition to the government and were dispersed at critical times immediately before crucial elections. Furthermore, poverty indicators did not rebound to pre-debt crisis levels. In the period 1988 to 1994, PROSANOL programs did lead to decreases in poverty, but in the early years of NAFTA after 1994, poverty levels began to worsen (Tetreault 2001).

If Mexico were an example of successful IMF and World Bank policy through the early 1990s, its lofty status was quickly and alarmingly shattered in December of 1994 with a currency devaluation that once again economically crippled the country. A newly

appointed *Zedillo* government attempted to gently devalue the *peso* which triggered a mass exodus of foreign capital and another social crisis. Another economic bailout was necessary amounting to \$US 52 billion led by the United States, IMF and World Bank. This bailout meant that the Mexican government would maintain its neo-liberal course in the face of deepening social crises. Exports once again began to grow and foreign investment gradually returned, but poverty and income disparity increased. Once again in the recovery of a crisis, unemployment rates did fall between 1995 and 2000, but this was accompanied by a 47% drop in real wages (Tetreault 2001). Furthermore, the peasant sector was infiltrated on two fronts. First, open markets caused a precipitous fall in the price of corn, a commodity that supported 80% of *ejidatarios* (De Janvry 1995). The only producers that were able to compete were large-scale agro-businesses forcing small-scale producers to sell their lands and find wage-earning employment within the large companies since they could not earn a living due to the low price of corn. The massive infusion of low-skilled workers into corporate agriculture kept wages low and unemployment in the peasant sector high.

Second, genetically modified corn was permitted to enter the country, which has had exacerbated environmental degradation and challenged the life rhythms of traditional indigenous cultures. The ownership of genetically modified seeds is controlled by large international corporations, increasing the dependency of peasants to the whims of foreign influences. Furthermore, the long-term ecological effects of monoculture are unknown. Traditional societies such as the *Huichol* are fundamentally ingrained into the cycles of life in their territory. Altering this cycle severely impacts religious practices and challenges native cosmologies that bind communities together (Biglow 2002).

The most recent presidency of Vicente Fox has brought little change to the economic model followed by Mexico. Fox has remained committed to neo-liberal economic and social policies and has promoted both the NAFTA agreement and the nascent Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Many analysts are sceptical of whether the Mexican economy can avoid future market crashes as took place in 1982 and 1994. High oil prices have surely helped the Mexican economy through the first four years of the new millennium. Yet, at the micro level, the labour market has been extremely volatile as factories in Asia become more competitive drawing American based contracts away from the hundreds of *maquiladoras* on the northern Mexican border. Fox's strategy to deal with the possibility of massive unemployment was to campaign on the promise of creating a transparent border for migrant labourers to work in the United States. However, in the post September 11th era, the United States has not been willing to meet the demands of the Fox government. Fox has been severely criticised for his lack of action with fears resting on the conscience of the Mexican people. However, due to Mexico's subservient position in relation to the levers of the global market, Fox can do little but hope oil prices remain high, keeping the economy strong and the burgeoning population active.

In summary, the direction of economic growth in Mexico has historically been a centralised, top-down pursuit. Despite a popular revolution and several economic crises, the Mexican government has maintained the quest for social and technological modernisation by prioritising for the needs of capital and foreign investment. Theoretically, centrally managed economic growth in the name of individualism and capitalism is the panacea to reduce poverty and maintain social cohesion. Recent trends of foreign dictated and domestically managed social policy as seen through the lens of the

Mexican experience has stayed the course in spite of the periodic crises that have increased income disparity and exacerbated poverty while mitigating and intruding on the self-sufficiency strategies of indigenous groups and peasants. Given the history of social turmoil in Mexico, it is interesting that more powerful social uprisings have not developed in the recent crises. Social assimilation and control has become subtle and powerful. The next section will look at the history of this phenomenon.

3.3.2 Education and Assimilation

It has been demonstrated in this thesis that Mexico has followed a social path based in Western ideals where economic advancement of the elite is the guiding factor in making social policy. There have been disruptions in the flow of events by social uprisings such as the War for Independence to end colonial rule and the Mexican Revolution to forge agrarian reform. However, class differences have been maintained throughout this history and the world-views of the indigenous have been considered to be nostalgic and backwards. The ruling elite have consistently used formal education as a means of co-opting the people with the greatest propensity for sedition. State-run education programs have carried on the task begun by the church and the army in the colonial era to keep populations sedentary.

For centuries before the invasion by Spain most education by peoples in the Americas was based on informal learning experiences. Their sense of history and world-view was absorbed in ceremonies and rituals where tribal leaders and shamen passed on legends through song, dance and story. Other skills needed to maintain their livelihoods were learned at a very young age by being included in the daily work of the family. The

formal education that did exist was restricted to elite religious-political leaders and their families. Literacy was produced with glyphs of letters that recorded their ancient history and sciences (Rippberger 1992, cited from Walker, 1986).

In Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, Spanish Jesuit priests were the first to introduce formal education. Their route to the spiritual heart of indigenous populations was to live with the people and learn their language, so they could formally teach their doctrine in the native tongue. This education was bilingual and native students were taught to teach others from their community, something the secular education institution did not adopt for over four centuries. Ultimately, the Catholic missions were used by the Spanish crown to manage the native population in order to avoid uprisings and the disruption of mining that took place during this era.

The post-independence years saw little change for the indigenous population. The church maintained significant power throughout the transition. As a result, the presence of external values continued to expand and deepen. The renewed and invigorated political elite also learned to use the Church as means of embedding a new cultural agenda of *mestizaje* throughout the country. The state became a mechanism for objectively creating a nation of Mexican people that had two roots: Spanish and Native. However, the European cultural project with Western ideals and religious values dominated the country while indigenous cultures remained marginalised from the decision-making processes of the country.

Education as nation-building became an important part of the national Mexican strategy during *Juarez's* tenure. As a native himself, *Juarez* bought into the European vision of economic exploitation and actively promoted free and compulsory education

throughout the nation (Friedlander 1975). Rural schools were created and gradually began to shift from a theocratic curriculum to a Spanish dominated, skills based pursuit. This era also saw the governing elites seek control the definition of *Indio* and thereby justify their course of action and the type of education necessary to promote their cultural and political ends. For example, those seeking to exploit the *Indios* for their own gain frequently sought to justify their actions by assertions of *Indio* inferiority. Others felt *Indios* should be educated so that they might participate in the national economy. The Natives generally resisted such definitions by retreating from *Mestizo* society (Rippberger 1992).

The post-revolutionary years saw an intensification in national education policy. In 1921, the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP), which still manages education in Mexico today, was established to create rural schools to educate the peasant and indigenous populations. Several sub-departments sprung out of the SEP to focus on agricultural efficiency and implementation in indigenous areas. The immediate goal was to offer a primary level of education and instil basic literacy skills. Notably, indigenous history, customs and identity were absent in the nascent programs since the native way of life still held an inferior status (Guevara González 2002).

Cárdenas, as in other areas of social policy, made significant contributions to the national education program. For the first time the SEP acknowledged that the Western style of formal education had little impact in indigenous communities. Many children missed school because they held a crucial productive role in cultivating crops and managing day to day activities of survival. Furthermore, it was recognised that the imported teachers did not have the cultural skills to communicate with the people rendering the programs virtually useless. The main goal of the SEP continued to be the incorporation

of the *Indio* into the Mexican nation. However, to accomplish this, education in indigenous areas was passed to the Department of Indigenous Affairs, which also had the role of incorporating the meso-American image into the psyche of the national culture.

The post-World War II era saw an intensification of industrial development and a concomitant push for assimilation in rural indigenous Mexico. The Department of Indigenous Affairs was dissolved and indigenous education policy was passed back into the offices of the SEP, which continued its attempt to unify the systems of learning and defined pedagogical norms (Guevara González 2002). However, the implementation of *Indio* rights to education granted in the 1917 constitution created a culture within the bureaucracy for a grassroots perspective of indigenous culture. Orthodox, Western traditionalists still maintained that native languages and cultural preservation were obstacles to the civilisation project; yet, anthropologists and educated natives were increasingly advocating for more inclusion of indigenous people in the programs run in their communities. Indigenous advocates within the government began to compile information and statistics on education in rural areas with the intention of developing the native cultures, but they remained powerless within the SEP (Rippberger 1992, 54).

This dynamic led to the formation of the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI) in 1948, which had the double objective of protecting indigenous rights to health, justice and education, as well as continue the integration of the indigenous peoples into the national Mexican culture. In essence the government had control over *Indio* affairs, in return for the funding of education. Teachers were expected to be agents of social change. They were sent to rural areas to establish schools, organise peasants, inform workers of their rights, stimulate community development, and encourage national pride. Boarding schools were

started with the intention of sending the *Indio* students back to their communities to teach. In the eyes on the political elite, schools were a crucial mechanism to solve the problems of poverty by incorporating the indigenous into the national project.

Paradoxically, the early days of the INI also provided a space for local teachers to develop culture specific curricula. Within the INI a different agenda was taking place than was unfolding in the field. INI promoted indigenous education, including the active recruitment and training of indigenous teachers who lived in the various communities. The idea was that these teachers would be bilingual and promote 'Mexican' ideals (Nahmad 1998). However, progressive indigenous teachers found INI meetings as a convenient means of organising diverse indigenous educational groups in coordination with the SEP. The SEP had been planning educational assemblies for Indian teachers since the late 1940s with the stated purpose of improving the quality of bilingual education and to provide a forum for bilingual teachers to express their needs and concerns to the government (Rippberger 1992, 165). Consequently, teachers were beginning to effect change by generating their own materials and methods apart from the government authorised versions despite working within a governmental organisation to create more relevant methods, formation and delivery of educational programs.

The process of using bilingual indigenous teachers to bring about acculturation, worked in contradictory ways as is pointed out in Rippberger's (1992, 58) thesis. First, formal education helped native students to assimilate naturally, but also brought indigenous values into the classroom, where the native language is encouraged and given authority through its use by teachers. Second, through teaching positions, native teachers have entered the middle class with the associated knowledge and access to the system in order to

change the system to further their own purposes. Third, native students have parents that have been through education programs. Many early education programs in indigenous communities had difficulty garnering a commitment from families that did not understand what their children would be going through.

Fourth, many indigenous communities have recognised that the SEP creates and promotes bilingual education as a means to national cultural unity, which can mean assimilation through language. Yet, without these skills, children will not be able to function outside of their community in the future. Frequently, native bilingual teachers began to postulate that their students should not have to give up their identity for academic success, but that the two should be compatible.

The push for bilingual/intercultural education is what dominates the discourse of education in contemporary Mexico. Rippberger (1992) showed that indigenous educators and community members did not think that simple bilingual education was reducing the rate at which culture and language was being lost. Therefore, they have pushed from within the SEP for a move towards bilingual/intercultural education. As Biglow (2001, 25) points out, the bilingual-intercultural education model was meant to erase the negative 'us' versus 'them' bipolar distinctions in education. Instead of teaching two separate systems of education, the bilingual-intercultural model sought to equally divide time between native concepts and foreign ones. Its goal was also to recognize the dynamic nature of indigenous peoples. Instead of seeing native peoples as only traditional, the model realised that their life was in a constant state of flux and reformation with influences from two cultures. New forms of intercultural education focused on developing literacy in both the native language and Spanish as the best way to manage cultural change.

In summary, the government's efforts in its stated goal of acculturation of the *Indio* populations through literacy, has not been entirely successful. Literacy rates, formal educational attainment, and economic and social rewards of formal education remain lowest among indigenous populations. Rarely have nations decided bilingual education policy on the basis of dialogue and mutual compromise – the only difference between bilingual and monolingual programs being the language used during the first two years of schooling. Content and delivery of SEP run programs has not changed to accommodate specific cultural, linguistic or geographical differences. In some cases resistance and reform from teachers as a cohesive non-mainstream group working at the local level to make substantial gains by creating change in their educational institutions have forced negotiation within the SEP. However, these gains are often subsumed by those in power in the continuous struggle between top-down management and local initiatives.

3.3.3 Indigenous Mobilisation

Social mobilisation against the state in the Mexican context is diverse and ever-changing. Objective class positions of actors, specific conditions for identity construction and the growing trend of opposition to global capitalism have been interconnected while the state has continuously attempted to tame renegade social organisation. For the purposes of this thesis I will focus on the indigenous movement for cultural, economic and political rights. However, the indigenous movement cannot be seen as independent social organisation, but has to be placed in the historical context of Mexico's corporatist and clientelistic culture as well as in its relationship to Mexico's burgeoning civil society. The *Huichol* contribute a significant point of reference in the indigenous movement in Mexico

due to their geographic location, maintenance of cultural traditions and endogenous political organisation. Consequently, the *Huichol* are a beacon, not only for other indigenous groups, but also for academics, social activists and other contributors to the thickening of civil society.

The indigenous identity has a rich yet unstable history in both the traditions of ancient cultures and in the deep rooted class relationship with the political elite. Indigenous identity is tough to pin down as some *campesinos* live like indigenous people, both economically through subsistence agricultural practices, and culturally where ceremony and mythology are intricately linked to the natural environment (Pare 1990). One break is language. The *Indio* community changed into a traditional *campesino*, not as an abandonment of a form of life, but as a process of capitalism where the pressures of a dominant society managed to alter the direction of the ethnic identity of indigenous communities. The 'disindianisation' process is complete when a population ideologically stops considering itself to be *Indio*, even when its forms of life follow the same life patterns (Bonfil Batalla 1994, 80). However, the indigenous identity has been not lost, existing within a distinct class structure. The 1980 census found that there are 8 to 10 million indigenous people _ 10% to 12.5% of the country _ speaking 56 languages. Within the native population there are 5,181,038 indigenous language speakers of which 3,699,653 also speak Spanish (Bonfil Battalla 1994, 46).

Indigenous communities in Mexico make up a 'horizontal' culture through regions of the country in both rural and urban spaces. The non-*Indio* is more 'vertical', obeying a hierarchal dimension of social organisation. Agriculture is the main productive activity and a connection to the land places the people in natural context, which is the point of reference

for common knowledge, abilities, work and subsistence. As Biglow (2001) points out, in the *Huichol* context, a native *Huichol* remains *Huichol* when they are connected to the land. This world-view has had an unstable co-existence with the occidental model of social organisation that attempts to conquer nature. The recent history of the *Indio* is one of inferiority in front of the colonisers. Colonisation was not only cultural, but was also geographic. Native communities were pushed into remote ecological niches that were agriculturally unproductive and difficult to access. Furthermore, the city became the political power centre rendering rural areas to be the spaces of the colonised, a necessary condition for capitalist industrial development. The result has been an asymmetrical relationship of domination and subordination where indigenous peoples have had little right or political space to develop their own civil project (Bonfil Battalla 1994). The development of Mexico has never been based on the strategies of indigenous cultures and the concomitant marginalisation is more profound than simply having restricted access to goods and services, but inhibits them from creating their own forms of life.

