

Indigenous Immigrant Youth's Understanding of Indigeneity: Language, Power Inequities, and
Self-Understanding

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Abstract

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This qualitative study seeks to address the question of how indigenous immigrant youth from Latin America make sense of indigeneity in their countries of origin and in the United States. For the last couple of decades, there has been a great expansion of scholarship in the area of Latina/o education. As the field has proliferated, studies focusing on the variation within Latina/o populations have also emerged, including variation based on different countries of origin (e.g., Darder & Torres, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, 1987) and gender (e.g., Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). One highly significant yet under-investigated source of variation within the Latina/o population are indigenous immigrants from Latin America (Barajas & Ruiz, 2012). This group has been routinely silenced in their countries of origin and subsumed within the study of Latina/os in the U.S. (e.g., Stephen, 2007; Urrieta, 2013). While their identities may be collapsed, their struggles are unique and persist. Because of the systematic ways indigenous populations have been rendered invisible, I use a “coloniality of power lens” (Dussel, 1995; Lugones, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 1995, 2000; Quijano, 2000) to foreground systems of oppression and power and the construction of the self and other (Corntassel, 2003, 2012; Holm, Pearson, & Chavis, 2003).

In order to better understand the experiences of indigenous Latin American youth who had migrated to the U.S., I conducted a qualitative study of eight self-identifying indigenous

youth from Mexico and Guatemala. Primary data for this study consists of interviews with focal youth. Other data gathered include interviews with non-self-identified indigenous Latino youth, two teachers, and one Bilingual Student Services Facilitator. Analysis of the youth's interviews yielded three important findings. The first relates to asymmetries of power based on language. The youth described hierarchies of language, the economic opportunities afforded to Spanish speakers, and the subordinate position of indigenous languages. The second finding relates to their understanding of the discrimination indigenous peoples experienced in countries of origin and in the United States. In particular, the youth identified the use of "*indio*" as a racial epithet. *Indio* is an important vestige of coloniality as it positions indigenous peoples as inferior. The third finding elaborates on how the youth made sense of themselves and others. Participants relied on the use of indicators for making sense of the category "indigenous;" through these indicators, the youth revealed a partial understanding of their own indigeneity. I posit that the process of sense making the youth engaged in exhibited particular kinds of understanding and awareness of indigeneity, including their own and of others.

This dissertation is an important contribution to the field of Latina/o education because it fills empirical and conceptual gaps. First, it shows the forms of oppression and systems of power indigenous youth understand and operate from. It also provides insights into how indigenous youth make sense of themselves and of others from their own particular lived experiences. It gives a textual space for the youth to talk about themselves in ways that are self-affirming (Smith, 1999). The second contribution relates to the historicizing of racial formations in Latina/o education. Understanding the experiences of indigenous immigrant youth requires an unpacking of racial formations tied to power inequities. The coloniality of power is one frame that historically situates the construction of a racial/economic hierarchy in the Americas. As

indigenous immigrant youth continue to immigrate, the coloniality of power lens helps us understand vestiges of coloniality currently present in their contexts of departure and colonizing contexts of reception.

DEDICATION

To the indigenous immigrant youth, and their families whom I have met and had the privilege of working with throughout the many years. They have taught me much about their indigenous experiences and their hopes and dreams for themselves and their children. Special dedication to Hernández, Pedro, Alder, Edward, Weas, Elías, Joaquín, and Antonio without whom this study would have not been possible.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my past and present relatives. To my parents and siblings. To my *abuelita* Maria A. Pérez, and *abuelito* José Ciriaco Pirique Chón who are no longer in this physical world. And to my son, Quetzal Diego Barillas Sánchez. I want him to grow up understanding that in addition to the many groups of people he has been born into and that he will member himself into, he is also indigenous, just like his father and his ancestors.

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My journey to the Ph.D. started way back in Guatemala when my father, David Barillas Pérez, decided to immigrate to the U.S. alone. Three years after leaving Guatemala he returned to my hometown, Palín, to bring my mother, Marta Dominga Chón de Barillas, and my sister, Sara Barillas Chón to the United States. My older brothers, Saul and Rolando, who at the time were 14 and 15 years old, respectively, were left behind. The journey I have taken on is one with all of them. I thank them all for their unconditional love and support.

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In 2010 I decided to take a different path away from Graduate studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Two years later, while living in Seattle, I was fortunate enough to continue the Ph.D. at the University of Washington. I thank Dr. Irene Monica Sánchez for encouraging me to go back to school and finish the Ph.D. I also thank Dr. Filiberto Barajas for taking me as his Ph.D. student. As it happens in life, paths diverge and I was fortunate enough to find Dr. Kara Jackson and Dr. Dafney Blanca Dabach to take me as their Ph.D. advisee. Dr. Kara Jackson has provided me with patient guidance. I admire her critical insights and the ways she compellingly, carefully, critically, and compassionately crafts her positions. Dr. Dabach has been instrumental in my thinking more deeply about Latina/o education. I am in awe of her expansive knowledge of the field of immigration and Latina/o education. I also want to thank Dr. Megan Bang, and Dr. Janelle Silva for agreeing to be part of my dissertation committee. They are amazing human beings, wonderful educators, superb researchers, and community leaders.

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Chapter One: Studying Indigenous Latin American Youth

Allá donde vivimos [en Oaxaca] los indígenas son los que hablan dialecto para nosotros. [Pero para los]...racistas, los latinos, [indígenas] son los que hablan un dialecto o los que visten diferentes a los [otros]...Entonces cuando mencionan, “los indígenas,” pues ya este, vamos a la palabra indio. Es lo que viene [a mente]. Entonces, ese “es indio,” cuando dicen “indígena.” Es lo que nosotros nos definimos con esa palabra de indígena, que viene de indio...Una persona india es, para mi todos los oaxaqueños. Pero no todos lo aceptamos. El que vive en la ciudad dice que es más civilizado. Según ellos, los indios son los de pueblitos más lejanos (Pedro)

Over where we live [in Oaxaca] indigenous people for us are those that speak *dialecto* [indigenous languages]. [But for]...racists, Latinos, [indigenous] are those that speak a *dialecto* or those that dress differently [from others]...So when they say, “indigenous,” well then, it leads to the word “*indio*.” That’s what comes [to mind]. So, he is “*indio*” when they say he is “indigenous.” That’s how we identify ourselves with the word indigenous, which stems from *indio*...An “indian” person is, for me, every Oaxaqueño. But not everyone accepts this. Those that live in the city say that they are more civilized. According to them, *indios* are those from tucked away villages (Pedro)

Pedro, a 20 year-old youth from Oaxaca, Mexico, shared the above experiences regarding his understating of the category “indigenous.” Pedro, a self-identified indigenous person was one of the focal youth of this study. In sharing his understanding, Pedro relied on indicators he associated with indigenous peoples. In the above quotation one of the indicators Pedro used was *dialectos*, a term used to refer to indigenous languages. Another indicator he used, as apparent in his statement that all Oaxaqueños were “*indio*,” is geographic location of origin. Moreover, his use of the word “*indio*” when talking about indigenous people is of particular importance because he saw a direct relationship between the two. For Pedro, the word indigenous emerged out of the category *indio*. Indigenous was therefore synonymous with *indio*. He elaborated on the category *indio* by saying that he believed everyone in Oaxaca was *indio*/indigenous despite people not accepting this. One reason he alluded for Oaxaqueña/os not accepting an indigenous or *indio* background related to the perception that *indio*/indigenous people were not civilized, or civilized enough compared to those living in the city.

I begin with sharing Pedro's partial experiences to introduce this dissertation because it is exemplary of how indigenous youth in this study understood the category "indigenous" and how they made sense of indigeneity, their own as well as others. As we can see in Pedro's account, there were specific ways, for example through the use of indicators, that he understood what it meant to be indigenous. As I will show in this study, other indigenous youth relied on similar and additional indicators for making sense of indigeneity. Pedro was extremely insightful in his understanding of the relationships between indigenous and "*indio*" categories. For him, the later emerged from the former. However, what are the historical roots of *indio* and what was the purpose behind its creation? These questions are important to consider because they have repercussions for how *indios*/indigenous peoples are viewed, and treated, as Pedro alluded to. Pedro also pointed to a denial of an *indio* or indigenous background. This denial is tied, among other reasons, to racial formations in Latin America.

Background and Purpose

Latina/os continue to be the largest racialized minority group in the United States (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011; Stepler & Lopez, 2016). Moreover, the number of Latina/o students in U.S. public schools continues to grow compared to other racialized groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In recent years, the U.S. has also experienced a surge in the number of unaccompanied minors crossing into the U.S. from Mexico and Central America (Donato & Sisk, 2015). According to Stinchomb and Hershberg (2014), unaccompanied minors from Guatemala, for example, tend to come from rural (often predominantly indigenous) areas such as the Western Highlands, which include El Quiché department. Some of these youth are successful in their crossing over and have found their ways into U.S. schools. Others have also pointed to the diversity of Latina/os in public education (e.g., Darder & Torres, 2014).

Despite of the diversity of Latina/os, there is nominal work in the field of Latina/o education attending explicitly to the experiences of Latin American indigenous immigrants—specifically *as* indigenous immigrants. The few studies that have investigated indigenous experiences tend to focus on their post-primary and secondary schooling (Casanova, 2012; Casanova, O’Connor & Anthony-Stevens, 2016), indigenous parents’ perspectives and attitudes towards schooling (Ruiz & Barajas, 2012), examination of linguistic diversity and characteristics (Pérez, Vasquez, & Buriel, 2016), and pedagogical interventions based on linguistic and cultural assets (Menchaca Bishop & Kelley, 2013; Ruiz & Barajas, 2012, Velasco, 2010). Others have examined some of the negative experiences that indigenous youth face in and out of school contexts (Barillas-Chón, 2012; Stephen, 2007). These studies are beginning to outline broader experiences of indigenous immigrant youth. However, none of them have specifically focused on how Latin American indigenous immigrant youth understand and make sense of indigeneity.

Some current studies have begun to employ transnational, “binational”, or “transborder” lenses for understanding indigenous experiences (e.g., Fox 2005, 2006; Stephen, 2007). Lynn Stephen’s critical work on “transborder” immigrants, for example, shows the physical, social, cultural and racial borders that indigenous peoples cross in the United States and Mexico. As I will discuss in Chapter Two of this dissertation, transborder or transnational lenses do not quite capture the complex experiences of indigenous immigrants—particularly of the forms of discrimination based on race they experience in the their countries of origin and in the United States. One such frame that examines power dynamics based on race that some Latina/o education scholars have begun to utilize is coloniality (Barajas, 2012; Urrieta, 2013).

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine indigenous immigrant Latin American youth’s understanding of indigeneity, theirs and of others. The study focuses on eight self-

identified indigenous youth from Guatemala (six) and Mexico (two). The conceptual frame utilized to make sense of their experiences is grounded in the literature on coloniality, particularly the “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2000).

This dissertation represents a contribution to the field of Latina/o education because it fills empirical and conceptual gaps. On the empirical level, findings from this dissertation will provide educators with insights into these youth’s experiences.¹ Such insights provide important context to educators working with indigenous youth. On the conceptual level, understanding indigenous youth’s experiences from a conceptual frame that foregrounds power dynamics based on race, such as the “coloniality of power” does, provides nuanced understandings of how race and racism operates in the youth’s countries of origin and in the United States.

Research Question

This qualitative study builds on previous research by investigating Latin American indigenous immigrant youth’s understanding of indigeneity. To this end, the overarching research question asked was:

- How do indigenous immigrant youth from Latin America understand and make sense of indigeneity in their countries of origin and in the United States?

The conceptual frame utilized to analyze indigenous youth’s understanding was informed by the literature on coloniality (e.g., Dussel, 1995; Lugones, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 1995, 2000), specifically Anibal Quijano’s (2000) coloniality of power.

My Personal Connection to This Study

My name is David Wotsbely Barillas Chón and I was born in Palín, Guatemala. What I am about to share is a partial story of my indigenous re-member-ing. The reason why I share

¹ “Educators” include practitioners, school staff, and researchers.

this story is because my interest in indigenous youth also stems from my own personal experiences with understanding and making sense of what it means to be indigenous. In many ways, I am also part of this study. As I discuss in Chapter Three of this dissertation, the researcher's position matters in the research questions asked, analytical lens utilized, and methods employed. Moreover, the researcher in qualitative studies is the ultimate instrument of analysis. My indigenous re-member-ing, without a doubt, influenced my interest in indigenous immigrant youth.

Indigenous Re-Member-Ing

I was born to a light-skin father who was born with blond hair (which with time turned black), and to a short, dark-skin mother. I remember as a child my father saying that his last name, Barillas, was Italian and that we were descendants from Italy. It still is unclear to me whether he said this in jest or not. In the past he has self-identified as Hispanic, Latino, or *Guatemalteco*. Ever since he obtained a U.S. citizenship he has also identified as a U.S. citizen or American. I have not heard him identified as *ladino*, which in Guatemala often means a person far removed from their indigenous ancestry due to their economic conditions, Spanish use, and non-indigenous cultural practices and beliefs. My father would never identify as *indígena*. He views *indígenas* as those that speak an indigenous language or have poor Spanish skills, have dark skin, are shorter in height, are from the *rancho*, village, or *campo*, and/or are *campesinos*. My mother has identified as *Guatemalteca* and has hesitated in becoming a U.S. citizen. I have heard my mother say that she is proud of Guatemala and will always be a *Guatemalteca*. I cannot recall hearing her self-identify as indigenous even though she has family members that are indigenous. Growing up in Guatemala and in the U.S. I never heard any of my parents or other family members ever identify as indigenous. It seems that the only times

indigenous peoples were brought up was to talk about them in disdain. It is a sad reality that even in my own home, and in my upbringing, I was subjected to discriminatory views toward indigenous peoples, even as I began my indigenous re-member-ing.

My journey to viewing and considering myself as indigenous began in my mid 20s while attempting a doctorate degree at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The first time I began to deeply think and feel on indigeneity was when I conducted a small qualitative study in Watsonville High School, Watsonville, CA. This was an exploratory study in which I attempted to document and describe the high school experiences of Oaxaqueña/o youth. While I initially did not go into the high school with the aim of focusing on Oaxaqueña/o youth, as I began to get acquainted with them through my volunteering and informal interactions, I started to feel closeness with Oaxaqueña/os. For me, the Oaxaqueña/o youth looked like me, and interacted with others in similar ways I did. Additionally, they were treated by others in the same ways I was treated by my peers in my youth: sometimes ignored, or sometimes made visible only to be put down again and ignored. As I was learning, documenting, interpreting, and writing about the lived experiences the youth shared with me, I was simultaneously thinking about my own lived experiences and how similar they felt to what I was witnessing. In this case, I was making meaning along with the youth about their and my own indigeneity. Up to that moment, I had immersed myself in the literature on Latina/os and education and Latina/os and immigration. These literatures, while speaking broadly about some of the experiences I felt and lived, did not immediately speak to my unique views, feelings and experiences. I felt that just like Oaxaqueña/os, my experiences were not included in the literature on Latina/os, immigration, and education. This initial study, both, provided the foundation for my interest in indigenous and

immigrant youth from Latin America in schools and sparked a process that I have taken on more seriously and cautiously of indigenous re-member-ing.

The process of “member-ing” myself as indigenous and into indigenous communities has been extremely difficult. By “member-ing” I mean including myself as a member of indigenous peoples based on shared lived experiences, worldviews, beliefs, and ways of relating to and being with the world around us. Many times I have questioned the extent of my indigeneity, moving in and out of indigenous group member-ing. For instance, I have asked myself “how much am I truly indigenous?” Or, “if I were to tell indigenous peoples in my town of origin that I am indigenous, would they accept me as such? Would they scoff at me?” Underlying my concerns and insecurities is a larger question of what it means to be indigenous. I have deeply struggled with this question since my initial study of Oaxaqueña/os and have at times hesitated to call myself indigenous—or member-ing as indigenous. Reasons for these are because I do not speak an indigenous language, my parents do not claim indigenous membership, and while I was born in Palín, a town that is proud to be the center of the Poqomam culture, I grew up in California.

How does one then claim indigenous belonging or go about member-ing? It has been through my personal academic journey, intellectual and community work and participation, and personal spiritual reflections, introspection, and “re-memberings” that I have come to view, feel, and speak of myself as indigenous. All these peoples, things, and events I have engaged with have facilitated a re-membering of my indigeneity. By “re-membering” I mean a remembering of my genealogy, my place of origin, and the stories of the Mayan peoples as retold by others in oral traditions and in writing that facilitates a member-ing: thus a remembering to member-ing. My mother and her family are the umbilical cord that physically attaches me to my indigenous

ancestors. My town Palín, a proud indigenous town, grounds me to an indigenous center. The stories I have read in books and heard from others about my Mayan ancestors connect me to other indigenous peoples in Guatemala and the rest of Latin America.

Organizational Structure

In what follows, I present the structure of this dissertation. In Chapter Two, “‘Coloniality Of Power’ As a Framework for Understanding the Immigration and Education of Latina/os”, I synthesize the current literature on immigration, paying particular attention to canonical works on immigration and education. I suggest that while this body of knowledge is extremely important, it is insufficient when understanding the experiences of indigenous immigrants. I argue that a nuanced understanding of indigenous immigrants requires addressing racial formations of peoples natives to the Americas. One particular conceptual frame that historically situates the construction of indigenous peoples in the Americas is coloniality. Emphasis is given to Anibal Quijano’s (2000) “coloniality of power” because it historical situates the invention of indigenous peoples and their placement in different scales of racial/economic hierarchies.

In Chapter Three, “Methodology”, I describe the methodological choices for this study. I highlight how Linda T. Smith’s (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies* informed this study. Description of the focus youth in this study is also provided. Here, my positionality as both “insider” and “outsider” to the group of youth in this study is further discussed. Chapters Four, Five, and Six are intended to build on how coloniality shows up in the youth’s lives.

Chapter Four, “Asymmetrical Relationship of Power”, examines the youth’s experiences with and understanding of asymmetrical relationships of power as evident in their descriptions of language hierarchies, the economic opportunities afforded to Spanish speakers, and the subjugation of indigenous languages. I posit that this asymmetrical relationship of power is

analogous to Quijano's (2010) coloniality of power. In this case, colonial languages were of social, linguistic, and economic power.

In Chapter Five, “‘*Indio*,’ Race, and Racism,” I intend for the reader to see the youth’s own understanding and awareness of discrimination towards indigenous peoples. One form of discrimination the youth described was found in non-indigenous Latina/os’ use of the “*indio*” racial epithet. Another form of discrimination indigenous peoples encountered was the discouragement from speaking their indigenous languages. I suggest that these forms of discrimination have the effect of dehumanizing indigenous peoples.

In Chapter Six, “Youth’s Understanding of Indigenous Peoplehood,” the reader comes to see how the youth made sense of the category “indigenous,” along with the peoples they associated such indicators to. I posit that the youth show particular kinds of understanding and awareness of indigeneity, including their own and of others. Their sense of indigeneity, while particular, was also connected to other documented notions of indigenous peoplehood. In the final chapter, “Conclusion,” I describe the contribution of this study for the investigation of indigenous immigrants and future directions in this type of work. I also offer implications for educators and researchers to consider when working with indigenous immigrant youth.

Definition of Terms

Latina/o. Currently, Latinx is used as a gender inclusive term with those traditionally not included in the gendered uses of Latina, Latino, Latina/o, or Latin@ in the field of education, among others. It is not my intention to reproduce gender exclusive terms by the use of Latina/o. I use Latina/o because I am “speaking,” purposefully, to a particular field that has intentionally focused on “Latinas” and “Latinos” in education. Some focal youth in this study also use Latino, and during those moments I use the same term they used when referring to specific Latino(s) or

Latina(s). I also use the term Latina(s) or Latino(s) when identifying specific students whose self-identification was unknown to me.

Indigenous Peoplehood. In this study, I adapt the term “indigenous peoplehood” from Corntassel (2012), and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis (2003) to describe indicators of indigeneity that indigenous scholars have previously described (e.g., Barnhart & Kawagley, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Cordova, 2004; Whit, Roberts, Norman & Grieves, 2001). These indicators are language, place territory, sacred history, and ceremonial cycles. Important to note is that these indicators should not be used as strict definitions of who may or may not be indigenous. Moreover such indicators do not constitute all aspects of indigeneity. Indigeneity is a contested term, and while it is inclusive of a pan-indigenous identity (e.g., Corntassel 2012; Holm, Pearson, & Chavis, 2003), there are attempts to narrow it down (e.g., Melan, 2009; Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Conrtassel, 2014). Important in this study is the focal youth’s self-understanding of indigeneity; and in particular, aspects of their indigeneity: their indigenous peoplehood.

Chapter Two: “Coloniality of Power” As a Framework for Understanding the Immigration and Education of Latina/os

Indigenous populations, and indigeneity more broadly, has not often been a focus of study within the traditional field of immigration and education. More commonly has been to focus on the acculturation, adaptation, and learning of English of Latina/o youth. While some scholars have actively highlighted variation within the Latina/o immigrant population (e.g., Conchas, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2005) there is more variation within this group in need of investigation. Additionally, while the frameworks created or reproduced in the field of immigration and education are critically useful for understanding the ways school age immigrants adapt or accommodate to their new context of reception, they are insufficient when investigating and interpreting the experiences of indigenous Latin American youth. I posit in this chapter that the experiences of immigrant Latina/os, and indigenous immigrant Latina/os in particular, requires addressing issues of racial formations and power inequities. A coloniality of power is one frame that historically situates the construction of a racial hierarchy or power in the Americas.

This chapter is segmented into three sections. The first section provides a synthesis of the literature in the field of immigration and education. The second section delves into the literature on coloniality, focusing in particular on Anibal Quijano’s (2000) “coloniality of power.” The final section speaks to the larger research gap that is being addressed in this dissertation. I point out that the current analytic and interpretive lenses for interpreting and understanding Latina/os, immigration, and education, while useful and imperative, are limiting when it comes to understanding the experiences of indigenous immigrant peoples from Latin America. I suggest that addressing coloniality is an important frame, often underutilized in the field. The coloniality of power provides explanations of the hierarchal division of power based

on race that takes place in Latin America and that indigenous peoples are affected by. Moreover, such hierarchical division of race is often reproduced in the United States.

Theories of Immigration and Education

I begin with a brief overview of general theories of immigration. I highlight canonical works (e.g., Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Portes, & Zhou, 1993; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Qin-Hillard, 2005) in this overview because they provide concise descriptions of the classic theory of assimilation, pull and push forces for immigrating, and segmented assimilation. The classic theory of immigration derived from European assimilation and full integration into the United States. From this perspective, assimilation happened in a straight line, as new immigrants within a few generations became fully American (e.g., Alba & Nee, 2003). The pull-push theory continues to be a popular way of thinking about immigration for its “intuitive” nature (Barajas, 2012). For example, “pull” forces for immigrating are perceived to be the availability of economic and educational opportunities in the receiving countries. Some major “push” forces being wars (e.g., civil), violence (e.g., civil and domestic), and lack of economic and educational structural opportunities, among others. The pull-push theory is based on a premise that immigrants are rational thinkers looking to maximize their economic potential. This perspective de-emphasizes other reasons for immigrating such as family reunification (Barajas, 2012; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). Other immigration scholars such as sociologist Min Zhou (1997), and Portes (1995) focused on the contexts of reception and how immigrants assimilate into particular parts, or segments, of U.S. society that are stratified by race and class (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Immigration and Education

Having briefly explained the general theories of immigration, this section focuses on providing an overview of the field of immigration and education—once again, focusing on canonical work because of its persistent impact. The general theories of immigration have provided specific conceptual frames for understanding phenomena in the field of immigration and education. For example, literature on immigration and education has mostly focused on interpreting and theorizing immigrant students’ adaptation, assimilation or acculturation to schools. In the field of education research, prominent examples of theories of immigrant students’ adaptation are Gibson’s (1988) “additive acculturation,” Valenzuela’s (1999) “subtractive schooling,” and Portes (1995; and Zhou’s 1993) segmented assimilation. Similar to Portes and Zhou’s (1993) work on immigrants’ segmented assimilation, these theories of adaptation point to types of strategic practices that immigrant students engage in, consciously or unconsciously, as they made sense of and engaged with new people and the social, cultural, political, racial, and ethnic contexts that mediate and are mediated by such interactions. Such theories were earlier works in opposition to a “deficit discourse” in schools (Valencia, 1997) that attributed immigrant students and other “minorities” academic underperformance to their family and “cultural traits.”

These early theories of adaptation were the foundation for subsequent research investigating how schools included or excluded immigrant students into the school culture (e.g., Conchas, 2001; Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003). Significant about the literature on immigrant students’ school engagement and adaptation is the contribution of theoretical and analytic lenses for interpreting their academic performance and variability. Whereas theories of adaptation focused on individual and collective immigrant attitudes and worldviews towards perceived educational opportunities (e.g., Ogbu, 1981, 1991; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Suárez-

Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995), other scholars centered attention on the structural forces that promoted or discouraged academic “achievement” or “failure” (e.g., Conchas, 2001; Stanton-Salazar 1997, 2001; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

In regards to the immigrant groups researched in the field of immigration and education, Latina/os have been of central focus. This trend, however, has been recently changing as the field has expanded to include different and distinct immigrant groups (e.g., Dabach, 2015; Portes and Rumbaut, 2014), such as Hmong (e.g., Lee, 2001), Korean (e.g., Dalla, 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2006), and Vietnamese (e.g., Stritikus & Diem, 2007), to name just a few. Additionally, while immigration and education work has often focused on questions of assimilation and identity, a parallel body of work has focused on learning English. Guadalupe Valdés’s foundational work (1998; & Capitelli & Alvarez, 2001), for example, is illustrative of this research. Valdés points to the strength of immigrant youth’s home language as well as the structural challenges for their academic success if they are not proficient in English. While the issue of immigrant students learning English is complex, larger political environments regarding immigration, and immigration policy, contribute to the ongoing interest in this phenomenon (Garcia, & Kleifgen, 2010). Thus, there is pressure on education researchers to investigate immigrant students’ English learning.

More recently, researchers investigating the experiences of Latina/o undocumented immigrants have greatly contributed and expanded the literature on immigrant Latina/os and education (e.g., Gonzales, 2011; Pérez, 2009; The S.I.N. Collective, 2007, 2009). This is a critical addition to the literature because it has purposefully and explicitly addressed the experiences of undocumented students in education, surfacing added challenges that

undocumented students face in the pursuit of higher education and pointing to a deferment of the so-called “American dream” for undocumented students.

Critiques and Further Directions

Just like the field of immigration, the field of immigration and education is characterized by its inter-disciplinary nature. This feature is significant because different disciplines provide specific analytic and interpretive frames for theorizing and understanding the range of immigrant experiences in the U.S. Four prominent disciplines in the field are sociology, psychology, anthropology, and linguistics. Sociologist Portes and Rumbaut, for example, make sense of immigration phenomena through macro politico-economic lenses. Their focus is exemplary of the sociology of immigration as it centers on larger economic, political, and social factors for mass migration in order to create theories that can be generalizable. Carola Suárez-Orozco and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco (1995, 2001; and Todorova, 2008) provide a psycho-social lens for understanding the complexity of identity formations and transformations of immigrants in the U.S and its schools. Their work is critically important, as it has greatly contributed to theories of adaptation, and motivation for immigrant students.

Missing from these large sociological and psycho-social perspectives are investigations into specific contexts of reception, (COR), such as structural and cultural features, that structure the “different modes of incorporation” (Dabach, 2015, p. 246) for immigrants into the U.S. These CORs in the U.S. educative system are the school and the classroom (Dabach, 2014, 2015). Therefore the work of educational anthropologists and linguists are highly important—they give flesh to the larger theoretical bones. Educational anthropologist and sociologist Gibson (1988) and Valenzuela (1999), respectively, provide “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973), foregrounding the complexity and nuances of immigrants’ lived experiences as they navigate

schools and negotiate different cultural settings. Lastly, education linguists, such as Guadalupe Valdés' (1998, 2001; and Capitelli & Alvarez, 2011) investigations about English learning for immigrant Latina/o students, problematize theories of instruction of English language. Valdés highlights the complexity of teaching and learning a new language as research shows that there is no one way of teaching English language and the outcomes, in terms of language “proficiency,” vary.

