

**The Culture of the Nation:  
The Ethnic Past and Official Nationalism  
in 20th Century Mexico**

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To  
Victor  
*in memoriam*  
and  
Albertina



## Abstract

Contemporary nations are founded on the conflicting and, at the same time, complementary interplay between modernity and ethnicity. In the debate of nationalism, however, sociological theory has revealed a polarisation of view points. Some theorists argue that the nation is a completely new phenomenon disassociated from the past and responding to modern conditions, while others stress that nations are expressions of cultural continuity based on the existence of a traceable ethnic past from which a sense of ethnocentrism is derived. The aim of this research is to highlight the complementarity of these viewpoints by discussing and comparing the theoretical models of two of the most representative exponents since the 1980's: E. Gellner's "modernism" and A.D. Smith "historical-culturalism". Mexican nationalism of the 20th century is the empirical backdrop against which the interplay of these theories are assessed. This research demonstrates that Mexican nationalism, despite usurping and using the ethnic indigenous past to form a unique culture of the nation, excludes the diversity of indigenous peoples by propagating a centralising discourse based on the Aztec and mestizo heritages, the civic traditions of the Liberal state, and encourages the emulation and adoption of the Hispanic side of mestizo culture. This dissertation comprises three levels of analysis: the modern and official use of a selective ethnic past conceived as a formula for integrating a multiethnic society; the inculcation of cultural ideas of common and continuous historicity through standard education and its respective text-books; and finally, the articulated responses of a stratum of educated indigenous peoples. The opinions and perceptions of native peoples are based on first-hand data obtained through interviews and a survey questionnaire. Thus, the study explores the indigenous reaction towards and perception of some of the symbols of Mexico's nationalism: the Aztec myth of foundation, the putative shared ancestry of "mixed race", and the civic cult to president Benito Juárez.

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Responsibility for views expressed here, as well as for errors and omissions, is mine alone.

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AEI</b>	<b>Asociación de Escritores Indígenas</b>
<b>AIPIN</b>	<b>Agencia Internacional de Prensa Indígena</b>
<b>AMPII</b>	<b>Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales Indígenas e Intelectuales</b>
<b>ANPIBAC</b>	<b>Alianza Nacional de Profesionales Indígenas Bilingües, A.C.</b>
<b>CIESAS</b>	<b>Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social</b>
<b>CIIAS</b>	<b>Centro de Investigación e Integración Social (Oaxaca)</b>
<b>COCEI</b>	<b>Coordinadora Obrero-Campesina-Estudiantil del Istmo de Tehuantepec</b>
<b>CONACyT</b>	<b>Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología</b>
<b>CONALTE</b>	<b>Consejo Nacional Técnico de la Educación</b>
<b>CONCA</b>	<b>Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes</b>
<b>CNPAB</b>	<b>Consejo Nahuatl de los Pueblos del Alto Balsas</b>
<b>CNPI</b>	<b>Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas</b>
<b>DGCP</b>	<b>Dirección General de Culturas Populares</b>
<b>DGEI</b>	<b>Dirección General de Educación Indígena</b>
<b>FIPI</b>	<b>Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indígenas</b>
<b>ICHC</b>	<b>Instituto Chiapaneco de Cultura</b>
<b>INI</b>	<b>Instituto Nacional Indigenista</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Instituto Indigenista Interamericano</b>
<b>LEI</b>	<b>"Licenciatura en Educación Indígena"</b>
<b>MLI</b>	<b>"Maestría en Lingüística Indoamericana"</b>
<b>OPINAC</b>	<b>Organización de Profesionales Indígenas Nahuas, A.C.</b>
<b>SEP</b>	<b>Secretaría de Educación Pública</b>
<b>SNTE</b>	<b>Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación</b>
<b>UPN</b>	<b>Universidad Pedagógica Nacional</b>

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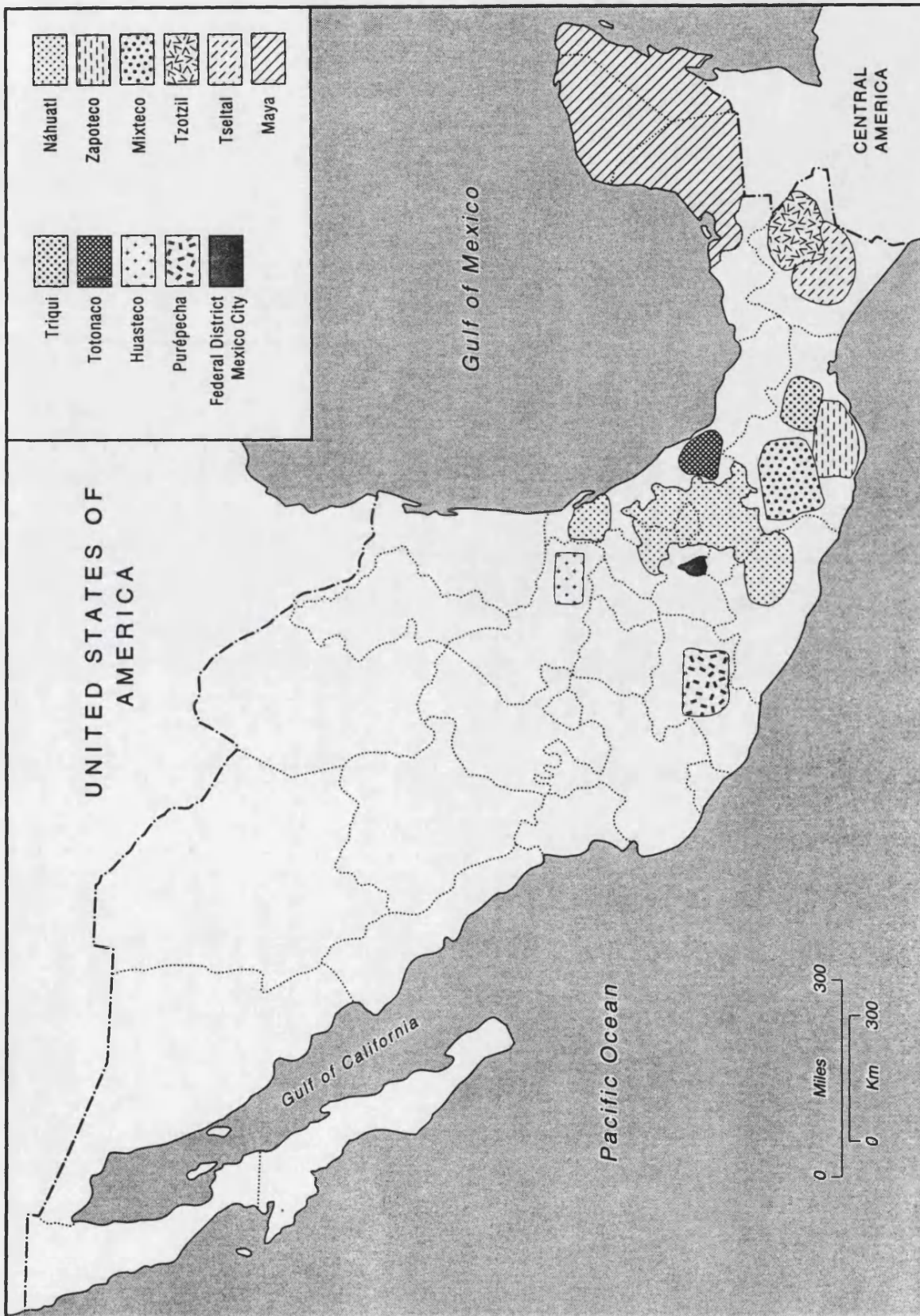
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Map 1: Ethnic Groups of Mexico







**Map 2: Ethnic Provenance of Indigenous Students and Professionals**

## Introduction

The chief organisational purpose of a nation-state is to mould citizens and create nation-wide identification. My purpose in this research is to assess perceptions of the ethnic and civic pasts in the official formulation of Mexican nationalism. Mexico has a multilayered cultural legacy manifested in its complex ethnicity from which is derived the nation as a concept of macro-ethnic community with discernable links with the past, civic traditions resulting from the creation of the Liberal state, and religious symbology of national unification (e.g. the Virgin of Guadalupe).

Without discounting the significance of religious symbols, this research only analyses the myths and heroes promoted by the state and the critical responses of some members of minority groups of Amerindian people.

Any reference made to the "past" is to confront one, if not the most, fundamental aspect of Mexican nationalism from the institutional perspective: the role of the Indian population in the history of the nation. Indian-ness provides the nation of Mexico with its cultural uniqueness and historical continuity, and it is difficult to conceive its modern sovereignty without these notions. Civic heroes also make their impact on the nation's identification through their role in vindicating facts and episodes inextricably linked to internal processes. Paradoxically, the persistence of Indian-ness, a cultural matrix of the non-European origins of modern Mexico, is the basic contradiction of the Mexican national culture which establishes the well known division between the "dead Indian people" and the "living Indian people" (Benítez 1967:47).

From the "dead Indian people" comes the source of authenticity and originality embedded in an exceptional historical past as is revealed by an abundance of archaeological remains, mythology and civic symbols; while the "living indigenous people" bear witness to an ethnic and

linguistic fragmentation, a lack of a sense of national unity and social marginalisation, which contradicts a nationalist agenda of modernity. And modernity here is understood in its widest sense of westernisation and industrialisation referring to the introduction of technological innovations, and the acceleration of socio-political change involving the mass of the people.

Official nationalism in Mexico is the state's long term project intent on constructing a culturally and linguistically uniform nation by means of integrationist policies and institutions. But this agenda has an intrinsic ambivalence: on the one hand, the state's integrationist policies, namely through indigenismo and the state educational system, have made various attempts since the 1920's to integrate and assimilate the "living" indigenous groups into the mainstream of the nation. On the other, the creation of the nation's culture demands the utilisation and selective usurping of various elements of both indigenous cultural life and the ethnic past.

The continual manifest dilemma posited by the ambivalent official position regarding the Indian peoples, such as the "usurpation of their cultural heritage" and "assimilation" into a national pattern has, nevertheless, created an extensive body of literature (García and Medina 1986). Mexican academics, historians and policy-makers have attempted to disentangle, reflect and speculate on this important area of national life from differing theoretical and ideological perspectives, for example: Gamio (1916), Villoro (1950), Aguirre Beltrán (1957), Bonfil Batalla (1987) and Stavenhagen (1988). Similarly, this double process of "usurping" and "assimilation" is a contemporary commonplace in the nation forming process taking place in Latin America and many other parts of the world (Morris 1989), but to my knowledge little or no attention has been paid to collecting and analysing the views and perceptions of Amerindian peoples vis-à-vis modern nationhood.

## The Historical Background

The prevalence of the ethnic past and the progression of socio-political events reflecting the environment of modernity such as the process of state formation of the 19th century and 20th century educational policies converge, in the making of Mexico. Several historical elements characterise Mexico as an "old nation" in a "modern state".

Middle America, Mesoamerica - the cultural area of Mexico and Central America was a centre of indigenous civilizations and antiquity for over 2,500 years (800-400 BC): the Olmecs and Totonacs on the Gulf Coast, the Zapotecs and Mixtecs in Oaxaca, the Maya in Yucatán and Chiapas, and the Aztecs, or Mexica,<sup>1</sup> in the Valley of Mexico-Tenochtitlán. Archaeological finds and mythology form part of the early cultural history of Mexico.

The arrival of Europeans in the early 16th century is the key event in an understanding of the transformation of the autonomous cultural life of Mesoamerica, through the introduction of Hispanic culture in the three centuries of colonisation in New Spain (1521-1810). In 1821, Mexico became a sovereign state. The political and cultural movement for independence from Spain was initiated and achieved at the beginning of the last century (1810-1821), resulting in a growing national conflict between conservative and liberal forces (1855-1861) and further interaction with the territorial expansion of the USA (1836, 1846-1848), French

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1. There are great academic discrepancies between the use etymology and meaning of the names Azteca, Mexica and Mexicano. A useful differentiation is provided by Kobayashi and could also serve as preliminary clarification: Azteca is a name derived from the place-name Aztlán. It was the name which the Mexica people called themselves. The name was abandoned before the arrival of the Aztec people on the central plateau, hence its association with mythical and legendary events. Mexica is the name of the group who settled in the central plateau and founded México-Tenochtitlán. Mexicano is a Spanish word derived from the toponym México, this word did not exist before 1521 (Kobayashi 1985:22). Finally, Náhuatl is the contemporary indigenous group which speaks one of the fifteen language families - phyla - of Mesoamerica, the Uto-Aztecan

intervention (1861) and the imposition of the Hapsburg emperor, Maximilian (1864). Internal political conflict, reaction to foreign aggression and emergent republicanism have given way to the further construction, by nationalist politicians from the last past century up to the present day, of a powerful civic symbology which celebrates the origins and establishment of the modern liberal state.

After less than a century of independent life, Mexico was the scene of a major social and agrarian revolution (1910-1917). The Mexican revolution gradually introduced a new social and political order based on constitutional guarantees and land reform. The post-revolutionary state, emanating from this socio-political upheaval, has been instrumental in formulating and implementing the modern policy of nation-building from the 1920's onwards, and especially in the formulation and diffusion of a broad national identity based on the cultural characteristics of a mixed race people, the mestizo, and the assimilation of the native indigenous peoples.

One of the major policies emerging from the post-revolutionary nation-building process, which receives attention in this research, is the expansion and development of a public education system and the introduction, in 1960, of the first collection of compulsory and uniform primary textbooks, aimed at providing and inculcating both an official historical viewpoint and a national identity amongst the dominant majority, the mestizos, and the indigenous peoples.

### Two Theoretical Perspectives

Attempts to identify the causes and components which explain the emergence and development of nations and nationalism in the contemporary world have recently given rise to a polarised academic debate between, what I shall term the "historical-culturalists" and the "modernists". The crucial point of this debate revolves around the following: do present-day nations have historical and ethnic origins, or are these phenomena

only created by modern objective conditions rendering the historical background an irrelevance?

The "modernist" perspective carries considerable weight as it identifies the role of the state, its corollary nationalist integrative policies and the spread of industrialisation as the major objective conditions in the formation of nations (e.g. Deutsch 1953, Gellner 1983, Anderson 1983, and Hobsbawm 1990). Within the "modernist" viewpoint, E. Gellner's argument is noteworthy, in as much as he has devoted attention to a very specific role of the state: organising and monopolising mass education as a condition for nation formation and nationalism.

However, the "modernist" approach has been subjected to a series of counter-arguments derived from historical research, carried out by those who have concluded that a legitimate source of the modern nation can be traced to its earliest history, as well as to the continuity of ancient cultural and ethnic expressions through revivals, revisions, mythologies and art (e.g. Connor 1972, Armstrong 1982, Smith 1986, Hutchinson 1987 and Kapferer 1988). If Gellner predominates among the "modernists", A.D. Smith has a similar role among the "historical-culturalists". For Smith, modern conditions such as revolutions, the state, industrialisation, integrationist policies and mass education are important reasons, but insufficient to explain the ideological power and changing socio-political dynamics inspired by nations and nationalism. Smith's model emphasises intrinsic cultural elements of the modern nation which in itself is replete with cultural meaning: the durability of "subjective factors" inherited from the past and the continuous manifestation of ethnicity.

One of my aims in this research is to demonstrate that the ongoing debate between "modernity" and "historicity" in the making of nations, can also be expressed in terms of mutual complementarity. The above theories need not be exclusive, instead, they are complementary explanations and contribute to an appreciation of the inter-relationship

between ancestral and modern complexity in present-day nations, including Mexico. In my view, Gellner's "modernism" and Smith's "historical-culturalism" are the theoretical models which reflect the parameters of a complementary approach. Firstly, Gellner's and Smith's approaches concentrate on two universal characteristics necessary to understand the phenomenon of nationalism: mass education and the persistence and utilisation of the historical past. Secondly, both authors, albeit using opposing arguments within the sociological tradition, have maintained a coherent and consistently high level of academic debate in an abundance of specialised literature.

### The Sociological Problem

In the modern sovereign territorial state of Mexico, the ethnic past, its contemporary derivative ethnicity, and the standardised education system are interwoven.

From Gellner's perspective, nationalism is induced by the modern state and detached from the past and its folklore. In the industrial era characterised by anonymity, an increasingly complex division of labour and standardised literacy, the state has the role of monopolising public education in order to create upward social mobility and literate citizens. Underlying this perspective lies the argument that nationalism is conceived as a process of "social engineering" whose main function is to create a correspondence between politics, culture and territory as a single entity. The modernist assumption that the "state creates the nation" suggests an artificiality or deliberate fabrication, however, the complexities of ethnicity and historical events bear witness to the fact that the nation-building process is not a simple mechanistic endeavour.

Smith's model differs from the above in one important respect: nationalism, the "ideal of political and cultural independence", is expressed in the modern age through the continuous sense of ethnicity manifested in the utilisation of



the "myth-symbol complex". The standardised educational system might create citizens, but for Smith the durability of "subjective factors" linked to the cultural past such as "ethnic origin", myths, symbols, legends and genealogies are equally pervasive, given that, from this perspective, nationalism is a form of culture. Here, it is important to emphasise that the survival of the mythology is variable; in some cases, according to Smith, intellectuals and nationalists codify, reshape and transmit the ethnic (and civic) pasts through revivals, ceremonials, homages to heroes and revisionist cultural movements and works of art.

Since the empirical case, contemporary Mexico, refutes the view that one theoretical perspective is salient, one of the aims in this research will be to demonstrate how these two positions converge in the construction of nationalism initiated by the state. The nationalist utilisation of the ethnic past and civic traditions are not simply "fabricated" or "invented"; the ethnic myths and civic heroes of national integration even if propagated by the national educational system, are rooted in Mexican history.

The official Mexican policy of ethnic integration relies on two myths according to the "myth-symbol complex" as discussed by Smith: the myth of foundation and the myth of descent. The Aztec culture is the main source of ancient historicity favoured by Mexican nationalism, and this is not an accidental rationale. In effect, the Aztec or Mexica empire, a "Triple Alliance" formed by three Indian societies - Mexica, Texcocans and Tacubans - politically and militarily controlled the central high plateau of present-day Mexico with its geographical and strategic locus being the Valley of Mexico (14th to 15th century). The territory was a cultural and linguistic mosaic, at the time of the Spanish conquest in 1521, populated by more than 20 million people (Cook and Borah 1936:46), and more than a 100 languages were spoken (León-Portilla 1957:468). These cultures have been divided into groups of "superior culture" who developed architecture, chronology, astronomy, religion, education and philosophical

systems; and the remainder who lead a semi-nomadic existence. The former corresponds to varying branches of the Náhuatl culture, from its Teotihuacán and Toltec origins up to the hegemony of the Aztec or Mexica peoples. Arguably, the conquest and colonisation had a greater impact on this highly-organised and self-contained culture from which derive both the myths of foundation and descent, as well as the claims for a "heroic" and "glorious" past, as currently exhibited by contemporary nationalist discourse.

These are selective motifs which endorse the historicity of the national mestizo majority of the population; therefore, such narratives and symbols exclude the diversity of other Indian groups, for example, the Maya in Yucatán, the cultures along the Gulf coast such as the Totonac, the Purepecha in the west, and the Mixtec and Zapotec in the South, whose own concepts of origin and descent are not reflected in the nationalist agenda.

In Mexican nationalist symbolism these myths are firstly the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlán (1325) (the capital of the Aztecs, present-day Mexico City) from which the national emblem symbolising Mexico's sovereignty emerges; and secondly, the putative joint racial and cultural descent derived from both the Spaniards and the Indians after the conquest of Mexico (1521) (mestizaje). Finally, there is a civic myth of national integration embodied in the heroicism of the president, of Zapotec origin, Benito Juárez (1806-1872), which symbolises an interrelation of events, namely the defence of the homeland and the beginnings of republicanism, and the construction of an indigenist biography praising the ethnic origin of the mid-19th century president. These myths, which must be carefully examined given their implicit fictitious or imaginary qualities, are not recent intellectual fabrications, nor are they for the exclusive consumption of elites, rather they are made ubiquitous through the state education system most notably through uniform primary text-books distributed throughout the nation.

Uniform text-books show the state's efforts to implement

an educational policy aimed at providing a standardised mass education. Text-books are also carefully edited narratives containing a highly-selective official view of national identity and history.

### Indians and Mestizos

These levels of analysis, of the ethnic past, civic heroes and public education, converge to form the contemporary nation. A third level, which forms the core of this dissertation, argues that the policy of national integration is imbued with conspicuous Aztec and mestizo mythological symbols which assumes firstly, that historical continuity is common to an ethnically heterogenous population and, secondly, that the nation shares a unity of descent from both the Spaniards and Indians. Benito Juárez, the progenitor of the Liberal state, occupies a place of unrivalled importance in the civic cults of Mexico as the modern symbol of national unity. Competing with the mythical overtones granted to this official hero, one can also find the arguable effects of Juárez's policies working against the perpetuation of local ethnicities and communities. In this respect, what are the perceptions and views of the indigenous population vis-a-vis these selective integrative cultural elements? Do Indian people automatically accept a putative mixed descent, an Indian hero of national unity? The second aim of this research is therefore to contribute to the study of perceptions of native ethnic groups and individuals, and their organised response to national identity.

From the two levels of analysis outlined above, emerges one of the main arguments of this research: despite the education system's standardised imposition of a unifying nationalism and the constant invocation of the ethnic and civic pasts, there persists amongst indigenous ethnic peoples a sense of having their "own" ethnic identity.

In contemporary Mexico, apart from the dominant national mestizo majority numbering 68,831,078 people according to the

1990 Census, there are 56 ethnic Indian groups numbering 10 million people inhabiting 27 of the 32 states of the federal republic (Nolasco 1988:123). Today's indigenous cultures are a result of various cultural contacts and civilizations. These include the alleged cultural source of the pre-Columbian past, the imposition of Spanish Catholicism, and the contentious acceptance of the politics of nationalism which I seek to demonstrate throughout this research.

Indians (and the word itself represents a semantic category of colonial origin), preserve in varying degrees, concepts and systems of beliefs which create and constitute their own subjective imagination, based on rituals and beliefs in the life-cycle of the individual. Equally important is the preservation, amongst some individuals belonging to ethnic groups, of an oral history containing ethnic memories with respect to indigenous "myths of origin", "descent" and "foundation". These Indian groups like any other ethnic group possess, according to the "historical-culturalist" position, a common ethnic name, that is to say, they have names of their own and are designated by others by these names in order to avoid the pejorative connotation of "Indio" (Indian). The possession of a conception of territory is more difficult to define due both to the historical fragmentation of Amerindia and the present distribution of ethnic people in villages, originated in the colony. However, language and the practice of Catholic symbolism with its respective cults and rituals are components found in the contemporary identity of Indian groups.

The indigenous world of Mexico is not simply a homogeneous bloc of disadvantaged ethnic people. This world is formed not only by a diversity of cultures and different natural environments and topographies, but also by social differentiation within the indigenous communities; primary activities such as agriculture are practised by the overwhelming majority, but modern professions are not unknown, albeit less so than in non-indigenous society.

Unlike the diversity of indigenous peoples, the mestizo

people present themselves as a united population having a shared life-style and a common language of communication, in spite of regionalism and geographical barriers. This dominant group inhabits all the states of the republic and has also accumulated significant cultural capital and religious influence, namely, the appropriation of certain artifacts of pre-Hispanic origin, and the adoption of Christianity.

The mestizo culture is the cultural and linguistic model of national integration to be embraced by all indigenous peoples. The official encouragement to overcome Indian-ness and adopt mestizaje is a source of permanent tension and mutual distrust which characterises inter-ethnic relations between the dominant majority and the Indian groups, the latter exposed to every possible disadvantage derived from their marginalised situation. Indigenous sentiments of cultural rejection are even more pronounced because of the fact that mestizo culture benefits from the usurping of selected elements of the indigenous past.

### Indigenous Elites and their Perceptions

The "modernist" model suggests a linear and evolutionary replacement of an agrarian structure with an urban industrial matrix under the auspices of a standardised educational system. But this process instead of promoting the assimilation of minority cultures and the erosion of family, local and regional bonds, has provided a space for the formation of a stratum of Indian intellectuals and an intelligentsia who are taking advantage of modern conditions such as literacy, the media, mobility and the division of labour in order to revitalise their ethnic identities and languages. The emergence of organised programmes and campaigns of indigenous professionals aimed at recovering their usurped "ethnic heritage", as well as utilising various media and modern literacy to disseminate their views and projects, offer visible signs of the prevalence of ethnic awareness despite the irreversible progress of modernity.

According to the "historical-culturalist" position, intellectuals and professionals are the producers and transmitters of seminal cultural knowledge. The collection and analysis of views and perceptions of indigenous peoples in my research include the opinions of a minority of Indian people who have received a higher education and maintain clear and definite attachments to the Indian milieu; and these are formed by two groups, intellectuals and professionals, and students of higher education. Hence, the views of "ordinary" Indian people as opposed to those of the educated Indians would be a matter for further research and comparison.

The views and perceptions of indigenous professionals and intellectuals studied in this research were collected from states of the central and southern regions: Tlaxcala, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Campeche and Yucatán. Similarly, the two groups of indigenous students also analysed declared as their place of origin the central and southern areas: Puebla, Veracruz, Guerrero, Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí, Oaxaca and Chiapas while none of the students of the sample declared that they came from any northern areas. This means that the perceptions of ethnic peoples from the northern parts of the territory are not included. Further research would have to explore the extent and dynamism of indigenous educated peoples from these states.

The official nationalist ideology conveys an important centralising discourse derived from the notion that Mexico has its ethnic origins in its Aztec and mestizo heritages. As I said above, this assumption is critically challenged by educated indigenous peoples from the central and southern Mexico. Furthermore, the study of the impact of this nationalist discourse in the five Mexican federal states which do not have indigenous population (i.e. Aguascalientes, Southern Baja California, Colima, Nuevo León and Zacatecas) would have to be explored in separate studies. Lomnitz (1992), however, has demonstrated the vitality of regional mestizo cultures vis-à-vis the national culture in areas of central Mexico (Morelos). In relation to the prevalence of cultural

regionalisms and the lack of empirical studies on this area L. González (1992), has underlined the importance of undertaking research on the cultural subjectivity of regions or "little homelands" (patrias chicas) in opposition to a wider patriotism. Recent examples of this concern are H. Campbell et.al. (1993) who have compiled a study in which they explore various facets of the Zapotec revival through the electoral process in the municipalities of Juchitán (Oaxaca) including the indigenous intellectual perspective. In the Yucatán peninsula, F. Ligorred (1983;1990;1992) has painstakingly documented the Maya linguistic revivalism, including the production of a literature written in the Maya language. The intellectual endeavours of the Maya and the Zapotec are contemporary illustrations of the indigenous people's efforts to retain their regional or ethnic identification through the preservation of languages.

#### Scope of the Dissertation

The study is basically a sociological and empirical examination of a theoretical discussion on the prevalence of ethnic minority identities vis-à-vis state nationalism and the symbolic utilisation of the ethnic and civic pasts. Such a theoretical discussion implies that the study emphasises strongly the cultural and ethnic constituents of contemporary Mexico, as well as the modernising trends initiated by the state in respect of education. Therefore, the study does not address other areas of enquiry such as an analysis of class and/or economic structures. As a consequence of the theoretical criteria applied, the dissertation does not discuss, despite their significance, the influence and interplay of political parties, the official position on Mexican sovereignty in the area of international relations (excepting the official uses made of Juárez in modern politics), and the critical or favourable viewpoints with respect to official Mexican nationalism by contemporary thinkers, philosophers and writers from the perspective of the

non-indigenous society, for example, Monsiváis (1976); Bartra (1993); Paz (1993) and Blancarte (1994).

Apart from the excellent research on proto-nationalism by Brading (1973;1991) and Lafaye (1985), or the history of the schools' patriotism by Vázquez de Knauth (1979) recent empirical studies on the various expressions of Mexican nationalism are, in fact, difficult to locate. There is available, however, a large accumulation of Mexican speculative solipsism. A 1992 edition of almost eight hundred pages (thirty six papers) (Noriega Elio ed.) is just a case in point serving to illustrate the celebrated commentary about the "Mexicans's obsession with themselves" (González 1992; Krauze 1992). Mexican nationalism (whether as a movement for independence or nation-building policy) is very often confused with other meanings such as the prevalence of patriotic sentiments or love of country. This probably helps to explain the recurrent interest of Mexican intellectuals for the theme of the patria (Knight 1994:135).

The timescale of the research is the Mexican society of the 20th century. The study encompasses references to colonial and modern Mexican history, although the discussion of ethnic myths meant collecting information from pre-conquest years. However, the research relies heavily on contemporary data (1991-1992) collected by sociological methods and techniques.

In brief, the present research seeks to respond to two questions: how has Mexican officialdom used the past as a means of facilitating the integration of an ethnically diverse society?; and, what is the articulated response of educated members of indigenous ethnic groups to an imposed national identity?

### Plan of the Dissertation

In chapter 1, I discuss and compare the main arguments posited by "modernists" and "historical-culturalists", particularly the theories of E. Gellner and A.D. Smith, and their relevance to my research. A full description of the methodology devised



for collecting first-hand data, as well as an account of the socio-ethnic composition of the two groups of informants in this study, are to be found in chapter 2. In order to locate the sources of conflict derived from the imposition of Hispanic culture from which contemporary Mexican nationhood emerged, chapter 3 focuses on the cultural history of the Indian and the mestizo. My aim in chapter 4 is to demonstrate the cultural and historical origins of the major ethnic symbols of national integration: the Aztec myth of foundation and shared mixed ancestry or mestizaje. Hero making with particular reference to the pragmatic role of Benito Juárez, and his relevance for both ethnic and national identities are the subject of chapter 5. Chapter 6 describes the origin and development of the modern standardised educational system; while in chapter 7 my concern is to analyse selected themes from the official history text-books aimed at instilling wholesale and uniform ideas of cultural continuity and national history centered on the Aztec, mestizo and Juárez traditions. Discussion of the various policies of assimilation for the indigenous peoples in the post-revolutionary period, as well as the role assigned to ethnic diversity, is the subject of chapter 8. Finally, in chapter 9, I demonstrate the rejection of official policies of assimilation by examining the emergence of organised movements and campaigns of educated indigenous peoples.

### Methodology and Data Collection

My analysis relies on first-hand data and documentary sources of data. Specifically, in the final parts of chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7, the reader will confront the empirical findings analysing the opinions and perceptions of educated indigenous peoples on national integration. First-hand data was obtained by in-depth structured interviews, and the organisation and application of a survey questionnaire with structured questions. During my fieldwork a series of 10 opinions were collected from a selected group of indigenous intellectuals

and professionals who inhabit the states of the southern and central regions. In addition, I obtained 60 responses from indigenous students of higher education in two institutions which offer specialised training for indigenous people, the Centre of Research and High Studies on Social Anthropology (CIESAS), and the Pedagogical National University (UPN) (Mexico City).

My reason for selecting the views and opinions of indigenous people with an educated background is because the study of indigenous perceptions vis-à-vis the cultural content of nationalism is still in its formative stages. For various technical reasons, including literacy and bilingualism, the indigenous educated elite are readily accessible, are the initiators of their own intellectual agenda and have produced literature from which a further assessment of their views can be extracted; other studies will have to determine the correspondance between "elite" and "popular" indigenous perceptions.

The interviews were addressed to a group of "educated indigenous intellectuals" selected by the following criteria: place of origin, education, publications and publishing projects, participation in autonomous organisations and current activities. A questionnaire was devised for the research and was addressed to indigenous students of higher education concentrated on two courses in two institutions: the Master's course on Indoamerican Linguistics (MLI) and the Bsc. degree (Licenciatura) on Indigenous Education (LEI). The selection of these institutions, CIESAS and UPN respectively, was because these are the only educational centres at the national level which offer special educational programmes for indigenous people. The questionnaire comprised 51 structured questions and this was responded to by the MLI and LEI students. The aim of the questionnaire was to collect qualitative and quantitative data on the following areas: "biographical information"; "knowledge of history and national heroes"; "knowledge and perceptions of national symbols and ethnic myths of integration"; "indigenous self-consciousness"

and "projects to rehabilitate ethnic cultures".

The study also incorporates documentary research of three collections of official history and social science text-books. The texts correspond to the following editions: 1960-1970, 1970-1991 and 1992. Documentary research was also undertaken in the archives of organisations made up of indigenous professionals such as the National Alliance of Indigenous Bilingual Professionals (ANPIBAC) and Revista Etnias, particularly with regard to manifestos about cultural and educational policies written by indigenous elites. Finally, the assorted publications produced by indigenous writers and intellectuals from the 1980's up to the present proved to be a valuable source of information. These publications can be divided into three categories: 1) conference and seminar papers from 1992 and 1993 (First International Meeting of the Indigenous Press in Mexico City, and the Third National Meeting of Writers in Indigenous Languages in Ixmiquilpan); 2) journalistic and literary journals edited by indigenous people (Revista Etnias, Nuestra Sabiduría, Nuestra Palabra and Guchachi' Reza); and 3) sociological and anthropological papers written by indigenous people which are listed in the general bibliography.

One final aspect needs to be explained regarding the collection and analysis of my original data for this research. The study of indigenous perceptions vis-a-vis official nationalism is a theoretically sound but empirically uncertain area of enquiry. I refer particularly to the difficulties of confronting a form of discourse imbued with its own values and notions and only intelligible in the indigenous realm, and its subsequent objective assessment and quantification from an analytical perspective. Indian discourse abounds with references to sentiments and experiences of "oppression", "rejection" and "exclusion", but these are often dominated by an "emotionalism" which denies the potential benefits that might arise from "development", "modernisation" and "national integration". My position with regard to the handling of the ethnic discourse of this research was as follows. Interviews

were conducted and taped in Spanish, translated into English, and then edited to illustrate those areas of the discourse which answered the relevant questions. Through the editing process, I was able to isolate the pertinent data, and my main aim has been to demonstrate the questioning of the official nationalist discourse from the Indian intellectual perspective.

## Chapter 1

### Theories of Nationalism: Modernists and Historical-Culturalists

Current sociological theories on nationalism are identifiable as particular schools of thought: primordialists, instrumentalists, and modernists, and a comparatively recent model which emphasises the study of the cultural and historical background of modern nations, which I will refer to as the "historical-culturalists" (1).

These theories chiefly discuss the varying factors involved in the rise of nations and nationalism in Europe, or the emerging nation-states in Asia and Africa after the Second World War (cfr. Mayall:1991). European internal transformations and the colonial impact of British and French imperialism have inspired the theoretical frameworks of the Anglophone branches of nationalism. This legitimate and comprehensive perspective has, nevertheless, neglected to include the early nationalist movements for independence in the Americas from the late 18th century and the subsequent problematical nature implied in the formation of these nation-states. In a recent article A. Knight raises a similar concern with regard to the types of Mexican nationalism since the post-colonial period (1994:136).

My concern in this chapter is to discuss and assess the applicability of the modernist and historical-culturalist schools of nationalism vis-à-vis the historical and sociological characteristics of the Mexican nation. This chapter begins with a descriptive summary of the sociological problem. Next, I will separately discuss the arguments posed by both models; and then I will focus on the advantages and problems of each theory with regard to the particular historical experience of Mexico.

## The Sociological Problem: Ethnicity and Modernity in the Nation of Mexico

As previously stated in the Introduction, the aim of the research is to explicate the perceptions of the ethnic past in the official formulation of Mexican nationalism in the 20th century. The peoples of the Mexican nation can be defined as a collection of 56 ethnic indigenous collectivities co-existing with a dominant mestizo majority under the sovereignty of a modern bureaucratic state (2). It was not until the present century that state agencies formulated and implemented a consistent set of policies aimed at integrating the multi-ethnic population of Mexico. These policies can be divided into two. On the one hand, cultural policies (i.e. indigenismo) and the establishment of institutions concerned with cultural and ethnic affairs (i.e. National Indigenista Institute, National Institute of Fine Arts); and on the other, the delimitation of a single, compulsory and free public education system and its subsequent dissemination among the population through an educational infrastructure (i.e. schools, text-books, teachers).

The chief purpose of the state school system has been to facilitate the constitution of a "homogeneous" nation, and thus to nullify the ethnic or regional loyalties of the non-dominant indigenous communities. Arguments concerning "development" and "progress" have been the impetus behind this pervasive policy. Mexican nationalist policies which have been disseminated to the whole population through the modern education system, nevertheless, rely on the invocation of ethnic mythologies and imagery (which have been appropriated by the state) both traceable to the pre-Hispanic and the colonial past.

The recourse to the past by nationalists is also selective, that is to say, it favours and reproduces the motifs and cultural symbols of central Mexico, largely Aztec in inspiration. The integration of a multi-ethnic society is motivated by ethnic memories codified into mythical narratives, and by re-calling the virtues of civic heroes as

I shall explain in Chapters 4 and 5. By the same token, the state has also encouraged artists and intellectuals to use and exploit the ethnic past and present indigenous cultures in its search for cultural uniqueness. Thus, state nationalism propagates an integrative formula imbued with ethnic and civic symbolism.

My contention is that despite the inculcation of a unifying nationalism through the education system and the constant invocation of the ethnic past appropriated by the state, indigenous loyalties to local communities, far from the national mainstream, not only persist but are reproduced and seek recognition. This leads to a more concrete proposition: the nationalist goal induced by the education system will never be realised uniformly as it allows for the continuity and survival of ethnic identities through their relative recent access to education and social mobility. One way to look at such a survival in the present situation is to consider the emergence of ethnic intellectuals and intelligentsia, who, although not claiming to put forward a single project of "Indianismo" (an arguable ideology common to all Indian peoples) (cfr. Chapter 9), have campaigned to become involved in the definition of the role of Indian peoples within the nation.

#### The Theories of Gellner and Smith vis-à-vis Mexican Nationalism

Gellner is the leading exponent of the modernist theory of nationalism. His model has been argued in a number of publications from Thought and Change (1964) to his later Cultural Identity and Politics (1987), and entirely reflects developments in the European world, both western and eastern, and to a lesser extent north Africa (3). Although he does not argue any concrete western example, particularly, in Nations and Nationalism (1983) the main paradigm for his analysis is constituted by industrial versus agrarian Europe.

Bearing in mind the context of western Europe, Gellner assumes that industrialisation was a significant force

preceding the widespread development of nationalism. But in a recent discussion Mann (1993) arrives at a different conclusion: his contention is that Gellner's Eurocentric theory does not even correlate with the European history of industrialisation (4). Mann argues that industrialisation in fact came later than the expression of national consciousness which can be found in a wide range of discursive and literary texts, also literacy and a popular awareness of geo-political factors linked to taxation were important factors. This observation is a useful clarification of a basic assumption of Gellner: nationalist sentiments preceded industrialisation, but nationalism as a homogenising force was required to meet the needs of the industrial age (Mann 1993: 144,145,162).

The argument linking nationalism to industrialisation is obviously difficult to apply to the Mexican context, where the spread of industrialisation was uneven and only systematically begun in the first decades of the 20th century, and a century after a nationalist movement for political independence.

However, the aspect of Gellner's theory which is applicable to the Mexican situation is his identification of a uniform educational system as the primary state agent employed as a progenitor of nationalism, unification and homogeneity. A country's possession of a uniform educational system as a promoter of nationalism is self-evident and a widely-documented phenomenon; this is not only the case for Mexico but for most of today's nations (Scott 1916; Reisner 1922; Kohn 1960). But arguably, Gellner's work on nationalism reflects a certain obsession with public education which constitutes the reiterative core of his theory.

Apart from the fact of public education, the Mexican example also fits Gellner's model in that it explains the instrumental use of "high culture" by nationalists in their search for homogeneity. The pursuit of homogeneity involves the manipulation of what Gellner calls the "high folk variant" (1983:77) - in this case the Aztec and Hispanic elements - by nationalists. Mexican nationalism readily understood these overlapping elements could be translated into a national norm



- mestizaje. The availability of "old high cultures" is an important component of state formation and for attaining a political sense of ethnicity; nations involve a mixture of "old tribalism" and "anonymous nationalism based on shared culture" (1983:85). This argument albeit derived from Gellner bring us very close to Smith's model.

Smith's works on nationalism cover a wide range of issues: for example, discussion and construction of theories and typologies of nationalism, the role of intellectuals and the intelligentsia, as well as the uses of ethnicity, art and mythologies for and by nationalist agendas. This array of theoretical instruments is mainly applied to Europe, but also to the Middle East, Africa and in some instances to Asia and more recently to Peru and Mexico (Smith 1971; 1973a; 1983; 1985a; 1986a; 1990; 1992a; 1992d; 1993b).

The theoretical relevance of Smith is the controversial importance, in the view of modernists and instrumentalists, he ascribes to subjective factors, such as emotions, values expressed in symbols, memories, legends and folklore which determine the power of the symbolic past that preceded the modern nation. The passion of intellectual nationalists and policy-makers for ethnicity, folklore, popular sentiments, pride of origin, heroism, sense of antiquity, defense of the homeland, or collective survival can now be addressed from a theoretical base. This systematic concern for demonstrating the impact produced by ethnic genealogies and origins of present nations, is clearly opposed to Gellner's view that nationalism is a purely modern phenomenon detached from "folk" or the past.

### The Modernists

The major pillar of Gellner's theory of nationalism is the state's educational system, and the paramount importance he gives to state education in the making of modern nations was already expressed in his Thought and Change (1964). Arguably, this work is central to an understanding of the modernist

position, which claims that the possession of a "nationality" or the belonging to a "nation" is not "natural" or "universal" (1964:151; 1983:5). Thus it denies any primordial explanations of the existence of nations and nationalism, Gellner continues, as the aspirations of nations do not create nationalism, but quite the opposite: "it is nationalism which creates nations" (1983:174), or "The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation" (1983:6). Moreover, the emergence of nationalism is not universal, it does not arise where there is an absence of the state, but appears only for some states (1983:5 original emphasis). In order to understand this sine qua non perspective of modernist approaches, it is useful to explore the social and economic conditions which have initiated a stage of urban culture produced by state nationalism.

#### Nationalism and the Agrarian/Industrial Dichotomy

Gellner relies on purely dichotomous explanations, the most salient being the polarisation between agrarian/rural and industrial/urban. This dichotomy is based on an evolutionist paradigm orientated towards progress and collective well-being, suggesting a continuing improvement introduced by industrialisation and limitless growth, a scenario which is clearly opposed to agrarian stagnation. For Gellner, the agrarian/rural element cannot generate nationalism, neither is nationalism a phenomenon necessary for rural existence because agrarian societies lack the means of enhancing social cohesion and cohesion explains the emergence of nationalism.

From this, Gellner postulates that nationalism is conceived as a stage of human evolution. His line of argument then is as follows: nationalism comes into existence through state education which facilitates communication beyond local boundaries, and not through "families and villages". The components associated with rural life such as tradition, "the folk", peasantry and underdevelopment are not required by nor do they generate nationalism. In this view, nations are the

products of modern conditions and the ethnic legacy is of secondary relevance, for example:

"The self-image of nationalism involves the stress of the folk, folklore, popular culture, etc. In fact, nationalism becomes important precisely when these things become artificial. Genuine peasants or tribesmen, however proficient at folk-dancing, do not generally make good nationalists" (1964:162).

Nationalism, in Gellner's conception, plainly emerges from a definitive break with the agrarian past. If small and scattered communities cannot produce an all-embracing identity, the state has to unify and mould them into an urban-centred society. In his article "Scale and Nation" (1973), he argues that large national collectivities fit modern conditions through state education together with two other important factors: the division of labour and anonymity. It is interesting to note how two opposing tendencies converge in the existence of a nation: on the one hand, there is an increasing diversification produced by a complex division of labour, while on the other, there is a growing homogenisation and similarity induced by standardised modes of education and training. In other words, the more diversified the structure becomes, the more homogenised the superstructure.

Obviously, he argues, this situation does not arise from a state of nature, it is education which plays a prominent and pervasive role. Nationalism facilitates diversified labour activities in an anonymous urban milieu by having a common expression. In this respect, Gellner's definitions of nationalism is pertinent: "Nationalism is basically a movement which conceives the natural object of human loyalty to be a fairly large anonymous unit defined by shared language or culture" (1973:11). And from a later work: "Nationalism is essentially the transfer of the focus of man's identity to a culture which is mediated by literacy and an extensive, formal educational system"; (1981:757) or, "nationalism is about entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which is co-extensive with an entire political unit and its total population" (1983:95).

Industrialisation is the other crucial factor associated with the rural/urban dichotomy of Gellner's theory. Nationalism evolves from the urban and industrial realm which is politically and territorially centralised, unlike agrarian societies (1983:75; 1980a:240). The centralised state has two roles, he argues: to inculcate the homogeneous culture and to ensure an adequate standard of literacy and technical competence (1981:762).

### The Conditions for Nationalism: the Monopoly of Education and High-Culture

The state's capacity for centralisation becomes a necessity in an age of an ever-diversifying division of labour and mobility, because the state facilitates the principle of nationalism in the modernist approach: the correspondance between the nation and its territorial boundaries. Such a correspondance implies a certain level of internal cohesion and communication through a "standardised linguistic medium and script" (1983:35; 1987:27). And only the state can control and monopolise a large educational system due to its costly infrastructure, and the state should manage the "most important of industries, the manufacture of viable and usable human beings" (1983:38).

In this interconnected argument, involving industrialisation, the division of labor and occupational mobility, the centralisation of the state plays a prominent role in the sphere of education. "Work in the main is no longer the manipulation of things, but of meanings", or "It is not just writing, but what is written that counts" (1983:33-31). Thus Gellner assumes an ideal-type of industrialisation: the need for literacy and technical competence required of citizens is not provided by local communities but can only be provided by a modern and national education system, "a pyramid at whose base there are primary schools, staffed by teachers trained at secondary schools, staffed by university-trained teachers, led by the products of advanced graduate schools" (1983:34). Such a pyramid is

necessary for national unity. More important than the Weberian concept of "monopoly of legitimate violence" is the "monopoly of legitimated education" controlled by the state and not by natural or emotional processes: "Contrary to popular and even scholarly belief, nationalism does not have any very deep roots in the human psyche" (1983:35). Nationalism not only provides "specialised training" it also "makes citizens" ("A Nuer village produces a Nuer, but it does not produce a Sudanese citizen") (1964:158) and provides a common cultural identity. If nationalism is neither a natural process simply absorbed from the family or village, then it is transmitted and inculcated through a state education system. In Gellner's view, nationalism is realised once societies reach a stage of "high-culture" sustained by the polity. But not all the many cultures existing in the world can have their own "political roofs", only cultural imperialisms which make efforts to dominate and create a political unity (1983:12). Gellner justifies the domination exerted by some "high-cultures" by using another dichotomy in the form of a metaphor comparing appropriate and successful nations with "cultivated varieties of plants", unlike the "savage kinds" which only reproduce spontaneously.

A simple analogy illustrates his point: cultivated "high cultures" with all their efficacious implications can claim to achieve statehood in their own terms, because according to him, they possess a homogeneous mode of language and literacy and so on; a "savage culture" can become a "high culture" but this will not necessarily engender nationalism. However, he says, some "savage cultures" struggle and create a state with its own territory. This struggle attempted by weaker cultures in search of nationalist status creates a kind of "nationalist or ethnic conflict" (1983:51). In Gellner's view prospects for new and potential nations are extremely poor, because they lack educational and communication systems which can engender cohesion. Only "high cultures" can survive the industrial era, while folk cultures, traditions and languages survive artificially and are preserved by ad hoc societies in

"cellophane-packaged form" (1983:117;121). From this perspective, Gellner salutes the imperative homogenising needs of nationalism, and sees its overall characteristics as justified due to its creation of productive literate citizens in an era of progressive egalitarianism.

Nations exist because of nationalism - homogeneous cultures protected by the state - and not because they are there "waiting to be 'awakened' by the "nationalist awakener". This argument emphasises once more his view that nationalism is not derived from any kind of ethnic consciousness by awakening mythical, natural or divinely-given elements, but concedes that nationalism takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations "sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures". The function of nationalism is to crystallise new elements, "though admittedly using as their raw material the cultural, historical and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist world" (1983:49).

Gellner contends, however, that the ideology of nationalism, pushing toward the delimitation of a "high-culture", does not occur in a cultural vacuum; although nationalism in his view emerges from a definitive break with the past. But Gellner shows a certain dissatisfaction with the fact that the "high-culture" advanced by nationalism is influenced by a pre-modern culture. Thus, one solution is to declare that a nationalist ideology "suffers from false consciousness" and acts contradictorily: "it claims to defend folk culture while in fact it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous mass society" (1983:124); "it preaches and defends continuity, but owes everything to a decisive and unutterably profound break in human history" (1983:125).

At this point we face a twofold puzzle: on the one hand, it seems to be clear that only dominant and expanding "high-cultures" can achieve statehood in their own right, but on the other it is nationalism which engenders the construction of a "high culture". These two possibilities are reflected in today's nations but are contradictorily explained by Gellner's

model.

### The Weakness of Nationalism: Ethnic Pluralism

So far we have seen that in Gellner's view nationalism is a question of power and dominion over obsolete and weak ideologies or structures. Nationalism facilitates the transformation of pre-modern societies into modern ones through the division of labour and education. However, his theoretical approach overgeneralises processes and contexts and this leads to the conclusion that he takes certain key factors for granted. For example, we never learn explicitly from Gellner how such an essential "high culture" is formed and at what cost to other co-existing cultures. This brings us to consider the socio-cultural position of ethnic cultures exposed to the embracing force of nationalism.

Gellner does not discuss this consideration in terms of "ethnic groups" or "ethnicity" (5), but it is implicit in his treatment of "sub-units of society who are no longer capable of self-reproduction" (1983:32;33). Such sub-units are either a family, kinship unit, village or tribal segment, and are perpetuated individually, that is, the individual infants are obliged to be socialised into the community and carry out its rites of passage, precepts, training, or perhaps its oral history and mother tongue. The infant grows to resemble the adults of the community and thus the community is perpetuated. In this sense, the members of the community reproduce themselves independently of the remaining society. However, as noted above, Gellner's characterisation of agrarian societies is such that no matter how well they reproduce themselves, this cannot be considered nationalism.

Ethnic groups or Gellner's "sub-units of society" are of no importance whatsoever from a modernist perspective. Small-scale "low cultures" are incapable of evolving their own destiny, rather a common destiny has to be imposed upon them: assimilation into a larger cultural homogeneous nation. Only effective nationalisms can survive, albeit there may be many

potential ones alleging a shared historical past or languages. Many potential "nations" disappear or are overwhelmed by the culture of a new nation-state and industrialisation "without offering any resistance"; language or culture do not provide bases for nationhood (1983:47). There are many cultures on the earth (6) but only a limited number of nation-states. Not all aspiring nations are successful in claiming an independent status, only powerful nationalisms can succeed.

Gellner's view regarding the assimilation of ethnic sub-units might be treated as polemical, as full assimilation and cultural homogeneity are uneven and the exception rather than the rule for most multi-ethnic nations. Moreover, alternative means of expression for non-assimilated ethnicities are re-emerging despite hegemonic nationalisms and state education, as I shall explain below.

In short, for Gellner, it becomes clear that nationalism is a movement for unification and homogenisation produced under modern conditions through state agencies, and this view opposes the one which argues that nationalist movements seek self-determination as a result of ethnic awareness.

### The Application of Gellner's Model

Two sets of arguments can be derived from a critical reading of Gellner's theory and its application. The first set refers to the identification of the objective causes that generate the existence of nationalism; the second arises from a consideration of the empirical evidence.

To trace the emergence of nationalism as a phenomenon linked to the industrial era, is to diminish the importance derived from other "subjective factors" such as those claimed by historical culturalists or primordialists, as I shall explain below. For example, Gellner disregards the appeal or the appraisal of "human attributes" though these may take the form of patriotism, xenophobia, "call of the blood", folk culture, the vernacular, popular sentiments against foreign or colonial rule, or other atavistic manifestations. In the



modernist view, these do not explain the emergence of nationalism, and at this point it is necessary to emphasise that Gellner's viewpoint refers to the functional role of nationalism aimed at forging national states in an industrial epoch. Such sentimental archaisms may be insufficient to explain nationalist movements for self-determination, but are components in creating an ideology that will be reproduced by the state's education system.

This last point brings into focus the discussion of the problems derived from an empirical enquiry when confronted with theoretical abstractions. For the sake of clarification, I shall list these problems although not necessarily in their order of importance.

i. Gellner's approach does not provide any hints or clues, let alone explicitly explain, the difficulties of constructing and transmitting a "high-culture" via the education system. What are the specific mechanisms, modes and means by which a culture is transmitted? For example, how can one evaluate the different ideological versions of text-books or the array of "invented traditions" and the civic culture discussed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983)? In this regard, the role of the state is insufficiently clear: we learn that the state and its agencies have a "monopoly of education", but we learn little of the means whereby the state manages to impose its authority.

ii. The scope of nationalism is much broader than just the dissemination of "high-culture" (official nationalism) or the spread of literacy. Hence, it is essential to define how culture and history should form part of the body of high-culture. This task is a particularly sensitive one in multi-ethnic societies or multi-ethnic nations. The diffusion of a "high-culture" to achieve nationalist goals in a multi-ethnic society signifies an imposed version of cultural nationalism that may conflict with the ethnic perspectives of "low-cultures" which are reluctant to assimilate. For example, some stratum of indigenous groups not only argue their disapproval in terms of the cultural component of a national high culture,

but also regard it as a threat to their identities. For the sake of theoretical generalisation, Gellner assumes this scenario or he thinks it is clearly of secondary importance, but empirical research suggests that the formulation of a nationalist cultural ideology plays a primary role before attempts are made to realise it and that such a high-culture is not always embraced by all members of society (cfr. Chapters 4 and 5).

iii. From Gellner's account it is possible to deduce the fact that it is the state which defines what constitutes a "high-culture", although admittedly he does not address this point. However, even if this were the case, defining the constituents of a "high-culture" implies that they have been identified, and are to be defended and preserved, as they reflect unique historical and cultural achievements. No culture in the world claims to be universal, no nation-state and not even the smallest ethnic groups are devoid of cultural and historical significance, moreover every culture desires to be unique.

iv. The process of centralising and homogenising the population cannot be undertaken under the guise of universalism; the mass of the population must be fashioned with a comprehensible symbolic system. Therefore, "high-cultures" not only demand the quest for literacy and education, but must also convey a cultural history, albeit one that is susceptible to manipulation by nationalists or political elites. Mexican school text-books, for example, emphasise basic literacy and socialisation skills but equally important they also contain a background history of the nation (cfr. Chapter 7).

v. By the time a society achieves a sustainable level of industrialisation and homogenisation as a nationalist requirement, groups within the society may generate other alternative goals and agendas. But from Gellner's model we find an overestimation of the impact of "high-cultures" and, consequently, an underestimation of the potential assertiveness of "low cultures". In this respect, his

modernist model misses one important point: for example, in the present condition of nationalism, "low cultures" (instead of assimilating with the "high culture") are taking advantage of modern circumstances such as mobility, spread of communications, standard education and the division of labour to reproduce their ethnicity. These circumstances are observable from the fact that new social stratum formed by members of "low cultures" are emerging. Indigenous intelligentsia, professional members of ethnic groups, may be seen as the results of the benefits brought by modernisation and bureaucratisation. In other words, nationalism and its high-culture is not necessarily embraced by all ethnic groups or sections of society, and its assimilation by an individual is a variable: for example, Polish students of secondary education studying under the Soviet-imposed educational system used to claim - with respect to the historical version of events they received - that they memorised, passed the exams, and then forgot it (Personal communication from Anneta Mieskowski 1991). Hence, the nationalist project was not completed with the ongoing expansion of industrialisation; conversely, technology and communications introduced at an exponential rate to meet the demands of industrialisation are generating new waves of potential and as yet unknown expressions of ethnic revivals or nationalisms.

vi. The nation-state is the basis of political organisation in the contemporary world; this commonplace presupposes that every nation possesses an educational system to disseminate a national medium of language and literacy. However, how one can explain that (despite such a facility) the state does not manage to produce an homogeneous population? Arguments aimed at the incompetence or the lack of resources of particular official educational systems may be valid, but other explanations are available if we examine the cultural discourse of integrationist policies and evaluate its acceptance or rejection by ethnic groups.

In conclusion, at the level of theoretical generalisations, the modernist theory of nationalism is indeed

convincing, but its empirical application is less satisfying. This is because Gellner's view of nations as the product of state's integration appears to have evolved from a linear trajectory, devoid of conflict or the presence of alternative ideological perspectives or antagonistic cultural discourses. But nations have not emerged free from contradictions, retrogressions, tragedy, suffering and insecurity. Nevertheless, Gellner is entirely justified in making a reiterative point which permeates his writings on nationalism since 1964, that the educational system is an effective facilitator of nationalism. The theory also manages to visualise the imperative force of objective and material factors, such as the spread of industrialisation and the expanding forms of standardised communications.

### The Historical-Culturalists

Turning now to the "historical-culturalist" approach, and to one of its typical exponents, we may say that the theoretical spectrum of Anthony D. Smith is varied and covers diverse aspects of the phenomena of nations and nationalism. In this section, I will concentrate on his most salient contention, the examination of ethnicity in modern nations, which challenges the modernist position above discussed, but at the same time enriches our understanding of nation formation.

It would be inaccurate to claim that modernists and historical-culturalists do not influence one another; on the contrary, some modernists do recognise the impact of the ethnic past in the modern age, (7) and historical-culturalists such as Connor (1973), Hutchinson (1987) and Smith also agree that political and territorial hegemony are key parts of any nation, and that the nation is a modern phenomenon which responds to modern requirements. However, in Smith's model there remains a strong claim for a recognition of the neglected but powerful concerns of ethnicity: "These elements that many of us, including many social scientists, would prefer to ignore, but we do so at our peril" (1989:341).

The importance given by Smith to historical and ethnic continuities in explaining the emergence and development of either national movements or nation-formations is the cornerstone of his approach. This viewpoint is already manifested in an article in 1978 "The Diffusion of Nationalism: Some Historical and Sociological Perspectives". Further writings attempt to expand his formulation by recurring references to ancient mythology and art (8).

#### Nationalism as a Continuum: the Ethnic-Self

The method implicit in Smith's approach is the study of the constitution and influence of the ethnic past on modern nations through an understanding of the ideological impact of ancient history and mythologies (1985;1986;1989); thus, he will strongly argue in favour of cultural or "subjective" factors, relegating to secondary importance purely "objective" or economic explanations. Unlike Gellner's dichotomous evolutionist approach, Smith proposes a continuum divided by two notions or concepts, the French notion of ethnie and the nation (9). This division delineates varying historical factors and cultural expressions but they are nevertheless contingent; the continuum is the power of the collective memory which allows for the reproduction over centuries or generations of a sense of "self" in the form of ethnocentrism.

The sense of self - subjectivity - consists of "cultural forms of sentiments, attitudes and perceptions, as these are expressed and codified in myths, memories, values and symbols" (1986:15). The distinction between ethnie and nation is crucial for his sociological theory of nationalism, because the former helps the analyst to identify the "ethnic origin" implicit in the composition of a modern nation (10).

Ethnie is a theoretical device in Smith's perspective which allows us to see the pre-modern origins of a nation. It is formed by certain characteristics: a collectively accepted name, a myth of origin and lineage, a shared history, culture, a homeland or an association with a definable territory, and

a unified and coherent solidarity, at least among elites. Before discussing the prerequisites for such a transformation, it is important to note his definition of a nation. This is a "named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (1991:14 original emphasis).

This definition includes features of ethnie (i.e. myths and a historical past) and modern institutions for social cohesion (i.e. a division of labour, citizenship and a public culture). If a nation possesses these latter characteristics which facilitate its reproduction or perpetuation, it is because the nation carries a historical experience of itself, derived from the former elements of ethnie, a name, a history, a homeland and so on. The nation, in Smith's terms, is firmly grounded in its subjective ethnicity but its civic components (i.e. flags, ceremonies) may have emerged in its more recent history (1988:9;1985). This is why the notions of invention, fabrication, artefact, construction or artifice are in Smith's view anathema (1991c).

#### From Ethnocentrism to Nationalism

Of the transformation of certain ethnies into modern nations, the agent is obviously nationalism which in Smith's terms is defined as a political and cultural movement seeking to achieve the "ideal of independence, unity and identity" (1991:51). Moreover, nationalism in the modern age is the modern secular equivalent of the pre-modern sacred myth of "ethnic election" (1991:85;1993c). From this formulation, Smith argues that nationalism is the politicisation and territorialisation of an earlier sense of ethnocentrism. Here it becomes important how Smith's model addresses the transformation of an ethnie into a nation, and this can be by means of two contrasting modes or forms of nation formation: the "territorial route" or the "ethnic route" (1986:140;141).

The "territorial route" is exemplified by following the

historical developments in the western world, for example in England, France or Spain. These European "ethnic polities" gradually were transformed into "territorial nations" or "national states" through their own state agencies and by the impact of a "triple revolution" involving economics, administration and culture which resulted in territorial centralisation, civil rights and mass education systems (1986:138). The "ethnic route" is characteristic of multi-ethnic empires in which a dominant ethnie subordinates varying and separate ethnic communities, each of which have their own set of loyalties. Another feature of the ethnic model is that the above mentioned "triple revolution" arrived historically later than in the West and was introduced and implemented unevenly (1986:141).

The relevant question to bear in mind is not the application of such routes to specific cases, but a qualitative assessment of the transformative process by which an ethnie can aspire to be a nation through the concept of the "myth-symbol complex" (11). This concept has been treated extensively by the author in his subsequent writings from 1984 (1984a;1984b;1986;1988). The mythic quality of an ethnic community is pertinent even in the case of territorial and civic examples both for the western experience and for most other parts of the world. This is precisely one of the most salient aspects of Smith's theory: no nation can emerge and sustain itself without an ethnic "core" or ideology and with its underlying concepts and symbols of nationalism. According to Smith, most nations are formed by means of a civic and territorial nationalism, constituted by the integration of a variety of ethnic communities inhabiting the territory of the nation. The process of integration is to "create those myths of descent, those historical memories and that common culture which form the missing elements of the ethnic make-up along with a mutual solidarity" (1986:147). Or as he more recently put it: nationalisms require a "sketch" of specific ideologies and ideas that "provide the symbolism and ceremonial that arouse the deepest popular emotions and

aspirations - notably when they are interwoven with much older symbols and ceremonies" (1991:83).

This theoretical assumption argues that subjective elements based on religion, ethnicity, symbolism or mythology are the bases for an understanding of the ideological content of each nationalism, and these qualities are not secondary or additional elements but play a vital and even necessary role in advancing nationalism. The preservation of ethnocentrism fuels the nationalist flame: "In former days peoples were chosen for their alleged virtues; today they are called to be nations because of their cultural heritages" (1991:84).

If the "cultural heritage" in this model is relevant in understanding modern nationalism, we must examine its principal component: the "myth-symbol complex" and "mythomoteur" which in Smith's terms is the "myth of the ethnic polity". The display or expression of this mythic complex by a given ethnie signals the dynamism of the myths and symbols embodied in beliefs and sentiments (1986:15). In other words, it indicates the capacity of an ethnic community to express its cultural historicity and thus its unique sense of "self". The "mythomoteur" is the main component of the ethnic community which has been developed over generations, and if this "mythomoteur" is lacking, the community cannot define itself and is unable to inspire collective action (1986:25).

The principal myth of the "ethnic polity" is the idea and experience of possessing common origins and descent. The underlying argument is that such a shared consciousness is powerful enough to mobilise itself towards collective goals and ideals (1986:58), one of whose goals is the ideal of political independence or nationalism. Civic and territorial models of nationalism also require delimiting of "myths of origin and shared history" by the appropriation of myths and symbols of pre-existing ethnie, or to recombine them into new cultural matrices (1986:152). In Smith's perspective, nationalist integration seeking territorial hegemony, centralisation, a unified economy and mass education is



largely promoted and supported by ethnic symbolism.

### The Ideological Power of Nationalism: the Myth of Origin and Descent

The myth of origin and descent is a salient feature of ethnie and the most important myth underlying Smith's theory of ethnocentrism vis-à-vis nationalism. This myth is also a persistent attribute of many territorial nationalisms (for example, the Aztec and Mestizo myths of the Mexican nation) to "provide the means of collective location in the world and the charter of the community which explains its origins, growth and destiny" (1986:24;1984b). It is conveyed by legends which refer to geographical and temporal origins, migration, ancestry, filiation, a "golden age", decline, exile and rebirth; ethnic mythologies dating back to antiquity or the Middle Ages contain a message of "linear development" and evoke a rebirth from "subjugation" or "decay" (1986:192;1984).

The myth of origin and descent inspires modern nationalist symbols to facilitate common goals. But the ideal of common descent is either usually fictitious or putative and has been transformed and eroded by conquest and invasions, wars and technological developments turning Anglo-Saxons into British, Franks into French, Romans into Italians, Aztecs into Mexicans - and in exceptional cases the almost intact surviving "myths of election" - Jews, Greeks and Armenians (1984a;1991b;1992b;1992d;1993c).

As noted above, these mythological narratives have not survived intact, on the contrary they have been eroded and transmuted by conquest, invasion, migrations, new religions and ideologies and yet, despite the long-lasting influence of material factors, these myths allow the continuity of the ethnic self (1986:191-192;1988). Therefore, the culture of territorial or ethnic nations seeks a uniqueness and a certain authenticity of its own. The most intrinsic aspect of the nation, as exemplified in the case of Mexico, is derived from its shared collective experiences and symbolism and not from cultural borrowings or imitation. As a complement to Smith's

theory arguing the salience of mythology of ethnic descent in nation formation, one can take the discussion further by adding the array of civic traditions and heroes resulting from the instrumental creation of a sovereign state to the repertoire of national identity. The state in its centralising role in the cultural fabric of Mexican nationalism is yet another equally important platform seeking shared solidarity, by resorting to the civic ceremonial recalling the origins of republicanism and the adaptation of western liberalism in organising the national state (cfr. Chapter 4).

### The Diffusion of Nationalism: Historians and Intellectuals

The next important issue is how and why the "myth-symbol complex" managed to survive the modern phase of nation-building. As noted above, the original myths are not left in their pristine form - in Smith's model - intellectuals, historians, nationalists, revivalists and statesmen play a vital role in collecting, reshaping, recombining, idealising and organising the content of the ethnic memory and the emergent state by the use of modern disciplines such as archeology, philology, history and ethnology in order to recreate and amplify the historicity of the nation. Artists, musicians, painters, dramatists, novelists also played a vital role in renewing the mythology (1986:161;1983c).

For the modernist perspective, these romantic and folkloric recreations are of secondary importance as the result seems artificial, but at the same time it is difficult to imagine the cultural concept of any nation if such revivals, recombinations or idealisations are absent. In spite of the criticisms from the modernists, Smith has conceded great importance to the work of historians, intellectuals and artists all expressing and reaffirming the sense of modern nationhood (1979b;1989a; 1992c;1993a).

This viewpoint is also explicit in Smith's National Identity (1991); the ideas and writings of intellectuals and

the signals conveyed by artistic forms act as disseminators of nationalism as a form of culture. Through revivals and the genius of artistic endeavour the nation is recreated and celebrated, intellectuals codify its history and values into concrete representations. Most of the examples he discusses - opera, paintings and music - are European (1991:94;1993a) but this perspective is applicable globally. Introspection has also played a role in shaping a particular national character; social philosophers have also made their contribution to the concept of the 'genius of a people' - for example: Rousseau, Siéyès, Paine, Jefferson, Fichte and Kant (12).

The durable mythical past either revived or reinvented is transmitted through the work of artists and thinkers, and their aim is to show a continuity with a recoverable past. Smith's approach suggests that the works and achievements of intellectuals and artists of all genres are more significant in the shaping of a nation than transmission through the media of education as argued by Gellner. Solely turning "peasants" into "citizens" (1993c:11) is insufficient in revealing the cultural individuality of a nation which Smith attempts to demonstrate by establishing a connection between national art and identity (1993d:65).

### Mexico and Peru and the Historical-Culturalist Approach

In this section I wish to pay attention to Smith's views on other geographical and cultural areas which have normally been outside the scope of modern theories of nationalism: Mexico and Peru (13). Obviously his treatment of these nations is not exhaustive, but these have attracted the author's interest given the constant appeal for nationalists and intellectuals of a genuine "ethnic past" generated by indigenous and vernacular cultures. We can now turn to a specific discussion of Mexico (and Peru) as examples of territorial nationalism and the nationalist invocation of ethnic mythologies.

Smith's "territorial nationalism" is a useful model for explaining today's nation-states given that ethnically

homogenised nations are uncommon phenomena (Connor 1972:319). Because this form of nationalism is facilitated by the operations and agencies of the state it is also an "official nationalism", of which the Czarist Russification of the last century is the best known example. Official nationalism is another useful concept as it indicates the overwhelming participation of the state in moulding an ethnic heterogeneous population into a centralised, unified and homogeneous entity. In this respect, Anderson's metaphor is pertinent: "stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire" (1990:82).

This suggests the painstaking effort required to engineer the difficult correspondence between culture and territory within a single polity. Official nationalism, defined as an ideological corpus or set of policies aimed at constituting a nation, emanates from the state and serves the state's interests, and its goal is to realise a congruency between its borders and its culture. And the implementation of state policies involves integration, conscription, state education, the official rewriting of history, the appropriation of relevant cultural motifs and, in the case of Mexico, indigenismo (cfr. Chapter 8).

We have noted that Smith's typology identifies two routes, the ethnic and the territorial which occur at specific historical moments: the pre-independence or anti-colonialist struggle, and the integrationist nationalism conducted by the state in the post-independence period (1991:82 original emphasis). It can be argued that both routes are applicable to Mexico. The anti-colonial struggles for political independence (1810-1821) have been significantly analysed (Brading 1973;1991; Lynch 1986; Pagden 1987) showing thus, a correspondence between periods of history and the route argued by Smith; but a more problematic situation arises when attempting to contextualise the timing of the integrationist nationalism of the post-independence. Two stages of post-independence integration can be observed, the first republican stage revolves around the mid-19th century with the

consolidation of the Liberal state (cfr. Chapter 4); while the second stage of official Mexican nationalism began to take shape after the popular agrarian movement which characterised the 1910 Mexican revolution. Among the most important socio-political transformations which were gradually achieved were constitutional guarantees, the replacement of the ruling political elites, expansion of lay education and agrarian reform (Knight t.2 1986:427 514,494). In the following decades, in the period characterised as the "institutionalisation of the revolution", nation-building policies were formulated and applied via state agencies and institutions, and, importantly, through the educational system; their major goal was to unify a disparate ethnic population. Another factor was the creation of a civic culture inculcated through recurring ceremonials, a factor which played an important role in the nation-building of modern France, Turkey and Italy. This civic nationalism, albeit endorsed by the state, has also been deeply concerned with maintaining and transmitting a continuity with its pre-Hispanic background, and thus promoted an official culture aimed at rehabilitating the indigenous cultures of the nation and which would at the same time legitimise the contemporary Mexican state.

Official Mexican nationalist mythologies are interwoven with the recorded antiquity of the indigenous past, and this indigenous past and "folklore" inject a uniqueness into the culture of Mexico. In Peru, the promotion of the ethnic past is not comparable to the Mexican experience. A brief reference to Peru's ideology of independence is helpful in pointing out why Peruvians have tackled the indigenous past with careful consideration. The ideological input of some Peruvian intellectuals, e.g. José Manuel Dávalos (1784), Hipólito Unánue (1761) and José Eusebio de Llano Zapata (1765), were basically concerned with the apologetic defence of the country's nature and natural resources (in responding to the derogatory 19th century French naturalism) rather than evoking themes of the Inca past (Lewin 1957). Reasons explaining this

selective preference are to be found in the frequent number of Indian revolts between 1708 and 1783 (Lynch 1986:159), and the great revolt of Tupac Amaru in 1780, which vindicated exclusively indigenous claims (e.g. territorial rights) and thus, excluding Europeans and their Peruvian creole descents (Miranda 1943; Valcarcel 1965; Durand 1973). The intellectual tradition of the incipient nationalists of Peru had a significant effect in future ideological formulations of a Peruvian indigenismo. In effect, 20th century indigenist vindications (i.e. search for authenticity) (Smith 1990b:11) were initiated by leftist intellectuals (e.g. J.C. Mariátegui and G. Prada), and emulated by subsequent governments seeking populist ends rather than formulating a clear cut strategy of ethnic integration and cultural legitimation (Mariátegui 1976).

In Mexico, the use of the indigenous past can be traced to the 18th century and its symbolism was an inspiration for the independence movement of 1810; and Mexican nationalists had at their disposal an abundance of ethnic material for the re-creation of myths and symbolism. The various elements of indigenous cultures are to be found in the ancient remains of ancient civilizations: neo-Aztecism (Phelan Leddy 1960:768), for example, suggests a similarity with the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, emulated by the western nation states. The diversity of indigenous cultures and languages are also the object of an official ethnic policy which, it claims, promotes the co-existence, harmony, equality and tolerance of the Indian peoples with the dominant and privileged mestizo population.

Smith's exploration of Mexican and Peruvian nationalisms reinforces his contention concerning the impossibility of constructing a modern nation without a sense of the past. This view recurs in England, Poland or Mexico whereby both a mythology and modern institutions are prerequisites for their constitution as nations (1994a unpublished article).

## How do Indigenous Peoples Respond to "Official Nationalism"?

To forge and inculcate official versions of culture and history, albeit based on authentic ethnic and indigenous sources, can be problematic. If an official and routinised version has to be enforced this is, firstly, because the population is culturally heterogenous; secondly, an ethnic diversity - to be consistent with Smith's contention - must have survived due to the potency of its myths of descent and origin; thirdly, the existence of multiple ethnic consciousnesses may clash with the dominant and official model. Official nationalism no matter how ethnicised may not have a broad appeal despite its attempt to forge ethnic integration even in terms of cultivating a minimal "fictitious ancestry". The nationalist task of integration, instead of hastening the disappearance of so-called obsolete indigenous ways of life, paradoxically arrives at the realisation that members of ethnic groups are forming their own cultural elites and intelligentsia.

Gellner claims that emotional sentiment linked to an ethnic awakening is "folklore", not nationalism; but on the other hand, Smith argues that the power of myths and symbols provides an invisible protection allowing reproduction, survival and renewal of ethnic groups despite the depredations of conquest, extermination, assimilation and discrimination or the insistent penetration of modern education. However, here it is pertinent to clarify that the use of ethnic myths as argued by Smith can be interpreted in two parallel ways. The first way, which is extensively argued in this study, is the state's appropriation of mythology to facilitate integration; the second is the debatable continuity of legacies of post-conquest years, including pre-Hispanic mythomoteurs amongst modern ethnic groups. If ethnic memories were preserved by each one of the 56 Indian groups this may suggest competition with the national model of identity imposed by the state through the educational system. However, as I will argue, Indian peoples scattered in small villages have to a

considerable degree lost their means of reproducing and diffusing ethnic mythological information and thus, one can argue that they lack a mythomoteur. Nevertheless, what counts in this discussion is that Indians (a term imposed under colonial rule) have managed to adapt, assimilate and reproduce an evolving historical identity defined by the existence of informal mechanisms of self-protection to survive in the period of nation-building (cfr. Chapter 3).

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have studied the main arguments of the modernists and historical culturalists and their applicability to the Mexican nationalism of the 20th century.

A preliminary conclusion is that the state is the central agency of integrative nationalism through the educational system, but this integration does not indicate an absence of cultural significance. A selective process of utilising and recombining mythologies is strongly required to facilitate and inspire the nationalist integration of an ethnically divided society. In this sense, Gellner's modernism and Smith's historic culturalism are not exclusive and antagonistic perspectives, but complementary explanations.

Mexican nationalism is transmitted through the educational system and possesses a potent ethnic symbolism; but ethnic groups resist full assimilation by taking advantage of modern conditions i.e. division of labour, state education.

This is an important point to bear in mind, because nation formation cannot be satisfactorily explained by a deterministic and evolutionist model, rather nationalism is unpredictable as it is fed by a complex of ethnic factors.



## Chapter 2

### **Empiricism and Nationalism: The Methodology of the Research**

New ethnic phenomena (e.g. autochthonous and immigrant ethnicities) challenging the effects of the integrative projects of nation-building, demand a different set of propositions in order to adequately explain the different face that nationalism presents today. This research initially emerged in the form of a theoretical introspection reluctant to accept the validity of the universalist assumptions contained in the opposite paradigms contrasted in this study (i.e. Modernists and Historical-Culturalists). This is the chief reason for the design and application of an empiricist methodology the aim of which is to collect a kind of data which could reflect the experience of sub-merged ethnic groups and to explore some of the views concerning cultural proposals for their survival.

In this chapter, I explain the processes involved in the devising and application of such a methodology, as well as the composition of the group of informants whose views, opinions and perceptions form the original core of this dissertation.

#### Beginnings

Studies of ethnicity, including Indian groups, have traditionally been associated with the domain of Anthropological science. Conclusive and detailed monographs describing the ethnographic composition of small villages and communities, but disconnected from the national mainstream, are conventional approaches which have blurred our understanding of contemporary ethnic processes. This excessive focus on the peasant and rural world (to which arguably ethnicity is inexorably bound) implies continued validation of the common assumption that ethnicity is exclusively limited to rural communities and thus, to assume its perennial static

nature awaiting disruption and eventual disappearance. Examples from this perspective are legion (Redfield, 1930; Wagley, 1949; Vogt, 1969), while recent studies have obtained illuminating research by including in their analysis a more intricate way to interconnecting the manifestations of ethnic traditionalism exposed to the modernising process of nation-building and transnationalism (Warman, 1981; Boege, 1988; Urban and Sherzer, 1992; Nagengast and Kearney 1990).

A different type of (urban and semi-urban) ethnic campaign, led by ethnic natives of Mexico since the 1970's who have been trained in the teaching profession and who have demanded cultural recognition on their own terms, marks the points of departure of this research. Explaining the emergence and trajectory of this relatively recent mobilisation, chapter 9 expresses the importance that I have assigned to this movement in pursuing the view that ethnicity is not strictly a rural phenomenon. Educated members of different ethnic groups were selected in this research, rather than Indian peasants or village dwellers, because the former are the first to put forward a new type of demand not strictly articulated in the traditional terms of the return of land, but a comprehensive view expressing dissatisfaction with several areas of the national project, even if somehow, Indian professionals, display a repetitive and imitative rhetoric which often resembles the official discourse. The following characteristics also account for their selection: the informants are articulate, have a position of leadership, hence, the possibility of exerting ideological or pragmatic influence, are bilingual, and, most important of all, are acquainted with an objective expression of nationalism, namely education, therefore, they have been in permanent contact with contemporary modernity.

Furthermore, my criteria of selection of informants rigorously demanded that they should conform to three variables: a) they should be linked to their communities or regions of origin, b) think of themselves as members of ethnic groups and c) have a post-graduated educational background.

These criteria helped me to avoid the interference of non-Indian experts and ideologues representing groups of cultural extremism, claiming for themselves the plights and ethnic symbolism of Indian peoples (e.g. the Confederated Movement for the Restoration of Anauak) (Friedlander 1975:170).

### Fieldwork

My main task during my fieldwork, starting in the summer of 1991, was to locate and to approach groups of educated people with an aware-ness of their ethnic backgrounds. In this search, I established a preliminary division between "intellectuals" and "students". I will start this description with respect to the former.

Members of official institutions, such as the General Direction of Popular Cultures (DGCP), offered invaluable help in providing me with a list of Indian writers, teachers and civil servants, from different ethnic regions of the country, who by that time had just gathered to celebrate the first meeting of "Writers in Indian Languages", organised with Federal budgetary support (Tamaulipas, 1991). I was interested in locating some of the individuals in the list, but since they live mainly in the southern and central parts of Mexico, I decided to travel (not without writing and telephoning them beforehand) in order to ascertain the possibility of interviewing them, according to the guidelines of an already devised methodology which I shall describe below.

In tandem with this initial list of intellectuals, which was later reduced to a five to six individuals according to criteria of selection (also described below), I learnt, via the newspaper ("Periodistas indígenas en el museo Diego Rivera", La Jornada 26/6/1991), of the existence of an independent group, mainly formed of Indian journalists, doing various editorial jobs seeking the recovery and diffusion of their languages and cultural traditions. Members of this group supplied another list of individuals which complemented the one provided by the DGCP. Through the group of journalists, I

managed to get to know the beginnings of the indigenous press, as well as the growing number of periodicals and writings of all types using a critical discourse denouncing "oppression", "exclusion" and "rejection", and consequently expressing desires to conduct projects of ethnic rehabilitation. In a second visit in 1992, my research also benefited from the proliferation of rallies, meetings and writings emerging in reaction to the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in the New World. This series of events continued well into the following year in response to the declaration by the United Nations of 1993 as the "International Year of Indigenous Peoples". In some of these meetings, I got acquainted with even more projects, publications and Indian people engaging in different intellectual activities as a form of expression, who kindly agreed for their words to form part of this research.

My encounter with the two groups of students who answered the survey-questionnaire for this study was less problematic in terms of travelling and allocation of time. Firstly because I knew in advance, through mentions in earlier publications (Bonfil Batalla 1981), of the two specific colleges and institutes at which they were enrolled and secondly, because I received almost immediate cooperation from the course's convenors and the students. After holding preliminary sessions to discuss the project and deliberations amongst themselves they agreed to answer the questionnaire on a voluntary base.

One final remark remains to be made for both groups of "intellectuals" and "students". The groups of informants of this research are constituted by individuals from different ethnic regions, instead of concentrating on one region or group which might not be sufficiently developed in educational terms so as to provide a comprehensive and qualitative range of educated members at a professional level.

### The Questionnaire

Since this is a sociological and empirical study which seeks

to explain new developments within the field of nationalism in relation to indigenous populations, I shall start by describing the questions which motivated the design of the questionnaire. General academic enquiries derived from my own project and reflection were reduced to indicators and these converted into new questions which would not pose any problems of interpretation for my informants. Examples of the general questions were: How do the ethnic groups regard themselves vis-à-vis the nation?; Are they aware of the nation?; How do they identify with the nation?; What foci - the national or the ethnic - provide them with a sustainable source of identification?; Is nationalism a successful integrative project?

The questionnaire, comprising fifty one questions, was divided into three parts:

1. Ethnic Background
2. Opinions and Perceptions of Nationalism
3. Contemporary Indian Identity

#### 1. Ethnic Background

In the first section of the questionnaire the students were asked to provide data on their sex, occupation, occupation of father and mother, language(s) spoken, place of origin, their educational background and to report their areas of academic interest. This was followed by three questions dealing with religious issues, my aim being to determine their religious affiliation, frequency of performing religious duties, and the importance that they give to religious practices by asking them to mention the non-secular festivities that they normally celebrate. This information obtained from each individual was helpful in describing the composition of the overall samples referred to later in this chapter.

#### 2. Opinions and Perceptions of Nationalism

The second part of the questionnaire covered the following

themes:

- A. Ethnic Myths
- B. Civic Heroes
- C. Artefacts and Symbols of National Culture
- D. Text-Books

"Knowledge of History" was the first indicator that the students found in the questionnaire. I used such an indicator in formulating the content of three questions. I asked them to mention a) which areas of Mexican history they were acquainted with, b) whether they have preferences for certain topics and c) to mention some history books they were fully familiar with. This information was helpful in establishing the correlation between periods of history and heroes discussed in the chapters on Civic Heroes and Text-Books.

I then proceeded to evaluate students' perceptions of nationalism. I selected two ethnic myths in order to be consistent with one of the theoretical assumptions underlying this research, the "Historic-Culturalist", which emphasises the relevance of "shared myths of origin and descent". It was by no means difficult to locate these narratives since these are displayed in the official discourse in a variety of explicit and tangible ways (e.g. text-books, currency, emblem, monuments). Thus, I formulated four explicit questions aimed at exploring the foundational myth: if they had knowledge of the narrative of the "foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan"; the method(s) through which they learnt the story (e.g. school, text-books, teacher, media, parents); the stylistic form of the symbol and its symbolic content; and finally, in order to confirm the answer on the ways in which they managed to obtain this information, I asked them to state specifically the means by which this information was obtained (e.g. text-books, festivals, parents, media, pictures and drawings). In an attempt to find out alternative information on the "myth of origin" I asked two extra questions: if they were aware of any another text (Pre-Colombian manuscript, Colonial or Contemporary) recalling the "origin of the Mexican people"; and, if they similarly knew the history of the origin of other

ethnic groups including theirs.

In order to reinforce my understanding of the students' awareness of the cultural ideas supporting the Aztec bias of Mexican nationalism, I included questions on chief institutions, events and artefacts of the Aztec society: the story of P. Alvarado's slaughter of native nobility (1521) (a story which relates the destruction of the autonomous indigenous memory allegedly kept in the aristocratic ranks of Aztec society); F.J. Clavijero's Ancient History of Mexico (1780) (a book written by a Mexican Creole Jesuit in exile - a typical example of cultural revivalism -, who glorified Aztequism and compared it with the archetypes of Western civilisation); the cultural institution of Calmécac (a House of Tradition where young men were trained in the precepts of Aztec religion); and finally, I intermingled at random, a series of words of the Náhuatl language (words used in rituals and words in frequent use).

The questionnaire included four specific questions to test the relevance of the mestizo myth. This myth was chosen in particular because it also forms part of the official rhetoric, it is to be found in text-books and discourse and, it is the notion that denotes the social relationships established between Indian and non-Indian society. Furthermore, it is the ideal of integration in terms of adopting Spanish as the lingua franca, the cultural combination of indigenous and Hispanic mores, and Christianity as the sole religion.

My first aim, then, was to find out if they were familiar with such a myth or narrative. In order to confirm this information, I asked them to mention the historical period from which the narrative emerged and the social factors involved (e.g. race, class, gender). Secondly, I asked them to report how they obtained this information (e.g. school, teacher, text-books, media, parents). Thirdly, since this myth occupies a place of prominence in the configuration of the nationalist discourse, I asked them to describe, in their own terms, three contributions of mestizaje with respect to

society as a whole. In relation to the latter question, I prompted them to state whether this myth was a reality, a policy, an ideology or an invention and to give their reasons for their selection. In an attempt to further explore Indians' evaluation of the mestizo, I included two more questions: to provide a definition of the socio-cultural personality of a mestizo based on their daily practice, perception and experience and; if they have or would be able to establish family or friendly relations with members of the non-Indian society. The results of these answers formed the core of the chapter on ethnic myths and a total of eight tables were drawn up using these data.

First hand data, shown in the chapter discussing the impact on civic heroes and national historiography, were obtained by means of two specific questions. Here the students, according to their individual preference, were asked to identify and to give a hierarchical rank to a list of heroes and anti-heroes (the criteria of heroicism was determined by historical figures associated with acts of defence and resistance against foreign incursion). The complementary part of the question asked them to describe the reasons for their preferences. Given that B. Juárez received widespread acceptance by both samples of students, the chapter deals exclusively with this character. Since Juárez is identified with the origins of Mexican republicanism and foreign invasion, the data obtained proved to be of great usefulness to further expand and complement the view of nationalism based exclusively on ethnic myths.

So far I have described the method by which I was able to gather information on the ethnic and civic components of cultural nationalism. Next I will refer to the way in which I obtained data on the second most important aspect of this research: the standardised school.

The availability of text-books has facilitated to a great extent, the measurement of degrees of "standard education" or "unification of information". Moreover, since the students were obviously acquainted with these texts, the information



obtained was extremely useful to ascertain empirically the salience of the "Modernist" position. In other words, to determine if the school and its tools are effective ways of inducing/shaping nationalism and citizens even from marginalised socio-cultural environments. A content analysis of these books is included in chapter 7. This analysis was complemented and contrasted with the views of the students elicited through the following question: Do you consider that text-books are suitable for teaching the reality of Indian peoples? I also asked them to describe their own opinions on how text-books approached the following areas: ethnic groups, ancient Mexico, and non-Indian society. Lastly, I included a section in which the students were asked to write their views on the content of Social Sciences texts, and to mention which historical areas, lessons, titles, drawings or paragraphs they could recall from History and Social Sciences texts, as well as the visual illustrations incorporated in the texts.

Forming part of the components of the national culture are the civic artefacts ("invented traditions"). To measure this area, I introduced some questions to obtain specific information on the students' perception and their ways of identifying with the emblem, national flag and anthem, as well as to explore their attachments and loyalty to the notion of "patria". For example, I included straightforward questions such as: if Mexico were attacked by a foreign country would you die defending it? In order to complement the section aimed at measuring patriotic loyalties, I also added a question asking them to mention their preferences on voting for ethnicised rulers in case the opportunity should exist (In order to emphasise the "ethnic" character of the ruler, I deliberately used stereotyped terms such as Indian, gringo or mestizo).

### 3. Contemporary Ethnic Identity

The information on the state of contemporary ethnic identity was obtained through the indicator "use of mass media". I used

this indicator because my aim was to formulate a clear question which could comprehensively reflect the projects of Indian peoples. In other words, to devise a method through which I could penetrate into their ideas about the future, to know their concerns about the reproduction of identity in modern conditions, to learn how they would like to mirror themselves and be able to forge their own images.

Accepting the argument that mass media is not only a sign of modernity, but also available, widespread and unparalleled by any other means of communication, and that media technology is the way by which nationalism and its cultural information is efficiently transmitted (replacing the printing press which brought about the notion of "imagined community"), I asked them how they would use media if they had the opportunity of having control of them?

The delicate issue of literacy or consumerism within the Indian milieu is paramount, therefore, my questions were: what radio (or TV) programmes would they be interested in producing? and, to what audiences would these programmes be addressed? To complement this section, I also pursued answers which could help me to interpret how Indian peoples perceive some socio-cultural and political aspects of Mexico by asking them: what do you approve or disapprove of Mexico and I offered a list of diverse and intermingled facts. To measure their "positive" - approval - perceptions I selected the following items: ethnic traditions, nature, volcanoes, history, land, people, "milpa" (land plot). In opposition, the "negative" - disapproval - perceptions were tested against items such as: Indians, mestizo, whites, government, Mexico City, discrimination, pollution, corruption, poverty of the majority of Indians, concentration of wealth.

After collecting the questionnaires and throughout their analysis, I realised that all the fifty one questions could not possibly be scrutinised in this research. Firstly, because some questions were deliberately used as mere complements of other questions (i.e. this helped me to confirm if the question was understood by the respondent). Secondly, some

questions were left blank either because the respondent did not understand the question or because she/he did not have the information to answer it. Finally, a number of questions introduced in the final part of the questionnaire correspond to another possible line of research (i.e. I attempted to explore their ideas on secessionism by asking questions on their general knowledge on present ethnic conflicts worldwide).

### In-Depth Interviews

In order to maintain a level of consistency between the survey answered by the students, and the semi-structured questions addressed to the professional group, I attempted as much as I could to control the information by asking the same questions and insisting on obtaining an answer. Basically, the questions which were rigourously applied to all interviewees concentrated around the themes of Ethnic Myths and Contemporary Indian Identity. These were: "Do you know the Aztec myth of foundation?"; "As a member of a different ethnic group, do you accept such a myth, and how do people in your ethnic region react to it?", "In your opinion is mestizaje a reality, a policy, a fabrication or an ideology? and "Explain any positive or negative contributions of mestizaje with respect to the situation of your ethnic group and to the country as a whole".

Finally, and in connection with the issue of Indian Identity: "If you were in control of mass media, how would you use this technology for the benefit of your ethnic group?". Depending on the availability of the informant, other concrete questions were aimed at exploring their views, programmes and ideas for rehabilitating ethnic cultures and histories. These semi-structured questions tackled aspects on Text-Books, History and Civic Heroes, such as: "What is your opinion about national education, text-books and Indian peoples?"; "Are text-books related to the educational needs and social environment of Indian pupils?". On Civic Heroes and History, I asked

questions like: "From an Indian point of view is Juárez or any other character of the national history a venerated figure?" and "In your opinion, how would Indian peoples be able to reconstruct their history?"

### The Composition of the Groups of Informants

#### i. The Indigenous Professionals and Intellectuals

The selection of this sample was determined by the following criteria whether the respondent has a graduate or post-graduate degree; undertakes academic and research activities or is involved in the state's programmes for education and indigenous affairs; produces and/or articulates ideas and opinions, given that they regularly publish or participate in editorial projects in an indigenous context; is involved with autonomous (or semi autonomous) organisations and campaigns whose goal is the recovery and diffusion of ethnic traditions, languages, history, customs, and so on; maintains close links with their native communities, even when they are city dwellers; have bilingual skills, that is, they are equally fluent speakers of the vernacular and Spanish languages.

Personal interviews were carried out in order to explore the contemporary opinions of this group with regard to historical themes and symbols of integration. The collection of this data required travelling and availability of time for the informants which meant that most of the interviews took place in the early hours of the morning, between working breaks, recreational periods and at weekends. However, carrying out these interviews provided me with the opportunity to observe their "ethnic domicile" and "working environments". For example, two Mayan informants from the southern peninsula of Yucatán offered me accommodation, thus I was able to observe the following: the vernacular is normally spoken on a daily basis within the family; the children are referred to by their Mayan names, and there is a perceived desire to revive and reinterpret under modern conditions the original domestic

architecture - in other words, my informant was reconstructing the "original Maya house" (Valladolid, Yucatán). I encountered a similar experience of "rebuilding" original housing in central Mexico (Tepeapulco, Tlaxcala), as my Nahua informant's house also demonstrates the maintenance of an almost extinct room distribution and decoration. These brief examples of the daily round help to illustrate the environment where some of my informants spend part of their lives and to appreciate the persistence of their socio-cultural convictions.

The following table shows the interviews in chronological order (1).

Table 1

"Characteristics of Interviewed Indigenous Professionals"

Date	Name	Sex	Ethnic Grp	Place
June 1991	JA	M	Tzotzil	Chiapas
June 1991	JVR	M	Tseltal	Chiapas
Agst 1991	GUG**	M	Purepecha	Michoacan
Sept 1991	BAC	M	Maya	Yucatan
Sept 1991	CECH	F	Maya	Campeche
Sept 1991	LRG	M	Nahua	Veracruz*
Nov 1992	MLGP	F	Maya	Yucatan*
Nov 1992	IJE	F	Tseltal	Chiapas*
Nov 1992	VC	M	Zapoteco	Oaxaca*
Dec 1992	FG	M	Mixteco	Oaxaca

(\*) The third September interview took place in Tlaxcala, the November interviews in Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo and the December interview in Mexico City.

(\*\*) The interview of this informant is not included in this section as his information was incorporated into Chapter 9.

This table of 10 individuals in no way attempts to include all Indian professionals and intellectuals who might conform to my definition, for example, IR (Purépecha), a

physician, or JSP (Nahnu), an anthropologist, ULG (Mixteco) a historian, and JJC (Mixteco) are not included simply because they were not in Mexico during the interviewing period. Unfortunately, two individuals, NHH (Nahua), a civil servant, and GB (Mixteco), a journalist, did not wish to participate in the interviews, however, both were very helpful indeed in defining the criteria for the sample selection and in establishing contacts with the interviewees.

The sample also excludes Indian or peasant leaders of political organisations, because their often militant and campaigning roles did not meet the criteria described above; for example, MRH (Tojolabal), head of FIPI - Independent Front of Indigenous Peoples -, and MD (Nahua), leader of the CNPAB - Nahua Council of the Peoples of the Alto Balsas -, or GD (Nahua) leader of CNPI -National Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Peoples -.

The interviewees form a small group and are from particular parts of the country, and may not satisfactorily represent all the ethnic groups in Mexico. However, their opinions are significant in the debate on the various elements of official nationalism because their views were collected systematically. Sociologically speaking, the group is not strictly a "representative sample", but a collection of views and opinions of educated indigenous people. Thus, when referring to them, I will use the words "group" of informants.

### Biographical Information

In this section, I will only offer biographical data on the group of professionals and intellectuals, according to the previous criteria, such as: place of origin, education, publications and editorial projects, participation in autonomous organisations and campaigns, and their present activities.

### Place Of Origin

The nine interviewees perceive themselves to be indigenous people, and two forms of criteria are illustrative of this fact. The objective criteria are that: they are speakers of non-European languages, maintain links with their home communities and regions, maintain close family and community relationships, participate in festivities, ceremonies and undertake religious duties. The subjective criteria are that: they have knowledge of their mythological or historical ancestry, are familiar with the symbols, history, legends and myths of their communities, ethnic groups or region; some of them have a knowledge of the symbols of collective identity (i.e. emblems and ethnic heroes) and are acquainted with the distinctive elements of their regions and ethnic groups, such as their history, geography, music, natural resources, flora and fauna, costumes, traditional customs and so on. They are also aware of the traits involved in the negative stereotypes of Indian identity (i.e. oppression, discrimination, subordination).

Their average age was between 45 and 55, excluding three female interviewees, and a Tseltal informant whose maximum age was 35. Their ages have a certain significance as it reveals that some members did not receive a standardised education, as this was introduced at the national level from the 1960's.

### Education

The indigenous professionals and intellectuals have a similar standard of professional training with respect to their non-indigenous counterparts. All of them have graduate degrees, and some of them post-graduate ones in disciplines related to studies of ethnicity, history and development. For example, FG has a master's degree in Development and Social Integration (Benito Juárez University, Oaxaca), JA has studied post-graduate anthropology at two American universities, and LRG holds similar qualifications in archaeology and history from Mexican and European institutions, VC is an editor and recognised poet, and JVR is a graduate ethnolinguist.

The situation of the female interviewees is different, and is one of clear disadvantage, not only with respect to the rest of the society, but with regard to their male Indian colleagues. Higher education for women in general is restricted at a national level; the ratio of academic staff in higher education in 1983 was four women for every ten men (Carreras 1989:614). This discrepancy undoubtedly applies to Indian women, who have even less means of achieving a professional education. Even so, the women of this group, MLGP and IJE, have received training in the teaching profession and ethnolinguistics, while CECH holds a graduate degree in Anthropology (University of Yucatán).

### Publications and Editorial Projects

The whole group has significant experience of publishing: the anthropological studies on the Maya by JA; the many specialised archaeological articles of LRG; the essays on human rights and development by FG; the poetry of VC, and the plays, tales and stories written by MLGP, IJE and JVR (2).

The majority of the interviewees are associated with editorial projects of an indigenous nature: FG was a founder member of Revista Etnias (1988), JA was also a founder member of the journal Nuestra Sabiduría (1992) of which IJE and JVR are regular contributors, LRG is a member of the editorial committee of the indigenist journal Ojarasca (1991) (formerly México indígena), BAC is the editor of Mayaón (Bulletin of Mayan Culture) (1987), while VC has a successful career as editorial director of the Zapoteco journal Guchachi' Reza (Sliced Iguana) (1975).

### Organisations and Campaigns

The recovery of indigenous cultures, history and languages from an ethnic point of view has led to the emergence of autonomous organisations of Indian professionals (cfr. Chapter 9), and the interviewees have played a crucial role in the



formation of these organisations. These groupings or associations have a variety of goals, some of them are concerned with the diffusion of Indian traditions and languages, while others are linked to a wider political agenda. For example: FG and NHH - not an interviewee - were leaders, ideologues and founders of ANPIBAC (The National Alliance of Indigenous Bilingual Professionals) and the Mayan branch of ANPIBAC was led by BAC. VC is well known as an ideologue of The Isthmus Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition (COCEI) (1974), a movement seeking municipal self-government for the Zapoteco region of Juchitán (Oaxaca) while The Maya House of Culture (1990) run by the Organisation of Maya Professionals was founded by the aforementioned BAC. FG participates in the study and diffusion of the Mixteco culture in the Research Center "Ñuu Savi" (1990) based at Nochixtlán, Oaxaca. VC, JA, BAC, NHH, IR and GB are regarded as the main intellectual organisers of the conferences, campaigns and seminars since 1992 (cfr. Chapter 9).

### Current Activities

The creative and productive activities of this group are diverse: most of them and their families obtain their living from academia, research and bureaucratic activities in state institutions and universities. FG is a lecturer in his discipline - Sociology - at the Benito Juárez University (Oaxaca), and LRG is also a lecturer - in History - at CIESAS (Mexico City) and the University of Tlaxcala (Tlaxcala). Both participate widely in national and international seminars and congresses and are frequently in demand as consultants.

Within the official education system, BAC is an inspector of Indian education in the Mayan region of Yucatán. Also in the Yucatán peninsula, CECH carries out research activities at the INI (Campeche), while MLGP researches and disseminates data on Mayan culture in the "Regional Unit of Popular Cultures" (Yucatán). In the southern state of Chiapas, JA runs the Department of Indigenous Cultures at the "Chiapaneco

Institute of Culture"; he is also the current president of the "Association of Writers in Indigenous Languages". JVR is a fellow at the "Centre of Culture and Arts" carrying out research on Maya linguistics. Lastly, VC writes poetry and edits the literary journal Guchachi' Reza.

Other informants contributing informally to this research were a group of Mayan women writers, whom I had the opportunity to interview during the "Third National Meeting of Writers in Indigenous Languages" (Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, November 1992). These writers claim their identity to be Mayan and they are of course speakers of Mayan languages, their literary interests are extremely diverse. However, in this study I have only concentrated on the works of a Tseltal playwright and a Tojolabal teacher and writer, this is because their activities fit the criteria of selection of informants described above. IJE (Tseltal) is a translator (Tseltal-Spanish) and compiler of tales, legends, stories and other forms of knowledge held by her community. She is also an actress and arguably the first Indian actress from the Chiapas Highlands region of southern Mexico. Her plays have recently been published (Montemayor (ed) 1992) under the auspices of the Federal Programme to Rehabilitate Indigenous Literature (cf. Ch 9). MRJP (Tojolabal) is an active campaigner for the recognition of her original language, and like the other female writers she is also engaged in the compilation of oral traditions and translations.

Let us now turn to the composition of the students who responded to the survey questionnaire.

## ii. The Indigenous Students in Higher Education

This section describes the sample formed by Indian people enrolled in institutions of higher education. The data was obtained through the application of the survey questionnaire previously described.

The CIESAS Masters's sample, 1989-1991, - Master in Indoamerican Languages - (henceforth MLI) are ten individuals

who answered the questionnaire on the 8th August, 1991. From the UPN Bsc. sample, 1990-1993, - Bachelor in Indigenous Education - (henceforth LEI) fifty questionnaires were completed between September 1991 and August 1992. Unlike the group of professionals, the students of these two institutions constitute a "representative sample" formed by 60 individuals.

Below I will present the biographical data of both sample groups. This is to establish the ethnic background and the previous education of these students in order to assess their perceptions regarding the permanence of the ethnic past and the imposition of official nationalism.

### MLI

Each academic year, only ten to twelve students seeking post-graduate education are admitted in the CIESAS's course, and ten of these completed questionnaires; the remaining two are students who were absent when the survey was undertaken. This group of ten individuals consists of nine males and one female. All of them are scholarship holders engaged in full-time study. Eight of the ten declared that an Indian language is their mother tongue, and the following languages are represented: Nahuatl, Totonaco, Chinanteco, Triqui, Chol and Tzotzil. This shows that the students are from areas with a high ethnic demographic concentration: Veracruz (948,778); Huasteca Potosina (291,612); Puebla (848,628); Oaxaca (1,615,780) and Chiapas (1,168,562) (1993) - total numbers of ethnic population in each state are shown in brackets - (INI - Subdirección de Investigación).

Three members of the post-graduate sample were trained as primary teachers, the other seven were university graduates; the first year of graduation was 1982 and the last 1990, with the majority graduating at the end of the 80's. The average date of birth is 1959, this means that their basic education coincided with the standardised national education and the uniform edition of text-books. All declared themselves to be Catholics.

## LEI

The total number of LEI students is 150. My sample is a third, i.e. 50 students, who answered the questionnaire during their first two semesters.

The sample of 50 comprises 27 females and 23 males. The ethnic composition is formed predominantly by Mixtecs (34) (See note 1), followed by Tzotziles (9), Nahuas (3), Triquis (2), Zapoteco (1) and Otomí (1).

Only 1 out of 50 declared having Spanish as their only language, i.e. 49 are bilingual and speak the languages described above. They are from four states with significant ethnic populations: Oaxaca (1,615,789); Chiapas (1,168,562); Guerrero (450,284) and Hidalgo (527,163) (1993) - total numbers of ethnic population in each state are shown in brackets - (INI -Subdirección de Investigación).

The registration requirements mean that the applicant must have experience in the teaching profession, therefore the majority, 40, have previously worked as primary teachers. The educational background of the remaining 10 was not revealed by the respondents themselves. The earliest date of birth is 1952 and the latest 1966, with 20 being born in the 50's and 23 at the beginning of the 60's; 7 individuals did not respond to this question.

All of them are familiar with the uniform text-books either through their experience as teachers or because they received a standard education as is revealed by their ages. The majority of the group, 36, are declared Catholics, but 14 did not respond to the question on religious affiliation, with no-one stating that they practiced another religion.

To summarise, the responses obtained were from 9 interviews addressed to indigenous professionals and intellectuals, and 60 questionnaires were answered by 10 students taking a Master's course (MLI) and 50 from a Bsc. course (LEI).

## Conclusion

In this research I have established the assumption that education is a facilitator of nationalism. Indian people who remain marginal to the influence of this modernist argument, that is to say, people who have received limited or no education, would hardly have provided meaningful empirical information. Consequently, a minority of educated Indians was selected in this study in order to explore the possibilities arising from the interconnections between ethnicity and modern nationalism. Three categories of educated ethnic people were analysed: one large group of undergraduates, one small group of post-graduates and another of professionals holding recognised academic qualifications.

The expansion of educational services of higher education for ethnic peoples is not limited to Mexico City; for example, Oaxaca, Yucatán and Michoacán are significant in this respect. Thus, the panorama of educated Indians is probably larger than the one presented here. Nevertheless, the study includes the most important centres of indigenous education (Mexico City) in terms of number of graduates and attention to specific subjects of ethnic interest. Although the students are temporary residents in Mexico City, the majority of professionals live in their places of origin. A salient criteria used in this research accounting for the selection of my informants, was that they should demonstrate the existence of permanent links with their ethnic regions. The expressions of a critical discourse constructed by this significant ethnic elite of educated people with respect to selected themes of ethnic and civic nationalism constitute the content of next chapters.

## Chapter 3

### **The Historical Transformation of Indian Identity**

The survival of Indian-ness in the period of nation-building is a fascinating and complex problem of cultural history. This history is intermingled with the building of the mestizo culture and almost impossible to separate from the history of the Indian; both are cultural products of the colonial society and did not exist before 1492. This has obliged me to attempt to re-formulate my initial statement in the following terms: assuming that Indians and the mestizo share the same colonial history, when and how was it that they became different and antagonistic social groups. For example, autochthonous Indians today are defined in terms of marginality and all its corollary connotations: low socio-economic status, subordination, inferiority, oppression, cultural and linguistic dissimilarities vis-à-vis the mestizo. The mestizo, on the other hand, epitomises the overcoming of the Indians' socio-cultural situation, hence being able to avoid a peripheral status.

In this chapter I examine some of the chief historical and cultural processes accounting for the divergence of the Indian from the mestizo. In my view, there are at least two reasons which indicate the historical permanence of a distinctive Indian-ness. Firstly, the Indians' capacity to adopt external cultural symbolic manifestations allows them to preserve forms of social cohesion and mobilisation. Secondly, the regular occurrence of ethnic conflict and tensions erupting from the early 19th century (within the context of state-formation) to the present day, in a variety of forms; for example, unequal social relationships between Indians and non-Indians, the Indians' status as culturally and racially inferior, neglect of development in ethnic areas, organised mobilisations and other forms of protest.

Contemporary Indian people clearly express, as will be demonstrated in the last section of this chapter, two perceptions derived from their constructed Indian-ness: a state of permanent conflict in terms of their social interreaction and a desire to forge images of positive identity devoid of stereotyped connotations (1).

### The Hispanicisation of Mesoamerica

Before addressing the subject I feel I must comment first on Gruzinki's use of the famous Náhuatl metaphor of "the net full of holes" (1993:15). According to the narrative of the "Annals of the Mexican Nation" (1528), "the net full of holes" was the legacy left to the Mexica after the massacre of the native nobility by the Spaniard Pedro de Alvarado in 1521 (León-Portilla, 1992:173). The various components of the narrative, immortalised in F.J. Clavijero's, monumental Ancient History of Mexico (1780), nullify the autonomous revival of the indigenous tradition by arguing that the Mexica tradition itself was destroyed and that therefore that expression in particular conveys the sense of loss of coherence and erosion of meaning brought about by the tremendous impact of the Spanish conquest. Gruzinki, like many other scholars is reluctant, however, to accept that a constructed indigenous view of the past or the means of transmitting it, (that is to say, to forge memory), were lost definitively in the centuries following the conquest. A rich colonial historiography authoritatively documents an extraordinary process of cultural construction and the adaptation of foreign and native symbolic and material elements, but not the fatalistic debacle of autochthonous cultural traditions. By the second half of the 16th century the process of reweaving the "torn net" had already started in native society, and the search for the threads linking "after" and "before" the conquest have been documented by scholars from different angles (Ricard 1966; Taylor 1979; Farriss 1984; Lockart 1992; Gruzinski 1993). In the words of L. Reyes, an informant for this research, and

a notable Nahua historian, generously recognised by Lockart (p.12):

"I think that Clavijero's historical representation contains a terrible, sinister ideology. This is the theory of 'decapitation' which argues that the people who held the Indian knowledge were murdered, with only a surviving peasant population who had no knowledge whatsoever; then, that peasantry had only one choice; either assimilation or disappearance" (Personal Interview to LRG Tlaxcala 23/8/1991).

The argument that the native population were not passive agents in the transformation of their societies throughout the colonial period (Spalding 1972) is also Gruzinski's point of view concerning the Indians' ability (or power of imagination) to perceive and accommodate the forms of "knowledge" and "communication", writing, reading, theatre, paintings, in order to ensure their survival and adaptation (Gruzinski 1993:57-58). Similarly, the initial Spanish socio-economic organisation, such as encomiendas (grant of Indian tribute and labour to a Spaniard), repartimientos (lands to be distributed), as well as the rural parish, municipalities and jurisdictions were built upon a pre-conquest Nahuátl form of organisation, the altepetl or "ethnic state" which according to Lockart, basing his study on Nahua sources, were settlements of people "holding sway over a territory" (Lockart 1992:14). The organisation of the altepetl reflected the existence and reproduction of "microethnicity" (p.27), as each altepetl or self-contained sub-unit was a sovereign entity with its own ethnic symbols (i.e. a temple and a market); and the altepetl was divided into sub-units or calpolli and these were formed by a number of households. The members of each altepetl practiced a cellular, modular form of labour organisation, as well as having a different dynastic ruler. The central region of Mexico was thus, deeply fragmented into a conglomeration of confederations, formed by simple or complex altepetl, lacking a single head. This form of ethno-social organisation, with similar divided linguistic ethnicities in the Maya region of Chiapas (Wasserstrom, 1989:22), was an expression of the surrounding socio-economic



needs for survival and the result of internal migrations and wars. It is interesting to note that this prevalence of ethnic fragmentation clashes with modern definitions of compact ethnic groups (Barth 1986; Smith 1986), which imply the historical evolution of a unified group of people possessing a single territory. Instead, as Lockart has revealed, each complex altepetl, within the same linguistic region and territory, had its own competing ethnic character and was economically interdependent on the others. However, Mexica rulers, according to the same author, attempted to use instrumental means to unify the group, for example, they sought to write and convey a unified history and to emphasise a single ruling dynasty, thus allowing the view that this central group was a homogeneous one even sharing a "common descent" as it was a single calpolli that witnessed the legend of foundation of the Mexica (Lockart 1992:24). It is not surprising therefore that the Mexica attempted to instill an earlier sense of unification and to rehearse an official history (Kobayashi 1985:83). According to this evidence, it seems to me that the existence of cohesion, solidarity and mobilisation of cultural resources which allow modern native groups to act in the pursuit of a collective interest (Urban and Sherzer 1991:4) are determined by agents or processes (i.e. institutions, state, church, migrations or war) operating at a supra-ethnic level. Therefore, present Amerindian ethnicities (characterised by their complex fragmentation) are preceded by a multilayered and overlapping influence of cultural traditions, and by no means could these be defined as historical evolutions preserved almost intact internally.

That the native dimension of Mesoamerica was a fragmentation of ethnic sub-units, and efforts were made by some dynastic rulers to portray a sense of unified solidarity, became of little relevance as the colonial period progressed, because the original forms of organisation began to disappear from the early years of the 16th century onwards. "Pueblo", the Spanish word for both settlement and people (irrespective

of size), became the dominant designation for the former altepetl and the native people and it remains so today. Does this not afford a primary explanation that the construction of Indian-ness signifies a gradual process of unification? "Pueblo" and "Indian" were constructed colonial perceptions, trans-altepetl and trans-ethnic, encapsulating and simplifying the vast and fragmented autochthonous diversity. The effect of colonial unification was also observed on the inner stratification of Amerindian societies based on elites and the mass of the people as these categories were eliminated by homogenising the division of labour. The Mayas, according to Farriss (1984), irrespective of whether they were batab (nobility) or macehual (labourers), became farmers and were placed at the bottom of the social structure (p.165); (Wasserstrom 1989:24). By contrast, the elites (pipiltin) in central Mexico assisted the Spanish enterprise of evangelisation; Gruzinski, for example, documents the creative capacity of the nobility to adapt the new techniques of communication (tri-dimensionality, realism and the Latin alphabet) in order to convey new religious meanings. Historians have commented on the easy assimilation of the nobility into Spanish structures, but this social group did not survive the 18th century with deculturation, loss of influence and mortality accounting for their disappearance (Gibson 1960). Hence, the ongoing construction of Indian-ness was not necessarily influenced by the protection of cultural traditions by native elites, on the contrary, due to their significant hispanisation, the nobility were likely to expand and construct the mestizos' mores and culture. If the construction of mestizo and Indian identity ran parallel, and both were exposed to the increasing effects of Spanish territorial organisation, immigration and evangelisation, what are the major indicators which allow for a separate Indian-ness? In my opinion the more durable basis of identity for the people who did not become mestizos was the fervent embracing of Catholic iconography, acquired along with other important traits, during the three stages of hispanicisation portrayed

by Lockart: a) 1519 to ca. 1545-50; b) ca. 1545-50 to ca. 1640-50; c) 1640-50 to 1800 and after (p.428).

By the early 19th century, the Nahua society (and very likely all other sedentary Mesoamerican societies, although this would depend on the number of Spaniards settling in the region or on the self-contained environment accounting for the relative isolation of the Maya), already had a noticeable Spanish character in terms of language (expansion of bilingualism); forms of government (substitution of the altepetl organisation); disappearance of encomienda and repartimiento in favour of individual arrangements and elimination of the ranks of the nobility (Lockhart 1992:428). In the cultural realm, Lockart and Gruzinki have concluded that western forms of symbolic representations and styles of art became dominant (e.g. the linear conception of history, music, the Latin alphabet, tri-dimensionality, perspective and realism). Religious art and architecture lost their mid-16th century monumentality to allow the spread of small Spanish-style parish churches. Finally, the development of Christianisation, which was first observed in massive baptisms, and the introduction of the principles of monotheism (Ricard 1966) gradually led to a proliferation of the worshipping of saints. The extent of the veneration of saints and particularly of Marianism is still expressed in the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a widely researched proto-national symbol of identity used as the banner of the 1810 insurgent independence movement (2).

These stages of gradual acculturation correlated with demographic phenomena and once again Lockart provides helpful information. The period 1519-1540 ended with a major epidemic, allowing for the commencement of the intermediary stage through 1640 which observed the consolidation of the cultural traits introduced in the first stage, such as devotion to saints, the substitution of the encomienda and religious syncretism expressed in art. This incorporation of new cultural elements was possible due to the fact that young generations were, perhaps, more likely to have survived the

1540 epidemic. This youth factor was interrelated with two likely parallel effects of the epidemic: the high rate of infant mortality and the decimation of the older generations, suggesting that the young survivors had access to a dominant position much earlier and for a longer time. The second epidemic of 1570 also allowed the emergence of a new generation which was not aware of the cultural traits of the pre-conquest years, nor the initial phase of hispanicisation, in other words, this generation developed within a substantially hispanic environment. Lockart also argues that the last cultural transition took place within a slow demographic pace and this could explain the fact that the Spanish language became the almost dominant form of expression in the Nahua area (pp. 433-435). According to this analysis, demographic causes facilitated the hispanicisation of Mesoamerica, and I shall refer next to another complementary and significant development, the forms of contact with Spanish society and immigration.

From the beginning of the conquest relationships between Indian women and Spanish men appear to have been commonplace. Two factors explain the rise of miscegenation: firstly, the first settlers arrived without women and secondly, indigenous women were separated from their male counterparts by the imposition of various forms of forced labour on the male population. The imposition of new economic institutions and power relationships also favoured the rise of miscegenation, for example, by kidnapping women during the subjugation of communities, through enslavement, or by the introduction of the system of encomiendas and the organisation of indigenous women as servants and concubines (Morner 1967:22-24). The multiplication of unions between native women and newly arrived Spaniards and African slaves became a central concern of the Church which felt that the achievements of its evangelical work were being undermined. The Crown issued three major instructions aimed at controlling the number of these unions. The first instruction emphasised the acceptability of marriage between male Spaniards and the daughters of the

indigenous nobility provided these women "were the heirs of their parents" or "in the absence of sons", in this way all native landlords could eventually become "Spaniards". The second instruction was addressed to the encomenderos: "they were ordered to marry within three years or, if already married but living alone, to send for their wives from Spain under penalty of losing their encomiendas" (Morner 1967:23). Finally, the Church showed little sympathy for unions between Africans and Indians; until 1768 there existed an ecclesiastical recommendation implying that Indians should marry "members of their own race" or, if possible, Spaniards (López Sarrelangue 1973:4). The instruction addressed to encomenderos that they risked losing their lands and Indian labourers if they did not legitimise their unions resulted in a rise in female immigration from Spain. The settlement of a Spanish female population had two consequences: i) the custom of Spaniards marrying indigenous noblewomen declined; ii) Spanish women were extremely efficient at introducing new fundamental structures and core values of colonial social organisation based on the European model of the patriarchal family (Muriel 1946; Lavrín 1972;1978). The model of the Christian family was developed under the guidance of these immigrant women, transmitted to their creole descendants through the introduction of the "honest policy and a good way of living" (D'Azambuja 1908:73; Tavard 1973:133).

The immigration of women and settlement of Spanish families required the re-organisation of households to accommodate the new settlers and this demanded a domestic labour force supplied by the Indian population. Although this has not been sufficiently researched in Mexico, a Peruvian comparison seems fitting (Burkett 1978). Here widespread domesticity of Indian women gave rise to stereotypical prejudices of Indian identity (i.e. subordination, inferiority, humility) associated with the menial nature of the work. At the same time, families and homes became, metaphorically speaking, "centres of acculturation" in which Indian women learned Spanish and became familiar with Hispanic

customs, habits and lifestyles due to their daily contact with Spaniards or creoles (Cuevas 1921:369). Lockart has also pointed out that increasing contact between Indian and hispanic societies in the realms of residential domesticity, trade and the workplace, helped to explain the spread of bilingualism and other forms of cultural exchange (p.450). In Yucatán, the Maya were also large providers of services for the newly constructed towns, cities and households (Farriss 1984:52).

The task of hispanicisation, historiographically speaking, ended at the turn of the 19th century. The mestizo had been incorporated into new working places, the towns and the new cultural product was ready to face the challenges which would convert them into the core of a nation. But this story is too optimistic. Certainly, not all Indians became mestizos. The colonial period, as we have seen, allowed the semantic unification of the socio-territorial microethnicity into "Indians and "Pueblo", but such ideological unification did not completely erode the possibility of creating socio-ethnic forms of protection beneath the large process of colonial subordination. The colony, as Farriss has said, was not a totalising enterprise. Next, I shall briefly discuss the forms of cohesion provided by veneration of saints, a colonial phenomenon of proven durability in contemporary Indian identity.

Evangelisation began with the baptism of "pueblos", towns, and peoples using saints' names. The local adoption of patron saints became a form of collective identity and reinforced communal organisation because the saint symbolised the founding of the "pueblo", while the communal devotion around the selected saint, the rise of a parish and feasts of commemoration were factors which distinguished and reaffirmed the cultural character of each people or town (Gruzinski 1993:240). Some forms of social cohesion around the cult of Catholic imagery resembled the former altepetl, for example, the cellular style of organisation amongst the members of the "pueblo" (brotherhoods) facilitated the dissemination of the

cult of saints, and provided the means to solidify internal cohesion separating the Indians from Spaniards, mestizos and blacks; non-Indians could not form part of the brotherhood, nor to have access to functions of mayordomos (foreman) (Gruzinki 1993:241). Other forms of Indian collective behaviour, such as drinking, homicide and rebellion, have also played a role in shaping communal cohesion and identification during the process of adjustment to colonial life (Taylor 1979).

Although, the forms of social organisation around the cult have obviously seen transformations since colonial times, as demonstrated by anthropological studies (Wauchope 1964), the relevance of understanding Indians' adaptation of Christianity is largely because it served to create a novel form of collective identity, one that helped to preserve the coherence of specific communities, perhaps mirroring the peculiar ethnic fragmentation within the Amerindian societies. In other words, the existence of small compartments of identification around saints responds to the non-existence of supra ethnicity in terms of visible signs of identity of compact ethnic groups. That saints are still of great importance to modern Indian life is reflected (apart from the large volume of anthropological literature in Mesoamerica) in the fact that of the sixty questionnaires answered by graduate and post-graduate students, only three stated that the most important celebration was not that of the patron saint of their communities or "pueblos". It goes without saying that the students who responded to the research questionnaire, declared themselves to be loyal to the specific saint of their communities, and do not feel identification with a wider religious symbol, even when such communities belong to the same ethnic region and linguistic group. In the light of this evidence, it seems to me that microethnic identification continues to be the norm amongst those native communities today that are generically described as Indians. To this state of fragmented identification one can add the fact that ten million Indians are grouped into fifty six ethnic groups

divided by a linguistic map formed by one hundred and twenty three languages belonging to fifteen linguistic families (Ligorred 1992:19;83-87).

### Indian Revolts and the Liberal State

A powerful ideology of cultural continuity backed up by creole patriotic themes (i.e. Aztec grandeur, hatred of Spanish immigrants and the spiritual protection of the Virgin of Guadalupe) (Brading 1991:562-564) preceded the emergence of the independent Mexican state. Once the new state was established, it envisaged the creation of a nation (a homogeneous and vertical community), but without the help of the above mentioned ideology of continuity. The founders of the Liberal state broke, first, with the eulogised past and, second, with the Catholic undertaking and its most notable product, the Indian and this meant increasing subordination of native societies in the emerging national project.

Numerous Indian rebellions and violent protests virtually throughout the country (Reina 1980), clearly illustrate the extent of ethnic tension resulting from the new state's economic agenda which basically relied on commercial agriculture and concentration of land. In the national imagination of the 19th century: "The Indian races still conserve their own nationality protected by family and language, they remain unaware of national identity" (Ramírez quoted by Brading 1991:661). Liberals and the press were united in favour of the demise of the Indian, justifying the seizure of communal land and their subjection (Hale 1989). In the next section, I will argue that the capacity of some Indian groups to react and generate conflict against the united stand of the national society, will imprint new historical features on their evolving ethnic identity. The moment at which Indians managed to express organised reaction to subordination is the moment when one can start tracing the history of the Indians as separate from the mestizo.

The complexity of a state undergoing its process of



formation was reflected in the character and frequency of Indian revolts. The revolts of the 19th century can be categorised as follow: i) peasant support for the anti-colonialist (and anti-imperialist) defence of the state, ii) violent reactions against communal land seizure, and iii) mobilisations in defence of ethnic interests.

The type of ethno-peasant mobilisation emerging in the context of foreign occupation is highly variable and thus, the most prone to theoretical confusion. In 1847, a revolt in the western Mexican territory (Sierra Gorda), occurred partly as a reaction to the state seizure of communal land to obtain the means to finance the war against the intervention of the United States (1847-48), and partly as an alliance to defend the national territory. Examples of the latter were also found in Veracruz (1845-1849) and Morelos (1848-1849) (Reina 1980:293). In other cases, peasants from Puebla joined the troops of the French army (1861) and fought against the Mexican government in an attempt to protest against the increase of taxes to subsidise the war, but there were also revolts in support of the republican cause combining claims for land restitution in central part of Mexico (Mallon 1988; Thomson 1991) (cfr. Ch 4). Similar situations occurred in the central highlands of Peru where guerrilla bands emerged in 1882 and 1883 to defend their interests against the occupation by the Chilean army and in collaboration with local landowners, after a dispute over nitrate resources. Other uprisings resisting taxes and forced conscription appealed to Indians and landowners followed by peasants and Chinese merchants (Mallon 1978:232-3). The confusion arising from this intricate fabric of collective interests against foreign invaders is, according to the study of Mallon in the case of the Andes, because these protests are characterised as "peasant" nationalisms (also termed by Mallon, nationalist movements) (p.234). However, I have one objection to this characterisation and this is that since these mobilisations did not aim to overthrow the sovereignty of the Peruvian or any other state, and were not backed up by any ethno-political

project of self-determination, they cannot be termed "peasant" nationalisms; even when Mallon warns us that this type of nationalist movement "stretches the very boundaries of the categories traditionally used to analyze nationalism" (p. 233). H. Bonilla (1978:219) responding to this debate has also argued against Mallon's characterisation. For Bonilla, the combination of blacks, Indians and Chinese fighting the Chilean invaders, was not activated by nationalistic convictions (which cannot be confused with popular perceptions of the outsider or ethnic resentments), these were unresolved colonial cleavages erupting within the context of the formation of the independent Peruvian state. The national integration of an ethnically complex peasantry (formed by Indians, blacks and Chinese) was a process gradually aided by the state and not the spontaneous result of anti-foreign sentiments (Bonilla 1978:230). For a nationalist peasant uprising to exist, it should be supported by a regional base, with an absence of localised identity, but existence of solidarity across villages, and none of these seem to have been prevalent in the characterisations of peasant rebellions described above (Taylor 1979:145).

I shall return to discuss the importance of cultural cohesion in evaluating the "ethnicist" and "nationalist" claims amongst Maya peasants of the past century. But first, let us briefly refer to the widespread popular unrest of Mexican Indians in the mid-19th century. Reina, in the above-mentioned study, shows that such a recurrent peasant protest was due to a) the increasing concentration of land fostered by the Liberal legislation of 1856 which transformed communal lands into private properties, and b) the intolerable working conditions of a free labour force recruited to work in the plantations growing commercial products such as tobacco, henequen (agave) and sugar cane (pp.21-24). Peasant protests continued until the end of the 19th century, reinforced by legislation favouring the colonisation of "empty lands" and the increasing commercial value of estates. Further popular protest found political expression in the mestizo (and Indian)

armed movement of 1910 (Knight 1986).

A mixture of indigenous reaction against land seizures, the enforced recruitment (and mistreatment) of labour force, messianic symbolism and racial hatred as a result of the increasing economic power of non-Indian elites, motivated the intense and bloody rebellions of the so-called "War of the Castes": Yucatán (1847-1853) and Chiapas (1869) (3). The fear produced by these rebellions in the perception of 19th century Mexican society was motivated by a series of factors, namely: fragmentation of territorial boundaries (e.g. the secession of Texas and US intervention), foreign threats to republican sovereignty (cfr. Ch 4), and the belief that the destruction of the "Hispano-American race" (D. Brading referring to newspapers of the period), could be caused by the irresponsibility of "arming barbarian tribes" (p.642). To this climate of anxiety, one has to add the explosive manifestation of a messianic syncretism derived from colonial Catholicism (much scorned by the founders of the Liberal state) acting as an ideology of ethnic cohesion.

The emergence of the Yucatán Maya uprising gained strength during the regional conflict of non-Indian elites fighting amongst themselves motivated by antagonistic objectives (i.e. centralism and separatism), and some Mayas fought beside the separatists having been given the promise of land restitution (1840). However, seven years later, separatists and centralists joined forces to combat a well organised Maya rebellion, occupying two thirds of the peninsula, alleging the extermination (or expulsion) of the white population from the Yucatán territory. This inter-racial war, to which the non-Indian population responded violently, relied on a non-hierarchical form of guerrilla mobilisation, the supply of arms from British Honduras, and ideological reinforcement around the cult of the "Speaking Cross" (Cruz Parlante) (Reina 1980:363-415).

Messianism developed in the Highlands of Chiapas in response to the extremely poor living conditions of a population already exhausted by land confiscation, excessive

church taxation, and abuse. The fabrication of the cult around the "Speaking Stones" (Piedras Parlantes) by a couple of Tzeltal people, served to reject the mediation of the local parish which helped to perpetuate the severe exploitation of the Indians by non-Indian merchants and landlords (Reina 1980:45-57). Unlike the so-called nationalistic revolts of late 19th century Peru, the Maya rebellions were motivated by a powerful ethnic symbolism to counteract the economic dominion of a differently perceived non-Indian society. Moreover, as argued by Reina, the Yucatán uprising managed to unleash a separate ethno-political project (i.e. demands for cultural autonomy) (p.37).

Indian rebellions, like other forms of protest, were fiercely combatted by the central government, the civil population, the elites and the army using several strategies of coercion, for example, encouraging internal division, superiority of armament, recruitment of indigenous leaders, territorial division (e.g. in 1902 the Yucatán peninsula was divided into three federal governments: Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo), harrassment of villages and systematic execution. The latter reached enormous proportions and concerns were aired that they were in danger of exterminating the "labour force" which would lead to the bankruptcy of commercial plantations. The deportation of Indians as slaves was a widely used measure to subdue Indian strife while preserving economic interest: Mayas were sent to Cuba, Baja California, Sierra Gorda and Zacatecas (1869); Tseltales to northern areas of Mexico (1869) and northern Yaquis to the Yucatán peninsula (1906) (Reina 1980).

These various examples of Indian revolts are illustrative of Indians' capacity to defend their own interests and react against the generalised state of their submission. This capacity of certain Indian groups to attain political visibility (Adams 1991:199) was due to the existence of some degree of internal collective organisation; for example: the investment of time and resources, sacrifice, search for social cohesion by recourse to supernatural forces and rituals, and

the election and following of leaders. The gradual shift from passive subordination to open protest also allowed for the construction of antagonistic perceptions (ethnic and racial hatred) between Indians and non-Indians. However, the significant aspect is that such rival perceptions have forged an enduring feature of ethno-social relationships: mutual distrust and fear. Fear existed on behalf of the dominant society with respect to Indian rebellions, while Indians mobilised in response to the violence and aggression of the non-Indians.

### The "Net Full of Holes" Revisited?

Contemporary Indian-ness consists of a multilayered legacy of cultural traditions derived from historical and social transformations. These are the arguable vestiges of pre-conquest years, the durability of colonial Catholicism in helping to provide mechanisms of social cohesion, the capacity of protest against repression, as well as the influence of the modern policies of the nation-state (i.e. education, acculturation). Indian ethnic identity is also an ongoing process of construction immersed in dominant patterns of advanced capitalism. Recent research on the transnational collective migration of Mixteco people highlights the capacity to resist, transform (or reconstruct) identity in faraway places (e.g. San Quintin Valley, California) by groups whose signs of cultural identification have been severely disrupted in their own place of origin (Oaxaca, Mexico) (Nagengast and Kearney 1990).

When discussing Indian-ness in the modern nationalistic period, it is very tempting to start the enquiry by addressing the survival of the cultural legacies of the past. Since the Indian is, explicitly or implicitly, associated with pre-Colombian times, the method used to test a reconstruction of Indian identity is to measure the modern vitality of past cultural experiences. The study of J. Friedlander (1970) investigates the meaning of "being Indian", according to the

salience of Pre-hispanic cultural traits in the everyday life of a Nahua village of four thousand people. Two main results can be derived from the study of the "Hueyapeños". Firstly, Indian identity in the village does not preserve any pre-Hispanic legacy (excepting linguistic aspects) (p.84), not even the members of the community are aware of or interested in the existence of such a past (p.194). However, they are called "Indians" by outsiders; an insulting connotation for the members of the village, because "being Indian" is being marginal, poor, and lacking material consumption of hispanic elements. The Hueyapeño identity is truly one of socio-cultural disadvantage, they lack a culture of their own, unsuccessfully try to emulate the dominant hispanic culture, and still have a "negative" and "inferior" perception of themselves (pp. 71, 76). The second result adds even more contradictions to such an unprivileged position. Indian-ness is an ideological fabrication for the construction of the national culture because Indians remain associated with an imaginary pre-Hispanic legacy and this has the value of maintaining cultural originality (p.xvi). Similar research in Bolivia (Abercrombie 1992) also discusses the current practice of the non-Indian society in constructing romantic stereotypes of the "Indian" linked to the past.

Friedlander (and Abercrombie) have convincingly demonstrated that the narrow search for Indian-ness in terms of the vitality of the pre-Hispanic past must necessarily lead to a disappointing result. Similar types of romanticism are to be found in those arguments suggesting that ethnic socio-cultural organisations remain framed in intact "forms and structures of oppression and exploitation" which perpetuate the ineffectiveness of the Indians' political mobilisation (Díaz-Polanco 1992:291). Thus, I will argue in favour of the Indian capacity to adapt and mobilise to survive in hostile cultural environments, and to show that Indian-ness is not only a static and fossilised expression of "negative" inferiority, but a state of social awareness resulting from a prolonged existence of discrimination. The social awareness

that some ethnic individuals have, also manifests itself in the need to forge and reconstruct dignified images of Indian-ness and many of my informants expressed the desire for revivalism in the search of ethnocentrism. Let me now turn to analyse the opinions of my group of interviewees. These opinions are organised under two headings: perceptions of social exclusion and positive images of Indian identity.

### The Self-Protection of Marginal Peoples

These statements are grouped according to the region of origin of my informants.

#### **Chiapas. Tseltal Linguist**

**JVR:** "I deeply dislike the inequality of social relations and the discrimination that Indian peoples suffer, because the Indian is politically and socially a marginal individual. Non-Indian people still regard indigenous people as inferior and useless beings; our thoughts are not valid, nor are our language or culture.

"The mestizos are changing their way of looking us, they are beginning to understand our reality, and this is changing a little, for example, San Cristóbal used to be a very racist town, but at the same time, the nearest town to the Chiapas Highlands and the Indians and their everyday life have exercised a lot of pressure in order to be accepted. Things are changing and it is not the same as before, but this is because of our pressure, and clearly, it is because, we Indians, have resisted abandoning our culture, and have preserved our language and dress. The mestizo is beginning to accept that it would be difficult to eliminate our Indian-ness".

#### **Chiapas. Tojolabal Teacher and Writer**

**MRJP:** "We have always been aware of our situation, because, we, Indians, have suffered too much. On an everyday basis we see people of our race suffering because of the injustices committed against us. We would like to do something about this, but it is our poverty which bring us the injustice. Through my own work I like to believe I do something to express the positive side, the beauty of my

people, as my work consists of recording and writing the traditions of the people, we would like to do that before everyone dies, the elderly have an immense literary mind, through them we would like non-Indian people to know the kind of people we are. My first concern is to demonstrate to the mestizo that they have offended us very much, and that they have to respect us and respect our language and culture. It is very important for our lives to be able to say that we reject a national language (Spanish). I had the collective opportunity to express such an individual sentiment the 12th October (1992) during an event against the 500 hundred years in San Cristóbal. For me, it was the beginning of a process to express our situation, I am sure that such a collective sentiment would not stop, even children were blaming their situation of exploitation. I think, this is just an act of justice and we are right to express it as such, because people have to recognise that we have been mistreated, discriminated and offended. I feel real sadness for all that has happened to us".

#### **Oaxaca. Mixteco Senior University Lecturer**

**FG:** "The relationship between Indians and non-Indians is expressed firstly in the ideological realm, this being the problem of cultural inferiority. The fact that, I think, I have the right to snatch your merchandise at the entrance of a market, and you accept such an act of violence, signifies that there is no labour relationship, but a situation of inferiority and superiority. This type of abuse is observed in Chiapas or Oaxaca, where social relationships are based on traditionalism and where the colour and social status of the individual are stronger, in other words, where mestizaje has not managed to cross barriers. A person is identified in terms of place of origin, dress, language, manners, these are the signs of social identity, and these signs allow the construction of discrimination. Thus, in order to avoid discrimination, the Indian is ready to take objective measures to protect him or herself, he/she is going to disguise or conceal his/her objective signs of identity: dress, language and origin. There are other questions that are linked to the situation of discrimination, and these are related to new problems such as issues of consciousness and identity.

"The first is the political manipulation and political invisibility of Indian peoples. The most evident manifestation of the former is to take Indian people



dressed in their original costume to political meetings, in this way, one can argue that it is not merely taking people to rallies, but of people with special significance, then, the Indians are asked to be present with all their Indianness at just that particular moment so as to legitimise a political candidate or a development project. There are more examples of this, one is indigenismo (cfr. Ch 8). The second problem, is political invisibility, that is to say, the absence of ethnic people in the construction of a nation, this is a nation built on ambivalence. Article 27 of the Constitution establishes that all land belongs to the nation, but who is the nation in this case? I remember the history of my pueblo, when we wanted that our tongue to be officially recognised. We lost the battle, but we realised that we had played a game at a disadvantage, because we have no place in this nation, we have not participated in its ideological construction and we have no rights".

In these opinions one can appreciate a situation of socio-cultural awareness derived from the historical subordination of Indian peoples. Discrimination was highly perceived amongst these informants as a result of the continuing existence of signs of cultural distinctiveness, that is to say, due to the open display and practice of some visible signs of identity (i.e dress, language, manners, origin). It was interesting to note, that one such sign of identity, dress, was commented on in two different situations, exemplifying both the reaction and manipulation of the dominant society: the Tseltal from Chiapas referred to the importance of preserving signs of distinctiveness as a mechanism to put pressure on the dominance of the mestizo in predominantly ethnic areas; the Mixteco informant commented on the widespread practice of using ethnic traditions for the political consumption of non-Indians. The rejection of this kind of folkloric manipulation, or cultural seizure, is not passive as can also be seen in the following comment of MLGP, a Maya writer:

"Mayas reject the folkloric manipulation of our symbols and wisdom. It has been customary that in certain official events, people are asked to dance their traditional dances, when a bureaucrat comes here. Similarly, we reject the so-called Maya princes or priests; a truly Maya healer would never allow himself to be used for purposes alien to the group, Maya people are aware of that".

Given that the self-perceived Indian is generally exposed to a permanent situation of conflict as a result of the display of their "visible signs of identity", the comment of the above mentioned FG throws light on the matter: the individual would take objective measures of self-protection in order to avoid harassment, discrimination or embarrassment (e.g. Friedlander recorded that the "Huayapeños" avoided speaking Spanish outside the village) (1970:74). Some mechanisms of self-protection might signify a desire by the individual to emulate the dominant culture or to reject his/her own. However, I would suggest that the ambivalence of this identity continues to express itself within an environment of concealment and discretion. Although it is not easy to find ready-made, concrete evidence to support this suggestion, one can bring into the discussion Gruzinki's analysis of the privacy and discretion of the domestic realm (together with the representation of landscape) helping Indians to conceal the only microcosmos which could exclude the intrusion of Spanish censorship (1993:91;146;176). Since Gruzinki embarks on the impressive task of finding the continuing existence and transformation of the Indian immaginaire, he has taken seriously the possession of privacy and discretion where other important protective traits managed to survive such as idolatry and healing (p.172). My suggestion could be refuted by using Gruzinski's colonial arguments, but in discussing the possibility that identity survives in an environment of discretion due to pervasive repression, the argument of the Tojolabal teacher above cited "I had the collective opportunity to express such an individual sentiment (...) to respect our languages and cultures", further confirms

the view that the public domain is normally not available for Indians to express themselves or exteriorise their thoughts (4).

One of the principal aims of this research is to explore perceptions that Indian people, the students and professionals, have of themselves, of their collectives and of non-Indian society. This exploration will attempt to assess the subjective basis from which Indian identity derives. In order to find out meaningful data on the way in which Indian people perceive the rest of society, I asked the students to state their opinion on the following questions:

1. Which of the following aspects of Mexico do you approve of most?

- i. the indigenous tradition
- ii. the Indian peoples
- iii. the mestizo people
- iv. the white people

2. Which of the following aspects of Mexico do you disapprove of most?

- v. discrimination
- vi. inequality
- vii. poverty of the Indian peoples

My first question sought to find the extent of "self-esteem" amongst students. I also added, a fourth possibility, "the indigenous tradition" in order to find out whether students add value to "traditions" or, conversely, disregard the socio-cultural situation of the indigenous population. In other words, to measure the influence of a common statement which reflects the Indians' place in society: "I like Indian traditions, but dislike Indian people". The second question had the intention of measuring students' opinion on those aspects of society which predominantly affect ethnic life.

Table 2  
 "Indigenous students' approval of Mexico"  
 MLI LEI

Theme	A.	B.	N-R	Total	A.	B.	N-R	Total
i.	9	0	1	10	43	0	7	50
ii.	2	0	8	10	17	0	33	50
iii.	0	9	1	10	0	43	7	50
iv.	1	9	0	10	2	48	0	50

Key: i. the indigenous tradition    Key: A. I approve of it  
 ii. the Indian peoples            B. I do not approve of it  
 iii. the mestizo people  
 iv. the white people

What the students value most is the indigenous tradition (9 and 43 responses respectively). From the highest score of non-responses obtained on "Indian peoples" (8 and 33) it may be deduced that uncertainty prevails among the students regarding their self-esteem as indigenous peoples. It is also possible that this picture is incomplete, given that there is a positive response towards Indian peoples, and given that the more favourable "I approve of it" was offered (2 and 17) than the response "I do not approve of it" (0 and 0).

The results shown above are not entirely surprising. Some Indians perceive their identity in terms of stagnation, vulnerability and lacking clear concepts and meanings, but this has an important explanation. Non-dominant ethnic cultures, in the Gellnerian tradition, beyond the level of the village, lack the means to engender cohesion and to construct and reproduce homogenised meanings. This concern is illustrated by the following comment, from a Tzeltal female writer, which exposes a self-critical view of "being told to be a Maya", without being sure what it is to be a Maya.

IJE: "My view is that the identity of the Mayas' today is still locked in a colonial framework. We need to overcome this stage. We need to reconstruct the meaning of the Maya. History tells us: the Maya were mathematicians, constructed

this and that city and were astronomers, but this not enough to be a Maya; it is important, I think, to be able to feel the process of construction of Maya identity. It is not enough to say "I am a Maya person", Maya, but in what sense? We are still lacking an explanation constructed by ourselves telling us what is the meaning of being a Maya, why we call ourselves Mayas. But we are the ones who would have to come to terms with such a search; the Mayas would have to find an explanation for themselves. But this is still not clear. In the region where I live, there are eight different languages, plus the linguistic variations, we have problems of communication amongst the Maya. For example, the writers and playwrights of my region, who form part of the recently formed Association of Zoque Writers, organise monthly gatherings and this is the only way to overcome problems of communication and interchange of ideas, in these meetings we realise that we are not only discussing our individual problems of how to publish our compilations and writings, we end up discussing our isolation.

Continuing with the results of the table, the data shows scant regard among the Indian students with respect to the mestizo: there is a high disapproval score (9 and 43) and a zero rating for "I approve of it" (0 and 0). With respect to the valuation of white people this is slightly lower than the mestizo: (9 and 48 disapproval) and (1 and 2 approval). It is evident that the Indian students show a preference for their counterparts, and reject the mestizo and white peoples in similar proportion. This data can be interpreted as these students having interiorised a constructed opinion of themselves which differs antagonistically from the other socio-cultural groups, in other words, they accept that they do not belong to the dominant sectors of the population. In the opinion of a Maya civil servant:

**BAC:** "Any member of the dominant society who does not consider himself as forming part of the Indian race, will not be interested in learning or assimilating Indian languages or values. Similarly, members of Indian communities who have managed to go to school might learn the educational contents of the national society, but they do not fully understand its meanings because these are

totally alien to the way of life of Indian peoples".

The information obtained in response to the second question, what do you disapprove of most about Mexico?, shows that "discrimination" is intolerable (7 and 21); by the same token, so is "inequality" among Indian and non-Indian peoples (7 and 24). Obviously, material poverty is unacceptable (8 and 22). See table below.

Table 3

"Indigenous students' disapproval of aspects of Mexico"

MLI

LEI

Theme	A.	B.	N-R	Total	A.	B.	N-R	Total
v.	1	7	2	10	17	21	12	50
vi.	1	7	2	10	14	24	12	50
vii.	1	8	1	10	13	22	15	50
Total	3	22	5		44	67	39	

Key: v. discrimination  
vi. inequality

Key: A. I disapprove  
B. I strongly disapprove

vii. poverty of Indian peoples

This data is useful in determining the bases of a separate identity. The students positively identify with their own people, they recognise the socio-cultural characteristics that differentiate them from the mestizo or white groups, and are aware of the socio-economic problems that affect Indian societies such as discrimination, inequality and material poverty.

The ideological weight of the word Indio as the fundamental marker of an identity associated with pejorative connotations is a much more complicated situation than the commonly accepted polarisation of Indian versus non-Indian. Indians identify and designate themselves in a variety of forms expressing their place of origin and labour relationships. In my fieldwork experience I became acquainted with a large vocabulary used by these individuals in order to

avoid the word Indio as a source of identification. References are first to the place of origin: the coast, the highlands, the lowlands; which implies the linguistic region and then concrete references are made to the town or pueblo of origin. A complete form of geographical and linguistic identification would be: a Mixteco from the highlands, a Nahuatl from the centre. Words pointing out companionship or comradeship used in the Spanish language by the mestizo society (e.g. compañero, cuate) are little used while terms such as paisano (peasant country fellow) or compita (short for kinship relations) are widely used. The most important of all these designations, are the words bilingue (bilingual person) or maestro bilingue (bilingual teacher) which denote positions of status and respectability among non-manual Indian labourers. An insight into the way in which Indians perceive themselves and the others is provided by LRG:

LRG: "In colonial times the distinction between Indian and Spaniard was clear, but it was a relation of subordination. Indians were afraid of Spaniards and this fear has been inherited. I remember as a child avoiding seeing the coyote, it was a very frightening thing to see one, because they are associated with disaster, bad luck, sickness, and it happens that colonial Spaniards and non-Indians today are called coyote (coyote has meaning such as astute person, guide to illegal immigrants, speculator, middleman). There are regions in this country where Indians retain their ethnocentric name and have names to designate non-Indian peoples. In my own pueblo, we differentiate between three kinds of people: we, the macehuales (people who belong to the pueblo), the coyotl (non-Indian peoples) and the pilume (indigenous people who do not belong to the pueblo) the latter are "Indians" but not Nahuas. In Tlaxcala, there is no word to express ethnicity, which is interesting, but that does not mean that there is no consciousness of ethnic adscription or that there are no ethnic and racial distinctions. A concrete example is this pueblo, Tepeapulco. Here, people use the Nahuatl language in everyday life, although there is no word to designate Indian and non-Indian, however, here no one accepts being called Indio or mestizo, they only accept the word Tlaxcalteca (the name of the region not of the ethnic group). But people here use the word Indio for those

peasants who sell their labour".

The Indians as seen by the Indians: Positive Images of Themselves

I have already discussed in chapter 2, the reasoning behind the use of the indicator "use of the media" in order to detect students' concern with the preservation and diffusion of their cultures, languages and histories. My aim has been to learn the cultural content of proposals that some Indian people might have so as to assess their present and future self-perception. In the questionnaire, I asked a hypothetical question asking, which cultural themes they would be interested in producing if they had the opportunity to broadcast such projects (i.e. production of TV/radio programmes) on a large-scale, crossing socio-cultural boundaries. I obtained significant information through this enquiry, and this gives further ground for appreciating the "subjective self-understanding" of ethnic collectives (Urban and Sherzer 1992:5).

The following questions were included in the questionnaire:

1. If you were asked to produce a TV programme, what would you be interested in showing to mestizo people?
2. If you were asked to produce a radio or TV programme, what would you be interested in showing to Indian people? (note 6).



Table 4

"Indian programmes for consumption by mestizo society"

MLI

LEI

Theme	Yes	N-R	Total	Yes	N-R	Total
i.	8	2	10	14	36	50
ii.	6	4	10	27	23	50
iii.	10	0	10	27	23	50

- Key: i. Themes of Indian history  
 ii. Indigenous customs and traditions  
 iii. To persuade them to increase their respect for Indian peoples

The consensus of the post-graduates (MLI group) is that "themes of Indian history" should be disseminated (8), unlike the LEI group who gave a higher number of non-responses (36) than "yes" answers (14). It was, nevertheless, surprising to find in the LEI group some self-asserting comments on the questionnaire, such as: "I would teach the mestizo peoples that they lack history".

Within the limits of this research it is not possible to ascertain if such a discrepancy of views on the issue of diffusion of "Indian history" is a reliable indicator emphasising degrees of assimilation among undergraduate and post-graduate students. However, there is more "ethnic awareness" among the latter group, and some obvious reasons can be adduced: the small group of post-graduates undertake specific courses on "Indo American Languages and History" which are carried out with more rigour; they are engaged in full-time studies and some of their lecturers belong to a given ethnic group (i.e LRG and ULG). This suggests a more committed willingness to receive instruction when compared with courses focusing on pedagogic techniques received by the large group of under-graduate students. It will be relevant to corroborate and compare in further research, the different degrees of assimilation of these two groups of students.

In general, "indigenous customs and tradition" are themes which should be disseminated for the information of non-indigenous society (6 and 27) in the opinion of my informants. Finally, the high number of responses elicited on the theme of increased "respect for Indian peoples" (10 and 27), suggests that these students, especially the post-graduate group, have a great interest in being regarded as equals by the rest of the society; they wish to generate and achieve a more respected place in the wider society.

Table 5

"Indian programmes for consumption by Indian peoples"

MLI

LEI

Theme	Yes	No	N-R	Total	Yes	No	N-R	Total
iv	6	0	4	10	7	0	43	50
v	3	0	7	10	13	0	37	50
vi	5	0	5	10	14	0	36	50
vii	0	10	0	10	0	50	0	50
viii	0	10	0	10	0	50	0	50
ix	9	0	1	10	38	0	12	50

- Key: iv. Themes of Indian history  
v. Myths and legends  
vi. Science and technology  
vii. To be the way the mestizo people are  
viii. To abandon the indigenous tradition  
ix. To instil approval for the culture of the ancestors.

The dissemination of "Indian history" was considered a relevant issue in the opinion of the MLI group (6), unlike the high number of non-responses elicited from the LEI sample (43). Reasons for such a discrepancy of opinion are similar to those in table 4 with respect to the type and content of the instruction received by each one of the groups of the sample.

A different situation was found in the case of the

dissemination of "myths and legends", where there is still uncertainty about the mass communication of this information. Here there was a high number of non-responses (7 and 37). This is perhaps due to the fact that younger generations may be unaware of this cultural information as a result of assimilationist policies. However, opinions from the group of professionals offer information on the importance of recovering and diffusing "myths and legends". Here are some examples of their opinions.

**Yucatán. Maya Translator and Writer:**

MLGP: "For me, it is very important to inculcate a sense of confidence within the Mayan group and to create means of self-communication amongst the Maya of Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo. It is very important to pay attention to the teaching of ethnic myths because they reinforce ethnic consciousness.

**Chiapas. Tzotzil Anthropologist:**

JA: "Indians of Chiapas have their own cultural repertoire of myths, either Maya or Catholic, which one is the most important? The Maya or the Catholic? We do not know. I am not interested in whether such myths are real stories or not, that is not what matters. I will make media programmes to strengthen the culture of the Indian peoples, to show them who they are and how different they are from the rest of society. I will also include the diffusion of myths, stories and legends, because this is very important material for revitalising the identity of the Indian peoples".

**Campeche. Maya Anthropologist:**

CECH: "The Maya culture has lost a lot of its original content. Thus, if I could have the means to produce a TV programme as you are asking me, I would create something to deal with the unification of the Mayas of the peninsula, that is to say, to be able to facilitate the interchange of ideas, values, experiences in order to restore a sense of cultural confidence amongst the Maya, because the Maya have given more than they have received. Something that we have forgotten is the teaching of myths, these give a lot of strength to the consciousness, the power of myths in the

Maya culture is very impressive. The myth of the "Speaking Cross", for instance, gave the Maya the power of organisation and conviction for mobilisation during the "War of the Castes".

"Science and technology" is of only relative interest for the consumption of the Indian society (5 and 14). However, it is very interesting to observe that not one student from either sample would produce a TV programme arguing the abandonment of the "indigenous tradition" (10 and 50), or a programme encouraging mestizo-ism (10 and 50) while the majority in both groups would stress producing programmes highlighting "approval of ancestral culture" (9 and 38). This is explained by one of the professionals as follows:

**Chiapas. Tseltal Linguist:**

**JVR:** "If I could have media resources, I would teach mestizo people aspects of my Tseltal culture. I am not lying, but my culture is more honest and less competitive, while the mestizo culture is just fantasy....If you give me the resources I can produce a programme about the legend of the 'red corn'".

To summarise, the students expressed a noticeable interest in the diffusion of the history of their cultures measured through the indicator of "modern mass media under indigenous peoples' control". Similar responses were elicited from the group of professionals.

**Conclusion**

Indian-ness resulted from the hispanicist unification of Amerindian microethnicity. It is the historical evolution of native identity, starting with the colonial Indian, that I have dealt with in this chapter. My purpose has been to discuss the overall traits which determine modern Indian-ness (not the ethnic identity of a single particular group) and for that I have discussed the historical capacity of mobilisation,

resistance and adaptation of some groups of Indians, as well as the set of social relationships derived from the interrelationship with the dominant society which have imprinted in the Indian individual a defensive and self-concealing identity in order to survive in a hostile cultural environment.

The evidence collected in the final part of this chapter, shows that contemporary Indian people are preoccupied with reviving and diffusing their cultures, languages and histories. Their wish is to forge a unique ethnic vision of their own and to avoid and reject the stereotypical and disrespectful images fabricated by the non-indigenous media.

## Chapter 4

### **Ethnic Myths and the Views and Opinions of Indian Peoples**

In this chapter I shall examine two myths of national integration expressed in a variety of official discourse: the foundation and settlement of the hegemonic centre of Mexico, México-Tenochtitlán, and the fabrication of a "myth of common ancestry", namely mestizaje. This latter myth is here understood as the ideal of acculturation expected from the ethnic groups and a formula to overcome racial and ethnic disparities.

These ethnic narratives forming part of national mythology are linked to state affairs. Evidence for this is to be found in the fact that the state and the public education system play an important role in its large-scale propagation in the form of discourse, iconography and text-books.

The purpose of the chapter is twofold. Firstly, and according to the "historical-culturalist" perspective, to describe the content and historical setting of such a national mythology, which has the function of aiding integration and unification in the ethnically diverse Mexican society. Secondly, to analyse articulate indigenous thinking, specifically the views of Indian professionals and students, with respect to the official concept of Mexican nationalism based on ethnic mythology.

#### The Myth of Foundation

The cultures developed in Mexico are of an ancient pedigree although attempts to establish comparisons with civilizations of the Old World, mainly around large river systems (the Tigris-Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Yellow and Yangtze rivers) may show that the Mesoamerican civilizations were later developments. Agriculture in Mesoamerica developed as early as 5000 BC, inland waterways were largely unnavigable due to the mountainous terrain, and animal husbandry was

unknown. This could suggest a precarious mode of existence, but on the Gulf coast of Mexico cultures such as the Olmec flourished around 800-400 BC.; and the urban centre of Teotihuacán reached its zenith around 250-300 AC, through the construction of an irrigation system which secured a permanent source of water for the Valley of Mexico (Arqueología Mexicana, 1995 (11):14-15). These cultures also possessed the staple food, maize (*Zea mays*; *Enchlaena Mexicana*). Despite the absence of some of the most important ingredients associated with the rise of urban civilization in the Old World, organised civic life and religion flourished. Evidence of this is the vast and complex "indigenous thought" revealed in "myths of origin", the "foundation" and the location of archaeological sites.

Most native cultures of contemporary Mexico have their own "myths of origin" traceable to an ancestral past (Weitlaner 1977; Scheffler 1983; Taube 1993). But the legend recording the foundation of the crucial site (Mexico-Tenochtitlán) depicts hegemony, centrality and symbolic creativity. Two explanations are useful for understanding the durability of the narrative about the creation of the Aztec capital in 1325 AC, present day Mexico City. Firstly, it shows the origins of a powerful city-state unknown to Europeans until the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 16th century. Secondly, it demonstrates the dynamics of the indigenous way of thinking. This is a narrative full of analogies and coincidences between indigenous thought and nature, resulting from a patient and lengthy observation of nature and the universe as well as profound changes in the social and symbolic order (Tibón 1985:563). It is thus the result of intellectual processes taking place at a precise moment in time, where fact and fiction are intermingled to form a powerful and ancient myth.

Many of the pre-Columbian and colonial sources include representations of the motif identifying the chosen site of Tenochtitlán - an eagle devouring a snake. This symbol, however, is not entirely Aztec as there is evidence that the

Totonac culture of the sixth to eleventh centuries also possessed such a representation, as is revealed by a surviving sculpture portraying a head of an eagle devouring a snake (Tibón 1985:634). Among the pre-Columbian and colonial sources of this myth we find the Annals of Tlaxcala, Tlateloloco and Cuauhtitlán, the Mendocino, Aubin, Borbonic, Tro-Cortesiano Codex, and the Pilgrimage Sequence. The colonial sources are equally important, for example, the Ramírez Codex and the Durán Atlas. Indigenous historians of the 16th century also contributed to the narrative's transmission: Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc's Mexicayótl Chronicle and Domingo Francisco de San Antón Chimalpahin's Original Relations of Chalco Amaguemecan, as well as Cristóbal del Castillo's Fragmentos de la obra general sobre historia de los mexicanos. The legend occupied a prominent position in the ethno-history written by the friar Bernardino de Sahagún, the Florentino Codex; Juan de Torquemada's Monarquía Indiana, and Diego Durán's Historia de las Indias de Nueva España. Likewise the 18th century historians and revivalists, such as F.J. Clavijero, Antonio de Solís and Agustín Betancourt elaborated made explicit references to the legend. Finally, contemporary and modern historians, antiquarians and scholars on Mexico acknowledged the symbolic significance of this myth in the nation's history and culture: W. H. Prescott (1796-1859), G. Vaillant (1901-1945) and the modern interpretations by R. Padden (1967) and J. Bierhorst (1990). Of course, the list of Mexican historians is extensive: Tibón (1985); A. Caso (1946;1952); Angel María Garibay (1965); M. León-Portilla (1959); A. López Austin (1969, 1994rp); W. Jiménez Moreno (1959); Covarrubias M. (1961); Matos Moctezuma (1988) amongst the most important.

The vast library of sources compiled over the centuries legitimises the mythological history of the Mexicas which has been incorporated into the cultural history of the nation. The complete narrative is divided into two Nahua or Aztec myths: the myth of origin and the myth of foundation, and they are quite distinct.



## The Origin of the Aztecs

The origin of the ancestral tribe is located in an imaginary Aztlán (Place of Herons), with an environment described as lacustrine or marshy; seven tribes migrated from Aztlán, one of these was the Aztecs. They departed following a command of their tribal God Huitzilopóchtli, which means "Hummingbird-of-the-left", (1) who is at times described as a deity or at others as a chieftain; it is this figure who guided the tribes during their migratory journey. On arriving at another mythical site, "Chicomostoc" (Place of Caves), the Aztecs separated from the other tribes in order to enforce a sense of "ethnocentrism"; the analogy being that, on re-emerging from these caves they were reborn (2). As a consequence of this rebirth, they ceased to be Aztecs and became the Mexica people or the Mexitin, a word derived from "Metzli" or moon (Limón 1990:16). The significance of the "Hummingbird-of-the-left" is that he directed them towards the "promised land" and the sources of power the Aztecs would have to master in order to achieve a better livelihood and their destiny (3). It was the institutionalisation of war and conquest that was to establish them as a hegemonic people.

## The Aztec Myth of Foundation

The latter part of the narrative refers to their continuing migration and the vision of the mythical sign - an eagle devouring a snake - indicating the chosen site and, thus, the fulfilment of the deity's covenant, a location suitable for constructing a settlement. The new homeland was very similar to that of Aztlán, a place surrounded by water, as it should be identical to the original site of migration; the new homeland's centre, Tenochtitlán, was an island in the midst of a lake (Limón 1990:101).

The historians Tezozómoc and Chimalpahuín describe the arrival of the Aztec-Mexicas in the Valley of Mexico in the early 13th century, and they were the last tribe to arrive. At

that time, the Aztecs were an "insignificant and semi-nomadic tribe", who became familiar with the Toltec tradition through the Culhuacan people, the main rulers of the Valley. Once in the populated Valley, the Mexicas had no land to occupy and were constantly harassed by the other tribes; they were forced by the other tribes to live on a volcanic site infested with poisonous serpents (Tizapán) in the hope that the snakes would wipe them out, but instead the Mexicas used them as food.

The hardness of the Aztecs, as well as their reputed mercenary zeal against rival tribes, impressed the Culhuacan people who managed to gain the loyalty of the fierce Aztecs and agreed to a matrimonial alliance between the chieftain of the Aztecs and one of the daughters of the Culhuacan. But, before the ceremony, she was sacrificed by the Aztecs to avenge the massacre, servitude and subsistence inflicted on them by the Culhuacan people. As a consequence, the Aztecs fled northwards towards Texcoco to a small inhabited island to avoid being annihilated by the superior Culhuacans. According to the legend, on this small island in the midst of lake Texcoco, the Mexicas saw the promised sign indicating their new homeland and thus established Tenochtitlán in 1325 (Prescott 1909:15; Limón 1990:110; López Austin 1994rp). Four cycles of fifty-two years, that is, two hundred and eight years passed between the so-called migration from Aztlán and the realisation of the vision of the promised land (4).

According to contemporary Mexican antiquarians, Tibón and Caso, the vision of the Mexica finding (a prickly cactus in the midst of a swamp and an eagle with a serpent in his talons and his broad wings open to the rising sun) is a manifestation of a profound religious symbolism, and a symbolism imbued with thaumaturgical and sacred significance which reflects the worship of natural forces which contributed to Aztec hegemony. From the most complete study to date, Tibón argues that this is an example of a complex symbolism which of itself establishes a process of association or coincidences between nature and the movement of the planets (1986:788).

The Aztec vision represents a complex symbolism which

once again has correspondences with the natural world. For example, the eagle is associated with the sun, because this bird follows the ascent of the rising sun, while the snake represents darkness, the underworld. The eagle (the sun) is located at a specific place, a lake associated with primitive Aztlán, but the moon is reflected in the waters of the lake and, thus, the reflection corresponds to the navel of the moon (omphalos del lago). The modern word "Mexico", Me: moon; xicco: navel, means "navel of the moon" (Tibón 1985:612;324). The contemporary Mixtec people have a word for "Mexico", "Nucoyo" meaning "the place of the navel of the moon". This precise moment witnessing an eagle (the sun) standing on a cactus, on an islet, in a lake (the moon) was in the mind of the indigenous people the realisation of a magical and sacred destiny. The components of Aztec symbolism are universal archetypes which find expression in many ancient cultures - i.e. the Caduceus, emblem of the messenger in Ancient Greece; the Uraeus, the Egyptian cobra representing supreme divine and royal wisdom and power; the eagle, emblem of the Apostle John; an eagle with a snake in its talons is, according to Homer, a symbol of victory - (Hall 1974:55; Cooper 1978), or perhaps, cultural parallels emerging from the careful observation of nature (i.e. to desire the moon reflected in the lake is a common act of foolishness according to an old Chinese tale). But what is undeniable is that observations of an eagle and a snake were commonplace given that in the lands of the New World eagles, snakes, cactus and lakes formed part of the natural environment (5).

It has been widely documented how the Mexicas made use of this potent symbolism, a so-called pact with the sun in order to justify the expansion of their city-empire by means of conquest, tribute and the practice of human sacrifice (Caso 1978:23). It can also be argued that past and contemporary Mexican antiquarians and revivalists were close to approaching the realm of fantasy and recondite speculation in order to demonstrate cultural originality. The symbolism recording the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlán was widely used during the

"Foundation of México-Tenochtitlán"



## Indigenous Responses

How does the Indian population respond to these integrative ideals? What are the views of educated Indians regarding the nationalist discourse based on ethnic mythology? How far do Indian memories compete with the state's indoctrination of identity? There are differing opinions and perceptions of Indian peoples concerning this centralising narrative.

In order to convey the original flavour of the interviews, I have retained the order of topics from the taped interview, selecting and editing the transcripts for obvious reasons of space. Thus the complete discourse of each informant is not presented. The interviews are organised by geographical region in order to clarify the regional ethnic perceptions when compared with the geographical centrality of the myths under review (See Map 2).

Extracts from in-depth interviews by region:

The Southern Region: Yucatán, Campeche, Chiapas and Oaxaca

### **Yucatán**

#### **BAC. Maya Teacher and Civil Servant**

1. Natividad Gutiérrez (NG): What is the opinion of the Aztec myth of foundation among the Maya?

BAC: "This is a concern held by the dominant society in its search for identification in this territory, a situation that emerges on the eve of the independence of Mexico. In the search for legitimacy, the white groups have used this myth which originated amongst the cultures of central Mexico.

"But I feel that, although this search incorporates mythology of ancient Nahua (Aztec) people, in practice, the living Nahua group does not actively participate or share in this concept of nationalism. The Nahua people are marginal to politics and the socio-economic structures, like the other Indian peoples of the country. The usage of Nahua stories is a reflection of a nationalistic ideology suitable for the dominant society.

"The search for symbolism and myths has taken place

around the centre of the country. But, what happens to the mythology of Indian peoples who live far in the North, or here, in the South? I feel that the national identity fewer and fewer incorporates elements from real life. Education in this country, as everywhere else, is the means to inculcate in the collective consciousness the project of a nation conceived by the dominant society.

"The Indian peoples understand clearly that Mexico is the centre, and that their communities and regions are situated in a wider territorial space, but they do not know how this process has been carried out. Due to this lack of information, Indian people do not share the responsibility for assessing the success of the nation-building project. Neither do they share the view of how this project has to be achieved.

"The Indian communities see the dominant group, the whites and mestizos, as the direct beneficiaries of all that has happened in society. The communities bear in mind that non-Indian society has caused their present state of marginality and depression".

#### **Yucatán**

**MLGP. Maya Translator and Writer**

2. NG: Are you familiar with the Aztec myths and narratives? Do you know the Aztec myth of foundation?

MLGP: "No, I do not know it. My work deals with the translation and compilation of Maya myths and legends, for example, at present I am working on a very interesting version of a story called "The horse of the Chac god" which is related to one's behaviour in order to bring rain which is beneficial for agriculture. These are the type of stories which have meaning for us".

#### **Campeche**

**CECH. Mayan Anthropologist and Researcher**

3. NG: The concept of Mexican culture within the scope of the official text-books inculcates the myth of foundation and mestizaje into us. Are you familiar with these myths? What do

they mean for the Maya of Campeche?

CECH: "I do not know such a story. We are very detached from the centre. The Maya people do not know the history of the origin of central Mexico. For the Mayan people only maize rituals and ceremonies make sense. People's celebrations and symbols from the centre do not mean anything to the Mayan people".

**Chiapas**

**JAC. Tzotzil Anthropologist and Civil Servant**

4. NG: As a member of the Tzotzil group, do you accept the Nahua-Aztec myth of foundation as a valid symbol of integration?

JA: "The Tzotzil people do not know such a story. We, Tzotzil people, do not know anything about this. We only know that the living Nahua people live in the same bad conditions as the other ethnic groups".

**Chiapas**

**JVR. Tseltal Linguist and Researcher**

5. NG: Do you know the myth of foundation for Tenochtitlán?

JVR: "As an Indian I have little information. The little information I have comes from the text-books which say that the ancient Mexicans arrived at the Valley of Mexico and founded Tenochtitlán in the midst of a lake on which they saw an eagle devouring a snake".

5.1. NG: Is that myth of importance for Tseltal culture?

JVR: "The truth is that this is of little importance for us, if some Tseltal people know something about this it is only a superficial view to say that that was the place the Mexicans finally settled".

**Chiapas**

**IJE. Tseltal Translator and Writer**



6. NG: Aztec myths are intended to unify the different ethnic groups of the country, what is your opinion?

IJE: "I do not know the Aztec history, I am only beginning to learn about my own Mayan culture. We have been locked with in ourselves for a long time, now we are starting to mature as a culture but Aztec stories do not mean anything to me".

#### **Oaxaca**

#### **FG. Mixteco Sociologist and Senior University Lecturer**

7. NG: Do you know the Aztec myth of foundation? Is such a myth valid for the Mixteco or Zapoteco peoples of Oaxaca?

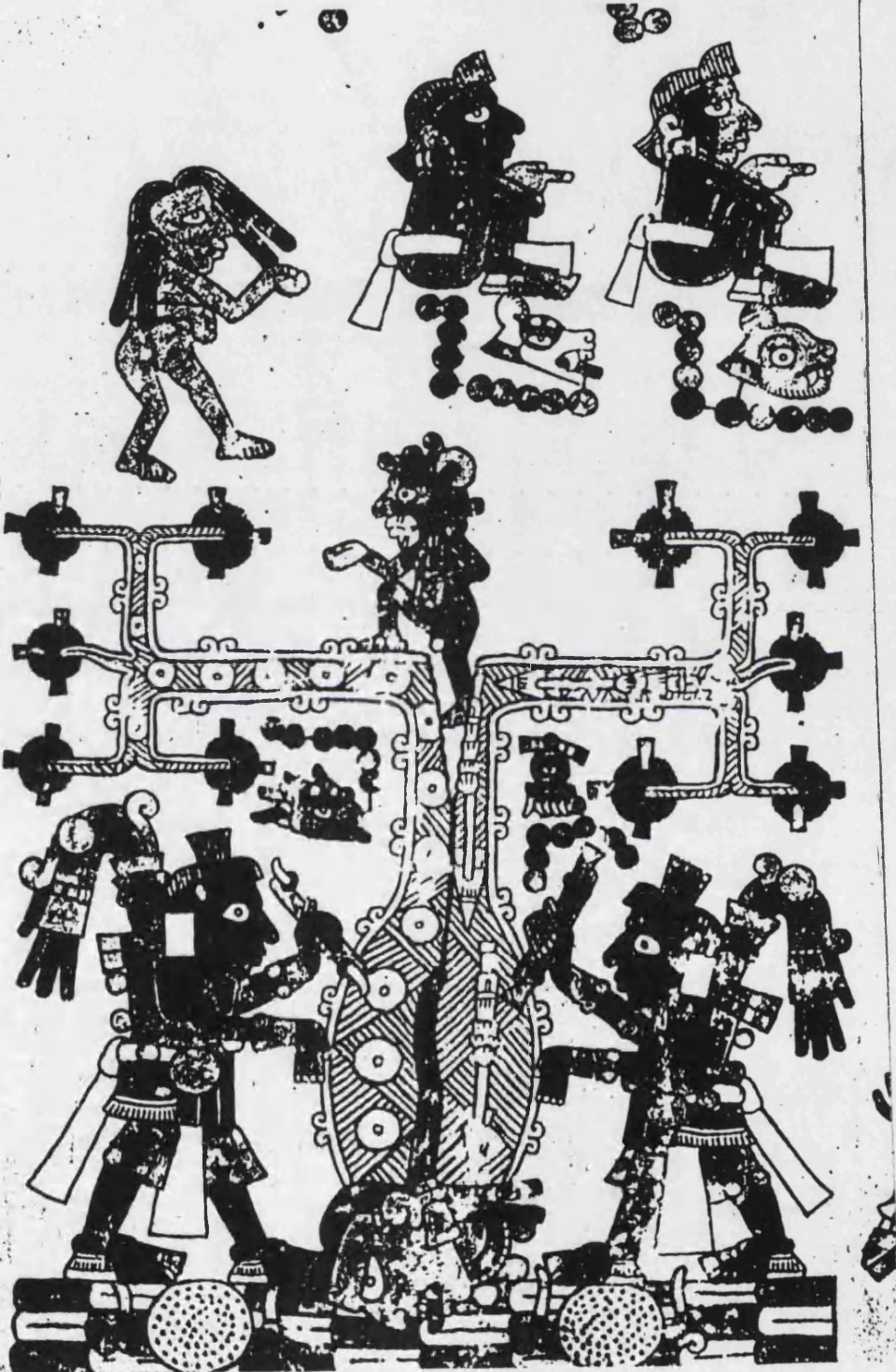
FG: "I do not know why it should be a valid story. I am a Mixteco myself. I am just one of the thousands of Mixteco people living in this country, but I can tell you I see no link or association whatsoever. I know that this is the symbol of the Aztecs, but it never occurred to me that this is the origin of Mexico. I know that is the Nahua place, the history of the Nahua people, but that's it, it is not the history of Mexico because I am also part of Mexico as a Mixteco and my history is not reflected in such a myth. Any idea attempting to link the myth of foundation with the origin of Mexico reveals the widespread ideological effect of the dominant society. Fortunately, not all Indian groups easily accept the myth.

"But this is not an Indian peoples' problem, it is a mestizo's problem as they lack history and are seeking to find one. This is just ideological production. When this myth approaches the people, through the school, it does not make any impact on the people who have their own history and know their origins. For peoples without history, such as the mestizo, it may be their history, albeit appropriated from someone else.

"I, as a Mixteco, do not have problems with my origins. We have our own origins. In my village, everybody knows that we descend from a goddess-woman-tree, and I knew that before my eyes saw the Vindobonensis Codex and the narrative on the Apoala Tree. I know my origins, as for the myth of origin of the others I just do not know and that does not



"The Apoala tree and the birth of the Mixteco people"



worry me".

## **Oaxaca**

### **VC. Zapoteco Poet and Editor**

8. NG: Is the myth of the Aztec foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlán known amongst the Zapoteco culture of Oaxaca?

VC: "In Oaxaca the participation of the collectivity is very strong. Each community has its own myths of origin and foundation. The myth of México-Tenochtitlán is only known by those who have gone to school, amongst peasants and old people it is completely unknown and if it is known it does not mean anything to them.

"However, our myths do not refer to the origin of a given community, but to the whole ethnic group. For example, our origin is explained by the myth of the Binnigula'sa', who were our distant ancestors. The founders of the Zapoteco people are the Binnigula'sa' and are identified as an ancient people, thus the people now establish a temporal difference between the ancient and present Zapoteco people. We, present-day Zapoteco, call ourselves Binizá meaning "people of clouds". Binnigula'sa' means: "ancient people from clouds".

8.1 NG: Do the Zapoteco people feel indifferent to the Nahua myth of foundation?

VC: "Yes completely. This is learnt at school, like one learns that  $2+2=4$  and that the capital of France is Paris".

## The Central Region

### **Tlaxcala**

#### **LRG. Nahua Historian and Senior University Lecturer**

9. NG: The myth of foundation is the symbol of the nation, what is its impact among today's Nahua people?

LRG: "I hold the idea that many Indian peoples regard these symbols as very ancient. The snake and the prickly cactus were very strongly rooted in the

conscience of many peoples. This is not only true for the Nahua culture. Among cultures even more ancient than the Nahua in the centre of Mexico there already existed such an idea. I am thinking, for example, of some pre-Nahua inscriptions showing carvings of a snake and a prickly cactus on ceramic vessels. The myth and symbol are indeed very ancient ones.

"There are other peoples who have their own myths of foundation and do not refer to the snake and the prickly cactus. For example, the Mixteco believe that they descend from a tree-godess. In any case, most Indian peoples recognise and are aware that the idea of Mexico is important in its own right, simply because in ancient times it was regarded as the "centre of the world" by the rest of the inhabitants of Mesoamerica.

"During the messianic and millenarist revolts of the 16th century, some Indian peoples held the idea that a new Mexican king had been born who was going to overthrow, along with the Mixtecos and Zapotecos, the political regime of New Spain. This revolt, rooted in the centre, enjoyed much support from other Indian peoples. There has always existed an awareness of the presence of the centre. This is not imposed (The informant refers to the 1761 millenarist movement of Antonio Pérez, an Indian religious leader, who preached the radicalisation of native Christian symbolism in order to reject colonial domination. Gruzinski, 1993:259).

"It is true, the schools of the '20's carried out a wide spread diffusion of patriotic symbolism based on ancient mythology, but the symbol and the myth themselves are deeply rooted. In the centre of Mexico, are strongly rooted symbols that are the tricolour flag, the snake and the prickly cactus, but this does not enjoy recognition in Yucatán or Chiapas as it does here.

"The symbol has been imposed on the southern region and reinforced in the central area through the schools, but it is one of the most ancient symbols of Mesoamerica. It is a very powerful one".

#### Summary of Findings: Group of Professionals

Of these nine responses, eight are inclined to support the view that the official symbol of integration, the myth of foundation, is an irrelevance for their Indian identities. The Mayan informants, for example, argued that only Mayan myths related to rain or agriculture are relevant to them; those from Chiapas openly recognised their lack of knowledge and interest in such a myth; the Mixteco response was expressed in terms of the validity of the myth only for the Nahua people and not for the remaining ethnic groups, while the Zapoteco informant compared Zapoteco knowledge of the symbol with the basic arithmetic learnt at school.

Despite the overwhelming rejection by southern people, the Nahua informant argued in favour of the historical origin and validity of the myth in the central region, consequently, the myth has meaning only for that region's inhabitants.

The arguments of some informants also showed that different ethnic groups have their own myths of origin and foundation, as was revealed by the Mixteco's mythical descent from a tree-goddess and the ancient "Binnigula'sa" in the Zapoteco region. The Aztec myth of foundation is therefore an alien narrative for the people of the south and their respective mythological accounts. Although both myth and symbol are ancient and powerful narratives and icons, as argued by LRG, they owe their recognition outside the central area to the state education system.

To complement these findings, I shall now analyse the responses of the two samples of indigenous students.

### The Views of the Students

The majority of students from both the MLI and LEI declared that they are familiar with the myth of foundation. The means by which both groups received information on the myth were as follows:

Table 6

## "Indigenous students knowledge of the myth of foundation"

Sample	School	Tea- cher	Parent	Friend	Media	Text Books
LEI	7	4	1	0	0	9
MLI	27	26	1	0	0	34
Totals	34	30	2	0	0	43

The data shows that text-books (43), school (34) and the teacher (30) are the principal vehicles for instilling national symbolism and that friends, parents and media are unimportant in this respect. Both groups have clearly identified the visual components of the myth i.e. eagle, lake, cactus, snake. In other words, they are familiar with the myth and it is easily recognised.

Both samples of students declared they have seen the representation of the myth of foundation on the national currency (40) the flag (46), the emblem (34), and as a symbol of the "president" (7) and "PRI" (2).

Table 7

## "Indigenous students identification of the myth of foundation"

Sample	Emblem	Currency	Preside- nt*	Flag	PRI*
MLI	7	7	1	7	1
LEI	27	33	6	39	1
Total	34	40	7	46	2

(\*) Institutional Revolutionary Party

Note: the variables \*"President" and "PRI" were added in order to show all areas in which the symbol is utilised, as the symbol is used as the presidential symbol, and since 1924 all presidents have been elected via the PRI.

To complement the above data, we can show that both samples learnt of the visual representation of the myth in the following places or ways.

Table 8

"Indigenous students score of visual representation of the national emblem"

Sample	School	Text Books	Festival	Images	Flag Day
MLI	7	7	1	5	6
LEI	29	26	5	6	14
Total	36	33	6	11	20

The overwhelming evidence is that such a myth as national emblem was first acquired at school (36) through the respective text-books (33 and 11) and civic festivals (6 and 20). The data demonstrates that the students obtained knowledge of the myth's symbolism at primary school.

It is interesting to note that indigenous students showed that they possess a broader sense of the visual representation of the myth and emblem, than the opinions expressed by the professionals and intellectuals. This is understandable to the extent that the latter group did not receive the standard primary education. However, the professionals and intellectuals have of course a greater familiarity with and access to the local knowledge kept within the community which allows them to offer more rational and convincing arguments and criticisms.

#### Knowledge of Aztec History and Culture

The aim of this brief section is to explore the way in which Nahua or Aztec history is known and assimilated by Indian students from non-Nahua ethnic groups. The data usefully complements the students' opinions regarding the myth of foundation, since the history of the central region is portrayed in the text-books (cfr. Ch 7) as the primordial

narrative recalling a "glorious past" before the arrival of the Europeans.

The indicators used to test this perception are themes or episodes from Mexican history, such as: "knowledge of ancient codices"; the "basic institutions of the Aztec society"; and the "meaning of certain Nahua words".

The data obtained from indigenous students show that knowledge of the history and culture of Aztec people is, generally speaking, of little importance. However, the graduate students are more familiar with such knowledge than with the undergraduates. For example, only 3 students from MLI declared that they were ignorant of the myths regarding the "origin of the ancient Mexica people" in contrast to the 45 responses of the LEI students. A similar response was received regarding the "knowledge of basic Aztec institutions": 7 students from MLI declared they had some knowledge, 1 declared s/he knew nothing and 2 did not respond; while 25 individuals from LEI said they knew "something", against 19 who stated they knew nothing and 6 did not respond.

As far as the "knowledge of Nahua words" is concerned, the questionnaires revealed basic and limited knowledge. The words I chose refer to names of deities from Aztec cosmogony, words used in rituals, as well as popular Nahua words intelligible in a Mexican context.

scores for "no-knowledge", MLI (174) and LEI (441).

The table below shows a summary of "knowledge" and "no-knowledge" scores from the list of subjects under study.

Table 10

"Indigenous students' knowledge of subjects from Aztec culture and history"

Sub-Theme	MLI		LEI	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I	11	6	3	45
II	7	25	1	19
III	4	6	6	29
IV	0	5	8	35
V	38	132	55	313
Total	60	174	73	441

- Key: I "Knowledge of ancient and contemporary texts on the origin of Mexica people".  
 II "Basic institutions of Aztec society"  
 III "Slaughter of Aztec nobility in the Main Temple" (Note 7)  
 IV "History written by Clavijero" (Note 8)  
 V "Meaning of certain Nahua words"

As noted above, the data corroborates the view that the indigenous students' knowledge of the basic subjects of Aztec culture and history, regarded as the cornerstone of official nationalism, is rather weak and superficial. A question then arises: how can ethnic diversity be integrated into one nation, using Aztec history and culture as a symbol of that integration, when there is a generalised lack of knowledge of this history?

We now turn to analyse the second ethnic myth of national integration.

### The Myth of Common Ancestry



Unlike the myth above, the narrative seeking to provide common ancestry for a modern society, with a past characterised by a caste-like structure and ethnically divided, does not claim any thaumaturgical or sacred explanations. Mestizaje as a goal of national unification does, nevertheless, have a mythical beginning. The narrative represented by an Aztec woman and the conqueror Hernan Cortés is in formal terms a very simple one. The implications of this idealised encounter and suggested collaboration between Indians and usurpers have proved to be, up to the present, extremely influential both in terms of official cultural policies and also on the Mexican identity.

Malinche to use the most common of her various names is the so-called "mother of the mestizo nation" (Glantz 1992) and is portrayed as a tantalising and mysterious figure who exerts multifarious influences even beyond the nation's borders, e.g. she has been resurrected as a non-conformist feminist symbol among politicised Mexican-American women (9). The myth has also proved to be an attractive field for the construction and reproduction of other cultural symbols aimed at representing a contemporary situation; for example, a symbol of "multiculturalism", "globalisation" and "pluralism" (Franco 1992). In Mexico, her attributed symbolic creation, the mestizo race, still plays a key ideological role in modern politics, for example, politicians believe that mestizaje is the

"antithesis of racist discourses and it has the capacity to incorporate differences and to reject racial puritanisms" (Moya Palencia "Somos mestizos en todo" Excélsior 16th August 1992).

### The Story of Malinche

There are many narratives built around the figure of Malinche, and they represent a cocktail of fact, legend and fantasy (10). If there is a single version from the moment of her meeting Cortés, it would be as follows: the figure has several names which correspond to the three historical eras of the

Mexican nation, the pre-Hispanic, the colonial and the nationalist: Malintzin, Marina and Malinche.

Malintzin was supposedly a member of the Nahuatl nobility, "a Cacique [aristocrat] over towns and vassals since her childhood", according to the chronicler of Cortés' expedition, Bernal Díaz (1978). Her widowed mother handed her to "some Indians from Xicalango" to favour a male heir, and so as to avoid a break in the line of succession of the Caciqueship the position was bequeathed to her mother's son. She was probably still young when she left the Valley of Mexico for the Maya region in southeastern Mexico where she encountered the Spaniards before the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlán: "The Indians of Xicalango gave the child to the people of Tabasco, and the Tabascans gave her to Cortés" (1978: 85) The Spaniards baptised her and she became the highly-respected Doña Marina. Doña Marina spoke - besides her mother tongue Náhuatl - the Maya language of Tabasco, and she communicated in Mayan with Jerónimo de Aguilar a Spanish soldier of earlier expeditions who had been stranded in the region: "These two understood one another well, and Aguilar translated into Castilian for Cortés" (Díaz del Castillo 1963:85). If it had not been for Marina's linguistic abilities "we - the Spaniards - could not have understood the language of New Spain and Mexico" (p.87). Cortés in his 5th letter to Charles V (3rd September 1526) acknowledges her role calling her "the tongue", and adds that "I always have her with me" (Cortés c1960:242). Díaz del Castillo's chronicle describes the many encounters between Cortés and Moctezuma, via Marina, once the conqueror arrived in the Valley. From this fact, it is argued that Marina was closely associated with the Spaniards and that she contributed to the fall of the Aztecs, Díaz del Castillo's and Cortés's accounts do not say that she bore the conqueror's children. Nevertheless, at least symbolically, these were supposedly the "first mestizo people" (Benítez 1984). Thus, a woman contributed to the conquest of Mexico by the services she rendered to the Spaniards, and Marina came to be called La malinche, a synonym for traitor in the Spanish lexicon of

"Motecuzoma, Cortés and Malinche"



Mexico (11).

There are many colonial and contemporary references to her, but much speculation and "fabrication" has accrued to the legend when, in fact, there are only two eyewitness accounts, by Díaz del Castillo and Hernán Cortés. She is also represented in Indian sources painted in the 16th century, such as the above-mentioned Annals of Cuauhtitlán and Tlatelolco and more importantly, in the Lienzo de Tlaxcala (1892 facsimil). It is not clear whether the colonial historians ever met her (Tezozómoc was born in 1525 or 1530 and Cortés's 5th letter is dated 1526), although they assigned considerable prominence to her role in the conquest.

Malintzin's biography has given rise to two antithetical narratives which are of great significance for the nationalist symbolism of Mexico: the rise of Mestizaje and the Malinchista betrayal of the Aztec nation (12).

### The Social Origins of Mestizaje

The mestizo people have their origins in the Spanish colony that was established after the collapse of the Amerindian societies. The most interesting question is how a national myth for unifying diverse ethnic groups into a common descent group emerged out of a colonial "caste system". In fact, the post-revolutionary ideology of mestizaje results from the complexity of the caste system. A recent study by Lomnitz sheds new light on the matter: "the specific dynamics of caste instability in New Spain explain much of the post-independence attitudes towards race and, as a result, they also help us understand the ways in which the national community was ideologically constituted" (1992:270). It is thus imperative to examine the various racial and social strata that developed in colonial society.

The ideological basis of the caste system evolved from the Spanish concept of the nation, which held beliefs concerned with racial purity, a "community of blood" and linguistic cohesion (Arrom J. 1953; Latchman 1956). Membership

in such a community was given by an individual's ability to demonstrate "purity of blood", a concept tied to Christian ancestry and maintenance of a lineal pedigree by means of sexual honour. Women born in Spain played a significant role in preserving these core Spanish values and thus, became synonymous with social status.

This suggests a certain matrilineality or matrifocality in the Mexican family system (Lomnitz 1992:277), and implies an importance given to women's status in the early formation of colonial society. In fact, family membership, inheritance and certain rights were passed from mothers to daughters: for example, only the children of female slaves were born into slavery, the offspring of Indian noble women and conquistadores comprised the first generation of the Mexican colonial nobility and, as noted above, family honour depended on creole women's chastity and fidelity (Gibson 1960; Israel 1975; Lomnitz and Pérez 1987; Seed 1988).

The colonial administration allowed the co-existence of an Indian sector or "republic" and a Spanish one under the control of the authority of the Crown. The African population, predominantly male and introduced by the Spaniards as slaves, was recognised as a different racial category (Palmer 1976:271) so in the early colony there existed three "pure" races: Spaniards, Indians, and blacks. Miscegenation amongst these three groups resulted in sixteen "racial combinations" organised according to a logic of colour classifications. Lomnitz, provides the following examples: white mestizo, dark mestizo, black mestizo, black negro, light negro, and so on.

For our purposes, how can the notion of a common descent derive from these varying caste classifications? The immediate answer is that such a system of stratification situates the mestizo, a result of the intermixing of Spanish and Indian, in the upper register of the schema, that is, Spanish male and Indian female equals mestizo. However, the ideal of whiteness, derived from "good breeding" and sexual honour, did not cease to be a noticeable component of social status, for example, although the mestizo population was already increasing in the

late 17th century, the word itself was synonymous with "bastardy" (Israel 1975:66). In short, the mythological symbolism adopted was not an arbitrary one; it attempted to reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the different social strata produced by the prevalence of matrilineal structures.

In the context of independent Mexico the institutionalisation of the mythical connotations of mixed descent, albeit firmly rooted in the colonial past, passed through several stages. The first of these was the 19th century influence of the egalitarian ideology of liberalism which introduced the status of citizenship and allowed the "dissolution of the castes into a 'mestizo race' as the classification of "racial combinations" was conflated into an inclusive "bipolar" model encompassing only the Indian and white" (Lomnitz 1992:276). From the late 19th century other developments aimed at rehabilitating mestizo ideology took place, e.g. the intellectual and political elites, namely A. Molina Enríquez whose influential work Los grandes problemas nacionales (1981rp) is said to have inaugurated the "golden epoch of mestizofilia" (Basave 1992:121) and after the revolution of 1910, an emphasis on mestizaje became more pronounced (Knight 1990:98). The works of J. Sierra (1848-1912), M. Gamio (1883-1960) and J. Vasconcelos (1881-1959), were inclined towards the positive appraisal of the mestizo and, in doing so, were in search of two goals: firstly, to effect an autonomy from the cultural values of the Hispanic tradition and, secondly, to formulate a uniformity for national cohesion. The mestizo became the archetypal "new hero" in the Mexican epic of nation-building and its success is reflected in the growing increase of mestizo population, for example, in 1810 Indians outnumbered mestizos (64 per cent of the total population was of Indian origin), but by the 1990's over ninety per cent of the total population is allegedly mestiza (Nolasco 1988:121).

#### Mestizaje as the Ideal of Common Descent

"The offspring of a Spanish father and an Indian mother,  
is the mestizo"



1. De Español e India nasce  
Mestizo.



Indian rejection and censure of this idealisation is manifestly evident, but the reasoning and arguments expressing indigenous opposition to mestizaje are varied.

Firstly, the professional, intellectual view.

Extracts from in-depth interviews, by region:

The Southern Region: Yucatán, Campeche, Chiapas and Oaxaca

#### **Yucatán**

**BAC. Maya Teacher and Civil Servant**

1. NG: From your point of view what are the contributions of mestizaje to the social and cultural life of the nation?

BAC: "I understand by mestizaje, the conjunction of cultural elements between western society and the indigenous society. I must point out, however, that for 500 years, it has been an upsurge in conflict that characterises the process of mestizaje. I am pointing to the conflict between different cultural values. Given the permanence of the conflict, it is difficult to identify contributions for the well-being of the society as a whole.

"In any case, when there are identifiable contributions, the non-Indian society takes the benefits - i.e. the wide consumption by mestizo society of food of Indian origin. In this sense, these contributions have been selected to favour only a part of the society. When Indian knowledge is appropriated, it is called mestizaje. In this respect, it is a question of cultural convenience which does not benefit Indian people at all".

#### **Yucatán**

**MLGP. Maya Translator and Writer**

2. NG: Is mestizaje an appropriate myth regarding the origins of the Maya?

MLGP: "It is sad to say this, but at present many Mayan people do not know where they come from. However, mestizaje is something alien to us, because we have the history of our own origin. Through the Chichen-Itzá records, we know we



descend from the Xiu who came somewhere from the centre. Curiously enough, within Yucatán, Indian people are called mestiza - "tancuh macehual" meaning half Indian and half foreigner - because we do not retain our Mayan names, and because in Yucatán many Maya people have green eyes and fair complexion. But we carry our Indianness in our minds and hearts. It is striking, we are poor Indian people but we are white".

#### **Campeche**

**CECH. Mayan Anthropologist and Researcher**

3. NG: The myth of mestizaje is a national theme of integration, according to the text-books. What is your opinion and how do the Maya of the peninsula react to this myth?

CECH: "Racially and biologically speaking we are mestizos, but this is not a problem. The problem is that the true Indian is not accepted, in order to lead a normal life Indian people have to become assimilated. Idealistically, mestizaje means equality, some people still entertain the view that uniformity will be achieved. The text-books inculcate us with the idea that a day will come when all of us will be able to say 'we are all Mexicans'.

"The Mexican, the centre and the mestizo, all enjoy a lot of privileges over the Indian cultures. The whole country revolves around the idea of Mexico. The country is apparently unified with the themes of the Mexicans, the Aztecs, the mestizo...."

#### **Chiapas**

**JA. Tzotzil Anthropologist and Civil Servant**

4. NG. What does the mestizo represent for the majority of Tzotzil culture?

JA: "Bastards! This is what they mean for us. Instead of Spaniards, it is the mestizos who at present humiliate the Indians. They have exploited us, humiliated and abused us. We can't overcome our poverty because everything has been given to them. Anyhow, this is my point of view as an Indian person".

4.1 NG: Do you agree that mestizaje is an ideology of integration, and is it a socio-cultural norm achievable by Indian people?

JA: "From a political point of view, perhaps. For those who see us as a marginal people, yes, we have to achieve integration. It is said that Mexico is a mestizo country, this is pure ideology. The 'good' Indian people have to become mestizo".

4.2 NG: Is the ideology of mestizaje offensive to Indian cultures?

JA: "Of course, this is pure ideology. I have never come across a mestizo person saying: look, this or that belongs to you, on the contrary, they take everything away from us. This is a tremendous fight happening on an everyday basis. I hope it will not be too long before the Indians can decide for themselves".

## Chiapas

JVR. Tzeltal Linguist and Researcher

5. NG: Do you know the myth of mestizaje?

JVR: "Well yes. I know this started when the Spaniards arrived on this continent and began to mix with the native people over here"

5.1. NG: In your opinion, what are the three contributions of mestizaje to the life of the nation?

JVR: "Language, education and religion".

5.2. NG: Is mestizaje a reality, an ideology or an invention?

JVR: "I think this is a very complicated matter, it might be a policy, but to me it is a reality in cultural terms and not in racial ones, I do not like to think this is a racial problem. Indigenous peoples are politically marginalised and socially discriminated against by the non-indigenous peoples who see us as inferior people whose thoughts, culture and costumes are disregarded. In my view, mestizo people dislike us very much".

### **Chiapas**

**IJE. Tseltal Translator and Writer**

6. NG: What is your opinion on mestizaje? Do you agree with the view that all Indians have to become assimilated with the mestizos?

IJE: "Of course, I disagree. Our Indian heritage teaches us to appreciate everything, nature, land, children....and we do not reject what we are. In Chiapas, there are many categories establishing the difference between Indian people and non-Indian people, between whites and Indians, there is a whole range of cultural classifications in between the Indians and the whites, not only mestizos count".

### **Oaxaca**

**FG. Mixteco Sociologist and Senior University Lecturer**

7. NG: According to your view is mestizaje a reality, an invention or a policy?

FG: "Mestizaje as a whole has many sides, many fields of analysis. This is not an issue to discuss from a biological point of view, although many people tackle the problem from a biological angle. The majority of the population is regarded as mixed race because skin colour has disappeared as a criterion of social differentiation.

"However, the colonial idea of "ruler and ruled" has not disappeared, there are still some who feel they are genuine descendants of Spaniards. These people reject mestizaje in order to feel superior to the rest of the society. They have constructed a biological opinion of themselves.

"Curiously enough, mestizaje as a sentiment of

belonging, of those wishing to take over a history which does not belong to them, does not have real heirs. That is to say, how can a poor Mexican entertain the idea of descending from a Spaniard? This is just absurd! The ideology of mestizaje emphasises that it holds power and authority, and this is reflected in all areas of social life. The mestizo culture feels superior to the Indian ones, thus, it justifies the injustice by the fabricated assumption of cultural superiority.

"Moreover, the mestizo has had a political project of constructing the nation without us, excluding us from participating and taking decisions by ourselves. There is no room for Indian history in the making of the nation, but I personally have to fight for my inclusion simply because I belong to this place".

#### **Oaxaca**

**VC. Zapoteco Poet and Editor**

8. NG: What is the Zapoteco view regarding mestizaje?

VC: "Historically speaking, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec has been regarded as a crossroad for many Indian nations, even before the arrival of the Spaniards. In this sense, one understands the Zapoteco sentiment from a linguistic and cultural point of view, and not as a racial or biological one. We are Zapoteco people, those who speak the language and live according to Zapoteco ways of life. We are not worried about the biological mestizaje.

"In ideological terms, this is a Creole racist thesis. Mestizaje is a racist ideology because it has been imposed on us as a condition to achieve development and progress, but this has failed, because we Indian people do not want to be mestizos and do not want assimilation, we do not reject our culture".

#### The Central Region

#### **Tlaxcala**

**LRG. Nahua Historian and Senior University Lecturer**

9. NG: Do you agree that the unified descent for all Mexicans is the so-called mestizaje?

LRG: "I think this is just a creation of the state, and it emerged with the political independence of Mexico. During the period from 1821 to 1900 there were no Indians, all were Americans. For a century the Indians were not recognised as such, but in practice the differentiation still prevailed.

"During the Mexican revolution, a new interpretation of the Mexican society led by J. Vasconcelos was advanced and then, all of a sudden, people started to talk about the 'cosmic race'. But, from my point of view, this is a recent ideological production.

"It is a myth utilised by the state in order to unify what it is not possible to unify, this is why the state insists that we are all mestizos. For thousands of years, miscegenation has taken place, the Spaniards are not pure Spaniards and the Indians are not pure Indians in the biological sense. This issue of mestizaje has been used ideologically over the last 50 years, unlike the myth of foundation, the idea that we are all mestizos is a new thing".

#### Summary of Findings: Group of Professionals

The theme of mestizaje was understood in a variety of ways as the collected interviews revealed. Most of the interviewees made references to mestizaje as a racial and biological phenomenon, but interestingly the racial connotations of mestizaje do not represent a socio-cultural problem for these interviewees. In this respect, two of the female Mayan informants were explicit: "racially and biologically speaking we are mestizos, but this is not a problem". A more complex observation was that the: "Mayan people have green eyes and fair complexion. But we carry our Indianness in the mind and heart. It is striking, we are poor Indian people, but we are white"; or as the Nahuatl historian said: "the Spaniards are not pure Spaniards and the Indians are not pure Indians in the biological sense". These views demonstrate that the purely physiological aspect of race is not an indicator of Indianness

and vice versa. As stated above, there are Indian people with "green eyes and fair complexion" and they are still regarded and regard themselves as indigenous people.

Another general opinion was stated in terms of ideology. The official policy of persuasion - to abandon Indianness through the adoption of assimilation, i.e. following the mestizo pattern, was rejected and censured by all my informants and was identified as an important problem, simply because these interviewees do not reject their cultural heritage. It is illuminating to note the ironic perception of a Chiapas informant: "it is said that Mexico is a mestizo country, this is pure ideology. The 'good' Indian people have to become mestizo". A similar opinion was to identify mestizaje as a feature of cultural superiority: "the mestizo culture feels superior to the Indian ones, thus it justifies the injustice by the fabricated assumption of cultural superiority". Consequently, mestizaje was identified as a recent ideology introduced by the state aimed at "unifying what it is not possible to unify", namely the merging of ethnic identities into the national mestizo identity.

The overall view is that mestizaje represents an ideological problem faced by educated indigenous peoples. This problem is perceived in terms of conflict, parameters of identity and an indigenous sense of historicity. One Mayan informant explained his perception of mestizaje not in terms of cultural amalgamation or mutual reciprocity but as a permanent state of conflict, the protagonists being two differing set of cultural values, in which one dominant set of values, western values, usurps the indigenous, and the result is mestizaje: "when Indian knowledge is appropriated it is called mestizaje". This view corroborates the assumption that cultural miscegenation is a unilateral formulation which discourages the equal participation of western and Indian traditions, rather it selects and utilises elements from the indigenous traditions in order to form a unique national culture; the mestizo nation has been constructed "excluding us from participating and taking decisions for ourselves".

The Tzotzil anthropologist overreacted to my question thereby emphasising the difference between them, the mestizos, and us, the Indian peoples. For him, cultural appropriation and conflict also characterise the distance between two opposing societies: "they take everything away from us. This is a tremendous fight on an everyday basis". Finally, it is interesting to note that mestizaje is perceived as a recent phenomenon in comparison to indigenous historicity. For the Mixteco informant, the mestizos lack history and this explains why they "have taken a history which does not belong to them"; the other informant from Oaxaca referred to the existence of miscegenation before the arrival of the Spaniards on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; while the Nahuatl historian observed that mestizaje is a myth utilised by the state over the last fifty years.

#### The Views of the Students

More individuals from the two student groups declared that they knew the history of mestizaje (34) than those who did not (20), as is shown in the following table.

Table 11

"Indigenous students knowledge of the myth of mestizaje"

Sample	Yes	No	N-R*	Total
MLI	9	0	1	10
LEI	25	20	15	50
Total	34	20	16	60

N-R\* (No-Response)

Whether the process of mestizaje refers exclusively to a visible and concrete situation is unclear, even though that option in the questionnaire generated more positive responses: MLI:4 and LEI:18.

In your opinion is mestizaje a  
 a. Reality?      b. Policy?  
 c. Invention?    d. Ideology?

Table 12

"Indigenous students opinion of mestizaje

MLI

LEI

Opinion	Yes	No	N-R	Yes	No	N-R
Reality	4	5	1	18	32	0
Policy	3	6	1	17	20	13
Invent.	0	0	10	0	0	50
Ideolg.	2	8	0	7	30	13
Total	9	19	12	42	82	76

In the case of the MLI students, the opinion is inclined to identify the mestizaje process as reality (4) or as a policy (3). The majority of LEI students responded negatively, that is to say, 37 individuals responded that it is not a policy; while 17 individuals said it is a policy, with 13 "non-responses". It is worth noting that none of the students responded to the option of a fabricated ideology: MLI (8) and



LEI (30). However, both groups seemed to disagree with the classification embracing the socio-cultural contributions of mestizaje as the "no" option registered the highest scores for all options: MLI (19) and LEI (82). The non-responses were also high (12 and 76) when compared to the scores for specific answers (9 and 42).

The following table illustrates the fact that a high number of non-responses (57) were recorded when measuring the opinion of both groups about the contributions of mestizaje to the social life of the nation.

Table 13

"Contributions of mestizaje to the social life of the nation"

Sample	Yes	No	No Response
MLI	2	0	8
LEI	4	7	49
Total	6	7	57

The data leads to the following conclusion: in the whole sample there is a high level of uncertainty (8 and 49) regarding the contribution of mestizaje when compared with the rate measuring certainty (2 and 4) of mestizaje. In other words, the students were unsure whether mestizaje has or not made any worthwhile contribution to the nation.

Before going deeper into the analysis of this uncertainty held by the students, we should note that knowledge of mestizaje was learnt through school (21), the teacher (14) and text-books (26) and obviously not from parents (0) or the influence of the media (0).

Table 14

"Indigenous students source of knowledge of mestizaje"

Sample	School	Teacher	Parents	Media	T-B
MLI	6	4	0	0	7
LEI	15	10	0	0	19
Total	21	14	0	0	26

In order to illustrate the uncertainty and the students' often negative opinions, it is useful to look at the most common sentiments expressed by the sample.

I. Comments of the MLI students on mestizaje:

1. "Mestizaje does not make any contribution, on the contrary it appropriates existing Indian cultural elements in order to make a sort of a fusion with the dominant culture".
2. "It accepts more of the alien, the foreign, and attempts to wipe away the indigenous".
3. "It proposes cultural and linguistic unification".

II. Comments of the LEI group on mestizaje:

1. "It is an ideology of descent from the Spaniards in order to continue exploiting us".
2. "It is a kind of racism used by the powerful people".
3. "It is a belief in cultural superiority".
4. "It is a discriminatory ideology against the Indian people".
5. "We are discriminated against by people of another race and culture".
6. "It imposes the teaching of the Spanish language".

The answers and opinions on the experience of mestizaje are predominantly of a negative nature, as in the questionnaires I did not record favourable or positive comments; in any case, there were more blank or non-responses. Thus, the answers together are indicative of two overwhelming views: on the one hand, cultural miscegenation is not an option favoured by the indigenous students; while on the other, there prevails uncertainty whether such an ideal of national integration is beneficial for the Indian peoples.

The views of professionals and intellectuals on the same subject, although measured by different techniques, also revealed a critical disregard of its ideology. As a whole, the

data emphasises the view that mestizaje as an ideology does not make any positive contribution to Indian societies, albeit it was evident from the opinions of this group that mestizaje is a biological and racial reality, but this does not represent a problem for the Indian peoples.

### Conclusion

The legendary settlement of the Aztecs is still utilised as a narrative mixing history and fiction, and as an emblem, together epitomising the historical origins and continuity of the nation. The symbolic element of mestizaje is a more complex matrix given that it emerged from the caste stratification of the colonial society. Thus, the mestizo myth has demanded a more positive assessment by intellectuals and policy-makers in the context of independent and post-revolutionary Mexico.

The hypothesis guiding the collection of data for this research is corroborated at varying levels. The students and the sample of professionals are inclined to make critical reflections and statements regarding the acceptance of the ethnic myths of national integration.

The myth of foundation is widely recognised in the form of an icon - the emblem - by the sample of students. However, the group of professionals were not quite convinced or did not accept the predominant centralist history which underestimates the cultural significance of other non-Nahua cultures, cultures that possess their own cosmologies regarding their origins or the foundation of their communities and settlements.

The myth of mestizaje was overwhelmingly rejected by both samples. The majority of the responses stressed the fact that mestizaje does not have any biological or racial connotations, rather it is its ideological revisionism of unification that clashes with indigenous opinion. The idealisation of descent neutralises the cultural origins of the ethnic groups involved. Finally, the evidence shows that Indian peoples

reject assimilation and mestizaje and clearly declare that they do not wish to become mestizos.

Amongst the students there prevailed a rather poor and imprecise knowledge of "Nahua culture and history". This stresses the fact that the proposed national integration utilising an Aztec or Nahua heritage lacks any basis within the wider multiethnic context of Mexican society. In other words, the students from different ethnic groups are ignorant of the cultural and political rationale supporting an integrative project of nation-building.

It can be argued that historical facts of state formation are more representative explanations of nationalism than the discursive mythological narratives of the ethnic past. With a view to complementing the ethnicist side of the national mythology, I shall now discuss and compare the civic views of my samples of informants regarding the beginnings of Mexican republicanism.

## Chapter 5

### **Civic Heroes and the Cultural Perceptions of Indian People**

Mexican hero-making stresses the role of historical characters involved in the resistance and expulsion of external aggressions and incursions. Far from being characterised as "suffering martyrs" (Colley 1994:182) Mexican heroes are to be regarded as instrumental "defenders" or "protectors". In delimiting the socio-cultural shape of present day Mexican nationalism and its mythology, foreign interference vis-a-vis national defence, is a recurrent theme (1).

Bearing in mind the chief characteristic of hero-making, that is individuals expressing a tangible commitment to preserving the integrity of the national territory, culture, population or natural resources, we may briefly mention the official list, albeit probably incomplete, of the most widely known Mexican male heroes. Cuauthémoc, the Aztec ruler who fought against the fall of Mexico-Tenochtitlán during the Spanish conquest (1521); the low-clergy priests who instigated the popular movement for independence in 1810, Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos; and finally, Lázaro Cárdenas, the president who secured the domestic economy by nationalising the oil industry in 1935.

The main characters of the civil war fought at the time of the Mexican revolution of 1910, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa, Francisco I. Madero, and Venustiano Carranza are difficult to interpret in the context of defence against foreign incursion. However, this group of revolutionaries already studied by O'Malley (1986) is helpful in illustrating a typical case of the appropriation of a popular movement by a political regime claiming to have inherited the legacy of the revolution (i.e. the present Institutional Revolutionary Party and the governments elected since 1928 via that party) (2).

In this chapter I examine the historical significance of President Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian born in 1806, in the

construction of Mexican civic mythology. From the myriad of "defensive" Mexican heroes described above, I have chosen to study Juárez for the two significant reasons which explain his veneration in modern Mexico. Firstly, he was a leading political figure confronting the formative period of the Mexican Republic against the backdrop of 19th century European expansion. Secondly, Juárez's life adds a legendary interest to this crucial episode of Mexican nationalism. His Indian origin contributes to highlighting his attributed heroicism, the expulsion of the House of Habsburg and the forging of a personality constructed on the basis of notions of firmness, duty and civic virtues. Juárez also had a successful career in Jurisprudence and was the Mexican president for nearly two decades. These historical and biographical reasons, combined with the instrumental goal of political successors (from the late 19th century to the present day) wishing to establish a continuity of Mexican republican origins and modern politics, have allowed the making and cyclical reproduction of a civic cult devoted to Juárez which is second to none in Mexican culture. The influential aura of the "Indian president" (i.e. the notion of civic presidentialism on the American continent) transcends national boundaries. Guatemala and Colombia have granted Juárez a place in their respective civic cultures. Juárez is not merely regarded as just a Mexican figure, he comes close to the not very common idea of being converted into a continental leader, is also known as the "Distinguished Hero of the Americas" (Benemérito de las Américas).

Juárez's ethnic origin is of further importance when adequately addressing the impact of modern nationalism amongst contemporary Indian peoples. Thus, this chapter will conclude with an examination of the responses from my samples of informants regarding civic heroes and official historiography.

#### Preamble: Foreign Apprehension

After the political break with Spanish tutelage in 1821, Mexico began to face the difficult challenge of constituting

itself as a Republic. The developing state in the first half of the 19th century has been described as disastrous: a stagnant economy due to the lack of external markets and capitals, and imminent financial bankruptcy (Rodríguez 1989:5). The demarcation of new political frontiers as a result of Texas's secession (1836) and the ratification by the Mexican Congress of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the Mexican-US war (1846-48), which ceded to the United States "over half a million square miles of territory", together considerably reduced the former vastness of what had been New Spain (Johanssen 1985:6). In the domestic realm, on the other hand, the task of transforming colonial subjects into citizens of the Republic was severely hindered by the limitations and drawbacks of a rudimentary education, inferior technology and poor infrastructure, and by the constraints associated with the prevalence of regionalisms and religious dominion (Vázquez de Knauth 1981:28). Continuous peasant and Indian revolts since 1819 (Reina 1980), the lack of patriotism and unified sentiments of national unity are the remaining factors which complete the picture of a shattered country. Here, it would be useful to mention the contrasting effects that the Mexican-American war produced on the popular perception on both sides of the new frontier. For the Americans it was, of course, a "brilliant success", a comprehensive victory over the Mexican army, even though this victory marked their first ever foreign war (Johanssen 1985:12). While in 1848 the American people and press celebrated their territorial annexation with patriotic jubilation, the Mexican post-war headlines conveyed great pessimism over such a moral disaster and its political implications for the present and future of the country (Suárez Arguello 1994:104).

The French intervention of 1861 and the imposition of the Habsburg monarchy in Mexico (1864) represented yet another arduous test for a recently devastated Mexican sovereignty. This explains the legendary and heroic overtones associated with this critical period of national defense and Liberal republicanism.

The reasons behind the foreign intervention by the French were diverse: Mexico's foreign debt, the geo-political interests of the French empire in the American continent, and the reaction of Mexican conservatism towards the Liberal and secular policies of the Reform movement (La Reforma) in which Juárez actively participated (1855-1857). In July 1861, Juárez's government suspended all repayments on the foreign debt incurred with Spain, France and Great Britain. Initially organised as a multinational punitive force, Spanish and British troops withdrew from Veracruz leaving the French army in Mexico. After a period of retreat due to Mexican popular resistance (Puebla May 5, 1862) and the dispatch of additional Napoleonic troops, the French army rapidly captured Mexico City forcing Juárez, who had replaced the presidency of I. Comonfort in 1861, to set up an itinerant government in the North. Mexican conservatives, anxious to restore their religious and military privileges, colluded with Napoleon III's Latin League project aimed at keeping a vigilant eye on the development of the Americanist Monroe Doctrine (1823). Both interests could be fulfilled if a Habsburg monarchy was created and so the throne was offered to Maximilian Ferdinand Joseph (1832-1867) and his wife Charlotte of Belgium (1840-1927) who reached Mexican shores in May 1864.

### Juárez: the Founding Father of the Republic

The stringent demands made on Europeans to respect a nascent American republicanism, were ideals shared, albeit in different times and circumstances, by the "fathers" and "founders" of the American civic nations: Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), Benito Juárez (1806-1872) and Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) (Brading 1983:17; Lowenthal 1985:120).

In the Mexican civic culture of the 20th century, President Juárez, is remembered as a major historical figure who helped transform the vestiges of colonialism into a new period of independence and modernisation. His commitment to restore the Mexican Republic is, however, his "finest honor".



As recently pointed out by B. Hamnett (1994) it was to

"turn the intervention into an irremediable disaster, humiliate Europeans beyond recall, vindicate the Republic, and force Mexicans to fight for the independence of their country" (p.142).

This project of national defence, devised by Juárez during his itinerant government, had as its final and unequivocal outcome the execution of the younger brother of Joseph I, by firing squad, along with the Mexican generals, Miguel Miramón and Tomás Mejía, on the Hill of the Bells (19 June, 1867) (Hamnett 1994:193). At least two factors contributed to the realisation of such an event: the creation of a constitutional framework capable of justifying the fatal destiny of a European aristocrat and popular support for the republican cause.

Mexico, as an emergent Republic imbued with the ideals of 19th century European liberalism, set about formulating legislation and consolidating institutions so as to create a popularly elected government regulated by a written constitution. The 1857 Constitution, drafted by a group of Liberal reformers including Juárez, defined Mexico as a republican nation exclusively governed by universal suffrage and rejecting any other type of administrative rule not democratically approved by the people. The House of Habsburg transgressed this principle by ignoring the constitutional legality of Juárez's presidency (1861). Juárez relied on legality to punish this offence against the nation by issuing decrees (17 December, 1861; 25 January, 1862) to justify Maximilian's execution even before his capture. The archduke was finally apprehended (15 May, 1867) and a military court passed, in June of the same year and according to the punitive law of 1862, the death penalty for "crimes against the Nation, the rights of peoples, peace and public order" (Hamnett 1994:175;192). Despite international pressure and the use of all available political, legal and moral arguments, Juárez stood his ground and the death sentence was passed on the unfortunate monarch. Those who have written about Juárez have dramatised the reason behind his firmness, pointing out his

"pained view of Mexico" (visión dolorida de la patria); sentiments that today may be taken for granted but which at that time served a concrete purpose: to offer the Mexican people a permanent lesson "because the patria was in danger and there was fear of irremediable loss" (Sierra 1965:488). A. Henestrosa also commented:

"Almost all the enlightened men of his generation showed hesitation and withdrew from the struggle; but to put it symbolically, from that fragile frame that the patria was once reduced to, he was the only one who never backed off" (1972:141).

Without the support of the popular masses, the triumph of the Republic over French intervention would have been unthinkable. Scholars have researched the deep influence of liberalism on Mexican society prior to the 19th century foreign occupation, in order to demonstrate the dynamism of rural and provincial regions; while rejecting the official historiographical view that this was a movement from the centre to the periphery led by white and mestizo elites (Sinkin 1979:37).

F. Mallon in a study on the period of the Ayutla Revolution (1855), which marked the incipient transformation of the state and civil society away from the remnants of colonialism, surveys three cases of peasant uprisings in the districts of Morelos and Cuernavaca in support of the Liberal leader of the Ayutla movement, Juan Álvarez. Mallon's argument is that the formation of the Mexican state showed a complex "texture of class struggles and ethnic conflicts" involving the peasants and not simply elitist "struggle within and between dominant classes" (1988:5-9). Such an intricate amalgamation of economic, social and ethnic interests in the rural areas provided fertile soil for the emergence of a combination of ideologies: liberalism, patriotism and anti-foreign sentiments. Therefore, the uprisings studied by Mallon were basically reactions proclaiming a populist strand of liberalism based on social justice and redistribution of land against the stranglehold of Spanish landowners. Thus it seems that the rural claims of egalitarianism were also coloured

with ethnic resentments. It was this popular ethnicist mobilisation which was present during the Mexican-US war and re-emerged during the French intervention, as observed by G. Thomson in his work on the recruitment of the citizen-soldier to form the popular militia of National Guards (1991:280).

The plan devised by Juárez to expel the foreign troops relied on the existing background of popular protest. Hamnett refers, for example, to Juárez's belief in the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare. It was also the organisation of guerrilla groups which delayed and harrassed French communication inland from the Gulf of Mexico and circumvented the French advance in the North (Hamnett 1994:180). Such was the popular support for the Republic in peril that the response of the French commander was to issue punitive laws (October 13, 1865), with the death penalty for those people assisting, caring for, informing or protecting the Juarista cause. A death toll of 50,000 people was to have been the estimated cost restoring the Republic (Scholes 1969 rp).

Maximilian's government in Mexico City lasted four years (1864-1867). Within this time, Juarez set up his itinerant government and devised his strategy for resisting the intervention, the Napoleonic troops were evacuated in 1866, but without the archduke since he chose to stay. A month later after the execution of Maximilian, a crowd celebrated their "second independence" (Krauze 1994:275) as the victorious Juárez entered Mexico City (July 15, 1867) in his legendary black carriage.

### Juárez: his Life and the Legend

A significant part of the fascination exerted by Juárez's story, the Indian who managed to overthrow foreign aggression and save the nation, is to be found in the anecdotal way in which nationalists and writers have exalted his ethnic background, and the limitations associated with a deprived childhood. In his adult life he became a successful acculturated Indian; a rare 19th century case due to the

overwhelming hostility to Indians by political and intellectual elites, Liberal ideology, and the rest of the society. Notwithstanding, Juárez was, paradoxically, a committed pragmatic Liberal and a freemason. The Mexican socio-cultural context of the Reform period showed an ambivalent interest in forging a concept of the nation based on the Creole nationality. In this apparently ethnically unbiased and egalitarian society, Mexico's antiquity was barely considered; repressed and feared were the 19th century Indians' protests; while indigenous claims continued to be ignored by eliminating words such as "race" and "Indian" from the context of legality (Hale 1989:220).

Juárez, of Zapotec parents and background, albeit orphaned at an early age, was born in 1806 in the small village of Guelatao in the southern province of Oaxaca. The cultural Indian context from which Juárez emerged remains a mystery, given that during his adulthood, he never spoke of his past:

"It is a striking fact that in all correspondence in the Juárez archive in Mexico City there is practically no mention of Indians" (Sinkin 1979:40).

Similarly, he made only brief reference to his Zapotec origins in his Apuntes para mis hijos (Notes to My Children) (Hamnett 1994:35) but this is not enough to suppose that the Liberal politician professed a militant ethnic awareness and acted accordingly.

Rare traces of his ethnicity can be found in the Manifesto published after the events of June 1867, in which he dramatically exposed a type of rationale behind his endeavour:

"We inherit the indigenous nationality of the Aztecs, and in full enjoyment of it, we recognize no foreign sovereigns, no judges, and no arbiters" (Hamnett 1994:194).

It does not come as a surprise that a 19th century Zapotec wished to avenge at least in words the conquest of the Aztecs. Juárez, indeed, was emulating the Creole independentist themes based on the revivalism of ancient mythology in order to justify their political separatism from

Spain (Brading 1973; Lafaye 1985). Consequently, he was not introducing any novel ideological statement by evoking Aztecist discourse, given the earlier rhetorical attempts to establish a nationalistic continuity between Aztec times and the Mexican republic by the lawyer and journalist Carlos María de Bustamante. (An example of Bustamante's thought was the speech he wrote to be delivered by J.M. Morelos at the opening of the first Congress of independent Mexico - Chilpancingo, 1813) (3).

If for Juárez it was a matter of political survival to remain silent about his own past, biographers, historians and politicians have searched, speculated and imagined the contours of this famous Indian's life. They have also commented on his physical and intellectual attributes through which his indigenusness is likely to be emphasised. For example, he is described as a small impassive man made from "a single piece of obsidian" who used to express his thoughts and language moderately, was devoted to family life, and always wore the same style of black frock coat which helped him to dramatise his commitment to the civic virtues of republicanism (Sierra 1905; Zayas Enríquez 1906; Roeder 1958; Hamnett 1994). Such details stress the whole episode of resistance while creating a charismatic legend different from the prototype of mestizo "Mexicanness" embodied in E. Zapata (4).

The mountainous area of his birth place, now called "Sierra Juárez", has been the favourite setting of writers seeking to magnify his first activity, that of a humble shepherd. From it, it is said, he learnt more than his contemporary Liberal colleagues, about the "harsh reality of Mexico" (la descarnada realidad de México): poverty, ignorance and injustice (Henestrosa 1972:23). At the age of twelve, he abandoned his birth place and went to Oaxaca "still locked in his own idiom which was his prison" because, according to Sierra, Juárez's wish was, to "encounter the life, world and language that would put him in touch with current ideas, with current areas of thought" (Sierra 1965:26).

Juárez's life reflects the complicated, and not always

easy to disentangle, succession of socio-political events that bore testimony to the consolidation of national politics. Tenacity, sense of duty, capacity of political survival, ecclesiastical education (1821) and professional training in Jurisprudence in the Institute of Science and Arts (Oaxaca, 1827) were, according to biographers, contributing factors in the initial phase of his career. He first became a magistrate of the State Court of Justice (1833-1834) in the same year that he became a lawyer; a period of academic and family life beginning in 1829 preceded his Oaxaca governorship (1848-1852) but this was brought to an end with his arrest, ordered by the conservative central government. He was thus exiled to New Orleans in 1853. After his return in 1855, he joined the Ayutla Liberal movement and was made Minister of Justice in the government of I. Comonfort in which the "Juárez Law" and the "Lerdo Law" were proclaimed, as well as the draft of the 1857 Constitution. Civil war erupted as a consequence of Liberal legislation, Comonfort was exiled, and Juárez occupied the presidential chair for the first time in 1858 retaining full power based on authoritarian centralism until the time of his death in 1872 (Cadenhead 1975:56-70; Hamnett 1994:96;202;1991:2-4).

But Juárez very importantly, counted on the support of political elites, businessmen, intellectuals and mentors operating at provincial level. In a work attempting to explain Juárez's gradual but effective move from regional into national politics, Hamnett (1991) points out the politician's ability to create and cultivate a network of friends of Oaxacan origin who had studied with him at the Institute of Sciences and Arts, some of which became "future leaders of Oaxacan liberalism" (p.5-6) (5). Juárez was called upon to serve in office by means of personal contacts established with Liberals already holding official posts and as a result of the recruiting process of educated people with a view to counteracting centralism and restoring the federal system in the Oaxaca province (22 August, 1846) (Hamnett 1991:9).

Oaxaca's long-lasting network of allegiances and contacts

is indeed the key to understanding the roots of Juárez's commemoration. C.Weeks (1987), who devotes a whole book to documenting the various expressions of homage to Juárez made by Mexican society, mentions the participation of Oaxacan friends living in Mexico City in the inauguration of the Juarista cult at his tomb in the "San Fernando Cemetery" (later "Pantheon of the Illustrious"). The homage was simple, leaving flowers and making speeches, but it had a more significant social function: to reinforce the politically influential Oaxaca people of the late 19th century. Not surprisingly, his Oaxacan successor, Porfirio Díaz, skillfully converted Juárez's legacy and nationalism into a powerful ideology of political legitimation.

#### The Porfirian Phase of "Invented Traditions"

On the threshold of the 20th Century, Mexico had already accumulated a plethora of events depicting its "national history". Three major historical events worthy of national remembrance took place during the long political rule of P. Díaz (1876-1911): the first homage paid to Juárez on the twelfth anniversary of his death (1872-1884); the Centennial of Juárez's birth (1806-1906) and the Centennial of Independence (1810-1910). The commemoration of these dates highlights the inauguration of a civic religion encouraged by the state with the aim of providing the masses with alternative institutionalised cults and festivities. And very importantly, the new religion was a celebration of the goal of Díaz to centralise the state and the economy; a programme imposed by the oligarchy in a society deeply fragmented along ethnic, regional and class lines. Mexico's vacuum of unified national sentiments was filled with large-scale "invented traditions" seeking to inculcate loyalties to the state as well as mass participation in public life. As rightly pointed out by Hobsbawm (1983), the new traditions could only bear fruit through the medium of repetition implying continuity with the past (p.267).

Ten years after the president's death, various groups all with different interests were summoned by Díaz to gather around Juárez's tomb: survivors of the Congress of 1856-57; veterans of the war of the Reform, representatives of Liberal newspapers, the Oaxacan people in Mexico City, the Benito Juárez society in Toluca, Masonic Lodges and workers (Weeks 1987:37). On that occasion, Juárez was proclaimed "national hero" and "symbol of national unity", and this was in connection with a specific political purpose: the search for popular support for Díaz's second election (1884) and the establishment of the ideology of liberalism into a "unifying political myth" (Hale 1989:106). Díaz, like Juárez, had similar Liberal and republican views and the the two men had worked closely together in resisting French intervention (Díaz won a military reputation fighting the foreign troops), but Díaz became Juárez's opponent for the presidency in 1867 and 1871 although he only succeeded to the presidential chair after orchestrating a revolt in 1876 (The Tuxtepec Revolt).

In such circumstances, Díaz's rehabilitation of Juárez resembled a careful work of ideological engineering serving personal goals, since his plan was to gain prestige as the politician ensuring the continuity of both Juárez's reforms and the defence of national sovereignty. This proved to be a useful set of beliefs and principles which helped to lend credibility to his government. The organisation of commemorative ceremonies for a prototypal person and a series of prominent events, were designed to be a founding act of the new regime (Connerton 1992rp:51). The media of the period reinforced and magnified the recently acquired designs: the newspaper, El partido liberal (1885-96) popularised Juárez's extraordinary heroism in yet another attempt to forge Díaz's image as the political leader committed to continuing the Liberal agenda (Weeks 1987:46).

If Juárez, on the 10th anniversary of his death was declared a national hero, the centennial of his birth was the occasion to inaugurate the "civic cult of Juárez" as the founding father of the Republic. This was yet another result



of the politics of Porfirism. The purpose of this celebration was to establish the continuity of liberalism as the political ideology of the regime, such a celebration possessing the character of an "invented tradition": a remembrance of Juárez by the popular masses and elites, as well as the acquisition of historical consciousness by means of public celebrations. For that purpose, the state agency created the "National Commission for the Juárez Centennial" whose task it was to convert the cult into a nation-wide celebration with a strong popular presence. In all corners of Mexico, according to Weeks's study, there were contests of oratory, parades and plays praising Juárez's life, monuments and statues were unveiled, and of course, "Juárez" became the newly acquired name for public places. Multitudes made up of school children, the illiterate, the poor, elites and bureaucrats were, for the first time, gathered together with a single aim in mind: to venerate the man who had fought to preserve the land and freedom that all had in common.

Twenty-two years had passed since the first public homage to Juárez. By 1906, communications had improved, urbanisation was on the rise and in between the prosperous elite and the rural and urban poor, an expanding middle class was taking shape. A wider readership was thus available, providing important support for the Liberal press in expanding the cult through news and editorials. The newspaper also became the medium through which the public got to know the growing number of writings, paintings and cartoons on Juárez (Weeks 1987:47).

Another relevant factor of the centennial celebration was that it established the pattern for the typical patriotic style of popular festivity promoted by the state and ritualistically repeated on important dates of the civic calendar. These celebrations which are still alive today suffered a decline in the 1920's but were revived in the 1930's as I shall explain below (6).

The 21st of March is a day of fervent celebration throughout the national educational system. It is the date of Juárez's birth and, supposedly, the "official" arrival of

Spring. Plays and oratory contests are put on to dramatise two aspects of national consciousness: the defence of national integrity against foreigners, and the enactment of and memorial to Juárez's childhood and ethnic background, as well as to his individual efforts and personal character. The narrative depicting Juárez's heroism is cyclically brought to life in plays and rituals. Writers and educationalists have converted Juárez's life into a charismatic easily-consumed legend, serving as a prototype with the desirable characteristics expected of Mexican school children: republican virtues, pride in national sovereignty, sense of duty and, for Indian pupils, acculturation. On the same date, the governmental homage to Juárez includes a popular gathering with high ranking official representatives in front of his huge semicircular theatre made from one thousand five hundred tons of marble, inaugurated by Díaz during the Centennial of Independence (1910) in Mexico City. Other Mexicans embark upon a long journey to celebrate Juárez's birth in the small village of Guelatao.

#### The Uses Made of the Figure of Juárez

Passed down from Díaz was the idea that Mexican presidents should identify and link their works and politics to the life and political ideals of Juárez. Mexico's increasing participation in the international arena since the Second World War became a major opportunity to use Juárez to emphasise Mexican sovereignty in relation to foreign affairs and commercial treaties. However, before explaining the consolidation of Juarismo as the symbol of national unity and foreign defence, it is relevant to point out that from the 1920's to 1930's, the Juárez cult and his popular remembrance underwent a notable decline. Mexico City and provincial newspapers commented, in the early 1920's, on the scant popular attraction and feeble official support invested in celebrating the Juárez cult. They also noted the increasing monotony of the ritual. In 1927, a northern newspaper, El

Porvenir, reported that the celebration of Juárez's birth passed almost unnoticed in the capital (Weeks 1987:100).

It is a striking paradox to observe that while the cult to the Zapotec Indian was in decline throughout the 1920's, the post-revolutionary period of Mexican nationalism, on the other hand, received a boost of ethnicist vitality in the arts by re-adapting the Indianist theme (i.e. music and mural paintings), the ideological reappraisal of the mestizo and, very importantly, a nascent indigenismo. Plausible explanations for this contradiction are provided by the fact that Oaxaca, the political power base of both Juárez and Díaz's governments, and Oaxaqueños, the initiators of the Juarista cult, ceased to be the regional base of governmental legitimation, after being replaced by people from the northern state of Sonora from which three consecutive presidential successors came: A. de la Huerta (1920), A. Obregón (1920-1924) and P. Elías Calles (1924-1928). Furthermore, the assassination of Obregón by a religious fanatic on July 17, 1928, contributed to overshadowing the anniversary of Juárez's death. The death of the northern politician was followed by the creation, by Calles, of the National Revolutionary Party - forerunner of the PRI - and this required the support of an ideological movement which used the exaltation of Obregón's misfortune.

Another explanation for the official neglect of the 19th century hero, in the aftermath of the revolution, was the increasing criticism of Juárez's policies in connection with indigenism. This critical disapproval became more widespread and was highlighted by some of the founders of the Mexican School of Anthropology, M. Gamio and N. Bassols (cfr. Ch 8). The chief concern of Indigenism was to stimulate a revitalisation of the Indian past in the search for cultural originality and, for Gamio, the symbol of Juárez could not genuinely represent Indian-ness. Arguments put forward were that Juárez's policies revealed a misunderstanding of Indian cultural life by failing to address wholesale benefits to the natives and, instead, encouraging the destruction of communal land holdings. In

post-revolutionary indigenist thought, Juárez deceived both himself and the Indians, by adopting a westernised way of life (Gamio 1916:317). This criticism, however, was not sufficiently influential to cause the abandonment of the Juárez cult.

Form the 1930's after a period of stagnation, the newspaper El Nacional, succeeded in reinstating, the Juarista myth within the allegory of the revolution in another attempt to establish continuity between the ideals of the reform and the revolution. Although Cárdenas did not address the theme of Juárez vis-a-vis foreignness during the announcement of the oil expropriation in 1935, the newspapers enhanced the parallel with the foreign resistance. However, the process of transition of Juarez's second revivalism was finally carried out by M. Avila Camacho (1940-1946) on the tenth anniversary of the nationalisation of the oil industry (18 March, 1945) which almost coincided with the date of Juárez's birth (21 March). The pattern of such a celebration was repeated by M. Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) and A. Ruiz Cortines (1951-1958). The resurrection of the Juárez cult was employed to define and identify Mexico's principles of non-intervention and popular self-rule, thus reinforcing political independence from the US. A. López Mateos (1958-1964) had a great opportunity to exploit the figure of Juárez in two events: Mexico's refusal to break off diplomatic relations with Cuba (1959) and the conclusion of a small land dispute in Texas (1963). According to Weeks, the latter event was magnified by López Mateos in his public announcement (July 18, 1963):

"he stood before a large portrait of Juárez so that all would understand that both he and Juárez have successfully defended the territorial integrity of Mexico" (p.110).

Subsequent governments have preserved the tradition of using and reviving the symbol of the Indian president. G. Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) made his contribution with a huge monument to Juárez at the site of Maximilian's execution. Former presidents joined the opening on the Hill of the Bells (June 15, 1967): E. Portes Gil, L. Cárdenas, M. Aleman and A. Ruiz

Cortines. The gathering of former political rulers participating in the veneration of Juárez can be interpreted as a demonstration that the symbol of the president was once again used to show the existence of solidarity and unity within the PRI's politics. This occurred at a time when the expanding middle class, the result of a period of sustained industrialisation starting from 1946, expressed open dissent (in 1965) through a large mobilisation of physicians and medical staff, followed by intense political unrest which culminated in the student crisis of 1968, a series of demonstrations brutally crushed by the army in the same year that Mexico hosted the Olympic Games (Poniatowska 1968; Johnson 1984).

Díaz Ordaz went even further by ordering the re-enactment of the "triumphant entry of Juárez into the Mexican capital" to celebrate the centenary of this episode (1867-1967). Photographs of the event captured crowds formed by civilians and the army filling the sidewalks of the Alameda Park while observing the solemn passing of Juárez's black coach, the symbol of his itinerant government, making its way to the Constitution Plaza where Díaz Ordaz read Juárez's 1867 proclamation from the balcony of the National Palace.

The black coach of Juárez, on permanent display in the Chapultepec Castle, the former residence of Maximilian and Charlotte, became a principal object of attraction, as well as his residential quarters and personal objects inside the right wing of the National Palace, today a museum and shrine devoted to the perpetuation of his cult. All aspects of Juárez's life have been fully exploited to meet political ends. Further examples reveal how Mexican politicians have exploited the endeavours of Juarism.

L. Echeverría (1970-1976) proclaimed 1972 as the "Year of Juárez". C. Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) following López Mateos' example, revealed the contents of the NAFTA agreement with a large portrait of Juárez strategically placed behind him on the same platform (Hamnett 1994:248). In the Summer of 1994, the intervention of foreign forces to solve the Haiti

crisis was opposed by the Mexican Foreign Office arguing that Haiti was well able to rule itself, political principles which were Juárez's great strength and which now served as a moral guide for Mexican diplomacy.

### Juárez and his own Indian People

From the second half of the 19th century, Juárez did in fact pioneer the creation of a modernist, almost Gellnerian, project of nation-building, nurtured by his Liberal faith and the belief in private ownership and individual rights. He envisaged a free republican unity of secularly educated citizens remarkably opposed to the attachments of traditionalism, factionalist politics and the perpetuation of local ethnicity. As a pragmatist, he sought to give a new impetus to national development by replacing, for example, communal farmers by free landowners and promoting small-medium size industry. The enforcement of legislation was, for Juárez, the source of that power required to destroy the obstacles of outdated colonialism. And this was possible providing racial and ethnic differentiation were abolished and the Indian people achieved a sense of individual independence through the introduction, and inducement, of a "sense of ownership". The result was the passing of the "Lerdo law" (June, 1856) which was basically a decree ordering the suppression of communal Indian landholdings and the restriction of ecclesiastical rights over private ownership (Hale 1989;1968:221).

Juárez's nationalist policies clearly created a climate of tension with the other Indian groups of Oaxaca given their alleged lack of submission to central authority. This was particularly evident during his governorship of that province. Cases in point were the Triqui people, who were disregarded by Juárez because of their "constant inclination to separate themselves from obedience to the authorities"; the uprisings in the Mixteca region over tax assessments which lasted until the 1850's; the central authority's inability to enforce payment of the capitation tax amongst the Isthmus Zapotecs

(Tehuantepec and Juchitán) (Hamnett 1991:15-16), and the frequent revolts in response to the 1856 legislation (cfr. Ch 3).

In the framework of Liberal doctrine which saw the Indian as backward and inferior, there was hope that republican equality would eventually "civilize" the Indians. The individual interest personified in Juárez was the unequivocal example as reflected in the editorial opinion of El siglo in 1848: "If Indians are talented and become educated, they attain the highest posts of the state" (Quoted by Hale 1989:238). The preservation of the Indian therefore, was not a preoccupation of 19th century liberalism, neither was indigenismo a characteristic of the period. The re-appraisal of Juárez's indigenosity as enhanced in his anecdotal biography is a genuine 20th century product. This converts the Juarista legend of the "Indian president" into an even more attractive story.

#### Indian Responses to Juárez and his Cult

As in earlier chapters, my purpose in this section is to analyse, from the point of view of my samples of informants, the significance that certain official heroes hold for contemporary Indian identity. The data shown below seeks to demonstrate whether the historical figure of Juárez lends itself to creating links of identification amongst the Indian peoples, either by virtue of his heroism or as the president with a distinctive Indian background.

The methodology employed was the survey already discussed (cfr. Ch. 2) which was applied to both groups of students (MLI and LEI). The interviews of the "professional group" were semi-structured and included questions such as:

1. From an Indian point of view is Juárez or any other character of national history a venerated figure?
2. In your opinion, how would it be possible to reconstruct the history of ethnic groups?

#### The Professional and Intellectual View

In order to facilitate the analysis I have organised the answers into two categories. Firstly, those interviewees who clearly stated the opinion that Indian peoples do not share the same concept of "hero" as the mestizo. Secondly, those informants who recognised the merits of the historical figure of Juárez and/or expressed negative comments. However, I admit that the answers obtained from Juárez are incomplete. Despite my informants' generosity with their time and interest in the overall purpose of the research, it was not always possible to fully explore all aspects arising from the interview. Limitations of time as well as a wish to maintain a reasonable level of interest from my interviewees, were reasons why further enquiries on other relevant heroes (i.e. Cárdenas, Morelos, Hidalgo) were not carried out. I have described in chapter 2 the method employed, which in all cases implied a significant investment of time on the part of my informants.

The two interviewees from Oaxaca - VC and FG -; the Nahua historian and the Tseltal from Chiapas, fell into the first category (i.e. Indian peoples' rejection of national heroes) and offered similar answers. These were:

**Oaxaca. Zapotec Poet and Editor**

VC: "The so-called national heroes are fabrications of the dominant society"

**Oaxaca. Mixteco Sociologist and Senior University Lecturer**

FG: "Indian peoples do not have heroes"

**Tlaxcala. Nahua Historian and Senior University Lecturer**

LRG: "Some heroes are valid for some people, for Indians I do not think they identify with heroes"

**Chiapas. Tzotzil Anthropologist and Civil Servant**

JA: "Indian peoples admire those fellows who work hard and manage to overcome shortages, not 'heroes'".



### **Campeche. Maya Anthropologist and Researcher**

**CECH:** "There is no room in our history for national heroes, because we only venerate those heroes (e.g. Jacinto Pat, Cecilio Chi) which recall the repression and suffering of the "War of Castes" (Maya Rebellion 1847-1853) (cfr. Ch 3).

This group of informants are reluctant to recognise the components of national culture and reject the notion of "heroism". Not even Juárez's ethnic background appear to be a matter of significance for this group.

Some of the reasons behind the view of perceiving heroes as alien components in the figurative realm of Indian identity are expressed below. Most of the answers obtained suggest that Indians' search for history is the first requisite to take into account in order to recover and re-habilitate Indian "heroism".

### **Oaxaca. Zapotec Post and Editor**

**VC:** "It is difficult to recover our history. Because this would imply a change in politics and the type of overall development. Plurality is not respected in this country for ideological and cultural reasons and because we are always given the argument that funding educative models for each ethnic group is costly".

### **Oaxaca. Mixteco Sociologist and Senior University Lecturer**

**FG:** "Where and how are we going to find our own heroes? This is a huge process of searching for our identity and the discovery or re-discovery of any type of identity is always a painful process. Because the idea that we have of ourselves is a romantic one and this implies first of all recognising that we - the Mixteco - have not existed as a unified people. There have been Mixteco kingdoms and heroes, like "Claw of Tiger" who is recalled for his efforts in unifying the Mixteco people in the past. So, we are facing a double process: how to find our identity as a Mixteco people and where to find our history. At present our communities are divided by municipal and territorial

divisions, and we understand that this is a component of our identity, but this division is a false one. The day we are able to discover our history, our own Mixteco world would certainly collapse, because I just do not know if we would be able to cope with our true identity".

**Tlaxcala. Nahua Historian and Senior University Lecturer**

LRG: No answer recorded.

**Chiapas. Tzotzil Anthropologist and Civil Servant**

JA: "I would not know how to start the process of the Indians' own search for history and identity and thus, to be able to find whether our heroes are important for us. I would begin this enquiry, however, by widely asking myself who are the Indian people; where do they come from?; how was Indian society constructed and so on. Once I know the origin of Indians I would refer to recall the history of the other groups of society. From this perspective, I would make enquiries into the history of events from the Indian perspective and this is because the Indian person needs to know how come we live in this country and not in another. The government sponsors small projects such as dance, music and so on, but it is not interested in funding a wider project covering aspects of history and identity. This is very important for us because Indian identity has hit rock bottom".

**Campeche. Maya Anthropologist and Researcher**

CECH: "At present we do not have a project to help us recover our Maya history".

The responses of the interviewees from Yucatán and Chiapas expressed the following views with specific reference to Juárez:

**Yucatán. Maya Teacher and Civil Servant**

**BAC:** "He is the 'heroe' of the national society, it does not matter for the Maya people if he was an Indian, he did not do anything good for his own people"

**Yucatán. Maya Translator and Writer**

**MLGP:** "Juárez is a man worthy of admiration because he became president despite being an Indian"

**Chiapas. Tseltal Linguist and Researcher**

**JVR:** "There have been other prominent Indians who have done nothing for their people, look at Díaz, his mother was Mixtec, like Juárez who was a Zapotec".

These answers encapsulate the contradictory element of the Juarist myth: the recurrent problem faced by Indian individuals of how to retain ethnic identity while participating in the whole of society and having decision-making capacity. The following expression offered by the Maya civil servant reflects the dilemma for Indian peoples of being unable to embrace Juárez's legend wholeheartedly.

**Yucatán. Maya Teacher and Civil Servant**

**BAC:** "There is no reason for Indians to identify with Juárez: firstly, he destroyed the communal rights of land ownership and more importantly, he betrayed his culture to become a politician. For Indian peoples to have access to policy-making signifies conflict and tension. We need to have access to power, but to do so one has to abandon one's Maya identity. Of course, there is no document explicitly stating such; however, the very few Indians holding at present, some degree of power, have already gone through a purifying filter which prepares them how to better serve for government institutions but not Maya communities. This is what happened to Juárez and this is a story which we do not wish to repeat".

Overall, the opinions of these individuals were able to identify Juárez's different roles, but there was not one mention of the issue of "national sovereignty" or "defence of patria" as understood by the rest of society, a view often enhanced by politicians. One possible explanation for this discrepancy of opinion is because Juárez's public image manages to exert an impact on Indians' perception due to his peculiar case of transmuted identity in order to exercise political power. This situation would also become apparent when analysing the students' opinion.

### The View of the Students

Juárez seemed to be highly regarded by the samples of students, but this, obviously, is not accidental: a calendar cult of Juárez is cyclically repeated, and national historiography which students are acquainted with, emphasises his public role.

In the questionnaire the students were asked to choose one or more of the most common heroes or anti-heroes, used by the text-books in order to illustrate specific facts of official Mexican history. In chronological order these were: "Moctezuma", "Cuauhtémoc", "Hernán Cortés", "Malinche", "Benito Juárez", "Porfirio Díaz" and "Lázaro Cárdenas" (See note 7 for a general description of these individuals).

For the MEI group the heroes in order of importance were recorded as follows:

Lázaro Cárdenas (7)

Moctezuma (6)

Cuauhtémoc (5)

Benito Juárez (5)

Porfirio Díaz (1)

Hernán Cortés (0)

Malinche (0)

The LEI pattern is slightly different:

Benito Juárez (38)  
Cuauhtémoc (35)  
Lázaro Cárdenas (20)  
Moctezuma (17)  
Porfirio Díaz (5)  
Hernán Cortés (0)  
Malinche (0)

The figures of the nationalist period favoured by the students were Benito Juárez (5 and 38) and Lázaro Cárdenas (7 and 20). The "Indian president" is highly regarded by the LEI sample, while the preferences of the MLI group were divided between two "heroes" of the "pre-Hispanic" period who achieved significant scores - Cuauhtémoc (5 and 35) and Moctezuma (6 and 17) -. As an anti-hero of the nationalist period, "Porfirio Díaz" obtained a minimal score (1 and 5).

It is worth underlining the fact that "Hernán Cortés" and "Malinche" (See note 8) were regarded with total indifference, they did not even accumulate "anti-hero" points, given that the spaces allocated to these responses were left blank. Zapata and the characters of the Mexican revolution were not included in this study for the reason already outlined: their historical context did not refer to an episode of foreign resistance.

In order to corroborate the above rankings, it is interesting to look at some of the positive statements expressed by the LEI group:

1. *"Cuauhtémoc and Lázaro Cárdenas died defending their people against the enemy".*
2. *"Benito Juárez, Lázaro Cárdenas and Cuauhtémoc defended us for the benefit of our country".*
3. *"Benito Juárez and Lázaro Cárdenas applied policies linked to Indian interests".*
4. *"Cuauhtémoc bravely defended the Mexica [Aztec] people".*
5. *"The Indian Benito Juárez became president".*
6. *"Lázaro Cárdenas wished to give us an education".*

The negative ones expressed by the same group:

1. "*Hernán Cortés, Porfirio Díaz and Malinche did not fight for the country, on the contrary, they acted in favour of the enemy*".
2. "*Hernán Cortés, Porfirio Díaz and Malinche did not fight for the patria, they acted against it*."

In brief, among the Indian students it is absolutely clear that to call someone a hero, irrespective of the historical period, the figure must have "defended" or "fought" for the country and this reflects the influence of the standardised school system. Consequently, the anti-heroes were "enemies" or "traitors" to the nation acting as allies to foreign intervention. But also some incorrect views were recorded: for example, Lázaro Cárdenas did not "die defending his people against the enemy" (See statement 1). The way in which the students expressed their views on "heroes" reflects the common nationalist ideology, and prominence was given to those figures whose political activities were linked to indigenous affairs.

These students recognised the indigenista biography of Juárez which praises Indians' capacity of acculturation under the principle of pragmatic individuality (i.e. "*The Indian Benito Juárez became president*"). As stated earlier in this chapter, Juárez assumed his ethnic identity with extreme discretion in order to survive the hostile socio-political climate towards the Indian peoples throughout the period of 19th century liberalism. Hence, the re-appraisal of Juárez's ethnicism came as a work of 20th century biographers and historians dazzled by the dramatic confrontation of foreign aggression resisted by a skilful Indian. Within national politics the irreconcilable clash between Juárez's identity and his embodiment of exercising absolute power was, nevertheless, overwhelmingly perceived by the Indian students and the professional sample alike. In other words, the fact that "*Juárez became president*", considering the unprivileged

political position of Indian peoples in general, appears to be by far the major reason exerting symbolical influence amongst my informants.

### The National History

This section explores the views of the students with regard to the official chronology of Mexican history, as derived from the text-books, and acts as a complementary factor to expand our knowledge of the students' views on civic heroes.

In the questionnaire the students were asked to choose, in order of importance, which periods of history learnt at school motivated and interested them intellectually. This part of my overall research aimed at inducing recollection of school days was carried out according to Mexico's official chronology. i.e. divided into three eras: Pre-Hispanic (800-400 BC -16th century); the Colonial (16th-18th) and the National (19th-20th centuries).

Since one of my aims during the field-work was to test the students' knowledge of national history, my informants found in the questionnaire a total number of five headings: "Conquest"; "Colonial"; "Independence"; "Reform" and "Revolution". Following such headings my plan was to evaluate two perceptions. Firstly, whether the individuals were able to show a solid correlation between heroes and history and secondly, if they were equally able to identify the factors or processes involved in the different periods of history.

The analysis of results showed that the "Pre-Hispanic" and "Conquest" periods did manage to generate interest within the MLI group. For example, they recorded respectively six and seven positive answers for these periods; the least interesting were the "Reform" and the "Revolution" eras which only gathered three and one answers respectively.

The above contrasts sharply with the opinions of the LEI group. For them, the study of the "Revolution" (32) was more important, followed by "Independence" (26), "Conquest" (26), "Reform" (13), "Colony" (12) and "Pre-Hispanic" (6).

As said above, the MLI group showed a certain interest in the "Pre-Hispanic" and "Conquest" periods. Such preference correlates adequately with the students' interest for the so-called "Pre-Hispanic" heroes (Moctezuma 6 ; Cuauthémoc 5). Consequently, according to this group of students, the ranking of five points attributed to Juárez shows that the Indian president has a similar range of importance when compared with the "Pre-Hispanic" figures. Nevertheless, for the group of post-graduates, the historical "Reforma" period was of minor significance ranking only three points, and the "Revolution" only accumulated one positive answer, despite the fact that L. Cárdenas was given seven points. In other words, there is a correlation between "Pre-Hispanic" characters and specific periods of history, but this correlative perception is less clear with respect to Juárez's "Reformation" and "Revolution".

On the other hand, although the LEI group showed a preference for Juárez (38), the results do not correlate, given that the study of "Reforma" only obtained fourth place in the students' list of interests. For the group of undergraduates, the study of the "Revolution" (32) was the principal motivating area of enquiry, but L. Cárdenas, as representative of socio-political outcomes derived from that period (i.e. Post-revolution), was ranked in third place.

Such a lack of consistency regarding, heroes and history, as manifested by the two groups of the sample, suggests two possibilities. First, the students seem to have a lack of sustainable historical information or, perhaps, a state of confusion. The reader will recall, for example, that a similar result was obtained from the section dealing with "Knowledge of Aztec History" (cfr. Ch.4). Second, the selection of given heroes by each individual may be the result of cyclical repetition of "invented traditions" and thus, failing to point out the historical reasons behind public veneration. A third speculative possibility is the assumption that one can pick heroes at random following individual preference but this does not seem to be plausible as heroes need to be understood within a given historical context.



## Conclusion

The study of the formative period of the Mexican Republic after the incursion of foreign powers has been the focus of this chapter. This episode allowed for the development of common bases of identity resting on the capacity to delimit "hero" and "enemy-making" prototypes. Mexican historiography venerates those characters who have defended the homeland. Juárez, in particular, occupies a prominent place. Such historiography was tested against the perceptions of three groups of Indian people and the results did not always express unified opinions.

Juárez was perceived critically by the group formed by professionals with the argument that he is a character of the national society. Such a view, thus, implies that as in the case of the ethnic myths analysed before, the concept of hero does not seem to arouse general acceptance within the ethnicist groups. These informants also expressed the need to discover viable ways to recover and re-construct their differently perceived historical information and thus, perhaps, to evaluate whether heroes are of significance to Indian groups.

The results obtained from the samples of graduates and post-graduates showed an overwhelming recognition of the character discussed, but this again has to be viewed in the light of the fact that these students are closely related to the world of standardised education. It was interesting to note, for example, that the notion of "hero-making" (i.e. fear of foreignness) was clearly identified by these students. Some discrepancies were recorded with respect to the lack of correlation assigned by the students to heroes and periods of history.

Equally relevant was the discovery that Juárez's personality and life managed to produce a significant impact amongst my informants. This was perceived in terms of a dilemma referring to Indian people's impediments to exercise political power without necessarily compromising their ethnic

identities.

It seems that the project of integrating an ethnically divided society, by persuading the people to share the same cultural archetypes, to believe in the same heroes, and to observe the cyclical repetition of civic cults, is a task which normally does not produce the type of results theoretically expected. This is so despite the availability of effective tools for acculturation, such as the educational system and its respective text-books, as I will seek to explain in my next chapter.

## Chapter 6

### **The National Education System: Origin and Development**

The modernist theories of nationalism emphasise that a standardised education system is a condition of nation formation. In Mexico, the closest thing to a "standard" in matters of education is the primary education system. Mass education has been an official policy since the late 19th century and it was perceived as one of the most effective means of unifying the socio-cultural diversity within society; in the phraseology of Mexican educationalists, "to forge a patria" (Gamio 1916) and "to educate is to redeem" (Ramírez 1948).

At the turn of the 20th century, Mexicans were still influenced by the excessive clericalism inherited from earlier centuries and, as society moved towards economic diversification, state education sought to introduce notions of progress and the means to achieve material success through social mobility by adopting a rational system of thought. The fundamental premise of Mexican education reflects a universal concern: to unify the population, to create citizens, and to prepare a labour force in response to economic development. An extensive bibliography documents the long-term commitment of the Mexican history of public education (Larroyo 1948; Emery 1984; de la Peña 1983).

It is not enough of an argument, however, to simply state that education is a condition for nationalism and vice-versa. Each educational system possesses its own complexity, manifested in antagonistic ideologies and the contest between opposing forces operating within the society, such as that between the secular state and the church (Fen 1969), and between state agencies and the unions. Thus, my concern in this chapter is to examine the process by which the state has managed to create a major monopoly of education according to the Gellnerian view.

The chapter then has two main themes: the interrelation

of those socio-political factors which have played a decisive role in the application or curtailment of the major Mexican educational policies, and the sociological implications arising from the imposition of state education in both urban and rural society.

### The Foundations of Mexican Public Education

The creation of an educational structure initiated a process by which the state sought to absorb family or local loyalties and to replace them with civic duties and fidelity to a wider community. The Mexican reformation period of the mid-19th century was the backdrop to the beginnings of educational legislation under state control, supressing religious instruction while offering a new secular educational content with subjects such as Civic Instruction, Geography and History. Soon after the restoration of the Republic, Juárez's government reflected this conviction with the release of the "Organic Law of Public Instruction" (December, 1867), a law which was reformulated on May 15, 1869 (Vázquez de Knauth 1992:96).

When G. Barreda (1824-1881) was in charge of educational changes, he introduced positivistic ideas of secularism and science with a precise aim in mind: to combat the causes of "Mexican backwardness" (Barreda 1901:169; Wilson 1941:22). By December 10, 1874 a new piece of Liberal legislation exerted great influence on the future layout of Mexican education as the law promoting the introduction of secularism throughout the entire country was enacted.

Despite early legislation, the education system was systematically developed during the regime of P. Díaz (1876-1880 and 1884-1911) in response to the process of economic growth and centralisation. The Mexican primary school system was organised and devised by J. Baranda (1840-1909), who created the project of a centralised and unified educational institution between 1882 and 1901; and J. Sierra (1848-1912), whose aim was to "modernise" the structures of primary

education laid down by Baranda (Wilson 1941:319). Baranda started the construction of the educational apparatus in several stages, based on the idea that its eventual standardisation would require the training of suitable teaching staff, hence the founding of the School for Teachers of Primary Instruction (1887). Two years later, the "Mexican national school" was taking concrete shape as the First Congress of Instruction (1889) added the concept of obligatory schooling to the idea of compulsory secularism (Martínez Jiménez 1992:124).

J. Sierra's plan represents the conceptualisation of Mexican education seeking to achieve ethnic integration and linguistic uniformity. Education was in Sierra's view the irreplaceable instrument for the task of civilising the masses, awakening them from their lethargy and offering them a positivistic belief in progress. For that purpose, Sierra introduced three important aspects aimed at expanding education through the creation of institutions: the plan which would provide unified instruction at least in the initial years of people's education; the parallel training of staff and building of primary schools; and finally, the project to build up the Ministry of Educational Affairs (Secretaría de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes) (1905), known from 1921 as SEP (Ministry of Education) with J. Vasconcelos as the first minister (Martínez Jiménez, 1992:128).

### Post-Revolutionary Education

The 20th century has witnessed a stronger consensus on the ideological content of a standardised education, its legislation and the pragmatic attempt to influence large sectors of society. With the out-break of the Revolution of 1910 the Porfirian regime came to an end, followed by a period of economic and political turmoil and one outcome of this social upheaval was the promulgation of the Constitution of 1917, a legislative tool which incorporated aspects of the previous charters of 1824 and 1857 in areas such as civil

liberties, democracy and with various anti-monopolistic and secular clauses. The reformulated Constitution allowed the state to implement a process of modernisation and socio-economic development and as part of this, it included a significant provision on education. For example, Article Three declared that state-sponsored primary education should be compulsory and free; that the content would instil a "love of the patria" and promote an understanding of other countries in a spirit of tolerance and justice; and that every citizen has the right to receive an education and to attain literacy (Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos:1985).

More legislation, educational reforms and the necessary infrastructure were introduced in order to bring about the content of Article Three for large sectors of Mexican society. The task of disseminating mass education came to prominence during the years of the Obregon government (1920-1924), and the reformulation and passing of the "Organic Law of Public Education" (1920) allowed for the application of the various educational policies defined by the minister of Education, J. Vasconcelos and his implementation of the varying educational projects has been widely documented (1). The goals of these projects were largely concerned with instilling a sense of a national identity in people and with the spread of literacy. In practical terms, Vasconcelos conceived of four types of schools: the rural school, the cultural mission, the indigenous school and the rural teacher training school (Tucker 1957:35; Heath 1972), as well as literacy campaigns and the introduction of a programme of public libraries. E.

Loyo (1992) has documented, for example, the multiplication of reading materials, from 1920 to 1940, on science and literature topics. These were made available by the government in order to encourage the spread of literacy amongst the working class, the indigenous sector, women and children. Such projects were the first of their kind in the history of Mexican education, and were closely linked to the idea of nation formation through the printing press.

The mid 1920's are a crucial period in understanding the

difficulties implied in the creation of an education system sponsored by the state. I refer to the conflict between church and state characterised by the government's secular policies geared to eradicating religious influence in education. The continuing dispute, led by the 19th century Liberals and Conservatives, re-emerged again after irreversible and definitive plans to make education free, obligatory and secular were announced during P. Elias Calles' regime (1924-1928). Briefly, one of the aspects of this conflict was the church's reluctance to implement legislation against which they reacted by suspending religious services and possibly instigating an armed revolt in the western state of Jalisco (Bailey 1974; Meyer J. 1974).

Subsequent educational programmes launched by the state also had the undoubted purpose of eliminating religious influence. The "socialist education" implemented during L. Cárdenas's mandate (1934-1940) is just one example. The aims of this so-called "socialist education" were linked to the growing participation of the state in the economy; its curriculum stressed the importance of physical and intellectual strength to overcome existing disparities in terms of wealth and labour (Cárdenas 1978:18). The events of World War Two and the expropriation of foreign oil companies on Mexican territory were also factors adding ideological weight to the official Mexican version of nationalism and, consequently, to its educational system. The construction of the educational infrastructure, and the establishment of a network of institutions for teacher training, led in 1942 to the enactment of the "New Organic Law of Public Education" passed during M. Avila Camacho's presidency (1940-1946).

Towards the end of the 1940's, the public education system was near to being completed and consolidated, but attempts to define its ideological content along official guidelines were still being suggested. For example, the Education Plan of 1947 initiated in the second year of M. Aleman's administration (1946-1952) emphasised the type of education suitable for the Mexican population: notably that it

should not be imported via foreign models, given that the ideal of public education was "to maintain the peculiar character of our country" (Solana et.al. 1982:330). The content of this very "Mexicanized" education had three goals which focused primarily on the peasantry: a) effective teaching of the peasantry; b) improvement of the economic and sanitary conditions of peasants and c) the inculcation of a civic spirit in each young peasant aimed at encouraging the view that peasants form an integral part of the nation (ibid).

Such an educational policy shows the widespread practice of using schools to turn "peasants" into "citizens", a scenario documented in great detail in E. Weber's (1984) study of the national integration of the French peasantry at the end of the 19th century. The national aim of educating peasants in order to prepare them for modern conditions while preserving a unique cultural context, reveals the inevitable contradiction of nationalism highlighted by "modernists": education sponsors the modernisation of the agrarian world, and "historical-culturalists", the school encourages the preservation of the country's cultural peculiarities.

President A. Ruíz Cortines (1952-1958), in his first speech to the country, expressed a similar view: that his education programme would be aimed at "introducing vigour into the Mexican nationality, raising the level of culture, especially that of the popular classes and orientating education to serve economic development" (Solana 1982:49). This policy had clear objectives: to educate peasants and create citizens able to meet the demands of the recently introduced economic policy of import substitution, as well as to promote a cultural awareness of "Mexico". The model of "Mexican awareness" proposed the following: to instil a sense of the historical past; to encourage integration; to teach the notion that the "patria" is the supreme norm; to incorporate Mexican culture (i. e. the mestizo culture) into the universal culture and to adopt "Mexicanness" as a way of life (Ceniceros 1962:14).

The inculcation of a sense of "Mexicanness" based on the



ideological reconciliation of Hispanic and indigenous traditions was officially reinforced in the public arena, such as at galleries, museums and archeological sites. Ballinger writes: "While post-revolutionary governments were tackling questions of land reform, peasant rights and education, a new museum tradition was emerging" (1993:26). Signs of historical continuity and the desire to perpetuate ancient traditions materialised with the Museum of Anthropology, opened in 1964. Recently, and in line with the official interest to rescue and protect the "living work of the indigenous past", thirteen archeological projects of vast dimensions have received substantial investment (Proyectos Especiales de Arqueología, 1992).

It is safe to say that from the passing of the 1947 law up to the present, educational policies have maintained the same basic aim: that of creating and expanding an educational system with the following characteristics: free, secular, compulsory and under the control of the state. But, complex internal conflicts evolving within the expansive bureaucratic machinery, also resulted from this gradual orchestration of a centralised education.

#### Recurrent Risks of an Educational Monopoly

The educational edifice is an ongoing process of construction often reflecting a huge complexity of events. One such event is, indeed, the impressive growth and expansion of the educational bureaucracy since its foundation in 1921. From 1976 to 1988 (i.e the regimes of López Portillo and M. de la Madrid, respectively) the administrative structure for education grew in order to respond to the massification of education as a result of its compulsory nature. It is estimated that the bureaucratic administration reached its peak in 1982 when, for example, the SEP included 7 undersecretariats, 44 director-generalships, 304 managerships and 6 councils; it employed 800,000 staff, including over 10,000 civil servants. It also controlled 60 per cent of the

total budget; 93 percent of the schools and the enrolment of over 13 million children and young people (80 percent) (Ornelas 1988:107; Pescador and Torres, 1985:50 Quoted by Morales and Torres, 1990:71). This heavy centralisation and bureaucratisation of educational services, including planning and decision making, has undergone important changes since May 31, 1983, when M. de la Madrid announced its decentralisation. Basically the 1983 reform implied the transfer of administrative control and resources from the federal government to the thirty one different states. The effects of the decentralisation could be already observed in 1987 when the thirty one governors signed an agreement accepting the coordination of services in their states.

Nonetheless, the project of decentralisation has been challenged by powerful opponents. The National Union of Educational Workers (SNTE), the largest union in the country with more than 548,355 members, challenged and rejected the plan arguing that it was an attempt to undermine their privileges and labour rights. The organised opposition also reflects a discrepancy which is at the heart of national politics: the open confrontation between the so-called elite of technocrats and the teachers - "the normalistas". The clash between these two distinctive layers of bureaucrats has permeated and determined the eventual curtailment or advancement of educational programmes. The latest collection of text-books released in 1992 is a case in point which I shall examine later in this chapter.

Morales and Torres (1990) have argued that educational policies normally respond to immediate political objectives rather than objectives for solving long-term problems. The advance of a technocratic elite into high political positions, in the opinion of analysts, signifies that the function of the technocrats is that of legitimising political positions and exerting ideological control, in order to regulate conflicts within the bureaucracy and over the political directions at the state and federal levels (p.xv;p.44). The elite in control of the SEP, for example, is formed by individuals with little

or no formal training in public administration. They are post-graduates in a wide range of disciplines, never publicly elected before being appointed to run a state agency but, very importantly, they are individuals who are politically loyal to the chief of the executive. The following example illustrates this situation. It came as a surprise that E. Zedillo (elected president in 1994), had been appointed head of the SEP two years earlier as this is a prestigious post associated with men who have made distinguished contributions to national culture such as, José Vasconcelos, Narciso Bassols, Jaime Torres Bodet, Agustín Yañez and Jesús Reyes Heróles. During his stay at the SEP, Zedillo earned himself discredit in the public eye with the introduction of the 1992 text-books which, according to the headlines, these books offered a "revisionist" view of history in order to enhance Salinas's policies (Excélsior; La Jornada 20.9.1992). However, it was not at all surprising to learn Zedillo's arguments for his withdrawal from the educational institution eighteenth months later as revealed by an interview after a public meeting in which he showed a typical case of loyalty to the president:

"I was called by licenciado Colosio who asked me to be the general coordinator of his presidential campaign. The first thing I did was to discuss the matter with president Salinas, who advised me to accept it. And with a great conviction I accepted the invitation" (Proceso 4.4.1994).

Zedillo, who was barely considered an electable presidential candidate given his controversial role as minister of education was, nevertheless, appointed by the outgoing president Salinas as his successor almost immediately after the assassination of the PRI candidate, D. Colosio in the northern city of Tijuana (October, 1993).

The SNTE, on the other hand, has undergone important transformations in its structure since its foundation in 1943. Initially conceived as the centre of popular support and mobilisation, the union is still the nucleus of the State Workers' Federation (FSTE) and it helps to bond together the different labour and popular organisations of the PRI. Nevertheless, since the 1980's the union has entered an

unprecedented phase characterised by open confrontation with the SEP elite. This is in part due to the democratisation of the union's structures from the 1980's encouraged by demands of salary increases, and partly as an effect of the "modernisation" or decentralisation in education. It is also a reaction against the exclusion of the teachers' planning in at least three areas: elaboration of didactic material; the capacity to influence decision making in educational reform and their former ability to place teachers in the SEP top positions. Popular support, however, remains at the core of the bargaining process between the state institution and the union.

Wide support and mobilisation from the teacher's organisation is expected at times when the state requires demonstrations of political legitimation. This is explained by the fact that the teaching profession in the Mexican social structure is still a vehicle for the upward mobility of the peasants and the working class and a traditional source of women's employment. Male teachers in rural areas represent 43 per cent of the total number of teachers, whereas in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, 74.1 per cent of teachers are female (Vega 1989:587).

Within the space of four months Zedillo, at the head of a team formed by the present interior minister, E. Moctezuma and the educationalists G. Guevara Niebla and J.A. Pescador Osuna, managed to integrate a new strategy for reform through the so-called "National Agreement for the Modernisation of Primary Education" (Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Primaria, 1992). This agreement proposed a radical decentralisation of the SEP's responsibilities giving more power to provincial governments as in 1983, including the capacity to reformulate didactic materials (Proceso 11.4.1994). In 1992, this agreement was signed by President Salinas, the former Minister for education, Zedillo, the SNTE leader E.E. Gordillo, and the thirty one governors. Through this agreement the technocrats managed to severely weaken the influence of the teachers to the point that the teachers have

lost much of their power and influence in the writing of the content of educational programmes. But, before moving onto that discussion, I shall first briefly describe the organisation of the Mexican school system.

### The Organisation of the Mexican School System

Constitutional law in the form of Article Three decrees that primary school education is compulsory and that its educational content and the organisation of the educational staff are also regulated by constitutional principles.

By 1976, the Mexican state had defined what is considered the "minimum standard of education", this states that primary and adult education are compulsory (Article Two of the Federal Law for the Education of Adults, 1976); (Necesidades esenciales en México 1985:16). Primary education is defined by eight goals to be pursued: strengthening of personality, knowledge of scientific methods, acquisition of "democratic habits", encouraging the preservation of "values and traditions of national culture", socialisation, self-sufficiency, understanding that the "present is a product of the past and of the continuous heritage of several generations", and forming an "attitude of change in the consciousness of children in order to generate flexibility when facing changes produced in society, in science and culture" (Sección Permanente de Planes de Estudio, Programas y Métodos de Enseñanza Primaria de 1973); (Necesidades esenciales en México:1985:20). The overall goal is that of shaping a national standard based on scientific - as opposed to religious - knowledge; socialisation, and the inculcation of national values and a sense of the past.

The organisation of the national educational system comprises three levels: basic (preparatory and primary); middle (secondary and the school-leaving examination) and higher education (university degrees). I will refer only to the first level, comprising children from the ages of 6 to 14,

due to its more consolidated structure and widespread expansion within society, and hence its approximation to the idea of "standardisation".

Educational services can be federal, municipal or private. However, the majority of primary registrations at a national level are under the control of the federal system. This system serves different types of school: primary schools offering "complete service" (those with 6 grades), rural "partial" (or incomplete) schools, "unitary schools" (those offering several grades in one room with only one teacher), community courses, boarding schools and rural itinerant schools. Excluding the "complete school service", the other types of school operate in rural areas and are characterised as "partial" or "incomplete" (Necesidades esenciales en México 1985:17).

In 1980, there were 76,000 schools of all types throughout the country for the 6 to 14 age group catering for 15.3 million registered pupils (Necesidades esenciales en México 1985:24); the total population for that age group was 17.3 million (X Censo General de Población). This enrolment statistic (15.3 million) may be misleading because it does not account for the fact that registration does not necessarily mean that all young people will complete their education. In fact, about 1.6 million children never completed or failed their primary education, and about 400,000 individuals never registered, thus the real number of students absorbed into the national system was 13.7 millions and this figure is confirmed by the educational statistics (ibid. 1985:36). In short, if the total population of that age group is 17.3 million, and only 13.7 million (79.19 per cent) receive primary education, there is still a group of 3.6 million who receive no or little education. So nearly 80 per cent of students at the national level are enrolled in the public educational system.

The primary education picture for indigenous peoples is more complex and official data are vague and incomplete. Available data for 1982 suggest that attendance by indigenous pupils within the school system is below average (2). In this

year, the total population of the age group 6 to 14 who "speak indigenous languages" was 942,875 and the number of registered indigenous pupils of the same age group was 380,000 (Ruiz Velasco and Bonilla Castillo 1983:39;254). It is not known if this last figure corresponds to the total number enrolled or to the number of pupils who completed primary education; consequently, the numbers of those who never complete their education are equally incomplete, which is expected to be higher than the national average. Whatever the case, the number of indigenous children who do not receive primary education is higher, 562,875, or 59 per cent, than those who apparently receive it 380, 000, or 41 per cent.

Statistics concerning the number of schools in indigenous areas are also incomplete and ambiguous. It can be said that indigenous pupils are served by rural educational services which, as we said above, are "partial". For example, data from 1970-78 showed that about 1.5 million pupils, possibly including indigenous and non-indigenous students (13.5 per cent of the national registration) were registered in rural schools (Necesidades esenciales en México:1985:18). Similarly, data from a study by Brooke and Oxenham (1980:11) establish that 40 per cent of the total number of schools were located in the countryside. These data are of relevance, given that most young people inhabiting rural areas would find it difficult to finish their primary education, and this has two implications for modern nationalism: The "average standard of literacy" would not be easily attainable and this widens the gap between the rural and urban populations; and secondly, identification with a same sense of national identity would be equally non-uniform.

In brief, the national educational system manages to cater for a significant 80 per cent of pupils who apparently inhabit urban areas and attend "complete" school systems, in contrast with the inadequate services provided for indigenous areas. In 1982 over 380,000 (41 per cent) indigenous children for whom Spanish was not their first language received a basic education (Neumann and Cunningham 1984:28).

The structure of rural education is by no means satisfactory. The evident lack of resources and adequate infrastructure contribute to making even more difficult the planning and provision of mass education, a situation accentuated by the geographical size and ethnic diversity of the country. I shall now offer a summary description helping in an understanding of the difficulties under which the official educational services operate.

The rural countryside is very fragmented; it is largely formed by villages and hamlets inhabited by less than 500 families which are accessible only by paths or poor roads. The largest of these villages contain a church, some form of school, a plaza and a municipal building. Even more fragmentation exists among the thousands of peripheral communities with less than 100 families - ranchos, rancherías and ejidos. These settlements are mostly found in the rural hinterland of the valleys and mountains; they are often remote and lack any organised means of communication with the rest of the country (Russell and Pedraza Salinas 1989:586). These settlements are the most common location for Indian peoples, communities separated by geographical barriers which add a uniqueness to their already discrete cultural traditions. According to the size of the community and population, they might possess a municipal building or some form of school. For example, populations living in settlements with more than 5,000 inhabitants would benefit from a full six year regime in the so-called "complete organisation schools". Scattered villages with less than 5,000 inhabitants have a "partial organisation" or "unitary school" which are attended by a single teacher. Those pupils who wish to attend a "complete organisation school" have to travel to the nearest one. In rural areas, less than half of primary schools contain all six grades, in other words, the "incomplete (or partial) organisation" type of school predominates (Brooke and Oxenham 1980:14).

An example of how the educational system works is



provided from Michoacán by the Purépecha Indian people, according to the aforementioned study of Brooks and Oxenham. Capula is an Indian village serving a school population of its own for the full six years, and three adjacent villages for the first two academic years; it also serves a community for the third year and a village that has no school at all. All these villages depend on Capula's school for the final three years and graduation. Such a situation is multiplied all over the country, thus the pupils depend on travelling to a larger village to conclude their primary education. This structure of the rural school system suggests that most schools provide only one or two years of instruction. The existence of such an incomplete but widespread form of schooling for small villages has an important content and this is, the schools aim at providing forms of socialising, basic literacy, inculcating general knowledge, and a sense of national identity and integration. Such a socialisation or acquisition of basic cultural information takes place during the early years of instruction, and the only major mechanism available is through the state's formidable resources, that is, its advantageous monopoly of primary text-books.

### Primary Educational Text-Books

Mexican text-books have been available since 1880, albeit strictly speaking these were not co-ordinated and contained differing versions of historical events and were not generally accessible. Furthermore, such text-books resemble in one way their contemporary successors given that with their publication they offered a distillation of opinions, ideas and images of national identity and patriotism; for example, an 1880 text-book states:

"Republics are sustained and prosper through the patriotism of their children and nobody makes sacrifices for what they do not know" (Vázquez de Knauth 1970:64).

In the mid-1920's Vasconcelos and Calles argued against the production of official text-books, and instead recommended

that teachers should utilise already published reading materials which had recently been made available as a result of the editorial "boom" encouraged by Calles's government (e.g. itinerant libraires, popular editions of European classics) (Loyo 1992:268-269).

What are now regarded as modern history text-books are series of texts coordinated by the state and available since 1960. The rationale for and the massive production of these books is closely linked to our understanding of the state's standardising of educational operations. Between 1960 and 1992, three collections of text-books were produced and their main aim was to diffuse a single, coordinated historical version, as well as providing the basic means of socialisation. In effect, the texts of the first and second years offer a direct focus for acquiring socialising skills, (3) given that children in rural areas are less likely to complete their primary education, but at least they have access to a basic standard manual aimed at teaching them how to communicate beyond their local villages.

In 1959 the so-called "Eleven Year Plan" was launched during A. López Mateos' administration (1958-1964). The aim of this plan was to make the first grade available to all children and to make education popular and accessible. This policy focused on expanding the educational infrastructure, training more teachers, and introducing a single version of school texts (Greaves 1988:339). In the same year the "National Commission on Text-Books" (Comisión Nacional de Libros de Texto Gratuitos) was established by presidential decree. Firstly, the books were intended to be instruments to propagate "the sentiments and duties of the patria to the children who will one day be citizens" ("Decree of the National Commission of Free Text-Books" Decreto Presidencial de la Comisión Nacional de Libros de Texto Gratuitos:1959). Secondly, the creation of these texts would put an end to the proliferation of text-books with differing versions of Mexican history. Thirdly, coordinated reading materials aid, to paraphrase Anderson, in imagining the limits of the nation, by

making education accessible to children inhabiting the remoter areas. Finally, compulsory education meant that successive governments would be responsible for the production of school materials in a standardised form (Neumann and Cunningham 1984:14).

Each generation of books from 1960 to 1992 has differing designs and art work, pedagogical techniques and narrative styles, as well as a predilection for highlighting specific and, historical events. It is absolutely essential to bear in mind that the texts of the first two generations (1960-1970) were the result of an open competition, unlike the 1992 collection, as stated in the presidential decree of 1959 (Article Two of the National Text-Books Commission). The 1960 texts were important for two reasons: first because they aimed to disseminate the first co-ordinated image of Mexico to the young and, secondly, many of these books reached children who had never seen or owned a book of any kind before (*ibid.*).

The second generation books (1970-1992) replaced the former under the education policy of L. Echeverria's administration (1970-1976). Apart from the emphasis on instilling skills and notions of progress and efficiency, this collection introduced a new premise based on the pupils' development of a scientific attitude towards their surroundings and local environment, and encouraged a comparison of the various occupations, environments and life styles of young people (4). The third generation of text-books announced in August 1992 is incomplete. Only the history books for the 5th and 6th year were extensively modified, and this modification gave rise to an intense and critical debate. The content of the texts highlights the ideology of C. Salinas de Gortari's administration (1988-1994); emphasise selective events of the recent past to justify and perpetuate the economic reforms of the previous regime (i.e. the North American Free Trade Treaty and the development programme, Solidaridad). Finally, concerns were also risen because a Spanish publishing house was given the concession to print the books (instead of using the services of Mexican publishing

companies or the usual printing infrastructure of the National Commission of Text Books); and the production costs of eleven million books were an astronomical 14,579 million pesos (\$ 4,555 million) (5).

One of the enduring ramifications of this debate was that the teachers' union publicly rejected the validity of these books. Arguments put forward were the revisionist and biased historical content of these books, as well as their "anti-pedagogical approach". These arguments are partly linked to the fact that produced real exasperation: that the writing of the new history text-books was carried out by presidential mandate, thus ignoring the recourse to compulsory public contest as stated by the 1959 decree. Instead, a team led by well known writers and historians, H. Aguilar Camín and E. Florescano, offered a simplified version of historical events placing emphasis on the documentation of facts and eliminating traditional aspects of the curriculum. Furthermore, what was really of importance in the 1992 debate were the claims of the union denouncing its restricted role in the formulation of didactic material. Union leaders denounced the authorities' indifference to the accumulated experience of teachers and educationalists with respect to the needs of young people.

Zedillo, as the education minister who ordered the new books, recognised the tactical significance of preserving the unity of the SNTE, and its much needed support considering the proximity of the 1994 federal election. In an attempt to diminish the teachers' opposition, he publicly announced that the 1992 books "were not the definitive ones" and that "history was a national passion far to reach consensus". He then ordered the setting up of a forum for consultation accessible to all sectors of society and a technical council (CONALTE) (National Technical Council of Education) was given full responsibility for coordinating the proposals. Although many alternative projects, corrections and additions drawn up by individuals or groups were submitted to CONALTE, the fact is that none of them was seriously considered by SEP which meant that the friction dividing the teachers and the

technocrats emerged again. In the view of the elite, the proposals made by the teachers were far from capturing a vision of the nation, were full of errors and imprecision, and lacked the methodological rigour which characterised the work done by the team of university trained historians and educationalists (Proceso 4.4.1994).

The technocrats' opinion added to the climate of frustration which already existed within the union. The SNTE's leader E. E. Gordillo made public their disagreement with the SEP in January 1993 when she said: "We disagree with the way in which the educational model is conducted". A month later, Zedillo proposed the creation of a joint commission of SEP-SNTE to work jointly throughout the writing of the texts. Headlines and editorials have commented on the sarcastic way in which the SEP has accepted "supervision" from the SNTE. In the final analysis the teachers have temporarily won the battle. At the time of writing this section, the controversy surrounding the text-books remains unresolved; while 6, 850, 000,000 new books are stored in the storehouse of the National Commission of Text-Books. Consequently, students of the 5th and 6th years nationwide have no new history books. The second generation of texts remain in general use in the majority of schools.

### The Distribution of Primary School Text-Books

The reality of rural schools presents enormous material problems including a lack of finance and infrastructure but, how do these reading materials reach rural children in remote areas each new academic year and, in the long term, what influence can the standardised text-books have upon rural children?

The long desired goal of providing elementary education and reading materials to every child who enrolled was achieved through the production of text-books whose production reached a figure of 82 million in 1981 (Neumann and Cunningham 1984:41). How are the large number of text-books printed on a

paper similar to newsprint and made from sugar cane distributed annually to the 57,000 rural schools located in the 31 provinces of the Republic, and thus to most of the 137,153 tiny settlements of which 8,559 are indigenous villages? (Prontuario de estadística educativa indígena 1988:27).

Text-book availability in the countryside is one of the most important mechanisms linking communities to the nation. Thus, the distribution of texts is of crucial importance and means using all available forms of transport. The delivery chain starts with the railways or postal service and might end up with whatever form of transportation is available (i.e. trucks, tractors, donkeys and so on). The logistics of such a system of delivery is to provide each child with identical reading materials, even if the local school only offers partial education. The official aim of imposing standardisation attempts to deal with the problems of access and remoteness, and relies on whatever transport is at hand, and all possible facilitators, from local authorities to neighbours.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the establishment of the Mexican system of national education. The standardised programme of primary education began in the late 19th century and reached its final form - free, secular and compulsory - in the final years of the 1940's. The creation of such a system has not taken place in a cultural vacuum, primary schools can be regarded metaphorically as the filter by which specific precepts of national identity, a suitable ideological historiography and socialisation are disseminated.

In this respect, the expansion and modernisation of the educational system have created a polarised division in its administrative and staff structures, and this has proved to have repercussions of considerable weight for the nation-making programme. Bargaining for popular support, assurance of

political legitimacy and arguments concerning superiority of intellectual status, have impaired the goals of transmitting cultural coherence and continuity, removing the urban and rural disparity, and forging national identity.

Although the sociological strategy of the Mexican school and the text-book system manage to satisfy the educational needs of over three quarters of the school population, indigenous pupils' attendance remains lower given the widespread existence of the so-called "partial" schools in rural areas. The tenacity with which distribution of text-books operate attempts to overcome the lack of schooling in remote rural areas. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that despite the desirability of the educational system, both in theory and practice, it is failing to provide a consistent sense of national integration because it neglects educational services in the rural areas.

The recent acquisition of power by technocrats, as well as the change of president in 1994, have been turning points in creating a climate of tension in the educational process. But, what in fact are the really significant aspects of this juncture? One can certainly put forward the argument that society's lack of access to the 1992 books has caused a major disturbance in the continuity of educational transmission; even if the second collection of texts has remained in continuous use. But, books of the second collection have not been reprinted since 1991 and the new ones are stored as a result of their debatable content. Put simply, students and teachers have not had history texts for a period of over four years.

I turn now to my next chapter in which I examine the nationalistic content of the books. In particular, I shall address such questions as how the first and second generation texts portray the Indian ethnic groups, and most importantly, what is the Indian opinion of the standard texts.

## Chapter 7

### School Text-Books and Cultural Themes of Nationalism

In the previous chapter, I have described the operative functions of the state primary school system. In this one, my aim is to combine the "modernist" and "historical-culturalist" perspectives to examine the symbolism of integration by analysing the content of the text-books in the public education system, and the opposing views obtained from my samples of Indian students.

The collection of texts that will be examined are the reading materials for the Social Science course (3rd to 6th grades) which includes Mexican history. These books under the general title Ciencias Sociales (Social Sciences) (1970-1990's) completely superseded the first series published entitled Historia y Civismo (History and Civics) (1960-1970). In 1992, a new series of text-books, entitled Mi libro de historia de México (My History Book of Mexico), attempted to replace the 1970-1990's collection. However, as I shall try to show, the latest collection also continues to narrate the most salient symbols of national identity despite important modifications in the most recent period of Mexican history - i.e. C. Salinas's mandate (1988-1994). This analysis is mainly based on the second collection Ciencias Sociales (1970-1990's) given that it has been in use for over 20 years and has not yet been entirely replaced by the 1992 collection. These books are directed at an age group of 6 to 14 years.

The analysis of the standardised view of Mexican historiography as a form of national teaching covers a variety of themes grouped into three historical periods: the Pre-Hispanic (800-400 BC-16th centuries), the Colonial (16th-18th centuries) and the National (19th-20th centuries). Obviously a complete study of all the themes and episodes grouped in these historical periods exceeds the bounds of this research, thus I shall concentrate only on the following aspects: i. the teaching of the ethnic past; ii. how the major ethnic



narratives (the myth of foundation and mestizaje) are explained; iii. the symbols of civic culture; iv. the portrayal of indigenous peoples and cultures in the school texts; and v. the legacy of Juárez.

Each history book of the 1970-1990's collection (3rd to 6th grades) offers its own rationale of two key areas, the pre-Hispanic and the colonial periods, according to the age group. This chapter conflates the general discourse of these two narratives in an attempt to avoid unnecessary repetition. The narrative on the myth of foundation is particularly salient in text-books for the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade and for these grades there are also important lessons on mestizaje. The 6th grade book, including the 1992 version, summarises the above areas and focuses on the history of Mexico within an international context, as well as various aspects of world cultures. Text-books for the 3rd and 4th grade have yet to be published for the 1992 collection, and the 5th grade text has a limited circulation. A comprehensive description of the general content of a standardised Mexican text-book is provided in Appendix 2.

#### Modern Teaching of the Pre-Hispanic and Colonial past

The Mexican nation has relied on state agencies (i.e. public education) to achieve a certain degree of uniformity, but the nation also assumes itself to be a collective with a recorded ethnic past. In this sense, Mexico is not isolated in its search for cultural uniqueness; most nation-states in the world today stress historical and mythological roots and locate part of their singularity in so-called "glories of the past", "golden ages" or "genealogies of descent" (Smith 1988:25). Projects of national integration are not simplistically conceived as bureaucratic institutional policies, very importantly, official educational policies recover, rehabilitate and proffer mythological narratives in order to ensure social cohesion.

The inculcation of the pre-Hispanic period is perceived

as a positive element to arouse national pride and is viewed as a significant experience from a continuing collective inheritance. By "pre-Hispanic" period I refer to the civilization, religion and art developed in Mesoamerica from 800-400 BC (the Olmec culture) until the arrival of Europeans in the early 16th century. A study of the way in which the past is learnt and explained indicates a set of ideological perceptions which reflect and prefigure an anticipated degree of integration. Official nationalism depends on a historiography of the indigenous past, and is perceived as a source of cultural pride. This is, nevertheless, a selective, expedient and revisionist view of indigenous history.

The following table systematises the correlation between historical periods, mythical events and symbols of national integration in the curriculum texts:

Table 15

The text-book periods of national history

History	Event	National Symbol
Pre-Hispanic	Foundation	National Emblem
Colonial	Mestizaje	National Integration

Sources: Historia y Civismo (1960-1970); Ciencias Sociales (1970-1990's) and; Mi libro de historia de México (1992).

a) The Pre-Hispanic Past: the Matrix of Mexica Culture

The Aztec narratives are eloquently described as the single source of common ancestry, and are complemented with descriptions of the high degree of civilization in Mesoamerica, plus a chronology of the evolution of "homo sapiens". "A Common Past" (3rd grade 1970:15) is the title of the first lesson in history, that is to say, the subject is taught from the 3rd grade on. The aims of this lesson are twofold: firstly, to explain the origin of humankind and, secondly, the relevance of archaeology in understanding the ancients and their material culture. The comprehension of

"civilization" is a component of the concept that the "common past" of present Mexicans was a "civilized" one. The criteria for measuring "civilization" are as follows: the origin and development of homo sapiens; the differences between sedentary and nomadic groups, and the invention of agriculture, and these three processes are all specifically located within the context of the American continent.

The invention of agriculture in Mesoamerica is an important element for understanding the organised cultivation of staple foods (i.e. maize) as the basis of Mexican civilization. The lesson emphasises the archaeological significance of agriculture, and gives an idea of the antiquity of the Mexica culture. The text implies that the "common past" is ancient, civilized and has its own continuity. For example: "The Ancient Cultures: the Men of Maize", "We Mexicans eat maize as our ancestors did" (3rd grade 1970:21). Modern disciplines such as archaeology and botany are used to diffuse the view that the continuing consumption of the original flora of Mexico (for example, cacti *Cactaceae*) is, along with the domestication of maize, a source of cultural prestige.

The attention paid to the development of sedentary life, as a condition of civilization, is of crucial importance in instilling the significance of the legend of foundation and settlement of the Mexica people in 1325. The three different editions of the texts (1960-1970, 1970-1990's and 1992) include this mythical narrative which describes the preordained "sign" sought by the northern nomadic tribes, "the eagle standing on a prickly cactus devouring a snake", which was adopted as the national emblem of modern Mexico (5th 1964:19; 3rd 1970:38; 6th 1992:24).

The narrative concludes with the assumption that Mexico was founded on a rocky island and this conveys certain ideas of nationalism: continuity, uniqueness and heroism. For example, the metamorphosis from nomadism to a settled existence is associated with "effort and the organising capacity of resourceful and hard working ancestors" (5th

1982:37). The narrative style of the texts has a tendency to emphasise heroism and suffering, and such a dramatisation of the epic gives rise to feelings of self-esteem.

The Aztec epic of migration does not end with the foundation of Tenochtitlán; further lessons focus on the organisation of the settled Mexica society, the people's lifestyle, their institutions, the lineage of monarchs and rulers, religion, and emphasises their belligerent character, military adventures and territorial expansion (5th 1982:35). The titles of some of these lessons are self-evident: "patria of the warriors of the sun" and, "The conquests of the warriors increase Mexica power" (5th 1964:42). In fact, the official view of the pre-Hispanic past portrays the Aztec people and culture as the most powerful society in Mesoamerica achieving power over other adjacent kingdoms and peoples through institutionalised warfare (6th 1992:25). Furthermore, there is emphasis on the notion that the Aztecs, the cultural ancestors of present Mexicans, had an onerous and harrowing origin which they overcame with toil, tenacity and "genius", characteristics that helped forge an organised and "splendid" civilization.

This information on the Mexica society develops the perception that Mesoamerica, and Mexico in particular, was not a land inhabited by dispersed nomadic peoples, nor a simple collection of communities, but consisted of an architectonic and self-sufficient city-state, institutions, a division of labour, a complex religion, genealogies of monarchs, leaders and warriors, as well as a knowledge and application of science and the arts comparable, if not superior, to other cultures on the continent and beyond. But these views have implications vis-à-vis the cultural assimilation and national integration of the other non-Aztec indigenous cultures, as I shall explain below.

The chronological organisation of the subjects in the text-books has the importance for pupils to bear in mind the transatlantic foreign contact; such is the context of subsequent historical drama, the conquest, the colony and its

outcome: the mestizaje.

#### b) The Colonial Legacy: A Mingling of Peoples and Cultures

The content of the texts on the colonial period reveals the research produced by well known intellectuals and historians. Sociological explanations replace the religious viewpoint with regard to the teaching of colonial history; for example, secular interpretations of the conquest and colonialism are espoused, such as the use of superior firepower and the consequences of "spiritual conquest", the term coined by Ricard (1966).

How do young readers manage understand the Spanish conquest and dominion of Mexico for three hundred years? The episode revolves around the destruction of Mexico-Tenochtitlán, during the Spanish conquest in 1521, hence again it emphasises the role of the Mexicas. Since the conquest is associated with the destruction of indigenous society, a sense of the Mexica's heroic resistance is highlighted and the narrative style of these texts is thus dramatised. Mexico has been a mosaic of disparate groups since antiquity, and this ethnic and linguistic diversity was altered irreparably during the colonial period. The school text view of this gradual ethnic and racial mingling designates the process as "The encounter of two peoples" or "The birth of a new culture" (3rd 1970:53). This important section also carries mythical overtones surrounded both by popular fantasy and scholarly speculation but, as the text-books reveal, this fabricated legend continues to be a potent symbol of integration (3rd 1960:21; 3rd 1970:47; 6th 1992:36) (1).

According to the text-books, the traumatic effects of the conquest, the arrival of new pandemic diseases, and the introduction of new economic activities resulted in the decimation of the Indian population. The colonialists replaced the native labour force with African slaves, thus the lesson says: "very soon there were three human groups in New Spain: Spaniards, Indians and blacks. These groups mixed with each

other until they formed families from different races" (4rd 1982:65). Such racial encounters must be seen in the perspective of instilling a "myth of descent"; if nearly the entire population has an equally mixed ancestry, then it is likely to shape the perception that Mexicans form part of a "single family". From this simplistic perspective, Mexicans are neither Indian nor European, but a congenial and benevolent result of both, and thus it ideologically resolved the difficulty of granting equality of descent to a variety of cultural and racial groups. The official view of the texts is clear: "men and women, Indians and Spaniards also mixed and from them were born the mestizo people, from whom the Mexicans of today descend" (3rd 1970:56).

The official version of "Mexican culture" is an attempt to balance the Indian (mainly Aztec), and the European, or Hispanic, influences. But such a bilateral approach presents a revisionist and selective view of understanding the indigenous past, as only the Aztecs receive attention. Moreover, the selective teaching of the past is not convincingly achieved from an analytical viewpoint, although the age group of primary pupils must be allowed for. The presentation of the cultural contributions of the Indians is distorted and superficial, concentrating on surviving elements of their material culture like tools, agricultural techniques, food and clothing. In other words, few aspects of indigenous cultures are assumed as heritage the following typical simplistic example illustrates this point: "My mother" - says "Rosita" an imaginary female character - "ground chilies in a stone dish similar to the ones used by the Mayas. We have inherited these things from the ancient peoples" (4th 1982:42).

If the recovery of Indian traditions and heritage as forming part of mestizaje is selective and only refers to superficial events, the Spanish cultural influence is seen from a very different perspective. It stresses the arrival of cultural influences which are reflected in new economic activities, but above all in terms of introducing new ideas,

values, attitudes, Christianity as well as a universal lingua franca, Spanish. The importance of colonial life is reflected in a new religious architecture, the first university (1551) and the first printing press on the continent (1539), as well as new writers and thinkers born in Mexico like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (4th 1982:68).

In short, the texts' exegesis of mestizaje favours the Hispanicist legacy, in terms of the introduction and reproduction of a new ideational system, and minimises the indigenous heritage focusing almost exclusively on the surviving humdrum remnants and artefacts of material culture in the daily consumption of commodities.

#### From Ethnic Symbolism to National Emblem

The cultural and national symbolism of the text-books shows a utilisation, re-adaptation and re-combination of ancient ethnic narratives which are propagated via the school system to promote the modern condition of nation-building. In the following section I will survey the way in which the major nationalist symbols of integration and unity are inculcated through the public education system.

"Our symbols" (3rd 1970:113) is the self-evident title of the lesson dealing with a general exposition of the historical emergence of the three Mexican national symbols:

i. The emblem: this is derived from the Aztec legend of settlement and foundation in 1325; it is a pictorial arrangement of three species native to Mexico: a cactus, an eagle and a snake, with a lake and the central valley of Mexico in the background (4th 1964:76; 3rd 1970:113; 6th 1988:195; 6th 1992:24).

ii. The flag: this commemorates the political independence of Mexico in 1821 and since its introduction it has maintained its three distinctive colours in the following order: green, white and red. The colours are supposed to represent respectively: liberty, sovereignty and sacrifice, but they

"The Mexican National Emblem"





also symbolise independence, liberty and unity. The white band is decorated with the national emblem, the symbol of the nation (3rd 1970:113).

iii. The anthem (Mexican national anthem): First performed in September 1854, its lyrics appeal to citizens to defend the patria and the nation's sovereignty against foreign invasion (3rd 1970:113).

The emblem is reserved for the most important civic functionary, that of the presidential executive. The emblem is the obvious feature of the flag and the design appears on all denominations of the currency, the peso. In civic ceremonies, the objects of veneration are the flag, with the emblem included, and the anthem. The respect granted to Mexico's national symbols is not restricted to the educational environment but permeates all spheres and institutions of public life. Moreover, since the emblem represents the functions of the executive, it encourages an imaginary association between the figure of presidential authority and the mythical Aztec narrative of settlement. According to textbooks, presidents since 1824, the national palace and the emblem are three interrelated facets of Mexican nationalism (6th 1988:205).

In recent decades, educational policies have reinforced their attempts to instil in the Indian groups a certain feeling of solidarity and identification regarding patriotic symbology. One recent example has been to encourage the translation of the national anthem into vernacular languages and to hold civic ceremonies in Indian languages ("Solidaridad indígena con los símbolos patrios" Nuestra Palabra (7) 1990:12-13). By doing this, the educationalists' idea is to forge a closer identification with the lyrics of the national anthem amongst the Indian peoples by making the lyrics intelligible to them. However, as my results will show, it is one thing to broadly identify the symbols and another to express the feelings of loyalty and solidarity which the symbols aim to inspire.

Before moving on to that discussion, I feel it is

pertinent to describe a typical civic ceremony, and for this purpose I have chosen the Mexican ceremony known as "Honouring the Flag" (honores a la bandera). As a general rule, the ceremony of the Mexican flag takes place every Monday morning in every school throughout the Republic. There is also an official national holiday each year known as "The Day of the Flag" (February 21). Particular honour is also paid to the national flag on "Independence Day" (16 September) and the "Anniversary of the Revolution" (20 November), as well as on the first and last day of every academic year when events of historiography, according to the official calendar, are recalled through the media of speech and small dramatised representations (for example, the birth of Benito Juárez, the Constitution of 1917). The dramatic moment of the ritual known as "Swearing to the Flag" consists of hoisting and displaying the flag, an act similar to that in North American flag rituals. The hoisting of the flag is followed by the oath of allegiance:

"Flag of Mexico, legacy of our heroes, symbol of the unity of our parents and brothers: we promise you lasting fidelity to the principles of freedom and justice, which make our homeland independent, human and generous, and to which we offer our existence" (Juramento a la Bandera).

At the end of the ceremony the national anthem is solemnly sung and with that, the civic duty of every Mexican has been satisfactorily fulfilled by expressing an oath of loyalty and sacrifice to the symbol of unity represented by the flag. However, what importance does this ritualisation have for the Indian peoples? Why seek to acquaint them with the national symbols? Why foster amongst the Indian peoples the same attachments that exist in mestizo society regarding such patriotic rituals? Clearly, the aim is to include them within the main aspects of official historiography where sentiments of loyalty and sacrifice are paramount, and to create the concept of a unified patria represented by uniformly accepted symbols.

The frequent celebration of these civic events means that Indian students are undoubtedly aware of national symbols. However, the degree to which they are identify emotionally with such symbols depends on the perception of each individual, as I shall seek to show next.

a) The Flag

The majority of the students of both institutions (MLI and LEI) claim to know the symbolic meaning of the colours of the flag (52). The question used to measure this perception was: Do you know the meaning of the colours of the flag?

Table 16

"Indigenous students' knowledge of the flag"

Sample	Yes	No	No Response
MLI	8	0	2
LEI	44	2	4
Total	52	2	6

In both groups the following associations predominate and they correspond to the ones inculcated through official channels.

i. The official meanings of these colours are:

Red: *"the bleeding heroes in battle"* (Sacrifice).

Green: *"hope in the nation"* (Unity).

White: *"purity of the nation - the patria"* (Sovereignty)

ii. Other non-official meanings recorded:

Red: *"bravery"; "defence"; "strength"; "liberty"; "watermelon flesh"*.

Green: *"work"; "strength"; "mountains"; "mint"; "laurel"; "forest"; "countryside"; "watermelon rind"*.

White: *"liberty"; "religion"; "honour"; "strategy"; "shadows"; "perpetual snow"; "peace" and "the union between the watermelon flesh and the rind"*.

b) The Anthem

Indian perceptions were measured according to the following excerpt from the national anthem:

"And if a foreign enemy were to profane your land just think: homeland, beloved homeland, that the heavens have given you with every son a soldier".

The "emotional state" generated in the individual regarding the above quotation was scored as follows:

Table 17

"Indigenous students response to the national anthem"

Sample	Acceptance	Rejection	Indifference	N-R
MLI	4	4	2	0
LEI	39	3	4	4
Total	43	7	6	4

Within the MLI group, opinion is equally divided between "acceptance" (4) or "rejection" (4). By contrast, the LEI group overwhelmingly "accept" the anthem (39).

I list below reactions to individual phrases and verses of the anthem.

i. Love of country:

Table 18

"Indigenous students reaction to 'love of country'"

Sample	Yes	No	No Response
MLI	6	0	4
LEI	36	3	11
Total	42	3	15

ii. To fight the enemy:

Table 19

"Indigenous students reaction to 'fight the enemy'"

Sample	Yes	No	No Response
MLI	7	0	3
MLI	34	3	13
Total	41	3	16

ii. I will die for my country:

Table 20

"Indigenous students reaction to 'die for my country'"

Sample	Yes	No	No Response
MLI	4	4	2
LEI	41	2	7
Total	45	6	9

A general positive response is observed regarding the national anthem (42, 41 and 45), although this response is more stressed by the LEI group (36, 34 and 41) in comparison with the post-graduate students (6, 7 and 4).

The following is a collection of both negative and positive views regarding the national anthem. These may contribute to form a more precise idea about the prevailing sentiment of Indian students with respect to the inculcation of patriotic symbols.

i. Negative/Unfavourable views:

MLI Group:

1. "I do not find any beneficial meaning for me".
2. "There is discrimination, thus, I cannot feel what a mestizo

may feel".

3. "It does not mean anything to me as an Indian.

LEI Group:

1. "The Indian peoples are not mentioned at all, on the contrary, it attempts to wipe them out".

2. "It is the ideological defense of the dominant class".

3. "There is no mention of the defence of our ethnic homeland".

ii. Positive/Favourable views:

MLI Group:

1. "It encourages love of the country".

2. "It is an important teaching for all Mexican people".

3. "I feel emotional depending on the circumstances".

LEI Group:

1. "I like it because I feel part of the Mexican patria".

2. "It recalls the feeling of fighting.

3. "I like it depending on the circumstances".

A preliminary conclusion is that indigenous students identify broadly with the perceivable representations of the symbols: the illustration of the emblem, the flag and the national anthem. We know, from their age and by the registration requirements in their pursuit of higher education, that both groups of students have been in contact with the standardised school system. Therefore, the wide margin of positive scores establishes that the inculcation of the symbols of national integration through the school system works efficiently. Nevertheless, this preliminary conclusion may be modified if we add the data generated from reflection on these issues. When the students had the opportunity to reveal their own points of view explicitly in the questionnaire, these were, of course, of two kinds: positive (favourable) and negative (unfavourable). The negative

statements were more precise comments, when compared to the ambiguity of the positive ones. The former were more convincing while the latter were commonplace generalisations. Perhaps, as William B. Yeats (1865-1939) put it: "there is more substance in our hate than in our love". As an example, compare the following statements:

**Negative:** "It does not mean anything to me as an Indian"  
"There is discrimination, thus, I cannot feel what a mestizo may feel".

**Positive:** "I like it because I feel part of the Mexican patria"  
"I like it depending on the circumstances"

### Mexico: A Land of Diversity

It is interesting to note that the official view recognises the existence of "diversity" as one of the renowned features of the land and its people: "There is only one Mexican Republic but within the territory there is a diversity of climates, topography and resources, so that we can say 'there are many Mexicos'" (4th 1982:14). L. Simpson's phrase "many Mexicos" is derived from Mexico's topography and climate, and is taken in the discourse of the texts as a point of departure conjuring up the notions of contrast and disparity:

"why there are many Mexicos - why, for example, there are 50 distinct languages among the Indians and why the Maya of Yucatán are total foreigners to the Yaqui of Sonora" (Simpson 1967:6).

Similarly, another official example:

"a boy from Chiapas, used to the Southern vegetation is amazed to see the Northern desert. A Yucatecan, inhabiting the lowlands, is astonished when he sees the mountains of Durango. The Southern countryside is not the same as that of the centre or the North, and the cities, according to their size and place of location, also have a particular way of life" (4th 1982:14).

This apparent recognition only operates at the level of the obvious, that physical and climatological conditions determine different habitat, modes of existence and so on. But a contrasting view is shown in the discussion of potentially problematic types of diversity, for example, the existence of the many living indigenous languages and peoples as I shall indicate below.

The variegated structure of the population should also be an important element in illuminating the country's diversity. Although the titles of the texts would appear to suggest this (i.e. "We are Mexicans" and "Diverse peoples" - 3rd 1970), there is no specific exposition of the elements that differentiate peoples from one other, i.e. culture, ethnic origin and language. Such a deliberate omission in respect of the prevailing autochthonous multi-ethnicity is understandable in the sense that, in effect, the texts aim to encourage a singular integration personified by the stereotypical mestizo.

In contemporary Mexico, ethnic integration is rather idealised and assumed, and if such a diversity existed it was a concern of the past. The following extract is a revealing example:

"the Mexican territory was inhabited by many indigenous groups with differing physiques: some were darker than others, some shorter and rounded, others were tall and slim. Later, the Spaniards arrived and later still the Black slaves. All these groups mingled; this is why, nearly all the Mexican people are mestizo" (4th 1982:14).

Although a certain amount of naivety can be observed in the above, particularly when one considers the age of the reader, it is still striking to note a basic identification in terms of physical differences, for example, tall vs. short. In its attempt to nurture integration, it is interesting to observe that this official proselytising underestimates the indigenous cultural ingredients of the mestizo, or the existence of indigenous traditions and peoples. Typologising peoples by differences in their physique is the only criterion which deserves mention in the school texts:



"The mixing of all these peoples, those who intermingled and those who did not, has resulted in the present population of our country having a diversity that reveals different physical types" (4th grade 1982:14).

The reading materials under review are characterised by a shallow and superficial exposition of ethnic and linguistic diversity, and stresses the perception that all inhabitants of the country are "Mexicans":

"We are all Mexicans: those from the North and the South; those from the countryside or the cities; those who speak an Indian language and those who speak Spanish" (4th 1982:16).

In a feeble attempt to offer a sense of the multi-ethnic basis of Mexico, the 4th year text-book asks the following questions: "Do you know Mexican people who speak some Indian language? Have you seen people dressed in a different manner?" (4th 1982:16).

From this viewpoint, the issue of encouraging the development of ethnic identities is discounted. Moreover, if ethnic identities exist, apart from the national identity which is to be encouraged, such an identification is nebulously reduced to a form of personal commitment detached from the cultural influences of the family and community.

More evidence of the official underestimation of the country's ethnic diversity is revealed by the fact that none of the editions of the texts contain any specific information regarding the present situation of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Fifty-six ethnic groups with a total population of 8 to 13 million (1990) living in 27 states, out of the republic's 32, remain outside the scope of the official teaching texts. A minor exception to the rule is the prescribed text that deals with the "research carried out by Rosita" (3rd 1970:37), on the contemporary Maya people of Yucatán. This group is the only "living" culture included in the text-books in as much as they have retained certain aspects of their traditional material culture - their food, clothing, tools. As one would expect, the texts do not

encourage the acquisition of knowledge or an appreciation of any other related areas such as historical memories or the perceptions of contemporary indigenous peoples.

The official teaching regarding the indigenous ethnicity of the country is twofold. On the one hand, indigenous cultures are contextualised as a form of cultural stagnation having little to offer Mexican society as a whole; while on the other, the indigenous past is "glorified" because of its rich symbolic heritage and surviving archeological sites. Indigenous students are encouraged to be mestizos and to abandon their traditional "folkways", which implies that the mestizos have nothing to learn from Indian life and experience. Such is the unilateral formulation of mestizaje taken as the normative course for national integration, theoretically at least a conflation of two opposed cultural traditions.

#### Peripheral Cultures and the "Ethnic Core"

As noted above, the official historiographical discourse, as presented in the text-books, emphasises the geographical centrality of the Aztec culture as the predominant group with respect to other peripheral ethnic cultures. In fact, the narratives concerning the Pre-Hispanic past suggest the inculcation of a sense of pride and superiority in the nation's Aztec ancestry, this becomes even more prevalent in the descriptions and hence marginalisation of the other indigenous cultures. Such a predilection is not exclusive to the integral process encouraged by Mexican education.

Regarding the creation of the "first European nations" for example, Smith argues: "these were constructed around strong, cohesive ethnic cores" (1986:212). In effect, the dominant core ethnic group favoured by both Mexican historiography and nationalist ideology is the legendary Aztec people who, according to the generally shared perception, played the major adversarial role during the Spanish conquest and thus became the most immediate point of reference for

understanding the phenomenon of mestizaje.

A representative statement concerning the "Pre-Hispanic Cultures" is to be found in the 6th grade text-book for the Social Sciences; such a statement reflects the official ideological position on the indigenous multi-culturalism of contemporary Mexico, as well as the integrative role of the Mexicas:

"Before the Spanish arrival, the Mexican territory was occupied by many indigenous groups: Mayas, Totonacos, Huastecos, Mixtecos, Zapotecos, Purepechas, Tlaxcaltecas, Mexicas, Chichimecas and many more. As a whole they did not form a nation, but each group constituted a separate culture with their own territory and authority; some were independent, others were dominated by the Mexica" (6th 1988:167 - emphasis added).

Unlike the mythical and historical status assigned to the Mexica, the Maya people, as the second largest indigenous group, are contextualised in terms of their contemporary daily life. The aim is for the pupils to enquire how another group of their ancestors lived, "in order to compare their life in the past with ours in the present and to discover what it is we have inherited" (4th 1982:37).

The instruction on the indigenous peoples begins with the scenario of two imaginary pupils, "Rosita and her friend", undertaking research on the "living" Mayas of Yucatán in order to study the way of life of their ancestors. As the school programme encourages the development of a "scientific curiosity", the pupil is expected to enquire into the lives of Indian peoples so "they could realise that there are still things in use throughout Mexico that were left by the indigenous peoples" (4th 1982:36). For example, in Yucatán, the Mayan languages are still spoken, traditional clothes still worn, and the cuisine is probably thousands of years old (4th 1982:37) and their current usage is considered by the text to be the only asset of a cultural heritage transmitted across the centuries.

Apart from the Aztec and the Maya, only the Zapoteco and Mixteco cultures of the southern state of Oaxaca are included

in the second generation of text-books (1970-1990's), but their study is generalised and brief. Zapoteco antiquity is noted in its relation to the flourishing centre of Teotihuacán, whereas the information on Mixteco culture mainly refers to their skilful techniques in the narration of historical episodes, including their conquest by the Mexica (3rd 1970:29). This method of explaining history hinders the autonomy of each of these cultures; in other words, their inclusion in the discourse of the texts has a centripetal rationale. Its concern is with the preponderance of the centre and how these southern cultures were finally dominated by the Mexica. As expected, the lessons offer meagre data on past cultural achievements: Zapoteco architecture, Mixteco craftsmanship in precious metals, the commercial skills of Zapotecos, and the Mixteco ability to produce codices recording their history (3rd 1988:31; 6th 1992:11).

If the first and second generation of text-books are characterised by their generalised lack of interest in encouraging the pupil's knowledge of the diversity of indigenous cultures, the last edition (6th 1992) is even more notorious in this respect. In effect, the 6th grade history text totally excludes the Mixteco culture and reduces the exposition on the Zapoteco (1992:11). Since the pedagogical rationale of the latest edition is that of simplifying the discourse and extracting the "principal ideas", the short paragraph on present indigenous cultures offers the following banal truisms:

"Many elements of the indigenous cultures survive and these are a heritage for all Mexicans"; "Forming part of this heritage are agriculture, herbalism, agricultural rites and traditions, indigenous myths and crafts"; "The culture of present indigenous peoples preserve many elements of the ancient tradition" (6th 1992:31).

These statements from the 1992 edition convey the official view of indigenous peoples: the culture of the nation is subject to inherited Indian elements rooted in a distant past. However, although these statements observe their own

Careful logic and striking sense of pride, these are overwhelmed by a discourse whose major concern is national integration formulated in terms of mestizaje.

### Indigenous Religions and Catholicism

Catholicism is treated as an example of the "cultural life" that was introduced during the colonial period. The teaching of the "spiritual conquest" or evangelisation involves undertaking an enquiry into the destruction of the indigenous historical memory. In effect, its destruction by the Spaniards is included in the lesson on the colonial period (4th 1982:48). The conversion of native people to Christianity entailed the destruction of temples, sculptures, codices which were used to record rituals, vestments and religious commentaries. This accepted view that Indian peoples lack their own system of knowledge is also repeated by the texts: "Friar Diego de Landa destroyed all Maya codices, thus we know almost nothing about the stunning Maya culture" (4th 1982:48).

But the privileged place assigned to Aztec culture is again reiterated when the same lesson states that their memory did manage to survive the impact of evangelisation. However, this Spanish version of events was written under the direction of Franciscans using material provided by Indian informants:

"Fortunately, in the centre of Mexico, some friars, like Bernardino de Sahagún, thought that in order to convert the Indians in an appropriate manner, it was necessary to know their ancient cultures, so they asked old Indian people about what they recalled from ancient times and with this data they wrote books" (4th 1982:49).

This ideologically biased interpretation assumes that the various indigenous peoples have no surviving historical memory. What is described as the "indigenous memory of the past" is a speculative reconstruction of their ancient ways of life and thought carried out under the selective criteria of 16th century Catholic missionaries. Such a view has two implications. Firstly, official teaching denies and

underestimates any form of indigenous cultural autonomy; if their memory is externally controlled or denied, the Indian ethnic groups have little chance of recovering their symbolic past. Secondly, it assumes that Christianity replaced Indian religion and thought, thus, if contemporary Indian peoples are so-called "Christians" it is because they have lost their own ethnic memory and perceptions.

One final comment to underline the ideological contradiction that the official historiography cannot resolve. On the one hand, it elevates and dramatises the "glorious past" of the centralising Aztecs, but on the other, it does not offer any ways or means for reviving Indian cultures that would be under the control of the indigenous peoples themselves, let alone information that would lead to an appreciation of indigenous styles of life and thus, to minimise the mestizo society's general contempt and disregard for the Indian population. Therefore, the contents of text-books reveal that the goal of the official education policies is not to teach history "objectively" but rather that their aim is to inculcate a perception of a mestizo Mexico by using selected historical events of the nation-building process.

#### Benito Juárez and the Text-Books

Patriotism and unity have not been always felt in the country, and the study of the Reforma period is useful to underline the disastrous consequences of such an experience. The three collections under study refer with some detail to the complex relationship between foreign aggression and republicanism, and Juárez's defensive role and biography (cfr.5). As expected, the lessons highlight the importance of acquiring "consciousness of independence" and "patriotic emotions of national defence" by referring to a dramatic narrative depicting sufferings and humiliations inflicted by foreign forces as well as reprints of the correspondance between the emperor Maximilian and President Juárez (May, 1864) (3rd, 1970:108-109;6th 1970:60-61). As an innovative feature of the

1992 collection, a paragraph on the Mexican "cultural renaissance" in the arts, science and press is included seeking to forge a national identity based on customs and manners, and romanticism after the restoration of the Republic in 1847 (6th 1992:95).

The Official School Text-Books Challenged

In the questionnaire only two questions were included regarding the Indian and mestizo predicaments as portrayed in the texts. These were:

1. Do the texts offer an understanding of Indian society?
2. What is the approach of the texts regarding the following:  
A. Ethnic groups, B. Ancient Mexico, C. Non-Indian Society?

Not a single positive answer was received regarding the question: Do the text-books offer an understanding of Indian society?

Table 21

"Indigenous students opinion on text-books's understanding of Indian society"

Yes	No	No Response
0	53	7

The answers to the question: What is the approach of text-books regarding ethnic groups, ancient Mexico and non-indigenous society? is reflected in the following table.

Table 22

"Indigenous students opinions on the themes of the text-books"

Theme	Positive	Negative	No Response
Ethnic groups	0	22	28
Ancient Mexico	2	7	41
Non-Indian Soc	19	0	31
Total	21	29	100

As noted, a high score of "non-responses" was recorded (100). However, it is important to compare the total lack of "positive responses" on the subject of "Ethnic Groups" against the total of "negative responses" regarding the theme of the "Non-Indian Society". In other words, according to the students, the text-books ignore the Indian reality and situation, while favouring mestizo society. And this is corroborated by the fact that on this specific occasion both samples expressed a high degree of similarity in their responses. Such overwhelming uniformity of views is because text-books have a significant impact on the Indian student since these are very likely to be their first available reading materials, or to put it symbolically, their first window on the external world.

The irregular, or almost nonexistent, availability of the printing press and the low rates of literacy amongst Indians are facts to bear in mind when considering the importance of text-books for this sector of society.

In order to complement the above data, some of the most representative statements of indigenous students' opinions of the text-books' concerns (or foci of interest) are given below:

i. On Ethnic Groups:



1. *"Very superficial"*.
2. *"There is a lack of verifiable history"*.
3. *"There is very scant knowledge of Indian peoples"*.
4. *"The Mexica are the only group included"*.
5. *"The treatment we receive in the text-books portrays us as illiterate and non-cultured peoples"*.
6. *"We are looked upon as inferiors"*.
7. *"The ethnic groups are studied as things of the past, not as living peoples"*.

These statements revealed that the majority of students held a consensual view that the text-books do not reflect, nor encourage the study of Indian societies.

ii. On Ancient Mexico:

1. *"There is no satisfactory history"*.
2. *"It is tackled as a legend not as a historical process"*.
3. *"It is superficial, backing the official point of view"*.
4. *"It is explained as a grandiose view of events"*.

Thus, the study of "Ancient Mexico" put forward by the standard education system did not satisfy the Indian perception either.

iii. On Non-Indigenous Society:

1. *"The books taught us that we have owe our very existence to the foreign invaders"*.
2. *"The foreigners have legitimised our past as theirs"*.
3. *"This section is broad, complete and more elaborate"*.
4. *"It underlines the view that the mestizos are superior to*

us".

Some other opinions were expressed by the students and significantly show the irrelevance of the text-books regarding the thinking and everyday life of Indian society:

1. *"The text-books do not include the necessary information to teach the histories of the Indian peoples".*
2. *"These books are not elaborated, taking into account the specific situations of the Indian communities".*
3. *"They encourage the study of western cultures and neglect the study of Indian ones".*
4. *"There is more information on alien things in this country".*

If there are still any doubts about the negative consensus of the indigenous students to the educational text-books, it is useful to supplement this with the views of some members of the professional group.

Extracts from in-depth interviews:

**Yucatán. Mayan Translator and Writer:**

1. MLGP: *"Each group or ethnic region must have its own specific text-books, because the uniform ones teach us a reality and a way of life alien to us. For example, they refer to types of housing that we do not know, our houses are not made of bricks, and sometimes the child does not know what a brick is".*

**Campeche. Mayan Anthropologist and Researcher:**

2. CECH: *"The text-books give importance only to the study of the history of the centre, such books say nothing of our own history. For us, the study of the War of the Castes is more*

important than the Mexican Revolution, because our Mayan history venerates the repression and suffering of the mid-19th century war of Yucatán".

**Oaxaca. Mixteco Sociologist and Senior University Lecturer:**

3. FG: "The Nahua and Aztec peoples do not have to be a validating history for the Mixtecos or Zapotecos. Each people constructs its own myths and histories according to their own experience which might or might not include legitimate aspects".

**Chiapas. Tseltal Linguist and Researcher:**

4. IJE: "The Indian peoples must know how the country has been constructed historically but, above everything else, they must know about themselves".

To summarise, these opinions claim that the text-books neglect the history and social life of Indian peoples. It is possible to say that an insufficient and ambivalent sense of national identity prevails amongst these students, and an inability to link Mexican national identity with the continuity of traditions and values in their Indian societies due to the fact that their histories are not reflected in the official text-books.

Modern Techniques for Imagining the Past

One of the exemplary achievements of the recent editions of the official text-books is their art work. Unlike the 1964 edition, characterised by lengthy paragraphs and simple and unattractive monochrome illustrations, the 1970-1990's and 1992 editions present rich, varied, colourful and attractive books for the young reader. Moreover, the 1992 texts on history have been notably improved with regard to their technical presentation, with line drawings being replaced by photographs. The lessons have been shortened but are profusely

illustrated with colour photographs and expressive titles: "The patria of the warriors of the sun" (5th 1982:42); "Men of maize" (3rd 1970:21) or "Creole patriotism" (6th 1992:56). They clearly reveal that an illustration as an educational device is preferable to a lengthy description, and the former allows and fosters an image of a collective "history".

The illustrations in the books on the Pre-Hispanic period are an aid to imagining a distant past, parochial or universal. Large format colour photographs support and clarify the text, they convey a sense of reality and authenticity contrary to the earlier idealised drawings. In this sense, the perception of the past, although remote, is portrayed as factual evidence both temporal and spatial. This attempt by authors of the texts to demonstrate the existence of the past is aided with illustrations of pre-Hispanic icons, such as masks and religious objects or stone sculptures of Mexica deities (3rd 1970:24). There are also full size plates of pages from the Mixteco codices which offer a sense of the types of activities undertaken in the past (3rd 1970:32).

The many illustrations from the latest collections portray characteristic scenes from contemporary Mexican life. I say "characteristic" because these are only understood by the people of Mexico, given that such scenes only exist and are comprehensible in a Mexican context. For example: photographs showing the authentic native flora i.e. maize, cacti, chilies, tomatoes, and the original fauna i.e. a turkey, a small dog (escuintli) or domestic tools. By the same token, the Spanish text includes some Mexicanisms like "platicar" (to talk) and some Náhuatl words like "tianquitzli" (market). Photographs portraying indigenous examples of nature and daily-life help to foster and imagine a sense of cultural continuity, which is, as we have seen, an important component of nationalism. In this respect, the following example is revealing:

"Mexicans, men and women, boys and girls have inherited the way of being and thought of our ancestors, the Mexicans of yesterday" (6th 1988:166).

Photographs of paintings by the most renowned Mexican artists also contribute to encouraging a visualisation of Mexican history. As an example, the lesson entitled "Mexico is a product of its history" is illustrated with details from J. C. Orozco's murals (Hospicio Cabañas, Jalisco) (6th 1988:166); and details from D. Rivera's murals on the daily-life of Tenochtitlán (National Palace, Mexico) are frequently found in the pages of the text-books. Perhaps, the most salient representation of patria, not to be confused with the emblem, is the robust figure of an Indian woman dressed in white holding the national flag; in the design of this image, which used to decorate the 1964-1970 edition's front cover, there is also the head of an eagle holding a snake (4th; 5th; 6th 1964). The front cover of the second edition omitted the idealised image of woman-patria. However, the 1992 edition has rehabilitated this once familiar symbol of the patria who characterises and identifies the official primary school texts (6th 1992).

The text-books section on the colonial period is also very well illustrated with reproductions, plates and drawings. Powerful if idealised drawings stress the nature of the "conquest" and the "heroic battle" depicting clashes between Spanish soldiers and Mexica warriors (3rd 1970:52-53). Mestizaje is also visually represented by photographs of the colonially stylised "painting of castes" which show couples from diverse races dressed according to their social status (4th 1982:66;68-69).

But it should be remembered that these texts are reading materials aimed at a young readership. Those who read or at least observe these illustrations might perceive that a "common cultural heritage" in a republic formed by "many Mexicos" was a reality. The many young readers from the different ethnic cultures are, therefore, encouraged to imagine the past of a contemporary integrated culture.

## Conclusion

From 1960 to 1992, three different collections of standard and compulsory history text-books have been produced by the Mexican public education system to be used by the whole of the primary school population.

In this chapter I have examined the official view regarding two periods of national history, the pre-Hispanic and the colonial, from which two enduring subjects of national identity have emerged: the formulae of national integration represented by the national emblem and mestizaje. The recurrent appearance of these themes in the three collections of text-books is not an arbitrary choice of the policy makers, but an official attempt to provide a sense of the cultural continuity and unity of Mexican society by instilling a perception that the nation possessed a "collective past" based almost exclusively on its Aztec history and, equally, a shared ethnic ancestry resting upon the Hispanic bias of mestizo culture. Consequently, this common denominator of nationhood has a tendency to neglect the diversity of the past of indigenous peoples and underestimate the relevance of their present cultures and ways of life.

The dissemination of nationalism via the educational system has created two situations in the contemporary identity of Indian students: they widely recognised the iconographic representations of ritualised patriotic symbolism and this underlines the fact that the arenas of the school and civic activities play an important role in their dissemination, by contrast; they have a clear perception of exclusion from the mainstream of the nation given that text-books have a tendency to ignore the socio-cultural milieu in which today's Indian people live. The examination of some of the reasons used by the state to legitimise national integration vis-à-vis ethnic exclusion will be the focus of the next chapter.

## Chapter 8

### **The Indigenist Project: "Mexicanization" or the "Plurality of Mexico"**

Indigenism is a governmental policy and the ideology which rationalises and underpins its policies and actions reflects the perspective of the dominant non-indigenous society, a perspective anticipating the idealised destiny of the indigenous communities. Indigenism is thus defined by a lack of indigenous inputs and viewpoints both at the grassroots and governmental levels in formulating policies and programmes concerning the Indian peoples.

The indigenist debate properly emerged, after the Mexican Revolution of 1910-20 with its promise of "national reconstruction". Specifically, it came from the ethnographic work of a generation of social scientists of the 1920's, known as the "Mexican School of Anthropology", who subscribed to what is now known as the "fundamentals of indigenism". The policy remained in operation without serious interruptions until the emergence, towards the end of the 1960's, of a radical critique by a number of social scientists and students. The emergence of semi-autonomous Indian movements and campaigns was an additional factor demanding a change in the ideological orientation of the policy.

This chapter is broadly divided into two sections: the first traces the origins of official indigenism and the theoretical basis for the policy, and some examples will illustrate its application and management. The second examines the emergence of a critical view of the policy of indigenism, which in turn has paved the way for the consideration of an alternative form of national integration, namely the construction of a "plural nation".

#### The Fundamental Principles of Indigenism

Governments since the Mexican Revolution have continuously

espoused a policy of nationalism. Three inter-related aspects of the socio-cultural life of the country could be addressed through the implementation of an indigenist policy: firstly, the creation and inculcation of a shared national culture; secondly, an attempt towards integrating - "Mexicanizing" - the indigenous peoples into national life; and lastly, the introduction of practical measures aimed at improving the living standards of the indigenous population.

The identification of these goals, as well as their likely solutions enjoyed the theoretical and methodological support of an anthropological "science", and indigenism gained a reputation outside Mexico by claiming the use of anthropology as a science in promoting "cultural change". This is revealed in the formulations of the founders of indigenism such as M. Gamio (1883-1960); M. Sáenz (1888-1941); N. Bassols (1897-1959); M. Othón de Mendizabal (1890-1945), J. de la Fuente (1905-1970); A. Caso Andrade (1896-1970) and G. Aguirre Beltrán (b. 1908) (1).

By the turn of the century, the indigenous composition of the country was largely unknown. In 1917, M. Gamio regarded as the "founder of Mexican indigenism", formulated a programme within the Direction of Anthropology, at the Ministry of the Interior, aimed at alleviating this primary lack of information and thus to produce a defined strategy of integration. Gamio's method observed the following logic: firstly, to study the indigenous peoples and after their lack of westernisation had been identified to promote their cultural evolution (1960:20). A first result of this programme was a combined anthropological and archaeological study from 1918 to 1921 of the settlements surrounding the recently reconstructed sites of Teotihuacán, near Mexico City: the La población del Valle de Teotihuacán (1922), in which he sought to identify the prevalence of pre-Hispanic and colonial influences exhibited by the indigenous peoples; these legacies from the past were obstacles to his conception of nationhood.

A volume of indigenous and colonial reminiscences, indicative of the "backwardness" of the country, was published



in 1927 in the form of an essay bearing the title La situación socio actual de la población indígena compiled by C. Basauri. Such a study was published until 1940 in three volumes under the title La población indígena de México. Of these studies (2), the research on Teotihuacán and the outline for the ethnographic compilation served as guidelines to orientate the future development of indigenism based on the "scientific and integral knowledge of the autochthonous groups awaiting incorporation into national life" (Comas 1953:26).

Indigenism, the creation of Mexican anthropology applied to the Mexican context, emerged with a missionary zeal intent on improving and rectifying the indigenous way of life. Gamio utilised "socio-anthropology" as a solution for resolving socio-cultural complexities which he saw as deriving from the heterogeneity of the population. His point of departure was to analyse the obstacles impeding development, and from this perspective to propose means to eliminate or transform such obstacles (Gamio 1922). He also advocated an "integral approach" as developed in his Forjando Patria (1916) (Forging the Patria); by this he meant the comprehensive study of the diversity of interlinked and interdependent entities which form the population and its territory.

Like his positivistic predecessors, Gamio despised the "great heterogeneity" and "extreme differentiations" of the population; the premises for this differentiation were the historical background, racial characteristics, different "modalities of material and intellectual culture", and a diversity of languages and dialects (Gamio 1935:35; Nahmad 1973:1169-1182). Gamio argued that if a country has a uniformity of civilization or a homogeneous "cultural type" this was a "sign of progress" as is manifested by the most "advanced peoples, like France or Germany" (1987:37). Here it is interesting to note a similarity of views between Gellner and Gamio: "the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism" (Gellner 1983:46 emphasis added). The multiethnicity of Mexico of the 1920's was for Gamio the key reason impeding progress, and such heterogeneity could

only be rectified by state agencies and a consistent programme of homogenisation. In Gellner's perspective, the realisation of modernity creates the social need for nationalism and, thus he rejects the view that nationalism imposes homogeneity to achieve modernity (1983:Ch.4;45; 1972:120-123). Homogeneity carried out by state nationalism was the main social requirement for the existence of a nation, and the Mexican pragmatism of nation-builders like Gamio, Sáenz and others invested considerable efforts and endeavours attempting to achieve this aim.

Indian peoples possessed two historical traits which de facto excluded them from the nation-building process: their indigenous languages and what was perceived to be their anachronistic cultures (Gamio 1985:118). Thus, for them to become part of the national mainstream they had to be "Mexicanized".

#### The Mexicanization of the Indian Peoples

Mestizaje or acculturation, in terms of the official boundaries of "Mexicanness", remained central to the creation of a "coherent" and clearly "defined" nation. The basic socio-cultural features of a mestizo population were identifiable by the following characteristics: adoption of the Spanish language, assimilation of western values derived from Hispanic influences, and certain "material" and "intellectual" manifestations of the culture as exhibited by an arbitrary division of the nation, "a less efficient population of intermediate culture and an efficient population of modern culture". The Indian peoples were assigned to the first category and the mestizo and other "urban groups" to the latter (Gamio 1985:119-120). Gamio recognised the diverse physiognomical distinctions amongst the various indigenous groups, but added that "the Indian...has intellectual attitudes which are comparable to those of any other race" (1985:90). Food consumption and diet was another characteristic that divided the Indian masses from that of the

mestizo; the differences in diet produced variations in the "physical vigour" of the Indian peoples. Finally, in Gamio's opinion, perceptions of morality and art are manifested in a variety of ways, widening the gap between the mestizo and the Indian population (1985:126).

If the above lists the ideal-type characteristics of the people, Gamio recommended a programme of assimilation - Mexicanization - for the Indian masses to be undertaken by the state. This programme advocating "cultural change" may be summarised as follows: To replace the plurality of Indian languages by the use of Spanish (3). To substitute the vegetarian diet of the Indian masses with an omnivorous one, the assumption being that Indian peoples perform only manual labour. To introduce "scientific knowledge" and a move away from the Indian custom of "copying what is taught by parents over many centuries", and working methods which are "empirical, anachronistic, and consequently faulty and inefficient". By the same token, he also suggested that the Indian peoples attempt some novel collectivist innovations: for example, to "substitute the present festivities held in towns and the countryside for others, such as the ancient ones; they should celebrate nature which at the same time should be works of art, but the implied religiosity should be diminished gradually" (1985:117 129 and 131).

There are conflicting opinions as to whether Gamio intended to destroy the Indian cultures or not, but the study of the history of indigenism invalidates any claims for conservation. For Gamio, nation-building was more important than the preservation of a collection of anachronistic cultures. Gamio and his colleagues believed that the more a culture was attached to its pre-Hispanic past, the more obsolete it was likely to be. As a consequence, his solution was for the extirpation of any pre-Hispanic anachronisms through education, assimilation and an imposed secularisation. In short, the indigenist ideas of the 1920's were inspired by an evolutionist model in which the ethnic native cultures were merely an obstacle to national progress.

To bring about the "Mexicanization" of the Indians, the state assumed responsibility for implementing the enormous task of assimilation. The project sought to target more than two million Indian people out of a total population of 14 334 800 in 1921 (Nolasco 1988:121). The means and mechanisms of initiating such a massive "cultural change" were mainly through the creation of an infrastructure and the introduction of the Rural School movement (INI 1978:69).

### The New Infrastructure and the Rural School Movement

In the 1920's, the concept of communications was seen as little more than a lack of basic roads and tracks linking the small and scattered communities of the rural areas with the urban centres. The minimal communication between the Indian peoples and the mass of the population was perceived as a "cultural problem", and geographical remoteness explained the prevailing "economic disentanglement, social isolation and cultural stagnation of the Indian peoples".

M. Sáenz (1888-1941) continued the work of Gamio, and they both shared a similar preoccupation: the integration of Indian peoples by the same means - Social Anthropology (Sáenz 1936 in Comas 1953:27). Sáenz like Gamio was not proposing to rescue, revive, or even add to the indigenous cultures; as already noted, in their view these were already obsolete anachronisms. Stimulated by the revolutionary zeal of constructing a new mestizo nation, Sáenz carried out research in 1933 in the Tarascan area entitled the "The Experimental Indigenous Incorporation Project" (La estación experimental de incorporación del indio). This was a programme "aimed at acculturating the Indians and to improve their living conditions in order to achieve the integration of these communities into the Mexican mainstream" (1953:15).

The "new rural school" programme focused on areas such as sanitation, hygiene, improving production techniques and so on. More important were those aspects involved in the process of assimilation and in inculcating an abstract sense of

"Mexicanness". These schools would teach the Indians to "think of the patria, would create an external world represented by Mexico: Mexico would be symbolised by pictures of the president of the Republic and by our heroes, by the national anthem and the flag" (Comas 1953:130). This rather mechanical vision of the nation was widely disseminated through representations of the above mentioned devices, but it did not always prove an adequate means of instilling a subjective sense of nationhood in the rural world. For example, the same schools stressed the practice of acquiring familiarity with news via the media, but, as Sáenz himself discovered, "rural teachers felt inadequate and insecure when reading aloud and neither they nor the youngsters had any interest in reading about the faraway world of Mexico City" (Heath 1972:104). In any event, Sáenz like Gamio was convinced that integration was an act of social justice and righteousness, starting with the new schools and followed by a policy of "giving the Castilian voice to four million mute Indians" (Sáenz in Comas 1953:130).

The methods employed to achieve one of the primary goals, castilianization, were subject to continuous experiment and change. S. Heath (1972) has studied the different trends and methods involved in the long process of constructing a "linguistic patria" which encompassed a wide range of practices from enforcing Castilian to bilingualism. Some examples of such trends are illuminating: N. Bassols (1987-1959) was inclined towards a form of schooling that attempted "a synthesis of the two cultures, preserving the positive values of the Indian races and using the technical culture of the Western civilization" (Comas 1953:51). J. Vasconcelos opposed the idea of establishing a separate education for the Indian peoples, given that the national objective was to eliminate the indigenous element by encouraging their assimilation towards Vasconcelos's idealised conception of the "cosmic race" (1953:97). Another approach was that of W. Townsend and M. Sáenz (1931) whose method was to first study the Indian languages and from this analysis, impose the official language; this form of acculturation derived from a

project to translate the Bible into the indigenous languages (Heath 1972).

These approaches and projects were devised and implemented by a number of government educational centres and institutions. For example, the above mentioned Mexican Rural School (1922) founded by R. Ramírez; the House of the People (Casa del Pueblo) (1923) and the Cultural Missions (Misiones Culturales) (1925) were both proposed by J. Vasconcelos and aimed at both "civilizing" and improving agricultural methods; the Department of Indigenous Incorporation (Departamento de Incorporación Indígena) (1926) launched by M. Sáenz; the House of the Indigenous Student (Casa del Estudiante Indígena) (1926) whose aim was to concentrate a certain number of young indians in Mexico City in order to expose them to the patterns of urban life; the Centres of Indigenous Education (Centros de Educación Indígena) (1933) were boarding schools located in eleven ethnic regions; and the Linguistic Summer Institute (Instituto Lingüístico de Verano) (1935) established in Mexico by Townsend also made its contribution towards "Mexicanization" by undertaking a campaign of "acculturation and national integration", as well as the study of indian languages and proselytising evangelical Protestantism (Comas 1953:34).

To what extent did these educational projects stressing the substitution of Indian-ness by Mexicanization succeed? In 1924, according to Sáenz, the Rural School was to be found "all over the country"; more precisely there were 1,417 rural schools in Indian communities out of a total of 3,392 rural schools, 4,445 teachers and 120 supervisors; 170,000 children were registered and 50,000 adults. More than half of these schools serviced "pure indigenous peoples" (Sáenz in Comas 1953:116). However, it is difficult to believe that such an educational network was successfully established only four years after the end of a costly and totally disruptive civil war in a country facing acute financial bankruptcy. Even if this was the case these educational efforts were meagre, for out of a total indigenous population of 2,166,033, in 1921,

1,868,892 were more than five years old (Nolasco 1988:121). The conclusion has to be that the builders of the nation were exaggerating their achievement of "mestizo-izing" the indian population through teaching them Spanish, improving their living standards, communications, and introducing a new set of values and the concept of "patria".

### The Rehabilitation of the Indian Peoples

From 1940, there appeared a new form of indigenism seeking to glorify the Indian past, to vindicate indian-ness, and an insistence on recognising their separateness which was to be the rationale for their incorporation into the nation-state (Comas 1953:8). This second phase of indigenism introduced the notion of "respecting the personality of the Indian peoples, while promoting their integration", and came into existence through the influence of L. Cárdenas's presidency (1934-1940). In the last year of his administration, he held the Indigenist Inter-American Congress (Michoacán) and Cárdenas's opening address, "The Indigenous Peoples, Factors of Progress" (Los indígenas, factores de progreso), was a new departure in constructing an official indigenism (Cárdenas 1940 in Comas 1964:132-142). The Indians were now to be regarded as potential promoters of development rather than mere obstacles to modernisation. Evolutionary theories based on the polarity between tradition and modernity, or homogeneity versus heterogeneity were of major importance to the anthropology of the 1920's (4). On the other hand, the American schools of anthropology and pedagogy stressed empiricism and rational education, mainly F. Boas's "cultural determinism" and the "problem method" educational theories of J. Dewey, of whom Gamio and Sáenz were their Mexican disciples at Columbia University in New York from 1904 and 1911 (Gamio 1985:9). Eventually, pervasive evolutionary paradigms were gradually overtaken by theories of social change which ultimately had an impact on social policy. Of particular interest were the models of "underdeveloped regions" proposed by G. Aguirre

Beltrán (b.1908) in the 1950's, which will be discussed below (5). That the populist pragmatism of Cárdenas sought to continue indigenous integration is revealed in the following excerpts from his aforementioned address of 1940:

"The indigenous race has attributes and offers qualities to the continental culture - not even their detractors can deny it"

But his rhetoric can be interpreted as ambiguity, and equivocation came to characterise the indigenist discourse:

"Neither de-indianize nor foreign models, neither revive pre-Columbian indigenous systems nor allow their stagnation which would be incompatible with national life. What must be supported is the incorporation of the Indian into the universal culture, that is to say, to promote the development of the race, the improvement of their living conditions by introducing universal technology, science and art; but always on the basis of maintaining the Indians's racial personality and showing respect for their consciousness and identity" (Cárdenas 1940 in Comas 1964:138).

I want to stress the importance of this discourse because it points to a new course in indigenist policy. On the one hand, an ideological formula which assumed that integration was to be encouraged, while at the same time respecting the "race", "consciousness" and "identity" of the Indian peoples; on the other, such a formula became the guideline for reorientating and consolidating indigenist institutions, such as the Inter-American Indigenist Institute and the National Indigenist Institute of Mexico (6).

Despite the fact that the INI was created in 1948, eight years after the Inter-American Congress (1940), the idea of "respecting while integrating" was firmly established in the minds of the politicians concerned with indigenism and academics involved in nation-building. Gamio's concept of the "Mexicanization of Indians" acquired another dimension: "Mexico should use the Indian cultures in order to enrich the national one" (INI 1978:16). The national goal of uniformity embodied in the mestizo was not to be abandoned, yet the



usurpation and manipulation of Indian cultures became another stage in the process of mestizaje.

It should be noted that only some expressions of Indian-ness became worthy of praise, mainly the "spirit manifested in the arts" - a perspective which had already been adopted in the nationalist art of the 1920's. But it was the mere presence of the Indian in the society as a whole that demanded transformation, that is to say, to persuade them to adapt to a so-called universal or western way of life. The policy to respect the culture of the Indian but at the same time to westernise it became such an ideological paradox that it remained an unresolved puzzle even for the most indigenist of mestizo ideologues.

Indigenism thus pursued two interrelated goals: to achieve national integration and to utilise Indian-ness as the fundamental criteria for defining the national culture of Mexico; but as noted earlier, in neither case could the Indian peoples themselves participate, thus indigenism remained an intellectual construct of the dominant political and academic elite. The pragmatic task of indigenism involved the implementation of agrarian reform, educational programmes and, in Aguirre Beltrán's words, the "confiscation of Indian values as a fundamental of national identity" (1975:182; 1976).

Since the common mestizo perception of the Indian peoples was that of a collection of fragmented and helpless communities, the question of their "protection" was a parallel concern of indigenism. In the opinion of the first director of the INI, A. Caso Andrade, indigenism was an "attitude and a policy" (INI 1978:79). An attitude because there was a "need to protect the indigenous communities and to give them the same equality with respect to the mestizo communities who form the mass of Mexico"; and a policy because it was a formal governmental decision, "having the aim of integrating the indigenous communities into the economic, political and social life of the nation" (INI 1978:79).

The name given to integrate, protect and seize the minds of the Indian peoples was "planned acculturation" and included

14 points which were known as the Guidelines for Indigenist Action (Bases para la Acción Indigenista) (INI 1978:82). The "appropriation" of Indian "material culture" in the search for a unique Mexicanness, has been commonplace since the founding of the Spanish colony. Examples multiply across the centuries: the symbolism of the eagle and the snake, indigenous arts and crafts, the unique baroque style of Catholic buildings which incorporated the skills and techniques of native artisans, the modern sculptures depicting Aztec forms and symbols, the widespread use of Náhuatl names, Mexican cuisine, and so on. Such appropriations by artists, policy makers and the mass of the people has encouraged a great deal of incisive and critical reflection in order to disentangle an ever-present contradiction: the glorification of the "dead Indian" and the consumption of their art, and at the same time an open contempt and disregard for the living Indian, their modes of thought and their way of life.

A first critique of this inherent contradiction in indigenism, emerged in 1950 with Luis Villoro's book Los grandes momentos del indigenismo (The Great Moments of Indigenism). In his view, the Indian plays a key role in the configuration of the national cultures on the American continent, they are representatives of "American-ness". At the same time, it is axiomatic that the Indian is alien to the consciousness of non-Indian society, and it is from within this non-Indian society that the political and cultural agendas of the nation emerge. If the Indian is necessary, but also alien, he/she must be transmuted into symbolic representations which are readily comprehensible to the non-Indian world. Indian-ness reproduces itself, despite the political attempts to suppress and transform it, and due to this reproduction there persists the "originality of our existence". To complicate the matter further, Villoro reverses the axiom by arguing that the West is potentially alien and the "Indian is the one in charge who reminds us of our specificity when facing the other alien - the foreign" (p.27). Thus, the Indian is the defence against the alien and becomes the "nucleus of the truly American" - in

the continental sense. It is the Indian as an alien and separated being which at the same time is a kind of cultural icon; of course, the paradox is that the Mexican national culture is partly constructed from an indigenous alien. Confronting the socio-cultural reality of the Indians, a state of "primitivism", a nonconformity, a noxious and "negative" culture, required urgent transformation, hence the justification for indigenism. In other words, indigenism requires the appropriation of Indian-ness in order to accept the mere existence of Indian peoples. The high value given to the Indian in the construction of the national culture explains why further attempts to define the process of Mexicanization include a concern and respect for Indian cultures. In 1957, a respected scholar of pre-Hispanic antiquities, M. León-Portilla, established a paradigm for "Mexicanization" in the double sense of integration and nation-building, and "it does not attempt to suppress the authentic values of the indigenous cultures". It seeks to raise the conditions of the Indians and develop their communities where it can be said that vestiges of pre-Hispanic cultures are harmful. By these criteria, "Mexicanization" would seek to transform their primitive agricultural techniques, their healthcare and economy. Once this was realised and, after the problems derived from the ethnic and cultural diversity had disappeared, the true cultural face of Mexico would emerge, "a country enriched with positive values, not only from Western culture, but also with those furnished by the pre-Colombian indigenous cultures" (León-Portilla 1957 in Comas 1953:250).

Showing respect towards the cultural personality of the Indian peoples involved the inclusion of trivialising terms such as the preservation of "authentic values" (i.e. handicrafts), or the introduction of "positive values" (i.e. cooking utensils). Gamio also recognised from other fieldwork experiences that the "aborigines have mental processes which are conducive to their biological and intellectual development, thus, this has to be encouraged and preserved"

(Gamio and Vasconcelos 1926:107; Gamio 1943). By the same token, it produced confusion about how to integrate the "countless vestiges of pre-Colombian cultures into the economic and social life of the country". The attempt to put the indigenist ideals into practice, that is preserving only the serviceable "values" or stimulating certain "mental processes", reveals the extent and the impossibility of undertaking such a task. This clash between ideology (an intellectual fabrication) and pragmatism led to the failure of indigenism as will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

The problem of how Indian-ness is constructed and reconstructed for the use of the non-Indian society, has been analysed by the aforementioned J. Friedlander. She provides a representative example of how "Mexicanization" in a Nahua community - Hueyapan - was implemented by a state agency, "Cultural Missions", in the late 1940's (1975:130). The case discussed by Friedlander shows that indigenism was successful, as it encouraged the suppression of "their customs" and the adoption of a uniform pattern of identification, but the result was a state of cultural confusion.

"Hueyapeños have been taught to denigrate their customs and to emulate those of the Hispanic elite, that is to measure their own worth in terms of how closely they succeed in duplicating the ways of non-indians. In the context of modern Mexico this has meant that Hueyapeños have come to believe that the more material symbols of Hispanic culture they obtain, the less indian they will seem" (1975:131).

In similar terms, Gellner has described the situation faced by those sectors of the population which have not managed to incorporate into the egalitarian dynamic of the modern industrial state:

"Often, these alienated, uprooted, wandering populations may vacillate between diverse options, and they may often come to a provisional rest at one or another temporary and transitional cultural resting place" (Gellner 1983:46).

But even if the above instance fits the general hopes of

the indigenist agenda, the ethnic diversity and complexity of Mexico can also provide us with contrary examples. In the late 1960's, a study of "controlled acculturation" amongst the Cora and the Huichol, inhabitants of isolated mountainous areas of the northern states of Jalisco and Nayarit, shows that indigenism failed. It is already clear that the indigenist policy was transmitted by either government agencies or through the schools:

"these groups - the Cora and the Huichol - have always shown passive resistance to these programmes, and the teachers themselves consider the effort useless. During the presidential term of Lázaro Cárdenas, two boarding schools for Indian children were opened but they were soon closed because of lack of attendance by the children, despite strong pressures to keep them open" (Nahmad 1981:7).

These two opposing examples demonstrate that indigenism not always manage to achieve uniform results. Proximity and geography might be a valid argument in explaining the adoption of mestizo mores among the Nahua community of Morelos in central Mexico, contrasted with the rejection of official policies by the inhabitants from a peripheral and isolated region. It also has to be conceded that the Nahua people have in fact been linked and have participated in major national events; for example, Friedlander records that members of the village were workers on the sugar-growing haciendas - the focus of the regional revolution led by Zapata - and some "Huayapeños fought in the revolt" (1975:57). Also the village benefited from the agrarian reforms, receiving two land grants, and migration to urban centres or the haciendas has been a marked trend since the turn of the century (1975:63). Moreover, the community has been connected by road since 1953 (1975:64). This picture is contrary to the "atmosphere of concealment" that prevailed among the Cora and to a lesser extent the Huichol. Access to the region at the time of the study depended on "long treks on muleback or foot"; more important was the peculiar development of "cultural

invisibility" among these isolated peoples. In the opinion of American and Mexican researchers attracted by this mechanism of preserving ethnic identity, the institution of "cultural invisibility" has become one of this group's most effective methods of avoiding an intense involvement in the wider society. The deliberate communal introversion amongst the Cora depends on a system of religious cargo (duties) and a "strong tendency toward secrecy and a great reluctance to become a focus of attention from non-Cora" (Hinton 1981:1).

This brings us to the later role of indigenism after the establishment and consolidation of the indigenist institutions.

### Indigenism and Industrialisation in the "Regions of Refuge"

The theoretical works of G. Aguirre Beltrán set the indigenist agenda from the 1950's onwards. Although still revealing a similarity with earlier approaches, Aguirre points to two ways of overcoming the "native". That archaeology can help to create a national consciousness supported by the indigenous past, and the anthropological method aimed at introducing development and integrating indigenous peoples into the nation-state (1953;1957).

His writings of the 1950's argue that the changes promoted by the revolution, such as new educational programmes, roads, public health campaigns and so on, have managed to produce "deep cracks in the ancient structure, but it has not been completely destroyed" (Aguirre Beltrán 1957:7). His main contribution would be in introducing a new approach to integration: that is to say, if the "ancient structure" was still intact, why was this, and in any case how could this be made compatible with national life or even how could it be destroyed, if it happens to clash with increasing industrialisation?

Aguirre's view centred around the idea of "regions" within which "the folk ethnic communities are parts of a system constituted by a national dominant ladino and mestizo nucleus,

such communities are satellites around the nucleus". This is the incipient version of his notion of "regions of refuge". "Regions of refuge" were those ethnic environments located in peripheral areas inaccessible to modernisation or industrialisation, and thus "where the colonial situation persists" (1979:23). Such regions are characterised by the coexistence of a dominant ladino and mestizo group and Indian peoples, the ancient inhabitants of the area. The latter "groups retain their old values, customs and behaviour norms" and "appear to be the most backward section of the national population. Thus, they are subject to subjugation and exploitation by the technically and economically more developed groups" (1979:23-24). Since the "backward" community is not isolated and forms part of a region, the government is required to promote "regional integration" in order to promote "cultural change". Once more this reflects the policy of introducing modernising techniques in order to promote development, but preserving the ethos of both mestizo and Indian communities in order to undertake "cultural change" or acculturation (Aguirre Beltrán 1957). Aguirre established a programme to implement this policy which was divided into developmental stages, and included interdisciplinary teams, trained personnel, and the creation of Coordinating Centres to be located in the mestizo metropolis of the region. However, this programme for acculturation, like the previous attempts, was conceived under a clear misunderstanding of the processes of Indian life. The project was idealistically motivated, but as a consequence it overlooked potential resistance and hostility, as well as the importance of the historical ties and the interests of the Indian people involved. Aguirre insisted on creating a "social consciousness" which of itself would promote development, while he strongly disapproved of "any tendency which could revive a given ethnic consciousness" (1975:178). Furthermore, indigenism aimed at discouraging the emergence of any form of "Indian power", given that such a situation could reinforce the structure of castes and would represent a "step backwards in the progressive evolution of

humanity" (Aguirre Beltrán 1972a:169).

Aguirre's formulations easily go noticed in the history of indigenism because industrialisation was becoming a major parallel concern of economic and political policy. In effect, the government policy of import substitution industrialisation, initiated in 1946 during M. Aleman's government, demanded the large-scale promotion of industry and infrastructure projects to satisfy the internal market (King 1970:41). But the policy of developing and supplementing the infrastructure was destroying the natural environment of the Indians, and indigenism was unhelpful in lessening that impact.

Institutionalised indigenism was an active collaborator during the construction of three dams in regions of high ethnic populations: in the Papaloapan (1947), the Tepalcaltepec (1949) and the Cerro de Oro basins (1972). The role of indigenism was that of coordinating the clearance of the population from those areas which would be submerged, and carrying out that task with the least possible opposition or conflict (Boege 1988:242; Villa Rojas:1955). The projects flooded ancient settlements and agricultural areas of several ethnic groups, the consequence was a damaging and long-term dislocation of the affected peoples (Stavenhagen 1988:309). These cases provide suitable evidence for appreciating the contradictory way in which the indigenist policy of development and integration while respecting the Indian personality was conducted.

The project for the Papaloapan basin was a major hydro-electric scheme, the "Miguel Alemán Dam", aimed at promoting the "development and the rational use of natural resources" (Comas 1953:57). Its construction deluged the ecosystem of the Mazateco people, one of the sixteen ethnic groups inhabiting the state of Oaxaca, and twenty two thousand individuals were evacuated.

The Mazateco people challenged the construction with minor armed resistance, but mainly through a mobilisation of their symbolic resources (Boege 1988:243). The Mazateco possessed a



complex mythology derived from the concept of their origins which had their source in the tropical forests - "the place where people are born" (Benítez t.III 1968:37). From their myths, as recorded by Boege and Inchaústegui (1977:106), the Mazateco argued that the chikones ("dueños de la tierra") - Lords of the Earth - would not sanction the construction of the dam, on the contrary, the Lords were going to demand a tribute payment of two hundred lives in compensation as it was an offence for a "human hand" to change the course of the river (Boege 1988:243). Most probably such a tribute was never fulfilled; however, the army maintained a considerable presence while the construction was in progress. A similar story of a "giant king living under the surface of the earth swallowing-up some engineers" (1988:221) was also heard during the construction of the Cerro de Oro dam, which also affected Mazateco people.

The Tepalcaltepec project was created to "promote the integral development of the river's basin" (Comas 1953:59). The area affected involved a greater part of the Tarascan Plateau (Meseta Tarasca) inhabited by a homogeneous monolingual group, the Purépecha. Aguirre Beltrán was responsible for the anthropological research required to facilitate the evacuation and resettlement of these peoples (1952:364-373). Unlike the first and last examples, this project has not been studied from a critical standpoint which would allow us to examine the adverse effects of the dam. Nevertheless, Aguirre later recognised in 1952 that the "lack of a plan and objectives amongst the agencies and institutions" were substantial obstacles to any palpable "integral development" (1952:366).

The Cerro de Oro scheme was interlinked with the Miguel Alemán Dam and built to increase the capacity for hydro-electric power and irrigation, and flooded territories (the Chinantla area) of the Chinanteco and Mazateco peoples of Oaxaca. During the sixteen years involved in the construction, four evacuations and re-settlements were carried out, but there is no agreement as to the numbers of people affected:

Boege estimated at "least eight thousand Mazateco and Chinanteco peasants" (1988:21), Aguirre estimates ten thousand (1975a:413), Barabás and Bartolomé speak of twenty thousand (1973:30), and Pardo offers a figure of forty thousand (1990:164).

In any case, this project also produced an example of the utilisation of symbolic structures. This was initiated in 1972 by the indigenous institution of the "Council of Elders" (Consejo de Ancianos) which gave orders to the group's shamans to invoke their spiritual powers to halt the dam's construction, and to "kill the president of Mexico" (Barabás 1973:31). Since this strategy obviously failed it was replaced by a sense of impotence and alienation which came to dominate the people affected, and eventually a "messianic movement" developed. This took the form of the well-known archetype of an apparition of the Virgin in a local cave, who demanded to speak to the "president" and the "priests of the municipal town". This cult still exists among the Chinanteco through the worship of naturally-formed wooden fetishes which were discovered in the cave; the fetishes are still venerated in religious processions and the cave is an object of pilgrimage. (Barabás and Bartolomé 1973:32).

It can be argued that the affected Indian peoples were experiencing the crude dissolution of their beliefs and cultures and the loss of their territories. But this erosion was perceived as a success for the acculturation policy, since its aim has been one of undermining the separate Indian communities and of consolidating a larger national community. At least, indigenism had engineered a dislocation of the affected groups' cohesion by means of fragmentation through their enforced resettlement and their cohabitation with other groups, i.e. Mazateco and Chinanteco families were settled in areas inhabit previously by Mixteco people; uprooting their sense of belonging to their original communities and kinship organisation; diminution of their cargo cults and destruction of their ancient rituals based on worship of the forces of nature; loss of language and other elements of identity, i.e.

replacement of traditional dress, homes, artifacts. And more importantly, offering the Indians the possibility of changing their status, from that of a "quasi caste" to that of adopting a position as a "proletarian class" (Aguirre Beltrán 1973:365).

In 1973 and 1974, two anthropologists involved in the Chinanteco project, A. Barabás and M. Bartolomé, denounced the impact of the scheme in two publications released in Denmark and London. A year later, Aguirre answered the imputation of "ethnocide conducted by the indigenist policy of the Mexican government" claimed by the above anthropologists (1975a:405-418). It is interesting to examine Aguirre's response in as much as it clarifies the role of the indigenist policy.

In Aguirre's terms, the denunciation of "ethnocide in Mexico" is an act of "irresponsability" as scientific research would make such a claim insupportable (1975a:411). But more importantly, it gives us an insight into his views regarding the cultural history of the Chinanteco people vis-à-vis the "nation of Mexico". The Chinantecos, Aguirre argued, lack the historicity attributed to them by Barabás and Bartolomé - a "thousand of years of existence and four hundred of colonial resistance"; their forms of resistance were symbolically expressed through their adoption of certain "Catholic saints", and to designate this appropriation a "Messianic movement" is merely an exaggeration of "unimaginative anthropologists" (ibid:412).

Aguirre rejected the view that the Chinanteco people constitute a "truly national formation" as this is a linguistic group formed by "little more than a dozen independent communities" which had been dispersed "long before the conquest of Mexico", and nine out of the twelve speak mutually unintelligible languages. He then added: "With such difficulties of communication it is difficult to suppose the existence of a socio-ethnic unity larger than a simple community" (1975a:412). His definition of a nation includes the prerequisites of a "community of language, territory, economic life and culture"; and of the economic criterion:

"the nation has been born as a result of capitalism", the "articulation" of the ethnic communities to the dominant capitalist mode does not satisfy the conditions demanded by his definition.

"To call the Chinanteca a nation, a social and ethnic group which lacks a community of language, territory, and economic life which impedes the formation of an internal market, is scientifically unacceptable" (1975a:412-413).

These claims are commonplace and, to some extent, convincing explanations from the viewpoint of nation-builders. A number of formal criticisms - from the Marxist perspective that dominated Mexican intellectual life of the 1970's - can be made of this position, namely eclecticism and ideological opportunism. But now it is clear that his definition derived from Stalin's concept of a nation (1913) and that he was arguing in favour of assimilation for those "people without history" (Wolf E. 1982:19-23). That Aguirre was paraphrasing Stalin's definition of a nation does not come as a surprise to students of nationalism. Stalin, as we know, was a prolific writer on the ethnic and class dilemma posed by the integration of minority groups into the USSR (Munck 1986:76). Marxist successors (Kautsky, Luxemburg, Bauer and Renner, Lenin and Stalin) wrote on the subject, sometimes for tactical ends, but drawing on basic theoretical assumptions (Smith 1983:257). In the pamphlet commissioned by Lenin, Marxism and the National Question (1913), Stalin coined the following definition: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in a common culture" (Quoted by Nimni 1991:91). This definition, simply based on a list of characteristics, noting that most macro-nations are by no means sustained by one single language or culture, was later criticised for its "rigidity" and "schematicism" (Nimni 1991:90-91). Nevertheless, the Marxist ideal type of nation was frequently cited as authoritative, or elaborated even further by the

Marxist interpreters of the "national question" (Munck 1986:77; Davis 1978:71). Specifically, Aguirre refers to a second hand elaboration of such a definition provided by an author named Vlad Constantin Ensayos sobre la nación, (original in Spanish) published in 1973 in Bucharest, this is known because Aguirre himself cites the source from which he extracts his argument (Aguirre 1975a:413; García Mora and Medina 1986:619). Should an "ethnic phenomenon" be characterised as a nation, according to Constantin's definition, is because a collective shares the above features of language, territory and economic life. Thus, in Aguirre's view it was unacceptable to characterise Indian groups as nations since in their social organisation one or more of the above features did not exist.

As a promoter of national development, Aguirre stressed an instrumental approach, overestimating economic criteria (i.e. nations are capitalist formations with an internal market) and diminishing the role of lesser cultural specificities - for example, the symbolic resistance of the Chinanteco and Mazateco peoples.

To summarise, up to this point I have outlined the major configurations of indigenist policy. This has encompassed an analysis of the initial formulation of indigenism as proposed by post-revolutionary opinion of the 1920's; the revisionist posture claiming "respect for the Indian" that characterised the following decades; and a discussion of the consequences of implementing the policy of indigenism and its varying impact on Indian life: the results of "Mexicanization" on a Nahuatl community and the negative experiences of the Cora and the Huichol, as well as the introduction of industrialising projects, supported by indigenism, in the Mazateco, Chinanteco and Purépecha regions. In all these instances, it was clear that such a policy strongly favoured a unifying programme of nation-building at the expense of encouraging the cultural affirmation of smaller ethnic groups.

But these scenarios heralded the imminent decline of indigenist policy (7). Academic critiques and the emergence of

semi-autonomous ethnic movements have played an important role in the discourse on indigenism, to which I now turn.

### Alternatives to Indigenism

Following the Mexican political crisis of 1968, precipitated by the disenchantment and mobilisation of a large section of society including students and academics, there emerged a series of challenges aimed largely at the economic policies of the government of G. Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970). This dissent also found expression during the so-called "democratic liberalisation" initiated by the populist policies of the following administration of L. Echeverría (1970-1976). This was fertile soil for the growth of varying dissenting viewpoints from all sectors of society. Most pertinent for this research were those questioning the role played by the social sciences in the implementation of state policies, and these critiques and theoretical reformulations had two interlinked effects. On the one hand, through an ongoing critical debate indigenism ceased to be a dogmatic policy for national integration; on the other, social enquiry paved the way for the emergence of new forms of indigenous mobilisation (cfr. Chapter 9).

### New Definitions of the "Mexican"

Unlike the indigenist approaches focusing on the idea of homogenisation discussed above, the social sciences of last two decades have a shared perspective: the construction of an "authentic" nation should be enriched with the "mosaic of the different ethnic and regional cultures of the country" (Stavenhagen 1974:6). What was required was a vindication of indigenous diversity and an abandonment of the official view that Indian cultures were obsolete and static, and still influenced by their pre-Hispanic past which manifested itself both pragmatically and symbolically.

Academic viewpoints encompassed a wide range of opinion;

for example, a cumbersome bureaucracy which failed to implement indigenist policy, the role of imperialism and, particularly, the Marxist denunciations of the consequences of introducing capitalism in indigenous areas. Since Marxism became the dominant critical discourse, the discussion concerning the cultural impact of "Mexicanization" of Indian peoples was often muted. 1975, A. Palerm summarised a basic concern:

"The idea of Mexico as a cultural and biological mestizo entity...has remained firmly established in the national consciousness, although this is still an incomplete...reality". (1975:163).

The homogenous nation was far from being realised, thus the questions to be asked were: what happened to the policy of indigenism and why did it fail? Palerm argued that the tendency of post-revolutionary indigenist policies, which initially sought the "liberation" of the Indian and their attempted social "transformation", created institutions which have been "dedicated to satisfying the needs of tourism, and to undertaking the recording of antiquities and the ethnographic vestiges of ancient cultures, instead of favouring and developing the Indian cultures" (Palerm 1975:164). By the same token, anthropology in Medina's opinion was only an agent in the construction of an official culture, a discipline that was inevitably tied to the nationalist cause (1986:223-224).

The familiar contradiction of nationalism produced the crisis of indigenism and a critical reappraisal of the enterprise: nationalism seeks to find a national consciousness in the Indian cultures, while at the same time promoting their disappearance in the "name of national unity". As we have seen, social scientists were summoned to participate in development projects, i.e. the evacuation of Indian towns, coordinating the displacement and resettlement of populations, studies on the effects of "planned acculturation", and to analyse and ethnographically record cultures which were only

"tolerated inside museums" (Palerm 1975:164). In this context, indigenism, nationalism and anthropology were in crisis inasmuch as they insisted on utilising Indian-ness to forge a mestizo nation.

A similar argument regarding the use of indigenism as an instrument in forging a national culture was also expressed by R. Bartra:

"The indigenist policy of the state has contributed to the assassination of the indigenous peoples; like the bourgeoisie, the state also needs the cultural corpse of the Indian in order to feed the myth of national unity....The official indigenist institutions are nothing else but permanent agencies of a funeral ceremony burying the Indian, perpetual candles around the dead body of the Indian" (1974:81).

F. Benítez (1968) extensively documented many examples showing the contradiction between the universal sympathy for the "dead Indian" - the glorification of pre-Colombian art -, and the rejection of the "living Indian" - the poor indigenous rural individual facing discrimination and a loss of identity. In his travels around the country he found, for example, the surviving expressions of a sense of ethnicity contrasted with the demands to embrace assimilation and an intense feeling of discrimination. This situation is particularly pertinent to the following extracts concerning the Mixteco people:

"Their major aspiration....is to be fluent in the Spanish language, and they are convinced this is the only way to obtain respect from the mestizo. Some Mixteco Indians reject their parents and communities, but we cannot blame them for that. Those who have lost their culture and have not been assimilated into the Western culture, experience frustration and disequilibrium. Their colour announces their origin and they are not accepted by whites" (Benítez 1968:391-392 t. I).

Fellings of discrimination such as the above described, were multiplied all over the country and this situation demanded the proposal of other interpretations of the



programme of national integration such as the concept of "pluralism". It should be noted, however, that the preponderance of a Marxist approach argued that ethnicity per se was an inadequate explanation inasmuch as the Indian was also an "exploited peasant", an "uprooted proletarian" or a "worker". This introduced the widely used designation of "ethnic class" (etnia clase) which has produced a considerable literature but largely irrelevant to our analysis (cf. Díaz-Polanco 1979).

### The Plurality of Cultures

Thus we arrive at two pertinent approaches in discussing the destiny of Indian cultures as integral to the nation: "Mexicanization" and "Pluralism". As we will see, the latter supports the present theoretical orientation of indigenism. How can the shift towards the consideration of multi-ethnicity be explained? What was the context for its emergence and who were its intellectual progenitors?

Pluralism emerged in the 1970's, at a time when no one would entertain the view that the Indian peoples were capable of initiating their own agenda. The patronising attitude of official and "liberal" indigenism was indeed still an obstacle; while on the other hand, national and international public opinion simply ignored the magnitude of "ethnocide" and "genocide" taking place on the peripheries of Latin America. In 1971, a symposium was held, "Inter-ethnic friction in Non-Andean South America" (Fricción interétnica en América del sur no-andina) in order to discuss and propose alternative strategies of indigenism. This event was coordinated by a number of international organisations and only non-indigenous social scientists and anthropologists participated (8).

From the symposium, there emerged the so-called "Barbados Declaration" (Declaración de Barbados). The declaration was of importance for the future of the whole continent given that it denounced the tenuous situation of the ethnic native peoples, the result of the interference of religious missionaries,

state and nation-building policies, and anthropologists. It underlined an ingredient for further ethnic mobilisation: "the Indian peoples have the right and the full capacity to propose their own historical alternatives concerning their liberation" (Indianidad y descolonización en América Latina; Documentos de la Segunda Reunión de Barbados 1979: Introduction).

From the release of this declaration, between 1971 to 1977 an increase in the number of indigenous organisations on the continent was registered (Bonfil 1979:81; 1991:23). In 1978, another workshop was held: "Movements of Indigenous Liberation in Latin America" in the same University of West Indies (Barbados, July 18 to 28, 1978) and a second document was produced, the "Declaration of Barbados II". Unlike the earlier occasion, representatives of indigenous organisations from eleven countries participated, including leaders of organisations from Mexico plus a contingent of social scientists.

The emergence of ethnic movements and perspectives unknown to social scientists enriched and widened the concept of indigenism, and the recent Indian movements gained academic and political visibility with the declaration of "Barbados II" (Bonfil 1991:77). New political organisations, manifestos and reflections on the real demands and programmes for Indian peoples were becoming a significant issue of concern among academics, and they demanded to be adequately addressed and receive the attention which had previously been denied them (Bonfil 1981). The notion of "plurality" emerged from this context and served as an example in encouraging future cultural policies for Mexico and the rest of the continent. In effect, such a concept became a "central factor in changing the way of looking upon the Indian" (Bonfil 1991:78).

This situation provides one of the main explanations for the transformation of the indigenist policy from "Mexicanization" to that of a "recognition of plurality". So far, this is an incomplete project still undergoing conceptual clarification and requiring further legislation. However, let us turn now to discuss its implications in a broader national

context.

G. Bonfil Batalla established a conceptual and ideological framework for this approach. Once again it became evident that the search for a "true Mexicanness" had not evaporated, although on this occasion the agenda was rather more generous in that it included an innovative ingredient: a recognition and an acceptance of the fact that Mexico is "more Indian than mestizo". This theme was comprehensively explored in Bonfil's book, México profundo (1987) (Profound Mexico). For him, the answer lies in the qualitative source of "civilization": "the Mesoamerican civilization...continues to be alive in Mexican society and its principles regulate the deep cultural orientation of many millions of Mexicans, many of those who are recognised and recognised themselves as 'Indians'" (1987:250). It was an inaugural recognition of the fact that previous nationalist policies have "denied the existence of the Mesoamerican civilization", an overwhelmingly dominant civilization influencing the whole of Mexican society. The issue was, nevertheless, not whether to implement a contrary policy, to "Indianise" the society, but to find a means of achieving the "autonomous development of the original cultures of the Indian peoples" (Bonfil 1991:79). In other words, to be able to construct an alternative which sees the Indian as a factor of civilization: "the space of Indian civilization goes beyond the space occupied by the Indian peoples, their more transparent and persistent carriers" (ibid:80). The mestizo project, he continues, has been an "imaginary" and fabricated one, which can be replaced by a "plural nation" derived from a "matrix of Indian civilization". If within the society such an Indian civilization is given its rightful place and that society has adopted a "pluralist programme", other alternatives would become available, for example, one that could "make us wish to be the people that we really are and can afford to be: a country with its own aims and goals, derived from an understanding of its profound history" (Bonfil 1987:245). Stavenhagen made a similar claim in 1973:

"If Mexico wishes to be loyal to its own history, traditions and cultural independence, in the next twenty five years the indigenist agenda should rescue, respect, encourage and promote the cultural development of the ethnic groups called 'Indians', encouraging the effervescence of the Mexican spirit, through cultural and educational policies which could recognise the cultural plurality of our country, as a fundamental part of an authentic national culture" (1973:473).

The views of Bonfil and Stavenhagen have considerably influenced social scientists and indigenist politicians. In this context it is commonplace to now hear remarks such as "pluralism is a crushing reality" (Durán 1988:37), or that the policy encouraging the diversity of cultures "enriches the nation" rather than considers them as a burden to the state (Warman 1988:97) (9).

This alternative perspective obviously presents a great challenge to earlier official versions of nationalism. Firstly, because the "ideology of the mestizo" is firmly rooted in the national consciousness - as discussed by A. Palerm - and, secondly, because it demands a full reformulation of all aspects of national life, including legislation, education and the media. Moreover, this project is a curious and novel form of romanticism; in the search for a "genuine national spirit", the uniform image of the mestizo is to be subordinated to neither an idealised western nor the Indian model. Encouraging the liberation of "Indian civilization" is, nevertheless, controversial but it is likely to provide a viable alternative. However, a satisfactory answer will only be arrived at through observing the future achievements of Indian organisations and programmes and, then, to assess whether they are or not embracing a pluralist agenda formulated to take account of their self-identity as distinctive and historical peoples.

### Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have examined the ideology of indigenism as a corpus of theories and policies formulated by non-indigenous

Mexican society. The goal of indigenism emerged as an agent of national integration and as a formal government-inspired nationalist policy, and had a twofold purpose: the integration of Indian peoples through assimilation and the utilisation of Indian-ness in the search for a genuine national culture. "Mexicanization" or "Pluralism" were nation-building attempts to confront the non-western reality of the diversity of indigenous cultures.

Arguably, the nation-builders' vision of promoting wholesale acculturation and assimilation was forceful, substantial, and even possessed a certain inevitability. The reconstitution of the Mexican nation resorted to scientism, a positivist methodology, in an attempt to create a sustainable community with a single culture, and a language which could be developed as an integral and efficient form of communication. However, implementing the policy of assimilation had unforeseen consequences for the nation-builders and unwelcome results for the Indian peoples: for example, a weak sense of "Mexicanness" and the gradual loss of identity after the introduction of industrialisation in some indigenous regions.

On the other side of the spectrum, the "pluralist" conception may be deprecated for pursuing a romantic approach to nation-formation, despite the fact that this perspective more adequately reflects the ethnic complexity of the country. Evidence for its success would very much depend on the nature of the cultural and political schemes proposed by the Indian peoples themselves.

Perhaps demographic factors may ultimately offer a solution: while the so-called dominant mestizo population doubles every 55 years, for the indigenous-speaking peoples it doubles in only 18 years (Valdés 1988:125). This is explained because the Indian population is going through a stage characterised by low mortality rate and high birth rate, in comparison with the non-indigenous population which has achieved a balance between mortality and birth rates. If this estimation is correct, by the year 2013 the Indian population will double from its current figure of 10 million, unless

their reproductive pattern changes. Thus, which one of the two perspectives will satisfy this increase: "Mexicanization" or "Pluralism for Mexico"?

## Chapter 9

### **The Emergence of Indigenous Intellectuals and Professionals**

Independent indigenous thought emerged in the middle of the 1970's and is broadly known as the "Indian policy" (política india). It was mainly launched and developed by educated indigenous peoples within an academic context critical of the integration and assimilation policies for indigenous peoples promoted by the state - indigenism. The "Indian policy" may be characterised as a relatively recent phenomenon and is a result of autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations for indigenous professionals. The activities of these organisations involved critical and theoretical reflection, creation of ideologies and the formulation of concrete policies from an indigenous perspective for the benefit of Indian peoples.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first includes a theoretical conceptualisation of native intellectuals, and an assessment of the emergence of organisations formed by indigenous professionals. The second studies the main effects of the "Indian policy": the critique of integration, the rejection of castilianisation, the proposal for bilingual education and, finally, the professional training of a stratum of the ethnic intelligentsia.

#### Indian Intellectuals: Theoretical Definitions

Unlike other Indian and peasant movements or organisations which have as their principal demands the struggle for land, the respect of political and human rights, the improvement of labour conditions and development (Mejía y Sarmiento 1987:); the groups of professionals are characterised by a globalising view of indigenous existence and the academic means by which their critiques, programmes and projects were put forward.

The ideologues and leaders, as well as the many members, of these organisations were Indians (from different ethnic groups) trained in the teaching profession. Another characteristic of these organisations is that, for the first time, a link was established between the needs and interests of the communities and their only available spokesmen: primary teachers, bilingual instructors and professionals.

Not all the so-called intellectuals in Mexico are indigenous in an ethnic sense. In order to highlight the specificity of the indigenous intellectual, my task will be that of reviewing the most obvious characteristics defining an intellectual; this will help to establish the difference between the "typical" intellectual in a developing society and the native intellectual and professional.

## 1. The Definition of Intellectual

Some common assumptions are valid for both a developed and a developing society vis-à-vis the definition of an intellectual. The first is that he/she is a non-manual worker "who live by and for the exercise of the intellect" (Aron 1957:205). Similarly, an "intellectual is a person who is engaged in thinking about ideas and non-material problems using the faculty of reason" (Hussein 1977:8). A second assumption regards intellectuals as a group, a "socio-professional category within a comprehensive classification of occupations" (Collini 1993:200). In this respect, a preliminary distinction arises: in western societies, notably France and Great Britain, writers and academics are renowned, while in developing societies the scope of occupations is wider and comprises not only writers and academics but also civil servants, journalists, lawyers and teachers, even those involved in secondary school teaching (Shils 1976:199). Occupations such as teaching and journalism more adequately suit the Indian intellectual milieu, as we shall see below. A third general assumption is that the category of intellectuals possess "advanced modern education" and therefore, are in "contact



with modern intellectual culture" (Shils 1976:198). They are not subject to the restraining ties of their local or regional cultures, neither are they content to explain the world within traditional or religious frameworks. Thus, it is contact with the western or modern milieu that creates the intellectual. Intellectuals and the intelligentsia apparently overlap, both have emerged as society evolves in complexity with its evolving needs of training, specialisation and expertise.

Certain common characteristics are also found amongst intellectuals in developed and developing societies alike. Culture, indeed, is the main point of reference; intellectuals not only create, distribute and apply culture, according to Lipset's definition (1959:460) but, even more importantly, they exercise some form of "cultural authority or leadership". Their intellectual proficiency and their public persona transform them into "cultural experts or leaders", as in France and Britain (Collini 1993:201). Furthermore, they play a key role in the cultural construction of identity, forging a sense of "Englishness" or "Frenchness" (Collini 1993:202).

The intellectual in a developing society and the indigenous intellectual both share identical preoccupations and are engaged in similar activities geared to apply, diffuse, promote and rehabilitate the culture they identify with and ideology. As in Europe, Mexico or Malaysia, intellectuals emerge "by an act of will", from contact with the everyday culture, from elite traditions or from the realm of family and community, but definitely not from institutionalised knowledge (Husseini 1977:16). Another common characteristic is their celebrated maintenance of independence of thought. Similarly, the following well-known characteristic is pertinent: "for although anyone has ideas and wishes, only intellectuals devise ideologies" (Matossian 1976:253). They are not only able to produce innovative and independent thinking, but also implement pragmatic policies to translate their purely intellectual activity into practice.

## 2. The "typical" intellectual in a developing society

Let us now turn to identifying the characteristics of the "typical intellectual in Mexican society" (1). This category reflect the "ideologies of delayed industrialization" (Matossian 1976:259), based on the ambiguous interplay of "archaism" and "futurism". This type of intellectual manifest their contempt for the past and for the peasant whom they regard as backward (2), thus maintaining a "sentimental, patronizing and contemptuous attitude towards the masses" (Matossian 1976:216). The eradication of "indigenounness" goes hand in hand with imitation, admiration and fascination for the west. Their interest is to combat backwardness by introducing formulae for achieving progress, development, professionalism, efficiency and urbanisation, the archetypes of modern western civilization. The intelligentsia and the intellectual groups who wish to replace backwardness with development within a national context conform to the following observation:

"That is why ideologies of delayed industrialization condemn the peasant for his backwardness, and then praise him for being a real representative of the indigenous culture" (Matossian 1976:263 original emphasis).

## 3. The Indian Intellectual

Ethnic intellectual and pragmatic input involves three general concerns. First, a discursive tendency to eulogise the past; second, a protest to denounce conditions of ethnic marginality and thirdly, a consciousness of the need for the Indians to recover the "Indian". The discourse inspired by the desire for of cultural recovery and denunciation of material conditions, transform the role of Indian intellectuals in Mexico in an attractive area of enquiry, since the "Indian" has been appropriated by non-Indian intellectuals in order to construct national images of "Indian-ness".

The ideological rhetoric of the Indian intellectual is

thus, a search for romantic ethnocentrism (i.e recovery of indigenous cultures and languages and the revival of traditional institutions). One can understand that this ideology is inspired by a strong symbolical appeal which might help to achieve political goals, personal interests, or other types of bargaining for the social improvement of the ethnicised population within the nation-state. At the pragmatical level, some of these intellectuals, as revealed by their documents and campaigns, have sought to implement the training of an Indian intelligentsia, which could presumably secure the realisation of their own conception of development, as well as the denunciation of economic exploitation disguised as modernity. Another element of interest in the discourse of ethnic intellectuals, is that the ambivalence "backwardness" and "modernity" is expressed differently by these individuals, because they regard peasant culture as the source of primordial identity. They do not feel in total awe or fascinated by modern culture as they are aware that this is the very entity that has excluded and alienated them. The novel feature resulting from the emergence of Indian intellectuals within a developing society, previously dominated by non-Indian intellectuals, is that some members of ethnic groups become aware that others have become spokesmen for their interests, thinking and needs which are strongly linked to their peasant world.

Indian intellectuals normally face problems of self-definition. From my fieldwork experience, I have observed in recent meetings organised by these groups (See later in this chapter), an ongoing consciousness to reject usurpation of Indian-ness, and this has taken the form of adopting segregationist attitudes towards non-Indians in the construction of the self-Indian discourse (e.g. these seminars are closed to the public). In general, they begin to explicitly rebuff non-Indian input (i.e traditional anthropology, missionaries, politicians, academics). These individuals are also characterised by a perceived lack of political radicalism and avoidance to establish links with

existing politics, at times showing loyalty to bureaucratic institutions given that, in some cases, their livelihoods depend on them. For example, in referring to the role of a Nahua theatre director (Ildefonso Maya) turned into a regional civil servant of indigenous affairs, Schryer (1980) observes an ambiguous case in which an ethnic intellectual is both the beneficiary and critic of the indigenismo establishment (p.255). Finally, these individuals, in my opinion, possess a wealth of information, an eloquent articulation of speech, and are skilfull strategists combining capacity to deal with several activities at once (i.e. organisers, writers, speakers, fund raisers).

### Indianism and Pan-Indianismo

One of the most common ideas about Indian intellectuals is to suppose that they conform to one single strain of thought or that are seeking to construct a common ideology to be embraced by all Indian peoples. Indianism, Pan-Indianism and the recent emergence of the so-called "International Indigenism" claiming to "represent a movement that is made up of political communities of indigenous nations" (Wilmer 1993:47) is a new terminology which arguably represents the ideologies of the diverse types of indigenous political mobilisations. In my view, the above notions only deserve attention inasmuch as they are conceptual tools of analysis, if only creating misunderstandings, given that such notions do not have any political significance for Mesoamerican Indian spokesmen let alone ethnic communities. Indianism and pan-Indianism imply making reference to gross generalisations which only help to perpetuate the idea that "Indians" constitute a culturally undifferentiated mass of people. For example, Barre (1988) has taken the idea of "nature", to which allegedly native Americans subscribe, in order to define Indianism as "the cosmic vision of life and the world that means for the Indian peoples, equilibrium and harmony amongst the different elements of nature" (p.183). On the other hand, an objective

characterisation of "International Indigenism" should emphasise that, this is, above all, a political indigenous activism (in cases supported by NGO's) reaching international forums and organisations in order to denounce mistreatment of governmental policies and violations of human rights and environmental issues; but, definitively, this is not a single Indian transnational platform foreseeing some kind of native Americans' unification. Consequently, the creation of a nation of Indian people existing somewhere, as suggested by the use of the term "pan-Indianism" (i.e macro-nationalism), a distortion of International Indigenism, is first, an academic invention for the current case of Mesoamerica and second, an unrealistic project.

Some authors have documented the development of a type of Pan-Mayanism which, strictly speaking, should signify a movement for the unification of the Maya Quiché within Guatemala (Watanabe 1995:25-46). Concerns for this kind of unification have also been aired by the informants of this research (i.e BAC, CECH), expressing the desire to unify their own scattered villages into a compact people and territory (e.g. the union of the Maya-Yucatec population divided into three local governments within the peninsula - Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán). There is evidence, however, to corroborate the existence of movements or campaigns seeking to achieve the unification of a single ethnic group having a language in common (e.g Maya-Yucatec, Maya Quiché). Contemporary Yucatán provides some interesting examples. The group formed by Maya teachers and professionals self-named "Mayaon" - "We are Maya People" - (Somos Mayas), has launched a public campaign for the official recognition of the Maya-Yucatec language within the peninsula, claiming that 33 per cent of the population are Maya speakers; while 3 per cent are Maya monolinguals. Evidence of this ethnic policy is expressed in the document (written in the Maya-Yucatec language) entitled "Jalachthaanil Sakih" (Valladolid Declaration, June 1994). This kind of localised political activism evidently differs from the so-called "Pan-Mayanism". In other words, the

latter involves a project of enormous proportions because this would imply finding means to mobilise and create solidarity between 4 to 5 million Maya people (divided by 6 Maya linguistic families - approximately 30 Maya tongues) who inhabit the national states of Mexico, Guatemala, Belice, Honduras and El Salvador (Ligorred 1992:156).

In a more general characterisation, the role of Indian intellectuals is to critically challenge the domination of indigenismo: to be able to be in control of their own cultural affairs, and desires to speak by themselves at the level of their own regional cultures although this does not necessarily include secession from the current nation-state.

In what follows, I shall seek to distinguish between several strata of educated Indian people. This typology will enable us to identify the unique significance of the intellectuals vis-à-vis the category of the intelligentsia, and will also reveal the complexity of indigenous ideas and ideologies which are far from being a unified body of ideas as suggested by the terms indianismo or Pan-indianismo.

Table 23

Typology of Indigenous Intellectuals and Intelligentsia

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1. The educated "intellectual" aware of his/her ethnic culture
  2. The educated member of the "intelligentsia" aware of their ethnic culture.
  3. The non-educated member of the "intelligentsia" aware of their ethnic culture.
  4. The non-educated "intellectual" aware of his/her ethnic culture
- 

Note: It is pertinent to stress that the difference between "educated" and "non-educated" is a conceptual device allowing the establishment of a distinction between "post-graduate education" and "skills" or "training" in a modern context (3).

The first and second categories of the above table, attain high levels of formal education (i.e. educational degrees at postgraduate level or training at undergraduate level). The non-educated "intellectual" or "intelligentsia" have skills and experience of a non-manual activity (i.e.

publishing, journalism). However, the educated and non-educated intellectual are dedicated to carrying out activities for the recovery and defense of indigenous ways of life, formulate ideologies and strategies and assume positions of leadership and authority. Meanwhile the categories comprising the "intelligentsia", are engaged in activities geared to the recovery of their culture and language, but do not attain positions of leadership or authority. Finally, the four categories share in common the fact that they maintain strong links with their ethnic communities of origin, identify with an ethnic culture and may be able or unable to speak and write an Indian language.

As seen above, there is a noticeable growth in the complexity and differentiation of indigenous intellectuality, based on educational skills, awareness of ethnic consciousness, division of labour and positions of leadership and authority. However, these classifications still represent a minority within both the national and the ethnic societies.

Quantitative estimations of Indian individuals engaged in intellectual activities are non-existent in the form of systematic records or statistics. It is possible, nevertheless, to offer a gross, if somehow vague, estimate: the category comprising intellectuals is not larger than a couple of dozen individuals scattered all over Mexico, plus a few resident abroad (USA and Holland); while the category of self-aware intelligentsia may be formed by some hundreds of individuals. Since the total indigenous population is formed by 10 million people, the ethnic intellectuals and the intelligentsia are likely to represent less than one per cent of the total indigenous population; but, as a matter of fact, intellectual groups in any society are characterised as constituting a very small minority (Personal communication: Bonfil, Hernández and Bautista, Mexico City July, 1991). However, when addressing a "very small minority" such as this, indigenous intellectual dynamism cannot simply be measured in quantitative terms, but through its capacity and effectiveness to realise its goals:

"No issue is raised by queries as to how large or small a political group may be. It is defined by the pattern of interaction, and not by the number of individuals contributing to it" (Blanksten 1976:141).

This typology will become more intelligible when examining the emergence and development of Indian organisations for indigenous professionals.

### The Organisations of Indigenous Professionals

The history of independent organisations formed by indigenous educated people goes back to 1948, they re-emerged in the 1970's and increased from the 1980's. International and national contacts with emerging organisations throughout the continent (i.e. Barbados Declaration), a growing indigenous desire to participate in their own socio-cultural affairs, and an increase in social mobility and literacy prompted the creation of the organisations under review.

#### 1. The Mexican Association of Indian Professionals and Intellectuals

The ideology of the "Mexican Association of Indian Professionals and Intellectuals" (AMPPII) founded in 1948, aimed at highlighting the "ideals of the Mexican Revolution" and claims for social justice for the "Indian masses". The group was allegedly formed by indigenous professionals, and the motto of the organisation was: "let's Mexicanize Indians and not Indianize Mexico" (Iwanska 1977:5). Two publications emerged: Notebooks of AMPPII (Cuadernos del AMPPII) and, Voice of the Indian (La voz del indio). Both publications had an informative purpose, although somehow exaggerated in terms of their capacity of reaching ethnic audiences: "to inform the Indian masses about what has been done on their behalf by AMPPII and transmit to the Mexican Government and Mexican elites the problems of the Indian masses as perceived by those peoples themselves" (Iwanska 1977:44-48). This early group



reflects the influence of the assimilationist policy of the 1940's (Cfr. Chapter 6); this is clearly revealed by both its ideology and motto embracing unification, unlike those movements of the middle of the 1970's which rejected the indigenist policy of the state. It is precisely the emergence of this latter form of professional organisation, acting against the integration promoted by the state, which will be now examined in more detail.

## 2. The Organisation of Nahua Indigenous Professionals

The Nahua and Mayan teachers initiated the formation of Indian organisations rejecting indigenist policies. In 1975, they issued a joint Nahua and Mayan manifesto entitled "Ethnic Consciousness and Liberation". In the same year, the Nahua bilingual teachers formed the "Organisation of Nahua Indigenous Professionals" (OPINAC) (4).

This ethnically based organisation of Nahua teachers undertook to serve as a link in the formation of a wider network of professionals. A multi-ethnic platform emerged in 1976 during a national meeting of over 400 Indian teachers and bilingual instructors, this meeting known as the "First National Meeting" was held in VÍcam, Sonora (June, 1976). In the opinion of the Indian people who attended, the meeting was of great significance because it was there that "we started to recover our words" (5). In another multi-ethnic meeting held in December of the same year, the idea of creating a wider organisation of ethnic professionals was agreed, after the formation of an executive committee aimed at regulating the activities of the recently formed "National Alliance of Indigenous Bilingual Professionals (ANPIBAC).

## 3. The National Alliance of Indigenous Bilingual Professionals

This association, formed in 1977, was conceived as a forum of organised debate at the national level, in which the "task of Indian teachers and bilingual instructors as forming part of

the indigenous peoples" was that it should reflect and propose initiatives and programmes as well as familiarise themselves with the thinking of other ethnic groups. The indigenous rationale which justified the formation of this multi-ethnic organisation of professionals falls into three main areas: the recovery of culture and criticism of indigenismo - the view that acculturation and linguistic unification are conditional on the existence of a nation; and an awareness of the necessary Indian participation at the political and intellectual level (6).

This civil association claimed independence from the government, political parties and religious organisations; it promoted political participation within the bounds of existing state institutions in order to "collaborate with those institutions carrying out programmes of development in the communities, the participation of these communities will help to strengthen national unity" ("Declaración de Principios y Programa de Acción" 1977:2). Radical political aims such as to dismantle state institutions were not on the agenda of this organisation.

#### 4. Revista Etnias

The diffusion of the specific conditions created by the unprecedented movement of Indian teachers, as well as encouraging debate regarding their professionalism vis-à-vis the national society, led to the formation of an independent indigenous press (7). This project, launched in 1987 by its founders and former members of ANPIBAC, is today known as Revista Etnias. Total independence from official, religious or political parties characterise this journal, in order to publish Indian views which normally are ignored by the national press. The editorial policy of this journal has the following aims: to be a "link of communication" between the Indian peoples of Mexico and other parts of the world; to continue being "a platform of our communities and organisations in order to denounce physical and cultural

aggression"; to diffuse "ethnic groups' thinking, philosophy, culture, languages and opinion" ("Editorial" Etnias (1):1987). The journal includes all genres of journalism such as: articles, interviews, chronicles and editorials. One of the journal's peculiarities is its concern to reproduce the types of opinion expressed by Indian peoples, for example: oral testimonies denouncing various forms of aggression, letters and manifestos. The journal, despite its irregular periodicity, sometimes manages to reach core Indian communities even when they are located in isolated areas.

#### 5. International News Agency of the Indigenous Peoples

The proliferation of organisations and development agencies, as well as the growing concern of international public opinion on issues such as human rights and the environment, has led to the creation of an information service organised by the indigenous peoples. This organisation run and administered by indigenous journalists and editors from Mexico, Canada, the United States and Panama, has the aim of facilitating inter-ethnic communication and to disseminate indigenous news to the remainder of the non-indigenous world. The decision to launch an autonomous indigenous communication network emerged from the "First International Meeting of the Indigenous Press", - Mexico city, April, 1992 - ("Declaración México", Revista Etnias (10) 1992). The activities of these media organisations only refer to the dissemination of Indian news and opinions and do not engage in other forms of political mobilisation. However, their emergence is the result of active intellectual activities promoted by indigenous peoples.

#### 6. The National Association of Writers in Indigenous Languages

This association grouping writers in indigenous languages was constituted in November 1993 with the aid of state agencies dealing with cultural affairs. Some of its members were also founding members of the former ANPIBAC. Its main objective is

"to promote the development and diffusion of Indian languages and literature in order to preserve the cultural integrity of indigenous identities and dignity within the mainstream of national society" ("Escritores indígenas emiten opinión sobre el conflicto en Chiapas" 1994 - AIPIN). This organisation is mainly engaged in the restoration of Indian languages and literature, and eschews any form of independent political activism, thus it maintains links with state sponsored cultural and educational institutions. The AEI is constituted by more than twenty regional associations of writers in ethnic languages ("Programa de Lenguas y Literatura Indígenas" 1993).

Since 1992, new independent meetings aimed at consolidating these organisations have taken place, although enjoying official financial support; their goal is the collective discussion and interchange of views amongst Indian writers, professionals and intellectuals. For example, from 1991 to 1993, there were three different congresses of Indian writers (Tamaulipas, Yucatán and Hidalgo) and two for Indian journalists (both in Mexico City), as well at least seven seminars between 1992 and 1994. These "Seminars of Analysis of Indigenous Experiences" (Seminarios de Análisis de Experiencias Indígenas) were not open to the public and were exclusively concerned with the intellectual work produced by members of ethnic groups (Morelos, Michoacán and Mexico City) (Personal Communication GB 22/12/1994).

Another form of organisation from the above mentioned is that of political activism through municipal elections, COCEI (Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec) which has campaigned against the PRI since 1981. COCEI is largely an ethnic Zapotec organisation "in defense of Isthmus peasants, workers and students" (Campbell 1993:228). Therefore, it is not primarily an organisation of Indian intellectuals and professionals, but has received considerable input and support from Zapotec artists and intellectuals utilising the ethnic and local culture and history to highlight their political goals. According to Campbell, the indigenous Zapotec people from Juchitán are the only Indian

group which benefits from the widespread dissemination of a journal of Zapotec affairs Guchachi' Reza, its cultural institutions, such as the "Juchitán House of Culture" founded in 1972, and the diffusion of local culture and literature through art, photography and narratives, achievements due to the work and endeavours of Zapotec intellectuals (i.e. A. Henestrosa and F. Toledo) (Campbell 1993:222-23).

To sum up, from 1948 there have emerged six organisations whose membership is formed by indigenous non-manual workers. The main concern of these organisations is the recovery of Indian identity, to formulate policies according to ethnic opinion and to disseminate indigenous information. These organisations use as their major media for the dissemination of the Indian viewpoint the teaching profession and the printing press.

How do these organisations attempt to maintain their claims to the recovery of cultural identity, languages, history and the dissemination of information? Various formulations and strategies are proposed by these groups who seek to challenge the monopoly of the state's hold on, not only education, but also the "Indian heritage". Our concern now is an examination of the attempts of those concerned with education whose aim is to recover what they consider to be their "cultural property".

### The Ideology of ANPIBAC

The professionals grouped around ANPIBAC introduced, for the first time in the history of indigenous organisations, the idea of reinforcing and using forms of addressing "ethnic consciousness" as the fundamental basis for a successful political mobilisation. One of the most interesting aspects of this organisation of Indian professionals were the rhetorical attempts to restore cultural confidence by stressing the historicity of Indian identity, the recovery of what they have called "ancient thinking" (the fabricated discourse of cultural continuity serving as an inspirational motif to

encourage political organisation) and the preservation of Indian socio-cultural institutions, such as the family and the community to which these organisations have given special importance. The content of these documents are interesting examples of fabricated traditions; a need to demonstrate cultural continuity and the existence of a past and ancestors, which according to the documents provide Indians with a source of "inherited wisdom and philosophy which continues to be diffused by the Indian family and community" (9). Finally, these professionals realised the extent of their cultural marginalisation and the need to invigorate Indian identity for further generations:

"so as our children would no longer live ashamed of our culture and language; for them to recover the spiritual relation with the mother earth. Our ancestors have demonstrated their grandeur, the time has come for us to recover and elevate such a grandiose history" (10).

No scientific research seems to support the claims of these documents and, I do not believe, these ideologues and cultural leaders were concerned with the provision of a rigorous and academic discourse. Instead, their concern has been to construct an ideology (and an ethnic literature) of self-defence; at times romanticising the past and evoking imaginary situations in which one often finds the idea that "Indian life" has been interrupted throughout five hundred years (cfr. Montemayor 1992). What matters in the context of this research, is to highlight that such a discourse aimed at justifying the development of an ideological movement of limited dimensions seeking Indian participation in the ideological formulation of indigenismo, and the need to improve their social mobility by occupying bureaucratic positions. It is interesting to note, however, that attempts were made to identify, what they thought has caused the state of "Indian cultural marginalisation", that is to say, the effects of official education on the Indian milieu. For example, their immediate political aim was to halt the "penetration of ideas from the dominant society into Indian

communities through standardised education" (11). Moreover, they attempted to redefine the role of Indian teachers,

"after realising that they are being used by the state educational project for the benefit of the dominant society. The bilingual teachers have been used as agents to promote acculturation, they have been used to manipulate our own people" (12).

In short, the indigenous ethno-nationalist discourse may be characterised by eloquence and romanticism, and by identifying the sources of indigenous disadvantage. Political pronouncements involving an integral conception of their situation vis-à-vis the nation-state also emerged, but these did not involve a pragmatic agenda that would challenge the state's sovereignty and control; for example:

"a new consciousness has emerged; the consciousness of being a group of people with a culture, language and our own philosophy. This new consciousness has allowed us to realise that we live under economic exploitation, racial discrimination and political manipulation, by the false imposition of a superior culture and race and by the false right to rule our people and decide for us" (13).

Following the ideological discourse of ANPIBAC, I will turn now to evaluate the policies and activities of this organisation.

### 1. Actions and Strategies

ANPIBAC's strategy of action was a series of meetings, seminars and congresses covering a wide range of indigenous issues. The key factor in the success of indigenous expression was precisely the form of the meetings in which declarations or demands were subject to general voting, a strategy still widely used by indigenous organisations. Approximately thirteen meetings between 1975 and 1988 were held with another semi-official Indian organisation, the "National Council of Indian

Peoples" (CNPI) (see Appendix 3).

These meetings indicate two stages in the organised course of the movement: the first from 1976 to 1986 and the second from 1986-1988 to 1989. An enormous wealth of first-hand data was produced by these multi-ethnic conclaves covering various issues such as indigenist policy, development, conservation of natural resources, and so on. From 1986, a second phase of ANPIBAC evolved. This phase, characterised by the ideological assimilation of Lenin's writings on the "right of nations to self-determination" to a Latin American context (Díaz-Polanco 1985:83), probably inspired the new ideological guidelines of the organisation.

The concept "ethnic group" was replaced by that of "nationality" and it proposed the future creation of a "federation of nationalities", which would ultimately lead to the formation of a "multinational state" (14). The recently introduced approach on "nationalities" was the new perspective dominating the discussions held after the 1986's meetings (15). The latter phase differed from the former in one way: this concentrated on discussing practical ways of guaranteeing the future survival of the movement, given that this second phase witnessed internal friction produced by the election of a new executive committee, divisions among members, an absence of solidarity, lack of financial support and personal commitment (Personal communication GU and GB, July 13, 1991). Since my enquiry is less concerned with the ramifications of such internal instability, my aim in the following section will be to evaluate the goals and the implementation of the indigenous policies and programmes formulated by indigenous peoples through ANPIBAC.

### The Indigenous Criticism of Indigenismo

It is very common to find different types of narratives in the documents of the organisation denouncing those state institutions concerned with indigenous affairs as these engendered both institutional mistrust and indigenous



resentment. From the Indian standpoint, indigenismo was an incompetent policy unable to offer viable alternatives for the development of Indian cultures. But the organised professionals held the view that Indian peoples should take the initiative and responsibility for enhancing their cultures, a possibility hitherto denied to native peoples as state institutions currently administer their diverse cultural and ethnic affairs (16).

The state's recognition of Indian claims to multi-ethnicity is variable and gradualist. Perhaps the most significant shift away from the traditional ideal of constructing a single nation, with its consequent denial of Indian participation, was the recognition of the country's ethnicity in the recent proposals aimed at creating Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution in 1991, in which Mexico "recognises itself as a multicultural and multi-lingual nation". This recent concession given by the state to the Indian peoples is due to the experience of mobilising ethnic professionals and their political pronouncements demanding Indian responsibility and participation in the novel formulation of "Mexico's plurality" (cfr. Chapter 8). Although this constitutional provision is of recent provenance, we must bear in mind that indigenous intellectual opinion has instigated current indigenist developments, and it is not to be viewed simply as a right granted by the state to the native peoples.

#### The Indian Peoples Resist Castilianization

The generalised assumption that the existence of a single language is the ultimate condition for the existence of a nation has been the subject of censure from some educated Indians. For example, in a paper addressed, in 1979, to the 5th "Conference of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research", F. Gabriel, a former leader of ANPIBAC stated:

"The linguistic unity sought through castilianisation of indigenous peoples, as a requisite for the integration of the ethnic groups into the Mexican nation, is an ideology that falls by its own weight: on the one hand, we indigenous peoples, have been here long before in this so-called conquered territory, thus, before anybody else, we have the right to call ourselves as we please. We do not have to be foreigners in our own land, and what we want is not to be recognised under a generic nationality, but to seek the recognition of our own cultural, social and political particularities; on the other hand, we are integrated into the mainstream of the 'national society', but at its lowest stage. The economic marginalisation is not because we cannot speak Spanish, our problem is not the language. It is false, it is the idea that our bad economic and cultural situation is due to the lack of knowledge of the Spanish language, and thus, we are seen as the "problem" impeding the progress of the country" (17).

The campaign to achieve official recognition of the indigenous languages is without doubt the most important area for encouraging the organisation of ethnic professionals. Linguistic diversity is the key to explaining the "multiculturalism" of the nation:

"We must be more reflective and sensible in order to accept an undeniable historical and human fact: the existence of a multilingual and multicultural situation created by the multiethnicity of the population; we must recognise that in Mexico, there is no such a thing as the national language, there are many national languages, the Spanish language is only one of them" (Gabriel 1979:3).

The project to create a bilingual educational programme for and by the indigenous peoples, emerged in 1976 - in Vícam, Sonora. This emerging project in its final form bears the title "National Plan for Bilingual and Bicultural Education" (Plan Nacional de Educación Bilingüe y Bicultural) discussed below (18).

#### The Proposal for Bilingual and Bicultural Education

In the same way that the state attempted to undermine indigenous identity through the acculturation and

castilianisation of its educational curricula, the authors of the bilingual and bicultural programme found through educational means the instrumental mechanism for the "return to our cultures" and "to develop our culture and science". The state education system "had sought to destroy forever the memory of our peoples" thus, the newly proposed educational model was conceived with the intention of reviving and encouraging the native cultures and languages (19). The overwhelming enthusiasm engendered, with regard to the possibility of recovering control of their cultural inheritance, reached its peak when delegates gathered for the 1980 meeting which stated that such a Plan would be introduced at any cost "even if we have to invest our own resources, if we do not obtain any official support" (20).

The Plan is visible for its apologetic approach to bringing an educational programme into existence. For example, the basic concepts underpinning were: firstly, to obtain cultural rights for collectives allowing native cultures to flourish, and only after a certain recovery of these cultures had been obtained, assimilation of elements of the (vaguely defined) "universal culture" should be pursued, and secondly, "the acquisition of awareness with respect to nature and mankind, basic requirements which would guarantee the existence of the Indian family and communities" (21).

However, in an attempt to define concrete measures resulting from the Plan, some significant cultural endeavours were put into effect and these deserve some comment. These activities refer to measures to establish and develop the "historical memory stolen and hidden by the conquerors" and to "recognise that the family and the community are the institutions that facilitate the survival of the Indian peoples" (22).

The various mechanisms seeking to achieve the recovery of Indian identity through a form of education conceived by the organisations themselves which, besides pedagogy, includes a means of preserving and transmitting the "Indian memory". One can criticise the rethorical impossibility of attempting to

recover a foregone memory based on legacies of the past; an issue which can easily be deprecated by claiming unscientific desires of revivalism based on essentialism and primordialism. However, what matters in this discussion is to appreciate the capacity of Indian teachers to envisage the importance of finding means to counteract the present state of agony of native cultures.

### 1. The Teaching of the Indian Memory

The mechanisms proposed by the Indian professionals in order to recover "the stolen and hidden memory" (Gabriel 1979a:21) illustrate the efforts of this organisation vis-à-vis the recovery of identity (e.g. "The day we are able to discover our history, our own Mixteco world would certainly collapse, because I just do not know if we would be able to cope with our true identity" cf Chapter 5:169). These mechanisms encompass the roles of the indigenous teacher and of the family and community.

According to the Plan, the teacher should be responsible for introducing literacy via indigenous languages, as well as promoting the study of "native philosophy". It also included bilingual tuition of the traditional methods of measuring time, the traditional system of measurement, local, regional and national geography, and the traditions of each group as manifested in dance, music, mythology and medicine (Gabriel 1981:24-25). Most of this knowledge, necessary to advance a systematic education, was to be found in the ethnic family and community, therefore, the Plan proposed to establish a solid link between the traditional institutions of the Indian world and the indigenous pedagogues responsible for this very particular form of non-standardised education.

The design and formulation of the techniques necessary to recover the "knowledge" and "wisdom" of Indian cultures, was intended to be derived from research launched by the authors of the Plan. Over the generations, indigenous peoples were forced to assimilate as we have noted earlier, the consequence

was that Indian peoples had only a precarious knowledge of their own cultures. But, the authors of the proposal recognised that this knowledge was somehow "hidden" and only detailed research could reveal these cultural resources. For example, ambitious fieldwork research covering all ethnic groups was carried out between 1979 and 1981, its purpose was to discern the overall composition of the "knowledge" held by the communities and to be able to formulate a pedagogical system according to the Indian "concept of the world and life".

Research techniques, such as questionnaires and surveys were conceived of as strategies to collect ideas, traditions, tales, legends, myths and histories; an example of these fieldwork techniques are to be found in a questionnaire entitled the "ANPIBAC Guide to Interviewing" ("Guía de Entrevista"). Hundreds of questionnaires were completed by people of various ethnic communities and age groups, unfortunately, further analysis using these techniques was not undertaken, because of the authors' dissatisfaction with the information gathered (i.e. information of saints, Catholic festivities) (Personal Interview FG 8/12/1992). This type of data, nevertheless reflecting a more precise account of the contemporary cultural situation of native peoples, contradicted the idealistic proposal of attempting to recover a "hidden memory" speculatively furnished by aspects of a remote past. Thus, the ambitious project of finding evidence on how to recover such a memory remained abandoned (23).

It can be argued that the Plan was a total intellectualist proposal which included a romantic ideology seeking to reflect the socio-cultural needs of the ethnic population. However, serious difficulties emerged at the instant of its implementation: the state institutions insisted on retaining their monopoly and dominance of education, and soon after it was removed from indigenous control.

### Interaction with the State

The creation of this organisation aroused suspicion and censure from, among others, non-indigenous anthropologists and social scientists who feared the loss of the status quo and employment from the forceful demands of the Indian professionals. A typical form of reproach involved an underestimation of indigenous initiatives to organise by arguing that the gatherings of Indian peoples were undertaken by state agencies or even by the ruling political party - the PRI (Mejía and Sarmiento 1987:154). This is understandable in the context of Mexican politics characterised by the preponderance of a one-party system with its well-establishment clientelism (24).

Electoral presidential campaigns relied on political and non-institutional groupings to guarantee the success of potential candidates, and this was strategically utilised by the Indian leaders who learnt to play the institutional game. For example, the former president J. López Portillo (1976-1982) was informed of the Plan, in December 1977, through an open letter read at his official residence by members of ANPIBAC and CNPI (25). Other official documents concerning discussions of the Plan are missing, with the exception of a letter dated January 1981 and signed by the under-secretary of the Ministry of Public Education. Among several points raised by the letter, it mentions the fact that the civil servants responsible, the indigenous department, have agreed that the "National Plan for the Implementation of Bilingual and Bicultural Education" should be transferred to the management of the Minister of Education to avoid being rejected by the Minister of Finance, given the amount of the budget proposed (26). The letter argues the desirability of forming a joint committee involving members of the General Directorate of Indigenous Education (DGEI) and ANPIBAC; and it was proposed that the formation of this commission dedicated to the implementation of bilingual education should be under the control of an official institution. The functions of the recently created DGEI were securing the "viability of the national educational project for indigenous peoples" (27).

The autonomous initiative for securing a suitable education for the Indian peoples was usurped by the state through the recruitment of ANPIBAC's more prominent founders, and from this act evolved the most telling rebuke of ANPIBAC. This had two consequences, on the one hand, the organisation was internally fragmented and divided, destroying its popular credibility and showing its vulnerability to coercion from the state; while on the other, the official policy known as the "General Basis for Indigenous Education" (Bases Generales de la Educación Indígena) (Subsecretaría de Educación Elemental and DGEI, 1986) was formulated to operate strictly within the limits of official institutions.

But more practical difficulties were soon revealed: the lack of trained Indian teachers, and the lack of official support of successive administrations for the education of indigenous peoples (28). According to further studies carried out by official educational institutions, the proposal for bilingual and bicultural training was an irrelevance, given the deficit of Indian teachers with knowledge of a curriculum in a bicultural context, as well as the lack of teaching materials and an lack of ethnic awareness by both non-Indian teachers and indigenous students (29).

The current opinion of many former members of ANPIBAC claims that the organisation has not disintegrated, rather it is in the process of self-renewal on both organisational and ideological levels. Even more importantly, it has held the loyalty of a good number of delegates from all over the country who are perhaps awaiting the renaissance of this unique organisation, unrivalled on the continent (30).

To summarise, the intense effort invested by Indian professionals, in more than a decade of ANPIBAC activity, did manage to pay dividends. Firstly, the proposal for the recognition and acceptance of indigenous thinking, either from professionals and members of the communities, in the design and application of an integrative policy of the state. This led to an ideological reformulation of official indigenism, which was transformed into "participatory indigenism".

Secondly, as a result of "participatory indigenism", some Indian professionals were recruited to varying levels of the state bureaucracy, and this helped to give a certain credibility to the recently created corpus of indigenous thinking, although this created deep divisions within the organisation. Thirdly, the intellectual elaboration of a Plan for indigenous education at a national level was finally considered by the state's educational authorities. Finally, implementation of the Plan demanded the continuous qualitative and quantitative training of Indian peoples in order to carry out the difficult task of implementing bilingual and bicultural education among the 56 ethnic groups.

How the professional training of ethnolinguists and graduates of indigenous education is organised will now be considered.

#### The Training of the Indigenous *Intelligentsia*

The most serious obstacle for the introduction of an education capable of reflecting the needs of the Indian peoples has been the lack of a competently trained body of teachers comprising members of the various ethnic groups. The organised professionals, as I have said, did a great deal to persuade the educational establishment to enrol Indian students in institutions of higher education. The creation of an indigenous trained teaching staff firstly emerged as a condition for the creation of the Mexican Institute of Indigenous Languages, which in its turn was one of the demands expressed by ANPIBAC.

In 1977, a new phase in indigenous professional training was initiated after the creation of a degree in "Social Sciences" at the "Centre for Research and Social Integration" in Oaxaca (CIIAS) and, a year later, at the "Centre for Research in High Studies in Social Anthropology" in Mexico City (CIESAS). In 1982, the "Pedagogic National University" (UPN) created a degree in "Indigenous Education" (LEI). Finally, in 1990 a Master's Degree in Indoamerican



Linguistics (MLI) was begun through a tripartite programme involving the official institutions INI, CIESAS and DGEI, thus excluding the former participatory role of ANPIBAC.

The MLI programme from CIESAS has the aim of "contributing to the formation of indigenous professionals in the study of the science of languages". The emphasis of this programme is on the technical and formal study of Indoamerican languages in general and those of Mexico in particular. The student on this course, is expected to master the theoretical paradigms and methods of linguistic analysis, as well as to obtain a specialised knowledge of Indoamerican languages and, thus, to train students to develop researches in the field of ethnolinguistics.

Admission requirements for candidates who want to form part of a team of specialised linguists, preferment is given to those of indigenous origin, who speak an indigenous language, thus maintaining links and an identification with the interests of the Indian population (Cfr. Chapter 2:76). Other formal requirements are: the individual must have studied the different levels of the educational system up to the professional grade (i.e. BSc.) besides demonstrating some experience or previous training in linguistics (31). Each academic year, this programme offers places for a limited number of 10 to 12 candidates, and three generations of students have graduated with this degree since 1990 (32).

In its turn, the programme for LEI from UPN was created in order to professionalise the indigenous teaching staff; it was, therefore, addressed to teachers with previous experience in the teaching profession within an Indian milieu. It is worth noting the ideal requirements for the admission of these candidates, given that these generally work under less privileged conditions than those of the typical teaching situation: to form part of an indigenous community, to have worked in one's ethnic community or other communities, to maintain the "cosmogony which makes possible the cohesion of the group", to be able to speak an indigenous language, and to be cognizant of "the conflict between his/her culture of

origin and the appropriation of values, usage and customs of the national culture" (33). The study programme involves 8 semesters, and the total number of students registered for each academic year is between 120-150. A total of five generations have graduated since its creation in 1986 (Cfr. Chapter 2:77).

But these official educational enactments appear to be deficient and unsatisfactory with respect to satisfying the demands for bilingual education within the multhi-ethnic reality of Mexican society. However, despite their limited scope it is important to constantly bear in mind that official policies have traditionally denied and avoided the materialisation of indigenous projects aimed at facilitating Indian peoples's control of their own cultural resources, as the state has assumed unto itself the role of not only administering but also usurping indigenous cultures and historicity.

#### Official Agencies of Cultural Management

Agencies and programmes with official state support in many cases are instrumental in counteracting the autonomous dynamic of certain indigenous cultural initiatives. For example, the recent case of the "National Programme of Development for the Indigenous Peoples" 1991-1994 based on the aforementioned INI ("Programa de Lenguas y Literatura Indígenas 1993:3). This programme offers support in terms of financial aid and investment in areas of culture and education; however, there is no provision for indigenous participation, direction or administration of their own ethnic affairs or cultural resources.

In this context it is important to highlight the role of state agencies intent on monopolising indigenous initiatives through clientelism, recruitment of professionals and spokesmen, and the creation of official or semi-official indigenous organisations. Incorporation of educated Indians into the bureaucracy and the creation of official or semi-

official indigenous organisations have been effective and recent instruments in counterbalancing the activities of independent organisations, which I will now examine.

At the beginning of this chapter, I delineated the typology grouping ethnic professionals and intellectuals, as well as six indigenous organisations between 1948 and 1993. Independent indigenous thinking has been a driving force in advancing and interpolating indigenous demands vis-à-vis state structures and institutions, such as bilingual education, the recognition of Indian languages, the training of professionals, and indigenous political participation. The emergence of ANPIBAC opened up new avenues of ethnic interaction with the state. Firstly, it was the first multiethnic organisation with a non-manual working membership, which managed to be popular and credible in both the civic and political realms; secondly, it was the shared platform from which subsequent organisations such as Revista Etnias, AIPIN and the National Association of Writers of Indigenous Languages, have emerged. However, the status, leadership and official support and funding of these three organisations are indicators demonstrating the state's reluctance to permit indigenous control of their cultural affairs.

Table 24

Leadership, funding and status of ethnic professional organisations

Organisation	Leadership	Funding	Status
AMIP	Educated Intellectual	Official	Official
OPINAC	Educated Intellectual	Membership	Independent
ANPIBAC	Educated Intellectual	Membership	Independent
ETNIAS	Educated and non- educated intellectual	Membership	Independent
AIPIN	Educated and non-educated intellectual	Membership	Independent
AEI	Educated intellectual and educated <u>intelligentsia</u>	Official	Official

This chart allows us to concentrate our attention on the formation of the official organisation, AEI, which functions

as a means of counteracting intellectual and autonomous control of ethnic affairs. This can be explained by the fact that some AEI leaders were founding members of ANPIBAC, and now form part of the state bureaucracy and the above mentioned "Programme of Development for Indigenous Peoples". Such programmes have ignored any widespread introduction of bilingual education, the major Indian concern for more than a decade, and now concentrates on the "compilation, study, systematisation, strengthening and diffusion of indigenous languages" ("Programa de Lenguas y Literatura Indígenas" 1993:3); and aims at co-ordinating with other major national institutions such as the "National Council of Science and Technology" (CONACYT) and the "National Council for the Culture and Arts" (CONCA) the cultural production of indigenous peoples. Consequently, the "Programme of Development for Indigenous Peoples" has designed a policy comprising of 18 substantial measures, in areas related to indigenous intellectual production, in order to capitalise on the "discovery" of the neglected wealth of "Indian ideas". It also intends to organise financial support to establish regional academies of native languages, workshops on Indian literature, regional and national conferences of indigenous writers, courses to train writers and teachers, and conclaves on Indian drama and poetry. Other support regards awards for writers and indigenous children, scholarships, courses in Maya and Náhuatl languages to be made available in universities and various cultural associations based in Mexico City. Support in the fields of publishing and other media are also contemplated, for instance, the establishment of multilingual journals and publications, a catalogue of indigenous publications and three radio stations broadcasting in Náhuatl and Mayan cultures and languages, and on indigenous literature in general ("Programa de Lenguas y Literatura Indígenas" 1993:6-10).

Even though this programme presages a significant revival of the ethnic cultures founded on Indian languages and given that certain prominent Indian educated people constitute the

"Council of Advisers" (34), the renaissance of the Indian imagination and future proposals are likely to be constrained by officialdom. The exceptions may be those organisations involved in media activities whose forms of funding do not entirely depend on official requirements and finance. This is due to the fact that emerging autonomous initiatives soon become dominated by the all-embracing corporatism that characterises the exercise of power in Mexico, and by its self-appointed roles as "protector" and "administrator" of the nation's cultural heritage.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the emergence, vitality and unprecedented organisation of ethnic professionals and intellectuals. These organisations are a major reason for establishing a distinction between indigenism and Indian policy. Both official policy and independent indigenous thinking have differing strategies on how to realise national integration. Indigenism looks to assimilation and linguistic homogeneity, while Indian policy seeks the renaissance of Indian cultures and languages through the participation of the Indian peoples themselves.

The Indian intellectuals form a small minority in numerical terms and have only recently appeared on the political scene, but this in no way invalidates specific achievements produced for the benefit of the whole ethnic population: the inclusion of a bilingual and bicultural education in the national educational system, the reformulation of indigenist policy, the proposal of Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution, the state's commitment to continual specialised training for indigenous students, as well as the official input given to sustaining the diversity of indigenous languages.

These achievements may not yet affect the many millions of indigenous peoples, and consideration has to be given to the fact that each of the 56 different cultures could demand

its own individual programme which goes beyond existing political and financial resources. However, Indian intellectuals and professionals have effectively managed to create a climate of credibility in an attempt to challenge the official nationalism with its delusions of cultural and linguistic homogeneity.

## Conclusion

This thesis has explored the process of construction of a national identity in a multiethnic society. The study of the Mexican case required three levels of analysis. The first is civic, namely a project of official cultural nationalism. According to this policy, compulsory education for all citizens, organised under the monopoly of the Mexican state, is mandatory according to constitutional principles and plays a prominent role in disseminating state nationalism. The second refers to the ethnic and civic mythologies derived from the culture and history of the nation which constitute resources appropriated by the cultural policies of the state. These contentions, which I sought to demonstrate by comparing the models of E. Gellner and A.D. Smith in chapter 1, are both applicable to and complementary in the study of contemporary Mexican nationalism. The third level, the views and perceptions of educated Indian people regarding the nationalist discourse, offers significant empirical data to assess the theoretical study of Mexican national identity.

The educated indigenous groups under analysis have assumed a critical posture in respect of the cultural themes and myths of national integration. In order to properly evaluate critical Indian discourse two questions should be asked: a) does the ethnic past persist despite modernisation? and b) can Mexican nationalism be characterised as a failure because it has not managed to eradicate localised ethnic identities?

One way of assessing "Mexicanness" derived from Aztecism and Mestizo-ism emerges from the opinions of the indigenous professionals analysed in chapter 5. This group clearly manifested their lack of interest in the official myths. The central myth, referring to the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and its associated symbolism, is ethnically legitimate, but it does not have the resilience, comprehensiveness or adaptability that would permit the inclusion of the southern cultures.

By expressing a certain sense of detachment, even alienation, from the symbolism disseminated by the state, the group of professionals demonstrated the importance and survival of their own mythologies. My interviewees expressed the conviction that mestizo history and culture is a recent phenomenon compared with their history derived from mythologies corresponding to their origins. Nevertheless, this result which evokes primordialist conceptions of origin, must be understood in terms of individual responses, and not as if it were information expressed by the ethnic collectives to which the individual identifies.

The material collected and analysed from the group of professionals has also been critical of notions of "heroicism" as these form part of the fabric of national culture. Although historiography highlights the ethnic background of president Benito Juárez, the Indian hero of republicanism, he did not make any positive impact on the perceptions of these individuals. Amongst the most important reasons given, these informants state that Juárez's alleged Indian-ness has served the historical development of national society rather than that of small ethnic localities.

The management of ethnic information facilitating the permanence of Indian identity, analysed in chapter 3 reveals the following result. The group of professionals have been engaged in (or have ideas and proposals on how to start) projects of ethnic rehabilitation using media technology, a methodological indicator used in this research in order to measure the self-perception of Indian-ness (cfr. Ch 2). In my opinion, this is a significant result showing the Indian professionals' state of ethnic awareness expressed in the desire to construct positive images of themselves and to have the possibility of transmitting these images nation-wide, to work towards the internal cohesion of ethnic groups, and to recognise that the power of mythologies is of importance in vindicating Indian cultures.

However, proposals concerning the rehabilitation of ethnic "subjectivity" (historic memory, mythology) advanced by



organisations of Indian teachers and discussed in chapter 9, reveal the impossibility of recovering pre-Hispanic ethnic information intact, from villages and communities, as this knowledge has been severely eroded. Thus, despite individual desires for cultural revivalism, the Indian cultures of today face a great challenge to locate the sources of their ethnocentrism.

The opinions of the Indian students regarding the acceptance or rejection of the national symbols of integration (also studied in chapter 5) were collected through a survey questionnaire, but the results obtained were not dissimilar to the group of professionals. The indigenous students expressed a sense of alienation and cultural uncertainty with respect to the mestizo myth. These groups of students had difficulty in detailing the advantages of mestizaje or any positive contribution to their Indian ways of life that may derive from its adoption and emulation.

In chapter 5, it was also interesting to corroborate the fact that the students possessed insufficient knowledge with regard to the cultural rationale (i.e. Aztecism and Mestizoism), which justifies the single nation agenda. However, the majority of the two groups in the sample offer positive information regarding civic traditions which recall the process of state formation (e.g. civic heroes and rituals). Ethnic and civic information are transmitted through state education and the results obtained validate the dissemination of themes of cultural integrative nationalism amongst the samples of Indian students.

Indigenous educated people have constructed a discourse critical of official nationalism and some expressions of ethnic identity do persist. However, these manifestations of identity are by no means crystallised into an ethno-political project seeking autonomy or separation from the central state. In fact, none of the organisations of professionals and intellectuals studied here, have made clear demands to challenge the authority of the state. Their demands and campaigns aim to find appropriate channels within the

state bureaucracy to accommodate their own projects of cultural rehabilitation (a "proto-nationalist" revival within the state) and management of their ethnic affairs (e.g. the Maya-Yucatec linguistic revivalism). As discussed in chapter 9, the production of a political ideology put forward by a single ethnic group, let us call it for the sake of clarity, Mayanism or Zapoteguism, seeking autonomy for that group, is non-existent. Pan-indianism, Indianism and International Indigenism are also discounted in this respect, given the speculative character of these ideologies in the Mesoamerican context (cfr. Chapter 9).

I wish to emphasise, however, that one should not dismiss the present inability of Indian peoples to formulate their own ethno-political projects and thus, to confirm the success of the integrative project of state nationalism. My answer to this is that Indian collectives face enormous difficulties in maintaining ethnic cohesion in conditions of extreme disadvantage in terms of development and economic self-sufficiency, cultural hostility and rejection from the dominant society, as well as political repression. Indian cultures are gaining cultural strength, visibility and recognition, but this at present does not automatically imply desires for separate statehood.

The emergence of the Chiapas rebellion of 1994 serves as an illustration to clarify my point. The revolt by peasants and Indians initially demanded the resignation of the former president C. Salinas, as well as demands for justice and end to corruption in government. This uprising was mainly constituted by recent settlers of the marginal fringes of the Lacandona jungle because of demographic pressures of land <sup>1</sup>. Demands for improvement in material conditions of life made by this revolt under the banner of the Zapatista National Liberation Army are readily understood, if one dares to imagine what kind of development might be available in crowded areas of the "jungle". However, while conceding the legitimate

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<sup>1</sup> Notes taken from A. Fábregas's talk (Institute of Latin American Studies, London, 15 May 1994).

denunciation of poverty made by this revolt, whose protagonists are said to be "young, marginalised, modern, multilingual and experienced workers" (García de León, 1994:28), my reservation in characterising this movement as "Indian" is that it lacks any ideological ethnic input. Firstly, it is led by non-Indians; claims that its principal spokesman (Marcos) is only carrying out orders from a clandestine Indian committee (which no one has seen or heard from) cannot be taken seriously. Secondly, the poetic messages (some call them a "post-Modernist critique"), plans and negotiations proposed by the charismatic spokesman are more likely to capture the imagination of the young, urban, educated middle sectors of society than to arouse support, identification and trust in rural villages.

Furthermore, although Indian groups throughout the continent have not remained indifferent to the impact and strategies of the Chiapas revolt, ideological and tactical disagreements have emerged. The Mapuches of Chile, organised around the militant organisation geared to the recovery of territory, the "Council of All Lands" (Consejo de Todas las Tierras), were amongst the first organised Indian groups to notice the alien element of the revolt which was explicit in the character of the Chiapas demands (e.g. the resignation of Salinas, demand for justice without proposing changes in the legal structure of the state). There has also been a lack of clarity about the concept of territory and leadership; in the words of Aucán Huilcaman, spokesman for the Council's main organism, the "Mapuche Tribunal": "I can assure you that we, the Mapuches, would never have a sub-commandant in a similar situation. We may have a traditional authority, but not a leader who seems to be a copy, an assimilation, of the existing political system" <sup>2</sup>.

In the light of these facts, my characterisation of the uprising involves the following criteria. It was a popular

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<sup>2</sup> "Crítica mapuche a los mayas insurgentes: no exigen territorios ni cambiar la estructura del estado" (Proceso (910) 11/4/1994).

protest which now reflects a new ideology taking the "Indian" as a central motif in the discourse, thus appealing to nationalist sentiments in confronting the conditions imposed by foreign capital investment as a result of the transnational NAFTA agreement, and the corollary agrarian reforms recently proposed to article 27 of the Constitution (the bastion of the nationalistic goals achieved by the Mexican Revolution).

From the events of 1992 - the fifth centenary of the arrival of the Europeans - a new discourse incorporating "multiethnicity" and "the Indian" along with issues of environmental concern (e.g. the jungle) and human rights has become fashionable in replacing the tired and already discredited ideologies (Marxism in all its forms) which had served as the former discourse of protest against capitalism (and transnationalism in substitution of imperialism). The support that many civilian sectors of society have given to the Chiapas protest is not because they pursue the realisation of a shared "ethnic project" (the existing proposals for municipal autonomy have been tailored by anthropologists and ideologues from political parties), but as a form of joint (symbolic) dissent against the increasing deterioration of living standards of Mexicans since the so-called "lost decade" of the 1980's, when Mexico's economy was thrown into the beginning of its present financial crisis. Thus, the Indian plight has been turned into a new ideology to convey the dissatisfaction of large sectors of non-Indian society.

A growing volume of literature containing chronicles, testimonies as well as the daily coverage of the press, along with commercial videos (available even in supermarkets) and the fact that "Marcos" sends his messages through the "Internet", is an example of a fashion which incorporates visible signs of today's consumerism: hi-tech, the environment, global communications and "ethnicities in conflict". A final argument helping to reinforce the non-Indian character of the revolt, when compared with the traditional forms of Indian resistance and mobilisation, is the total absence of symbols of Catholic messianism, used to

facilitate ethnic cohesion, as exemplified in chapters 3 and 8.

My first conclusion outlined above, is that ethnic awareness does not necessarily engender pragmatic secession. Is Mexican nationalism, then, an accomplished integrative project? Have ethnic identities been eradicated or not? I have argued from the perspective that the ethnic past persists. It seems that another group of answers might be provided with respect to the managerial capacity of the state. In this research I have discussed two issues related to the state's management of education: firstly, consideration of the gap between educational facilities for the dominant society compared with Indian communities; secondly, recognition of the bias in the cultural information implicit in its educational content.

Inadequate infrastructure, funding, and technical competence of the educational bureaucracy are very likely to curtail the effective dissemination of Mexican nationalism within indigenous areas. Evidence from chapter 6 shows that state schooling in the 1980's is far from uniform among both the mestizo and indigenous populations: 13.5 million (79.19 per cent) of presumably urban mestizo students are enrolled in the standard education system, which contrasts with the official figure of just 380,000 Indian students (41 per cent) (out of a total Indian population of 10 million people), who receive a limited education in officially designated "partial schools" in rural areas.

Internal conflicts from 1991 reflecting the complex expansion of education services (ie. the technocrat elite and the teachers union) have interrupted the sequence, initiated in 1960, of providing a uniform nationalistic information and basic literacy through the availability of text-books nationwide. Such recent conflicts, which have resulted in the lack of availability of primary books in the past three years, might affect future generations. However, it is more important, in my opinion, to highlight a basic problem already existing in terms of deciding what the appropriate content of

text-books should be. The discussion of Indian-ness is pertinent in this respect. The overwhelming majority of the sample of 60 students were reasonably familiar with official books (i.e. careful illustrations of Mexican nationalism). In evaluating the state's integrative strategy, I propose that nationalism has indeed been effective in at least the following way. In the opinion of the limited number of Indian students who have received professional training, it can be said that they have not rejected the great modern advantage of having acquired literacy, basic skills, bilingualism and the availability of free books. This leads me to conclude that Gellner is absolutely justified in contending that education, monopolised by the state, is indeed a competent and fundamental resource in providing societies with standard communication in the progression of nationalism and possibly egalitarianism. Nevertheless, the students themselves have assumed a critical posture with comments like "the books do not reflect components of current Indian life", "they refer to 'Indian life' as matters of the past", "they disseminate harmful and stereotyped interpretations of Indians' history and culture", "they encourage the propagation of the Hispanic bias of the mestizo". In short their main criticism, and a very important one, is aimed at the official cultural formulation which excludes "living Indians", while Indians are encouraged to form part of the "nation".

Therefore, my case study argues against Gellner's contention that nationalism, on the other hand, faces a great deal of difficulty in breaking with the past. Is it not true that the cultural past of any nation is an unresolved and deeply contradictory matter? I have provided enough evidence to show the way in which the state has used Indian-ness to provide a unique culture for the nation, while paradoxically undermining ethnic differentiation and encouraging the assimilation of Indian cultures. From my analysis in chapter 8, this has had the following consequences: indigenism, as a state policy guiding the ideological and practical incorporation of indigenous peoples into the national

mainstream, has faced continuous reformulations and critiques from academia and from the indigenous peoples themselves, given the practical impossibility of achieving cultural and linguistic uniformity as repeatedly argued by policies of nation-building.

From these ongoing reformulations, new forms of indigenism have emerged. One worthy of attention is the encouragement by the state for the revival of Indian languages and literature, coercing Indian writers and other professionals, and introducing constitutional provisions allowing the expression of multi-ethnicity (Article 4). Two tendencies can be discerned from the dispute for cultural resources. Firstly, the state's curtailment of any possibility implying the development of cultural and eventual political autonomy (e.g. manipulation of ethnic intellectuals). Secondly, the depletion of two cultural supports of official nationalism, the mestizo model and indigenismo, gradually being replaced by a discourse addressing the plurality of cultures rather than perpetuating the narrow formula of the mestizo, inasmuch as this is not a current sociological phenomena, but clearly a national myth which has contributed to the cultural stagnation of Indian peoples.

As argued in chapter 9, since the 1970's ideological proposals aimed at confronting or rectifying state policies of assimilation and linguistic unity have resulted in two substantial advances: i) the indigenous intellectual production of a self-made "Indian policy" as opposed to the state's indigenism, and ii) professional training for a stratum of the indigenous intelligentsia. Nevertheless, these forms of organised response carry a significant disadvantage for the realisation of Indian cultural goals, since the authors of these programmes and campaigns have proposed indigenous participation within the national bureaucracy and this has exposed Indians to coercion and recruitment by various official agencies within the contemporary political context.

Modernisation and nationalism have unleashed upward

social mobility, educational provision and access to technological and communication innovations to hitherto marginal groups. These transformations have unexpectedly contributed to renewing awareness of ethnicity and to constructing a critical discourse against the cultural integrative themes of the state. But the extent of this criticism is at present limited because the Indian peoples of Mexico are fragmented, some of their leaders are exposed to coercion, they face organisational difficulties to preserve their cultural sources and to orchestrate a multiethnic movement geared to the recovery of their cultural input appropriated by the state. Despite present-day limitations, the historical past continues to show the capacity of indigenous peoples for adaptation and survival. Furthermore, I believe that in the future, the Indians of Mexico will by their own efforts recover their historical position.



## Chapter 1: Notes

1. D.Bell offers a clear "instrumentalist" approach in relation to the political resurgence of various types of "subordinate identities" in the competitive arena of "plural societies". In opposition to a "primordialist" viewpoint ethnicity becomes a strategic choice by individuals as a means of gaining power and privilege and thus ethnic identification may flourish or fade away depending on political or economic factors (Glazer N. and Moynihan D. (1975):140-174). The "primordialist" school comprises several viewpoints. Armstrong J. (1982), for example, argues that ethnic belonging as manifested in medieval Europe and the civilizations of the Middle East, is based on symbolical aspects. Throughout history, ethnicity has proved to be diffused and recurrent and this persistence of cultural forms and meanings builds up the imaginary barrier between "us" and "them". On the other hand, Geertz C. refers to the politicisation of "primordialities" - kinship, race, language, region, religion and customs - in the new states and discusses the patterns derived from the conflict between primordial and civil sentiments. The acquisition of political sovereignty faces a long lasting problem: the "metamorphosis of subjects into citizens" and the maintenance of a "socially ratified personal identity" and the desire to "construct a powerful national community". Conversely, the doctrines of nationalists stimulates sentiments of "parochialism", "communalism" or "racialism" to gain coerciveness and power as well as to mobilize "social resources" (Geertz 1963:105-157). Finally, the "modernist" position also has several versions, but, it denies the power of ethnic ties in relation to the spread of nationalism as a form of political movement or the formation of nations. Hobsbawm E. (1990) argues that the nation is a modern phenomenon, resulting from liberal ideologies and its development has not depended upon cultural, linguistic or ethnic criteria; economic and political factors are the causes explaining the emergence and development of nations. In this view, states and political doctrines of nationalism create, fabricate or invent nations; to demonstrate this assumption, the author puts forward a chronological scheme of the European phenomena of nationalism from an evolutionist perspective (Gutiérrez 1991:378).

This summary is by no means exhaustive nor does it include all the authors falling into the different theoretical perspectives. For comprehensive accounts on the existing literature on nations and nationalism see, for example: Deutsch K. An Interdisciplinary Bibliography on Nationalism, 1935-53 (1956); Merritt R and Deutsch K. Nationalism and National Development: an Interdisciplinary bibliography (1970); Pinson K. A bibliographical introduction to nationalism (1935) and Smith A. "Nationalism: a trend report and bibliography" (1973).

2. This research excludes the process of integration and accomodation into the core of the Mexican nation of various groups of European, Asiatic, Central and South American

immigrants. For an historical view of this process see Morner M. Adventurers and Proletarians: the Story of migrants in Latin America (1985); Kicza J. Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico (1983); Rodríguez M.E. (1986): "El inmigrante europeo 1839-1930".

3. Some other works of Gellner E. which do not argue directly and implicitly questions and problems of nationalism are book reviews of: Evans Pritchard The position of women in primitive societies and other essays (Oxford Magazine (5), June:417-9, 1965); "The savage and the modern mind" in Modes of thought Honton P. and Finnegan (eds) (1972); "Actions before words" in; The Times Literary Supplement (4083) August 15th, 1980; Hallpike C.R. The foundations of primitive thought); "Down with occidentalism" (The New Republic (3526-7) August, 1975); B. Lewis The Muslim discovery of Europe "The tribal society and its enemies" (The conflict in tribe and state in Iran and Afghanistan) Tapper R. (ed) (1983). Other works of Gellner: The concept of kinship (Oxford, 1987); Plough, sword and book (London, 1988). For a recent discussion on the several philosophical and anthropological enquiries made by Gellner see: Transition to modernity: Essays on power, wealth and belief, Hall A. J. and Jarvie I.C. (eds), 1992. Gellner's literature on nationalism is to be found in the general bibliography of this study.

4. For an earlier discussion on the failure to identify casual links between nationalism and industrialization see Smith A. Theories of Nationalism, (2nd edition, 1983) chapter 7 "Industrialization and the crisis of the intelligentsia" pp. 109-150.

5. Gellner avoids and dislikes "ethnic conflict"; in his view, it is associated mainly with economic and political factors of underdevelopment; see, for example his critique, with respect to Scotland's awakening for self-determination of T. Nairn's The Break-Up of Britain. Crisis and Neo-Nationalism (1977); "Nationalism, or the new confessions of a justified Edinburgh sinner" in; Spectacles and Predicaments (1979) pp. 266-276.

6. Gellner's arguments do not favour ethnic resurgence, see for example his view regarding the impracticalities brought about if each of the 8 000 languages in the world claimed a state of their own. Potential nationalisms are countless if we allow the use of language or some other cultural criterion. Scotland for instance is not based on linguistic nationalism but on shared history (Gellner 1986:48).

7. For example, Hobsbawm recognises that 'national patriotism' is a powerful force based on "bonds": "in many parts of the world, states and national movements could mobilise certain variants of feelings of collective belongings which already existed and which could operate, as it were, potentially on the macro-political scale which could fit in with modern nation states and nations. I shall call these bonds 'proto-national' (Hobsbawm 1990:46). Mann M. although favouring the

view that nationalism is a distinctive political ideology emerging only from the 18th century onwards, states: "True, I must qualify that statement -modernity of nationalism-, acknowledging that elements of 'ethnic consciousness' identified by Anthony Smith existed in earlier times" (Mann 1992:138).

8. Ethnic sentiments inspire modern nations and national movements and these are modern phenomena. This statement reflects part of Smith's intellectual tradition which lies in between Gellner's modernism and Armstrong's primordialism. From the former he adopts the modern conditions propelling nationalism, i.e industrialisation, division of labor, standard education and from the latter the "pre-existing models of ethnicity". This is revealed in his discussion on the publication of the two major works discussing the modernist and the primordialist perspectives: Armstrong J. Nations before Nationalism (1982) and Gellner E. Nations and Nationalism (1983) and in "Ethnic Persistence and National Transformation" (Review article) (Smith 1984).

9. Smith denies explicitly to characterise his analysis on the basis of a continuun of collective identity (Smith 1986:17).

10. Ethnicity in Smith's terms is largely mythical and symbolical (1986:16), it is also social, a cultural network of social relations i.e a community. "Nationalism is the secular, modern equivalent of the pre-modern sacred myth of ethnic election" (1991:84).

11. This term is also employed by Armstrong (1982) and taken by both Armstrong and Smith from Ramon d'Abadal i de Vinyals (1958) (Cfr. Smith 1986: Chapter 1, note 29; and Smith 1991:92).

12. From the 1950's Mexican thinkers speak of a "Mexican philosophy" geared to reflect on the influence of European ideas into the Mexican realm, for example: S. Ramos, El perfil del hombre y la cultura en Mexico (1951); A. Reyes, La x en la frente (1952); L. Zea, Conciencia y posibilidad del mexicano (1949); O. El laberinto de la soledad (1950), A. Villegas, La filosofía de lo mexicano (1960) amongst others.

13. An exception worth mentioning is B. Anderson whose widely quoted argument of "print capitalism" in the formation of modern nations, takes the first Mexican novel in 1816, El periquillo sarniento (The Itching Parrot) to exemplify the process of creating a "limited" and "sovereign" "national imagination" (1990:34-35).

## Chapter 2: Notes

1. The high number of Mixtec people in this sample is probably explained by their long time tradition of national and international migration to large urban towns (e.g. Oaxaca, Mexico City, Tijuana and border cities of the United States), in the search of better economic opportunities (Kearney 1994). Mixtec people in Mexico City have formed associations to protect their interests in the labour market and, very importantly, to maintain community links with their villages in the reproduction of traditional forms of cohesion around the cults and rituals to patron saints (e.g. Community of Residents of San Juan Tamazola based in the Ixtapalapa neighbourhood - Delegación - (Information provided by GB 10/8/1992). Reliable figures of indigenous peoples living in Mexico City remain controversial. However, the 1990 census establishes the figure of 208,000 people who speak Indian tongues, which contrasts with the figure of around 500,000 people, given by the metropolitan indigenous programme of the National Indigenist Institute ("Mexico's Indians Survive as Hidden Minority in Capital", Los Angeles Times, 12/11/1992).

### Chapter 3: Notes

1. One can also point out yet another aspect of Indian-ness: the validity of Amerindian languages. The importance of Indian languages and literature in today's ethnicity is discussed in N. Gutiérrez, "Ethnic Literates: The Development of the Marginal Printing Press" in; Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, (Forthcoming 1995).

2. The symbolism of Marianism as an element of the ideology seeking political independence was a flexible one open to a number of interpretations. For example, the search for spiritual autonomy, and an ideology for the creation of communal bonds of solidarity (Wolf 1958; Lafaye 1985; Brading 1973; Paz 1981; Meyer 1989; Hobsbawm 1990).

3. Chiapas has a history of continuous uprisings; the last of the large rebellions, before the mid-19th century took place in 1712 (Reina 1980:45).

4. In 1970, Friedlander's main informant "Doña Zeferina" expressed a similar view of resistance and discretion summarised in "her philosophy of life": "a person must know how to defend herself" (p.xviii).

5. Following the advice of OAB and GB, I introduced the word "radio" into the second question of the questionnaire, the reason being that in the Indian milieu radios are more likely to be available than TVs.

## Chapter 4: Notes

1. The significance of the 'left' lay in the fact that the sun sets in the west and if one stood facing that direction, the left hand pointed to the south, where the new Aztec homeland would presumably be found. The "Hummingbird-of-the-left" is represented in some codices by a man with bird-like attributes, those of a hummingbird or an eagle. See for example: the Boturini, Azcatitlán codices, and the Pilgrimage Sequence (Limón 1990:72).

2. Caves are associated with the womb; emerging from caves is a current Mesoamerican idea of origin according to the Popol Vuh (Ancient Maya Legends) (1981:38).

3. "It is true it will make our glory. As long as the world exists, the glory and honour of Mexico-Tenochtitlán will never end". As recorded by Chimalpahuín and quoted by Tibón 1986:564.

4. The Calendaric sign of Huitzilopóchtli, "Ce tecpátl 1-Flint", coincides with other important events: date of migration of Aztecs from Aztlán, foundation of Tenochtitlán, designation of the first ruler or tlatoani (A. Caso 1946).

5. It is unsurprising that an element of the pan-American nationalism of the late eighteenth century was precisely a defence of the unique flora and fauna found on the new continent - i.e. Clavijero, Father Mier in Mexico and José Manuel Dávalos and J. Llano Zapata in Peru. Their defence was aimed at refuting the views of the 18th century French naturalists - i.e. Cornelius de Pauw and George Louis Leclerc [Buffon] - who argued that America was a continent still in its "puberty" given that its evolutionary process was not yet complete which explained why the great mammals had not developed, not even the lion, rather reptiles and cactus (Gerbi 1946; Gutiérrez 1990:106; Buffon and de Pauw's thesis are to be found in: Oeuvres Complètes 1826; and Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américaines 1768).

6. The meaning of these terms are: Quetzalcóatl (God of the Wind); Pipiltin (Nobility); Huitzilopóchtli (God of War); Tepochcalli (Educational centre); Itzcalótl (Movement of wind); Tlazoltéotl (Goddess of Filth); Xiuhpohualli (Aztec calendar count); Tlamacazaque (Priest); Malintzin (Aztec name of Malinche); Teométl (God of Wine) (Robelo C. Diccionario de Mitología Nahoá 1982).

7. The question on "Slaughter of Aztec nobility" refers to the claims of F. J. Clavijero, regarding the lack of tradition in contemporary Indian peoples (Cfr. Chapter 2).

8. The question on "History written by Clavijero" is based on the knowledge of Clavijero's book (Historia Antigua de

México). The question sought to reinforce the indigenous students perception of their ethnic past.

9. Discussion of the Malinche myth has frequently been underestimated in the sociological and historical literature on national integration. A re-evaluation of Malinche's role has been undertaken in recent years. In Mexico this rehabilitation is of a recent provenance, for example, the colloquium "La malinche: los padres y sus hijos" (National University, December 1992), unlike the earlier examination of the increasing body of Chicano literature. Marina also embodies another popular legend, that of the "Weeping Woman" (La llorona), a legend rooted in colonial Mexico which has been adopted as the "cultural heroine" by the Chicano people (Soto 1986; Blea I. Irene 1992; Castillo 1990; Limón J. 1990; Mirandé and Enríquez 1979).

10. Many contemporary writers have attempted to uncover more about the biography of Malinche by different methods, but the results have been slender and contradictory (Brotherson 1992a).

11. "Malinchista" is a colonial term implying a preference for foreignness or whiteness. Creoles reserved this term for women who preferred to marry Spanish men born in Spain (Lafaye 1985:45).

12. The legend also contains a negative and derogatory connotation associated with betrayal, which will not be discussed here, given the fact that such a connotation does not form part of a standardised official version even though it still persists in the popular imagination. In the 1950's there emerged a form of introspection aimed at elucidating the meaning of the "Mexican"; two writers are associated with this tendency: Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz. The latter addressed the story of Marina or Malinche in one of his most popular collection of essays: The Labyrinth of Solitude (1959). One of these essays "The Children of Malinche" (Los hijos de la Malinche) (1987) examines the popular feeling of betrayal; he also compares Malinche with a "Mexican Eve". Paz has proved to be very influential in fostering a derogatory image of Indian women symbolised by Malinche, and he deduces that the feeling of "solitude", "instability" and "inferiority" which dominates Mexican folk psychology is derived from the Mexican's rejection of her. Other explanations refer to the opinion that Mexican "machismo" is the search for a "father" figure, in as much as the father raped the mother and departed. All these psychological banalities are superficially associated with Malinche. Clearly, these are the result of stereotypes and prejudices derived from the colonial caste system. Chicano women and feminists have used Malinche as a means of challenging "male patriarchal symbolism" (See note 9).

## Chapter 5: Notes

1. Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez and Leona Vicario are the two female heroic characters recognised by official historiography given their participation in the success of the insurgency movement of 1810.

2. Evidence that Zapata and the symbols of the 1910 revolution have once again exerted popular fascination irrespective of official control has been shown with the emergence, in January 1994, of the so called "Zapatista Liberation Army" (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional). However, earlier independent peasant and popular organisations have made frequent use of Zapata's symbology and name. For example: "Zapatista Peasant Organisation Mucio Bravo" (Organización Campesina Zapatista General Mucio Bravo) (1980); "Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organisation" (Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata) (1982); "Emiliano Zapata Union of Communal Farmers" (Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata (1978) (Mejía 1987:105;131;143).

3. "Spirits of Moctehuzoma, Cacamatzin, Cuauhtimotzin, Xicontenatl and of Catzonzi, as once you celebrated the feast in which you were slaughtered by the treacherous sword of Alvarado, now celebrate this happy moment in which your sons have united to avenge the crimes and outrages committed against you, and to free themselves from the claws of tyranny and fanaticism that were going to grasp them for ever. To the 12th of August of 1521 there succeeds the 14th of September 1813. On that day the chains of our serfdom were fastened in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, on this day in the happy village of Chilpancingo they are broken for ever" (Bustamante Cuadro histórico de la revolución mexicana, t.11, 1843:391; Brading 1983:7)

4. The view that Zapata embodies the stereotype of the Mexican "macho" and that of "Coarse Mexico" (México bronco) are widely acknowledged. For example, he is portrayed as the barely literate campesino (peasant), who liked to dress as a charro (Mexican horseman), behaved aggressively, was a haughty womanizer, and careless father of many children. Similarly, his physical attributes have been typecast: the markedly virile face and the typical Mexican moustache. According to O'Malley, Zapata has been converted into the Mexican prototype of masculinity thus engendering an official interest in establishing a correspondence of patriarchal values with the public images of the post-revolutionary leaders (1986:42).

5. The Institute founded in 1827 was the civil organ of the Oaxacan liberal legislature; one of the few secular colleges which offered other educational alternatives away from the traditional military or ecclesiastical careers (Cadenhead 1975:19).



6. Such celebrations include: firework displays; the illumination of public places, speeches, military music, the raising of the national flag, playing the national anthem, parades, unveiling public works and monuments, and serenades.

7. Moctezuma: "Ruler of Mexico at the time of the Spaniards's arrival, peacefully received the invaders, declared himself subordinate to the king of Spain...and was murdered by the Spaniards" (Ciencias Sociales 3rd year 1988:49-51).

Cuauhtémoc: "Last ruler of Mexico after Moctezuma and Cuitláhuac ...was tortured by the Spaniards so as to reveal where the treasures of his ancestors, the Aztec kings, were hidden" (Historia y Civismo 3rd year 1960:95).

Malintzin: "Christened by the Spaniards as Marina or Malinche - who knew the Maya and Náhuatl tongues, and was the Spaniards's interpreter" (Ciencias Sociales 3rd year 1988:47)

Hernán Cortés: "Was an intelligent and brave soldier" (Historia y Civismo 3rd year 1960:80); "Cortés's alliances with the dominated peoples under Mexica rule, helped him to conquer the Mexica empire" (Mi libro de historia de México 1992:39).

Benito Juárez: "His parents were poor indians and humble people" (Historia y Civismo 4rd year 1960:110); "the President who bravely and firmly defended the Republic against foreign intervention" -the Hapsburg, Maximillian (Mi libro de historia de México 6th year 1992:88).

Porfirio Díaz: "President who re-elected himself six consecutive times..., under his dictatorship political parties and popular suffrage disappeared...,his re-elections had adverse consequences for the political and social progress of Mexico" (Mi libro de historia y civismo 4rd year 1960:147).

Lázaro Cárdenas: "was elected president in 1934, expropriated large estates, distributed land, opened thousands of rural schools, and carried out the nationalisation of industry" (Ciencias Sociales 6th year 1988:117).

8. It is interesting to note as a prototypal case of "anti-heroism", the generalised and negative opinions expressed towards the female figure known as "malinche". It is claimed that "Malinche" is the progenitor of the mestizaje myth. In the students' perception she is an ambiguous figure and the resulting confusion and ambivalence is not free of bias - the text-books argue that "all Mexicans are mestizo people". But what is the Indian view of "Malinche"? She is regarded with total indifference for her controversial role during the conquest of Mexico, she is perceived neither as a "traitor" nor as an "enemy", even less a "heroine". There are two explanations available to validate these results: firstly, the official historiography is short of "heroines"; secondly,

there are two anatagonistic views of "Malinche": the popular view that she betrayed the Aztec people, and the diffusion of mestizaje as the common background of ethnic unification.

## Chapter 6: Notes

1. See for example the studies by Heath B. Shirley (1972); Booth C. George (1941) and Vasconcelos's biography by Blanco José Joaquin (1977).

2. The discussion on the minimisation of indigenous population in the official statistics is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

3. Some of the socialising skills mentioned in the text-book Mi libro de segundo ano, 3,215,000 copies produced by 1985, were the following: a) how to use communication and services (i.e. postal service, electricity); how to identify currency and the metric system; b) what is the importance of a school and learning how to form relationships, friendship and collaborations; c) how to observe one's surroundings and to develop a scientific curiosity.

4. For example, the pupil is expected to compare the adaptation of particular cultures to different natural environments, such as the rural mestizo community "Ojo de rana"; the industrial settlement "Cosamaloapan"; the indian community practicing agriculture on denuded soil, "Nochixtlán"; and production by mechanised agriculture, "The plateau of Northern Mexico" Ciencias Sociales (3rd year 1970:57;65;77;89) Cfr. Appendix 2.

5. The national press devoted intense coverage to the public release of the 1992 collection between August and September, 1992. Sources are the daily newspapers La Jornada, Excélsior and the weekly journal Proceso (September 1992).

## Chapter 7: Notes

1. The role of Malinche is made explicit in the 1992 text-book: "Malinche, spoke Náhuatl and the Maya languages, and learnt Spanish. She was Cortés's translator, adviser and mistress. She helped him to know the Mesoamerican peoples" (6th 1992:36).

## Chapter 8: Notes

1. The members of the "Mexican School of Anthropology" were academics, administrators and held high bureaucratic posts, were trained as anthropologists and educationalists - disciples of Malinowski, Foster, Tax, Boas and Dewey - and their published work is extensive (Gamio 1985:v-xii; Drucker-Brown 1982:10;14-15;20).

2. The initial plan was for the study of 11 areas, but only that of Teotihuacán was undertaken due to the demise of the Direction of Anthropology (Comas 1964:26).

3. In Gamio's view indigenous languages are for the "use of scientific specialities, such as ethnographic studies and folklore" (1985:133). And for Gellner: folklore, traditions and vernacular languages are preserved artificially by ad hoc societies (Gellner 1983:117) Cfr. Chapter 1; section "The conditions for nationalism: the monopoly of education and high culture".

4. Roxborough discusses the issue "Replicating the Transition", in the 1950's and 60's (1979:13-26).

5. Prolific writer, physician, indigenist administrator, creator of the Coordinating Centres, pillars of the current models of indigenism.

6. A brief background is necessary to illustrate the institutionalization of indigenism as part of a formal policy of acculturation coordinated by the federal government. In 1935 it was created the Autonomous Department of Indigenous Affairs (Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas) followed by the First Indigenist Inter-American Congress (Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, 1940) which gathered representatives from most of the indigenous regions of Mexico and the rest of the continent. There it proposed the creation of the Inter-American Indigenist Institute (Instituto Indigenista Interamericano) whose function was to suggest indigenist policies applicable for each of the participating Latin American governments. In Mexico this initiative led to the establishment of the National Indigenist Institute (Instituto Nacional Indigenista) in December, 1948 (Comas:1953; INI 1978:8).

7. There were also other factors such as the inadequacies of bureaucratic administration, lack of sensitivity by civil servants, lack of finance and coordination, corruption, lack of political as opposed to the moral authority of the INI (Marroquín 1972:118).

8. Dr. George Grinberd, Programme to Combat Racism (Geneve), World Council of Churches, the University of Berne (Switzerland) and the University of West Indies (Barbados), the hosts (1979).

9. The term of mestizaje also has regional variants such as "jarocha" (Veracruz), "tapatía" (Jalisco), "norteña" (Northern states) and "yucateca" (Yucatán) cultures (Arizpe 1988:72).

## Chapter 9: Notes

1. It is fair to say that not all intellectuals of Mexico should bear the same label. Within the non-indigenous society there are various types emerging at different historical moments holding a wide range of socio-cultural and political preoccupations. For example: F. J. Clavijero (1731-1787), J. Vasconcelos (1881-1959), A. Reyes (1895-1957) O. Paz (1906), C. Fuentes (1928) and the ecologist group of the "100's".

2. I am referring to the politics and programmes of non-indigenous intellectuals and intelligentsia at the turn of the century and, those of the decade of the 1940's. Typical examples were the introduction of positivism and acculturation (Stabb 1959:405-443; Powell 1986:19-36).

3. I owe this information to Dr. G. Bonfil Batalla during a personal interview granted to me just days before his tragic and sad death in July 1991. N. Hernández - founder member of ANPIBAC and former coordinator of the "Programme of Indigenous Cultures" -CONCA - also assisted me with some helpful comments. I also received valuable information from G. Bautista, member of ANPIBAC and editor of Revista Etnias (Mexico City, July, 1991).

4. (1976) "Del I Encuentro Nacional de Maestros Indígenas Bilingües" in; (1981) La ANPIBAC y su devenir político (1st edition); 1987 (2nd edition).

5. (1980a) "Informe de la Primera Asamblea General de ANPIBAC".

6. (1977) "Declaración de Principios y Programa de Acción" - ANPIBAC.

7. Some examples of articles on issues of education written by indigenous peoples in the journal under concern are: "Reflexiones en el camino" (Demetrio Alcázar (3):1988); "Cuál educación indígena" (Mario Millán Soto (4):1988) "Los indios y el derecho a ser diferentes" (Juan Julián Caballero (5):1988) "Los maestros bilingües y la educación indígena" (Juan Julián Caballero (6):1989); "Participación de las comunidades indígenas en el quehacer educativo" (Antonio López Marín (6):1989); "La dirección general y su nueva administración" (Genaro Bautista (7):1990); "La tradición lingüística de los indios se ha basado en la realidad" (Rafael Martínez (8):1991). "Los pueblos indios frente a la modernización educativa" (Genaro Bautista (10):1992); "Total indiferencia del Departamento de educación indígena (Crispín Flores (10):1992); "A punto de concluir la licenciatura en educación indígena" (Otilio Atanacio (10):1992).

8. (1980b) "Informe del Comité Ejecutivo Nacional de ANPIBAC, presentado al Primer Congreso Nacional".

9. (1976a) "Conclusiones y recomendaciones a que llegó el Encuentro Nacional de Maestros Indígenas Bilingües".

10. "Conclusiones" (ibid).

11. (1981b) F. Gabriel "El proyecto educativo de los grupos étnicos de México: la educación bilingüe y bicultural" (July-August, Mexico City):12.

12. (1977a)"Informe del Segundo Encuentro Nacional" (Mexico City, June).

13. (1980) "Convocatoria a la Primera Asamblea General Nacional" (Mexico City); (1976a) "Conclusiones y Recomendaciones a que llegó el Encuentro Nacional de Maestros Indígenas, celebrado en Cárdenas, Vícam, Sonora, durante el 17 al 19 de mayo de 1976, expuestas a JLP candidato a presidente".

14. (1986)"Informe de la 3a Asamblea Ordinaria de Nacionalidades", - APIBAC.

15. The "national" adjective was eliminated and then, the organisation became the APIBAC. (1983) "II Congreso Ordinario Nacional - Convocatoria"; (1987) "III Asamblea de Nacionalidades -Convocatoria"; (1987a) "III Congreso Ordinario de Nacionalidades"; (1988) "Reunión Nacional sobre Desarrollo Etnico" - Convocatoria".

16. I do not mean that ANPIBAC was the only body responsible for the formulation of the so called participative policy, but indeed, it played an ideological role of great significance.

17. Gabriel Franco (1979) "Lengua nacional vs lenguas indígenas"; Hernández Natalio and Gabriel Franco (1978) "Los indios y la antropología social" as well as (1981a) "El ANPIBAC y su política de participación"; Hernández Natalio (1978) "La nueva política indigenista". This document was reproduced in: Bonfil Batalla (ed), 1981:398-402.

18. This voluminous document summarises the educational proposals held by the indigenous communities. This Plan was elaborated through extensive field work research aimed at collecting views and opinions from thousands of individuals and communities by means of interviews, public consultations and celebration of meetings at different levels. From this Plan, emerged two Regional Plans, known as the Chihuahua Plan (1981c) and the Oaxaca Plan ("Instrumentación de la educación bilingüe-bicultural" Departamento de Educación Indígena - Proyecto Oaxaca n/d). There was an autonomous attempt by the group of ANPIBAC to introduce these Plans. However, different state agencies have opposed to put into practice the project by creating confusion and clientelist manipulation of some leaders and members of the organisation. An account of this situation from an indigenous perspective is to be found in Revista Etnias, Bautista G. "Indígenas indigenistas" (3):1987. Gabriel Franco (1981b). The document also is known as "Plan



Nacional para la Instrumentación de la Educación Bilingue y Bicultural". Other documents related to this Plan by the same author are: (1979a) "De la educación indígena tradicional a la educación bilingue y bicultural". This document is also known as "Declaration of Oaxtepec" it is reproduced in: Bonfil Batalla (ed), 1981:400-403.

19. (1981b) Gabriel F. "Proyecto Educativo de los grupos etnicos de Mexico" p.9.

20. (1980a) "Informe de la Primera Asamblea General de ANPIBAC".

21. (1979a) Gabriel F. "De la educación indígena tradicional a la educación bilingue y bicultural. Conclusiones del Primer Seminario Nacional de Educación Bilingue y Bicultural, Oaxtepec, Morelos.

22. (1982) "Politica educativa cultural de los grupos etnicos de Mexico" p. 3.

23. (1979) The questionnaires remained unanalysed and now form part of the general archive of ANPIBAC.

24. The celebration of the First Meeting received support from official channels and the party in power, for example, in the organisation were involved the Institute of Economical and Political Studies of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the Union Trade of Teachers and Professionals, and the organising committee of Indigenous Bilingual Teachers (1976a; 1981).

25. (1977b) "Carta leída por el Comité Ejecutivo Nacional de la ANPIBAC al Presidente de la República"; (1982a) "Comunicado al país".

26. (1987c) "Respuestas del Subsecretario de Educación Básica sobre el Plan Nacional para la Instrumentación de la Educación Indígena Bilingue-Bicultural y otros".

27. "Programa para la Modernización de la Educación Indígena" 1990-1994. Subsecretaría de Educación Elemental (Mexico City 1990).

28. The issue of indian education was not considered a priority during the presidential administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988).

29. Calvo B. and Donnadieu L. (1982; 1982a:249, 144, 246, 300 and 301). From an indigenous perspective, Claro Moreno G. and Botro Gazpar Anastacio M. (1982).

30. The headquarters of the organisation remain in the same original place since 1977 (Mexico city). This information was obtained through informal conversations with active members of the movement, for example: GU (Purépecha); JO (Zapoteco); GB

(Mixteco).

31. "Programa de Maestría en Lingüística: Propuesta" (mimeograph n/d).

32. I owe this information to Ernesto Díaz-Coulder, Academic Convener of "Programa de Formación Profesional de Etnolingüistas" (Programme for the Professional Training of Ethnolinguists) (Mexico city, 15th July, 1991).

33. "Plan de estudios dirigido a maestros que prestan sus servicios en el medio indígena -versión preliminar-" (UPN 1980:12).

34. For example: J. Arias (Tzotzil); V. de la Cruz (Zapoteco); L. Reyes García (Náhuatl); I. Rojas Hernández (Purépecha) and R. Menchú Tum (Quiché). Some of these individuals are informants of this research.

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**Appendix 1**  
**The Questionnaire**

IIP

Num.....  
Date.....  
Place.....

Nombre.....  
Hombre..... Mujer..... Ocupación.....  
Idioma: Español... Otro (s)..... Ambos.....  
Lugar de nacimiento.....

Educación:  
Primaria..... Año.....  
Secundaria..... Año.....  
Preparatoria..... Año.....  
Normal..... Año.....  
Universidad..... Año.....  
Otra..... Año.....

a. Graduado:..... sí..... no..... Año de graduación.....  
b. Ocupación de padre..... madre.....  
c. Area de investigación.....  
d. Materias estudiadas.....  
e. Publicaciones.....  
f. Profesores.....

1. ¿Con que frecuencia va a la iglesia?  
nunca..... una vez al año o menos..... cada tres meses...  
una vez al mes..... cada tres semanas..... una vez a la  
semana..... varias veces a la semana..... diario.....

2. ¿Qué fiestas religiosas celebra?  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Mencione uno o dos recuerdos/ memorias que recuerde sobre la religion de sus abuelos.....  
.....  
.....

4. Qué partes de la historia de México conoce  
Conquista..... Colonia..... Revolución..... Independencia...  
Reforma..... Invasiones extranjeras.....  
Epoca Pre-Colombina.....

5. Qué aspecto le ha llamado más la atención de las épocas anteriores

Época Pre-Colombina.....  
 Conquista.....  
 Colonia.....  
 Independencia.....  
 Reforma.....  
 Revolución.....

6. Mencione algunos libros de historia

Época Pre-Colombina.....  
 Conquista.....  
 Colonia.....  
 Independencia.....  
 Reforma.....  
 Revolución.....

7. ¿Conoce la historia de la fundación de Tenochtitlán?

no.....sí.....Por qué medio obtuvo la información:  
 escuela.....profesor.....padres.....amigos.....  
 radio.....TV.....libros o artículos.....  
 libro de texto gratuito.....

8. ¿Conoce el significado de la fundación?.....

el águila.....la posición del águila.....  
 el lago.....el nopal.....

9. ¿Dónde ha visto la representación de la historia de la fundación de Tenochtitlan?

emblema nacional.....monedas.....presidente.....  
 bandera.....PRI.....otro.....

10. ¿Dónde aprendió a conocer el emblema?

cuando era joven en la escuela.....(libros de  
 texto...festivales...dibujos...fotos...día de la bandera.....)  
 cuando adulto por la TV (que programa).....sus hijos.....sus  
 padres.....otro.....

11. ¿Qué historia sobre el origen de los mexicanos conoce?

Ninguna.....  
 Manuscrito pre-Colombino.....  
 Texto de la colonia.....  
 Texto contemporáneo.....

12. ¿Qué historia sobre el origen de otro grupo étnico de México conoce?

Ninguna.....  
 Manuscrito pre-Colombino.....  
 Texto de la colonia.....  
 Texto contemporáneo.....

13. ¿Sabe que era el Calmécac? no.....si.....quienes estudiaban ahí.....que estudiaban.....al terminar sus estudios que hacían.....

14. ¿Conoce la historia de la matanza de Pedro de Alvarado en el Templo Mayor (12 de agosto de 1521)? no.....si.....que grupo en particular murió.....quienes sobrevivieron.....por que murieron.....

15. ¿Ha leído la Historia Antigua de México de Clavijero (1780)? no.....si.....Mencione tres aspectos que le hayan interesado.....

16. ¿Conoce la historia del mestizaje?  
no.....si.....época.....  
Razas principales.....  
Castas.....  
Problemas.....

17. ¿Dónde aprendió la historia del mestizaje?  
escuela.....profesor.....padres.....amigos.....  
radio.....TV.....libros o artículos.....  
libro de texto gratuito.....

18. Mencione tres aportaciones del mestizaje en la vida del país  
.....  
.....  
.....

19. En su opinión el mestizaje es:  
una realidad.....  
una política.....  
una ideología.....  
un invento.....  
Mencione algunas razones.....

20. ¿Qué le gusta más de México?  
La naturaleza.....volcanes.....montañas.....mar.....  
los magueyes.....la milpa.....las aves.....  
la tradición indígena.....la historia.....  
la gente.....indios.....mestizos.....blancos.....  
otro.....

21. ¿Qué le disgusta más de México?  
 la gente.....indios.....mestizos.....blancos.....  
 el gobierno.....la ciudad de México.....otras ciudades....  
 .....la discriminación.....la contaminación.....  
 la corrupción.....la desigualdad.....la pobreza de la  
 mayoría de los grupos indios.....la riqueza de los blancos.....

22. Mencione tres lecciones, títulos, dibujos o fragmentos que recuerde del libro de texto gratuito -historia, español o ciencias sociales.....  
 .....  
 .....

23. ¿Usted sabe que significan los colores de la bandera?si.....no.....  
 rojo.....verde.....blanco.....  
 .....

24. ¿Le da emoción cuando escucha el himno nacional? si.....no.....me es  
 indiferente.....¿en que circunstancias?.....  
 .....

25. ¿Por que medio escucha el himno nacional?: sus hijos.....  
 TV .....radio.....escuela:.....otro.....

26. ¿Qué significado tiene la letra del himno nacional para usted?  
 Amar al país si.....no.....  
 Lucha en contra del enemigo si.....no.....  
 Apreciar que "grande y rico" es si.....no.....  
 No significado si .....no .....  
 Otro.....

27. ¿Si el país fuera atacado daría su vida por el?.....

28. ¿Qué prefiere usted -tener presidentes "gringos"; tener presidentes  
 indios; tener presidentes mestizo o seguir como estamos.....  
 En qué areas piensa usted que necesitamos diferentes presidentes:  
 gringo...economía....política...cultura...lengua....tradiciones.....  
 indio ...economía....política...cultura...lengua....tradiciones.....  
 mestizo...economía....política...cultura...lengua....tradicions.....

29. ¿Cómo definiría a un hombre o mujer mestizo (a)?  
 bueno.....malo.....más o menos.....amigable.....egoísta.....  
 abusivo.....arrogante.....estúpido.....tacaño.....escandaloso...  
 .....otro.....

30. ¿Usted tiene amigos mestizos..... amigos gringos.....?  
 ¿Usted tiene compadres mestizos.....compadres gringos.....

31. ¿Que personas admira usted más?  
 Cuauhtémoc (CC -both)  
 si.....  
 no.....  
 nunca ha oído hablar de el.....

Moctezuma

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de el.....

Cortés

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de el.....

Porfirio Díaz

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de el .....

Benito Juárez

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de el.....

Lázaro Cárdenas

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de el.....

Malinche

si.....

no.....

nunca ha oído hablar de ella.....

32. ¿Mencione algunas razones por las cuales prefiere a ciertos personajes?

¿Por qué los personajes mencionados son heroes?

Cuauhtémoc.....Moctezuma.....Cortés.....P. Díaz.....

B. Juárez.....Lázaro Cárdenas.....Malinche.....Otro.....

.....

.....

.....

33. ¿Alguna vez ha escuchado los siguientes nombres?

Quetzalcóatl.....Pipiltin.....Huitzilopochtli.....Tepochcalli.

.....Itzcalotl.....Tlazolteotl.....Cempohualtonalli.....

Xiuhmolpilli.....Tlamacazque.....Malintzin.....

Teometl.....Nauholin.....Chalchiuhcihuatl.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

34. ¿Por qué medio ha escuchado esos nombres?  
 Quetzalcóatl.....Pipiltin.....Huitzchilopochtli.....Tepochcalli.  
 .....Itzcalotl.....Tlazolteotl.....Cempohualtonalli.....  
 Xiuhmolpilli.....Tlamacazque.....Malintzin.....  
 Teometl.....Nauholin.....Chalchiuhcihuatl.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 radio.....tv.....libros.....abuelos.....hijos...  
 iglesia.....vecinos.....otros.....

35. ¿Qué fechas son importantes para usted?  
 31 Dic.....21 Feb.....28 Feb.....Semana Santa.....15-16 Sep  
 .....Navidad.....12 Dic.....Santo Patron.....  
 Otro.....

36. En su opinión que se necesita para crear un país mejor:  
 más trabajos.....más escuelas.....menos desigualdad entre  
 indios y mestizos.....deshacer el mestizaje.....abandonar la  
 cultura indígena.....tratar de ser como los españoles.....  
 como los estadounidenses.....como los franceses.....

37. Si le pidieran producir un programa de televisión ¿que enseñaría a los  
 mestizos?: otros temas de historia.....  
 .....  
 .....tradiciones y costumbres indígenas.....  
 .....  
 a tener más respeto a las culturas indígenas.....  
 otro.....

38. Si le pidieran producir un programa de televisión o radio ¿que  
 enseñaría a los grupos indios?: otros temas de historia.....  
 .....  
 leyendas.....ciencia y tecnología.....  
 .....  
 a ser como los mestizos.....a abandonar la tradición  
 indígena.....a tener aprecio por la cultura de los antepasados.....  
 .....otro.....  
 .....

39. ¿Qué herencia quisiera dejar a sus hijos?  
 dinero.....educación.....tierra.....  
 tradición.....lengua.....

40. ¿Qué piensa de lo siguiente?  
 dinero.....  
 posición.....  
 educación.....  
 familia.....  
 lengua.....  
 religion.....  
 tradición/ costumbre.....

derechos humanos

41. ¿Ha oído hablar de los siguientes movimientos?
- las panteras negras en EU (60's).....
  - la campaña por la independencia de Tibet.....
  - la organización terrorista ETA.....
  - las actividades de Sendero Luminoso en Perú.....
  - el genocidio de los kurdos en oriente medio.....
  - el surgimiento del nacionalismo en Lituania y Estonia.....
  - las rivalidades entre sikhs e indios en India.....
  - el proyecto del movimiento para la restauración del Anáhuac.....

42. Mencione tres de sus libros favoritos.....

.....

.....

.....

Observaciones:.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 2

### The description of a Mexican Text-Book - Ciencias Sociales 3rd year -

This book is designed for pupils aged about eight to ten. I choose this book as a model given its widespread distribution as revealed by the number of editions i.e. 16th, in 1988 (2, 542, 683 copies). The cover front is decorated with a drawing of Morelos - a "hero of the independence" - by the contemporary Mexican painter, José Luis Cuevas. The book constitutes a typical example of some of the core topics discussed: the teaching of the pre-Hispanic and colonial pasts, the several rural and industrial environments of Mexico and the identification with the main national symbols of the homeland. Thus, the book aims at comprising a synthesis of "history", "social sciences" and "nationalistic indoctrination".

Consequently, the book as a whole does not follow a strict chronological and/or tematical order as its aim is not to provide a course of history or social sciences in themselves, but to provide the pupil with basic cultural identification, socialising skills and understanding of the large Mexican community.

The themes of history encompassed in the book refer to the following topics: the ancient past, the conquest of Mexico and the further outcomes for the Mexican socio-cultural life derived from the contact with Europeans. The first of such topics is described in about sixteen pages under the general title "The ancient cultures" and this is sub-divided into five areas: "The men of maize" (p.21); "The Olmecs" (p.25); "The Zapotecs and Mixtecs" (p.29); "The cultures of the central plateau" (p.33) and "The Mexicas" (p.37).

The second topic of history, "The encounter of two peoples, deals with the Mesoamerican and European contact and the narrative is described in ten pages. The sub-divisions are: "A distinct culture at the other side of the sea" - the distinctive culture being the European - (p.43); "Towards the



conquest of Mexico" (p.47); "The Spaniards faced the Mexicas" (p.49) and "A new culture is born" (p.53). These are the only two periods of history covered by the book.

Four sections deal with the pupils's understanding of the diversity of Mexico's environments and people's occupations and this is described in forty four pages. "A Community of Mexican farmers" (p.57) is exemplified in one concrete case: the community "Ojo de rana" located in the state of Michoacán. This is a typical agricultural mestizo community which depends on the rain seasons for agricultural labour and describes the basic institutions and the forms of social and family organisation available in a rural mestizo community (p.64). "A crop for the industry -1. Cosamaloapan" (p. 65). This section refers to the several modern stages involved in the production of crops introduced by the Spaniards in Mexico, the sugar cane. The typical production of sugar cane is exemplified in a humid and hot region close to the Papaloapan river, in a settlement called "Cosamaloapan" and the aim of the lesson is to show the relationship between owners and workers in relation to the growing of a single crop (p.59). -2. "Sugar Making" - La zafra - deals with the description of the difficult process of social organisation, suitable infrastructure and temporal labour force involved in sugar making (p.72). -3. "The work in the sugar mill is organised": this refers to the industrial production of sugar and the exactitude required by sugar growers to meet industrial needs (p.73). The other typical case of "Mexican farmers" is exemplified in Oaxaca: "The struggle against barren soil". The description is situated in the county - distrito - of Nochixtlán characterised by the development of agricultural activities in areas in which two main resources are lacking: irrigation and fertile soil (p.80). Like the example of the sugar mill, the Nochixtlán case describes its forms of social organisation, and the new agricultural techniques learnt by young generations (p.88). Finally, the most developed type of agriculture in Mexico is exemplified in the lands, crops, social organisation and mechanised techniques available in the

northern areas of Mexico: "Ciudad Obregón; the green revolution" (p.89).

The book begins and concludes with two pertinent sections dealing with the pupil's assimilation of the idea of belonging to common collectivities and the symbols of the homeland. "Community, country, world" is the first lesson and its divided into three self-evident sections: "My community" (p.5); "Our country" (p.9) and "A common past" (p.15). In general terms, these sections describe the differences between rural and urban environments; Mexico's extreme differentiation, and the idea of a remote common past (p.20).

The final section is entitled: "We are Mexicans" (p.107) and there is offered a summary and comparison of the four communities of people described above, and most importantly, an exhortation of what patriotic symbols represent for contemporary Mexicans: "Our symbols" (p.113). As expected, this section includes the description of symbols, the emblem, the flag and the main paragraphs of the national anthem (p.117). The whole book is profusely illustrated.

The book is narrowly based on Mexican typical rural and mestizo aspects, there is no room for comparison and no other information of other cultures within Mexico or beyond is available. Furthermore, no bibliography is recommended to satisfy the likely interest of the pupils' curiosity. Finally, the book is written in a clear and simple language and a glossary is offered at the end of the book.

### Appendix 3

#### Organisations of Indigenous Professionals: Meetings and Congresses

Event	Place	Year
1. 1st National Congress	Pátzcuaro, Mich.	1975
2. 1st National Meeting of Bilingual Teachers	Vícam, Son.	1976
3. 2nd National Congress of Indian Peoples	Santa Ana Nichi, Edo. Mex.	1977
4. 2nd National Meeting of ANPIBAC	Mexico City	1977
5. 1st National Seminar of Bilingual and Bicultural Education	Oaxtepec, Mor.	1977
6. 3rd National Congress of Indian Peoples	Mexico City	1979
7. 1st General Assembly	Mexico City	1980
8. 1st National Congress of ANPIBAC	Ixmiquilpan, Hgo.	1980
9. 1st Extraordinary National Congress	Tuxtepec, Oax.	1982
10. 2nd National Congress	Cherán, Mich.	1983
11. 3rd Ordinary Assembly of Nationalities	Mexico City	1986
12. 3rd National Congress of ANPIBAC	Emilio Portes Gil, Edo. Mex.	1987
13. Seminar on Ethnic Development	Zapotitlán, Sin.	1988

14. 1st National Meeting of Writers of Indigenous Languages	Cd. Victoria, Tam.	1990
15. 1st National Meeting of the Indigenous Press	Mexico City	1991
16. 2nd National Meeting of Writers of Indigenous Languages	Tuxtla Gutz., Chis.	1992
17. 1st International Meeting of the Indigenous Press	Mexico City	1992
18. 3rd National Meeting of Writers of Indigenous Languages	Ixmiquilpan, Hgo.	1993
19. Meetings of the Association of Indigenous Writers	Mexico City, Cuernavaca Mor.; Angahuan, Mich.	1992-1993