It is quite evident that the roots of indigenous discontent stem from the colonial order beginning in the sixteenth century when the *Indio* was created. Before the Spanish invasion there were no *Indios*. Since the arrival of the Spanish, the *Indio* have been perceived to be the embodiment of backwardness and have consequently had their methods of social organisation destroyed in order to enrich the colonisers. Violence and religion were two of the main tools of the Spanish to indoctrinate the native population, which established a third mechanism of exploitation _ labour. *Haciendas* were the tools of this exploitation creating a class distinction that still significantly shapes contemporary indigenous identity. Constitutional land reform and return of indigenous lands top the

complaints of the indigenous movement, demonstrating the class struggle to obtain equal political terms and regain autonomy over the local economy.

Indigenous peoples contributed greatly to the social uprising that culminated in the great Revolution. Rebel leaders from the South recruited large numbers of native fighters and were led by an indigenous man, *Emilio Zapata*. Class subordination was an important condition to understand why the revolt happened; one goal of the revolution being to break economic/political ties and institute a new distribution that was broader and more democratic. Consequently, the post-revolutionary government took over some industry and created new enterprises. They also attempted to control cultural aspects of the country that would make the economy grow. Ironically, the same social project with the base being a culturally homogenous society emerged from the revolution, albeit with certain rights written into the constitution such as the reclamation and redistribution of lands for indigenous peoples. Ultimately, the revolution dealt with central control and did not identify with the profound problems of dismantled social organisation at the local level. Independence, reform and revolution were a victory for *Mestizaje* and still did not include a shared vision with the indigenous peoples (Bonfil Battalla 1994, 166). Consequently, agriculture was modernised and state-run schools were expanded to maintain and stimulate the dominant culture's penchant for resource and labour exploitation, and modernised economic growth.

Despite the fact that indigenous people have lived in a world of imposed assimilation, violence and reduced social space making up 500 years of cultural, economic and political domination through loss of territory, forced work and religious persecution, indigenous cultures still exist. Certainly, the traditional means of supporting a community

have been extinguished, but the cultures live on in a marginalised status, struggling to co-exist with the outside world. The indigenous still provide a locus of social discontent that has been manifesting in new forms in recent years, but are fighting for the same goals: land, liberty and justice. Since the revolution peasants and the indigenous have pressured the government to comply with the principles embedded in the 1917 Constitution, specifically Article 27 which states that land is the property of the nation to be regulated in accordance with public interest (Paré 1990). *Ejidors* were the political concession given by the ruling administrations, yet agrarian conflicts and loss of indigenous lands in favour of large-scale private producers have made *ejidos* instruments of political control.

The *Cárdenas* government (1934 – 1940) was the only administration that attempted to include the *ejido* with a nationalist development strategy. Paradoxically, the corporatist structures (the CNC as well as other labour organisations) that arose during this era to include peasants and workers in the decision-making processes of the nation became the structures of subordination and control. The successive PRI governments used these corporatist organisations to control the dominated classes and maintain clientelistic and paternalistic relations with the distant rural communities. Kinks in this system began to show in the late 1960s. Agricultural production had increased at an extraordinary pace of 5% annually between 1940 and 1965, but began to stagnate in the late 1960s. Grain shortages highlighted a crisis caused because of insufficient attention given to rain-fed agriculture that produced key staples (Paré 1990, 82). The solution to the crisis was to adopt policies of the ‘Green Revolution’ which had little impact and only benefited a small group of politically connected peasants, increasing the gap between already visible economic inequalities (Paré 1975).

In terms of grassroots organisation, the discontinuities in the rural social structures mentioned above led to new forms of popular mobilisation. Typically Marxist organisation manifested in the South. Indigenous people in the state of Guerrero became particularly militant and rebel indigenous organisations took shape in Chiapas. However, emboldened by the student revolt in 1968, independent social organisations began to consolidate, opening up political space for peasant mobilisation, popular education and identity politics. Increasingly throughout the 1970s, official peasant organisations were not able to contain the demands of rural workers within the national corporatist structure resulting in widespread land invasions by rebel peasant groups. Moreover, disparate peasant groups began to unite to discuss their experiences in order to identify common problems. An example was the National *Coordinadora* Plan of Ayala (CNPA) that included twenty-one organisations from different states and had the principle demands of legal recognition of indigenous land rights, the distribution of land exceeding the legal limits of private property, community control over defence and natural resources, agricultural production and marketing, and the preservation of local culture (Paré 1990, 85). The participation of indigenous groups in this type of social protest altered the direction of their struggle into new channels to mobilise their people through negotiations at the local level. The difference in the movement, as noted by Paré (1990, 91), was the “growing separation between the state and the peasant organisations as autonomous spaces civil society.” Furthermore, the struggle began to form national networks to develop common political platforms in order to connect and transcend the previously isolated struggles of individual movements.

The historical reduction of social space had negative consequences for *Indio* culture since it limited their possibilities for development that required broader levels of social organisation than the local level. In the 1990s, the *Zapatista* movement out of Chiapas created a social buffer that indigenous groups still use to push for indigenous rights. Various rebel groups in the Chiapas highlands formed throughout the 1960s and 1970s with Marxist intentions of taking up armed struggle in order to overthrow the state and obtain power. The economic and social conditions which culminated in the rebellion on January 1st, 1994 offered reason to why the rebellion formed. Chiapas not only had vast wealth in various natural resources, including petroleum, but conversely had extremely high levels of poverty and income inequality. The revolt was a direct response to Mexico's adoption of free trade policy in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and captured national and international attention. The military stand-off took a different path than previous native uprisings. In the past, the federal government had easily been able to walk over lightly armed insurgents and kept the action away from the eyes of the broader population. However, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) was able to attract sympathy, not only from Mexican social activists, but also from human rights proponents from abroad. Under the light of the media camera, the Mexican government could not simply annihilate the insurgency, but had to use more subtle tactics that could not break down the *Zapatista* barriers. It is also significant to note that the EZLN had colourful and able leadership. *Subcomandante Marcos* brought a poetic and educated voice to the movement that attracted sympathisers who progressively yearned for more of what the *Zapatistas* signified. The nature of the *Zapatista* movement quickly evolved. Originally, academics who followed the rebellion closely found it difficult to distinguish between the

Zapatista uprising and other disturbances that had occurred throughout Latin America.

Nowhere in the EZLN's original 'Declaration of War' was there any specific mention of indigenous rights. The EZLN's intention was to,

“... advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities” (Acción Zapatista, 1999).

However, the connection of the *Zapatistas* with civil society changed the rhetoric of the movement from that of Marxist doctrine to softer language that appealed to intellectuals and broader civil society. Some post-modern advocates such as Burbach (1994) rather presumptuously described the insurrection as the first post-modern rebellion.

Warfare and military manoeuvring took place throughout the region for several months and was 'officially' ended with the ratification of Commission for Concord and Pacification (COCOPA) on February 16, 1996. Nonetheless, later in 1996, the incoming president *Zedillo* reneged on implementing the changes addressed in the accords. One point of contention in the struggles of indigenous peoples at the time of writing is to have the government live up to the promises outlined in COCOPA, drawing other indigenous groups around Mexico to declare that they were also *Zapatistas* who would fight the same battle as their counterparts in Chiapas.

The structural conditions for the *Zapatista* uprising as outlined in Veltmeyer (2000) are an important aspect of the broader indigenous movement in Mexico. However, the internal dynamics of the *Zapatista* have continued to be reformed and shaped by external circumstances and from experiences within their community which are often shared with other indigenous groups. Thus, the internal evolution of the movement has occurred at two

levels. On the one hand, the *Zapatistas* have become to be understood not simply as a guerrilla struggle for state power, but rather as a social movement resisting the top-down imposition of contemporary global capitalism. It was not until after the offensives of January 1994 that the EZLN fully embraced the 'indigenous' cause as a part of the *Zapatista* struggle, softening its socialist oratory. They had a strong bargaining position due to the buffer set up by the sympathy created over the plight of the indigenous reality.

Strategically, the *Zapatistas* were very shrewd as they made the most of the circumstances and began to portray an image quite different from the militant insurgent persona they had originally assumed. The EZLN maintained the role of military protector and provided the pedestal from which the *Zapatista* movement could publicly highlight the plight of indigenous people in Chiapas, in Mexico and around the world. Furthermore, the *Zapatista* rebellion arose at the same time the Internet blossomed. They used this new tool of rapid and mass communication to disseminate information through specialised lists, conferences and web-pages. This medium allowed the *Zapatistas* to communicate behind the lines of conventional media that were previously used to broadcast mainstream content that propagated the government's agenda. They mastered the art of cyber-space, providing room to orate freely and share ideas with people supportive of their cause. The *Zapatista's* version of autonomous decision-making and democracy struck chords with sympathisers around the world (Cleaver 1998). Ultimately, the *Zapatista* movement evolved to join forces with their empathetic supports in civil society _ a crucial link that permitted a space for local changes to take place.

On the other hand, cultural and linguistic preservation, and autonomous social organisation has been fundamental in maintaining social systems that express a distinct

world-view and perspective of humanity. The *Zapatistas* followed the wave of support and used the space given by the military to set up enclaves of indigenously-run democratic councils representing the Indigenous Autonomous Regions of Chiapas. On October 12, 1994, nine months after the rebellion, the Council was officially formed and laid out a new, localized version of government. Their concept of democracy was something that was built from below through a council system. This system was broken down into 32 municipalities, from which there were 50 smaller communities or village assemblies per municipality. The village assemblies were generally in rural areas that were extremely impoverished and had from a dozen to over 100 families. Routine weekly assemblies took place as a part of or after every Sunday mass and were open to all citizens. Anyone over 12 years was allowed to speak and vote. However, votes were rare — consensus decision-making was the norm. These meetings addressed practical issues of the community and resolved budgetary problems. For specific issues, the assembly elected delegates called *responsibles* to co-ordinate work that needed specific and on-going attention. The *responsibles* were subject to re-call if the community did not feel they were fulfilling their obligations (Unknown author, Anarcho-Sydicalist Review 1999).

The village assemblies also elected delegates to be a part of the 'Autonomous Municipal Council' (AMC) that represented all the communities in the municipality. The AMC was renewed every one to two years and was given powers to resolve local problems of co-existence. Issues such as minor crimes were usually dealt with by assigning community work to the perpetrator. The AMC had a very limited budget and

the delegates worked without a salary. The majority of the decision making power was left at the village assembly level (Unknown author, Anarcho-Syndicalist Review 1999).

The social buffer created by the *Zapatistas* also allowed for changes in the way youth education took place. As schools in the *Zapatista* regions were established, teachers were able to effect change by generating their own materials and methods apart from the government authorised versions. They are also working from within the SEP, creating locally sensitive methods, formation and delivery of programs (Rippberger 1992). These changes have contributed to the pan-indigenous movement that rejects a subordinated social and economic position while reinforcing indigenous culture and redefining the Native position within the nation. Moreover, teachers within the broader movement are better able to negotiate with the government and maintain programs once they have already been established and have proven to be effective.

At the time of writing, the *Zapatista* movement has paradoxically both branched out and been subverted giving it much different look than it had in its incipient stages in the early 1990s. On the one hand, the development and stability of localised democratic communities created a national base from which meetings could be held bringing together indigenous people from across Mexico. In October of 1996, for the first time in recent history, hundreds of representatives from 30 indigenous groups conducted a national indigenous forum and created a formal organisation called the National Indigenous Congress (CNI). This congress formed a national plan and was a step in the process of indigenous peoples becoming political subjects in the struggle against exclusion, inequality while promoting the recognition of differences (Arcos García 1998). In this way, *Zapatismo* did not invent the indigenous struggle, but added a significant national

dimension to it by unifying the systematisation of the indigenous experience and their political objectives, pressuring the state to make profound constitutional reforms. The relative autonomy of the *Zapatista* regions became a political reference point for indigenous people in other regions and was channelled through the CNI.

The CNI held its third and largest national forum in 2001. It was a significant meeting not only through what was said, but also through the inputs of diverse indigenous groups into the meeting. The objective results that came from the forum highlighted a determination to integrate several national indigenous movements in order to become more relevant in national life, to elaborate a program of struggles that would sum up the simultaneous aspirations of indigenous communities, to promote the formation of new regional indigenous organisations, to demonstrate that *Zapatismo* is a national political force, not just regional phenomenon, and to achieve a climate of protest to demonstrate their demands for justice by putting the indigenous at the centre of the national political agenda (CNI 2001). While the forum was intended to nationally reaffirm the resistance of indigenous peoples and denounce the continuing militarization and persecution of indigenous organisations, individual indigenous groups held smaller precursory forums within their home states and prepared their own political declarations to bring to the table at the national congress. Furthermore, educated and emboldened indigenous groups have extended their solidarity to include indigenous groups from other countries. Following upon the success and awareness created in the third CNI, two international congresses have been held with the spiritual and political leaders of indigenous groups from thirteen different countries to discuss methods of preserving indigenous identity, spirituality and territories. Importantly for this thesis, education reforms are at the forefront of their

demands, stipulating changes in the manner in which education takes place in indigenous communities.

On the other hand, the *Zapatistas* do not garner the same national or international attention they received in the nascent years of the movement. There was hope after the regime change to Fox's government in 2000 that the COCOPA would finally be passed and indigenous autonomy would have the constitutional right to proceed. However, Fox only offered a watered-down version of the reform, angering the *Zapatistas*. Mexico continues to be a country with the quest of maximising its economic growth. This preoccupation, along with a world of more graphic and pressing battles, means the *Zapatistas* do not receive the media attention achieved when they took on NAFTA. Free trade is still the dominant economic policy and the *Zapatistas* have little to show for their years of struggle since they have failed to formally secure the legal reforms. The struggle continues on.

In summary, the roots of the indigenous movement in Mexico demonstrate a history of marginalisation and violence that have contributed to a process of disindianisation. Many Mexican peasants still toil in a traditional rural life, but have lost their indigenous identity. The diverse cultures that existed in precolonial times have transformed into what they are today; that is, they have a common origin. This shared history is a reason is a point of reference for diverse indigenous groups to bond. Consequently, the indigenous social movement is based on this connection. This does not discount the necessity of economic betterment, but they want it with different values. The groups that have maintained a union to the spiritual and ceremonial past are increasingly fighting the pressures that could possibly eliminate their indigenous identity and leave them as peasants at the lower levels of a class system. The indigenous movement for increased

cultural, economic and political rights is a horizontal relationship to counteract the vertical integration of native cultures into mainstream society. Social spaces have opened up to allow grassroots organising and transparent interaction between historically marginalised groups, both within Mexico and with international partners. However, the dominant forces have also become more centralised and consolidated, largely outside of the country. Protest toward the state has come in the form of demanding institutional and constitutional change in the name of cultural preservation. However, the corporate and clientelistic structures of the state still minimise the efficacy of the indigenous movement. Consequently, indigenous leaders can still be easily-co-opted in favour of development projects and economic benefits.

The *Zapatistas* remain a central organising point in the discourse of the indigenous struggle in Mexico. Despite a decline in the general following of *Zapatista* objectives and ideals with the general public both nationally and abroad, the internal growth of the indigenous movement is largely attached to the historical successes and principles of the *Zapatistas*. National and international forums are regularly conducted and rudimentary forms of participatory democracy within local communities are all connected to the concept of *Zapatismo* and social autonomy. Centres of social resistance are developing at the grassroots and connecting to the now established structures offered through the CNI where experiences are integrated into the movement. A pan-indigenous culture of resistance remains defiant to external pressures of assimilation hoping for future success in reforming national cultural, economic and political structures that will allow indigenous peoples to autonomously manage their own social change and be included in the decision-making processes of the state.

3.5 The Huichol

The *Huichol* are a distinct indigenous group with cultural roots in pre-Hispanic meso-American culture. They are the principle group under evaluation for this thesis. The *Huichol* are one of few indigenous cultures in the world that have maintained traditional modes of social organisation and a worldview based in their relationship with the natural environment. The education programs that have formed in the *Huichol* region are one of the latest endeavours taken on by the *Huichol* in a long series of responses and resistance to occidental influences on their culture and economics. The following section will describe the historical structures of *Huichol* society and meld these conceptions with their common identity and struggles. I will also highlight how education has evolved and become linked to civil society organisations and the broader movement for cultural, economic and political rights for indigenous people in Mexico and around the world in the face of global neo-liberalism.

3.4.1 Demographics and Geography

The *Huichol* exist as a small enclave of subsistence peasants in a small but rugged territory high in the mountains of the *Sierra Madres* in central Mexico. They are extremely religious, linked through their ancestors with ceremonies and myths. Despite adopting some Christian elements, the *Huichol* maintain a meso-American religion rooted in their history and their environment. The current culture forms part of a communal history of *Wixaritari* that has existed for over 1000 years ago. Today, according to various censuses of *Huichol* teachers, population estimates oscillate between 17,000 and 50,000 people

(Arcos García 1998). The *Huichol* territories are divided into four administrative communities: San Andrés Cohamiata (*Tateikié*), Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán (*Tuapurie*), San Sebastián Teponahuaxtlán (*Wuat+a*) and Tuxpan de Bolaños (*Tutsipa*). Each of these communities has its own leadership hierarchy and face different development issues. Many of the neighbouring *mestizo* villages are populated by descendants of colonisers that inhabited the Sierra in the 1920s and have held claim to the municipal governments which maintain a dominant relationship over the *Huichol*.

The *Huichol* homeland encompasses approximately 4,000 square kilometres as recognized by the federal government. Conversely, the *Huichol* claim up to 90,000 square kilometers in the current states of Jalisco, Nayarit, Zacatecas and Durango (Biglow 2001). The most numerous and isolated settlements are located in San Andrés Cohamiata in Northern Jalisco and Eastern Nayarit. This area of the Sierra Madre Occidental is a very isolated and ecologically diverse landscape that extends to the Western coastline of Jalisco and Nayarit. The elevation varies from sea-level to well over 2,400 meters. Two of the most dominant characteristics of this region are the climate and topography. The climate of the region is extremely dry for most of the year. The summer monsoon season from July to September provides the area with life sustaining moisture, but otherwise the area is desert-like and receives little or no rain. Most of the *Huichol* communities subsist at high altitudes on plateaus above rugged and precipitous canyons. The canyon bottoms maintain a subtropical climate with lush vegetation at river's edge, while the highest regions are noted for their pine-clad forests. Living on the high mesas, the *Huichol* migrate with the seasons to various family ranches. Increasingly, some families have settled in small villages during the winter months, but move to their ranches at higher elevations during the

rainy season while managing their agricultural plots at lower altitudes. A common problem at these high altitudes is a lack of water. There are no streams at the higher elevations, making life difficult. The water that does exist rises to the surface at waterholes throughout the region. These water sources, although not numerous, sustain life in a desolate environment and limit the location of permanent human settlements, which is one reason why *Mestizo* settlements have not been permanently established.

3.4.2 Colonial History

The history of the *Huichol* as a distinct and isolated culture predates the arrival of the Spanish. In pre-Hispanic times, the *Huichol* did not come under the rule of *Moctezuma* and the Aztecs by living in a broad refuge of distant mountain ranges and treacherous gorges. However, due to the scarcity of ethnographic and archaeological data, it has been difficult to understand their lives in pre-Spanish independence (Torres 2000). Yet, the seemingly unchanged modes of subsistence provide a live version of what *Huichol* culture might have been like hundreds of years ago. Contemporary academic research largely begins with colonial records and the responses of the *Huichol* to Spanish incursions.

The *Huichol* had their first contact with European culture in the early 1500s when *Nuño de Guzmán* led his Spanish armies through what is now central Mexico. He attempted to conquer the indigenous cultures in the region _ which also included the *Cora*, the *Chichimecas* and the *Tepehuano* _ forcing the *Huichol* to fall back into the Sierra probably leading to their first significant loss of territory. The concomitant restriction of movement changed their commercial routes as well as their forms of social organisation since ceremonial centres were located at great distances throughout the region (Arcos

García 1998). The roughness of the terrain made total conquest of tribes in the Sierra virtually impossible for *Guzmán*. However, he did succeed in making his way to the Pacific coast, claiming accessible and arable lands for the Spanish, as well as beginning a long defensive history of isolation and marginalisation for the *Huichol*.

At the end of the 1500s the tactics of Spain towards the natives changed to the politics of diplomacy for peace and a system of missions to pacify and colonise *Indio* territories. It was not until 1580, nearly 50 years after *Guzmán* first waded west through the Sierra to the *Gran Nayar* coastal region, that the Catholic Church began activity since the *Sierra* region was virtually inaccessible from the North, East, and South. The *Huichol* were reclusive and kept away from the Spanish colonial authorities by moving higher and deeper in to the *Sierra Madre*. In fact, through this theory, the *Huichol* have spent the past 500 years in this region (Furst, 1996). According to Franz (1996, 80), “the *Huichol* were apparently the least affected of all the *Sierra* tribes, since they were never congregated into nucleated mission settlements.” Their seasonal migrations and the geographic dispersion of family ranches made the establishment of religious outpost a difficult exercise. Whereas the neighbouring *Cora* fought aggressively to resist acculturation, the *Huichol* response was primarily to ‘flee’, thereby having as little contact with their aggressors as possible. As Biglow (2001, from Vogt 1955) notes, this instinct to flee is the impetus for the *Huichol* being withdrawn and reticent in direct relations with *Mestizos* in the modern historical era. The *Huichol* retreated into the *Sierra* and created a region of refuge with a natural geographic boundary that enabled the *Huichol* to resist the early acculturative pressures of missionaries.

The first Franciscan mission was established in *Huichol* territories in 1723, which established the four administrative regions that still exist today. The missions operated under a system of worship and civil authority and also took in *Coras* and *Chichimecas*. Two years later in 1725, the region that encompassed the *Huichol* enclaves was given to a private owner, *Marqués de Valero*, by the Spanish government. As a businessman, *Valero* began mining operations that continued through to the early 1700s. In 1733, the Franciscans established a Catholic mission in the district of San Sebastián Teponahuatlán, which was followed by the establishment of missions in several other key *Huichol* communities deeper in the Sierra (Rojas and Rodríguez Quiñones 2000). However, in relation to the convertibility of other indigenous groups, the Jesuits were largely unsuccessful in converting the *Huichol* from their 'primitive' pagan traditions and worldview (Torres 2000).

After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the *Huichol* stayed resistant to the colonial mentality despite some connection to the outside world with livestock rearing and agricultural technology. The Franciscans worked harder than ever by increasing their presence and putting up more churches. The *Huichol* remained resilient, maintaining their spiritual perspective and religious practices. However, their modes of social organisation evolved, adapting to the pressures of the foreign culture. Notably, the *Huichol* adopted an agrarian authority that, today, still runs parallel to traditional authorities.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the *Huichol* largely held on to their traditional forms of social organisation. Despite the Spanish crown having signed a treaty with the *Huichol* designating independent territories in 1809, the growing *Mestizo* culture inevitably

increased due to land incursions. This document is important today in the attempts of *Huichol* to regain the borders sanctioned in this treaty. For the most part, the newly formed country ignored the indigenous treaties made by Spain and negated pre-existing borders in the 1859 constitution amounting to another severe land reduction. Several years later, some *Huichol* participated in various revolts of the Mexican Revolution by aligning with *Pancho Villa*'s forces that raided Mexico City from the North (Torres 2000, 51). For the most part, the revolutionary struggle and the years that followed simply provided the *Huichol* with a respite from foreign intrusions into their territories and culture.

After the Mexican revolution, under a new constitution, came the possibility of expediting laws that would permit indigenous communities to obtain title over their lands. In 1921 *San Andrés* was the first community in *Huichol* territories to begin proceedings to officially recognise their lands. This process was followed by each of the other three jurisdictions. It was not until 1938 under the leadership of *Cárdenas* that their claims were finally recognised by the government. However, in the 1950s large tracts of *Huichol* land was appropriated into two *ejidos* in Nayarit and Durango, taking away 23,000 hectares on the northern border (Torres 2000). The 1960s saw the beginning of the contemporary struggle for land redemption. On the one hand, the *Huichol* had legal documents from both the pre-independence era and from the relatively new constitution. On the other hand, the thirst of the dominant *Mestizo* culture for new ranch lands seemed to override the *Huichol*'s legal stand. This contradiction is central for the land claims disputes in the new century.

3.4.3 Social Organisation

Most of the *Huichol* population lives on disperse, far off ranches, connected through their *Kawiteros* (elders) and *Mara'kate* (shamen). Families live and subsist on

mesas and plateaus throughout the region and cultivate corn and other small-scale crops on extremely steep slopes. Travel is very difficult and only possible on foot to most areas. The *Huichol* within each community cultivate the land collectively through families working plots of land with the shared labour of family members, friends, and more distant kin. The fact that land is collective means that the territorial lands cannot be individually bought and sold (Biglow 2001). The *Huichol* maintain a cultural cohesiveness through frequent and long lasting ceremonial *fiestas* in which residents have to travel long distances and where much of their agricultural production is consumed. It is at these festivals, which frequently last for several days, where the *Kawiteros* and *Mara'kate* chant songs, perform ceremonial dances and recall ancient stories that connect the people with their ancestors and Gods. It is customary for the participants to consume *Peyote*, a hallucinogenic cactus that is not only central to their spiritual connectedness, but also keeps them awake for days on end. *Huichol* cosmology includes a view of the world that interconnects all people, other living things and places, and the ritual use of *peyote* provides the medium for interlocution with the Gods.

Decision-making structures for the *Huichol* are complex since there are pre-Hispanic, introduced and mainstream circles of power. The current 'political' system utilised by the *Huichol* was established by the Franciscans in the late eighteenth century. Religious leaders are selected each year within the following hierarchy: governor, second governor, bailiff, treasurer, commissary and a secretary. The governor is the traditional political leader and the commissary addresses agrarian questions in order to resolve territorial conflicts with *Mestizo* neighbours and manage community well-being and vigilance in the face of external threats (Arcos García 1998). Each of the four main

communities maintains and votes for their own organisational structure. Although the four communities are autonomous, they are loosely bound together by a governing board known as the *Unión de Comunidades Indígenas Huicholas* (Union of Indigenous Huichol Communities of Jalisco or UCIH). The UCIH does not directly govern the daily affairs of any of the Huichol communities, but rather it serves to mediate disputes with state and national organizations such as the INI, as well as to disseminate information down to community governors.

Recently, larger villages have sprung up throughout the *Huichol* region. These centres are administrative hubs with links to the mainstream municipal system of Mexico. Consequently, the villages are the focus of where social change is taking place for the *Huichol*. A small capitalist economy and the concomitant influence of individualistic values have been introduced into these villages, making them centres for trade in goods from outside the *Sierra*. Families that have taken the lead in establishing small stores have not only adapted their lifestyles away from traditional subsistence living, but have also created a class structure with links to the dominant political parties (Biglow 2001). The lead authority at the village level is the commissary, who is usually from one of the most economically prosperous clans and can financially absorb the time not used to sustain life. This person must also have knowledge of traditional and civil laws since they are responsible for the mediation of local disputes, weddings and village maintenance.

Traditional religious authorities maintain a strong influence alongside the formal governing structures. The *Kawiteros* and *Mara'kate*, as elder statesmen and experts of tradition, not only participate in the Governor's council, but also guide and contribute to what takes place in all the *kalihueys* (temples). Villages have larger *kalihueys* to

accommodate major festivals, yet each small family ranch generally has a tiny shrine for day-to-day connection with the Gods. Therefore, the nature of political networks change depending on how centrally located a family is. There is, as Biglow (2001, 36) points out, “a course set between two types of power and governing in which the necessity to stay connected with the outside implies a submission of a distinct order”. Due to the imposition of outside political, civil and administrative authorities, the competency and influence of the traditional authorities has suffered. However, the *Kawiteros* and the *Mara'kate* maintain influence in both civic and traditional decision-making, mediating consensus among the community members in regards to the activities of the elected authorities.

It should also be noted that there are other indirect political influences throughout the *Sierra Huichola* that have arrived in the form of development projects intellectualised and funded by external government organisations, NGOs and religious groups. These projects insert a new set of values into the culture that demand expediency, efficiency and technology. It is obvious that those who are illiterate and without formal education are easily left out, which polarises traditional systems and has led to corruption through individual benefit (Biglow 2001).

Consequently, there are three sorts of power that are interrelated: traditional mediators and two groups who either align with external influences in the formal political structures or are associated with development projects aided by various NGOs. Some of the *Kawiteros* have been lured into the corporatist and clientelistic web of party politics with different clans staking claims of support for different mainstream political parties. The dominant families have long held an association with the PRI, which still represents the *Huichol* region in the state and national governments. Other families have joined the

competing parties such as the PAN or PRD waiting for the day that they will be the main connection to governing powers.

The *Huichol* are more wary of their people that have made links with academic, activist and religious NGOs. These external groups all have growing influence with the *Huichol*, yet there remains a culture of scepticism isolating those *Huichol* that have committed to development projects aided by the outside. This is not to say that the *Huichol* working on new projects are not involved with the political parties or participate in communal meetings. However, distinct cliques have formed, often within the same immediate families, in a struggle over the direction that the community should take culturally, economically and politically.

Interestingly, traditional leaders are increasingly working together with all factions within the community to participate in state, national and international indigenous congresses. The horizontal growth of the indigenous movement is greatly supported by the community and led by the elders. By contrast, it is the degree and methods of integrating vertically into broader society that the experiences, perceptions and objectives of differing individuals creates divisions within the community _ ruptures that capitalist culture can exploit, catapulting the might of the individual over the social capital of the community.

3.4.4 Identity and Struggles

“Para vivir hay que hacer la fiesta, hay que sembrar y luego hacerle su ceremonia al Padre Dios” ... (In order to live, we have to have our festivals, we

have to sow our fields and later perform our ceremonies in the name of our father God.)³

It can be seen that the struggles of the *Huichol* are not only extended outward dealing with the marginalising structures of Mexican society and global capitalist culture, but also have an internal aspect. Individual identities have a growing variance among *Huichol* depending on factors such as geographic proximity to *Mestizo* culture, age and recently arising class differences. The *Huichol* identity has long been internalised through their subsistence agricultural and parallel celebrations and traditional ceremonies. Traditionally, they have an historical oneness with their ancestors since the evolution of change took place at the pace of nature; that is their sense of time makes their past, present and future the same thing (Torres 2000). However, the external pressures to deal with social change have compressed their reality, making time awkwardly present and decision-making urgent. Their social problems are modern, the question being whether a modern mindset is needed to deal with the looming social issues.

Traditional *Huichol* identity has several aspects including the following: (1) belonging to and extended family that has the right to plant traditional varieties of corn in certain areas of the territory. This kinship is intricately linked to ceremonies and places of sacred offering that reinforce the reciprocal relationship between the natural world and their ancestors/gods to whom they pray; (2) belonging to a ceremonial centre to carry out communal jobs organised by the commissary and participate in rituals; (3) belonging to an agrarian community that discusses crop success and accept roles given out by the religious leaders to conduct communal ceremonies; (4) maintaining an ethnic identity that conforms

³ Quote from unknown *Huichol* in Torres 2000, page 19.

to traditional customs as well as through national and international discourse over their 'indigenusness' to such things as their language, traditional dress, traditional forms agriculture, artisania, participation in ceremonies and customary rights (Arcos García 1998, 17). A key characteristic of the traditional *Huichol* system is the importance of ceremonial centres and sacred places, which serve as centres for the dispersed population to experience the fundamentals of social and cultural cohesion. The use of the land is based in the ownership and reciprocity between extended families and the ancient owners of the land, the rain and the sun linking these families with ancestors and sacred beings through blood sacrifices and other offerings in key mythical locations. This is an intrinsic aspect of the tenancy of the land and their identity in general. In other words, ceremonies act as links to social/productive customs and identities. When researchers have asked why they have ceremonies, the answer is invariably "because it is our custom" (Torres 2000, 103). Conflict with the values of the efficient modern economy is easily seen since ceremonies use up a considerable part of the agricultural production. Ceremonies are vital to maintain their social capital, yet the *Huichol* are poor because they have so many ceremonies to keep their Gods content. Moreover, people of custom talk of 'we' with certain cultural parameters or conduct. This does not mean that the rules that maintain *Huichol* pueblos are homogenous, but rather ceremonies are the ritualised link between humans, nature and the sacred. Customs are accommodated into a single identity from contradictory elements of multiple partial identities and unify the people (Torres 2000, 104). As a result, the *Kawiteros* feel that fiestas must not be stopped because they are what strengthen, reaffirm and maintain social organisation, ultimately bringing disperse and isolated communication into one identity. Planting corn, working together and helping each other are all a part of

the motivation to go to fiestas and contribute to the health of the Gods which promote health, harmony, peace and good harvests. Participating in customs is equal to a strong well-being that represents life.

However, the encroachment of Western capitalist culture has not only been physical, impeding the planting of crops and appropriation of sacred sites, but also has a cultural component. The imposing force of capitalist values creates class structures between the native group and the dominant culture, as well as class structures within marginalised communities. For the *Huichol*, the struggle for land claims integrates them with *Mestizo* society, albeit in a relationship of conflict. It can be clearly seen that a nation of peoples can be culturally, economically and politically distinct from the 'nation-state' in which they are included. If the *Huichol* can be considered a 'nation' of people, then without freedom, they cannot be autonomous (Biglow 2001, 65). The 'nation-state' of Mexico lends to the idea of freedom within an almost idealistic state that possesses a political dimension that is seen as the liberating force for the freedom people like the *Huichol* seek, but also houses the forces that import destructive social change.

Early interaction of the *Huichol* with the state largely came in the form of land struggles. Their territories were indiscriminately usurped despite the legal recognition of their lands. However, the internal culture of the *Huichol* had little capacity to deal with the federal government on legal grounds. Throughout the 1960s, the *Huichol* tried to strengthen their means of presenting their land claims. It was inevitable that this struggle would enter into their collective identity in concert with their traditional bonds. It was quite extraordinary for a group of people to have maintained their sacred identity in the face of a class identity of capitalist culture. The government responded to the increasing

land claims by creating a strategy that had worked with other indigenous communities; that is, assimilation. The number of government projects in the region grew to infiltrate their isolation culminating in the *Plan Huicot*.

The *Plan Huicot* was a development project instigated by the INI that brought roads, airstrips, health centers and schools to the most remote regions of the *Huichol* territories. Furthermore, the government tried to apply the wisdom of the Green Revolution to their agricultural practices, as well as introduce livestock husbandry. Most of these programs failed since they did not diminish participation in fiestas and ceremonies, which frustrated external advisors because they slaughtered their animals for communal consumption at ceremonies, rather selling them for a profit. However, changes were implemented that would gradually entice a forming capitalist culture to work its way through the local culture. Roads brought in goods and politicians, livestock provided a means of quantifying individual wealth and electricity brought advertising and the images of beautiful 'light-skinned' people.

The most recent struggle for the *Huichol* deals with their class position. The *Kawiteros and Mara'kate* have largely succumbed to the pressures of the outside world realising that their struggle to avoid being culturally destroyed by external pressures has become more pressing than to simply maintain their traditions. Paradoxically, it is through identification in their traditions indigenous people are bonding to avoid reducing their struggle to that of class (Arcos Garicía 1998, 7). On the one hand, civic power has increasingly been placed above traditional communal hierarchies intensifying the process of acculturation. This has occurred in a response to the policies of the federal government. The INI, in the time of *Salinas* (1988 – 1994), tried to bring *Huichol* solidarity through the

fight against poverty through decentralisation. Consequently, the *Huichol* put more emphasis on how they were represented at the municipal level hoping to share in the profits of the economy and granting better services to the public. However, the resources that were channelled through to the INI to use in *Huichol* regions were not given to the *Huichol* (Torres 2000, 210). The municipality became a decorative figure for the state that tried to include indigenous leaders in the power structures of national societies.

On the other hand, the battle has broadened to include other indigenous groups nationally and internationally where the links are not simply based on a class position, although it is central to their realities, but realise the importance of the strength of social relations within the networks of sacred and ceremonial roles. The goals of the *Huichol* between 1991 and 1997 have placed them in an international struggle to recuperate identities that form part of the mosaic of struggles to recognise diversity, feeding the possibility of generating another reality for society where peoples merge according to who they are and who they claim to be (Arcos García 1998). An ethnic resurgence among indigenous groups in Mexico is linked to indigenous organisation within a pan-indigenous intelligentsia to counteract and resist national policies of indigenous assimilation (Stavenhagen 1994).

To conclude this section, I note that *Huichol* culture has become more complex in recent years. This does not imply that the *Huichol* did not have problems in the past, but complexities cause controversies that may or may not be within the control of local people to address. They are seeing unprecedented stratifications in wealth, varied life experiences since some *Huichol* have lived outside the region, new modes of education and increased political connections with both state-focussed organisations and the pan-indigenous

movement. This diversity in experience thins out their traditional identity and distributes power to the various struggles, so much so that it is difficult to separate the contemporary identity of the *Huichol*, whether it be culturally or class based, from the endogenous struggle to determine which path the community should take.

3.4.5 Education

The education of *Huichol* children is transforming rapidly. Historically, youth education has been informal. Children begin to help around their family ranches at an early age and they participate in festivals and ceremonies with their parents. It is through these regularly held communal meetings that the children learn of the *Huichol* worldview and are taught the connections between their people and their ancestors and Gods. Still today, informal learning plays a significant part in youth education, but formal education programs are gaining prominence.

The post-revolutionary governments' goal of youth education was to integrate the *Indio* into the national Mexican culture. However, remote regions such as the *Sierra Huichola* did not receive the attention of other groups who lived in more accessible terrain. In 1948, the INI took over the problem of reaching indigenous communities with education programs to help them get over their shortcomings and leave their backwardness. It was not until the 1960s that the INI began to focus on schools in *Huichol* regions by inventing programs such as the '*Acción Indigenista*' (AI) in 1963 to modernise education and health and the *Plan Huicot* in the 1970s to enhance economic development. These projects ultimately fell through for several reasons. First, the children could not regularly attend classes because of familial responsibilities. Second, the *Huichol* population was not highly

centralised, so children often had to walk several kilometres per day just to reach the schools. Third, the programs were not very effective since the methods and forms of application followed the occidental paradigm of knowledge acquisition and were not modified to *Huichol* culture which generated confusion and wasted resources. Fourth, teachers that were brought in to conduct the classes often had trouble adapting to the harsh environment and would leave, leaving programs in limbo (Torre 2000). Consequently, proponents of deeply rooted formal education programs have had a difficult time finding the necessary cultural conditions to institute schools on a permanent basis.

Throughout the 1990s, the government was persistent in finding ways to establish formal education learning. They adopted the strategy of 'starting them young' by targeting four and five year olds. To accomplish this task, small buildings, or *albergues*, were constructed throughout the *Sierra* and equipped with basic teaching materials such as desks and chalkboards. The aim was to provide a location for schooling to take place in all regions so that travel times for the youngsters would be kept to a minimum. Furthermore, the schools were to be staffed by young *Huichol* for two year stints since they not only knew the local language and could integrate well with the families, but also had the ability to travel easily throughout the region without experiencing stress or culture shock. In return, the teachers received a small wage and the opportunity to study in the city when they finished their duty. These *albergues* were largely successful, ultimately acting as a day-care without the parents and *Kawiteros* feeling that their children were being unduly influenced by foreigners.

By 1998, Torres (2000) counted 73 *albergues* throughout the *Sierra Huichola* offering classes up to the sixth grade. However, the number of students continued to

decline with each successive year. The schools had 7,706 students registered for the first level of classes. This number dropped in each successive year such that only 754 students were registered for grade six. The SEP attempted to develop schools with a more aggressive occidental paradigm in some of the more populated villages and close to *Mestizo* villages, having 35 by 1998. These schools ran in to the same problem of decreasing student enrolment and had trouble providing classes for all grades. Participation dropped off so much that there is still only one formal school run by the SEP. It is called the 'telesecondary' since all the class are taken by video. A small number of *Huichol* youth go to the nearby cities to attend higher levels of school, which is expensive for the families and can isolate those families from the rest of their community. Notably for this study, several new schools have sprung up throughout the *Sierra* with a new bicultural curriculum run by the communities. These schools will be scrutinised more closely in Chapter 4.

3.4.6 *The Indigenous Movement and Links To Civil Society*

The struggle for indigenous cultures in Mexico to exercise political and cultural autonomy within the context of a modern state does not exist in isolated, atomised vacuums. In fact, the struggle for autonomy implies that a democratic solution is being sought to allow for self-governance and fair treatment under recognised treaties such as the constitution (Article 27), bi-lateral accords (*La Ley COCOPA*) and international conventions (ILO convention 169). Accordingly, indigenous people need the support of broader society to exist in an autonomous fashion. Historically, the ruling elite have discouraged, often with violent coercion, free discourse between civil society and people opposed to the modernising direction of nation-building. However, transparency in media

coverage and accountability to international influences has allowed indigenous groups to create and foster bonds among themselves and with *Mestizo* social advocates. The *Huichol* have been very active on both these fronts.

On the one hand, the *Huichol* have important cultural and geographic factors that contribute greatly to the indigenous movement in Mexico. The majority of indigenous insurgencies against the government have come from southern regions of the country. Guerrilla tactics have frequently been used in Guerrero, Chiapas and Oaxaca, and these groups still garner most of the attention of the government and foreign sympathisers. The *Huichol*, located in the centre of the country, maintain strong links to their long-standing culture and have demonstrated a continual unified opposition to land incursions. They continue to speak their own language and wear their traditional clothing and, importantly, still rely on ceremonial practices to bond the community. Most indigenous groups have lost one or all of these characteristics, which diminishes their self-esteem and social capital. Consequently, the *Huichol* have emerged as an important focal point in the indigenous movement by participating in and leading local forums that contribute to the CNI (*Declaración Política* 2001) and international meetings such as the 'Meeting of Indigenous Elders of the Americas' in Jalisco in 2003.

The *Huichol* have begun to construct new alliances locally, nationally and internationally from a position of relative strength compared to other indigenous groups. Regionally, they have connected with the *Nahua* in the south of Jalisco to create a political subject in the state. Nationally, they have joined other indigenous groups that are struggling for land. They have acquired the discourse of the *Zapatistas*, resulting in changes to their relationship with the government to forge a place in national planning. As

Torre (2000, 63) notes, in the meeting of several indigenous groups in Guadalajara after the *Zapatista* uprising in 1994 to discuss the necessity of legal recognition of indigenous rights and autonomy, the *Huichol* were distinct leaders in the discussions as they had endogenously put into place some mechanisms to combat external cultural influences.

On the other hand, the *Huichol* are working with various NGOs and universities to promote development of their lands and culture on their own terms. Relationships with civil society organisations saw a breakthrough in 1989 as the first open meeting between members of civil society and the *Huichol* to create a means of support outside the Sierra took place to organise the struggle and create a regional alliance. Meetings of this sort had previously been underground. The four *Huichol* communities formed the UCIH in 1991 to solicit civil society in Jalisco for support in territorial tribunals, which have recuperated 10,320 hectares of lost territory (Arcos García 1998). This conjunction was paralleled by the formation of the Jalisco Association of Support for Indigenous Groups (AJAGI). The AJAGI was formed by a small group of *Mestizo* professionals who had been working in *Huichol* communities and decided to form an organisation outside of the *Sierra* where they could advocate for land rights from within the legal system and support the *Huichol* as a socially and distinct people based on the national constitution and international charters. The *raison d'être* of AJAGI recognised the need of mainstream society to realise and respect the efforts of the *Huichol* community to maintain and care for the world the ancestors (Arcos García 1998, 6). These groups accomplished two things: first, they helped make the struggle of the *Huichol* one of a judicial process similar to what the *Zapatistas* were achieving in the south; and second, they created a visible and working system in the mainstream culture to propagate alternative modes of social organisation.

Thus, the fundamental defence of *Huichol* territory became situated not only in the deep roots of their history, culture and identity, and not only in agrarian rights, but also through a virtually tangible link connecting them to other indigenous groups in Mexico and around the world, as well as internationally within the mandates of the ILO and the UN.

The *Huichol* have also linked with academic institutions. For example, my sponsor organisation for the research for this thesis, the UACI, is an extension of the University of Guadalajara doing advocacy work for *Huichol* and *Nahua* communities in education and agricultural development, as well as offering support to indigenous people that have moved to Guadalajara from all over Mexico. Another university, the ITESO, advises and oversees various educational projects that will be investigated more closely in Chapter 4. *Huichol* relations with broader society have begun to blossom reaching social advocates and educating the public in general, and are therefore an important component of their struggle for cultural, economic and political autonomy.

In summary, the *Huichol* maintain a small population in the rugged central highlands of central Mexico. Their traditional modes of social organisation and ceremony have remarkably remained intact throughout the colonial history of Mexico. In fact, it is their connection with the natural world and determination to maintain cultural, economic and political autonomy that marks the *Huichol* as a formidable axis of resistance in the national indigenous movement for inclusion in national decision-making. However, despite their resourcefulness and fortitude in dealing with external social pressures, the internal struggle to stay socially cohesive is an ever-present challenge. The complexity of internal social relations has been increasing since a capitalist culture has been instilled. Consequently, the *Huichol* have to address class issues as individualistic identities migrate

into Western ideals due to the magnetic pull of capitalism. This added complexity to their own identity on top of their desire to maintain cultural integrity makes their class struggle more present. Several strategies have arisen to address the inevitable intrusion of market including developing education programs, making connections with various advocates in civil society and developing pan-indigenous organisation in Mexico and around the world. Needless to say, the *Huichol* provide an interesting point of resistance and interjection in the broader movement to devise a new social vision in the face of neo-liberal domination.

3.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline and briefly describe some of the cultural, economic and political history of Mexico in order to establish a social context for the development of youth education programs in the *Sierra Huichola* (Chapter 4). National society and international global culture has finally reached into *Huichol* culture, which has worried some traditional *Huichol*. The *Huichol* were largely able to avoid cultural intrusions throughout the colonial era and through the revolutionary years due to their remote geographic location and cultural fortitude. However, land incursions became increasingly troublesome as agricultural lands and sacred sites were taken away in favour of large scale ranching. Cultural intrusions intensified in 1963 with the AI and then later in the *Plan Huicot*, notably through attempts to establish formal education programs. Through these years the *Huichol* have slowly developed a class consciousness in respect to the dominant culture. Recently, the internal class structures have rapidly arisen. The battle for land rights was the first step into the occident, and later roads and electricity brought goods and services which challenged traditional economic means of subsistence and

brought in advertising and soap operas with their alluring images. Consequently, the internal and external struggles that the *Huichol* face are at a point where most other indigenous groups were previously besieged, succumbing to dominant society and creating an overwhelming class inferiority due to their loss of cultural integrity. *Huichol* elders have recognised the assimilation processes of the dominant culture and are addressing them by educating their youth on their own terms, connecting with other like indigenous groups throughout Mexico to fight legal and constitutional battles and linking with broader civil society through activists in NGOs and Universities. In a world now dominated by the neo-liberal economic paradigm and the magnetism of individualism, the *Huichol* are an important beacon for resistance, creatively trying to avoid becoming slaves of consumerism by creating local development initiatives as well as connecting up into national society and beyond.

Chapter 4

The Case of *Tateikita*

4.1 Introduction

Tateikita is small village in the *comunidad* of *Tateikié* where I conducted my field research. It maintains a central position in the social dynamics for the *Huichol* of this community, and a point of reference for the other three major *comunidades*. The families that live in *Tateikita* are well connected politically and have produced some university educated individuals. *Tateikita* is also a growing commercial centre where goods from the outside can be sold, and it is also the locale that has experimented with different methods of formal education. Therefore, it is a place that, on the one hand, acts like a door where external culture can enter the community, and, on the other hand, focuses the direction of the *Huichol* as a spiritual, political, economic and educational centre. The localisation of power within this centrality is a new dynamic for the *Huichol* since the traditional population was more dispersed. Consequently, *Tateikita* provides both a locus for new and necessary buffers from external society, as well as a point from which external cultural values can insidiously penetrate and disrupt their cultural balance.

As Biglow (2001) notes throughout his dissertation, schools have become a location for the negotiation of *Huichol* identity, particularly among the youth who are confronted with foreign ideas that they must balance with traditional values. At the beginning of the 1990s, the current form of their struggle, according to one *Kawitero* as ‘culturalists’ rather than as politicians, was established as an isolated force that did not

involve many people from the community. However, their discourse has changed gradually expressing aspirations that are more complex than the historical battle to regain lands. The effort to regain lands has facilitated other organisational processes that have been galvanised due to the recognition that the struggle exists due to their cultural, economic and political subordination. A perceived necessity to transform their social organisation has emerged meaning that their distinct social sectors must be rebalanced as well. Moreover, for the first time there is an external advocacy agenda and infrastructure in place to assist the *Huichol*. The remainder of this chapter will describe the cultural, economic and political dynamics of *Tateikita* and demonstrate ‘why’ and ‘how’ the new educational programs are contributing to the pan-indigenous movement in Mexico for autonomous cultural, economic and political rights.

4.2 The *Tateikita* Experiments

The first section of this case study will have two parts. First, I will describe the social dynamics of *Tateikita* in order to understand the setting in which the new school programs have emerged. Second, I will outline the objectives and key players involved in the creation and functioning of the schools, as well as the frictions and conflicts that have arisen due to the existence of the schools.

4.2.1 *Tateikita: Profile of an Indigenous Community*

The bulk of this civic profile comes from the anthropological study done by Biglow (2001) and from my personal observations. The literal meaning of *Tateikita* is ‘small place of our mother’ and is located in the broader *Huichol* community of *Tateikié*

meaning 'place of our mother peyote'. *Tateikita* is one of the principal small villages within the *Huichol* territories and is home to approximately 280 people (Biglow 2001, 11). *Tateikita* is located at the edge of a small plateau with an altitude of 1,800 metres that precipitously drops hundreds of metres down to the Chapalagana River. Like much of the *Sierra* region, the climate is dry eight to nine months of the year, with only seasonal rains striking the region from June until the end of September. *Tateikié*, the regional ceremonial centre is approximately five hours from *Tateikita* via a newly constructed road completed in April 1998 and eight to ten hours on foot. *Huejuquilla el Alta*, the town that serves as the northern gateway to the *Huichol* territories, is an eight hour trip by truck from *Tateikita*. Before the road was built the only way to access the village was on foot or by small aircraft which use airstrips built under the *AI*. Due to the time required to use the road, and its seasonal impassibility, the most efficient, and costly, means of reaching *Tateikita* is by plane. Flights in and out of the *Sierra* are not an option for most *Huichol* because of the expense, but planes can be contracted from locations in the state of *Nayarit* to reach the *Sierra* communities.

The layout of *Tateikita* is not traditional, representing a colonial, plaza-style settlement. A traditional *Huichol* settlement is centred by a small *kalihuey* (religious temple) and sleeping quarters that are stilted and made from wood. *Tateikita* also possess a small *kalihuey* within its borders next to the plaza, but maintains a larger *kalihuey* about two kilometres away signifying the religious and ceremonial importance of *Tateikita* to the nearby settlements. The central plaza has a concrete court used for basketball and volleyball and a covered meeting centre that is used for community functions. Surrounding the plaza, are several of the local shops, with others located down nearby side roads.

Another prominent feature of the plaza is the health clinic with its chain link fence and concrete foundation. The remainder of the public buildings and homes are made from adobe brick. The local governmental agency is located opposite the plaza from the health clinic, consisting of no more than a two-room adobe structure with dirt floors. The spacing of buildings in *Tateikita* is such that the most centralized area of the village is where most of the wealthy families live. They stay close to their shops, managing them during the day and into the evenings. On the fringes of the village, approximately 100 meters in any given direction from the central plaza, the homes tend to include small plots of land, whereas those living close to the plaza do not have any immediate land at their disposal. The people who live outside the village exist in a more traditional fashion are generally poorer and keep to themselves, preferring to only come to the village when it is necessary to purchase supplies, attend meetings, receive government assistance or participate in ceremonies (Biglow 2001).

Tateikita continues to be a remote location and does not possess many of the amenities taken for granted in urbanised areas. Unlike the outlying ranches, water in *Tateikita* is provided by a series of plastic tubes that route water collected from a spring in a holding tank near the village. I would not consider it to be potable, but that did not stop the locals from drinking straight from the pipes. However, its availability is sporadic due to leaks and other complications with the system that may leave the village without water for days at a time. There is no electricity in the village or phone service, but the government has put in power poles promising to have electricity for the village in the near future. The schools and some of the wealthy families have constructed solar paneling on the roofs of their homes to power small light bulbs and radios. There is even one family that has a

satellite dish and television, which is a big draw for the local children. Many families own cheap radios throughout the *Sierra*, allowing people to listen to news on an INI-sponsored AM radio station broadcast in *Huichol*, or to one of several Spanish-only ranchero stations available at night. Oddly, one of the schools was set up with satellite internet access for the first time by a religious based NGO while I was there. It was very strange to be in community with no electricity, but still be able to write email and get global news. It will be interesting to see if internet access will have an impact on the community.

The village of *Tateikita* is following the urbanisation trends of capitalist societies and is not representative of traditional *Huichol* economics. Outlying ranches rely on traditional subsistence farming, while those within *Tateikita*, much like other centralized villages such as *Tuxpan de Bolaños*, are now dependent on a new economic system that requires them to purchase foodstuffs they are unable, or unwilling to grow themselves. The *Huichol* in general are not highly skilled or educated in Western terms and have not developed an aptitude to be successful in small animal husbandry (Biglow 2001). They do keep pigs, horses and cattle which are allowed to run wild throughout the village feeding on garbage and human waste.

Families from *Tateikita* possess individual ranches located outside the village at higher elevations within the *Sierra*. These families reside on their ranches during the rainy summer months, leaving their homes in the village. Within the ranches, families possess cattle and small animals, with the cattle being used for milk production which is then processed into cheese. Cattle are not normally killed for their meat, except when they are used in ceremonies in the place of venison or when the cows have become old and can no

longer be used for breeding purposes. Families from *Tateikita* will only return to the village if they need additional supplies (Biglow 2001).

As has been mentioned, there is a growing capitalist class in *Tateikita*. Families with a regular cash flow like teachers have opened general stores selling basic items that are brought in by truck or obtained from trips to *Mestizo* villages. Being general stores, all the shops carry largely the same items including eggs, canned goods, pasta, oil, sweets, carbonated drinks, beer, commercially ground corn-flour mix, salt, beans, rice, milk powder, coffee, and a limited selection of fruits and vegetables. In addition, stores carry pesticides (bug sprays and insect powders) and general items (sandals, batteries, flashlights, candles, cigarettes, sewing items, and stationary). Since there is a significant cost in bringing these items to *Tateikita*, the prices are quite high. Most families cannot afford to purchase items at the local shops. Furthermore, the *Huichol* are very reluctant to try new foods, which makes introducing new staples into their diet quite difficult. Malnutrition continues to be a problem, especially for children since meals usually consist only of tortillas and beans.

Due to the isolation of *Tateikita*, foreign cultural influences are less severe than in villages close to *Mestizo* towns. No electricity means there is virtually no television and there is still no bus service to facilitate the mobility of people in and out of the village. It appears that *Huichol* men are more susceptible to the influences of foreign culture, while the women of the village provide the gravity toward traditional culture. The women are largely in charge of the extensive preparations for communal celebrations and continue to wear their traditional clothing. Many men wear traditional clothing, but being attired in

western style *ranchero*⁴ clothing indicates a social status of being modern. In fact, many families spend a significant amount of their income on clothing their boys in a western fashion. Alcohol, specifically beer, is also a growing problem. Not only do the men spend a large portion of their income on expensive beer, but it is often consumed during the long festivals in place of peyote. These men miss out on the crucial spiritual link to their ancestral identity, as well as misbehave disrupting the celebrations that include young children. As mentioned, these problems are not as severe in *Tateikita* as they are in other villages, but they are growing problems that the community faces.

4.2.2 Formal Education in *Tateikita*

Schooling arrived late in *Tateikita*, but recent history has seen several educational programs form. These programs have not only given youth a new opportunity to learn, but has also fundamentally changed the community. The Franciscans arrived in the *Sierra* in the sixteenth century, yet their first establishment in *Tateikita* did not occur until 1963, shortly after the construction of the first airstrip. Changes took place quickly after this including the commencement of the first Franciscan school in *Tateikita* in 1976. However, local resistance abounded and few students attended as the people were wary of foreign influence.

Later, in conjunction with the *Plan Huicot*, a primary school was built along with a boarding dormitory for students whose families lived too far from *Tateikita* for their children to attend every day. The primary school is still an important centre of social

⁴ The *ranchero* style comes from a music genre that arose from rural Mexico and is akin to the country-western culture in North America.

activity in *Tateikita*. With over 300 students taking classes from grade one to six, the school has grown due to the support of parents and boards over 100 students who share the classroom with the children from or near to *Tateikita*. These boarded students usually return home to their distant ranches on the weekends. At the time of my visit, most of the primary teachers were *Huichol*. The school was created through the SEP. In relation to Rippberger's findings in Chiapas (1992), SEP guidelines for schooling in indigenous areas have evolved due to pressures inside and outside the organisation. They now stress the development of native language and culture alongside the typical curriculum of Spanish and national culture. The local teachers were one of the first groups to earn an income from the government. Consequently, it was the teacher's families that made a shift from subsistence living to one more characteristic of the middle class. These teachers used their disposal income to construct brick houses in *Tateikita* and open local stores in order to increase their wealth. It was also these families that established themselves as the political leaders of the village as well, regularly acting as governors and commissioners due to their economic freedom to spend the time doing the work.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s while the primary school remained established, formal education programs for older age groups were never implemented. There were relatively successful attempts to expand rural education to small ranch settlements controlled by *Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo* (CONAFE). These small schools offer the first three years of primary education to children in areas that have fewer than ten students in areas where attendance at a regular primary school might prove difficult. CONAFE donates scholarships to families and materials to students in the region. This program has largely been successful since the teachers have come from the

community. Young adults perform two years of teaching service in return for their own opportunity to study in the city. In addition, there is now a preschool in *Tateikita* that introduces young children to literacy programs at young age.

By the mid 1990s the *Huichol* became more aggressive in implementing youth education programs. In 1991, the SEP was given a mandate by the federal government making secondary education (grades seven to nine) mandatory throughout the country. However, as was the norm, rural indigenous areas were not the focus of new programs. The SEP was only able to open one telesecondary school in *Tateikié* where students took many of their classes in Spanish via video tape. The teachers that were provided by the SEP ran into similar problems discovered by Rippberger (1992) in Chiapas. They did not speak the local language and had a difficult time adapting to the harsh living conditions of the *Sierra*. Few teachers did more than one year of duty, if they did last that long.

The only other option available that had occasionally been used in the past was to send their boys to the closest urban centres. As Biglow (2001) discovered, it is the father of boys that has promoted traveling out of the homeland for an education or to work. The men in the community are not as fearful as the women in regards to foreign influences as many of them have done some sort of migrant labour on larger farms in Mexico or even the United States. However, fathers are very protective of their daughters since marriage for girls traditionally occurs shortly after menarche. The marriage of a female child brings more labour into the family economic unit since men are expected to contribute production not only to the well-being of their affinal families, but also to their nuclear families. Sending boys away is not seen as a good thing by the *Kawiteros* since migration breaks up the family unit, they learn to use Spanish and not the native language and they are taught

that *mestizaje* is the best way forward for Mexico in contradiction to the traditional culture. It is because of this disjunction that the elders pushed to have schools built in the *Huichol* region.

In 1995, the first secondary school in *Huichol* territories began instruction in *Tateikita*. The *Centro Educativo Tatutsi Maxa Kwaxi*⁵ (CETMK) was created and developed by the *Huichol* in partnership with the AJAGI (civil society group) and the SEP (governmental institution). However, the local people were the driving force behind the school. They solicited the help of *Rocío de Aguinaga*, one of the founders of AJAGI and researcher at the ITESO in Guadalajara, but the bulk of the decision making about the school was done through local meetings where consensus of the entire community decided what was to be taught. Consequently, The CETMK was organized to be an 'indigenous' school. Instructors were chosen from among the *Huichol* themselves, instead of relying on *Mestizo* teachers who would know little to nothing about the *Huichol* way of life or language. While genuinely certified teachers were desired, teachers were selected based on special skills they could contribute to the school. Some teachers had little or no formal education experience. In coordination with *de Aguinaga*, the *Huichol* obtained permission to run the school as an experiment in bilingual-intercultural education within the SEP. *De Aguinaga* also organized teacher training seminars and workshops, with a group of assistants at the ITESO, as a way to help *Huichol* teachers earn their full credentials.

The location of the school, by agreement of authorities, parents, and coordinators was *Tateikita* because of its previously educated and relatively sedentary population as well as its close access to an airstrip. It employs eight full-time faculty and staff and engages

⁵ Educational Center of the Tail of Our Grandfather Deer

over 100 students divided among three grade levels. Initially, the CETMK's small base of students was housed in buildings confiscated from the local Franciscan mission. With assistance of parents, new sets of classrooms were constructed below the mission. However, the establishment of the CETMK did not pass without dispute. A new school meant more teachers in the community with an income. The teachers have not only built new houses, but also have an influential position over youth development. The teachers of the primary school saw this as a threat to their power in the community creating two main political factions. One parent of a primary student and who is associated with the primary teachers told me that they will send their son away to the telesecondary school instead of the CETMK because they did not agree with the leadership of the new school, demonstrating a disjointedness in the cohesion of the community.

The CETMK has sustained itself for several years resulting in more ambitious plans for education in the *Sierra*. On the one hand, *de Aguinaga* has been working with two other village centres to begin similar primary schools following processes learned in the formation of the CETMK. As of yet these communities do not have teachers or buildings, but in an interview *de Aguinaga* said that this does not matter. The process begins with the local community and the school will slowly build up from there. As a result, each location has different initial elements that will have a different logic of relation with the school. On the other hand, two secondary projects have been initiated in *Tateikita*. One is a '*preparatoria abierta*' (open school) started by *de Aguinaga* and the ITESO that had been running for three and a half years with limited success. In this program, initiated to allow the teachers in *Tateikita* to obtain their own high school diploma, the students take intensive classes on weekends when the ITESO is able to fly in available teachers. The

curriculum is SEP issue. At the end of the course the students take standard nation-wide exams that will lead to a diploma equivalent to a high school graduation in North America. However, the program has struggled since the number of students attending has dwindled and there have been insufficient supplies and inadequate books. The other project is run by the UACI. I was able to visit *Tateikita* due to my participation as an English teacher in this project. It also targets the secondary age group. However, the UACI program intends to maintain a constant stream of intensive courses, each lasting two weeks. The thrust of this program is to get students to complete three levels of each course, which are mostly modeled on the Western system but include courses such as indigenous rights. Upon completion the students will be able to attend classes at the University of Guadalajara. At the time of my research the program was just beginning and student participation was high and energetic. Credit for this can be given to the CETMK, since most of the students in the program had experienced formal education at the CETMK and were not in a foreign environment in the new school. Yet, it remains to be seen whether the program can sustain itself and develop any university level students.

The UACI is running a parallel program in the village of *Tuxpan de Bolaños* on the southern borders of the *Sierra*. However, attendance is low largely because the conditions in *Tuxpan* are much different than in *Tateikita*. There is a much stronger *Mestizo* influence in *Tuxpan* due to its proximity to the foreign culture. *Tuxpan* has both electricity and bus service which create problems between the youth of the community and the elders who wish to preserve the culture. The youth rarely go to fiestas, drink more beer and work in the cities. Consequently, there are fewer registered students in *Tuxpan* and they are older with less experience in formal education than in *Tateikita*. Since the students are older,

classes are only run on weekends. As a result, the UACI is facing the same problems as the ITESO's open school with declining student attendance.

4.2.2.1 *The Tatutsi*

In the CETMK, or the *Tatutsi* as it is fondly called, the *Huichol* of *Tateikita* began to move away from the state-led model of indigenous education that was extremely detrimental to traditional values and modes of social organisation. Instead, the school prevented the uprooting of students and created a learning environment adapted to the customs of the *Huichol* (de Aguinaga 1996, 67). The uniqueness of this program was an instant draw for academics. Several ethnographic studies have been done, closely monitoring the internal dynamics of the CETMK. Furthermore, the success of the school has bred other schools in different locales and programs for older students in *Tateikita*.

The CETMK has become a centre to formally teach *Huichol* youth about the culture and traditions of their ancestors, as well as a means for acquiring skills to manage western culture. As Biglow (2001) discovered, the values of the students closely resemble their teachers and the community elders. The CETMK is organized with eight faculty members including one coordinator and one female teacher, an advisory board of parents and an outside advisor (*de Aguinaga*). Along with the coordinator exists a number of administrative assistants in Guadalajara that serve as curriculum development advisors for the teachers at the CETMK or serve other administrative functions such as ensuring that proper forms and information reach the *Sierra*, and that teachers receive their biweekly salaries (Biglow 2001). *De Aguinaga* only claims to have a facilitator's role as an advisor to assure that that "things go smoothly" so that the SEP does not decide to close the school

or reorganize it in a way that takes the locus of control out of the hands of the *Huichol* by placing it under administrative scrutiny that might remove teachers or courses. The other advisors are to help teachers with their lack of formal training in core courses such as mathematics and science. They are especially useful when *Huichol* teachers must teach these courses without laboratory equipment, electricity or books.

The *Tatutsi* has been designed as a bicultural program that will allow *Huichol* students to gain knowledge about their own culture as well as learn how to manage elements of western culture. The curriculum blends the elements of both cultures and student participation adds depth to the experience. On one end of the spectrum, the curriculum offers a full complement of the sciences, languages and western literature. The students take classes in chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics, Spanish and English. On the other end of the spectrum, the students formally learn about *Huichol* culture, cosmology and language. These two poles of courses are blended by the study of indigenous rights and technical applications such as carpentry, horticulture and art. The depth of these programs comes from regular meetings of the student body and the community services they perform. An elected student council runs weekly meetings, performed mostly in *Huichol*, for the entire school while the teachers and parent leaders listen from the outside. The students organise the extra-curricular activities such as sporting events and community clean-ups, and address problems within the school such as missing books or problems with teachers. These meetings are an extension of the oral tradition in *Huichol* culture (Rojas 1999) and are preparation for future participation in community assemblies in an intercultural scenario (Corona 1999). Biglow (2001) also points out that the student meetings are a mechanism for establishing and maintaining social norms based on

traditional values. Points of contention are worked out through mediation, arbitration and public reprimands.

The *Tatutsi* has developed an interesting means of creating and maintaining a collective culture through its student assemblies. However, the school also promotes individual achievement and rewards successful students. The school regularly holds examinations to evaluate individual progress. Moreover, the INI provides funding for the families of students who achieve a grade of 'B' or higher to subsidise the cost of going to school. Biglow (2001) discovered that this money was rarely used for its intended purpose and that the students who needed financial help the most never received it. This type of competition also breeds individualistic values that are not consistent with the traditional culture.

Biglow (2001) also notes that the local boarding of students has had a positive effect on the school and changed the culture of *Tateikita*. Many of the students live in the community on a continuous basis throughout the academic school year. By living and studying together their identity formation takes place in two ways. First, students do not make distinctions between their academic culture and their daily lives. School culture becomes, in essence, part of their lives in their being, thinking and knowing. Students are not thrust into an atmosphere where they must participate in one culture within the school and another outside of it. The native language is used inside the school and when they return home. Biglow (2001) surmised that there is a different bond for those whose families live close and are not boarded since family obligations may take precedence over academic performance and participation. Second, the boarding of students at the school and in the village make them learn to cooperate with others in order to survive. Student

collectives provide an environment that challenges established forms of social control. Therefore, students are a new group within the community that can effectively engage in activities that do not involve the greater community such as organizing their own sporting events, playing music and holding dances. At the same time that such student cooperatives may cause a separation of school culture from community culture, the *Tatutsi* students and teachers are creating a new perspective of how to deal with rapid socio-cultural change such as the infusion of individualist values of a capitalist economy.

Funding for the school has come from several sources. The SEP and the ITESO have both contributed funds to buy books and fly building materials to *Tateikita* to build the school. The school now has five buildings: three classrooms, an administrative centre that houses the library and computer room, and a storage room that also acts as a small store. The library is growing and they have other teaching tools such as telescopes and computers. The technology, such as computers, was funded by AMISTAD a religious based NGO. AMISTAD has also supplied a volunteer English teacher, but not without controversy. Many of the people I spoke with are very sceptical of the motives of AMISTAD, referring to them as the 'Halleluiahs'. I was frequently asked about what was said in discussions I had had with the teacher as they suspected some sort of conspiracy since she was frequently on the computer communicating with her supporters in the United States. Very few of the teachers or students were eager to try out the new computer equipment, so it remains to be seen if the technology can be used as a tool for the community or if it will fall into disrepair.

Despite having to deal with the several internal challenges just outlined, the *Tatutsi* has become a central point of social development for the *Huichol* of *Tateikié*, and more

specifically *Tateikita*. Biglow (2001), Rojas (1999), Corona (1999) and de Aginaga (1996 and 2002) have all elaborated on the functioning of the program helping to explain why the school has been able to grow roots where other educational projects have failed. What is it about the *Tatutsi*'s bicultural/intercultural program that has created stability, such that the school is established, ongoing and evolving? Certainly, the continued support of the ITESO has been crucial, but what are the internal factors for the success of the school? I have picked out four interrelated themes from the research that has come out of studies on the *Tatutsi* since its inception.

First, there is ownership in the direction of the school by the staff, parents and ultimately, as Biglow (2001) points out, the students. From the beginning, it has been explicit that the school was designed to formally teach students about the historical reality of the *Huichol*, as well as learn how to manage certain aspects of *Mestizo* culture. This type of objective decision-making and action means that the school is a mechanism to address the contested social space in which the *Huichol* find themselves. Moreover, due to its political origins, the school becomes a contested social space within itself. De Aguinaga (2002), who has assisted the key players in the development of the school, notes that it is the locals who conduct the daily activities of the school since the outsiders do not know the local culture. It is the *Huichol* and their communal desire to maintain a connection with their history and ancestors, albeit in a changed form, that has kept the school cohesive despite the internal and external conflicts that all the participants have had to bear.

Second, by recognising that the school is a contested space within itself, it becomes crucial to understand what is taking place within the school on a daily basis. Biglow (2001) elaborated extensively on the dynamics of the *Tatutsi*. The classroom is a place that

is led by the teachers with the students expressing similar visions to that of their teachers. Yet the students are also active participants in the direction of the school, particularly through their student assemblies. Consequently, the identity formation of the students is closely related to the local culture and its tradition of respect for the family and the community. The students demonstrate high-levels of self-worth through the work they do at the school. In terms of social capital, important bonds are being formed by the students in their collective experience of learning about the position of indigenous people and the *Huichol's* contribution to the broader indigenous movement.

Third, the school has to be able to deal with the same external influences that are threatening the community. By beginning with the affirmation of cultural identity, the school furthers the formal education to become a defence mechanism from *Mestizo* culture and as a tool to participate in communal and national negotiations. These issues are not only addressed by the teachers and administration, but are also taken on by the students. Biglow (2001) notes that one major problem has been the occasional truancy of teachers who have engaged in week long beer drinking binges and not gone to school. Interestingly, it was the students who most aggressively addressed this problem by castigating the teachers in their student assembly. They felt betrayed and proposed rules that would prevent this type of event from occurring again. The students also have had to learn how to deal with individual pursuits, especially in competition to get good grades. In the type of school program that has been adopted, incentive for efficient individual success is present by simply issuing grades. Some students that were new to the school and bicultural learning have left because they could not deal with a new culture. This dynamic

demonstrates how the school is a contested space in search of new points of social equilibrium.

Fourth, the *Tatutsi* has received recognition from UNESCO as being an excellent model for indigenous education. This identification is important for all of the people involved in the school as there is increased justification to further develop the school and initiate new programs based on the same model. The school is now in a stronger position to outwardly project itself and reinforces the ideals of the school. External recognition is an important component of maintaining a strong identity. Therefore, those involved with the *Tatutsi* have created a cultural buffer to potentially damaging influences of external cultural values.

4.2.2.2 *Direct Communal Challenges*

The introduction of formal education for *Huichol* youth in *Tateikita* has largely been successful in creating an environment for students to learn about their culture and its place in Mexican society. However, there are ongoing problems which threaten the fabric of their social capital that the schools and the community must address. Trust and inclusion are key components of creating and fostering social capital. Yet, not all children are attending the schools partly due to the parent's lack of understanding of what schooling is since they never studied formally⁶ and partly due to a lack of trust between community members. Furthermore, a few of the students enrolled in the *Tatutsi* had never previously been exposed to bicultural/intercultural education. These students had more trouble fitting in, and if they stayed, they were often the students who achieved lower grades and did not

⁶ See Rippberger (1992) for the same observation in Chiapas.

receive the funding rewards mentioned above (Biglow 2001). In the long term, if the school becomes a means of social mobility then striations between the 'educated' and the 'uneducated' may occur in the community, separating individuals who are able to complete school and those who are not. These divisions are stretched out even further by students going on to study at the university level. When students go to study in the big city they enter the world of money. They have to pay rent and buy food and clothes. If and when these students return, which is the hope of most people involved in education in the *Sierra*, these *Huichol* will have a much different perspective of the world than those who stay on their distant ranches, stratifying epistemologies within one supposedly cohesive social group.

Yet, the *Huichol* who have had the opportunity to study at a university feel ignorant in regards to the traditional culture. I discovered in several interviews with *Huichol* students at the University of Guadalajara that they feel that they are able to quickly learn how to deal with mainstream social systems. Unfortunately, day to day living away from their home means losing a heritage they wish they knew better. Returning to the community keeps them in touch with their people, but they feel foreign largely because the people who live in the *Sierra* view them as foreign. To be *Huichol* is to be a part of the land and participating in ceremonies. Those who leave lose touch with the routines and rituals of the culture and are often not deemed to be *Huichol*. Despite this disarticulation, some elders and students see the need for their kind to be educated and work on behalf of the community in the mainstream culture. Through the UACI the *Huichol* students have formed a network of support to survive in the urban centre and maintain contact with their indigenous identity. A prominent *Huichol* lawyer who works for the UACI told to me that

he thinks this type of organisation is crucial in maintaining a bridge between the indigenous youth working as advocates in the dominant culture and their native community. It is an important link up for the community to compete in the structures of Mexican society and crucial bond down for the indigenous advocates to maintain an affective link with their traditional culture.

Internal problems have also developed in *Tateikita*. Now that the *Tatutsi* has had a few functional years, skewed perceptions and opposing factions challenge the motives of the school. As Biglow (2001) discovered, and I also observed, a significant amount of rumour and innuendo circulates through the community in regards to the school. Parents associated with the primary school refer to the *Tatutsi* as a 'private' school since the coordinator lived in Guadalajara for many years and the school receives funding from foreign sources. Their general wariness of foreign influences makes the school a distinct location within the community. The people that are not integrated into the culture of the school feel that a project that was to be controlled internally has become the puppet of external institutions. The teachers in the primary school lead this discontent. As mentioned previously, many of the teachers at the primary school have instituted a market economy, either as shopkeepers or as consumers. Furthermore, the primary teachers largely represent the attitudes of the *Tateikita* community. Therefore, the divisions between the two schools will remain until communication between the two groups is established. The *Tatutsi* retains internal support from the immediate families of the teachers and students and from a couple of the local shopkeepers in the village who are related to graduates. Biglow (2001) made note that many of the *Tatutsi* students are aware of this disarticulation and do not feel that they are a part of the local community

despite their direct contributions such as village clean-ups and airstrip repair. The student's perceptions demonstrate the polarisation of the two cultures within the local community since the efforts of the students are not recognised by the community.

One of the greatest challenges of the community will be to deal with the changing epistemological perspective of the students who are learning formally. The traditional culture is deeply rooted in the interaction with the natural environment and the Gods that permit their survival. Learning how to reason scientifically in the Western tradition will often contradict spiritual edicts. For example, how does knowledge of the effects of bacteria and viruses on the human body and other living organisms relate to traditional beliefs of bad spirits? The foreign doctor in *Tateikita* told me numerous stories about how he treated individuals with bacterial infections with antibiotics after the local *Mara'kame* had failed with traditional methods of spiritual cleansing by chanting to the Gods. Does this not discount the fundamental spiritual connection of the people to the Gods? Formal education provides an environment for the learning and acceptance of foreign ideas. The worldview of the *Huichol* will fundamentally change as current elders pass away and the youth of today become community leaders. It is the hope of the *kawitero* who initiated the schools that by controlling their own education the community can remain intact with traditional values despite the recognition that their ancestral worldview will come under scrutiny.

In spite of the problems and disarticulations that have resulted due to the emergence of formal education in *Tateikita*, the schools seem to be providing development and reinforcement of some general communal beliefs. Biglow (2001) determined that the students held communitarian values thinking that their formal education will promote

mutual respect, community activity, familial bonds and connections with elders. They continue to work on community projects and are learning to discuss concerns among themselves and with their families. Present relations between the students and the community may be strained, but as more students graduate and become active participants in community assemblies, the tolerance for the schools will likely become more widespread.

4.2.2.3 *Institutional Observations*

The various external organisations helping with education in *Huichol* villages struggle to work together. The University of Guadalajara, the ITESO, the SEP and the Christian group AMISTAD all have good intentions, but ultimately have to achieve separate goals. This is a problem that is recognised by the people working in each of these groups. A common goal of assisting the development of education for the *Huichol* is well-understood, yet each institution requires results from the resources they have injected into the projects. Consequently, projects that could be melded together are operating independently. Some students will complete the path from primary school, through the *Tatutsi* and on to the UACI program. Yet, each program is distinct. The primary school is most influenced by the SEP, the *Tatutsi* is guided by the ITESO and the secondary school is a UACI project that has overrun the ITESO's *prepa abierta*. AMISTAD claims to be neutral in its donations, but their presence makes many local nervous leading to fissures in community bonds.

I also noticed epistemological differences between the people actively working on behalf of the *Huichol*. On the one hand, some of the advocates are extremely

particularistic, focussing on the protection of traditions in the name of the 'other'. They deem the struggle for cultural survival to be locally based. What comes out is not envisioned, but what is important is that change is managed from within the community. There is considered to be not only diversity in the problems and challenges of different indigenous groups, but also differences between the different communities within the *Sierra Huichola*. As Rojas (1999) points out, for example, there are distinct processes taking place in each location. Social power will rise from within by working with those who wish to know. Those who know know how to do. Therefore, the teachers, students and external facilitators are all on the same path and must work together to deal with the discrimination of the public system of dealing with indigenous peoples. Through this common experience it is posited that the people can work together to develop new skills that will enhance the standard of living in the community.

On the other hand, some advocates press for the need for structural change to regain autonomous management of their lands and culture. The problems and identity of the *Huichol* must be linked with the similar conditions of other indigenous groups. Therefore, networks need be fostered by holding meetings and workshops. Indigenous youth must be increasingly educated to not only create an awareness of their social status, but to also gain skills that will contribute to the broader networks of indigenous organisation. Furthermore, from this point of view, schools are not deemed to be fundamental to the conservation of the identity of the culture; cultural identity stems from what the community does and the activities in which it participates. The schools offer the opportunity to strengthen bonds within the community and create an awareness that will foster links with other indigenous groups, but will not rescue the culture. The people

need protection under the rules of the land in order to live autonomously, which means struggling to be included in the national project.

The key to the preservation of *Huichol*, according one *Huichol* who works at the UACI, is to combine the emerging elements of *Huichol* identity. Those *Huichol* who work in mainstream society will feel isolated from the traditional culture, just as those who maintain local customs will be ignorant to western laws and ideals. Furthermore, communication must be generated between indigenous groups such as has been taking place at the different forums of the CNI. Traditionalists of one indigenous group must communicate with traditionalists of other indigenous groups in meetings organised by advocates in the external culture. External advocates must also work together to aid students entering the *Mestizo* world with the hope that they will use their knowledge and energy to help their native communities. These processes and linkages are becoming increasingly complex as the collective experience of the *Huichol* broadens and more connections are made with the external culture.

4.2.3 Summary

Formal education programs have recently taken shape for the first time in *Huichol* territories. Over the years, the *Huichol* have eschewed the programs of assimilation offered by the state. However, in the early 1990s, many of the elders came to realise that change in their communities was imminent due to the encroaching external culture. One strategy of dealing with these pressures was to start education programs run by the community. By linking with advocates at the ITESO and other civil society groups, the village of *Tateikita* became the location of a new secondary school. The success of this school has spawned

other educational projects in the *Sierra* including other secondary schools in different villages and new programs for graduates of the secondary school to prepare for university.

The impact of these schools has been unpredictable and varied. I have categorised these fundamental changes into four categories. First, the school has created new 'communities' within a community. On the one hand, the *Tatutsi* and its graduates have a connection that, at the time of analysis, others in the community do not wish to join. This disarticulation is due to the individualism that has entered the culture. Those opposed to the schools have political and economic interests that are threatened by the knowledge of new students. The students are also learning about the conditions of their homeland and developing their own ideas about the governance of the community. These perspectives are not parallel and cause conflict. Conflict is not new to the *Huichol*, and has traditionally been dealt with publicly. As more students graduate from the school and become active in the local meetings it is hoped that differences can be worked out and the traditional values of respect, family, community and custom can be upheld in a fashion that originally inspired the creation of the *Tatutsi*. On the other hand, teachers paid by the government are not reliant on their own agricultural production for survival. They are able to purchase their food, hire labour to build bigger houses and finance the stocking of small shops. Furthermore, due to their financial freedom the teachers are selected as the political leaders of the community and are targeted by political parties as the links into the Mexican corporate and clientelistic hierarchy.

Second, the epistemology of the *Huichol* is changing quickly for those who attend school and slowly for those who live far away from community centres. The formal learning that is taking place will put into question the foundations of *Huichol* spirituality.

Ceremonies and customs will become objectified and preserved on a heritage basis and not because they are integral to their existence. It has been noted that fewer youth are regularly participating in traditional ceremonies, not necessarily due to the schools alone, but in combination with many other factors of external influence. The challenge for teachers and the youth as they become leaders in the community is to forge new methods of cohesive social organisation in the place of an articulation with traditional cosmology.

Third, the schools are producing university graduates. At this point in time very few students are attending universities, but as the number of programs grows more will likely follow. These graduates could provide a key link and buffer between the external cultural, economic and political structures. Some of the students may decide to pursue a path separate from their indigenous past since many of the *Huichol* who do not leave develop a mistrust for those who have left. However, there are *Huichol* working in the big cities to support new students in the hopes they will use their knowledge and energy to work on behalf of their homeland. This type of advocacy means knowing and working within the legal framework of the country in attempts to negotiate constitutional and institutional change and linking with other indigenous groups who would benefit from similar changes.

Fourth, the schools provide a point of entry for civil society advocates and a means for the *Huichol* to express their social situation and worldviews out into broader society. NGOs and universities provide finances and expertise to develop the goals made by the community, as well campaign in mainstream society to highlight the injustices that are perpetrated against indigenous peoples. The *Huichol* are watched closely by the federal government due to their growing influence in the *Zapatista* movement and *Mestizo*

ranchers supported by municipal politicians still eye *Huichol* territories for their cattle. The transparency fostered by civil society advocates keep the powers that be from further compromising the fragile cultural, economic and political bonds that allow schools such as the *Tatutsi* to form, grow and evolve.

4.3 Lateral Discussion

The purpose of this section is to integrate the theoretical discussion outlined in Chapter II and the historical context listed in Chapter III into the descriptive analysis of youth education in the *Sierra Huichola*. I will use three interrogative categories to accomplish this discussion. First, why were the education programs necessary? Second, how did the programs form? Third, how has the indigenous movement for cultural, economic and political rights impacted the schools and, in turn, what is the contribution of the education programs for indigenous rights in Mexico?

4.3.1 Why Has Formal Education Blossomed?

Institutionalised and organised methods of formal education took a long time to reach the *Sierra Huichola*. This is one reason why the *Huichol* maintained social autonomy through many decades of colonial influence. That is, they have been able to exist and subsist outside the social structures led by the modern state, including the education policies of assimilation and de-indianisation. Yet, recent history has brought external cultural influences closer to the *Huichol* territories. Some areas such as *Tuxpan de Bolaños* have largely succumbed to *Mestizo* society, losing traditional forms of learning, language, social cohesion, and therefore shifting their identity toward a symbolic ethnicity

that carries with it the weight of class. Other regions in the *Sierra*, like *Tateikita*, have yet to be engulfed by capitalism and maintain strong traditional bonds based in a localised communal identity. The *Tatutsi* and subsequent schools have been formed explicitly to reinforce communal values and the importance of family, language and culture in order to meet the external social influences head on.

The *Tatutsi* was able to sustain itself because the people involved were given the social space and means to build the school and develop a community based curriculum while at the same time being supported by the SEP. Thirty years ago, it would not have been possible to begin a locally based school and have it formally recognised by the state. The state would have seen it as a threat to national unity and disbanded it. However, in the new millennium, many events have made the government become more tolerant to autonomous indigenous development including the experience of the student rallies in the 1960s, the governmental transparency required to be a part of international structures such as the World Bank and the IMF, the success of the *Zapatistas* to put indigenous issues on the national agenda and the integration of native teachers into the SEP.

Community leaders and the *Huichol* working outside the homeland are well aware of the class struggles that await indigenous communities yet to be assimilated into mainstream social systems. This recognition has not only linked the *Huichol* with other indigenous groups in Mexico, but has also instigated the development of new schools. One of the long-term objectives of the schools is to bring other *Huichol* students to universities to develop skills necessary to combat the state at an institutional and legal level. While the local culture does not have a fully developed class identity, it is recognised by their leaders that the foreign capitalist culture will have to be managed to avoid falling into the

quicksand of imposed individualism. As a result, the schools have been created with the intent of maintaining their sense of community, family cohesion and ethnic heritage.

According to one *Kawitero* and teacher of *Huichol* culture, “we are not politicians, we are culturalists.”

In terms of educational theory, the new education programs can be called ‘formal’ due to their acceptance by the state. However, they also maintain characteristics of nonformal systems since they were essentially initiated outside of the formal structures. As per Brennen’s (1997) taxonomy of nonformal education, the programs in the *Sierra Huichola* act as an alternative to what the state has to offer. The schools do have to provide certain courses to be recognised by the state, but the schools are largely defined by the community built classes in *Huichol* culture and language as well as by the importance of student assemblies and community work. Consequently, the *Tatutsi* and the other subsequent schools are excellent examples of popular education through what Hammond (1999) described as being ‘by’ and ‘for’ the people to ultimately, in the case of LaBelle (2000), develop cultural values is association with other groups to gain more autonomy over economic and political determination.

The economic and political structures that help categorise the indigenous peoples as separate from the mainstream are not lost in the analysis. Many indigenous people have died fighting for justice, as in the case of the Mexican Revolution. As a result, the struggle for territorial rights has a legal basis such as in Article 27 of the constitution, in convention 169 of the ILO and through the COCOPA law. Yet, large companies are still permitted to invade treaty lands and recent neo-liberal land reform has picked off parcels of land abandoned by peasants who have become disconnected with traditional communal forms of

survival. It is in the face of these looming powers that the *Huichol* have created new youth education programs as a means to maintain their political/territorial foundation, modes of self-government and social competencies that make up the crucial elements of autonomy outlined by Díaz-Polanco (2002). Furthermore, and crucially, their struggle for autonomy has been buffered and nourished by supporters in civil society and through the increasing influence and impact of pan-indigenous organisation.

4.3.2 How Did the Programs Form?

Analysing 'how' the youth education programs formed in *Tateikita* requires looking at the cultural and external inputs, community strategies and immediate impacts of the schools. Understanding and outlining these elements are the building blocks of a model of youth education that could possibly be used by other indigenous groups in Mexico, but is not a precise recipe since the social conditions of varying indigenous cultures are not the same.

One of the principle contributing assets to the development of formal education in *Tateikita* is the strong ethnic bond. By ethnicity I refer to the 'paternity' aspect outlined by Von Groll (1999) in which a community endogenously maintains a moral obligation to live out and pass on the values and mores of its ancestors. This connection and dedication to a unique world-view forms the crucial 'bonding' links of social capital outlined by Grant (2001). The social cohesion of the *Huichol* is founded in their history and is an asset in managing future social change. In the case of other indigenous peoples that have lost their traditional forms of social organisation, external forces of the state and the market have categorised the indigenous as backward and, therefore, their culture should be assimilated.

However, the *Huichol*'s traditional culture has buffered the internalisation of external categorisation at the psychological level. In the context of Jenkins' (2000) 'external categorisation'/'group identification' dichotomy, the *Huichol*, as a group, have the capacity to strive for autonomy in spite of the categorisation pressures of external society on the individual.

The schools also require external support to ensure their survival. Funding for construction, supplies and salaries comes from several different groups, including the state. The consultation expertise is sympathetic to the *Huichol* cause and the culture. The local community is provided the leadership role in decision-making and given support by the outsiders. This process is indicative of the 'bridging' of social capital that transcends different communities and cultures (Grant (2001)). The stimulus of foreign involvement for the *Huichol* comes from civil society advocates and not from the assimilating policies of the state. Consequently, the government has been held accountable to the *Huichol* and supported the schools in spite of having to take a secondary role in the development of the programs.

The community strategies used by the *Huichol* of *Tateikita* are founded in and supported by their ethnic bond and the building up of their social capital into mainstream society. Training local teachers on the job, creating a curriculum based in the local language to formally learn about the traditional culture and giving students a leadership role through regular assemblies are all aspects of the schools that bond learning with their history. This strategy resulted from the elder's recognition that change in their community was imminent. Therefore, if change is to take place, it should be managed by the community. Students are taught how to interact with respect, intelligence and intuition

with an awareness of their traditional rights and developmental challenges. Some lessons have been learned as the community deals with a blossoming middle class and more students who leave to go study at university. However, it is these university students who will provide a key link in the future to buffer the capitalist endeavours of external institutions and the local community.

4.3.3 Contributions of and to the Pan-Indigenous Movement

The establishment of locally directed formal education in the *Sierra Huichola* did not take place in a post-development vacuum. Various external and internal factors were crucial at all stages of planning from the realisation of 'necessity' by the *Kawitero* to the parallel struggle of other indigenous communities⁷. Through the schools a strong territorial awareness of the elders has been founded in the youth and together they are building a defence strategy that is providing the groundwork to manage change within their history, their identity, and national and international laws. These aspirations coincide with the national demands of other indigenous groups in reforming Mexican legislation and institutional practices to allow indigenous people to autonomously exercise their own government and make decisions within determined jurisdictions and to control natural resources.

The indigenous movement for cultural, economic and political rights in Mexico is the consummate popular movement. The *Huichol* are a group of people that constitute themselves in conjugation with other indigenous peoples. In this process of 'political

⁷ Refer to the constitutive elements of the process of generation of collective subjects by Arcos García (1998).

construction'⁸, they are seeking institutional recognition not in a revolutionary sense, but with gradualist strategies such as educating their youth from the perspective of a rich traditional history. They are defined not only by the interests they represent, but also by the demands they make through strategic choice. Knowing and understanding these demands helps to objectively locate the position of the struggle in relation to the dominant social powers. The discourse of the movement has evolved to encompass not only the demands of indigenous Mexicans, but also the sharp criticism of neo-liberalism and anti-globalisation movement. The 'scaling-up' of the movement requires education and conscientisation in order to lobby and access local, state and national political structures, as well as link with the international indigenous to ensure international treaties and conventions are followed.

It is evident that the corporate board room of multi-national companies is reaching into the psyche of *Huichol* youth. Advertising images and addictive products attack the fundamental make-up of the individual by diminishing self-esteem and challenging the customary communal bonds based on the growth and harvest of corn. The Mexican government does not have the power to restrict these cultural impositions due to their monetary debts and economic treaties with the United States, nor would the Mexican government limit capitalist growth if it had the power to do so. The *Huichol* have recognised these distant threats to their culture in conjunction with other groups of people opposed to corporate globalisation. The indigenous movement in Mexico exists due to the education and expansion of the numbers of native members as well as its connection with civil society. The networks are complex as the *Huichol* elders and local leaders interact

⁸ Refer to Fox's (1996) model of 'political construction' of social capital.

with other indigenous groups close to home, nationally and internationally on cultural, economic and political issues. These same leaders, on top of the work they do in their own community, also deal with advocates in universities and NGOs creating a space in which the *Huichol* can exercise autonomous decision-making and legally battle to maintain and regain sacred territories. These dynamics help explain why the schools in *Tateikita* have arisen as a complement to the goals and discourse of the broader indigenous movement in Mexico.

The *Huichol* are not simply receivers of external stimuli. They also provide a location where political construction takes place and is shared with other groups. The new schools are examples of how the *Huichol* are responding to external pressures of the dominant society and the discourse of the indigenous movement. The horizontal sharing of ideas and methods of resistance are key processes to scale-up a movement. The education initiatives are not only preparing *Huichol* youth for the challenges of their own community, but are also a model for other indigenous communities in Jalisco and the rest of Mexico. Native groups such as the *Nahua*, who have largely lost their language and customs, gravitate to the *Huichol* as a reference point in their own struggle to claim territories, re-establish councils of elders and maintain a spiritual connection in native cosmology to their land. Describing how these links form and solidify is constructive to the inclusion of new indigenous groups and social advocates to help guide the future of the movement.

4.4 Conclusion

Tateikita, in the remote northern section of the *Huichol* territories, has become a locus of social change that blends the move to modern forms of social organisation with

indigenous struggle for cultural, economic and political rights. The infusion of capitalist enterprises has created striations within the community since the entire population is not subsisting on the same modes of production. The schools have been created to manage these changes in order to maintain community values in the face of encroaching individualism. However, the self-sustaining initiatives of the people involved with the school are not isolated. The objectives of the schools are intimately linked with the broader movement for indigenous rights that have evolved over the years and with civil society advocates opposed to the invasiveness of neo-liberal social policy.

A structural epistemology was useful in explaining ‘why’ the schools in *Tateikita* exist within the realm of a popular movement. In fact, objectifying the social reality of any given person or community is a crucial step in taking direct action. I identified the osmotic nature of capitalist processes and how they have entered the community, chipping away at the individual psyche. I also noted that the schools have directly created a small capitalist culture amongst the teachers who get paid and have opened small stores, moved away from subsistence agriculture and constructed larger houses. *Tateikita* is a village within an extended long-standing community. A paradox exists since *Tateikita* is also central to the *Huichol*’s contribution to the indigenous movement’s struggle for increased cultural, economic and political rights. The schools have formalized learning for the first time for *Huichol* youth ensuring that future generations will have a different epistemological perspective than their ancestors, which is considered necessary by the elders to maintain traditional values of community and family in the face of pressures exerted by external society. Consequently, the elders have solicited the help of civil society advocates who were in place due to their own doubts about the destructiveness of capitalist culture.

Theoretically, there is no universal method of scaling-up a social movement.

Diverse circumstances require varied methods of framing resistance. For the *Huichol*, their isolation from the rest of the world provided a significant measure of social capital based on their traditional social organisation and sense of community. This social capital is a recognised asset which is being built upon to preserve communal and familial values in the face of change. Yet, internal conflicts and varying visions are one of the results of taking the initiative to manage social change. Therefore, it is difficult to posit what the strategies of the community will bring in the future. But with the weight of knowing that other indigenous groups are reliant on the *Huichol* as a point of reference in the indigenous movement, there exists the responsibility of maintaining a course to strengthen bonds in opposition to the structures that have long dominated indigenous cultures and their alternative world-views.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

This thesis has been an examination of the social dynamics contributing to the development of formal youth education programs in the *Huichol* village of *Tateikita* in central Mexico. This chapter is the concluding section, surmising the three main components of the research _ the theoretical framework of education and social movements, the structural context of indigenous communities in Mexico and the experience of formal youth education in *Tateikita*. I will also reiterate the main conclusions that were outlined throughout the thesis that tie these three categories together and reinforce the thesis statement.

First, it has been demonstrated that the indigenous peoples of Mexico have been, and are continuing to be marginalised by the dominant European-based culture. Policies of cultural assimilation, economic exploitation and political domination have explicitly negated the social structures of the original civilisation and implicitly restricted and inhibited the formation of social buffers to filter out the negative influences on localised cultural, economic and political identities. In fact, there is little left of the original traditional culture which has been replaced by a sense of inferiority largely due to the lack of distinction between their culture, which has been evolving, and their class, which has remained at the lower levels of a highly striated society. Furthermore, contemporary capitalist globalisation has exacerbated the problem by placing the levers of social influence and control further away from the local level.

Second, many indigenous communities in Mexico are responding in new ways to their marginal status. As a social movement, a significant portion of the mobilisation energies of the indigenous are directed toward the state, which identifies and answers questions of 'why' the movement took shape. The recent demands of the indigenous have been aimed at gaining the power to autonomously decide over their present and future within legally defined territories. What makes the struggle new is that the objective is to not take control of the state and, due to increased transparency, civil society has become a contested social space in which both the state and indigenous movement appeal for support. With the help of an increasing number of civil society advocates, indigenous struggles modified the political map of Mexico in the 1990s. Yet their fight does not have one organisational centre; the *Huichol* being a crucial node of resistance in the geographic centre of the country. Indigenous organisation has been transformed from isolated agrarian/economic ethno-political points of resistance, where some groups are independently defensive and some are militant, to a common concerted lobby of state institutions. Together they demonstrate a common voice for autonomy, participatory citizenship and social equality while recognising the distinctness in their cultural and economic assets. 'How' each centre of resistance forms and shapes itself is dependant on the pre-existing social capital derived from their rich history and particular cultural habits which includes traditional forms of social organisation and their relationship with nature. The *Huichol* in particular have developed new models of local development based in the culture of the community that can be used to galvanise traditional ideals in a changing social environment. These projects are intended to create new political subjects that will

operate under a new identity based in the ownership of a culture and will take a principle role in the complex and convoluted process toward creating new public spaces.

Third, while recognising that the schools formed in the context of this broader indigenous movement, they are also crucial in their contribution to the growth and promotion of the ideals of the movement. I identified the schools as being 'formal' in the sense that the pedagogy is structured and recognised by the state. However, the curriculum was locally constructed placing the power of the education into the hands of the community, which is indicative of many nonformal popular education programs that operate outside of the state-led system. The schools are truly transformative since the learning methods are new in comparison with the informal learning that the elders knew and have been put in place to deal with social change. The schools are having an impact for change on the community in general as students become aware of their position in broader society and as they learn new skills such as carpentry and diversified agriculture. Furthermore, the students have more experience working with foreigners and civil society advocates and more students are striving to enter into universities where they will increase their capacity to work on behalf of the community within the national institutions and legal structures.

Fourth, the development of community based schools in *Tateikita* represents the increasing complexity of their native identity by contributing new dimensions into the social map of the community. Indigenous communities in general should not be considered homogenous, but the growing number of youth graduates is making their social web increasingly complicated. The schools are focal points of social interaction within the budding 'village' of *Tateikita*. Teachers and their families no longer have to live in a

traditional subsistence fashion. Some traditionalists in the community regard this type of lifestyle as rather *un-Huichol*, ultimately creating a group of residents out of the teachers who adhere to a more symbolic ethnic identity with traditional *Huichol* culture.

Furthermore, the *Huichol* that live in cities tend to develop a stronger identification with the broader indigenous struggle, if they are not completely absorbed into *Mestizo* culture, than with the day to day life in the *Sierra Huichola*. The spectrum of psychological links to the traditional culture is being stretched. Ultimately, as the elders who grew up in the traditional paradigm pass-away, they will be replaced by young adults who learned about their world from a different perspective. This epistemological shift in the modes of thinking is distancing the culture from its traditional cosmology, challenging the community to find new bonds of social capital to replace those that kept the community cohesive through many tumultuous years of colonisation.

Fifth, while it has been recognised that community-based formal education is a crucial means of developing the indigenous movement, the particularistic nature of the programs does not indicate a universal solution. The schools have instigated some changes that could have negative long-run implications. Support for all the schools within the community is not unanimous as local power struggles exist, breaking down the pre-existing social capital. Class striations are emerging since the teachers have the means to earn an income from external sources which could lead to further conflict within the community. Some of the students that leave the community to study at university will not only lose touch with the traditional culture, but some students will also inevitably choose to follow a more individualistic mainstream path and not advocate on behalf the community. Simple technological advances such as having regular electricity service will advance the infusion

of subliminal messages of inferiority, making the school a point where occidental culture can wither communal bonds by entering the psyche of the youth at a crucial point of the adolescents' mental development. Ultimately, the goal of the indigenous movement is to give more local control of power so that problems that do arise can be addressed within the community and new forms of social capital can be generated as older bonds become symbolic.

Finally, I conclude that community-based youth education initiatives are a necessary component of the broader efforts of indigenous people in Mexico to achieve more autonomy and manage social change. This indicates a broadening of the perception of formal education as simply being a state-led endeavour, such that culturally distinct localities must impart significant influence over the nature of the education. Community-led education is a form of locally-managed adaptation to external societal influences that is crucial not only at the community level, but also in creating links and networks with other communities existing under the same objectively recognisable circumstances.

To bring this dissertation to a close I will comment on one final development impact of the schools in *Tateikita*. It must be recognised that the marginalisation and oppression of one group of people over another is human made. As Freire (1984, 26) notes, those who have had their humanity stolen have been 'dehumanised', but those who have stolen it, too dehumanise themselves. 'Development' over the past 400 years, and more explicitly in the past forty years, has been one directional wrought with false generosity and humanitarianism which has only proved to soften the power of the aggressor while maintaining the instruments of dehumanisation (of both the oppressed and the oppressor). True generosity comes from the fight to destroy the mechanisms of

marginalisation, which frequently nourish false charity. According to Freire (1984, 27), this lesson must come from the oppressed, and less frequently articulated, from those in solidarity with the oppressed. The first stage to surmount the situation comes from the ability of marginalised people to critically recognise the causes of their social position so that, through 'transforming' action, a new situation can be created. This educational philosophy is well known and has had applications in many popular environments around the world including the nascent youth education programs in *Tateikita*.

Yet, much of Freire's philosophy gets left at the local level. Local awareness within the global forest and a perception of a possible transformation is a necessary, but insufficient condition for liberation. The reductionist tendency of western culture to categorise reality not only separates human beings from the natural environment, but also makes people from other cultures 'things'. The essence of the western model of modernisation is based on their being 'One' right, and everything else becomes objects to be manipulated, controlled and dominated, which in contemporary times makes 'things' the objects of purchasing power. A crucial phase of Freire's pedagogy is to create actors who work in solidarity with those who have been stripped of their natural resources and cheated from the sale of their labour. The struggle for their liberation begins when the marginalised can educate themselves sufficiently to communicate their reality to advocates in the dominant society; the second phase requires those in solidarity to use this knowledge and transform the objective reality of the dominant culture and create a new situation from within _ a reality that transcends the 'One' into interrelated 'Oneness'.

As I mentioned in the introduction, this thesis has a statement beyond objectively describing and explaining a social reality. It has also been a labour of solidarity with the

Huichol. Due to several circumstances outlined in this thesis, the *Huichol* have boldly challenged the dominant development paradigm. It is now up to others to observe and listen carefully. The rally cry of the *Zapatistas* now rings clearly _ *nunca mas sin nosotros!*

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