The literature on immigration and education has greatly focused on the U.S. contexts of reception (Dabach, 2015) and the cultural and structural settings of education: the school and the classroom. Until recently, missing from theories of immigration and education, especially in the earlier literature, were explorations of contexts of departure (e.g., countries of origin) and the racial, linguistic, and economic structural forces, among others, shaping immigrants' lived experiences in those contexts. Recently, a body of research known as transnationalism has attempted to focus on immigrants' contexts of departure and its intricate social, political, economic, and cultural connections between receiving countries (Fox, 2005, 2006; Orellana, Thorne, Chee, & Lam, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Qin-Hilliard, 2005). Carmina Brittain (2002), in *Transnational Messages*, explained that transnationalism is a “theoretical perspective...[and] a field to which many disciplines have contributed” (p. 11). Transnationalism emerged as a way to understand the political and economic interconnectedness that were the result of the rise of globalization; as Brittain explained, transnationalism focuses on “the unit...the boundaries around the unit, and the ties between units” (p. 13). These, “units” usually referring to nation-states, can also include micro-units such as immigrants “who cross boundaries and create overlapping boundaries across different nation-states” (Brittain, 2002, p. 13). The transnational work that immigrants do takes place in a transnational “space,” conceived

as a form of collective work where “individuals engage in activities and processes...that link the individual to multiple localities across boundaries, thus overlapping these boundaries” (Brittain, 2002, p. 16). Most often, however, transnationalism is a way of understanding the political and economic links that immigrants have and keep between the geographic spaces they are located in (for example communities/regions in the U.S.) and their regions of origin (such as sending remittances to their extended family, and being members of transnational community-based organizations).

Scholarship on Latina/o transnationals has yet to fully investigate immigrant youth’s transnational work that happens in intimate settings such as the home (Sánchez, 2001; Sánchez & Machado Casas, 2009). One methodological challenge in investigating the transnational work of immigrant youth in intimate settings is conceptualizing what transnationalism looks like in such intimate spaces. Patricia Sánchez (2001), for example, urges for researches in this field to “develop finer methodological tools to ‘see’ and ‘uncover’ transnationalities, in particular those involving youth and children. Otherwise we run the risk of overlooking important processes of childhood socialization and identity formation” (p. 38). To examine the transnationalism work that youth do, Sánchez and Kasun (2014) conceptualized transnationalism as the “social practices by people who engage more than one national context with some depth of familiarity, through activities that include maintaining family ties in multiple countries, [and] possible visits to the sending country” (p. 75). This view of transnationalism is expansive as it includes the multiple ties and mutual exchange of goods, information and knowledge between immigrants and their places of origin. While schools are public institutions, the school and the classroom can be similar intimate setting such as the home where immigrant students can share information and knowledge (through the use of many languages and other forms of communication)

regarding their new experiences in their contexts of reception, and how to make sense of their interactions with peers.

The literature and research on transnationalism is important because it attempts to highlight the complex ways immigrants accommodate or integrate into their CORs while maintaining close ties with their countries of origin. Lynn Stephen's (2007) ethnography, *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* is an especially relevant example of current work on transnationalism. In this work, Stephen charts the "transborder" experiences of indigenous Oaxaqueño/a immigrant families and individual members in the U.S and Mexico. Stephen wrote that Oaxaqueño/a immigrants:

have crossed racial and ethnic boundaries within Mexico that have followed them to the United States. They have crossed class and regional economic boundaries as they have been inserted as workers into different kinds of agricultural production systems and service sector economies at different points in time. They have crossed the boundaries of nation-state as they move between countries. They have negotiated changes in technologies of travel and communication through time...For this reason, I characterize their lives and those of others represented in this book as transborder rather than just simply transnational. (p. 6)

Similar to Patricia Sanchez's (2001, 2007) interpretation of transnationalism, Stephen conceives of transborderers as immigrants who share knowledge and experiences about their multiple localities in the U.S. and their country of origin. Transborderers have the capacity to construct time, space and social relations "in more than one place simultaneously" (Stephen, 2007, p. 5). Sánchez (2004) warned that transnationalism is not the same as immigration in general (p. 4), and Stephen foregrounds this distinction by writing that transnational (with its primary focus on economic, political, and cultural links) becomes a "subset of the transborder experience" (p. 23). For Stephen, the transborder is a conceptual frame for examining the daily experiences of living within and across borders: "the movement of the border with the person who crosses it and the wearing of the border inside and outside as an undocumented person" (p. 145). Marcelo Suárez-

Orozco (1989) introduced the concept “dual frames of reference” to speak of the ways immigrants’ psyche was split between life in the U.S. and a longing for or remembrance of life in their countries of origin. This “dual frame of reference” was meant to signal how immigrants were simultaneously positioned as “here” (their new contexts of reception) and “there” (their countries of origin). Transborderism is distinct from “dual frame of reference” because it is inclusive of other ways of being and navigating social, political, ethnic, and linguistic spaces all at once. In this case, transborders carry the border with them, and as such the histories that are connected to them. In the case of indigenous Oaxaqueño/as, these transborders must also cross the “hierarchies of color” (Stephen, 2007, p. 176) found in Mexico and in Mexican communities throughout the United States.

Stephen and Sánchez’s work is useful because they provide theoretical perspectives and some conceptual ways for understanding the immigrant experience of indigenous Latin American youth. Transborderism takes into consideration the social, cultural and linguistic borders immigrants cross, and the links (physical, economic, emotional, and psychological) they maintain to multiple spaces at once. Such immigrants maintain these links through their sharing of knowledge, information, and resources. Because the knowledge that indigenous immigrants have and share is particular to their lived experiences as conditioned by colonizing forces, their transborder work is an indigenous transborder experience. While transnationalism blurs notions of citizenship, Stephen’s transborderism, relying on Chicana Feminist theories on borders, contest the vision of borders by showing how indigenous immigrants carry them on their bodies.

However, the crossings over and links that indigenous immigrant Latin Americans engage in do not follow a circular (back-and forth) movement as the literature on transnationalism suggests. Because of their unique experiences in their countries of origin,

indigenous immigrant Latin Americans are in positions of in-between many physical, emotional and epistemic centers. They operate from multiple frames of references as indigenous persons understanding and making sense of what it means to be indigenous in their countries of origin and in the United States: as immigrants speaking or learning to speak colonizing languages, living in geographic marginalized places, and understanding the power dynamics that are imbedded in the treatment of indigenous peoples. Moreover, indigenous immigrants do not fit the transnational frame as they are not completely part of a nation-state (Mexico for example), where they are often treated as second-class citizens. For the indigenous immigrant, ways of being, how to act, what to believe, and how to make sense of their world in their countries of origin and the U.S, sometimes have to be de-emphasized while other “acceptable” (read as colonized) ways are emphasized. To help me understand the experiences of indigenous immigrant youth I turn to the literature on coloniality.

Coloniality and the Coloniality of Power

The word “coloniality” has a specific theoretical and historical meaning for us as members of modernity/coloniality international collective...Historically, coloniality names the darker side of modernity. Conceptually, coloniality is the hidden side of modernity. By writing modernity/coloniality, we mean that coloniality is constitutive of modernity and there is no modernity without coloniality. (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 8)

I open up this section quoting Tlostanova and Mignolo (2012) because they highlight the relationship between coloniality and modernity. By coloniality being the “darker side of modernity,” the authors were referring to the structural and historical processes of colonization—e.g., the split of the world into Western-European and non-European, the construction of the “Americas” (Mignolo, 2009) and the salvation of the newly created indigenous “other” through external and internal forces. Coloniality being the “hidden side of modernity” referred to how Western Europe built a narrative of civilization, and civilizing the other, “while hiding at the

same time its darker side” (Mignolo, 2011). Coloniality being both the darker and hidden side of modernity was made possible due to a particular logic: the logic of the colonizer (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012, p. 7). This logic will be explained in the next subsection. Before moving on, however, a brief explanation of what is meant by “colonial” and “colonization” is necessary in order to avoid further confusions with the use of “coloniality” in this dissertation. Adapting from Tlostanova and Mignolo (2012), “colonial” refers to a “‘conquered and managed territory’ linked to the process of European ‘colonization’” (p. 17). “Colonization” refers to external and internal subjugation of the colonized. Such external subjugation happened through the creation of policies and other rules of law that structured the daily life of the colonized (Rama, 1996). Colonization can be seen manifested in Althusser’s (1971) description of ideological state apparatus, such as the church, and the school. Colonization was, thus, characterized by interconnected legislative, political, and economic structures that ensured the subjugation of the newly created Americans, meaning indigenous peoples, by Europeans. Internal subjugation took place through what Dussel (1995) described as an “erotic, pedagogical, cultural, political, and economic praxis” (p. 45) that, as Quijano (2000) wrote, “seduced” the colonized to aspire to be just like their oppressor, especially in thought, belief and actions.

Modernity and Coloniality

For Mignolo (2011; and Tlostanova, 2012) coloniality must be understood in relationship with modernity. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to write on modernity—philosophers have exhaustively debated on this topic.² What needs to be highlighted here is the relationship that coloniality and modernity have with the Enlightenment. There is no one general and accepted definition of the Enlightenment as it encompassed a large time period and was informed

² Critical thinkers from of the “Frankfurt School”, such as Adorno and Horkheimer have criticized the project of modernity for example for its narrow construction of knowledge and its fetishization of the scientific method.

by a range of thinkers (Bristow, 2010). However, significant for the discussion of coloniality and modernity are the themes of rationality and the range and limits of the scientific method that characterized the Enlightenment. Rationality is significant to highlight here because it dealt with epistemology and ontology. In his foundational contribution to colonial thinking, Walter Mignolo (1995) in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* wrote that literacy and the printed text became an important tool of knowing and for personhood formation in Spain and the rest of Europe. For Mignolo, the printed text in renaissance Europe (the Enlightenment Europe) took a central role in knowledge production. It was believed that knowledge, and rational thought, could only be produced through the printed text. Thus, the literate person was a knowledgeable person as they had consumed rational thought as reproduced in printed text. Later on in the colonial world, the person who spoke the official language of learning such as Latin, and subsequently Castilian and Spanish was also a knowledgeable person. What is more, the printed text also established personhood through the creation and preservation of history: thus, the literate person was a knowable person. It was by recording history through text in books that origin stories were connected to personhood: it was through archiving and printing story that people were assigned a space, place, and time in the world (Dussel, 1995; Mignolo, 1995). The outcome of this form of logic was that those without a printed history, in the European model, were ahistorical; thus, at best, their humanity (as interpreted through a Western/colonial lens) could not be confirmed, and at worst, they were relegated to being less than human—e.g., savages and barbarians.

Important about the Enlightenment for the discussion of modernity and coloniality is that it made possible the construction of Western Europe as the center of civilization, thought, and humanity. Enrique Dussel (1995) wrote in *The Invention of the Americas* that modernity must be

conceived as a “center-periphery system” (p. 11). In this system, Europe became the center of knowledge and of cultural, linguistic, social, political, and economic control. Europeans were thus established as knowledgeable and placed in a “natural” position of control and authority. The periphery in turn was the newly created Americas and its inhabitants: the “*indio*.” The Americas and its inhabitants were relegated as the “things” to control. Moreover, indigenous peoples were envisioned, and treated, as non-knowledgeable. In this system, all knowing became self-referential—thus, Eurocentric. By Eurocentric is meant that indigenous peoples were understood from Western epistemological and ontological positions: from the positionality of the Western colonizer. Here I quote Anibal Quijano (2000) at length to illustrate the relationship between Eurocentrism, modernity and coloniality:

Eurocentrism is...the name of a perspective of knowledge whose systematic formation began in Western Europe before the middle of the seventeenth century...it is...a specific rationality or perspective of knowledge that was made globally hegemonic, colonizing and overcoming other previous or different conceptual formations and their respective concrete knowledges, as much in Europe as in the rest of the world. (p. 549-50)

In this quotation, Quijano provided a defining characteristic of coloniality as a particular logic “under all forms of colonialism” (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 7) that has its roots in Enlightenment rational thought. For Dussel (1995) and Mignolo (2009) modernity was the result of coloniality (of a particular logic). Mignolo (2009) further argued that “modernity/coloniality are two sides of the same coin...there is no modernity, there cannot be, without coloniality” (p. 42). While coloniality could not have been possible without enlightenment thinking, it is now difficult to disassociate modernity from coloniality, and coloniality from modernity. The reason why this is the case is because modernity was possible due to a colonial logic, and this colonial logic has been kept in place due to modernity.

To summarize, coloniality refers to a particular logic that was put in place in the Americas through colonization, yet mostly operates now without such colonizing structures, as it has become part of daily existence. Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007), in building on Quijano's "coloniality of power", explained coloniality as the "long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (p. 244). For Maldonado-Torres, coloniality survived colonization because it is reproduced in our everyday life through our conscious and unconscious acts, our "cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience" (p 244). We cannot escape coloniality, as we are already in it; we breathe and live it all the time and everyday (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 244).

Coloniality of Power

Anibal Quijano is a Peruvian sociologist who viewed globalization as a direct result and culmination of modernity, which was made possible by the "constitution of America" (p. 533) and its colonization. What Quijano meant by the "constitution of America" was the invention of the Americas and its inhabitants. Dussel (1995) contended that Columbus constructed the islands he encountered as Asia, and its people as Asian (p. 32). Because Columbus was looking for a land that was not there, and for people that did not exist, he invented the land and its people according to his own categories of thought: from an Eurocentric perspective, that was very much influenced by Enlightenment thinking. Quijano posited that the construction of America established two fundamental axes of a new global model of power: a "coloniality of power."

One of the axes of the coloniality of power was "the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of 'race,' a supposedly different biological

structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the other” (Quijano, p. 533). The invention of the new Americans as “Asian,” then as others and *indios* is highly significant because it shows one of the first acts of modernity: the construction of racial categories. Lange (1998) in explaining Dussel’s work, showed that Europeans saw non-Europeans “exclusively in terms of their own categories of thought” inventing indigenous peoples of America, first as Asian, and subsequently as *indios*. These *indios* were perceived as “undeveloped inferior peoples who would benefit from the arrival of the Europeans” (Lange, 1998, p. 135). Maldonado-Torres (2007) then reasoned that the first byproduct of the coloniality of power was, what Mignolo (2000) referred to as, the “colonial difference.” Mignolo (2009) wrote that the “colonial difference operates by converting differences into values and establishing a hierarchy of human being ontologically and epistemologically” (p. 46). On the ontological level, this axes of power, had the effect of classifying and reclassifying the population of the world (Mignolo, 2000) into persons (Europeans) and non-persons (the newly created *indio*). Quijano wrote that in the Americas, race and racial identities “were established as instruments of basic social classification” (p. 534) whereby the newly conquered, ascribed as *indios*, were relegated to the lower ranks of the hierarchy. On the epistemological level, Mignolo wrote that “European local knowledge and histories...[were] projected to global designs” (p. 17)—in this way, Europe established itself as the center of knowledge and history and the rest, specifically the indigenous person in the Americas, as a-knowledgeable and ahistorical. Due to modernity/coloniality, a new global system of knowledge and personhood was established.

The creation of a hierarchy of human beings ontologically and epistemologically was essential for the coloniality of power because it was directly linked to the control and exploitation of indigenous peoples’ labor, and the natural resources of the Americas. This is the

second axis of the coloniality of power: the creation of a new global capitalist system that is structurally linked with racial categories (Quijano, 2000, p. 536). For Quijano (2000)

[E]ach form of labor control was associated with a particular race. Consequently, the control of a specific form of labor could be, at the same time, the control of a specific group of dominated people. A new technology of domination/exploitation, in this case race/labor, was articulated in such a way that the two elements appeared naturally associated. (p. 537)

This naturalization, or normalization, of the association of race and labor is important because it has been used as a source of economic and racial exploitation and its rationalization. This rationalization is evident in discourses in the Americas, and in the U.S. in particular, regarding a so-called “culture of poverty” in which the poor, mainly Blacks and Latina/os (both colonial inventions), are poor because of their own cultural values and worldviews (e.g., Lamont & Small, 2008; Valencia, 1997; Valencia & Black, 2002; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Ramón Grosfoguel’s (2003) comparative study of the coloniality of power across U.S, France, Netherlands, and Great Britain illustrates that while efforts have been made to create discursive practices (such as policies) that do away with race and racism, such categories have taken on a new form, whereby ethnicity and culture have become a proxy for race. In this new world, while careful attention is placed into excluding racial identifiers from political and economic policies, “racism is articulated through a cultural meritocratic discourse. Antilleans [for example] are excluded from promotion in the public administration through a discourse about lack of qualifications, knowledge, and experience” (Grosfoguel, 2003, p. 13). Here it is evident that race and labor continue to have a mutual relationship, whereby a division of labor parallels a racial divide. In this racial hierarchy/division of labor, indigenous and other colonized peoples continue to be at the lower ranks and non-indigenous at the top.

To summarize, the coloniality of power is characterized by the creation of a hierarchical division of race and a global capitalism that has direct and reinforcing relationship with racial categories. The coloniality of power explains the hierarchies of power based on race as codified through skin color.³ What is more, coloniality created new identities such as “*indios*” and *mestizos*, categories that did not exist prior to colonial interventions. Quijano (2000) explained this in the following way,

[I]n the moment that the Iberians conquered, named, and colonized America...they found a great number of different peoples, each with its own history, language, discoveries and cultural products, memory and identity. The most developed and sophisticated of them were the Aztecs, Mayas, Chimus, Aymaras, Incas, Chibchas, and so on. Three hundred years later, all of them had become merged into a single identity: Indians. (p.551)

Hand-in-hand with the creation of racial hierarchies was the dichotomization of the world into European and non-European. This split is what Mignolo calls the “colonial difference.” This colonial difference established personhood or what Maldonado-Torres (2007) writes as “coloniality of being.” In this case, the coloniality of power established an idea of personhood after the image and concept of the Western European man. From this view, Europeans were complete persons (although imperfect) as characterized by the enlightenment thinking of personhood associated with a soul. On the contrary, the invented indigenous person in the Americas was a wretched human that needed salvation. In this case, the indigenous person became a sub-human who could never achieve complete personhood because of the very system of power and oppression that racialized them. Finally, the coloniality of power created, as Mignolo (2000) wrote about, epistemic centers. What is meant by epistemic centers is that parameters around knowledge were created. These parameters determined from where to know (Eurocentrism), how to know (through printed text), what to know (rationality and scientific

³ Maria Lugones (2010) also shows how coloniality created gender, modeled after European notions of gender.

thinking), and when to know (when it was convenient for the European exploitation of the colonized).

Coloniality As a Framework for Understanding Indigenous Immigrants

The frameworks re-produced in the field of immigration and education for making sense of the many reasons immigrants move out of their places of origin and settle in the United States are extremely important. They are critically useful for understanding the ways school age immigrants, along with their families, adapt or accommodate to their new context of reception. The recent work on transnationalism aims at a careful examination of how immigrants establish, and/or keep, social, political, economic and cultural networks with their countries or regions of origin and their new contexts of reception. Nonetheless, such literature is insufficient when interpreting the experiences of indigenous immigrants. As I showed in the previous section, the experiences of immigrant Latina/os, and indigenous immigrant Latina/os in particular, requires addressing coloniality of power. A coloniality of power lens is crucial to utilize because it helps historically situate the construction of a racial hierarchy or power in the Americas. This racial hierarchy and power dynamic became the fabric of everyday life in the Americas as it has rooted itself as ideology. What is more, people from Latin America cannot escape such history and ideology, regardless of their immigrating to the United States.

The conceptual contribution this dissertation provides to the field of immigration and education, with particular attention to the literature on Latina/o education, is the examination of indigenous immigrant youth's experiences from a coloniality of power lens that foreground power dynamics. While some scholars have begun to utilize a colonial lens when investigating Latina/o education (e.g., Barajas, 2012, 2014; Urrieta, 2013, 2014), such is not always the case. Manuel Barajas' (2012, 2014) comparative work between Mexican and European immigrants

illuminates connections between immigration and coloniality. Barajas (2012) proposed a conceptual frame for understanding the uniqueness of immigrant Mexicans that he labeled “Interactive Colonization.” For Barajas, an Interactive Colonization frame “integrates the colonial, structural, and transnational frameworks” (p. 11) found in the field of immigration. For Barajas, major theories of immigration are usually structural (e.g., sociological) and/or cultural (anthropological). As discussed before, while structural and cultural theories contribute particular understandings to immigration (e.g., economic integration, theories of adaptation, links/networks maintained by immigrants), they do not account for the historical and conceptual shared experience between the colonized immigrant and the colonizing context of reception. For Barajas, the immigrant experience of the colonized, such is the case of Mexican immigrants, is different than that of the European, the colonizer, simply because they both are in different ends of the coloniality of power. Therefore, trying to explain Mexican, or colonized, immigration, relying on theories for explaining European immigration (e.g., early theories of assimilation) is incompatible.

Similar to Barajas, I posit that relying on structural or cultural theories alone is insufficient when examining Latina/o immigration, and the experiences of indigenous immigrants in particular. A reason for this is that immigrants are not solely motivated by economic opportunities (Barajas, 2012; Massey, Durand & Malone, 2002). Even “transnationalism,” as discussed before in this chapter, has its limitations because it rests on the assumption that immigrant are regarded as citizens in their countries of origin—with all the right and privileges afforded to them. While indigenous immigrant from Mexico may be connected to a larger Mexican nation, their experiences are one of living and being treated as second-class citizens. As Stephen (2007) demonstrated, indigenous immigrants must deal with discrimination

in their countries of origin and in the United States by other Mexicans. Thus, while they may be Mexican, their legal rights have often been ignored and violated—The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) is illustrative of the plight of indigenous peoples for human rights recognition in Mexico. Such experiences are not “left behind” once they cross into the U.S., as they carry them into the U.S. as my early work (Barillas Chón, 2010) as well as others’ work shows (e.g., Ruiz & Barajas, 2012; Pérez, Vasquez, & Buriel, 2016; Urrieta, 2013).

Chapter Three: Methodology

The overarching research question guiding this study was: How do indigenous immigrant youth from Latin America make sense of indigeneity in their countries of origin and in the United States? I conducted a “basic qualitative” study (Merriam, 2009) that primarily relied on qualitative interview methods for gathering data. It must be pointed out that it is not my explicit intention to make generalizations regarding all indigenous immigrant youth based on this study. Rather, one of my aims was to investigate the experiences of a number of indigenous youth and make a type of localized generalization that is specific to the youth in this study. In Chapter Seven, “Conclusion,” I will discuss how this localized generalization might have applications to an analysis of other indigenous immigrant youth in other parts of the U.S. It is possible, that other indigenous immigrant youth in the U.S. share similar experiences as those in this study.

The methodology I employed in study was informed by indigenous and education scholar, Linda T. Smith’s (1999) book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Sandra Harding (1987) made the following distinction between research methodology and methods: “a research methodology is a theory of analysis of how research does or should proceed” (p. 2), while methods are the techniques for gathering data. Smith argued that methodology is important “because it frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed and shapes the analysis” (p. 143). Smith’s (1999) work was important for the design of this research for two reasons. The first related to the importance of emphasizing indigenous people’s lived experiences from their own self-interpretations and self-understandings. The second related to foregrounding understanding indigenous peoples’ self-understandings from conceptual frameworks that critically examined how indigenous peoples came to be established as subjects of and for study.

Smith (1999) provided a powerful and concise critique of traditional (Western) research design. By traditional, Smith meant research that has its roots in Enlightenment and “rational” thinking, which is reproduced by modernity. Similar to Quijano (2000), Mignolo (1995, 2009), and Dussel (1999), Smith located the roots of coloniality and its accompanying imperialism in the Enlightenment. For Smith, the enlightenment/modernity produced a totalizing discourse about history, a universally linear account of history and of peoplehood progression. Moreover, the Enlightenment provided the foundations for thinking about “knowledge” and the “proper” methods to get to this knowledge—e.g., scientific method, and objective truths and facts. This scientific method and view of objectivity, however, was imagined and conceptualized from Eurocentric logic—meaning that other ways of thinking, such as indigenous conceptions of knowledge and access to this knowledge, were never taken into account. Imperialism and coloniality imposed a methodology for collecting data and validating knowledge that had a direct relationship with how indigenous people came to be seen and interpreted, and simultaneously how they came to see and know themselves and their communities (Smith, 1999).

In response to traditional research, Smith proposed a “decolonization” of research methodologies. Decolonial methodologies are fluid and dynamic research designs and analysis that centers indigenous concerns and worldviews and understands indigenous experiences from indigenous epistemic and ontological positions (e.g., Deloria, 2004; Louis, 2007; Smith, 1999). It must be pointed out that decolonial research is not a complete rejection of traditional (Western) theory, research, or knowledge (Louis, 2007, p. 131). The fluidity of decolonial methodologies, however, allows for the adaptation, transformation and reimagining of Western research designs for investigating the lives and experiences of indigenous peoples. The fluidity that is espoused by Smith (1999), Louis (2007), and other indigenous scholars, allows for the

trenzar (Montoya), or braiding, of indigenous understandings, or ways of making sense of lived experiences, with traditional research methods. In this case, what emerges is decolonial methodologies, and some forms of decolonial methodologies are “indigenous methodologies” (Louis, 2007).

I want to make clear that for Smith (1999) indigenous methodologies are concerned with “broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research” (p. 143). In more general terms, a primary goal of indigenous methodologies is advancing the many political and epistemological aims of indigenous peoples in order to affect positive and enduring change in their everyday lives, not only in the academic realm. This study was not designed with the explicit intention of creating some enduring and positive effects on the lives of the youth who participated in it.⁴ However, it did seek to contribute to a better understanding and representation of their experiences by focusing on their self-understandings. To this end, this qualitative study is similar to what Smith referred to as a “representing” indigenous project. By “representing,” Smith (1999) meant the depiction (and interpretation) of indigenous peoples “by indigenous peoples” to counter the “dominant society’s image of...[them,] their lifestyles and belief systems” (p. 151).

A primary goal of this dissertation was to emphasize indigenous youth’s lived experiences and sense-making. The primary methods utilized in this study for capturing youth’s own understanding were interviews. In these interviews, the youth were asked about their thoughts, perspectives, and self-understandings. Finally, in line with a decolonial project, I

⁴ It is uncertain the extent to which this research had any positive (or negative) effect on the lives of the youth who participated in it as this required revisiting with the youth and asking them specific questions on what effect, if any, this dissertation had in their lives. It could be the case that my presence and interactions with them had some effects. Again, I can only speculate what this effect may have been as I have not followed up with them to ask what effect, if any, my presence had in their lives.

relied on decolonial frameworks (as outlined in Chapter Two of this dissertation) to critically examine and interpret the youth's lived experiences.

Research Context

The Setting - Northwest High School

I met and recruited the participants in this study at Northwest High School (Northwest High hereon). Pseudonyms are used for the school, city, indigenous youth, peers, teachers and staff. This high school was located in Evergreen, a midsize metropolitan city in the Pacific Northwest. Three major reasons why Northwest High was selected as the site for this study were because 1) the school was a newcomer center and high school serving students from all over the world, 2) the school was in the midst of experiencing an increase in indigenous language speaking students from Latin America, and 3) I was already familiar with one teacher and one Bilingual Student Services Facilitator. In fact, Ms. Leon (a mathematics teacher) and Ms. Alegría (a Bilingual Student Services Facilitator) were instrumental in me learning about and obtaining initial access to the school. Ms. Alegría introduced me to Ms. Pérez, Northwest High's principal, in October 2015. After my initial introduction to Ms. Pérez, I followed up with an email to ask for permission to carry out my study at Northwest High (see Appendix D). After some issues related to IRB approval and the prolonged time Ms. Pérez replied to my emails, I was granted full permission to do the study in mid March of 2016.

Northwest High was originally designed to be a newcomer center, serving as a transitional space for newcomer immigrants. The initial goal of this newcomer center was to orient immigrants to life in the U.S., help them gain some English language skills and then transfer them to a neighborhood school (personal communications with Ms. Alegría and vice principal, Ms. Monica). For the past four years, the school transitioned to full high school status,

and students were given the option of remaining at Northwest High to finish high school or opt to transfer to their neighborhood school. The school primarily served immigrants, in six through twelve grades, however, some of these immigrants were U.S. citizens, born in the U.S, yet, living most of their life in other countries.⁵

Over the past four years, the school has average a student populations of 204 students, with the 2014-2015 school year experiencing the greatest number of student attendance (251) (state data, 2014). The school was also culturally and linguistically diverse as reflected in the student population speaking more than 21 individual languages (school website, 2014). For instance, for the 2013-2014 school year, Spanish was the leading language spoken by the student population (29%) followed by Chinese (16%), Vietnamese (12%) and Somali (11%). Furthermore, of the Latina/o student population, 46 students, only six were identified as speaking an indigenous language. While there were no dramatic changes to the student population between 2014 through 2016, through informal conversation with Ms. Alegría, who was in charge of enrolling Latina/o students, the number of Latina/o students speaking an indigenous language in 2014 was underreported. Given the nature of the school serving as a transitional space for recent immigrants, the student population, although small, was constantly shifting as students would come for days or weeks and then not come back at all.⁶ However, my time at Northwest High as a volunteer and researcher provided me opportunities to interact with some Latina/o students. I met at least 11 students who said they spoke an indigenous language—and of those 11, two stopped coming to school within two weeks of their starting day. Therefore, I believe

⁵ I met a few students who were U.S. citizens but grew up in other countries like Mexico. They returned to the U.S. as teenagers and enrolled at Northwest High. I do not know why they enrolled at Northwest High since I did not ask them such questions.

⁶ Northwest High was an “option” school, meaning that students were given the option of attending and remaining at the school. Students were also given the option of leaving the school at any time. There were varied reasons for students to stop attending the school, such as immigration status, work options, family circumstances, or option of attending their neighborhood school.

that there were more indigenous language speakers from Latin America than was reported on the school website, in 2014.

I volunteered at Northwest High from the Fall of 2014 until June of 2016. My volunteering consisted of helping Spanish-speaking students with their classwork during their mathematics, art, and newcomer classes. While my study formally started in January 2016, my volunteering up until that time was invaluable. I was able to establish relations and make observations. Upon approval from the school leadership to conduct my study at Northwest High, I had two-and-a half months to conduct interviews.

Participants

The focus of this study was to investigate indigenous immigrant youth's sense-making of indigeneity. Therefore, I was interested in recruiting youth who were both indigenous and immigrants. All the focus youth in this study self-identified as indigenous and had been in the United States for 24 months or less.

Indigenous Youth

It was primarily through my volunteering that I slowly got to know many of the Latin American youth at the school, including those that participated in this study. I volunteered at Northwest High from the Fall of 2014 until June of 2016. My volunteering consisted of helping Spanish-speaking students with their work during their math, art, and newcomer classes. Other ways I met indigenous youth at this school were through Ms. Monica, the Vice Principal, who upon meeting me showed me a list of students who she identified as indigenous and whom she believed might be interested in this study. The only indigenous youth from that list that became part of this study was Weas.

Given the focus of the research, I wanted to recruit youth who self-identified as indigenous, were immigrants to the U.S., between the ages of 15 and 20 years, and had a working understanding of Spanish. There is a significant body of literature in the field of immigration and education on the experiences of immigrant Latin American youth. As I discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the experiences of indigenous immigrant Latin American youth have often been under investigated. Because one of the goals of this study is to add to the field of Latina/os and education, I specifically sought immigrant youth who were also indigenous. Northwest High School took in students as young as 12 and as old as 20 years old. I narrowed the age group to 15-20 because most of the indigenous youth I had established rapport with were between these age ranges. It is possible that conversations with youth between the ages of 12-14 would have provided similar or different findings. For instance, there were at least three indigenous youth that I met at Northwest that were between this age range. They, however, were less likely to talk to me about their experiences and unwilling to be part of this study. Finally, I decided to focus on students who had a working understanding of Spanish simply because I am a Spanish speaker. Spanish in this case facilitated communication. It is possible that had interviews been conducted in K'iche or Mam, findings to this study might have been different or better supported.

To identify youth who fit these criteria, I developed a set of “talking points” (See Appendix A).⁷ These “talking points” were used during informal or causal conversation with the youth. During these conversations I would ask them where they were from and languages they

⁷ In this appendix, I wrote that I would give all Spanish-speaking students a letter inviting them to be part of this study and that upon positive responses, I would use this Appendix (A) to filter possible participants. I did give an invitation letter to all students in the “Spanish Advisory” period. However, I did not get any response from any of them wanting to be part of this study. So, while I developed this “talking points” to filter out youth to be part of the study, I did not use this Appendix as I had originally intended to. I did keep it in mind when having informal conversations with you in order to filter out possible participants.

or family members spoke. I kept a record of students who said they were from large or well-known indigenous regions/areas, such as Oaxaca in Mexico and El Quiché in Guatemala. While geography was a useful criterion, it may have limited the location of participants to those who originated from places such as Oaxaca or El Quiché. Another talking point consisted of asking what languages they or their family members spoke. I recorded the names of the youth who said they or their family members spoke an indigenous language. While speaking an indigenous language is not a sole indicator of indigenous identification, it is nonetheless a useful one (Corntassel, 2003; Holm, Pearson & Chavis, 2003).

I did not ask the youth if they self-identified as indigenous during casual conversations. One reason for this was because I felt the question was too intrusive, and secondly, I was not sure if the students were familiar with the term. Ultimately, it was during their first semi-structured interview that I asked them if they identified or not as indigenous.

Finally, I understand that gender is an important category that has not often been focused on in the immigration and education scholarship (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). I made all the efforts I could to provide an equal representation of gender in this dissertation. However, I was not able to get any of the young women I met who fit my criterion to participate in this study. I suspect that reasons for this are due to my gender. I often saw the young women whom I was interested in interviewing sitting or walking in close groups, at the library, in the cafeteria, at school events, or in the soccer field, speaking their indigenous languages. I was not successful in establishing close relationships with them as I did with the male youth.

In all, eight self-identified indigenous immigrant youth were the focus participants in this study. Six of them were from Guatemala, and two from Mexico. I will describe in some detail these youth in the next section.

Peers

Peers often play significant roles in youth's self-perceptions. Moreover, they can impact youth's self-understanding in negative and positive ways (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Peers were interviewed in order to understand their perceptions of indigenous peoples in their countries of origin and in the United States. The peers in this study consisted of three male youth from Latin America: Alexis, a 17 year-old youth from El Salvador; Chava a 15 year-old also from El Salvador; and Adolfo, a youth from Guatemala who was 19 year old. Adolfo was Adler's closest friend, one of the focus indigenous youth in this study. The other two youth were familiar with indigenous youth in this study, however, as far as I could tell, they were not close friends with any of them.

Peers were selected based age (15-20 years old), being Spanish speakers, and being immigrants. These peers did not self-identify or identify their family members as indigenous. Additionally, peers were selected based on showing interest in the study

Teachers and Staff

Teachers, staff, and the school were not the primary focus of this study. However, teachers and staff can often provide critical insights about students' experiences at schools. For instance, they can describe youth's interactions with each other, how they treat each other (positive and negative), and provide reasons for them that may not be apparent to the youth themselves. Teacher participants included Ms. Leon, head of the math department, and Ms. W. who was a science teacher. The only staff member I interviewed was Ms. Alegría, a Bilingual Student Services Facilitator.

Ms. Leon was in her fourth year as a math teacher at Northwest High. I had met Ms. Leon previously to knowing about Northwest High. She had agreed to be part of this study

primarily because she was interested in learning more about indigenous youth and the range of Latina/o school experiences. Ms. W. was in her second year as a full time teacher (she had previously been a long-term sub at Northwest High), not having taught full-time anywhere else. She was interviewed because she had personally reached out to me regarding help with her indigenous Latin American students. Moreover, she was interested in learning more about her indigenous students and wanted me share any information that could help her be an effective teacher. Finally, Ms. Alegría was interviewed because of her close work with Latin American students. She had close to 10 years working in the district in different capacities and was in her sixth year working as a Bilingual Students Services Facilitator. Her main responsibility was enrolling Spanish-speaking students at Northwest High and keeping in contact with families. She was from Oaxaca and was involved in cultural activities regarding Oaxaqueña/os in Evergreen. Her knowledge of Latina/o students and closeness with them were the primary reasons for including her in this study.

The Indigenous Immigrant Youth

In what follows are brief descriptions of the indigenous youth in this study. The order of descriptions follows a chronological order, starting with the first youth I met and ending with the last youth I met. Except for Joaquín and Antonio, the indigenous youth self-selected a pseudonym to go by in this study. I provided pseudonyms for all other participants.

I start with Table 1 because it provides a quick view of the youth's basic demographics at the time of their first semi-structured interviews. I will come back to Table 1 and describe it in more detail at the end of the youth's brief descriptions.

Table 1.

Background Information of Participating Youth

Name	Age	Place of Origin (City/region, Country)	Languages	Length in U.S. (At time of interview)
Hernández	20	San Miguel Ixtahuacan, San Marcos Department, Guatemala	Mam (language of origin) Spanish	24 months
Adler	17	Morelos Cuautla, Mexico	Spanish (only) Understands some Náhuatl	6 months
Weas	17	Joyabaj, El Quiché Department, Guatemala	K'iche (language of origin) Spanish	24 months
Edward	18	Totonicapan, Guatemala	K'iche (language of origin) Spanish	26 months in the U.S 14 months in Evergreen
Pedro	20	San Antonio, Huitepec, Mexico	Spanish	10 months
Antonio	17	El Quiché Department, Guatemala	K'iche and Spanish (languages of origin)	12 months
Elías	15	Guatemala City (born), El Quiché Department (raised)	Spanish Understands some K'iche	24 months
Joaquín	17	El Quiché Department, Guatemala	K'iche (language of origin) Spanish	24 months

Hernández

I first met Hernández in June 2015. He was a 20-year-old young man from San Marcos, Guatemala. Hernández was soft-spoken, and eager to learn English, graduate from school, and go to college. During my classroom observations, I would see him interacting and willingly working with his peers. I would also see him during lunchtime hanging around with a core group of three other older Latino youth, two of which played with him in the school's soccer team.

Back in Guatemala, Hernández, in addition to working was also attending school with the intention of becoming a teacher. He worked in order to financially help out his mother, as his father had passed away, and to pay for school. Hernández had immigrated to the United States approximately 24 months prior to the second time I interviewed him. Reasons for this, he shared, was to be reunified with his sister and to attend school. Once in the U.S. he intended on continuing his goal of becoming a teacher and was both excited and unsure about how to make this possible. Often times, I noticed a look of concern in his face, as if he was dealing with challenging and stressful situations. Whenever possible, I would engage in conversations with him, regarding how he was doing and feeling, how his schoolwork was going, and about his job. He would share with me about his full-time work as a dishwasher at a local Thai restaurant and the pressure he often felt to pay rent, phone, and other bills. Hernández lived with a relative renting an apartment that was shared with another person. Life for him consisted of working late into the night, getting up early in the morning to drive to Northwest High (he lived approximately 30 minutes driving time away from the school), and being in school for six hours before going back to work. Hernández said that, compared to his life in Guatemala, he felt treated well at Northwest High by teachers and other staff.

Adler

I met Adler early on in the 2015-2016 school year. At the time of the first interview, Adler was 17 years old. He was born in Morelos Cuautla, Mexico and was living in the U.S. with his father, mother and sister. While as a child he spoke Náhuatl, one of the largest indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, early on in his childhood he was told by his grandparent to not speak it. He also worked after school, sometimes with his father during the weekends painting houses. Adler was a very welcoming and gregarious youth who enjoyed helping his peers, teachers, and others at Northwest High. On numerous occasions I witnessed him befriending other youth at school. An example of his gregariousness was captured in my field notes:

Towards the end of lunch, [Adler] and his friend [Adolfo]...came over and sat next to...us. [They had gone out of school to buy lunch and brought it back with them to school]. I playfully said that they should share [with me] the sandwich they bought, and [Adler] decided to give me his sandwich. I gave it back since I had already eaten (Field Notes, October 8, 2015).

Reasons he gave for his family immigrating to the United States were for him to have a better future. He said that his goal was to graduate from Northwest High, “*y tener un título para poder trabajar en algo humilde*” (“and earn a degree in order to work on something humble”). Similar to Hernández, Alder said that he felt generally treated well at Northwest High. He also said that he felt “freer” in the school: “I feel a bit more free, and a bit more free because of who I am...what I have learned in this school is that it doesn’t matter what language you speak. What is important is that you want you learn.” Adler also commented on how he felt treated like a

child at Northwest High because of the type of work and assignments his teachers gave him.⁸ He felt that the work was beneath his academic grade level.

Weas

Weas was a 16-year-old K'iche speaker born in Joyabaj, El Quiché department, Guatemala. At Northwest High, he was assigned to the 10th grade. I first met Weas on October, 2015, during one of his math classes. His teacher at the time, Ms. Stein, had asked me to focus working with him, as he needed much help. During my volunteering time at Northwest High, Ms. W. also asked me to spend time with him. Ms. W told me that Weas had difficulties working in groups, and that he preferred being alone. She also told me that sometimes he would put up “a front”, act “defiant” and “disruptive” in class. For example, during one occasion, while I was helping a new student find information about her school bus, the vice principal, Ms. Monica, asked him why the long face. Then she told him to smile. Weas responded defiantly by saying, “why should I smile?” Ms. W. believed that Weas was putting on this appearance or “front” of not caring or wanting to interact with others, yet, he was willing to work individually. She shared that Weas was at his best working individually or working one-on-one. Throughout my volunteering at Northwest High, I would try to find Weas whenever I had time and check in with him. Most often, I would see him during lunch, walking alone off campus and going to the local market to buy lunch there.

While Ms. W., and I in some ways, saw Weas as preferring to be alone, or not wanting to interact with others, Weas' own view of his experiences at Northwest High revealed something different. When I asked him how he felt at Northwest High, Weas said, “*aquí me siento que me puedo divertir mas que allá en Guatemala, porque en Guatemala casi no tengo amigos y aquí sí*”

⁸ Two older Latina students and one Latino who were not part of this study shared Adler's perspective. They said that they felt like the work they were given was for younger students, and the Latino student said that teachers treat students like “little kids.”

(“here I feel like I can have more fun than over there in Guatemala, because in Guatemala I have almost no friends and here I do”).

It was also during initially meeting Weas that he expressed a desire to learn English. He said that he had come to the U.S. to learn English and have a “good future.” While he said that he had fun at school, he would also say that he did not like Northwest High because there were too many Spanish speakers there. Weas wanted to transfer to another school because he believed he would have more opportunities to speak English outside of Northwest High. As long as I knew him, learning English and transferring to another school were two things he desired the most.

Weas was an unaccompanied minor and said that he had obtained fake Mexican papers to cross Mexico. It took him three weeks via bus to get to the border. He also explained to me that his immigration status was “tough,” and that he had two lawyers working on his case. Ms. W. later confided in me that Weas had been detained by immigration for six months prior to entering Northwest High and was released conditionally. He lived with his brother in the city and mentioned that he felt very sad the first night in the U.S. as he missed his mother quite a lot. At the time of this study, Weas worked nine-and-half-hours after school, three days a week.

Edward

I met Edward the same day I met Adler and Weas. Edward was an 18-year-old young man from Totonicapán, Guatemala. He was a K'iche speaker who learned Spanish when starting primary school in Guatemala. The highest level of schooling he attended was the fifth grade and left school at age 12. He arrived as an unaccompanied minor to the U.S. at the age of 15, taking him close to a month to cross Mexico and make it to Los Angeles, CA. Like some of the youth, Edward immigrated to the U.S. to be reunified with his family (siblings). Unlike the rest of the

youth, Edward did not immigrate to study, rather, to work: “*bueno, yo antes, casi yo nunca pensé de venir aquí a estudiar. Yo cuando vien aquí, vine a trabajar*” (well, before, I almost never thought about coming here to study. Me, when I came here, I came to work”). It was with the encouragement of a coworker, who took him to Northwest High and enrolled him there, that he became a student at the school.

Edward was a quiet person whom I often saw sitting alone during lunchtime. It was during this time that I would take the opportunity to sit with him in order for us to get to know each other. I would share about my experiences as an immigrant—e.g., not liking the food at first as I found tortillas in the U.S. to not be tasty at all. He would also share that he did not like the food either, and that he did not hang out with anyone at school. During these times Edward would also tell me a bit about his life outside of school. He told me that he worked at a Peruvian restaurant as a dishwasher/cook six days a week. His shift usually started right after school and ended around 11 PM. On his days off, he would do his laundry, run other errands, and catch up on sleep. While he found life in the U.S. to be “*bien*”—as he said, “well, for me, the United State is good”—and the material living conditions in it quite different than those of Guatemala (e.g., brand new cars, tall buildings, paved roads), he said that he often missed his friends and mother. Like Weas, he expressed sadness about missing his mother. He also said that while one earns more money in the U.S., the standard of living is high and there is rent and bills to pay.

As time progressed, Edward started to develop close relationships with Fernando and José (two youth from Guatemala who were also speakers of indigenous languages). I often saw them hanging out during lunch, occasionally leaving the campus and coming back with food and/or drinking soft drinks or coffee. I do not know what languages they spoke while hanging out together.

Pedro

Pedro was a 20 year-old from Santa Ana Huitepec (Oaxaca), Mexico. He was not a speaker of an indigenous language. Pedro immigrated alone, paying a smuggler to cross him into the United States. According to him, he immigrated in order to study—yet, he confided in me that he did not like school, that he was interested in learning about how to become a businessperson (something he believed was not taught in school).

I met Pedro towards the end of 2015 and he was one of the youth in this study that I developed a closer relationship with. Like many new students to the school, Pedro would often sit alone during lunchtime. During this time, I would take the opportunity to sit with him and talk. Pedro, like Adler, was very gregarious and was willing to share about his life with me. He would often ask me for help or advice regarding work. On one occasion he asked me to call a restaurant for him in order to find information about a job he wanted for a family member. On another occasion, he asked me for information regarding immigration legal help for his sister. Unlike the other youth, maybe because of his age, he was a very serious young man. As time went on, Pedro developed friendships with a core group of students at Northwest High.

When he first arrived to the U.S., Pedro worked seven days a week at a local restaurant. Similar to Edward, he was referred to Northwest High by a coworker. In order to attend school, he reduced his workdays to six days a week (usually working 9-10 hours per work day). Similar to Edward and Hernández, his work shift started soon after school ended, leaving him little time to socialize with anyone after school. Life for Pedro in the U.S. was lonesome. He shared a one-room apartment with another person and during his day off, he would do laundry, catch up on sleep and run other errands. When I asked him how life was in the U.S. compared to life in Mexico, he said that he had no people to hang out in the U.S. and that there were many bills to

pay. He also told me that there were some conditions that were better in the U.S. For example, he said that he had a gay uncle that faced much discrimination in Mexico and, therefore, decided to immigrate to the U.S. According to Pedro, this uncle felt welcomed and treated better in the U.S. In terms of schooling, Pedro shared that going to school in Mexico was expensive and it was better to work than to pay for school, especially if there was little to no money to pay for school in the first place: *“allá el que no tiene dinero, pues mejor que ni se ponga a estudiar”* (“over there, those who don’t have money, well, it’s better not to go to school”). Therefore, he stopped going to school at the age of 13. He viewed Northwest High as a place where there was no discrimination, where teachers supported students and gave them *“fuerza”* or strength. This is evident in his statement: *“pues la verdad lo que me gusta de esta escuela es que...no hay discriminación...los maestros prohíben que discriminen a otros, que se burlen si se equivocan”* (“the truth is that what I like about this school is that there is...no discrimination...teachers prohibit others from discriminating, or to make fun of others if they make a mistake”). This aspect of him perceiving no discrimination at Northwest High was important for Pedro because he was often picked on, made fun of, and discriminated against in his previous school in Mexico.

Antonio, Elías, and Joaquín

As opposed to the youth described above, I did not spend much time talking and developing strong relationships with Antonio, Elías, and Joaquín. Reasons for this are due to the time I met them, and the youth’s own predisposition to talk or not talk with me. I had met Antonio at the beginning of 2016, and while he would say hi whenever he saw me, he never stopped to have long conversations with me. I wanted to respect his space and did not pressure him to speak more than he wanted to during these short interactions. Elías had been at Northwest High School for close to two years by the time I interviewed him. While I had seen

Elías before in school, it was Ms. W. who officially introduced us to each other in early May 2016—two months before I was to complete interviews at Northwest High. Ms. Alegria introduced me to Joaquín the same day he enrolled at Northwest High School—this was in late May 2016.

Despite the little time I got to spend with Antonio, Elías and Joaquín, I was able to obtain some important information about them. Antonio grew up in the El Quiché department of Guatemala. He immigrated to the U.S., “*buscando un futuro*” or to “search for a future” since, for him, “[*en*] *nuestros paises no hay tantas oportunidades*” (“in our countries, there aren’t that many opportunities”). He was bilingual in K’iche and Spanish, and was very interested in learning English. In the U.S. he lived with his uncles. I did not ask him about his immigration status, therefore, I am uncertain if he was documented or undocumented. Like Weas, Antonio did not like hanging out with peers at school; his reasons, however, were different. He said that he did not like to hang out with “*malos estudiantes que fuman*” or “bad students that smoke,” or that were disrespectful to each other by the way they spoke or treated each other. I observed Antonio, often being alone, in the computer lab/library, or eating lunch fast and then leaving the lunchroom.

Elías, at 15 years of age, was the youngest youth in this study. He was born in Guatemala City and grew up in El Quiché department with his grandmother (from his mother’s side). He said that as a child his grandmother would speak to him in K’iche, however, he did not learn to speak the language. Elías shared that his mother had immigrated to the United States leaving him behind in Guatemala. This had an important effect on Elías as he felt his mother had abandoned him. While his mother was in the U.S. he kept asking her when she was going to come back for him, and his mother would often replied that she needed money for this, and that

he should be patient until then. Elías could not wait for his mother to save enough money for him to come to the U.S., and so he decided to make the trip on his own to the U.S. He was reunified with his mother once in the U.S. who now had a new partner. Life in the U.S. for Elías consisted of going to Northwest High, and once school ended going home to the apartment he lived in with his mom and her partner. Once home, he spent his time playing video games, and waiting for his mom to return home from work.

The last youth I met was Joaquín. He was a 17 year-old youth from El Quiché department who spoke K'iche. While at Northwest High, he also worked full time at a restaurant. He was soft-spoken and would often look away when speaking to me. Similar to other new youth to the school, Joaquín initially sat alone. However, shortly after he arrived to school he started hanging out with Enrique, a 13-year-old youth from El Quiché that also spoke K'iche. I cannot say why Joaquín chose to hang out with a much younger youth, when there were others around his age, like Hernández, who were also from El Quiché.

Now I want to go back to Table 1 and describe it more detail. Important to highlight about Table 1 is the length of time the youth had been in the U.S. at the time the first interview took place, along with the language of “origin” they spoke. The youth’s length of time in the U.S. varied from 6-26 months. Some youth, like Adler were recent immigrants, and others like Weas, Joaquín and Elías had been in the U.S. for close to two years. Edward and Hernández had been in the U.S. longer than two years. What is more, their length of time in the U.S. did not equate with their length of time at Northwest High. Joaquín, Edward and Pedro enrolled at the high school at a much later time than when they arrived to the U.S. For example, Joaquín arrived in 2014, yet started attending Northwest High in 2016. Edward and Pedro arrived to Evergreen in early 2015, however, Edward started attending Northwest High at the beginning of

the 2015 school year and Pedro at the end of 2015. These youth, therefore, along with Adler, were relatively new to U.S. schools. It was unclear to me the motivations why these three particular youth decided to attend Northwest High School when they had not been in school in years.

I refer to the languages the youth grew up speaking as “languages of origin” instead of “heritage languages” (a term usually given to indigenous language speakers) because in the U.S. the latter has often been indiscriminately used to refer to non-English languages (Valdés, 2001b). This indiscriminate use of the term lumps together indigenous and colonial language speakers; as for example, an indigenous language speaker can also be a Spanish (colonial language) speaker yet both be labeled as heritage language speakers (Wiley, 2001). One problem with the term “heritage language” then, is that it does not differentiate the power dynamics between different heritage languages. While the term “language of origin” does not indicate power dynamics, it is more descriptive of the language(s) the youth originated speaking.

All the youth understood and spoke Spanish with varying degrees of ability. Out of the eight, Pedro was the only one that was never directly taught an indigenous language. The only language he spoke and read was Spanish. Antonio was born to a K’iche and Spanish-Speaking father and Spanish-speaking only mother. He grew up learning both K’iche and Spanish. Hernández, Edward, Weas, and Joaquín grew up in indigenous-only speaking homes. It was through schooling that these youth learned Spanish. Adler and Elías were taught their respective indigenous languages when young, however they did not maintain these languages for various reasons. Adler, for example, was teased as a child for speaking Náhuatl and then pressured by his grandparents to learn to speak Spanish and unlearn Náhuatl. While Adler and Elías

understood some words from their respective indigenous languages, they did not speak it with any fluency.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 are maps indicating the youth's places or origin. By place of origin, I am referring to the departments (similar to states in the United States) or villages/towns the youth were born in or lived most of their life in before immigrating to the United States. In Figure 3, El Quiché department is highlighted in red. While the rest of the youth provided specific towns of origin, Elías, Joaquín and Antonio mentioned El Quiché as department where they originated. As evident in the maps, four of the six youth born in Guatemala originated in El Quiché and two from the Northwestern highlands. Pedro originated from Southern Mexico (Oaxaca) and Adler from South-Central Mexico (Morelos).

Figure 1.

Map of Mexico and Guatemala- stars indicates youth's location of origin



Data Sources

There were two major sources of data for this study: nine and one-half (9.5) hours of interview data spread over 18 interviews with participants in this study; and 120 hours of participant observation (see Appendix C) over a period of nine (9) months at Northwest High. Table 2 provides a record of my interviews with various participants, and Table 3 provides a record of participant observation hours. In what follows I describe the content of and method for conducting interviews and participant observations.

Table 2

Interview Data

Focal Youth	No. of Inter-views	Length	Peers	No. of inter-views	Length	Teacher/ Staff	No. of inter-views	Length
Adler	2	1) 15 min 2) 50 min	Adolfo	1	20 min	Ms. Leon	1	22 min
Antonio	1	34 min	Chava	1	16 min	Ms. W	1	70 min
Edward	1	54 min	Alexis	1	20 min	Ms. Alegría	1	34 min
Elías	1	34 min						
Hernández	3	1) 23 min 2) 11 min 3) 21 min						
Joaquín	1	16 min						
Pedro	2	1) 50 min						

		2) 47 min						
Weas	1	34 min						
<i>Total min/hours: 389 min / 6.5 hours</i>			<i>Total min: 56 min</i>			<i>Total min/hours: 125 min / 2 hours</i>		
GRAND TOTAL INTERVIEW MIN/HOURS: 571 min / 9.5 hours								

Table 3

Participant Observation Data

Total Hours	Approximate 120
Days of observation	Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 AM – 1:30 PM
Starting Date	October 8, 2015
Ending Date	June 7, 2016
Length	9 months

Interviews With Focal Youth

The primary data utilized in this dissertation comes from semi-structured interviews with focus indigenous youth (see Appendix A1 and A2). Because my research questions focused on youths’ understanding of specific categories or experiences, semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate data gathering methods (Merriam, 2009). I want to provide a partial script I used when re-introducing myself to the youth right before interviewing them.

Thank you for meeting me...I want to learn about your thoughts and experiences regarding the term “indigenous.” For me, I did not consider myself indigneous until I got to college (I was in my 20s). Being indigenous...has a specific and very special meaning for me. Indigenous identity means different things to different people. There is no single definition of indigenous. And, well, I want to learn about your thoughts on what indigenous means to you. I want to start by asking about the languages you speak. In the town where I grew up, people speak a language called Poqomam. I did not learn to speak

it, nor did my parents and siblings. The only people I know that speak it are some members from my grandfather's family.

In this script, I introduced the category "indigenous" to the youth, and I also positioned myself as indigenous. This was significant because I was signaling my "stake" in this study. I was also pointing out to the youth that there was no one particular understanding of the term indigenous with the aim of easing them into sharing any thoughts they had about the category. Finally, indigenous was a term, that as I discuss in Chapter Six, was unknown by some of the youth. I will describe in more detail the significance of this script in the limitations section below.

The interviews done with youth were conducted in Spanish, usually right after school, on or off school premises, and lasted between 15-60 minutes. For example, Edward took time away from enjoying his day off to meet me at a local coffee shop close to his home. The two interviews I did with Pedro happened after school before he needed to go to work. The first interview took place at a nearby coffee shop and the second outside of the school on an adjacent playground belonging to a community recreational center. Ms. W gave me permission to pull Weas out of her class and interview him during this time (approximately 45 minutes). I interviewed Adler twice because the first interview, which took place on the sports field, was cut short due to him being called by his mother to pick his sister up. The second time, I interviewed him after school as we sat down on an empty hallway inside the school. This empty hallway was also the location where I interviewed Elías after school. The interviews I did with Hernández and Joaquín took place during lunch-time, which usually lasted between 20-35 minutes. I interviewed Hernández on three different occasions, twice in the lunchroom/cafeteria, and another time immediately outside of the school. Joaquín was interviewed in the sports field. Finally, I had to drive 20 miles south of Evergreen to meet Antonio at a local library to interview

him. As evident about the youth's work schedule, time constraint affected the length of interviews as well as how many times I interviewed them.

Because I wanted to honor all of the participants' words and voices (including their peers, teachers and staff), staying true to their words and sense-making, I audio-recorded the semi-structured interviews using a digital audio recorder. The digital files were uploaded into my computer soon after interviews were done for later transcription. Recording the interviews allowed me the ability to pay attention to the youth and maintain a sense of casualness to the interviews. This was particularly useful with Elías who felt nervous during the interview; he said, "this makes me very nervous." In order to ease him into the interview I put the interview guide down, and started conversing with him, asking him questions that I had memorized from the interview guide.

The questions I asked were modified from an earlier pilot study conducted in 2015 that was part of a graduate Qualitative Methods course I was taking at the University of Washington.⁹ In this pilot study, my research question was related to how indigenous youth experienced being welcomed or unwelcomed at school. In the first interviews, I asked youth about their treatment by teachers, staff, and particularly, their Latina/o peers. As my research question was fine-tuned to focus on youth's self-understanding of indigeneity, so too the interview guide was modified. In general, I focused on the following:

- Languages spoken—"What language did you speak back home?" "How about your parents or other family members?"
- The category "indigenous"—"When you hear the word indigenous, what comes to mind?"
- Self-identification—"how do you identify? Where, with whom?"

⁹ Because it was a graduate class, the course instructor mediated access to do the research at Northwest High and no need for IRB was needed.

- Experiences of indigenous peoples in countries of origin and in the United States—“How are indigenous language speakers treated in country of origin? Are they treated differently than non-indigenous language speakers?”
- And immigration experience—“what were some reasons that you (or your family) decided to immigrate to the U.S.?”

However, depending on the youth’s willingness to respond, or not, to particular questions, the questions asked were not always in the order as described in the interview guide. This flexibility in the composition (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) of the interview guide, however, resulted in a lack of consistency in youth responses. I will discuss more of this in the limitations section of this chapter.

Also, by the time I was satisfied with my research question, and the subsequent modification to the interview guides, I had already interviewed Adler, Pedro, and Antonio. While I was able to interview Pedro and Adler a second time using the final research guide, I did not get a chance to interview Antonio a second time. Nonetheless, Antonio’s interview is important because it revealed his understanding of the category indigenous and of indigeneity, his and of others.

Interview With Peers

Peers were interviewed in order to get a glimpse of how they perceived or thought about indigenous peoples in their countries of origin and in the United States. I also wanted to understand how they viewed the category “indigenous”, whom they believed to be indigenous, and the rationale behind that (see Appendix B for peer interview guide). These interviews were conducted in Spanish, on school premises, during lunchtime, and lasted between 15-25 minutes. The primary reasons for interviewing these peers was to obtain insights into how they understood

the category “indigenous” and their perception of indigenous peoples. These interviews consisted of overarching questions regarding their immigrant experience, experiences at Northwest High, self-identification, thoughts on the category “indigenous,” and the treatment of indigenous peoples in their countries of origin and in the U.S. In regards to the last overarching questions, I asked the peers the following: “Do you have a sense of who is indigenous at the school?” “Do you feel that indigenous peoples are treated differently at school than other students?” “How were indigenous peoples treated back in your country of origin?”

Interview With Staff and Teachers

Interviews with Ms. Leon, Ms. W., and Ms. Alegría lasted between 30-60 minutes, and took place in their classrooms or in an office. I interviewed Ms. Leon in her classroom during her “prep” period and Ms. W. was interviewed after school in her classroom. I interviewed Ms. Alegría twice in her office. Reasons for interviewing the teachers and Ms. Alegría were based on their individual interest, or knowledge, regarding former or present indigenous youth in their classrooms or at school. The teachers expressed a desire to understand more about the indigenous youth that were in their classroom in order to better teach them. While Ms. Leon said that she had no indigenous youth in her math classes in the 2015-2016 academic school year, she did have indigenous youth in previous years. Ms. W., on the other hand, had seven youth she identified as indigenous in her class—these included Weas and Elías. She identified these youth as indigenous based on language and location of origin. However, it must be pointed out that such indicators for her were not always reliable predictors of who was indigenous. When I asked her how could she tell if others were indigenous she said that she learned about K’iche speakers being indigenous from Ms. M., the newcomer teacher. She also said the following in terms of how she was able to differentiate who was indigenous.

I am starting to look at racial cues a little bit more. Like, there's a smaller stature and there's a darker skin. But I don't think that's a good indicator. So, it might be a clue sometimes if I noticed somebody is really quiet, but I don't know enough about races of Latin America.

Here Ms. W. was describing her process for identifying who might be indigenous based on language and phenotypic indicators. Ms. Alegría was interviewed because of her background from Oaxaca, Mexico, and working closely with Spanish speaking youth at Northwest High. As an enrollment coordinator, she had information about new students to the school and their countries of origin. She had also been at this school the longest and was able to share information about changes in student demographics, including indigenous youth population.

The questions posed to teachers and Ms. Alegría asked about their experiences working with indigenous immigrant youth. In particular, I probed for their perceptions of indigenous youth by asking the following:

- What is your sense of the experiences of indigenous youth at the school? Any differences in their experiences from other students?
- Compared to other immigrants, how do indigenous immigrants from Latin America adjust to being in their new school? Do they seek out social interactions?
- Have there been conflicts between other students and indigenous Latina/o students? If so, what seemed to be the conflict?

Participant Observations

To get a glimpse of the experiences of the focal youth at Northwest High, I conducted participant observations from October 2015 to June 2016. My participant observation role consisted of volunteering and focusing on observation at the school twice a week. Over time, my participant observations were more firmly defined. For instance, my volunteering was usually limited to assisting teachers or students with classroom work once a week (e.g., translating work

for the student and helping with English speaking activities). This usually happened Tuesdays. My “researcher role,” was usually reserved for Thursdays. During these days, I would limit my role to observing students, talking with them, and jotting down observations and conversations.

Observations generally took place in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways, sports field, computer lab/library, and as students were leaving school. I chose to do observations in these settings, because they were usually the ones focus youth would be found in.

In these observations I was paying close attention to indigenous youth’s experiences in their classrooms with other youth, with their teachers and the general classroom environment. I was also focusing on indigenous youth’s experiences outside of their classroom, in the lunchroom, hallways, sports field, and library/computer room. In these spaces, I was looking for how youth engaged with each other, whom did they hang out with, whom did they talk to or not, languages they used to communicate with others, and any tensions that were noticeable. Additionally, I was attentive to the social-mappings students formed, meaning where students would hangout and with whom.

I jotted down observation on a paper notebook that I kept with me while doing participant observations. Soon after I would complete my participant observations at Northwest High, I would go to the nearest coffee shop and type on my computer my field notes. If I could not type them as soon as my observations were done, I would make sure to type them before the day was over.

These observations gave me insights that individual interviews did not reveal, and in some cases it corroborated youth’s experiences. For example, most of the focus youth in this study felt, overall, treated well at Northwest High. Taken at their word value, it would appear that the youth had mainly positive experiences at the school. While this may have been the case,

this view obscures the fact that others did not. For instance, In Pedro's case, his observation that some indigenous youth at Northwest High seemed "*apagados*" or "down" was confirmed by my observation that some indigenous youth (like Fernando, not part of this study) would sit quietly with his head down, not speak to others, even when others were making fun of him.

Analytic Memos

Throughout data collection (interviews and observations) along with organizing data (transcription) I wrote analytic memos. These analytic memos were a type of journal entries in which to "dump" ideas regarding the data collected (Saldaña, 2009). Memos were organized according to date, labeled based on topic/theme, and saved under a "memo" file. Memos helped me make sense of initial observations and initial themes I noticed from the youth. For example, one of these themes concerned how the youth would identify based on location of origin. They would say the larger state or department they were from, then the particular town they grew up in. These early memos helped me think about geographic location as an important indicator the youth use for thinking about their indigeneity.

Methods of Analysis

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study were the individual indigenous youth. My analysis focused on the youth's understanding and sense-making. I was interested in how the youth made sense of the category "indigenous," and indigeneity, theirs and of others. I drew on Corntassel (2003) and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis' (2003) definitions of "indigenous peoplehood" to map out indicators present in the youth's description of indigeneity; including the category "indigenous," along with their self-identification, and descriptions of who they viewed as

indigenous (which also revealed indicators they used to think about whom was indigenous). These indicators were: Language, Geography, Labor background, and History.

Stages of Analysis

Uwe Flick (2014) wrote in the *Introduction to Qualitative Research* that data analysis is “the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it” (p. 5). Similar to Flick, I understand data analysis as a process of 1) organizing data into discernable segments of information, and 2) data interpretation. Below I outline the steps I took in organizing and interpreting the data for this dissertation.

Indexing data. The focus indigenous youth’s interviews were transcribed into Spanish using a word processor. Transcriptions were kept in Spanish in order to keep a record of the youth’s exact words and meanings as they meant them in Spanish. This minimized the distortion of their words. It also allowed me to pull direct quotations from the transcriptions in Spanish and translate them as needed.

Selective transcriptions of peer, teachers, and staff’s interviews were also done. These selective transcriptions were made in light of themes that emerged from focus youth’s data. An index of transcriptions was kept in Microsoft Word, with interviewee’s name and date of interviews. Observations were also typed into a word process and indexed based on date of observation, setting, and time.

Coding Data. Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) described coding as the labeling of data segments and grouping them into categories. An important aspect of coding—and subsequent analysis—is the examination and comparison “both within and between categories” (p. 24). The first step I took was to do “open coding” followed by more focused coding (Merriam, 2009).

The open coding allowed me to label any part of the focal youth’s transcriptions that appeared significant. At this stage I was not coding for particular themes or categories. However, given my research question and conceptual frame, I was being attentive to focal youth’s self-understanding of the category indigenous, treatment of indigenous peoples, and discussion of language spoken.

The second round of coding was more focused. This consisted of the creation of “organizational” and “substantive” categories (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). Organizational categorizing is a process in which codes, which were created during open coding, were put into a type of large “bucket” or category. These larger categories aligned with the topical questions I created for the focus youth’s interview guide. Two examples of organizational categories I created are “Indigenous Peoplehood,” and “Treatment of Indigenous People.” The first organizational category aligned with the topical question I asked regarding their understanding of the word indigenous and indigenous peoples. The second organizational category, “Treatment of Indigenous People,” aligned with the topical question I asked regarding the treatment of indigenous language speakers in countries of origin and the US. Substantive categorizing refers to the researcher’s own understanding of the words that participants use to describe a particular experience. One example of this substantive category is Adler’s use of the word “bullying” to describe treatment faced by indigenous peoples in Mexico. I interpreted “bullying” as a type of discrimination. Table 4 illustrates the process of creating organizational and substantive categories.

Table 4

Organizational and Substantive Categories (sample)

Indigenous Peoplehood

	Self-identification as indigenous or <i>indio</i>	Tied to Geographic location	Tied to Indigenous Languages
Hernández	X	X	X
Adler	X	X	X
Edward	X	X	X
Weas	X	X	X
Pedro	X	X	X
Antonio		X	X
Elías	X		X
Joaquín		X	X

Treatment of Indigenous Language Speakers

	The word “discrimination” used to describe treatment	The word “racism” used to describe treatment	Understanding of “<i>indio</i>” as pejorative term
Hernández	X	X	X
Adler	X		X
Edward			
Weas			X
Pedro	X	X	X
Antonio	X	X	
Elías			X

Joaquín			X
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Table 4 is an example of how codes that were created during open coding, such as “discrimination,” “racism,” and “*indio*,” were then “dumped” into the larger category: “Treatment of Indigenous Language Speakers.”

Analysis. After organizational coding, I engaged in analysis of the codes relying on the coloniality of power conceptual frame. I want to highlight coding and analysis done on Adler and Hernández as one small example of my analysis. Both youth self-described as indigenous, for example Hernández said that an indigenous person was “like me because I speak the language,” and while Adler did not speak an indigenous language he nonetheless said he was indigenous or “*indio*.” I isolated the word “bullying” from Adler’s interview because it was one that he consistently used to refer to his treatment and that of other indigenous language speakers in Mexico. Hernández, in sharing his thoughts on how indigenous peoples were being treated in Guatemala used the word “*racismo*” or racism. I interpreted the word “bullying” as a form of discrimination, and “racism” as a particular form of discrimination based on race. Moreover, Adler and Hernández described the use of the word “*indio*” as a pejorative term used for “*burla*” or “mocking” and to “*humillar*” or “humiliate.” Therefore, I grouped these codes under a new emerging category “Racism, Discrimination, and *Indio*.”

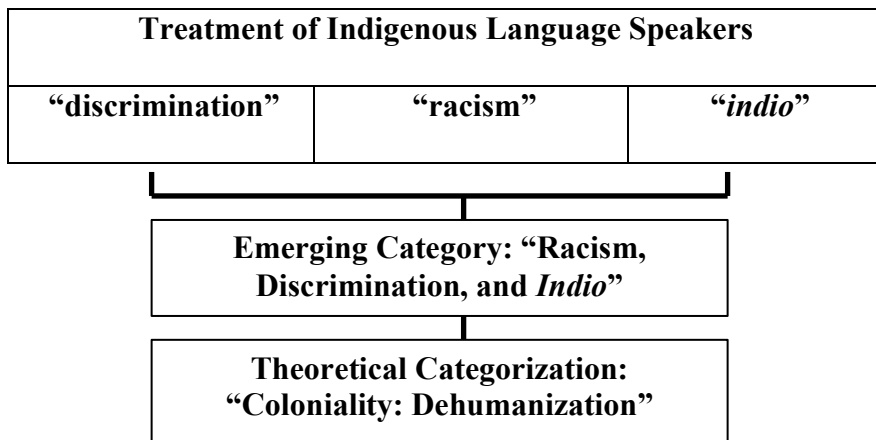
I then went a step further by engaging in “theoretical categorizing.” Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) described theoretical categorizing as a process of placing “the coded data into an exploratory theoretical framework...often represent[ing] the researchers[?] concepts...rather than denoting participants’ own concepts” (p. 26). I interpreted this new category of “Racism, Discrimination, and *Indio*” through a coloniality of power lens. In this case, coloniality was, both, a category and conceptual frame for interpreting the larger category of “Racism,

Discrimination, and *Indio*.” I also used theoretical categorizing when the youth shared information that did not fit into any other previous category that I had created in my research guide, such as “*Indio*,” and I felt it illustrated aspects of my conceptual frame: coloniality and indigeneity.

Table 5 is an example of how “Racism, Discrimination, and *Indio*” emerged from the earlier organizational category “Treatment of indigenous language speakers” as illustrated in Table 4. This emerging category was then interpreted through a coloniality of power lens as an example of dehumanization of indigenous peoples.

Table 5

Organizational and Theoretical Categorization (sample)



Issues of Validity

Other data, including selective transcriptions of peers, teachers, and staff, along with observations were used as points of triangulation. I looked across interviews with peers, teachers and staff, and observations to check whether the focal youth’s experiences were supported by different data sources. I also used the contexts of interviews with focal youth at academic conferences to check in with peers my interpretations.

Limitations

There were several challenges to gathering data that I want to address below. One of them was related to securing permission to do research at Northwest High. It took three months after initial IRB approval (January 1st, 2016) to obtain full permission from school administrators to conduct the study at the school. This gave me two and a half months (from mid May to mid June) to schedule and conduct interviews with youth, teachers, staff and peers at the school. A related challenge was scheduling interviews with the focal youth. This challenge was mainly due to the youth's work schedule. Elías was the only youth who did not work after school. The rest of the youth started their work within one and a half-hour after school ended. This made it difficult to schedule solid blocks of time with the youth after school for interviews.

I had originally planned the following activities for collecting data from the focus indigenous youth:

- Interviewing the youth twice—the first interview asking questions on indigeneity, and the second asking questions regarding immigration;
- Focus group interviews (asking questions regarding indigenous and immigrant experiences);
- Shadowing the youth through one school day; and,
- Asking the youth to narrate a personal story of their immigration.

The only activity I was able to do was interviewing the youth. As I explained earlier, in some cases I was able to interview some of the youth twice. Additionally, I did not get a chance to ask uniform questions to the youth. I had developed two interview guides with the intention of interviewing the youth twice. The first interview guide asked questions regarding indicators of indigeneity, and the second interview guide asked questions regarding immigrant experiences. I only had the opportunity of using both guides with Pedro, Elías, and Edward. I was able to ask some questions from the second interview guide to Hernández and Weas. I did not get a chance

to ask Antonio, Adler, and Joaquín questions from the second interview guide regarding immigration. This is a very important limitation because there was not enough data collected regarding their immigration experience to speak of patterns in immigration experience.

Focus group interviews would have been extremely beneficial to this study, as they could have given the youth opportunity to engage with one another through dialogue and verbally formulate their ideas and share their thoughts and feeling regarding indigenous and immigrant experiences, which perhaps may not have been articulated before in individual interviews (Kitzinger, 1994).

Positionality and Dilemmas

Epistemological and Ontological Positions

Norman K. Denzin (1997) wrote, “theory, writing, and ethnography are inseparable material practices. Together they create conditions that locate the social inside the texts. Hence, those who write culture also write theory. Also, those who write theory write culture” (p. xii). Furthermore, for Denzin, ethnographic work is interpretive, “messy”, dialogical, and multivocal: “the site at which the voices of the other, alongside the voices of the author, come alive and interact with one another” (Denzin, 1997, p. xiii). This study is not an ethnography, nonetheless, Denzin’s insight is suitable as my “voice” expressed through my writing, interacted with the “voices” of the youth. In this case, this qualitative study is multivocal. Moreover, I am intricately involved in this research as I originated the research questions and the methods I felt were most appropriate for collecting data. While in this dissertation, I provided textual spaces for the youth’s to express their own voices and understanding (through directly quoting from them), I ultimately gave the last analysis and interpretation of their understandings.

Chicana Feminist theorist Dolores Delgado Bernal (1998) made the observation that while there is an intimate relationship between methodology and a researcher's epistemological orientation, such relationship is not always explicit. Moreover, as Smith (1999) and Harding (1993) pointed out, there is a mutual and reinforcing relationship between theories of knowledge (epistemology) and "how" (methods) to study it. I interpret Delgado Bernal's observation as a challenge for me to be as clear as possible about my epistemological orientations and methodological choices. The way I make sense of the world is guided by many intellectual traditions. For the purposes of this study I highlight the theories and literature on immigration and coloniality. Theories of immigration are important for me because they have helped me understand some of my personal experiences being an immigrant. They have also helped me understand collective and individual immigrant experiences. However, theories of immigration are insufficient when explaining the experiences of indigenous immigrants. I also relied on theories of coloniality, especially coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), because it provides a specific conceptual frame originating in analysis of racial formations—among other forms of power hierarchies—in Latin America (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2006). In Chapter Two I outlined how these two theories are complimentary.

Other theories that have made their way into my everyday life are theories espoused by Chicana Feminist Theorists, such as Anzaldúa's (1999) "*mestiza* consciousness." Other scholars have done a much better job than I could ever do regarding the intimate relationship between epistemology and ontology (e.g., Heidegger, 1969; Gadamer, 1989/2004). From Anzaldúa and indigenous scholars, I have come to view ways of understanding as intimately tied to ways of being. For these scholars, we come to understand and know the world through the specific bodies we were born into, as opposed to the Western elevation of abstract knowledge detached

from bodies. Making my epistemological orientations clear also requires self-reflectivity and sharing how my lived experiences have shaped my approaches to research design.

Dilemma: Asking About “Indigenous”

I struggled with the best ways to ask the youth in this study about their self-identification and indigeneity. My personal experiences engaging with different indigenous communities made me aware that some questions are best left unasked, and that there is a time and place for asking questions. I have also learned that some indigenous peoples are sensitive to questions about indigenous experiences—especially if they do not know why they are being asked such questions in the first place, and/or what would be done with their responses. In one of my previous experiences working with indigenous youth (Barillas-Chón, 2010), I met a Oaxaqueña child born in the U.S. This girl associated being Oaxaqueña to something bad: “*yo pensaba que Oaxaqueño era algo malo*” or “I thought that Oaxaqueño was something bad.” If being Oaxaqueña or indigenous is something bad why would people want to share, especially with a stranger, that they identify as such? I have kept such experiences and understanding of indigenous peoples close to heart. Yet, I took on this dissertation in order to understand how youth made sense of and understood indigeneity, theirs and of others.

Critical Pedagogy/Education and works by feminist of color have encouraged and challenged me to be self-reflective. They have also pushed me to think about knowledge production, in schooling and research settings, as co-created with others. This collective process of knowledge production requires transparency and vulnerability. I cannot ask what I am not willing to self-examine and think through. In a similar way, I could not have asked the youth in this study personal questions, such as how they identified, and experiences, such as treatment based on their identification, that I was not willing to share about myself with them.

With this in mind, the way that I approached asking the youth about their self-identification and background was for me to share about my background. As I wrote earlier in this chapter under the “Data Sources” header, upon initially meeting the youth, and right before formally interviewing them, I would tell them that I was born in Guatemala, in a small town where many of the people speak an indigenous language called Poqomam, that I was undocumented for 13 years, and that I consider myself indigenous. Doing this presented an important dilemma for three reasons. The first was that it introduced the term “indigenous” to the youth. As I write about in Chapter Six of this dissertation, some of the youth were not aware of this term. From personal experiences, indigenous peoples rarely, in their everyday conversations, refer to themselves as indigenous.

Secondly, I relied on indicators that others have written are central to indigenous peoplehood (Corntassel, 2003; Holm et al, 2003). For example, I mentioned the geographic place where I originated from, and the indigenous language that some family members spoke. In doing this I was signaling to the youth indicators of indigeneity I deemed important. The dilemma with this is that I am unsure of the extent to which such indicators influenced the youth’s own understanding of the category “indigenous” and who may be indigenous. It could be the case that the youth were sense-making in the moment of the interview with me and that they relied on the indicators I signaled to them (Geography and language) for their own thinking about what or whom was indigenous. Some of this was evident, as I write in Chapter Six of this dissertation, where the youth used “like us” or “like we” in their description and understanding of who is indigenous. This “us” and “we” included me in their understanding. I speculate that it included me because of their understanding that I was also indigenous. These are important

dilemmas with no resolution because they make me wonder the extent to which I affected their own understanding of the category “indigenous” and indigeneity.

“Insider/Outsiderness”

Similar to youth in this study, I am positioned in the intersections between indigeneity and immigrant experiences. My struggles with understanding indigeneity and member-ing to indigenous groups, my physical appearance, Spanish speaking skills, and experiences working with immigrant families and youth for the last nine years, have provided me with some insight into the lives of immigrant and indigenous peoples. It has also informed me about ways to relate with indigenous youth, and strategies to employ in order to establish trust and the sharing of information. Overall, my position as an immigrant and indigenous person has provided me with specific knowledge and skills that were born out of my lived experiences. Like Stephen’s (2007) “transborder,” and Anzaldúa’s “*nepantlera*,” I operate in the world as indigenous, immigrant, male, Ph.D. student, and researcher.

Debates over the researcher’s positionality have often been regarded as distinctions between “insiderness” and “outsiderness” (Banks, 1998; Naples 1996) to the participants’ lived experiences and the community they make up. Non-indigenous researchers can indeed engage in indigenous methodologies. Smith (1999) wrote that indigenous methodologies do not “belong” to indigenous peoples alone; Louis (2007) adding that so far as the methods are used in respectful and ethical ways. This is to say that indigenous methodologies are not confined to those on the “inside”: the indigenous-identified researcher. Indigenous researchers often occupy insider/outsider positions (Villenas, 1996), being both insiders to the community of participants and outsiders as researchers. In this dissertation, I occupied both positions simultaneously.

The goal in foregrounding my position, as insider/outsider, is to make transparent how I am an important part of the research methodology. Harding on numerous occasions (1993, 1988) wrote that researchers are the ultimate instruments of analysis. For this reason, Harding pointed out that there is no neutral objectivity, rather subjective people interpreting research. Because people cannot stand outside their subjective reality and view it from an objective position, objectivity is thus difficult, if not impossible to obtain. Harding did not completely disavow objectivity or the effort towards it; rather, Harding argued that the way objectivity has been traditionally interpreted as unbiased and neutral is both politically dangerous (as it advances a particular ideological perspective) and methodologically weak. For Harding, researchers' epistemological positions are shaped by their lived experiences, along with the community of research they are part of. Harding referred to this epistemological position as "standpoint epistemology" (1993). Standpoint epistemology is more rigorous than traditionally imagined objective science because it demands that researchers critically examine and reflect upon how their subjectivity shapes and informs their research process.

My lived experiences and theories informing my knowledge and understanding of such experiences have shaped the research questions I ask, the method for collecting data, and conceptual frameworks I rely on to make sense of the data. Because I am the final "interpretive tool" (Harding, 1993, 1988), I have highlighted my epistemological and ontological positions in this chapter. Foregrounding my positionality as an "insider" does not guarantee a complete and full awareness of the youth's lived experiences; rather, it brings to light how the research process is a co-creation of understanding, where multivocality is part of knowledge production (Denzin, 1997). My "outsiderness" position guarantees a limited awareness and/or understanding of the youth's experiences and interpretation of those experiences. It can be the case that other youth's

experiences and knowledges were hidden from me as some indigenous scholars have written is part of survivance (Cajete, 1994). Additionally, it is quite possible that my interpretation of youth's lived experiences and understandings may have been quite different than their interpretation (as we operate from similar yet distinct theories for making sense of our world). Therefore, all interpretations that I made about the experiences and youth' sense-making in this study reflects a partial understanding of them.

Chapter Four: Asymmetrical Relationship of Power

In this chapter I examine the youth's experiences with and understanding of asymmetrical relationships of power they see and have experienced between Spanish and "*dialectos*." The focal youth used the term *dialecto* to refer to indigenous languages. Their understanding of this asymmetrical relationship of power was evident in their descriptions of language hierarchies and perceptions of economic opportunities afforded to Spanish speakers. Moreover, *dialectos* were placed in subordinated positions in the language hierarchies.

This asymmetrical relationship of power is analogous to Quijano's (2010) coloniality of power in two ways. The first is that the youth's discussion of language hierarchies pointed to the social and linguistic power of Spanish (and to some extent English) over indigenous languages. In this case, Spanish and English were languages of power. In the second case, language hierarchies paralleled a division of labor the coloniality of power established. Spanish speakers occupied the top and indigenous language speakers the bottom of this language hierarchy/labor division,

I begin this chapter with a description of Spanish as the language of social, political and cultural control in youth's countries of origin. Subsequently, I illustrate how the youth viewed the social and linguistic importance of Spanish as it mediated social interactions. The aforementioned is done in order to show the youth's understanding of language hierarchies. I then turn to a discussion of how the asymmetry of language parallels a division of labor established by coloniality. Finally, I conclude by pointing out the subaltern positioning of indigenous languages as evident in the youth's use of "*dialectos*" or "*un otro idioma*" or "an other language" when speaking about them. Indigenous languages subalternity provides

evidence of the hierarchy of language/labor, however, it did not prevent the youth from valuing and being proud of *dialectos*.

Asymmetry of Power: Language Hierarchy

En Guatemala...algunas personas si me...han dicho porque el dialecto, como te dijera, solo se maneja en tu pueblo con...los que entiendan. Cambio el español se utiliza en diferentes países. En otros lugares. Entonces, o “que ya no lo manejes. Ya enfócate mas en español.” Me han dicho unas personas eso porque es lo que se maneja siempre. Cambio el dialecto si es bueno también, pero solo se maneja en una parte...Entonces es mejor aprender mejor el español (Antonio)

In Guatemala...some people have told me, because *dialecto*, how can I tell you, is only used in your town with those that understand it. On the other hand, Spanish is utilized in different countries. In other places. Well then, ‘don’t use it [*dialecto*]. Focus more on Spanish.’ Some people have said that to me, because that is what is always used. On the other hand, *dialecto* is also good, but is only used in some places...Then is better to learn Spanish (Antonio)

Hay veces gente que dice, ‘prefiero yo hablar ingles que hablar español o que hablar esta lengua [náhuatl] que ni me gusta. Ni siquiera es conocida. Nadie la va hablar’ (Adler)

There are people that sometimes say, ‘I prefer to speak English than to speak Spanish or this other language [Náhuatl]. It’s not even known. No one is going to speak it’ (Adler)

In the above quotations, it is evident that Antonio and Adler were keenly aware of and understood a hierarchy of languages in their countries of origin. For Antonio and Adler, English, Spanish and indigenous languages occupied specific spheres of social and linguistic importance, or lack of importance for the latter. When Adler said that others prefer to speak English or Spanish because no one knows or speaks Náhuatl, he was pointing out the global linguistic importance of English and Spanish. Adler understood the importance of learning Spanish in Mexico; he specifically said, “*aprenden el que es más famoso como el Español. El que hablan todos*” or, “they learn the most famous one like Spanish. The one [language] that everyone speaks.” Other youth such as Hernández and Elías expressed a similar view. When I asked what it meant for them to learn English and Spanish they said the following:

para mi el inglés es muy importante para for me English is very important in order to

buscar mas oportunidades; para poder hablar con la gente; para poder expresarte a la gente de este país [EEUU]...aprender el español también es algo muy interesante, como para que gente de otro país se pueda comunicar...con nuestra gente [que habla español] (Hernández)

look for more opportunities; to be able to talk to people; to be able to express [one self] to the people of this country [U.S.]...learning Spanish is also very interesting, like for people from other countries to be able to communicate with our [Spanish-speaking] people (Hernández)

aprender inglés es algo que ayuda mucho en los estudios, en el trabajo. En muchas cosas también...aprender el español es para poder comunicarse con la gente, así, de diferentes países de Centroamérica (Elías)

learning English is something that will help a lot in studies [education], at work. In many things too...learning Spanish is to be able to communicate with people, well, from different Central American countries (Elías)

Important to emphasize here is that Antonio, Hernández, and Elías demonstrated an awareness of Spanish being a transnational language of communication in Spanish-speaking countries; in other words, spoken and written Spanish becomes positioned as a common language across Spanish-speaking countries. This was supported in their view that Spanish was “utilized in different countries” (Antonio) and that it helped people from other countries, including those from Central American (Elías), “communicate with...[other Spanish speaking] people” (Hernández). From this perspective, Spanish was positioned as the only language of communication and social interaction in and across Latin America countries. In this way, the youth understood that Spanish was a language of social and linguistic power. However, it must also be noted the sphere of influence Spanish had, while broad, was limited to Spanish dominant geographic locations.

Spanish As Colonizing Force and Mechanism of the Coloniality of Power

As a language of power that mediated social and linguistic interactions, it can be inferred that learning Spanish for the youth in this study was something that would inherently happen; as Adler said, it was a “famous language” that “everyone speaks.” To understand how Spanish became the language of power, we must situate it within its larger role in the colonizing of the

Americas. It is not my intention to provide a meticulous account of the Spanish language in Latin America. Here, however, relying on Mignolo (1995), Dussel (1995), and Rama's (1996) work, I want to briefly describe how Spanish was turned into a colonizing force and endures as a mechanism of the coloniality of power.

In *The darker side of the Renaissance*, Mignolo (1995) advanced the idea that the Castilian language, which was the predecessor of modern day Spanish, provided the colonizers with rationales and means of controlling indigenous peoples¹⁰ For the remainder of this chapter, Spanish and Castilian will be interchangeably used as they both refer to languages of power. Castilian as a language of erudition and power in Spain coincided with the colonization of the Americas (Mignolo, 1995). It must be noted that Castilian was not, and is not, the only language spoken in Spain. However, under Queen Isabella, who authorized the colonization of the Americas, Castilian was gradually used as a way to consolidate social, cultural, political, and economic power. Therefore, one rationale behind the use of Castilian/Spanish in the Americas was to solidify a global social, political, and economic power through language. Another rationale for the use of Spanish to control and colonize indigenous peoples in the Americas was to civilize them, as it was believed that they lacked a proper human language. This civilizing project happened through the teaching of the Spanish language and grammar.

One of the most important contributors to Critical Discourse Analysis, Norman Fairclough (2012) wrote that language, as a constitutive element of "discourse," is ideological "in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination" (p. 15).

¹⁰ Castilian is a regional language of north central Spain, often associated with the Kingdom of Castile. It was not the language of power in Spain, prior to the rule of Queen Isabella (Mignolo, 1995). Additionally, there are variants of Peninsular Spanish. This is important to note because what languages are "official" are sources of heated contention in Spain. A reason behind this is that language is tied to culture and power, thus, other language speakers as are the Basque are marginalized within Spain.

The whole intention behind imposing Spanish as the language of and for social and linguistic interactions in the Americas was to sustain particular relations of power and domination between the colonizers and the colonized (Dussel, 1995; Mignolo, 1995). What is more, because language reproduces ideology, teaching Spanish to the colonized had the effect of imposing on them specific ideological positions. In other words, imposing Spanish in the Americas had the effect of molding the indigenous person into the image of the Western colonizer. This molding occurred through the controlling of thought, behavior, and spirit (Dussel, 1995). Thought was controlled through teaching indigenous peoples Spanish grammar in order for them to write their histories in Spanish. Important about using Spanish to write the grammars of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, as Mignolo argued, was that it introduced a foreign language into their life experiences and thought processes. Spanish had the effect of inserting a new worldview into indigenous people's everyday understanding of themselves, each other, and the colonizers. In this way indigenous people were made to adapt and reproduce Spanish text and thought if they wanted to be part of the new social and political order established by the colonizers and their language of power.

The behavior of the indigenous person was also controlled through the Spanish language. Gloria Anzaldúa (1999), in *Borderlands/La Frontera* wrote that it was through a taming of the native wild tongue that *mestizas* were domesticated. One way domestication took place was through the normalization of the use of Spanish in public settings. Missing from Adler's comment that Spanish was the language that "everyone speaks," is that it is the language everyone speaks *in public*. In this way, Spanish became a sanctioned language

In my observations at Northwest High I noted the following:

During lunchtime...I went to sit next to V and M [two male K'iche dominant speakers who were sitting side by side]. Soon after M and V sat down, Bal [Mam and Spanish

speaker] and Teo [Mexican and non-indigenous youth] came over to sit at the edge of the table [across each other]. [At the same] time, Fran [Mexican non-indigenous youth] joined the table. V did not talk much and neither did M...I saw M trying to get V's attention and lean over to talk with him [almost whisper like]—I overheard M say something to V in K'iche. (Field Notes, 1/26/2016)

The above is one example that shows how indigenous language speakers would speak their language very softly, almost to a whisper, when in communal spaces at school. Table 6 illustrates other places where indigenous language speaking youth would speak their languages.

Table 6

Location Where Youth Spoke Indigenous Languages at Northwest High

	Lunchroom	Hallway	Sports field
Location	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frequency	Rarely	Usually	Frequently

Important to clarify about the table is that the youth would only speak their indigenous languages with others who spoke the same indigenous language. I noted indigenous language speaking youth speaking softly in most communal spaces like the hallway and lunchroom. One reason for this might have been due to the high likelihood of being overheard speaking indigenous languages by others. Because I was paying particular attention to them, I was able to pick up on their use of indigenous languages. The only exception to their soft-spoken use of indigenous languages was in the sports field, during lunch, where the youth were more spread out. In these instances, indigenous language speakers would most often hang out with each other—this was most often the case with a group of indigenous young women. Moreover, indigenous speaking youth, especially the young women, would sit together and speak a mix of their indigenous languages and Spanish (with indigenous languages prominently spoken). In all the six classrooms I did participant observations, I did not overhear indigenous language speaking youth speak to one another in indigenous languages. Also important to note is that just because I did

not overhear youth speaking indigenous languages in classrooms, it does not mean that they did not do so. It is also possible that they spoke their indigenous languages in others place, and/or that the frequency of their indigenous language use was higher than I noted. This table is nonetheless important because it provides a glimpse of the use of indigenous languages by the youth in communal spaces within the school. It shows that Spanish in these communal spaces within Latina/os was the sanctioned language of communication.

One more way Spanish was used as mechanism of control was through the structuring of the political and physical life of the colonized as Angel Rama (1996) theorized in his classic *The Lettered City/La Ciudad Letrada*. Rama outlined the ways in which the physical and political structure of the newly created cities in the Americas reflected Enlightenment ideas of order. In these cities, the “*letrados*” or “lettered” person, by which Rama meant the knowledgeable European male person, were the only ones capable of ruling over or managing illiterate indigenous people. This point is extremely important because it established a monopoly of power in the Americas that had a direct relationship with a racial/labor hierarchy established by the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). This monopoly of power controlled by literate European-white-Spanish speaking-men assured their position of power through the structuring of everyday life in the Americas, even after Spanish became the language of the colonized. Here is pertinent to quote Dussel (1995),

the conqueror domesticated, [structured], and colonized the manner in which those conquered lived and reproduced their lives. Later Latin America reflects this colonization of its life world through mestizo race, its syncretistic, hybrid culture, its colonial government, and its mercantile and later industrial capitalist economy. (p. 45)

Spanish continues to live and thrive in Latin America through its governmental policies, the media, printed text, and every other part of daily existence. While the Catholic Church played a role in the promulgation of Spanish, it was its institutional agents (e.g. friars, nuns, etc.) that

played a crucial role in the teaching of Spanish to indigenous peoples. More recently, as Canessa (2007) has described, schools have taken on the role of reproducing Spanish as the language of power.

The history of the English language in the Americas as a coloniality of power is different from that of Spanish. However, the result is similar: the control of peoples indigenous to the Americas. English as a coloniality of power resulted in the control of Native Americans, Mexicans and indigenous peoples that lived in lands that later became the U.S. Southwest, including Spanish colonies such as Puerto Rico. Relevant to my analysis is the relationship between English and Spanish in the United States. In their essay analyzing immigration, educational and nation building policies in the United States, Cervantes-Rodriguez and Lutz (2003) propositioned that the coloniality of power “informs power relations and regimes designed to regulate behavior, including language-regulating mechanism” (523). Useful about their work for the analysis of this chapter is that they pointed out an asymmetry of language in the U.S. between English and Spanish. For the authors, this asymmetrical relationship is rooted in a coloniality of power and is maintained and reproduced through mechanisms of control such as education and immigration policies.

Social and Linguistic Importance of Spanish

When Antonio was told to focus more on speaking Spanish than his indigenous language, because that was the language that was “always used” in Guatemala, he was underlining how Spanish has become entrenched in the everyday linguistic interactions of peoples in Guatemala. Adler’s statement, and Hernández and Elías views about the importance of Spanish also exemplified that Spanish has become the dominant language in Latin American countries. This power was evident in that Spanish was the language of social and linguistic interactions at

school, in their everyday life, and in accessing medical services. When asked how they learned Spanish, the youth who grew up speaking an indigenous language only—Hernández, Weas, Joaquín and Edward—responded that it was through schools. Edward said “*antes cuando yo tenia cinco-cuatro años...yo no podía hablar español. Hasta cuando comencé los seis años en la escuela, ahí cuando...poquito, [a] poquito...[comencé a] leer en español. Y así poco a poco aprendí*” (“before when I was five-four years old...I couldn’t speak Spanish. It was until I started school, around six years old when I...little, [by] little...[started to] read in Spanish. And like that, little by little I learned”). Adler and Weas’ following experiences demonstrate examples of how Spanish mediated important everyday linguistic interactions. Adler shared the following story regarding helping an Náhuatl speaking woman buy soap at a store back in Mexico:

<p><i>había una señora que fue a comprar jabón...Y le estaba diciendo [al trabajador] “jamón.”...le estaba diciendo que quería jamón. Y [el trabajador] le dio un kilo de jamón. Pero lo que no quería la señora es jamón. Era jabón. Entonces...me pregunto, “oye amigo, hablas el dialecto?” Le dije “sí” pero en su dialecto. Y me dice, “le puedes decir que quiero jabón?” Entonces le dije [al trabajador], “oye, ella quiere jabón.” “O jabón!” Y le dio un kilo de jabón.</i></p>	<p>There was once a woman that went to [the store to] buy soap [jabón] and...was saying “ham” [“jamón” to the clerk]. She was asking for ham. And she was given a kilo of ham. But this woman didn’t want ham. She wanted soap. Then...she asked me, “hey friend, do you speak <i>dialecto</i>?” I responded yes in her <i>dialecto</i>. I tell them [the clerk], “listen, she wants soap.” “Oh, soap! [said the clerk].” And she was given a kilo of soap.</p>
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While it may appear that going to the store and not being able to ask for what they want is a minor inconvenience or inconsequence to their personal lives, such experiences, nonetheless, reveals the impact of Spanish in the everyday linguistic interactions of indigenous people. Other experiences that were of far more consequence than going to the store are apparent in the accessing of medical services. Weas provided a glimpse of this when he talked about his family’s experience with hospital visits. Weas shared that his parents, K’iche only speakers, had

difficulties when going to the hospital because, “Spanish is used there only, and they don’t understand it.”

The linguistic and social significance of Spanish for the youth must be understood against the national and transnational importance of Spanish in Spanish speaking Latin America. As discussed above, coloniality established Spanish as the language of social and linguistic power and control in Latin America. One of the outcomes of Spanish as the mechanism of social and linguistic power was that it had the effect of controlling, and in many ways, determining the language and everyday experiences of indigenous peoples. If indigenous peoples are to make their desires and wants known, independent if they are heard, they must learn the colonial language. The importance, and in many ways urgency, of speaking Spanish was apparent in Weas’ example of accessing medical services. Against this context, learning Spanish in Mexico and Guatemala can only be interpreted as a logical consequence. Youth’s understanding of the importance of Spanish in their countries of origin and in the rest of Latin America, demonstrates the great pressure they, and other indigenous language speakers, are under to learn this colonial language. This great pressure, however, should not be taken as a certainty that all in Mexico, Guatemala or other Latin American countries will learn Spanish. The fact that Weas, Hernández, and Edward’s mothers did not speak Spanish points to other forces that are at work for the learning of Spanish: schools and gender. It is beyond the scope of this chapter and dissertation to focus on gender; however, I bring up these issues only to speculate on other factors affecting the learning of the Spanish language. It can be the case that Hernández, Weas, and Edwards’ mothers either did not go to school, or if they did, their schooling was limited. In this case, one can only speculate that gender was an important factor in learning Spanish.

Cervantes-Rodriguez and Lutz (2003) highlighted the English-Spanish asymmetry of power in the U.S. In the U.S., English is the language of power as education scholars focusing on language have argued before (e.g., Delpit, 1998, 2006; Valdés, 1998). I will not delve into these arguments here. Important about asymmetrical relationship of power between English and Spanish for the youth in this study is that it positioned those whose primary language was an indigenous one and learned Spanish much later on, such as Weas, Edward, Joaquín, and Hernández, under two expressions of the coloniality of power. Youth like Edward and Weas, along with their families, in order to access resources in Guatemala had to learn Spanish, as the examples above illustrate. Once they were in the U.S., these youth, while still learning and improving their Spanish, must learn English if they want to be part of the linguistic and social settings, outside of their Spanish-speaking enclaves (e.g. Urrieta, 2013; Ruiz and Barajas, 2012). As Hernández said, English was important in order “to be able to express [one self] to the people of this country [US],” moreover, “*sin el inglés no puedes hacer nada acá*” or, “without English you can’t do nothing here.” Even Spanish speaking enclaves in the U.S can potentially be exclusive. Others (e.g., Fox, 2005, 2006; Stephen, 2007) have pointed out that such enclaves can be spaces where indigenous peoples from Latin America face discrimination at the hands of other Latina/os. Thus, such spaces may not allow indigenous only speaking peoples in the U.S. to benefit from Spanish speaking networks/communities.

Division of Labor Paralleling Language Hierarchy

Pues [el idioma]...que más se hablaba [en México] era el español y basado [en] eso, pues conseguía más trabajo...y hasta preguntaban luego, “¿hablas español o hablas otro [idioma]?” Y cuando decías hablas español, “Ok. Te contratamos mañana. Vente a esta hora” (Adler).

Well, [the language]...that was spoken the most [in Mexico] was Spanish, and based on that, you could get more jobs...and they [employers] would even ask you, “do you speak Spanish or other [language]?” And when you said you spoke Spanish, “Ok. We’ll hire you tomorrow. Come at this time” (Adler).

In addition to being the language of social and linguistic interactions in and across Latin American countries, Spanish was also the language of and for economic mobility. In this case, Spanish was language of economic power. This is evident in Adler's quotation above where, for him, Spanish speakers were more likely to find work or be hired than non-Spanish speakers. For Weas, the specific jobs Spanish speaker did or were hired to do were different from those that indigenous language speakers had or did. Weas and Edward shared similar understandings of the relationship between Spanish, indigenous languages and the jobs available for speakers of each respective language. For example, when I asked Weas if Spanish was important to speak in Guatemala, he said "yes." He elaborated by saying that those that "*habla[n] bien español y tiene[n] un buen estudio*" ("speak Spanish well and have a good education") had better jobs than K'iche only speakers. When I asked him what types of work K'iche speakers did, he said, "*agricultura. Sembrando maíz...trabajo duro*" or "agriculture. Sowing corn...hard labor." Edward in Guatemala worked in construction and in retail, selling clothes. Additionally, Edward explained that "*indios*", by which he meant "indigenous peoples" were more likely to work as construction workers or *campesinos*: "[el que] *trabaja...en el campo, de construcción, el es un indio*" ([ones that] work...in the *campo*, in construction, that is an *indio*"). Edward's use of the word "*indio*" needs to be further unpacked. I will go into an in-depth discussion of the word "*indio*" in the following chapter (Chapter Five). However, for the purpose of this chapter, the word *indio* is synonymous with indigenous.

It becomes apparent from these youth's accounts that there was a direct relationship with knowing Spanish and the types of jobs, along with economic opportunities, available to Spanish speakers. For example, Weas believed that learning Spanish, along with a good education, could lead to jobs that were not confined to outside, hard, manual labor. Weas, Adler, and Edward

demonstrated an implicit understanding of a hierarchy of language that had a direct relationship with a division of labor. Missing from the youth's understanding was a connection to the role that race played in the relationship between language hierarchy and the division of labor. I posit that this hierarchy of language/division of labor parallels Quijano's (2000) coloniality of power. Recall that for Quijano, the coloniality of power established racial hierarchies and a new global capitalism that had a direct and reinforcing relationship to labor divisions. As Quijano notes,

The new historical identities produced around the foundation of the idea of race in the new global structure of the control of labor were associated with social roles and geohistorical places. In this way, both race and the division of labor remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing...In this way, a systematic racial division of labor was imposed. (p. 536)

Quijano's work is important for the analysis made here because under capitalism, which ensued in the Americas because of colonization, each form of "labor control was associated with a particular race" (p. 537). Moreover, the control of a particular form of labor was at the same time the control of a particular racial group. In Latin America, the racial groups created were the "other" defined as in direct opposition to the Western European colonizer: the newly created indigenous Americans. Indigenous peoples, because of their ontological and epistemological position as inferior human beings, were relegated to manual, and in many cases, indentured servitude; whereas the "*letrados*," the white Europeans, placed themselves in the top division of labor (often as controllers of labor) and they remained there through exploitative policies (Rama, 1996). For Quijano, this new technology of domination/exploitation, manifested as race/labor, "was articulated [and maintained through mechanisms of control] in such a way that the two elements appeared naturally associated" (p. 537).

I propose that race is an important factor to consider in the youth's identification of a language hierarchy tied to a division of labor. As Quijano showed, race and labor were

articulated by the colonality of power in such a way that they both became structurally linked, and mutually reinforcing. There is a connection between race and labor evident in the youth's personal work experience as well as in their explanation of the types of work indigenous language speakers in their countries of origin did. Table 7 is meant to illustrate the relationships between indigenous language, labor histories in countries of origin and the U.S.

Table 7

*Relationships Between Indigenous Languages and Labor*¹¹

Name	Indigenous Language: Community of Origin	Labor of Community of Origin	Labor of Family In Country of Origin	Youth's Labor In Country of Origin	Youth's Labor In The U.S.
Hernández	Mam	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	• N/D Mother did not work	• Started working at 12 years old	Dishwasher at Thai restaurant
Pedro	N/D ¹²	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Father was a <i>campesino</i>	• Worked as a beekeeper. • <i>Campesino</i> work ○ Sowed corn and beans ○ Owned cattle and lemon orchard.	Dishwasher at restaurant
Edward	K'iche	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker) Sowing and harvesting corn	• Father created and sold textiles at the market. • Uncles made and sold votive candles Mother did not work.	• Retail and construction work	• Cook and dishwasher at Peruvian Restaurant • Part-time Janitor at a hotel
Adler	Náhuatl	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker) • Hauling	Grandfather was a <i>campesino</i>	N/D	Weekend work painting houses with father

¹¹ No information is provided for Antonio

¹² N/D indicates no data

		materials • Sowing fruit			
Weas	K'iche	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker) Sowing corn	Non-wage work • Helped with field work		Dishwasher at restaurant
Joaquín	K'iche	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker) • Harvesting sand sowing corn • Cutting wood	Worked at wholesale of onions		Unknown type of restaurant work
Elías	K'iche	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker) • Subsistence living	Non-wage work • Helped grandmother sowing and harvesting corn and squash.		Not working

The table shows that there is a relationship between the types of labor done in the communities the youth originated from and indigenous languages. In this relationship, indigenous languages speakers' work was characterized as general work in “*agricultura*” (“agriculture”), and “*campo*” or “*field*” work. Subsistence living, such as harvesting and sowing corn, or as Elías, said, “*vender lo que ellos hacen mismo*” or “sell whatever they themselves made” characterized some of their families' socioeconomic background, including their labor. Most of the youth described the types of labor indigenous language speakers did as *campesinos*. Weas described this type of work as “hard labor,” because as Adler said, it was “labor under the sun” that was “*muy mala para la gente*” or “very bad for people.” There were some exceptions to this pattern, however, as for Edward, indigenous peoples also worked in construction or in textiles (crafts). Seen in this table is also a relationship between their families' labor and their indigenous language use. Hernández, Edward, Weas, Elías, and Joaquín were born to parents (or grandparents who raise them as it was the case with Elías) whose primary (or only) language was indigenous. Pedro was the only youth who was not born into an indigenous speaking family.

The table shows, that five out of the seven youth originated from families with some history of being *campesinos*. Finally, evident in the table is that two out of the three youth that worked for wages (Edward and Joaquín), were primarily K'iche speakers. Moreover, these youth worked in jobs associated with *campesino* labor. Out of those who did not work for wages (Weas and Elías), one was primarily a K'iche speaker (Weas), and both helped family with *campesino* work.

Also shown in the table is that indigenous language speakers—as illustrated by the linguistic community they originated from, the languages spoken in their families and that they grew up speaking—were relegated to specific labor sectors. More specifically, indigenous language speakers were most likely to be *campesinos* and/or do manual labor associated with *campesino* work. I posit that this demonstrates a division of labor along the lines of a language hierarchy. What is more, such language hierarchy/division of labor parallels the coloniality of power as explained by Quijano, whereby indigenous peoples occupy the lower ranks of the division of labor: *campesino* and manual work. For the youth, other forms of labor, that paid better and was less physically demanding, was reserved for Spanish speakers.

Lynn Stephen (2007) described a similar labor division along the lines of language/race that took place in the U.S. agricultural work between immigrant Oaxaqueña/os and non-indigenous Spanish-speaking Mexican workers. While Stephen did not use a coloniality frame for understanding the differential work and treatment of indigenous peoples in the U.S., she asserted the following:

the hierarchies of color found in Mexico, on the U.S. border, and in Mexican communities throughout the United States intersect with the U.S. cultural process of classifying immigrant workers as aliens by virtue of their color and language...This intersection results in a formidable hierarchy of power differences experienced in its most intensified form by recent undocumented indigenous workers who come from rural Mexico. (p. 176)

Evident in Stephen's work is a hierarchy of labor reflecting a hierarchy of race present in agricultural work. For example, Stephen described that indigenous migrant workers (who spoke Spanish with varying degrees of fluency) were often under the direct surveillance of and economic pressure from other Mexicans. These other Mexicans were often Spanish speaker foremen who would identify indigenous workers in order to exploit their labor. Indigenous migrants were in turn dependent on these Spanish-speaking foremen because they at least shared a language in common. Stephen noted, however, that such exploitation of indigenous Oaxaqueño/as labor was made possible due to the "the hierarchies of economic, legal, and cultural power" (p 176) that were present in the U.S. and in Mexico.

The case of the exploitation of Mexican indigenous labor from other Mexican illustrates the legacy of the coloniality of power. Many Mexicans are *mestizos*, that is, they are the descendants of both Western Europeans and indigenous peoples of the Americas. However, their indigenous ancestry has often been de-emphasized, and in many cases erased. There are many reasons for this as will be discussed in Chapter Five of this dissertation. One reason for de-emphasizing their indigenous ancestry is that *mestizos*, depending on their skin color, education and language (which are mutually reinforcing) benefit from the race/labor division set up and maintained by the coloniality of power. One benefit, as demonstrated in this chapter and by Stephen's work, is that they are better economically positioned than indigenous language speakers.

What is important about Stephen's work is that it points to a division of labor within the exploited labor of Mexicans in the U.S. In this division within a division, Mexican indigenous language speakers are exploited and taken advantage of by big agricultural labor and also by their Spanish-speaking Mexican foremen. Indigenous Mexican workers are then relegated to

marginal work within marginal jobs in the U.S. For example, two-thirds of the youth in this study did restaurant work. It is quite possible that the metropolitan location in the Pacific Northwest where the youth lived contributed to the types of work they did. Researchers on agricultural and social networks (e.g., Runsten & Kearney, 2004) point to how migrant workers use networks to secure jobs. One result of these networks is the concentration of particular migrants in specific geographic sectors associate with agricultural work. While the youth in this study did not work as migrants, it is quite possible that they relied on labor networks to secure restaurant work. For example, Hernández, Weas, and Edward secured jobs due to family members being employees or former employees of the restaurants they worked at. López and Runsten (2004), in their investigation of the labor sectors indigenous immigrants from Southern Mexico ended up in, showed that Mixtecos' labor concentrated on California's agricultural sector, while Zapotecos worked in urban service sectors doing restaurant related work. In this dissertation, the youth's work history in the U.S. reflected the types of work indigenous Zapotecos did in urban sectors. What I want to highlight here is that, while social and labor networks could be one reason why two-thirds of the youth ended up doing restaurant work, it is not the only reason. Stephen's work is one example showing that structural practices, that I posit are the product of a coloniality of power, contributes to the division of labor along the division of language/race. Indigenous peoples, whether in Mexico, other Latin American countries, or in the United States, continue to experience the effects of the coloniality of power as they are assigned the most burdensome work and paid little to do so (Bade, 2004; Ruiz, 2004).

Subaltern Position of Indigenous Languages

John Beverly (1999) described "subalternity" as being about "power...related to representation" (p. 1). While "representation" can include images and symbols it also includes

the spoken language that people use to speak about themselves and others. Central to the power related to representation is, “which representations have cognitive authority or can secure hegemony, which do not have authority or are not hegemonic” (p. 1). From Beverly’s perspective, subalternity is not only about the differential positioning of peoples in systems of power or marginality, but also about the validation of their existence through the acknowledgement of their languages. In reflecting on South Asian Scholar Ranajit Guha’s contribution to subaltern studies in Latin America, Mignolo (2001) wrote that subalternity dealt with subordinated social and economic class and their histories within industrial countries (426). While Beverly focused on the politics of representation (e.g., epistemological and ontological invalidation of the subaltern), Mignolo focused on how the subaltern came to exist as a product of the coloniality of power. An outcome of the imposition of Spanish on the colonized was the subaltern positioning of indigenous languages. This subaltern position is evident in the youth’s use of the word “*dialecto*” to speak of indigenous languages, and their descriptions of the importance, or lack thereof, given to indigenous languages.

Ana Gabriela Kovats (2010) wrote on her study of identity among Mixteco (Oaxaca, Mexico) youth in Southern California, that “*dialecto*” within the Mixteco community was referred to as “*tu’un nda’vi*, meaning ‘the poor language’” and Spanish was referred to as “*tu’un jaan*, ‘the rich language’” (p. 47). Regardless of whether the Mixteco community meant that their indigenous languages was the language of the poor while Spanish was the language of the rich (although this is not far from the truth as described in the previous subsection), what is evident here is that *dialectos* were placed in social and economic positions of inferiority. Conversely, Mixtecos placed Spanish as a “proper” language because it was one that was connected to wealth. Recall that Mignolo (1995) and Rama (1996) pointed out that indigenous

languages were seen as inferior, because among other reasons, they could not be used to convey important ideas and knowledge. Only Western languages had this power. Even indigenous communities themselves, as evident in Kovats' work, have adopted this powerful ideological perspective.

The youth in this dissertation also referred to indigenous languages as *dialectos*. While as I explain below, some of the youth were proud indigenous language speakers, and understood the cultural importance of indigenous languages, they nonetheless referred to such languages as *dialectos*. This practice of referring to indigenous languages as *dialectos* was similar to the ones described by Pérez, Vasquez, and Buriel's (2016) work on multilingualism and marginalization of indigenous students. According to Pérez et al, in Mexico and the United States, *dialectos* are widely used to refer to indigenous languages, and "some indigenous people themselves, including many youth in our study, use the term *dialecto* to refer to their own languages, rather than the term *lengua* (language) used by indigenous language activists" (p. 263). Referring to indigenous languages as *dialectos* is important because it demonstrated their subaltern position in the youth's countries of origin, even if they did not necessarily believe that such languages were inferior. *Dialectos* are subaltern languages as they are not the primary or proper language of communication and linguistic interactions, and they cannot yield well-paying jobs. Thus, they are positioned as inferior and powerless languages.

In other cases, the youth referred to *dialectos* as "*un otro idioma*" or "an other language." The usual translation of "*un otro*" is "another," by which is meant "one more" or is used to reference one thing from one already mentioned or known about. While it is true that the indigenous languages some of the youth spoke was "one more" language they knew, the term "another" does not correctly translate the youth's understanding of the positioning of *dialectos* in

the larger linguistic, social, economic and cultural context they are placed in. A better way to translate the word “*un otro*” is “an other.” When the youth said “*un otro idioma*,” to mean indigenous languages, they seemed to identify indigenous languages as not lesser languages. However, even in these cases, their use of the modifier “*un otro*”/“an other” was important because it positioned indigenous languages as “other than” the proper language of communication. Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* is important to reference here in regards to the youth’s use of the term “an other.” Said was interested in how the “Orient” and the “Occident” (by which he meant West) were imagined from the position of the West. For him, “the other” was an invention of the Occident, similar to how “Latin America” was an invention of the colonizers. While Said did not write about the coloniality of power, underlining his argument was that the “Orient” and the people living in it as “others” were articulated by the Occident in order to maintain differential power relations: “the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said, 1978, p. 5). Such differences between the Orient (the other) and the Occident (West) were beneficial for the latter because it ensured their domination over “the other.” Moreover, “the other” was meant to signify weakness and people who lacked knowledge. In a similar way, the youth’s use of “an other” language was meant to signify a language that was obscure and less meaningful than the language of power.

Indigenous languages occupy a subaltern position as evident in the youth’s descriptions of the importance, or lack thereof, given to indigenous languages in their countries of origin. When asked if it was important for him to speak or understand K’iche, Weas responded, “*para mi no. Porque siento que...kiche no casi no sirve nada*” (“for me, no. Because I feel...K’iche, no, it’s almost no good at all”). Weas statement is important because he clearly showed that

indigenous languages were no “good at all” in Guatemala. It must be clear that for him, K’iche was not intrinsically “no good,” however, he saw them as no good because he was understanding its positioning in the larger social-linguistic and economic contexts he lived in and operated from. One outcome of seeing indigenous languages as no good, or being locally useful, is their extinction as evident in Adler’s statement,

<i>Esa lengua [náhuatl] se va extinguiendo; y justamente nosotros...indígenas o nuestra gente se va extinguiendo y se van haciendo menos (Adler)</i>	That language [Náhuatl] is becoming extinct; and just we...we indigenous people or our people are going extinct and are becoming less (Adler)
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Hernández expressed a similar view when he said that indigenous languages “are becoming lost.” It is interesting to note that for Adler, the extinction of Náhuatl was tied to the extinction of people. In Chapter Six I describe in greater detail the connection between language and self-identification, important to note here, however, is the importance of language to identity.

Whereas Weas perceived K’iche to be no good at all, Antonio and Elías believed that indigenous languages were at least locally important. This was evident in Antonio and Elías’ respective comments that “*dialecto* is...good, but is only used in some places,” and “I don’t think that everyone is going to want to learn K’iche because that [language] is only used in Guatemala.” Even when acknowledging their local importance, indigenous languages remained subaltern as they have no transnational, social and economic (e.g., hegemonic) authority. Here I highlight Weas’ negative associations with the K’iche language. I focus on him to show how indigenous languages have been positioned as subaltern languages. Ever since I met him it became clear that Weas did not want to interact with most students, indigenous or non-indigenous. However, he expressed a deep desire to disassociate himself with K’iche and K’iche speakers. One major reason for this was that such youth spoke mostly K’iche or some Spanish. Weas on the other hand, wanted indigenous peoples in Guatemala to speak Spanish, and he

wanted immigrant Spanish speaking students in the U.S. to speak English. His perceptions, attitudes and experiences with K'iche and Spanish illuminates the complexities of learning Spanish and indigenous languages. Weas' experiences as a K'iche speaking person in Guatemala have shaped his views about the usefulness, or not, of K'iche,

<p><i>Porque algunos [que hablan k'iche fueron] encontraron muerto en la calle y no hacen nada [el gobierno de Guatemala]. No hacen nada porque [los de la comunidad] son indigenos, solo que hablan k'iche...y no nos quiere ayudar el gobierno...Ayudan mas lo que, lo que hablan español.</i></p>	<p>Some [K'iche speakers] were found dead in the streets and they [Guatemalan government] don't do nothing. They [government] don't do nothing because they [people in his community]...only speak K'iche...the government...helps more those that speak Spanish.</p>
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These experiences, as someone who comes from a community that speaks a subaltern language (and his use of this language) have greatly influenced his decision to want to learn Spanish and English. His wanting indigenous peoples to learn Spanish was made out of a deep desire for them to “*no sufrir mucho*” (not suffer much). There is much agency to his desire to speak Spanish and English instead of K'iche. For him, part of learning colonial languages was about survival, about not becoming invisible.

Weas' desire must also be understood against the background in which the coloniality of power has created a hierarchy of languages. The coloniality of power has made it possible for the youth, and other indigenous peoples, to learn not to learn *dialecto*. Take Adler's experiences not learning Náhuatl as an example:

<p><i>Así que a mi me enseñaron desde pequeño que no debo de aprender ese idioma [náhuatl] porque hacían mucho bullying a los niños [que hablaban náhuatl]...la gente que hablaba muy bien el español hacia mucho el bullying. Entonces, por eso mis familiares dejaron de aprender esa lengua.</i></p>	<p>I was taught since little that I should not learn that language [Náhuatl] because there was a lot of bullying toward [Náhuatl speaking] children, people that spoke Spanish really well would do a lot of bullying. So, that's why my family members stopped learning that language.</p>
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While Adler is the only youth that talked about the reasons why he stopped speaking Náhuatl, his account is important because it points to a process of learning not to learn their indigenous languages. Given the sociolinguistic and economic power of Spanish, indigenous language speakers are restricted in their options for the languages they can use in different social and labor spheres. Youth, along with other indigenous peoples, make calculated risks when deciding, or not deciding, to speak colonial languages.

Importance of *Dialectos*

In spite of the *dialectos*' subaltern positioning, Hernández, Antonio, Edward, and Adler (with a limited knowledge of Náhuatl) expressed a like and pride in knowing indigenous languages. Examples of this like are found in Hernández and Antonio's following respective comments, "*si me gusta mi idioma*" ("yes, I like my language") and "*estoy muy contento de hablar otro idioma. De hablar dialecto*" ("I am very happy to speak an other language. Of speaking *dialecto*"). Antonio exemplified the pride that youth had in regards to knowing a *dialecto* (except for Elías and Pedro who did not talk about pride in indigenous languages):

<i>Y siempre digo que hablo kiche...bueno, con las personas que me han preguntado...Pero he escuchado con otras personas [que hablan idiomas indígenas] de...como que lo esconden. No quieren decirlo. Porque le da vergüenza o, no se. Pero la mera verdad, a mi no, no me da vergüenza.</i>	I always say that I speak K'iche...well, with those that ask me...But I have heard other people [that speak indigenous languages]...like they hide it. They don't want to say it. Because they get embarrassed, I don't know. But the very truth, not me, I don't get embarrassed.
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As seen here, while indigenous languages were relegated to subaltern positions and as such, needed to be hidden or unlearned, Antonio was not embarrassed about knowing K'iche. He was happy and proud of this language. Such pride took place with an understanding of the lack of importance and influence K'iche had in Guatemala outside his town.

Both Joaquín and Edward expressed a belief in the endurance of *dialectos*. For Joaquín, “language is never forgotten. Always, its always there.” Edward explained the endurance of *dialectos* by saying the following: “I imagine that...over there in Guatemala, *dialectos* never die. I imagine that people will always speak a *dialecto*. I also imagine that everyone speaks it because the young ones are growing up. I imagine that they also learn it.” What Edward said was very important because he was challenging the totalitarian imposition of the Spanish language in Guatemala. For Edward, *dialectos* do not die in Guatemala because people will continue to speak them and teach them to their children. Edward provided a very nuanced understanding of language preservation and continuation when talking about his future and imagining a wife and children. When talking about his future family, Edward expressed a desire for his future children to learn K’iche in order for them to be able to communicate with their grandmother (Edward’s mom who is a K’iche-only speaker). He pointed out that this may likely happen if his future wife is a K’iche speaker. However, if she may be a Spanish speaker only, then their children might most likely be Spanish only speakers. What is more, he stated that his future grandchildren would, if they go to school, most likely be Spanish speakers only. Here, Edward is pointing out, both, the endurance of language in the face of the coloniality of power, and the great power of coloniality. In many ways, he is showing that while it may be impossible to deal away with the coloniality of power as is lived everyday, it is possible to engage in individual acts of resistance. This resistance is evident in how language is maintained, in the face of mechanisms of power (e.g., schools) aimed at erasing it, in order to maintain ties to the past, to culture and to future preservation of language.

Whereas Edward and Joaquín viewed the endurance of *dialectos*, Adler and Hernández pointed out how they are gradually being lost. In order to prevent this further loss, both youth argue for a need to learn indigenous languages. Hernández said,

El mam también es muy interesante...la generación de hoy no sabe. Es muy importante para que lo sepan. Para que puedan hablar otros idiomas...que sepan de los idiomas que hablaban antes. O recuperando también ese idioma porque ya se anda perdiendo. Mam is also very interesting...today's generation doesn't know [it]. It's very important for them to know it. So that they can speak other languages...so that they know languages that were spoken in the past. Or to recuperate those languages because they are becoming lost.

Similar to the Hopi youth in Nicholas' (2014) study of Hopi languages and indigenous identities, the youth in this dissertation were proud of *dialecto*, either knowing or speaking it. They viewed indigenous languages as important because it facilitated communication with families and they could potentially use their ability to speak it to help others in Spanish-only linguistic settings. Indigenous languages were important, not for their socioeconomic and transnational influence, rather for their cultural significance and connection to the past. This was evident by Adler, Hernández, and Edward's statements that their indigenous languages were important in order to teach the new generations their cultural and historical roots, and for the new generation to be able to communicate with their elders.

Conclusion

Mignolo (2000) wrote that there is an inherent asymmetry as it pertains to colonial and indigenous languages. The reason for this is that languages are connected to larger social, political, economic and cultural institutions that legitimize them or places them in subaltern positions. To be bilingual, to know a colonial language and an indigenous language, means to live this asymmetry. For Mignolo (2000), "the asymmetry of languages is not a question of a person knowing one better than the other, but it is a question of power" (p. 231). The youth in

this study understood this asymmetrical relationship of power. This understanding was evident when they described the hierarchies of language they experienced or perceived in their countries of origin and in the United States. For the youth, Spanish and English were of transnational and global importance, respectively. Indigenous languages, on the other hand, were of local importance. In the U.S., English, took on the role that Spanish did in their countries of origin, as it became important in order to communicate with others and because of the belief that knowing it could yield better economic opportunities. Additionally, the youth saw links between a division of labor and the hierarchies of languages. Relying on an analysis of the coloniality of power, I posited that there is a racial component to this division of labor/language. The coloniality of power created racial categories, and such categories were tied to languages, among other ethnic indicators (such as skin color). Race, language, and division of labor have, thus, been inextricably linked since the invention of the Americas. In the Chapter Five,, “‘Indio,’ Race, and Racism,” I describe the treatment of indigenous peoples and how such treatment is based on processes of racialization.

I also showed that indigenous languages occupied subaltern positions. This subalternity is also connected to the coloniality of power and some of the youth were clearly aware of this coloniality. For example, Hernández said,

<i>[cuando] lo que es España...atravesaron [el]...grupo de indígenas, por eso se fue cambiando el idiomas...Es una generación donde tuvieron hijos y los hijos fueron aprendiendo otros idiomas.</i>	[when] those from Spain...crossed [the] indigenous groups, that is how languages changed...It's a generation where they had children, and those children started to learn other languages.
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Edward's following explanation of how Spanish took root in his town revealed his understanding of coloniality, vis-à-vis schools as one of its mechanisms:

en Guatemala...[la gente habla] más español que antes. Pero me imagino cuando yo crecí era mas dialecto que español; porque la gente, pues, crecieron y se fueron a escuela ahí, pues así comenzó el español.

in Guatemala...[people speak] more Spanish than before. But I imagine that when I was growing up it was more *dialecto* than Spanish; because people, well, they were growing up and then started going to school there, I mean, that's how Spanish began.

For Hernández, it was the colonizers who introduced Spanish to the Mayan peoples. For Edward, it was the school that contributed to the teaching of Spanish to *dialecto* speaking people. This view of coloniality is important in understanding youth's view of a hierarchy of language in which English is a global language, Spanish is a colonizing language, and K'iche is relegated to local importance. I want to go back to Weas' response when I asked him if Spanish was important to speak in Guatemala,

En ingles, bueno acá. Bueno acá si de todo lado, porque no se, en k'iche creo que no nos ayuda en nada porque no sirve. Nadie, nadie lo entiende. Si vas a otro país y el español, español [se habla ahí].

English, here yes. Well, here yes and everywhere, because, I don't know, K'iche I don't think it helps us in anything because it is no good. No one, no one understands it. If you go to other countries and its Spanish [spoken there].

When Weas said that English is “*bueno de todo lado*,” (“good everywhere”) he was sharing an understanding that this language is good everywhere because, from a coloniality of power perspective, it is the language of power. It is a colonial language that represents one axes of the coloniality of power: a global capitalism. At the end of the sentence, when he said “if you go to other countries and its Spanish [spoken there]” he was pointing out the local and transnational importance of Spanish. However, Spanish has given way as a global language of power to English. K'iche, is left on the margins. It remains a subaltern language in a global world that still operates under the coloniality of power.

In spite of their subalternity, the youth in this study, including Weas, knew the importance of indigenous languages for cultural preservation. While the coloniality of power is

everywhere, all the time, it is possible to exercise agency. Weas, Adler, Hernández, Antonio, and Edward showed that there are calculated risks that indigenous peoples take when learning, or not learning, colonial languages. For Weas, leaning Spanish and English was a matter of survival. For him, the government did not care about the lives of K'iche speakers in his town. Hernández understood that indigenous languages are ways to reconnect with ancestral roots—with each other in what he considered to be a human race, connected by ancestors. As long as there are children born to indigenous language speakers, as Joaquín and Edward believed, there will always be indigenous languages.

Chapter Five: “Indio,” Race, and Racism

Yo pase a demostrar el baile de mi pueblo. Y el otro [estudiante] de Guatemala me dice, “¿ey, así baila tu pueblo? Hubieras bailado como algo banda o corrido. Un reggaetón o algo así.” Y pues yo me sentí mal cuando me dijo eso enfrente de todos. Dije, “¿y porque no pasaste tu?”... Y me dice, “ya cállate.” Me empezó a insultar, y pues no me gusto a mi. Y pues yo me aleje, no’mas le dije, “sabes que, mejor cállate porque no hiciste nada. Mejor cállate. Deja de insultar. Deja de discriminar.” Y pues también le cayo mal, y al ratito que salimos a fuera me empezó a humillar y todo eso...me dice, “tu eres uno allá de los indios.” Le digo, “si, soy allá de mi pueblo. Mi pueblo es indígena.” Y se puso hablar un chingo de cosas. Y me insulto. Y no me pude contralar también. (Hernández).

I went up to demonstrate the dance from my town. And another [student] from Guatemala tells me, “Hey, is that how you dance in your town? You should have danced *banda* or *corridor*. Maybe a *reggaetón* or something like that.” I felt bad when he told me that in front of everyone. I said, “why didn’t you go up there?”...He says, “just shut up.” He starts insulting me and I didn’t like that. I walked away from him, telling him, “you know what, you better shut up because you didn’t do nothing. Just shut up. Stop insulting. Stop discriminating.” And that upset him, and shortly after we were outside he started to humiliate me and all of that...he says, “you are from one of *those indios*.” I tell him, “yes, I am from there, my town. My town is indigenous.” And he started to talk a shitload of stuff. And he insulted me. And I couldn’t control myself either. (Hernández).

During my first interview with Hernández I shared with him that at the end of 2015 I had heard a story about a student from Guatemala who during an afterschool dance class was made fun of for performing a dance traditional to his town. Hernández responded that the students involved were he and another student from Guatemala. He said that the teacher asked for volunteers to come up to the front of the class and perform a dance representative of the places they came from. Because no one from Guatemala wanted to perform a dance from their towns of origin, he volunteered to do so. It was at the end of his performance that the above interactions happened. Hernández added the following, “what happens is that sometimes you get upset when they start to discriminate you...and sometimes you can’t control your nerves. So what I did, I went over to him [the student that made fun of him] to hit him.”

Hernández's story is important because it is representative of the discrimination that is experienced by indigenous peoples from other Latin Americans/Latina/os in their countries of origin and in the United States. This chapter is about the youth's own understanding of discrimination towards indigenous peoples. One form of discrimination the youth described was found in the use of the term "*indio*." As evident in Hernández's quotation, when the other Guatemalan student said, "you are from one of *those indios*," his intention was one of disdain as emphasis was placed on "*those indios*." It will be argued in this chapter, that saying "*those indios*" is a form of shaming and distancing from indigeneity. While *indio* was a form of self-identification for the youth, they also understood that the word was used in a pejorative way by non-indigenous peoples towards other indigenous or non-indigenous peoples. Another prominent form of discrimination the youth talked about was based on language. The discrimination based on language was evident in indigenous peoples being discouraged, in explicit or implicit ways, from speaking their indigenous languages.

I describe, through a discussion of the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) and coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) how dehumanization of indigenous peoples is possible. One form this dehumanization is contemporarily present is in the youth's understanding of the word *indio*. As I will discuss in this chapter, *indio* is seen through a deficit lens. Additionally, I interpret the pejorative use of *indio* as a racial epithet.

The "Coloniality of Being" and the Construction of *Indios*

Anibal Quijano (2000) wrote that the coloniality of power made European culture universal. This universality happened through the repression of the culture(s) of the colonized and their replacement with a Western culture or imaginary. By imaginary, Quijano (2007) meant beliefs, images, and modes of producing knowledge and meaning. In this way, the colonizers

created, and continued to reproduce, particular images of indigenous peoples from their own (colonizer) Eurocentric worldviews. Additionally, Quijano was interested in the political, economic, social, and cultural effects of coloniality of power on the colonized; hence, he did not delve into how this power was made manifest in the bodies or everyday lived experiences of the colonized. Maldonado-Torres (2007) pointed out that while the coloniality of power addressed relationships “among modern forms of exploitation and domination” (p. 242)—mainly economic, political, and cultural—it did not respond to the “effects of coloniality in lived experience” (p. 242) of the colonized. Therefore he wanted to expand the effects of coloniality by looking beyond its effects on the mind/thought and psyche, and into everyday lived experience and sense of being.

For Maldonado-Torres (2007), the “coloniality of being” referred to a process that made dehumanization and invisibility of the colonized possible (p. 257). He provided a lengthy and philosophical argument situated in Heidegger and Fanon’s work to illustrate this point. I will not go into the depths of his analysis here; it is sufficient to highlight his examples of the ethics of war and the Cartesian formulation, “I think, therefore I am” to illustrate the coloniality of being. Maldonado-Torres explained that the killings and genocide of the colonized was rationalized, and made acceptable, through non-ethics of war. He showed that the same ethics of war that were applicable to the colonizer, for example in their countries of origin and with other colonizing forces, were not applicable to the colonized. Some of these ethics included honoring their adversaries’ human rights and sense of humanity, even during the most inhuman acts such as war. In order to justify killing the colonized, the colonizer had to strip them of their humanity. From Maldonado-Torres’ perspective, the colonized were non-human once it was established that they had no souls and were ahistorical—meaning that they had no past that constituted their

existence and placed them in the genealogy of human progression according to Western thought (Dussel, 1995).

In addition to being dehumanized, the colonized were also made invisible through the Western logic of thought that marked thinking as the most important component of personhood. This is illustrative in Descartes formulation “I think, therefore I am.” Maldonado-Torres argued that this Cartesian formulation privileged colonizer thought and logic. From this perspective, to be human, to exist, meant to think, and to think from a particular Western standpoint. Because the colonizer had this quality of thinking, they were human. Conversely, the colonized or the “other” were made out to be non-thinkers, or to lack the ability to “think properly” and therefore, “were-not,” “lack[ed] being”, should not have existed, or were “dispensable” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 252). As these two examples show, the invented indigenous person, the colonial being, was dehumanized and made invisible by processes that were made possible by the coloniality of power.

The Construction of *Indios*

While I was playing soccer, I overheard a Latino [non-indigenous student]...say “*bola de indios*” [“horde of *indios*”]. I heard, often, the African students refer to the Spanish-speaking students as “*amigo*” in order to get their attention. The Latino students playing were: Hernández and five other [non-indigenous] Latinos. (Field Notes, 4/26/2016)

I recorded the above observation while I was playing soccer with a group of students one day after school. This particular group of students consisted of Mexican, Guatemalan, and East African male students who enjoyed playing soccer. I provide this observation because it was one instance in which a non-indigenous Latino youth used the word *indio* to refer to his peers. Based on the tone of disdain in his voice, the intention behind using the word *indio* can be interpreted to be pejorative. In this observation, I also noted that African students used the term *amigo* (friend) when addressing Latino youth. The contrast in the terms used when referring to Latino youth by

these two students is striking. I did not ask any of the African youth why they used *amigo* when addressing Latino students. I also did not ask this Latino youth why he called his teammates “horde of *indios*.”

Regardless of the reasons why this youth decided to call his peers *indios*, it is well known and it has become common knowledge that the word *indio* in many Latin American countries is used as a racial epithet. Quijano (2000) and Dussel (1995) showed that the word *indio* was a colonial invention created to speak about the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Therefore, the original intention of the word was meant to differentiate between the colonizer and the colonized who were conceived of as the non-Western, non-human (or lacking human-like qualities), and non-thinker (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). When the word *indio* has not been used others proxies have emerged such as *Oaxaquito* (Barillas-Chón, 2010) and *campesino* (Canessa, 2007), among others, to refer to indigenous peoples. Even here, such proxies are meant to dehumanize indigenous peoples. This is illustrated in Adler’s statement, “[*otras personas no indígenas*]nos insultan cuando dicen... ‘chingado indio que estas haciendo’ o ‘pinche oaxaco,’” meaning, “[non-indigenous people] insult us when they say... ‘fucking *indio*, what are you doing’ or ‘fucking *Oaxaco*.’” Regardless of the proxies used, *indio* continues to be the preferred pejorative term for referring to or insulting indigenous peoples; it is also a preferred term for insulting non-indigenous peoples.

Utilizing Maldonado-Torres’ coloniality of being along with the coloniality of power, it can be pointed out that *indios* have been re-produced as non-thinkers or as a non-“proper thinkers.” Because they lack this quality that defined personhood, *indios* were, at best, inferior humans, and at worst, sub-humans. We see the treatment of indigenous peoples as *indios* in the

youth's examples of how the word is used to mean someone who is *tonto* (dumb), poor, and coming from the uncivilized forest.

The youth's responses to the question “¿*qué significa indio para ti?*” or “what does *indio* mean to you?” demonstrate an understanding that *indios* were perceived to be intellectually inferior. Elías, for example, said, “[*indio es*] como *una persona tonta. Que no sabe lo que hace,*” or, “[*indio is*] like a dumb person. That they don't know what they are doing.” Hernández said that *indio* meant, “*es como que uno no es nada...como no tiene valores*” or “like one is nothing...like they don't have values.” Asked what he meant by “values” he elaborated by saying, “like, lets say that sometimes others [non-indigenous people] think of themselves more intelligent than others [meaning, indigenous peoples].”

A similar experience was shared by indigenous Guatemalan women in Eglá Martínez Salazar's (2012), *Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala: Racism, Genocide, Citizenship*. In her study of the coloniality of power and reproduction of power inequities in Guatemala, Martínez Salazar shared the following excerpt from an interview with an indigenous Guatemalan woman:

We know how hurtful it is to be named “dirty and stupid *india*”; when many tell you that your brain is as small as a rat's brain...that you and “your people” are primitive because we do not even know how to dress properly...it hurts because it is like a drop of water dripping onto the middle of your head day by day until it makes a huge hole...a hole of pain, sadness, and rage. (p. 77)

This view of *indios* being primitive was also shared by some of the youth and their non-indigenous Latina/o peers. Weas said, “*lo indio es lo...que están en le bosque verdad. Que viven ahí?*” or, “*indio is...those in the forest, right. That they live there.*” When asked why others would not want to be called *indio*, Weas said, “they don't like to be called *indios* because *indio* is that...lives in the forest. And, well, we don't live in the forest, that is the reason why I believe

that is why they don't like it." Something similar to this was said by Adolfo, a peer of the focal youth from Northwest High. Adolfo, was from Guatemala and did not self-identify as indigenous. When asked what *indo* meant for him, he said, "the word indigenous and *indo* are two separate things...*indios* walked around without clothes...it is a negative thing. People should not say the word *indo*." As I will discuss in Chapter Six, Pedro associated being above, and beyond, particular places on the *cerro* or hill with being *indio*. He specifically said, "those that live in the deepest parts, the small villages above the *cerro*, [those are considered *indios*]." The youth's account and Martínez Salazar's work shows that *indio* is considered a negative word because it is associate with regions that are "primitive," thus uncivilized.

The word *indio* was also linked to a lower socioeconomic position. Adler said, *indio* "*es cuando tu vienes de una familia pobre. O vienes de bajos recursos*" or "it's when you come from a poor family. Or you come from low resources." Edward made a more precise association with particular labor *indios* did when he said,

<i>Bueno, par mi un indio, bueno yo cuando estaba allá en Guatemala...trabajando, pues, así de campo...a veces pues que me dice un "indio."</i>	Well, for me an <i>indio</i> , well when I was over there in Guatemala...working, well, in the <i>campo</i> ...sometimes they would call me an " <i>indio</i> ."
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It can be pointed out, based on the above example, that the word "*indio*" has a range of meanings. Yet, central to the youth's understanding of *indio* is a deficit lens. This lens reproduces colonial discourses of indigenous peoples as they continue to be portrayed as less than human (e.g., lacking intellectual abilities and being uncivilized). Moreover, their economic marginalization is attributed to their own perceived intellectual and uncivilized ways and not to the coloniality of power that contributes to a racial/labor division. Martínez Salazar made this point clear when she wrote,

The racialization of...those constructed as subhuman via demeaning images and practices entails the naturalization of the arduous conditions to which the excluded, gendered, “abnormal,” and submissive Others are confined. In this process, the racially subjugated are viewed as living in conditions for which they are themselves responsible; it is their inferiority that explains their poverty and marginality. (p. 67)

These demeaning images, that illustrate a deficit lens of indigenous peoples, are well understood by the youth. Elías said that in Guatemala “many people take [*indio*] as form of insult.” He further elaborated,

por ejemplo, tengo a unos amigos que le dicen a otro... “o, vos sos un indio ¡Haces eso y sos indio!” Y entonces es ahí donde ellos no se consideran, o sea, maya...Y la otra persona considera como que si indio fuera alguien, como que, de vergüenza algo muy bien mal.

For example, I have some friends that tell others...“you are *indio*. Do that and you are *indio*!” And that’s where they don’t consider themselves, I mean, Maya...And the other person considers if as *indio* was someone, like, shameful or something real bad.

In Elías’ account, to be called *indio* is to be called something “very bad.” It is a source for shaming. Thus, it is important to not only avoid being called *indio*, but also of disassociating with their Mayan background, or with their indigeneity.

To be *indio* is “very bad” because one becomes subjected to discrimination, poverty, and harassment. This harassment is evident in the use of *indio* as forms of put-downs and insults. Weas believed that some Latinos use *indio* as a term to refer to indigenous peoples because they may not know how indigenous peoples would like to be called. Nonetheless, he added, “but some use it to make fun, you know.” While he had not personally been called *indio*, he had nearby friends who were called *indio* by other Latinos born in the U.S. Adler shared that *indio* was used as a form of insult: “*nos insultan cuando dicen la palabra... ‘chingado indio’ ...Pues son cosas así...Cuando nosotros nos insultan así*” (“they insult us when they say...‘fucking *indio*...these are the different [kind of] things...When they insult us).

Despite the negative associations *indio* was given (with accompanying negative images), the term was still used as a form of self-identification for some of the youth. Joaquín gave the following example of when the term was used in a negative way, yet he was not affected by it,

<i>[compañeros de trabajo] le dijeron a un compañero que es de Guatemala... “indio.” Y a mi no me afecta nada si me dicen eso porque además lo soy... Bueno, para mi me da igual porque siento que si lo soy [indio].</i>	[co-workers] called another co-worker that is from Guatemala...“ <i>indio</i> .” And that doesn’t affect me if they call me that because what’s more, I am [<i>indio</i>]...well, for me, its all the same since I feel I am [<i>indio</i>].
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Joaquín did not see the word *indio* as being an insult. On the contrary, he was affirming his indigeneity when saying he felt he was *indio*. Weas made a similar comment when responding to whether *indio* was a good or bad word: “*para mi, creo, no...porque es lo que soy*”, or, “for me, I think...no because that is what I am.”

What we see in Elías and Adler’s understanding of *indio* is a colonial reproduction of indigenous peoples as intellectually inferior and sub-human. For instance, Hernández and Adler’s explanation of *indio* was one that “*no tiene valores*” or “lacks values” and in some cases “is worthless.” The words that these youth used to describe *indio* are powerful because they illustrate a dehumanizing process aligning with the coloniality of being: the portrayal of *indios* as non-thinker, therefore not proper human beings. For example, while thinking does not characterize personhood, portraying indigenous peoples as non-thinkers negate their ability to be thinking beings as evident in Hernández quotes “it’s like one is nothing. Like one is nothing” because others, non-*indios*, “think of themselves more intelligent than [*indios*].” Moreover, because *indios* are imagined as non-thinkers, they, as Adler said, “*no somos nada*,” or are nothing. That is to say, the youth point out that *indios* are literally non-existent.

Furthermore, these youth demonstrate an understanding of the dehumanization of indigenous people through the use of *indio*—even if they do not call this process dehumanizing.

To be called *indio* for the youth literally meant that the person was a non-person, “*no somos nada*” (we are nothing), as the word is meant to strip them of their humanity. Once the indigenous person is stripped of their humanity, it is possible, or at least more tolerable to do away with them. From their inception, through the coloniality of power, *indios* have been an abjection, as some-“thing” to deal away with, to make invisible, or better, yet, to erase. In the U.S, this has been evident in the notion of “killing the Indian” and saving the man that contributed to Indian boarding schools (Pratt, 1973). One purpose behind the boarding school was to erase indigenous personhood and supplant it with a Western one. One way of erasing indigenous personhood, as evident in the above examples, is to make it something to be ashamed of through the use of put-downs and insults. Another way of erasing indigenous personhood is through language discrimination.

Racism and Language

Discrimination: Race and Racism

Now the youth, like, when the Spanish era arrived, now everyone thinks of themselves more like Spaniards than indigenous (Hernández).

Well, in my country...when [people] are indigenous...there are [other] people [non-indigenous] that...they don't like [indigenous peoples]...they [non-indigenous people] are racist (Antonio).

There are some [non-indigenous people]...they don't like to be friends...I imagine that sometimes is...racism, or I don't know...And that is another problem within Hispanics, well, that sometimes we don't get along. Who knows why (Hernández).

Not all the youth were aware of whether indigenous peoples were discriminated or not in their countries of origin or in the United States. What is more, not all of those who were aware of discrimination faced by indigenous peoples (Hernández, Adler, Antonio, Pedro, Weas) referred to it as racism. According to Martínez Salazar (2012), the majority of indigenous women who come from impoverished backgrounds, lacked schooling, and who are indigenous

language speakers only, do not know the word “racism” (p. 75-76). This, however, Martínez Salazar contended, should not be taken to mean that racism does not exist or affects their lives. She elaborated by providing the following excerpt from a Mayan activist who reflected on why indigenous peoples did not use the term “racism”:

It is simply absurd [that] ‘experts’ do not have enough imagination to think that maybe we have different ways to name things; maybe we do not have exact words but [instead we have] rich explanations and descriptions. You have to forgive me but sometimes I get very upset at these experts when they feel they have the right to say that because some of us do not use particular words, so we do not suffer a particular pain, in this case racism. What do they know about racism? Do they live with us every day to affirm such a stupidity like racism does not exist in Guatemala; that in Guatemala what exists is ethnic discrimination? Who do they think they are to even say that because some women did not go to school and do not use the word racism they do not suffer racism? Give me a break, it is simply unbelievable. (Mayan activist, as quoted in Martínez Salazar, 2012 p. 79)

For this Mayan activist, there was a distinction between racism and ethnic discrimination. This distinction was important for the activist to insist on because a prominent rhetoric that existed in Guatemala was that racism did not exist there. Additionally, it was thought that what existed in Guatemala was discrimination based on ethnicity (e.g., clothing, customs, religion, etc.). However, for the activist, the discrimination that indigenous people in Guatemala experience was (and is) based on race.

In a similar way, Antonio, Pedro, and Hernández, unlike the rest of the youth, utilized the term “racist” or “racism” to speak of the treatment of indigenous people in Guatemala and the United States, respectively. Antonio when explaining the treatment of K’iche speakers in Guatemala said, “*bueno, en mi país...cuando son indígenas...hay personas que...no le gusta...son racistas...ellos [las personas indígenas] se sienten humillados, tristes...al [ser] discrimina[dos]*” (“well, in my country...when they are indigenous...there are people that...don’t like them...they are racist...they [indigenous people] feel humiliated, sad...at being discriminated”).

Discrimination towards indigenous people also took place at Northwest High School. While not representative of the youth's understanding of the treatment of indigenous youth at the school, Hernández's following insights are important because they aptly demonstrate race and racism. Hernández said the following about the forms of discrimination towards indigenous youth at Northwest High,

Hay unos [latinos], pues, casi no les gusta hablar. O...no quieren ser amigos. Tienen otro amigo y casi no hablan con uno también....Yo me imagino que a veces es, quien sabe, racismo...Hay veces que no se lleva uno bien. Y es otro problema entre hispanos, pues que a veces no nos llevamos. Quien sabe porque.

There are some [Latinos] well, they don't really like to talk. Or...they don't want to be friends. They have other friend[s] and they don't like to talk to you...I imagine that sometimes is, who knows, racism...there are times when you don't get along well. And that is another problem within Hispanics, well, that sometimes we don't get along. Who knows why.

He further commented on the racism indigenous youth experienced at school,

Digamos que hay como racismo. Digamos que un ejemplo entre...estudiantes de México y estudiantes de Guatemala. A veces...cuando...pasan atrechos entre ellos y [estudiantes Mexicanos] le dicen [a los Guatemaltecos] como...“indio”...Es como que los estuvieran discriminando.

Let's say that there is like racism. Let's say like an example between...students from Mexico and students from Guatemala. Sometimes when...altercations happen between them...they [Mexican students] call them [the Guatemalan students] like...“indio”...Is like they are discriminating them.

Adapting from Wellman's (1977) work, Beverly Tatum (1992) described “racism” as a system of privilege based on race. In the United States, such system has been structured to privilege Whites, and mainly heterosexual-Christian males. Well-known decolonial thinker Ramon Grosfoguel (2016) described “racism” in much broader terms. Racism for him is:

A global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of the human that have been politically, culturally and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by the institutions of the “capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system”...The people classified above the line of the human are recognized socially in their humanity as human beings...The people below the line of the human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated. (p. 10)

The “line of the human” that Grosfoguel wrote about is referred to as “race” by Tatum. Quijano (2007; and Wallerstein, 1992) wrote that the coloniality of power established race through the codification of skin color, among other ethnic identifiers. Mignolo (1995) argued that the coloniality of power dichotomized the world into European and non-European, or into persons and non-persons. The coloniality of power upholds and reinforces race and racial hierarchies, personhood or non-personhood—that is to say, the coloniality of power made, and continues to make, racism and de-humanization possible.

Thus, when Hernández said, when the “Spanish era arrived...everyone thinks of themselves more like Spaniards than indigenous” he was pointing out processes of racial formations established by coloniality. Moreover, when he, as well as Antonio said that some “Hispanics” or other peoples in their countries of origin, don’t like to be friends with or like indigenous peoples, they were pointing out discrimination based on race. Hernández, thus, is succinctly describing the coloniality of power as evident in his understanding of the creation of racial categories, hierarchies of race, and the system of privilege based on race, or racism, upheld by colonial interventions.

Linguistic Racism

Hay veces que la gente se burla porque tu hablas un dialecto muy viejo que es como el náhuatl...los niños cuando les enseñan hablar...su español es muy malo porque se cruza con español y el náhuatl y hace que los demás niños se burlen de el porque habla como...allá en México se le dicen “oaxaquitos” y eso es una palabra muy ofensiva para...un niño cuando le dicen tu hablas como oaxaquito, entonces quiere decir que tu hablas muy mal tu idioma...Y eso causa como un tipo bullying, pero de vocabulario (Adler).

Sometimes people would make fun [of you] because you speak a *dialecto* that is so old like Náhuatl. When children are [first] taught to speak...their Spanish is very bad because it mixes with Spanish and Náhuatl and that makes other kids make fun of him because he speaks like...over there in Mexico they’re called “*Oaxaquitos*” and that is a very offensive word for...a kid when he is told that they speak like a *Oaxaquito*, then that means that you speak your language badly...And that is a form of bullying, but based on vocabulary (Adler).

Another form that race was codified was through language. This codification shows a racialization of language, whereby language stands for a racial identity. Examples of this racialization of language are found when Latin American or Spanish speaking people from Latin America are called “Spanish” or “Latin” in the U.S. There is racialization of language that was used to differentiate between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. In the above quotation, Adler made clear that “*Oaxaquito*” or diminutive of someone from Oaxaca was used as a very “offensive” word. As I (Barillas-Chón, 2010) and others (Mesinas & Pérez, 2016; Pérez, Vasquez, & Buriel, 2016) have pointed out, *Oaxaquito* has been used as a term to put down, make fun, and humiliate people from Oaxaca based on language. However, because language cannot be disassociated with race and identity (as many other scholars have written about, e.g., Pérez, Vasquez, & Buriel, 2016), the term *Oaxaquito* illustrates the racialization of language.

Weas, Pedro, and Adler’s experience is representative of the discrimination indigenous peoples faced based on language. Weas described the discrimination of K’iche speakers in Guatemala by the government in the following way, “*el gobierno no no ayuda a nosotros, porque nosotros hablábamos otro idioma...y no ayuda...[el gobierno] No hacen nada porque...solo que hablan k’iche. Son indios*” (“the government doesn’t help us, because we speak an other language [K’iche]...and they don’t help us...they [the government] don’t do nothing because...they only speak K’iche. They are *indios*”). While Weas told of his experience in Guatemala, Pedro spoke about the treatment that indigenous speakers experienced in Oaxaca, Mexico. He said the following,

pues lo que pasa es que ahí en México donde yo vivo, en Oaxaca, la gente que habla español usa la discriminación para los que hablan lenguas indígenas. Entonces el que habla lengua indígena, So what happens is that in Mexico where I live, in Oaxaca, people that speak Spanish use discrimination towards those that speak indigenous languages. Then, the one that speaks an indigenous language, well they

pues ya dicen “es indio”...Pues ya los que son del cerro, pues ya, es la discriminación hacia ellos. Y ya los que no hablan [lengua indígena], pues, ya esa misma gente pues lo tratan mejor porque ya dicen, “no pues viene del bajo.”

say, “he is *indio*”...So then, those that are from the *cerro*, well then, its discrimination towards them. And those that don’t speak [indigenous languages], those same people treat them better because they say, “no, well, they come from below [the *cerro*].”

What is important about Weas and Pedro’s account is that they show a general form of discrimination towards indigenous language speakers for the indigenous language they speak and their lack of Spanish speaking skills. It can be inferred that found in Weas and Pedro’s experiences and understandings are explicit and implicit ways indigenous peoples were discouraged from speaking their indigenous languages. The explicit ways are found when indigenous language speakers were made fun of or discriminated from speaking their languages.

Adler powerfully speaks to this explicit discrimination, or what he called bullying:

Tuve...mucho bullying porque hablaba desde pequeño...esa lengua...mis abuelos me quitaron ese idioma porque me hacían mucho bullying. Me hacían [otros que hablaban español] mucha burla porque no podía pronunciar bien las palabras en español y los decía en el dialecto. Así que, mis abuelos no quisieron que aprendiera mas ese idioma porque los [personas que hablaban español los] humillaban a ellos como a nosotros. Y nos decían [la gente que habla español] que nosotros no valemos nada sin el idioma español.

I had...a lot of bullying because since little I spoke...that language...my grandparents took that language away from me because I was getting bullied. They [other Spanish speaking people] would make fun of me a lot because I couldn’t pronounce words well in Spanish and I would pronounce them in *dialecto*. So then, my grandparents did not want me to keep learning that language because they [Spanish-speaking people] would humiliate them as they did us. And they [Spanish speaking people] would tell us that we are worth nothing without the Spanish language.

As we can see here, Adler, as is the case with other indigenous peoples, was explicitly discouraged from learning Náhuatl, and conversely, implicitly encouraged to learn Spanish. These explicit and implicit forms of encouragement to speak Spanish demonstrate forms of racism. Martínez Salazar (2012) made this point clear by pointing out that in order for indigenous peoples, such as the Maya in Guatemala, to assert their humanity they need to “pass”

as Ladinos or Mestizos. She wrote that such passing happens when indigenous peoples become fluent in Spanish, stop wearing their Maya clothing, and stop “using their languages” (Martínez Salazar, 2012, p. 74). In some ways, in order to maintain their sense of humanity, indigenous peoples must learn Spanish. This last point is demonstrated by Adler’s words, “*Y nos decían que nosotros no valemos nada sin el idioma español*”, “they would tell us that we are worth nothing without the Spanish language.”

I want to end this section by providing Edward’s explanation of his treatment in Guatemala based on his language. When asked if he had been treated differently by his peers or others in Guatemala, Edward said, “*bueno allá en Guatemala...no creo que la gente...piensa mal de mi...porque sabemos ahí que...todos hablábamos otro idioma*” (“well, over there in Guatemala...I don’t think that people...think bad about me...because we know there that...everyone speaks an other language”). In this account, Edward did not perceived being treated differently, at least based on his language use, by his peers or others in his place of origin because he lived among other K’iche speakers. What differentiates Edward’s experience from others who have faced linguistic discrimination, as was the case with Adler, was perhaps being situated within a sociolinguistic majority community of K’iche speakers. This community of K’iche speakers perhaps sheltered him from feeling or being treated differently by others. Living in this sociolinguistic community, however, as Martínez Salazar made clear, does not preclude Edward or other indigenous peoples from being discriminated against based on their language use, skin color and other codifications of race. The reason for this is that indigenous peoples live in a racialized world, with racial hierarchies, created and sustained by the colonality of power.

Maldonado-Torres (2007) wrote, “invisibility and dehumanization are the primary expression of the coloniality of being” (p. 257). This is an important point because it provides justification for the killings and genocide of indigenous peoples. When indigenous peoples, through the use of *indio*, are stripped of their humanity, their dehumanizing treatment (through insults, put-downs, fun-making) becomes acceptable and the norm. In some cases, the death of indigenous peoples becomes normalized as well as Weas’ example of the Guatemalan government not caring for the killing of K’iche speakers showed.

The Seduction of the Coloniality of Power

La personas indígenas en Guatemala ahorita ya son tratados diferentes porque ya todo lo que es la juventud de hoy ya no piensan lo mismo como antes. La juventud de hoy ya esta cambiando y pues las personas...indigenas ya esa cultura ya no los toman en cuenta...porque ya no practican las culturas. Ya los jóvenes...cuando llego lo que es la era de español, ya, ya todos se creen mas como españoles que indigenas (Hernández). Indigenous peoples in Guatemala are now treated differently because everything that is today’s youth, they don’t think the same as before. Today’s youth are changing and, so, then indigenous peoples, that culture, is not taken into account...because they no longer practice that culture. Now the youth, like, when the Spanish era arrived, now everyone thinks of themselves more like Spaniards than indigenous (Hernández).

From Hernández’s point of view, younger Guatemalans treat indigenous peoples differently due to lack of indigenous cultural appreciation that occurs in their generation. Hernández then speculates that reasons for this may be due to the arrival of Spaniards and the subsequent internalization by indigenous peoples of a Spaniard or Spanish identity. From a coloniality of power perspective, Hernández is clearly addressing the process of coloniality whereby racial hierarchies were created and indigeneity was diminished or attempts were made to erase indigenous peoples. From Hernández’ perspective, indigenous cultures are not only not taken into account, they are actively being undone as youth strive to embody a non-indigenous personhood.

However, Hernández does not know why people in Guatemala would consider themselves “more Spaniard than indigenous.” Why indeed would people in Mexico and other Latin American countries consider themselves “more Spaniard” and forget or deny their indigenous personhood? Foregrounding a Spanish or colonized personhood must be understood against the history of colonization and the legacy of the coloniality of power: mainly the construction of race and racism. The perpetuation of racism continues even among colonized peoples because of the seductive or alluring promise of the coloniality of power. This was made evident in Quijano’s (2007) explanation of the legacy of coloniality:

The colonizers...imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. (p. 169)

The coloniality of power as described by Quijano functions much like Michel Foucault’s (1977) concept of power. Whereas colonization took place through force (e.g., genocide of indigenous peoples), the everlasting impact of coloniality is due to it being achieved through indigenous peoples’ consent—and most often, this consent is achieved without awareness. When Quijano wrote that power was placed out of the reach of the dominated, he was speaking to the forceful domestication of indigenous peoples, through laws for example and the order of a racial hierarchy. Such laws were meant for the policing and surveillance of indigenous peoples by the colonizers. In order to maximize the surveillance and policing of indigenous peoples’ bodies, minds, and languages, some of them (*mestizos* and indigenous peoples alike) for example, were co-opted. This co-option was made through schools (Canessa, 2007) along with other instruments of the coloniality of power (e.g., the Catholic Church).

One reason the coloniality of power is internalized was because of its political, economic,

and cultural power seduction (Quijano, 2000, 2007). For Mignolo, this seduction was for indigenous peoples to become part and participant of the reproduction of knowledge. To assert themselves as thinking beings, thus human beings. For Maldonado-Torres (2007), the seduction was one in which the indigenous person was asserting their humanity and existence, and this assertion must have been made after the image of the Western person. For Weas, however, the ability to speak Spanish and disassociation from K'iche did not immediately mean access to power; it meant the freedom from suffering “*no sufrir tanto.*” Nonetheless, to be more like “Spaniards” meant to not be a “*persona tonta*” (dumb person) that “*no tiene ni en que quedarse muerto*”, “that does not even have anything to fall dead unto” (Adler).

Thus, Latin American people, *mestizos* and indigenous alike, are seduced by European culture and power because of its promise to make them into a some-body, and perhaps a some-body-in-particular. From a Foucauldian perspective, this seduction, or promise of power, is a political manipulation that has resulted in an internal form of policing and surveillance by *mestizos* and indigenous peoples towards other *mestizos* and indigenous peoples. Once the coloniality of power is internalized, indigenous and non-indigenous peoples police indigenous peoples in order to make sure that they are “more Spaniard” or to internalize the view that they should be “more Spaniard” than indigenous. One way this is ensured is through the use of the racial epithet *indio*.

Conclusion

It's because they have been raised, like, in a Spanish family. They don't know about...what happened in life before. And, so, like, there is discrimination (Hernández).

In this chapter I described the forms of discrimination towards indigenous peoples the youth experienced or were aware of in their countries of origin and in the United States. The most salient form of discrimination the youth were aware of was in their understanding of the

racial epithet *indio* and linguistic discrimination. Relying on a coloniality of being and power analysis, I posited that these forms of discrimination are rooted in racism, with the aim of dehumanizing indigenous peoples. While the youth shared negative connotations ascribed to the word *indio*, it must be pointed out that for some of them, like Weas, Pedro, Joaquín, and Adler, *indio* was not inherently a negative word. These youth took ownership of the word *indio* as evident in Weas and Joaquín's comments "it's what I am", and "for me it's all the same because I feel that is what I am", respectively. What is more, if *indio* was synonymous with indigenous (or vice versa), then all the youth were not ashamed of being *indios*.

I want to end with revisiting Hernández's question of why some Latin Americans would not want to identify as indigenous. Hernández speculates that others from Latin America may identify with their Spanish heritage because they might grow up in a "Spanish family" and connections to their indigenous genealogy might have been severed (intentionally or not). Weas pointed out the pragmatic utility of speaking Spanish. For Weas, speaking Spanish was about survival and perhaps the potential seduction to economic power, as other youth talked about. Both youth are pointing out different reasons why people may denounce their indigeneity—and in fact, reasons for denouncing indigeneity are complex. *Indio* in this chapter was shown to be one way to put-down or humiliate others. There is a double intention behind this: 1) to shame the *indio* or indigenous out of people, 2) in order for them to denounce and erase their indigeneity. However, the fact that the word *indio* is currently in use indicates that the project of indigenous erasure is not complete. "*Indio*" is meant to separate the colonial from the colonized, however, where does one begin and the other end? Anibal Quijano (2000) wrestled with this question in the following way:

The Eurocentric perspective of knowledge operates as a mirror that distorts what it reflects, as we can see in the Latin American historical experience. That is to say, what

we Latin Americans find in that mirror is not completely chimerical, since we possess so many and such important historically European traits in many material and intersubjective aspects. But at the same time we are profoundly different. Consequently, when we look in our Eurocentric mirror, the image that we see is not just composite, but also necessarily partial and distorted. Here the tragedy is that we have all been led, knowing or not, wanting or not, to see and accept that image as our own and as belonging to us alone. In this way, we continue being what we are not. (p. 556)

Just as Spanish is the legacy of coloniality so too is the word *indio* and the legacy of race and racism it established in Latin America.

Chapter Six: Youth's Understanding of Indigeneity

[L]a palabra indígena es, como de donde, donde nacimos nosotros...Y indígena es como somos nosotros (Joaquín). [T]he word indigenous is, like from where, where we were born...And indigenous is like us (Joaquín).

Bueno, indígena es que como somos nosotros verdad...Pues, indígenas es como yo, como hablo otro idioma (Weas). Well, indigenous is like the way we are, right...So, indigenous is like me, since I speak an other language (Weas).

I start with the above quotations because they highlight two aspects of the youth's sense-making regarding the category "indigenous." For Joaquín, the word indigenous was associated with a region of origin, and for Weas, with speaking a language other than Spanish. This sense-making revealed descriptive indicators of the category indigenous. The second aspect relates to their understanding of who they believed was an indigenous person. For Joaquín, an indigenous person was "like us," and for Weas, "like me." This second aspect of sense-making revealed not only a self-identification but also an identification of others who may fit some, most, or all the indicators associated with the category "indigenous."

In this chapter I make two observations. The first is that the indicators the youth provided when making sense of the category "indigenous," along with the peoples they associated such indicators to, reveals their understanding of "indigenous peoplehood." Relying on Corntassel (2003, 2012), and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis' (2003) work, "indigenous peoplehood" refers to the interconnection of indicators that are particular to indigenous group membership. Moreover, they are specific components of indigeneity. For Corntassel, such indicators are language, place territory, sacred history, and ceremonial cycles. I also rely on a coloniality framework for analyzing indigeneity. My second observation is that the process of sense-making the youth engaged in exhibited particular kinds of understanding and awareness of indigeneity, including their own and of others. Their sense of indigeneity, while particular, was

also connected to more widely circulating sensibilities of indigenous peoplehood. I rely on the literature by Chicana Feminist Theorists, specifically Gloria Anzaldúa (1999), and the works by indigenous scholars on what I refer to “Ways of Being” to describe awareness as forms of sense-making and understanding born out of particular lived experiences as colonized peoples.

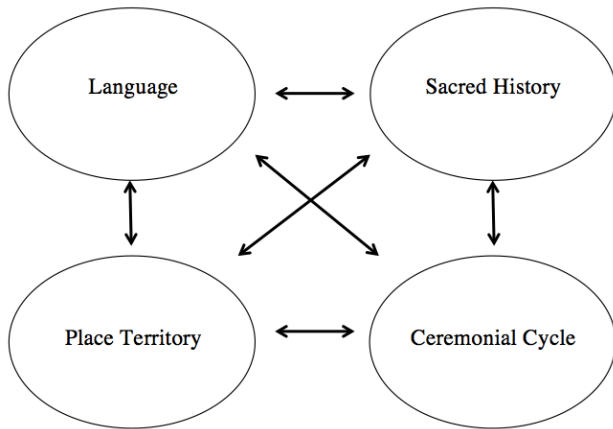
The structure of this chapter is as follows. Adapting from Cornassel (2003) and Holm et al (2003) work, I provide a description of “indigenous peoplehood” and show how the youth relied on similar indicators for identifying indigenous persons. I then describe how a particular awareness is present in how the youth understood themselves in relation to others and the indicators they relied on for identifying indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Peoplehood

Jeff J. Cornassel (2003), in his work on rearticulating indigenous identity, wrote that the term “peoplehood” had its roots in anthropologist Edward H. Spicer’s work on “enduring peoples” (p. 91). According to Holm, Pearson and Chavis (2003), Spicer was interested in how “human enclaves” were formed, and sustained in spite of coloniality. The importance of Spicer’s work for Cornassel and Holm et al. was that he advanced the idea that enduring peoples were distinct from others based on the following particular indicators or makers of group membership: relationship to the land, common spiritual bonds, and language use. Building their framework from Spicer’s earlier work, Holm et al developed a “Peoplehood Matrix” as shown in Figure 4, to illustrate indicators of indigenous peoplehood.

Figure 4

Peoplehood Matrix



Holm et al (2003) added the category “sacred history” to this Peoplehood Matrix. The importance of the matrix is that it illustrates the interrelatedness of the different indicators of indigenous peoplehood. Building on Holm et al.’s matrix, Cortassel advanced a pan-indigenous explanation of indigeneity in the ways outlined below.

- In terms of Language: “People who speak (or once spoke) an indigenous language, often different from the dominant society’s language—even where the indigenous language is not ‘spoken’, distinct dialects and/or uniquely indigenous expression may persist as a form of indigenous identity.” (p. 92)
- In terms of Place Territory: “Peoples who distinguish themselves from the dominant society and/or other cultural groups while maintaining a close relationship with their ancestral homelands/sacred sites” (p. 92)
- In terms of Ceremonial Cycles: “People who may, but not necessarily, have their informal and/or formal political, economic and social institutions, which tend to be community-based and reflect their distinct ceremonial cycles, kinship networks, and continuously evolving cultural traditions” (p. 92)

- In terms of Sacred History: “People who believe they are ancestrally related and identify themselves, based on oral and/or written histories, as descendants of the original inhabitants of their ancestral homelands” (p. 92)

What is important to point out about the matrix and Cornthassel’s definition is that no single indicator is more important than the others, as they are all woven into each other and are mutually supportive. What is more, for Holm et al. (2003), the whole of the indicators work together to “make up a complete system that accounts for particular, social, cultural, political, economic, and ecological behaviors exhibited by groups of people indigenous to particular territories” (p. 12).

Limitations and Possibilities of the Peoplehood Matrix

The Peoplehood Matrix is a good start for thinking about the question of indigeneity. More specifically, of what does it mean to “be” indigenous and of “whom is indigenous?” Canessa (2007), however, warns: “although it may appear ‘relatively easy’ to say who is indigenous in Latin America...who is and who isn't indigenous and what it means to be indigenous...is highly variable, context specific and changes over time” (p. 197). Nonetheless, useful about the Peoplehood Matrix is the conceptualization of a pan-indigeneity. This matrix, however, sets boundaries on who may be indigenous. For example, in writing that the whole of the indicators make up a “complete system,” Holm et al. do not account for how each indicator can also work independently of each other. This independence is important, because, while the indicators may often be mutually supportive, each one can also stand-alone. The youth demonstrated that an indigenous person may be one that self-identifies as such based on a history that locates them in an ancestral homeland or a region identified as indigenous, yet may not be speakers of an indigenous language, as was the case with Adler and Pedro, respectively.

Nonetheless, the youth relied on similar indicators found in the matrix when speaking about “what is indigenous” and whom they believe was indigenous. These indicators were the following: language, geographic location, and labor.

While building on the matrix in order to re-conceptualize a pan-indigenous identity, Corntassel strategically omitted the role of coloniality. One reason for this, according to Corntassel, is that there are indigenous peoples that were never colonized, but, nonetheless, fit into this matrix. While it may be true that some indigenous peoples may not operate under the coloniality of power, that is not the case for indigenous peoples of the Americas. Recall that Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2009) argued that the first act of coloniality was the creation of racial identities and differences as instruments of social, economic, and political stratification (p. 534). Quijano (2000) wrote,

the conquered and dominated peoples were situated in a natural position of inferiority and, as a result, their phenotypic traits as well as their cultural features were considered inferior. In this way, race became the fundamental criterion for the distribution of the world population into ranks, places, and roles in the new society’s structure of power. (p. 535)

At the bottom of this stratification were the newly created *indios*. Coloniality, therefore, cannot be omitted in descriptions or conceptualizations of indigenous peoples of the Americas, which exist because of coloniality. Moreover, coloniality is not something that happened many years ago, rather, it is a form of operating in the world that is present through social, political, and educational institutions that are fundamental parts of everyday life in the Americas. As, Maldonado-Torres (2007) reminds us, coloniality is present in our everyday life and interactions, as we all reproduce coloniality every single day.

Holm et al. (2003) and Corntassel (2003) went through great care to articulate the indicators of indigenous peoplehood and argued that they were interconnected—the arrows

connecting each indicator illustrated such relationships. However, they did not explain how indigenous peoples made sense of their world through the use of such indicators, or because of them. In other words, they did not explain how these indicators reflected sense-making.

In this dissertation, sense-making refers to particular awareness that is derived from lived experiences. This awareness, however, does not necessarily mean self-awareness. One problem with emphasizing awareness of awareness, or self-awareness, in sense-making, as Maldonado-Torres (2007) pointed out in his critique of Descartes' "I think, therefore I am," is that it elevates thinking above other ways of knowing and understanding. In this way, narrowly focusing on awareness of awareness can have the unintentional effect of reproducing a colonial discourse and view on sense-making. In particular, it can have the effect of de-emphasizing how knowing and understanding emerges from the body and lived experiences—a knowing that is not often self-aware.

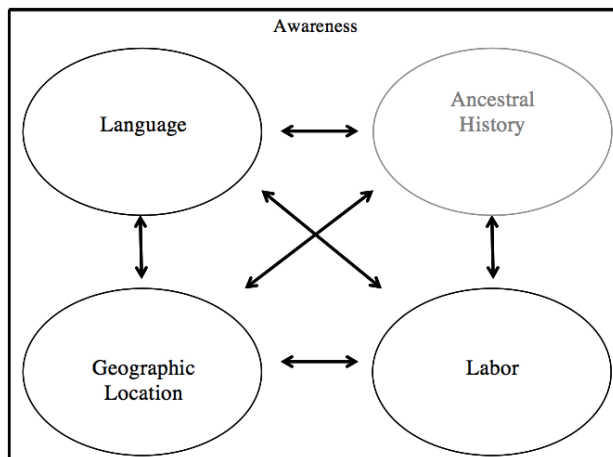
I posit that the youth demonstrated particular kinds of awareness of indigeneity. Their sense of indigeneity, while particular, was also connected to more widely views of indigenous awareness and understanding. Chicana Feminist Theorists Norma Alarcón (1990), Gloria Anzaldúa (1999), and Cindy Cruz (2001) theorized that the body is an important site for knowing and understanding. These writers and thinkers are important because they situate knowing and sense-making in lived realities, in what some Critical Educators refer to as experiential knowledge, and which has historically been characterized (due to the Enlightenment concept of knowledge) as a lesser way of knowing. For the Chicana Feminist Theorists mentioned above, it is the body that provides us with specific awareness or understanding. In a similar way, scholars on Indigenous Ways of Being point out that understanding and sense making is grounded in lived experiences (e.g., Barndhart & Kawagley, 2005, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Cordova, 2004; Whit,

Roberts, Norman & Grieves, 2001). Additionally, these writers include other ways of sense-making that escape self-awareness such as “intuition,” “fifth dimensions” and “maturity” (Anzaldúa, 1999; Cajete, 1994; Barnhart & Kawagley, 2008). These theorists and writers pointed to the varied ways of understanding, making sense, and operating in the world that does not necessarily require a cognitive awareness of them.

The youth’s awareness of indigeneity was deeply grounded in their lived conditions affected by language, geographic location, and labor backgrounds. These same conditions affecting their lived experiences were also used as indicators for self-or-other identifying as indigenous. Figure 5 is a modified peoplehood matrix adapted from Holm et al (2003) work.

Figure 5

Modified Peoplehood Matrix



This matrix is very similar to the one proposed by Holm et al. with few exceptions. The major change is that it is bounded to illustrate that the sense making that happens through the indicators (or because of them) working together or independently produces a specific awareness of indigeneity. Another difference is that a “Labor” indicator is included as this was one that emerged as important for the youth. While the only youth that described an “ancestral history” as an indicator for identifying indigenous peoples were Hernández and Adler, I include them in

this modified matrix to show how they parallel Holm et al (2003) and Corntassel's (2003, 2012) indigenous indicators.

Who Is Indigenous?

The Peoplehood Matrix is important because it helps situate the question of indigeneity, particular of “who is indigenous?” in a larger understanding of the many indicators and factors that affects such categorizing (self-identification and otherwise). The question of “who is indigenous?” however, has been a contentious one—there is no one answer that is satisfactory to all, especially to indigenous communities themselves. For these reasons, Corntassel (2003) asserted that this question “is best answered by indigenous communities themselves” (p. 75).

While there are no definite or conclusive answers to the question of “who is indigenous?” it is nonetheless important to highlight some crucial points regarding it. One of them is that indigenous people not always, nor necessarily use the word indigenous for self-or-other identification. For example, Andrew Canessa (2007) shared the following anecdote when interviewing an Aymara (Andes) speaker:

I asked my friend Teodosio Condori if he was indigenous (indígena)...Teodosio...is a monolingual Aymara speaker who has spent almost his entire life in the village of Pocobaya [Bolivia]...When I posed the question he chuckled at my ignorance and told me that no: the indigenous people lived down in the jungle; people in the highlands were not indigenous (p. 196).

Weas made a similar point when he said, “*lo indio es lo que...escuche es que están...en le bosque,*” meaning, “*indio* is that...what I heard is that they are...in the forest.” While it is possible that Teodosio, a person who could reasonably be identified as indigenous, may be actively denying this vestige of colonization, Weas’ comments suggest that this perhaps is not the case. Recall from Chapter Five of this dissertation that Weas did not deny being *indio*, a racial epithet used against indigenous peoples. Yet, *indio* or indigenous was not the most

immediate form of self identifying. What is more, the term “*indígena*” or indigenous was unfamiliar to the youth. This is the second point regarding the question of “who is indigenous?”

Of seven youth, four (Edward, Pedro, Weas and Elías) expressed how they had never been asked for their thoughts on the category “indigenous.” In fact, each one said that term “indigenous” was unfamiliar to them as they had not learned about it before I interviewed them for this study.¹³ For example, when I asked Edward if he had been asked for his thoughts on the category “indigenous,” he said:

<i>Para mi de indígena...casi nadie me preguntan como es un indígena o...también, este, de que se trata un indígena...Casi nunca me han preguntado [eso].</i>	For me indigenous...almost no one has asked me how an indigenous person is like, or...also about what it means to be indigenous...I have almost never been asked [that].
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What the youth above demonstrate is that rarely are indigenous peoples asked for their thoughts on the word indigenous itself and for their self-identification. Moreover, when asked for their thoughts on the category “indigenous,” their response may likely vary as evident in the youth’s understanding of the term. For instance, when I asked them what indigenous meant for them, the youth’s range of responses included, “a person that comes from mother earth,” (Hernández), “elders or old people” (Adler), “people from the past and that are no longer the same” (Elías).

The word indigenous is a category that academics, organizations, political movements, and governments have used to refer to the original inhabitants of the Americas. However, the original peoples of the Americas refer to themselves in a variety of other ways. Indigenous

¹³ Two important questions arise from this assertion. The first is, if they had no idea of what the term indigenous meant as they had not been exposed to this term before, how was it that they provided descriptions of what they understood to be indigenous? Perhaps, they were making sense with me about their own indigeneity. The second question relates to whom they would be learning this term from? They were not clear about this. However, we get an idea of this based on Edward’s comment that he learned about the word “*indio*” from school. While *indio* and indigenous are different, they are used to speak to the same people in Guatemala and Mexico: indigenous peoples.

peoples have also been referred to by others in a variety of ways depending on the rationale for their identification (e.g., political, social, economic distinctions and exploitations). As I discussed in Chapter Five, *indio* was an invention created by the colonizers and used for racial distinction between themselves and the original inhabitants of the Americas for the purposes, among others, of social and cultural domination. In Bolivia, *indio* was gradually replaced with the socio-economic *campesino* (peasant) term in the mid 1950s (Canessa, 2007). In this case, *campesino* became a proxy for *indio*. Currently, in some countries, like Bolivia and Mexico, the term *indigenous* has gained momentum, both as form of cultural pride and political mobilization. Examples of this are evident in more people self-identifying as indigenous in Bolivia (Canessa, 2007), the election of the “first indigenous” president in Latin America (Evo Morales), and the formation of the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (FZLN) in Mexico.

Indicators of Indigeneity

As described above, the youth had different understandings of the category indigenous. However, common among their varied responses was the use of “*como somos nosotros*,” (“like we are”) or “*como yo*” (“like me”) when speaking about who was indigenous. This was the case for five out of the eight youth (Hernández, Edward, Joaquín, Weas, and Antonio). Three out of the eight youth (Hernández, Adler, Pedro) explicitly identified as indigenous; for example, Adler and Pedro respectively said, “well, I simply identify as an indigenous person” and “well, I still identify as *indio*.” When the youth did not immediately identify as indigenous, they nevertheless included themselves in their understanding of the term “indigenous” by using words such as “like we are” (Joaquín and Weas). It is interesting to note here the use of the “we” in Joaquín and Weas’ responses of who was indigenous. This “we” not only included them, but also me. One reason for this is that I had shared with the youth, when I first met them and right before the

interview, that I considered myself indigenous. Thus, when responding to who they thought was indigenous, the youth referenced themselves and me, their interlocutor.

This “*como somos nosotros*,” “like me,” and “like we are” revealed the youth’s understanding of who was an indigenous person. By relying on their personal lived experiences, speaking or not speaking an indigenous language, living in self-identified or ascribed indigenous communities, and/or having a history of manual labor as textile, artisanal, *campesino*, and/or construction workers the youth identified indigeneity based on the following indicators of indigenous peoplehood: 1) language, 2) place/geography, 3) and labor background.

Language: On Speaking and Not Speaking Dialectos

Sheila E. Nicholas (2014) in her ethnographic study “‘Being’ Hopi by ‘Living’ Hopi” showed that despite being immersed in Hopi culture, the Hopi youth in her study did not speak or understand Hopi languages. Nevertheless, these youth considered themselves Hopi. While the youth in her study expressed a desire to know the Hopi languages, because they understood the cultural connections language afforded, such languages were not a condition for being Hopi.

Three out of the eight youth (Adler, Pedro, and Elías) demonstrated a similar understanding of indigeneity. In recounting his experience with being asked about his indigenous background and whether he was an indigenous language speaker, Adler said,

<i>Orgullosamente si. Soy indigena. “Hablas alguna lengua [indígena]?” me [preguntan otros]. Yo no hablo ninguna lengua [indígena]. La comprendo [nahuatl] pero no la puedo hablar.</i> ¹⁴	Proudly yes. I am indigenous. “Do you speak [an indigenous] language?” [others] ask me. I don’t speak any [indigenous] language. I can understand [Náhuatl], but I can’t speak it.
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In this example, Adler pointed out that while not being a Náhuatl speaker, he not only identified but is also proud of being indigenous. Pedro serves as another example of language not being a

¹⁴ Adler did not specify who would be the people asking him about his indigenous background and if this happened in Mexico or the United States.

pre-requisite for identifying as indigenous. Neither Pedro nor any of his family members spoke any indigenous languages. Regardless of this, Pedro said that he still “considered” himself “*indio*.”

Given the prominence that language played in the youth’s sense-making around who was indigenous, I probed in interviews regarding whether speaking an indigenous language was necessary in order to be identified as indigenous. For example, I asked Edward if it was possible for people like me, who did not speak an indigenous language, to be indigenous. His response was the following:

maybe they [indigenous people] think, when they look at you... that you speak an other language, but you don’t. I mean...for example, people may see you...speaking Spanish and I imagine they think, “oh, I imagine that he speaks one language or our language”...I imagine that they think that, but...you don’t know that...But I [also]...I imagine that they don’t know how your life has been, where you were born, where you lived. It’s like that. If they see you, they might think you speak it [*dialecto*], but they don’t know all about your life, like where you grew up, places you went and things like that.

Edward’s response is important because it showed an understanding that lived experiences (e.g., “how your life has been”) contribute to particular kinds of awareness of indigeneity. Edward’s understanding aligns with Chicana Feminist Theorists and scholars on indigenous Ways of Being who demonstrated that it is through lived experience and experiential knowledge that particular awareness are achieved. In this case, while for Edward, I may or may not speak an indigenous language, what contributes to my indigeneity is the collective experiences that I have lived (which include the places I grew up, the places I “went” and the like). Moreover, by not creating narrow categories of who may be indigenous based on language or non-language use, Edward is allowing room for self-identification.

Nevertheless, speaking an indigenous language was still an important indicator of indigenous peoplehood. Four out of the eight youth (Hernández, Weas, Edward, and Antonio)

relied on their own experiences speaking an indigenous language to illustrate who was indigenous. For example, Weas said that an indigenous person “is like me, since I speak an other language.” Hernández responded that he was indigenous “because I...speak an other language, I can write that language. I can read that language.” In this case, these youth pointed out that an indigenous person is one that speaks (and in Hernández’s case, can also write and read) an indigenous language.

Hernández, Antonio, and Edward also relied on their personal experience having difficulties speaking Spanish correctly for identifying indigenous peoples. For example, Hernández said, “*yo se que no hablo el español perfectamente*” (I know that I don’t speak Spanish perfectly); Antonio said something similar: “there are certain words that I cannot pronounce well.” Because these indigenous youth had difficulties speaking Spanish well, or they spoke it with an accent, they reasoned that other indigenous people would also have difficulties speaking Spanish or speaking it with an accent. Antonio illustrated this reasoning: “I see when that [indigenous] person starts talking, how they can’t express themselves well. So then, [I think] this person speaks an other language...so then, that’s why I identify them as speaking it [*dialecto*].”

Three of the youth’s non-indigenous Latino peers interviewed in this study also viewed language as an indicator of indigenous peoplehood. When probed about the category “indigenous,” Chava said that what came to mind was “like one that speaks *dialecto*...that speaks another language besides Spanish.” Adolfo had a similar response when he said that he thinks about the “languages they [indigenous people] speak.” When asked what differences, if any, existed between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, Alexis simply said, “language and clothing.” Evident in these non-indigenous Latino peers is the relying on language to single out

who is indigenous. In this case, language is used by indigenous and non-indigenous youth as a indicator of indigeneity.

Cornstassel (2003) posited that an important indicator of indigenous peoplehood included “people who speak (or once spoke) an indigenous language, often different from the dominant society’s language” (p. 93). However, as I noted above, while speaking an indigenous language was an important indicator for self-and-other identification, it was not a sole indicator of indigenous peoplehood. Moreover, such indicator could also be misleading as evident in Adler and Pedro’s case of self-identifying as indigenous without speaking an indigenous language

Nicholas (2014) showed that being Hopi was related to other ways of living, relating, and participating in their world that were grounded in their particular life-experiences growing up in a Hopi community. In Nicholas’ work, the youth were showing an awareness of indigeneity that was not solely, or primarily tied to language. It is true that the Hopi youth grew up in different communities than the youth in this study, and thus, had different levels of exposure to the language of power—English and Spanish, respectively. Exposure to the language of power, or to a community of speakers of the language of power, affects the learning of that particular language. Nicholas does not explain the prevalence with which Hopi languages were spoken in the communities the youth grew up in. It can be the case that while the Hopi grew up in a community of Hopi speakers, such language was, even among this community, not the most prevalent spoken. It is possible then, that they had limited opportunities to speak the language, and thus, speaking it was not a sole indicator of indigeneity. Weas, Joaquín, Edward, and Hernández did grow up in communities where their indigenous languages were spoken frequently. This was evident in Weas’ account that he spoke primarily K’iche with his peers and friends in the town he grew up in. For these youth, language was an important indicator of

indigeneity. However, similar to the Hopi youth, those youth in this study (Adler and Pedro) who did not grow up in communities of indigenous language speakers (or with people who would speak to them on a regular basis in an indigenous language, as was the case with Adler and Elías), nonetheless, identified as indigenous regardless of their ability to speak K'iche.

On Geographic Locations: “*De Donde Vengo*”

Mary Pat Brady (2002) in *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* wrote about geographic borders as a system of nation-building and people-making (p. 52). Brady foregrounded the centrality of land for making people when writing that “making identities is integral to making places; [and] places get made in part through identity making activities” (p. 52). The activities, according to Brady, for making people referred to the construction of geographic, cultural, social and linguistic centers and margins. Mignolo (2009) demonstrated that the project of coloniality established physical, psychological, and social borders. The primary purpose behind these borders was to differentiate peoples and places, and peoples living in specific places. This differentiation Mignolo called the “colonial difference.” In his *Lettered City*, Angel Rama (1996) showed how the ordering of cities in the Americas paralleled the colonizers’ views of social order. By “order,” Rama referred to the design and implementation, through construction, of cities that reflected Enlightenment ideals of rationality and efficiency. By ordering the city, the colonizers were ordering the physical and social landscapes. Rama (1996) furthered argued that cities reflected a “social hierarchy” (p. 5) and that such social hierarchy was grounded in a linguistic hierarchy.

From a coloniality of power perspective, cities also reflected a racial hierarchy, whereby White Europeans occupied the physical, cultural, and linguistic centers, while *indios* were relegated to the margins. From this standpoint, one function of geographic borders, as is the case

with circumscription of cities, is to differentiate and separate people with the intention of producing dominating and dominated groups.

One example of the youth's understanding of geographic spaces associated with certain groups of people was found in Pedro's account of different racial groups living in particular locations on the "cerro" (hilly region) he grew up in. Pedro identified as *indio* because the people from the "cerro" where he grew up were identified by people below the hill as *indios*. Although the people in the town where he grew up did not speak indigenous languages, the fact that they were geographically located in a certain place above the *cerro* made them indigenous. He explained this in the following way:

<i>me identifico como indio...porque de un pueblo a bajo de donde yo vivo...ya no son indios...Un pueblo que vive arriba de donde yo vivo ya hablan [dialecto], los pueblos alrededor ya hablan. Pero de mi pueblo hacia abajo ya no hablan...Pero ya estamos nosotros en el cerro pues. Por eso ya entramos ya como indios [al pueblo].</i>	I identify as <i>indio</i> ...because from a town below where I lived...they are no longer <i>indios</i> ...one town above where I lived they already speak [<i>dialecto</i>], it's spoken in the surrounding towns. But in my town and below it is no longer spoken...But then, we are [located] in the hill. That's why we enter [the main town] as <i>indios</i> .
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Wanting to know more about what he meant by people in the *cerro* or hill from those below it, I asked him to clarify the distinction. He explained, drawing an imaginary line on the table where we were talking, "a veces de aquí, de la línea, pues...ya de aquí pa'ca es una...raza, y de aquí pa'ca ya es otra" or "sometimes from here, from this line, well...from here to there is one...race, and from here to there is another [race]."

Pedro's explanation is important because it illustrates the creation of racial groups tied to geographic locations. I did not ask Pedro if people who once lived on the hill and who were considered *indio* remained *indios* if they decided to live below the hill, in the main pueblo. It is also important to point out that it is unknown if people above the racial/geographic line Pedro illustrated would have identified as *indio* in absence of the people below the hill calling them

indios or not. Another aspect of Pedro's account is the specific geographic locations that indigenous peoples are associated with. While he said that people in his town no longer spoke indigenous languages, they were nonetheless considered indigenous because of their specific location on the hill. From this perspective, a specific location was tied to indigenous peoplehood. Adolfo, a non-indigenous Latino, exemplified this point in his response to a question regarding how he was able to tell if someone at Northwest High School was indigenous. He said, "*nos identificamos cuando decimos de donde [somos] ¿Eres de Guatemala? ¿De que parte? Por ejemplo, de Quiché...La mayoría de personas [indigenas] son de Quiché,*" meaning, "we identify ourselves when we say where [we are from]. You are from Guatemala? What part? For example, from El Quiché. The majority of [indigenous] peoples are from Quiché." For Adolfo, a specific region was associated with indigenous peoplehood, regardless of whether it was true, or not, that the majority of indigenous peoples at Northwest High were from El Quiché.

The specific locations that indigenous peoples are associated with, most often, are geographically removed from the main town, center, or city. Additionally, Rama (1996) and Quijano's (2000) work posited that such indigenous locations were culturally, economically, socially and politically marginal; conversely, the political, economic and social centers are cities detached from indigenous towns. Edward explained this relationship. Asked if he could identify whether others at Northwest High School were indigenous or not, Edward said, "*depende pues de donde es, porque, por ejemplo, de otros países, me imagino que solo español. Como El Salvador, México. Me imagino que Oaxaca si tiene otros idiomas, pues*" ("it depends where they are from, for example, from other countries, I imagine that they only speak Spanish. Like El Salvador, Mexico. I imagine that Oaxaca does have other languages"). I asked him why he thought this way and his response was,

porque yo tengo un amigo, pues, en el restaurante que es de Oaxaca entonces me dijo que si “yo hablo en otro idioma también.” Me dijo que “yo soy de Oaxaca.” Por eso es que me imagino que si...por ejemplo, así de la mera capital de todos países casi no hay una gente que si habla en...sabe en otros idiomas. Lo que hablan solo puro español. Pero por ejemplo así ya de... un apartamento de un país, si, me imagino que si ya se habla.

Because I have a friend, well, at the restaurant that is from Oaxaca, so he told me, “I speak an other language also.” He told me, “I am from Oaxaca.” That is why I imagine that yes...for example, from the main capital of all the countries there are not that many people that speak...know other languages [*dialectos*]. What they only speak is Spanish. But, for example, from the...department [similar to a state in the US] of a country, I imagine that they do speak it.

Edward provided an interesting example of the relationship between language, place, and indigenous peoplehood. For him, indigenous speakers, as identified by speaking an indigenous language, were not likely to be found in Mexico or El Salvador. When referring to Mexico and El Salvador, Edward had in mind the larger nation-state that served as economic, linguistic, and geographic centers. This is evident when he modified his response by saying that indigenous language speakers were found in Oaxaca. From this perspective, it was only in specific regions within a nation (like Oaxaca or El Quiché) that indigenous peoples are to be found. It is also important to note that this particular region in Mexico that Edward associated with indigenous peoplehood, and its people, has a long history of being politically, economically, and socially marginalized. