DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 736 FL 020 458

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TITLE Columbus's Legacy, Conquest or Invasion? A Guatemalan Example of Counterhegemonic Teacher Practice and Curriculum.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 41p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; Indigenous Populations; *Mayan Languages; *Public Policy; Racial Relations; School Role; *Spanish; Teacher Role; Textbook Content
IDENTIFIERS *Guatemala; *Maya (People)

ABSTRACT

Evidence is presented that demonstrates the projection in some school settings of nuanced interpretations of the historical events and meanings related to 1492 and to the subsequent Spanish settlement of the Americas. In particular, the Maya language-Spanish language bilingual curriculum (Programa Nacional de Educacion Bilingue, PRONEBI) and Maya teachers in Guatemalan public elementary schools question traditional interpretations of Spanish-indigenous interactions and promote new symbols and images to Guatemala's Maya school children. An analysis of the emancipatory potential of these efforts is presented in this paper. An attempt is made to broaden the constructs of resistance and counterhegemonic practices to include the role of school and interethnic relations. This report presents and analyzes findings of research on teacher practice and textbook content in which the traditional justification for existing interethnic relationships and power domains in Guatemala are questioned. The discussion focuses or teacher practice and curriculum in two schools that participate in the Ministry of Education's PRONEBI program. Although 21 different Maya languages are spoken in Guatemala, the PRONEBI program encompasses only the 4 most widely spoken Maya languages and involves only approximately 20 percent of the Maya school population. The two schools discussed are located in the third largest Maya language region inhabited by more than 350,000 Kaqchikel speakers. Basically, a content with counterhegemonic potential replaced traditional content: that is, Spanish "invasion" of a flourishing Maya culture replaced Spanish "conquest" with its attendant images of cultural superiority; however, the learning process remained unchanged and, therefore, the emancipatory potential of the curriculum was weakened. This Guatemalan dilemma raises a problematic question that merits further study beyond the Guatemalan case: To what extent can students who learn potentially emancipatory content through nonemancipatory methodology use their knowledge for social and self-transformation? Contains 22 references. (LB)

Columbus's Legacy, Conquest or Invasion? A Guatemalan Example of Counterhegemonic Teacher Practice and Curriculum

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Forthcoming celebrations of the quincentenary of Columbus's "discovery of the New World" promise an extended re-examination and, most probably, reformulation of the various myths surrounding the arrival of the Spanish to the Western Hemisphere. School children from the Bering Strait to the Straits of Magellan likely will be emersed throughout the 1992 academic year in images of Columbus and subsequent Spanish conquistadores as the bearers of "civilization" to a land inhabited by pagan aborigines. However, the discussion of the Spanish arrival in the Western Hemisphere is, by no means, monological. Evidence presented in this report demonstrates the projection in some school settings of nuanced interpretations of the historical events and meanings related to 1492 and to the subsequent Spanish settlement of the Americas. In particular, the Maya language-Spanish language bilingual curriculum and Maya teachers in Guatemalan public elementary schools question traditional interpretations of Spanish-indigenous interactions and promote new symbols and images to Guatemala's Maya school children. An analysis of the emancipatory potential of these efforts is presented here. An attempt is made to broaden the constructs

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Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 24, 1992.

of resistance and counterhegemonic practices to include the role of schooling in interethnic relations.

This report presents and analyzes findings of research on teacher practice and textbook content in which the traditional justification for existing interethnic relationships and power domains in Guatemala are questioned. The discussion focuses on teacher practice and curriculum in two schools that participate in the Ministry of Education's Maya language-Spanish language bilingual program (Programa Nacional de Educación Bilingüe, PRONEBI). Although 21 different Maya languages are spoken in Guatemala, the PRONEBI program encompasses only the four most widely spoken Maya languages and involves only approximately 20 percent of the Maya school population (Seelye, Chesterfield, and de Coti 1988). The two schools discussed in this report are located in the third largest Maya language region inhabited by over 350,000 Kaqchikel speakers.

GUATEMALAN ETHNIC RELATIONS

The population of post-conquest Guatemala includes two major ethnic groups: the present day Maya and the ladinos, descendants of Spanish and Maya unions, who emphasize their Spanish ancestry. When multiple ethnicities are congruent with the emergence of the nation-state, one ethnic group, not necessarily associated with a social class, tends to dominate (Adams 1988). In the specific case of Guatemala, the post-colonial period saw the rise to political and socioeconomic power of one sector within the ladino group.

A dominant ethnic group or sector may control subordinate ethnicities by three basic strategies: 1) encapsulation, 2) assimilation, or 3) extermination (Adams 1988). The dominant ladino sector in Guatemala has used all three strategies in different measures at different times to constrain and check the social reproduction of the Guatemalan Maya groups. As forms of control, each of the three strategies involves cultural attack mechanisms, including control of the access to and distribution of cultural knowledge. These measures, therefore, have almost always impacted or been mediated by the formal school experience.

In an ethnocracy, like Guatemala, ideology organizes and justifies symbolically the actions of the dominant sector toward the subordinate ethnic group. Ladino alienation from Maya roots continues to be a key, if unconscious, element in the dominant ideology. Ghidinelli (1988) has suggested that the ladinos' difficulty in self-identification is a result, on the one hand, of their devaluation of their Maya ancestry and, on the other hand, of their over-valuation of their Hispanic or European roots. Cabrera (1988) proposed that the ladino dilemma with self-identification may be due to the difficulty of identifying oneself as prejudiced.

Ethnic relations in Guatemala historically have been characterized by interdependence as well as by tensions. Conducted most frequently in the political and economic arenas, ethnic relations are accompanied by mistrust and fear of intergroup treachery. Recently, a developing Maya national identity beyond

the municipio level (municipality--a geo-political designation roughly corresponding to "county" or "parish") portends a continued struggle for wealth and power in new forms (Adams 1988). The promotion of and resistance to the dominant ideology likely will represent a substantial portion of the continued Maya struggle. Therefore, the role of schooling as a mechanism of cultural reproduction and an arena of cultural contest in the Guatemalan society merits detailed attention.

RESISTANCE THEORY AND COUNTERHEGEMONY

Resistance theory informs the examination of textbook content and teacher practice in this report. Central to the discussion are the concepts of "power," "resistance" and "counterhegemony." The notion of power used throughout this study derives in part from the work of social anthropologist Richard N. Adams and in part from that of educational critical theorist, Henry A. Giroux. In terms of the social relationships under examination here, power refers to " . . . the control that one party holds over the environment of another party." (Adams 1967:32). Power domains then, develop when " . . . one party has greater control over the environment of a second party than the second has over the environment of the first." (Adams 1967:39). Adams has described the development of power domains in terms of "cultural advance." This construct holds that an increase in the technological ability to control the environment results in an increase in the amount of power socially available. He stated, "When this increase occurs, a

disproportionate and differential control develops so that some individuals or sectors of the society have greater control than others" (1967:35). However, reciprocity, another characteristic of power, identified by Adams makes control far from mechanistic for the dominant sector. In a social relationship, all parties have power available to them, albeit in varying amounts (Adams 1967). This characteristic of power allows for the possibility of resistance by a subordinate group to attempts by a dominant group to control its environment.

Power, whether that of the dominant or of the subordinate groups, may be latent due to " . . . a lack of knowledge that it exists or that it could be mobilized" or " . . . because of a rational decision to leave it unused." (Adams 1967:34). At some level, members in the dominant sector are aware that an inability or failure to control the environment of a subgroup is a threat to their own power domain (Adams 1967). The juxtaposition of the possibility of resistance by a subordinate sector of society with the drive of the dominant sector to expand power domains establishes an ever-present tension in social relationships. Formal public schooling represents one societal institution in which social tensions are mediated.

Frequently, theorists of critical pedagogy have focused their analysis of school-related social tensions and resistance on student/teacher (Alpert 1991; McLaren 1985; Elmore 1987) or teacher/administrator (Kanpol 1988, 1989; Bullough, Gitlin and Goldstein 1984) struggles that are framed in a worker/management

paradigm. Kanpol (1989) distinguished between teachers' institutional and cultural political resistance. The latter construct Kanpol described as a critical approach to curricular manifestations of the dominant ideology. The notion of cultural political resistance has significant application to social studies lessons described in this report.

The use of the worker/management paradigm often has excluded an examination of ethnicity as it relates to the schooling experience and the construct of counterhegemonic practice. Shamai (1987) explored the relationship of schooling to ethnicity in a Canadian setting. He argued for the creation of "new classifications, key concepts, terms, and typologies" in order to provide a more flexible analysis of the larger constructs of cultural reproduction and resistance.

In distinguishing resistance from counterhegemony, Giroux (1988) held that counterhegemony contained ". . . a more political, theoretical and critical understanding of both the nature of domination and the type of active opposition it should engender" (1988:162); i.e., not only a critical denunciation of extant power relationships but an annunciation of "alternative forms of experience and struggle" as well (1988:163).

The present report attempts to broaden the discussion of counterhegemony by placing Giroux's definition of the concept within the context of ethnic relations and the schooling experience. Specifically, the examination of the relation of counterhegemonic practices in the classroom to ethnic struggles is

directed by the question: how might the school curriculum be used to counter dominant information and attitudes about a nation's ethnic groups and interethnic relations. The format of the report includes a description of the two bilingual schools visited, a discussion of the teachers' practices, an analysis of the curriculum content, and a reflection on factors that limit counterhegemonic practices in Guatemalan schools.

METHODOLOGY

The research reported here was conducted in seven Guatemalan public elementary schools during the 1990 academic year (January to October). The details regarding the criteria for observation site selection for the entire project have been presented elsewhere (Wilhelm 1991). However, a description of the two PRONEBI schools discussed in this report is offered here. The highly politicized environment in which the fieldwork was conducted requires, except for the departmental capital cities of Antigua and Chimaltenango, the use of pseudonyms for school locations.

PIEDRAS NEGRAS, CHIMALTENANGO

The community of Piedras Negras is a Kaqchikel Maya hamlet of approximately 450 inhabitants within 10 kilometers of the departmental capital of Chimaltenango. Residents live in homes of corn stalk walls, dirt floors, and teja (curved red tile) roofs. They raise corn along with other vegetables and fruits for local consumption or to be sold in the markets of Chimaltenango or Antigua. The hamlet could be reached by a 30 to 45 minute walk up

a dirt road from Chimaltenango and by bus on market days. Although the school itself had no electricity or water, fundamentalist Protestant radio programs emanated from some huts and at least one home had a television antenna. Some homes had water wells, but apparently most residents traveled about two kilometers to get water from a nearby river. The tranquility of the environment was reflected inside the school itself.

The School

The campus consisted of three buildings each with two classrooms. One building was constructed during the Ríos Montt regime in 1982, and another building was constructed in 1989. All of the buildings exhibited a cement block, tin roof, and tile floor style of architecture common to many school buildings in Guatemala. They were arranged in a "U" shape and fronted onto a dirt patio. The desks, donated through the United States "Alliance for Progress" program, were newer and of a better quality than those seen in other schools. The school had a pila (cement wash basin) in the patio but no running water. Students brought water to school in a variety of containers. A small kitchen was attached to the oldest building and, nearby, were latrines of cement block for teachers and students.

The Faculty

The five teachers at the Piedras Negras school were all Kaqchikel Maya although not all spoke Kaqchikel fluently. None of the teachers lived in the hamlet, but two lived nearby in

Chimaltenango. The third and fourth grades and also the fifth and sixth grades were combined under one teacher each. The principal was also the second grade teacher.

The Students

Some 162 students were enrolled officially in 1990 in pre-primary through the sixth grade. All of the students, except for one family of three children, were identified as indígena. The student-teacher ratio ranged from 15 in the fifth/sixth grades to 43 in the pre-primary and third/fourth grades with an average of 32 students per teacher.

Teacher Attitudes Toward the Bilingual Program

The Piedras Negras school offered a complete PRONEBI bilingual program in Kaqchikel and Spanish from pre-primary through the fourth grade. The teachers were frustrated, however, because the children came to school speaking Spanish not Kaqchikel, and neither the students nor their parents showed much interest in their learning to read, write, and speak Kaqchikel. The teachers had attempted to convince the parents of the importance of Kaqchikel for their children but to no avail. Although the adults of the community spoke Kaqchikel among themselves, they did not teach it to their children.

This phenomenon has occurred with the current generation of students and has been attributed to pressures for economic and physical survival suffered by the Maya of the area since the earthquake of 1976 and the violence of various military

governments' counterinsurgency campaigns from 1979 to 1984. According to Maya linguist Narciso Cojti (1990), language death is happening more extensively and quicker in the Kaqchikel language area than elsewhere; however, the Q'eqchi' language region is also experiencing the process. Arguably the Kaqchikel region, which extends from Guatemala City to Lake Atitlán, has suffered the most extensive and prolonged assault by European and North American culture of any language region in the country since the conquest. Yet, the Maya of the region have managed to maintain their language and customs intact until very recently. The root causes of the decision by elders not to teach their children the language merit further study.

According to the faculty at Piedras Negras, instruction in the PRONEBI curriculum could be conducted in Kaqchikel with a Spanish summary or in Spanish with a Kaqchikel summary. The books furnished by PRONEBI for all content areas contained the same information in both Spanish and Kaqchikel. Both languages were used in instruction in the pre-primary, second, and third/fourth grades. The first grade teacher, an eight year veteran with only two months at the school, did not use Kaqchikel in instruction because she said the children resisted learning it. The second grade teacher/principal explained that she taught Kaqchikel only two or three times a week and that students were not very motivated to learn it. Earlier in the school year, she conducted reading comprehension exercises in Spanish and Kaqchikel and had determined that her pupils could understand what was read to them and what

they read in Spanish but not in Kaqchikel. She asserted that since the parents did not talk to them in Kaqchikel at home, the children had difficulty hearing and pronouncing Kaqchikel sounds. The pre-primary teacher reported that his pupils did not care to learn Kaqchikel and their parents did not see the importance of learning it because, as he stated, "They think it will be a disadvantage in life." (Except for the PRONEBI program, institutions in the macro-society did not promote the use of the Maya languages.) He was in his first year at the Piedras Negras school although he had taught pre-primary for five years in the Kaqchikel Maya municipio of Santa Ana. He believed that it was much easier to teach Spanish to Kaqchikel-speaking children (Santa Ana) than it was to teach Kaqchikel to Spanish-speaking children (Piedras Negras).

The students' motivation to learn the language appeared to be a key factor in the ease of instruction. Indeed, during the observation period, the children seemed to respond with more energy and interest when the instruction and questions were in Spanish. Silence, distracted behavior, or one-word responses greeted the teachers' questions in Kaqchikel. The teacher in charge of the third/fourth grades remarked that her students understood her in Kaqchikel but they were embarrassed to try to speak it. They usually only answered with one word and could not make complete sentences. (Some ladino teachers in other schools also mentioned that their Maya students were embarrassed to speak Kaqchikel in the classroom.) This student behavior reflected the power and pervasiveness of dominant societal and mass media messages outside

the school curriculum. Although the PRONEBI curriculum emphasized Maya culture and values, the students and parents at the Piedras Negras school apparently had embraced a significant ladino prestige symbol, the Spanish language. Even with curricular support, the teachers at the Piedras Negras school felt powerless in their efforts to promote and preserve the Kaqchikel language.

SANTA ANA, CHIMALTENANGO

The community of Santa Ana is a large municipio of more than 30,000 residents, some 93 percent of whom were identified as indígena at the time of the field work in 1990. Santa Ana is located approximately 25-30 kilometers from the departmental capital of Chimaltenango in the central highlands. Most of the residents are involved in subsistence agriculture or in the cultivation of broccoli and snow peas for export. Santa Ana has four public and four private elementary schools. The school selected for field observation was located on the northern outskirts of the community and was surrounded by corn and broccoli fields.

The School

The campus was small and included two sets of buildings facing each other across a dirt patio. There were eight classrooms that included one pre-primary section, two first grade sections, and one section each of grades three through six. One group of five classrooms was constructed in 1984. The other rooms and principal's office were added in 1987 and 1988. All the buildings

were made of cement block with either tin or "duralite" (asbestos tile) roofs and tile floors. The glass windows on two sides of each room served to light tha rooms. The school desks were donated by the United States "Alliance for Progress" program. The school had a pila with running water and a dilapidated shed, which served as a kitchen. New cement block latrines were under construction during the observation period. The latrines were needed to replace the old ones, which were nothing more than holes in the ground covered by a cement base and surrounded by pieces of corn stalk walls.

The Faculty

The faculty of the Santa Ana school was composed of seven teachers, six of whom were Kaqchikel Maya. A first grade ladino teacher was completing her student teaching practicum from the Escuela Normal "Pedro Molina" in Chimaltenango. The fourth grade teacher also was serving in his ninth year as the school principal. Of the seven teachers, four lived in the community of Santa Ana.

The Students

The student enrollment for 1990 was 232 students in pre-primary through the sixth grade. The student-teacher ratio ranged from a high of 39 students per teacher in the second and third grades to 12 students per teacher in the sixth grade. The average student-teacher ratio was 33 students per teacher. With one exception, all of the students were identified as indígena. Most

of the children came from the municipio itself but a few traveled from outlying hamlets.

Teacher Attitudes Toward the Bilingual Program

Although the school was officially a PRONEBI school, the principal reported that in 1985 the teachers decided to teach most subjects in Spanish and to use Kaqchikel only to summarize or explain when students indicated they did not understand. However, during one observation period, fourth grade students, when given the opportunity, chose not to have the teacher clarify in Kaqchikel their confusion of a math process. Whether the students said they understood and really did not, as students often do, or, whether they said they understood because they were embarrassed or resistant to instruction in Kaqchikel was unclear.

The reason given by the principal and the sixth grade teacher for teaching all classes in Spanish was that they had discovered that when students went to other schools or to básico (middle school), they were behind in their Spanish skills. First and second grade teachers reported they did not have the new PRONEBI textbooks with the recently approved unified Maya alphabet, and for that reason, they taught only in Spanish. Only the third grade teacher used Kaqchikel as the language of instruction. In contrast to the students in Piedras Negras, the children in Santa Ana entered school with oral fluency in Kaqchikel and Spanish as their second language. Students at this school were allowed to speak to each other in Kaqchikel in class and at recess; however, the

principal said that in some schools in town, the students were forbidden to speak Kaqchikel at school.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY

The principal objective of the observation methodology was to approach the study from the perspective of the classroom teacher in order to interpret appropriately how teachers understood the schooling experience and their role in it. I was particularly concerned with identifying the attitudes, values, and information about Guatemalan ethnic groups that these teachers presented during daily lessons. My role in the observation experience was that of participant-observer.

I spent seven teaching days in the Piedras Negras school and five teaching days in the Santa Ana school. (Due to a variety of factors, the duration of classroom observations at each school was limited; however, crucial data regarding ethnic imagery was identified at each site.) In the former school (Piedras Negras), I observed the pre-primary, first and second grade teachers for one full teaching day each. More observation time was not allotted to these grades because the focus of the curriculum at the primary level is almost entirely on basic literacy, penmanship, and arithmatic skills. I spent two full teaching days observing the third/fourth grades and the fifth/sixth grades teachers. In the Santa Ana school I observed teachers in grades three through six. Usually two-day observations were conducted on consecutive days.

In most cases, teachers were aware of the days the observation was to occur prior to the visit.

Observation data were recorded in handwritten field notes. No teachers' names were used in this report in order to provide anonymity to individuals involved in the study. Even in my field notes, no teachers' names were recorded. Rather, each teacher observed or interviewed was assigned a code number determined by the order of the school visited, grade taught, and, in cases in which more than one teacher in the same grade was observed, by order of observation. For example, in the first school in which observations were conducted, the first first grade teacher to be observed was assigned the number 1.1.1 denoting schocl number "one," "first grade," and "first teacher" observed in that grade. Had subsequent observations been made of another first grade teacher in the same school, that teacher would be assigned 1.1.2 denoting school number "one," "first grade," "second teacher" observed.

Data for each school were recorded in separate notebooks. This procedure was thought to be less obtrusive and less intimidating than other possible means including electronic recordings or photographs. I recorded each teacher's verbal communications, independent of content, to students as they transpired. The teacher's behavior was also noted. Where necessary for understanding the teacher's behavior or comments, student behavior or comments were also recorded. I used a watch to fix the time of classroom events, such as a change in

instruction from a lecture to guided practice or from one subject to another. The observation notes for each class also included a description of the room and of materials used by pupils and teacher. At the end of each day of observation, I read the field notes and made the necessary corrections and additions. The system that I developed for categorizing teacher behavior and attitudes was presented elsewhere (Wilhelm 1991). This codification system permitted the quantification of patterns of teacher behavior and facilitated comparisons between teachers and schools.

Teacher Interview Protocol

An important aspect of each observation experience was an interview with each teacher observed. In addition, I conducted informal interviews with other teachers who were not observed. At the Piedras Negras school, I observed and interviewed the entire staff of five teachers. At the Santa Ana school, I observed four of the seven teachers and interviewed all six Maya teachers. For the entire project, 41 teachers were observed and interviewed in seven schools, including the two PRONEBI schools. Another 17 teachers were interviewed but not observed. Of the 58 teachers interviewed, some 17 or 29 percent were Kaqchikel Maya and 41 or 71 percent were ladino.

Although I developed a protocol, interviews were conducted informally in a variety of circumstances. Most were conducted before or after class or during recess. For example, all of the teachers at the Piedras Negras school ate breakfast together at

recess. I joined them and was able to talk with them together about their understanding of the curriculum, their students and parents. At the Santa Ana school, I rode daily on a bus from Chimaltenango with several of the teachers and also ate breakfast each morning with two of them. As in Piedras Negras, my interest in our conversations focused on the teachers' understanding of their job, the curriculum, their students, and the community. Other interviews were conducted while waiting for or riding on buses or walking along dusty roads to and from school. In a few cases, sufficient rapport developed such that I was invited into the teacher's home for a meal. Not all teachers were asked every question in the protocol because, in many cases, the information arose naturally as part of the conversation. The teachers' responses to questions were recorded in the field notes following my return home each day from the observation experience or conversation. My questions were intended to provide background information about teachers' preparation and experience as well as their attitudes regarding the culture and ethnicity of students and parents. Also investigated were teachers' attitudes towards the Ministry of Education policies and programs as they were related to ethnicity.

I also used the teacher interview to identify the textbooks used by teachers and students. These books constituted the content for the second phase (content analysis) of the research. Field notes were analyzed to develop a list of textbooks used by students and a list used by teachers. Two forms were designed to indicate

the textbooks used in each grade and subject and to quantify specifically how they were used by students and by teachers.

NON-PRONEBI NATIONAL CURRICULAR IMAGES

Most ladino teachers, using the traditional, national, non-PRONEBI curriculum, promoted an exclusive national Guatemalan identity that included romanticized images of pride in the pre-Columbian Maya culture and in the historic bravery of the Maya resistance to Spanish rule. A crucial element in Guatemalan nationalism, which was projected by both government and commercially published textbooks, was an anti-Spanish attitude in relation to Spanish cruelty toward the indigenous population and toward the criollo/ladino independence movement. As important, nevertheless, was the dominant positive image of the Spanish as bearers of "civilization" to the indigenous population. Textbook description of Guatemalan national culture placed heavy emphasis on the contributions of the Spanish colonists and offered only limited mention of any historic or continuing Maya influence in the national development. The preferred knowledge about post-conquest Guatemala, emphasized by non-PRONEBI Guatemalan teachers and textbooks, simply omitted images and information of modern Maya culture, influence, and history. The clear message received by most Guatemalan school children was that although Spanish conquerors and colonists were cruel to their ancient Maya and criollo/ladino ancestors, the cultural knowledge and organization of modern Guatemala was established on the more advanced Spanish, not on the vanquished Maya, culture.

CONQUEST OR INVASION IN PIEDRAS NEGRAS

The content of a social studies lesson observed in the third/fourth grades indicated that the PRONEBI curriculum and textbooks presented interpretations of the Spanish arrival in the region that were clearly different from those taught by the ladino teachers in other schools visited in the study. A Maya teacher in the Piedras Negras school told her students to read in the PRONEBI social studies textbook about the early Maya civilization and the arrival of the Spanish. (Although she told them to read the passage in Spanish and also in Kaqchikel, only one fourth grade boy appeared to read in Kaqchikel). Then, she lectured in Kaqchikel using a chalk drawing of the ceiba tree (Ceiba pentandra) to explain that the early Maya were like the roots and trunk of the tree and the students were their descendants, the branches and leaves. She told them that the ceiba, which was the national tree of Guatemala, was also sacred to the Maya. She discussed the advances of the Maya civilization and the divisions into different language groups before the Spanish came. She lectured and asked questions in Kaqchikel but received no answers from the students other than "Ja" ("Yes") when she asked if they were Maya. The lecture followed closely the information in the third grade social studies textbook, Ri kac'aslen quiq'uin ri winaki' pa tak tinamit rox juna' (Our Community Life, Third Year).

The most striking aspect of her lecture was her nuanced interpretation of the terms "conquest" and "invasion." She told students to find the word "invadir" (invade) in their dictionaries.

She read the definition aloud and explained, "Some say that the Spanish came to conquer. We do not say that they conquered but that they came to invade." She further explained that the Spanish took the land away from the Maya and forced them to change their language, clothes, religion, and customs. She added, "Since the Spanish came, we have lost a lot. They made us talk Spanish, wear different clothes, and gave us poor salaries. The people were afraid and lost their customs." She referred back to the ceiba tree and said that though they now had different languages and different styles of clothing, they were still Maya. The teacher, then, summarized the lesson in Spanish.

Later, I asked the teacher what she understood to be the difference between the terms "conquest" and "invasion." She explained that she understood the term "conquest" to mean that the Spanish came "en buena forma" (in good form or style); i.e., peacefully with good intentions, but, she added, "That was not the case." She reported that she used the term "invasion" because the Spanish came with trickery and brought war and slavery. The teacher explained to me that she told her students that, in school, she was never taught the truth about the invasion. She said that other, non-PRONEBI textbooks used the term "conquest" rather than "invasion." She added that it was only after she read books, such as Los Cakchiqueles en la conquista de Guatemala by Francis Polo Sifontes, that she came to know more about what the Spaniards did.

My analysis, reported elsewhere, of non-PRONEBI textbooks published by the government and by commercial publishers

demonstrated that the terms "invasion" and "conquest" were used interchangeably (Wilhelm 1991). The treatment of the Spanish arrival in the third and fourth grade textbooks of two widely used commercial publishers leaves no doubt that the Spanish conquest was carried out with violence against the indigenous population. Yet, this Maya teacher clearly believed the non-PRONEBI textbooks and the regular curriculum presented an inaccurate picture of the events surrounding the encounter of Maya and Spanish cultures. By choosing to describe the encounter as an invasion rather than as a conquest, this teacher engaged in a counterhegemonic polemic with the prevailing Guatemalan view.

At issue in the debate appears to be an attempt by Maya intellectuals to redefine the history and, thus, the nature of ethnic relations in Guatemala. Embedded in the term "conquest" are other concepts such as the technological, cultural, and moral superiority of the conquerors over the conquered. These concepts form the framework for a dominant ideology that is used to justify ladino actions against the Maya. The term "invasion," on the other hand, suggests the violent and immoral disruption of one established culture by another. Such a reconceptualization of the origins of interethnic relations provides the subordinate power group, the Maya, with ideological justification and space from which to resist the historically inequitable ladino exercise of power, an important element of which is the ladino etic definition of the indígena.

MAYA HEROES AND SPANISH INVADERS IN SANTA ANA

Maya ethnic images were promoted in social studies lessons in the third and fifth grades in the Santa Ana school. The third grade teacher in a social studies lesson about the outstanding Maya leaders at the time of the Spanish arrival referred to the Spanish as "invaders." Instead of lecturing, this teacher chose to use the PRONEBI social studies books. She read a passage in Kaqchikel and then called on students to read the same passage aloud in Spanish. She told the class to applaud when each student finished reading. After each student read about a leader, the teacher, first, in Kaqchikel and, then, in Spanish, asked students to state the accomplishments of each Maya leader. The students responded orally, first, in Kaqchikel and, then, in Spanish.

The lesson was significantly different from social studies lessons about the Maya civilization taught by ladino teachers in other schools visited in that several Maya leaders were discussed. The regular (non-PRONEBI) social studies curriculum did not emphasize Maya leaders other than the legendary K'iche' Maya leader and Guatemalan national hero, Tecún Umán.

In sharp contrast to most other schools visited, no illustrations of Tecún Umán were displayed in this school. In fact, the fifth grade teacher in a social studies lesson on the arrival of the Spanish and the subsequent response of the indigenous population questioned the existence of the K'iche' leader and added a different interpretation to the events of the conquest. The teacher began the lesson by explaining that,

recently, he had taken a group of parents to the Maya ruins of Iximche', the center of Kaqchikel culture in pre-Columbian Guatemala and the first Spanish capital after the conquest. He explained to the class that many parents had never been there before although the ruins were easily reached from Santa Ana. The teacher lamented,

> We don't know our own history. There are many things they (the ladinos) have told us that are legend and are not true. Just because it's in a book doesn't mean that it's true.

The teacher lectured about the trips which Columbus made to the Western Hemisphere. He asked rhetorically,

> How did those who followed Columbus take the land? They did it with weapons fighting against the indígenas. Pedro de Alvarado did not have orders to kill people. The conquest orders (from the Viceroy of New Spain to de Alvarado) were to conquer peacefully.

This teacher's interpretation echoed the definition of "conquest" given by the third/fourth grades teacher in the Piedras Negras school. The Spanish had orders to conquer new territory "in good form," but instead they invaded bringing war and slavery. (On this point, the fourth grade PRONEBI textbook states, "The instructions given by Cortés to Alvarado were the same as those given to other subordinate invaders. Some of them were: to win the lands peacefully, even though this was not fulfilled, and to preach the Catholic religion to them, the indigenous" (no date:66).

A major point of this teacher's lecture was to demythologize Tecún Umán. He stated that such a personage as Tecún Umán never existed. Rather, he was an invention of the Spanish. The teacher

explained that, according to the legend, Tecún Umán was the grandson of a K'iche' leader known as Quicab; however, the teacher said that the name "Tecún Umán" never appeared in the Maya writings that survived the conquest. He claimed that the K'iche' leader against whom the Spanish actually fought was named Rajpop Achij. The teacher's assertion may seem a minor point; however, the only Maya celebrated with a national holiday and school festivities is Tecún Umán. He is the only Guatemalan, whether Maya or ladino, to be called "National Hero." Therefore, to call into question his very existence and attribute it to the oppressor group can be interpreted appropriately only as a counterhegemonic stance against the dominant ideology.

This teacher also further expanded his point that the Spanish and ladinos had created their own version of indigenous reality by a lecture on one aspect of the conquest story--the infamous alliance between the Kaqchikeles and the Spanish. He presented an alternative interpretation of this alliance with an initial explanation of the traditional version. In the traditional ladino interpretation of the conquest of Guatemala, found in most government and commercially published textbooks, the Spanish achieved military success over the indigenous population because the various Maya groups were divided and fought among themselves. According to this popular interpretation, the Kaqchikel people were portrayed as traitors to the indigenous cause due to their early alliance with the Spanish against the K'iche' and Tz'utujil groups. This fifth grade teacher, however, described the Kaqchikel alliance

not as a traitorous act, but, as an astute political strategy so as to be in a better military position later to conquer the Spanish. He explained that a Kaqchikel resident of Iximche', who was a spy for the Spanish, informed them of the Kaqchikel leaders' strategy, and the result was that Pedro de Alvarado had the leaders burned alive as examples to other groups. In this brief lecture, the teacher countered the dominant view about the treachery of the Kaqchikel people and also provided his Kaqchikel students with a reason to be proud of their ancestors.

The teacher finished his lecture and began a dictation about the conquest taken from a popularly used commercial textbook, Enciclopedia temática. The version of events in this textbook was typical of the traditional approach seen in non-PRONEBI schools wherein the images of the Spanish and indigenous populations were supportive of the dominant ideology. The textbook's attitude toward the Maya differed markedly from the attitude advanced in the teacher's lesson. This contradiction in images and information did not signify an attempt by the teacher to teach with "objectivity." Rather, the contradictions between the lecture and the dictation illustrated the limited availability to teachers and students of materials with views other than those that maintain and promote the historical and cultural common sense of the dominant ladino elite. The PRONEBI program terminated at the fourth grade and, consequently, there were no textbooks written from a Maya perspective for Maya youngsters beyond that level.

This phenomenon illuminated one restriction to counterhegemonic practice; i.e., the dominant culture controlled access to cultural knowledge, first, by creating the reality of the subordinate group and, then, by restricting the distribution of knowledge in textbooks. The teacher, in this instance, made no mention to his students of the contradictions in information between his lecture and the dictation. His dilemma was a common one for Guatemalan teachers; i.e., his initial counterhegemonic intent was circumscribed by his limited educational resources and also by his instructional methodology.

ELEMENTS OF COUNTERHEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY IN THE PRONEBI CURRICULUM

Detailed examination of the PRONEBI curriculum guides and social studies books provided substantial evidence to demonstrate that Maya teachers in Piedras Negras and Santa Ana were officially guided and supported in their counterhegemonic efforts. Also evident, however, were apparent inconsistencies in the conquest/invasion polemic. For example, the curriculum guide to the fourth grade social studies textbook suggested three learning activities related to the concepts of "invasion" and "conquest":

> 1) Ask the children what they understand by conquest and invasion and then give examples of each situation.
> 2) Together with the children deduce whether a conquest or an invasion occurred in Central America.
> 3) Specify to the children the Spanish personages who were prominent in the invasion of Central America. [no date:12]

However, the guide provided no further information or instructions to the teacher to facilitate a clear distinction between the two

terms. Indeed, as may be seen in the following passage, the fourth grade social studies textbook used both terms interchangeably:

> The arrival of the Spanish to Central American territory has been called a conquest; however, what occurred was a true invasion. These lands were already inhabited by aborigines.
> The conquest of Central America was initiated from two directions: One coming from the Gulf of Darién, in the south, by Pedrarias Dávila; and the other from México in the north by Hernán Cortés.
> The Spanish who headed the invasions were: from the south, Pedrarias Dávila, Gil Gonzáles Dávila, Francisco Hernández de Córdova y Gaspar de Espinoza, for Costa Rica and Nicaragua; from the north, sent by Cortés, Cristóbal de Olid and Pedro de Alvarado for Honduras; and for Guatemala and El Salvador, Pedro, Jorge and Gonzalo de Alvarado and their descendants. (emphasis mine) [no date:62]

Several learning activities suggested in the fourth grade curriculum guide, appear to foster a critical approach to ethnic identity and history. In order to teach the learning objective, "Identify correctly the principal personages (heroes) of the indigenous groups in Central America," the teacher should:

> 1) Talk with the children about the reasons why the indigenous leaders resisted the invasion.
> 2) Explain to the children what were the objectives of the invasion.
> 3) Together with the children, establish where and how the invasion was carried out against each indigenous group.
> 4) Together with the children, identify which indigenous personages offered their life in each battle.
> 5) Determine together with the children the dates to celebrate the memory of each hero of Central America.
> 6) Talk with the children about whether the education and civil authorities give importance to these dates. [no date:14]

The list of suggested activities demonstrates an attempt to teach Maya school children to examine critically the history of their

people. The learning activities emphasize ethnic pride and also contain elements of critique of the dominant view of Guatemalan ethnic history. Of particular interest to a discussion of counterhegemonic practices are items No. 5 and No. 6. These items combine an emphasis on ethnic pride with a critical analysis of the current symbolic practices regarding figures important to Maya history of local and national government authorities (most of whom are ladino). A class discussion about whether these Maya heroes are celebrated in official practices can provide students with ". . . theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interest of social and self-emancipation" (Giroux 1983:290).

Another set of suggested learning activities in the same curriculum guide further illuminates how a curriculum may embody a counterhegemonic approach to schooling. In order to achieve the learning objective, "Analyze critically the characteristics of Spanish domination in Central America," the following activities are suggested:

1) Ask the students to state approximately how much land their parents own.
2) Explain to the students how the indigenous groups lost their lands.
3) Explain to the children how slavery was carried out and is carried out today.
4) Talk with the children about the Maya religion and priests and how they were lost little by little.
5) Explain to the children what the Spanish did with the temples and sacred books of the indigenous (groups).
6) Specify to the children what the role of the (Catholic) priests was and what language they used. [no date:14]

In a country in which an estimated 2.2 percent of the population owns over two-thirds of the arable land and approximately 82 percent of Guatemalan children under the age of five suffer from some degree of malnutrition (Guatemalan Human Rights Commission/USA 1988), the potential emancipatory power in a classroom examination and critique of land tenure is strikingly revealed. As important to an ideology of resistance is the critical analysis of the systematic dismantling of the Maya religion proposed in Nos. 4-6.

The fourth grade social studies curriculum guide further provides opportunities for a discourse of resistance with activities related to Guatemalan independence from Spain. Significantly, one suggested learning activity brings a critical immediacy to the question of liberty: "Have the children analyze the current state of our freedom" (no date:15). As with the question of land tenure, the potential counterhegemonic power of this activity is illuminated only within the larger social context of the recent violence directed by the ladino elite and Guatemalan military against the Maya population. The trauma and destruction during the violent period (1979-1984) suffered by Maya groups throughout Guatemala has been documented and discussed in detail by Manz (1988) and Carmack (1988).

Important to developing a counterhegemonic stance among students are two elements present in suggested learning activities in the PRONEBI curriculum guide: 1) an emphasis on pride in one's culture and a respect for the culture of others and, 2) the use of students' and parents' cultural capital in the classroom. The

social studies curriculum guide presented the following culture-centered learning activities:

> 1) Explore the children's knowledge of their culture.
> 2) Analyze, together with the children, the situation of indigenous culture in colonial times and today in terms of western culture.
> 3) Have the children ask their parents and siblings what they think about indigenous culture.
> 4) Explain to children that no culture is better than another.
> 5) Explain to children why some indígenas lose their identity and how that affects indígena culture.
> 6) Talk with the children about what should be our attitude and our behavior as indígenas.
> [no date:17]

The emancipatory nature of these activities most appropriately is understood within the context of the dominant ideology's multitude of negative images of the Maya population that are promoted in the mass media and reinforced in the common culture. A detailed review of the literature that examines these images has been presented elsewhere (Wilhelm 1991).

The agenda displayed in these activities may be interpreted as an attempt to build ethnic pride and to counter the hegemonic view about the Maya. Such an agenda seems to be a necessary initial step toward self- as well as social emancipation.

An interesting series of images in the third grade PRONEBI social studies textbook contrasted positive, peaceful images of the Maya with negative images of the Spanish invaders. (Indirect critiques of the dominant group in the form of certain dances and humor have constituted an integral part of the Maya culture during the post-conquest period.) The ancient Maya were depicted as a people " . . . accustomed to living in peace . . ." (1989:43).

Whenever a problem arose, everyone, together, resolved it peacefully. According to one story, the peacefulness of the Maya was rooted in their belief in the "law of compensation": "If I do good, good I expect. If I do evil, evil I expect" (1989:49). The Maya prepared for religious ceremonies by prohibiting arguments and maintaining a "tranquil spirit" (1989:51). Another passage dealing with Maya metallurgy emphasized the peaceful use of gold, silver, and copper:

> They never used the metals for war because they were not accustomed to fighting. They were convinced that there was no (reason) to harm the beings of nature, much less the human being. [1989:45]

The peaceful images of the Maya were distinguished clearly from those projected in other discussions in the same third grade book about the Spanish and the criollos (Guatemalan born Spaniards). From the voyages of Columbus through the Spanish conquest and colonial period to the post-independence period, the book presented a series of negative images of the Spanish. For example, of Columbus' voyages, the text read, "Fights arose among them (sailors), reaching death and robbery" (1989:67). Descriptions of the conquest, colonial, and post-independence periods emphasized the violent rivalries that developed among the conquistadores and later among the criollo and ladino caudillos (political-military leaders) of the Liberal and Conservative parties.

The sharp contrast in the two groups' images offered Maya children clear models and values for how they were to live their

lives as Maya. More significantly, in terms of resistance, the almost stereotypical images offered an indirect, moral critique of the Spanish, criollos, and ladinos. They also appeared to provide a justification for a redress of grievances and historically inequitable power relations.

The PRONEBI curriculum clearly emphasized pride in and the common origins of Maya culture. As observed in the third/fourth grades social studies lessons in Piedras Negras, the third grade book advanced a unified Maya identity in a comparison of the Maya race and descendants with their sacred tree and Guatemala's national symbol, the ceiba:

> The roots and the trunk of the ceiba represent our ancestors. We come from the Maya roots and trunk, for that (reason) we are also Maya. [1989:40]

Statements in other PRONEBI books encouraged students to be proud of their ethnicity and culture and to respect the language, dress, and religious differences of other groups. Seen as a counterhegemonic strategy, this approach sought to accomplish two goals. First, resistance that leads to self- and social emancipation for Maya pupils must be grounded in ethnic pride. Maya children must study symbols and history that counter the ubiquitous, dominant negative messages they receive from the macro-society about their ethnic group. Second, pride in the numerous manifestations of Maya culture is a prerequisite for a national Maya identity.

In terms of counterhegemony, a unified Maya population at the national level (a recent concept in Guatemala) could present

serious challenges to the political and economic power domains of the traditional elite. The foundations for social emancipation appear to begin with a process of counterhegemonic self-empowerment.

COUNTERHEGEMONIC MEANINGS IN GUATEMALAN TEACHER PRACTICE AND CURRICULUM CONTENT

Kaqchikel Maya teachers in the two PRONEBI schools, supported by a curriculum that emphasized the Maya culture, projected alternative interpretations of the Spanish entry into Guatemala. These versions of the Spanish "invasion" challenged the legitimacy of the traditional, dominant Guatemalan version promoted by ladino teachers. Thus, Maya children in PRONEBI schools were treated to a strikingly different understanding of the origin of ethnic relations in Guatemala, one that advanced the legitimacy of Maya culture. Simultaneously, Maya as well as ladino children in non-PRONEBI schools learned a preferred version of the origins of ethnic relations that promoted the Spanish as great conquerors who brought civilization to the Americas and depreciated the value of the Maya culture.

The alternative interpretations of the concepts "conquest" and "invasion," observed in social studies instruction and in PRONEBI social studies textbooks, signaled the use of the schooling experience to resist and challenge dominant ladino definitions of Guatemalan history and ethnic relationships. The emphasis on the concept of "invasion" appeared to be an effort by some Maya intellectuals (PRONEBI curriculum specialists, Maya linguists, and

PRONEBI teachers) to assert a revision of the history of relationships between the Spanish and their descendants and the Maya and their descendants. This redefinition of concepts can be interpreted as an attempt at cultural empowerment and a clear example of the potential in schooling for resistance to dominant ideology. On the other hand, the inclusion of such apparently counterhegemonic notions in a national curriculum also seemed to reflect a recognition by some Ministry of Education officials and, perhaps, by foreign funding sources, such as USAID/Guatemala, that the Maya population might be incorporated more easily into national economic spheres by an emphasis on their diverse cultural worth rather than on past official policies of cultural assimilation.

Another area of historical revision apparent in the PRONEBI social studies curriculum, particularly in the third grade, was the portrayal of pre-Columbian Maya as a peaceful people. The strong emphasis on their peaceful nature and the clear omission of a discussion of historically well-documented wars of empire and human sacrifice among various Maya groups provided evidence that historical revisionism may serve the ideology of a subordinate ethnic group as well as that of a dominant group.

This emphasis in the PRONEBI curriculum may be understood appropriately as an effort to project positive images about Maya culture in order to counter and to resist the predominant and prevalent negative attitudes toward the Maya. The critical nature of this emphasis emerges particularly when the positive images are contrasted in the textbooks with negative descriptions of the

violent behavior of the Spanish "invaders" and subsequent criollo/ladino leaders. On the other hand, the peaceful images of the ancient Maya, from an accommodationist perspective, also support the traditional, albeit historically inaccurate ladino stereotype of indígenas as humble, passive, and backward people.

One other factor seems important to an accurate interpretation of the intent of the PRONEBI curriculum. The PRONEBI textbooks were written and field tested during the recent period of national violence (1979-1984)--a period when the Guatemalan military uprooted and slaughtered thousands of Maya who were suspected of supporting a leftist guerrilla movement. When understood within this context of Guatemalan social reality, the promotion of the peaceful nature of the Maya and the violent nature of their Spanish oppressors (to whom the Guatemalan military is heir), as portrayed in the PRONEBI social studies curriculum, holds at least two possible interpretations: 1) From an accomodationist or conformist view, the images may be interpreted as a symbolic, official effort by a program of the Ministry of Education to change the self-image of a rebellious Maya population involved in guerilla warfare to that of a docile group; and 2) within the context of the recent violence, the images also may be interpreted as a subtle, indirect condemnation of the continued use by the ladino power elite of the strategy of extermination of Maya culture.

LIMITATIONS TO COUNTERHEGEMONY IN PRONEBI SCHOOLS

The crucial element in whether all of the suggested learning activities previously discussed actually achieve a counterhegemonic thrust is how they are made incarnate in the classrooms. Several prominent factors appear to limit the degree to which Maya teachers and students can or will implement a counterhegemonic approach to learning. First, although the theoretical potential and curricular support appears to exit, the larger reality of education in Guatemala, particularly as it relates to the Maya, is that the dominant elite has proved time and again that it will resort to a policy of extermination to eliminate perceived challenges to its power domain. Guatemalan teachers, especially Maya teachers, are acutely aware of that fact and therefore may self-censure and stop short of promoting a true counterhegemonic approach to learning. They may opt for more subtle forms of "relevant cultural resistance" (Shamai, 1987), such as indirect critiques previously discussed, in order to protect themselves and their students.

Guatemalan political reality and its ubiquitous attendant threat of the extermination strategy severely limit the implementation of a counterhegemonic curriculum among Maya PRONEBI teachers in particular. Other factors, more directly related to education, also appear to restrict the teachers' capabilities of resistance. In addition to limited availability of resources written by Maya scholars for Maya pupils, the instructional methodology employed by the observed teachers worked against a Freirean understanding of self-empowerment. In those cases in

which the content of the lesson may be interpreted as counterhegemonic, the teachers presented the material in a didactic style characteristic of the Freirean notion of "banking" (Freire 1970); i.e., passive students received information through the teacher's lecture or dictation, recorded the information in notebooks, and memorized the recorded information for future classroom regurgitation. Basically, a content with counterhegemonic potential replaced traditional content--Spanish invasion of a flourishing Maya culture replaced Spanish conquest with its attendant images of cultural superiority; however, the learning process remained unchanged and, therefore, the emancipatory potential of the curriculum was weakened.

This Guatemalan dilemma raises a problematic question that merits further study beyond the Guatemalan case: To what extent can students who learn potentially emancipatory content through non-emancipatory methodology use their knowledge for social and self-transformation.

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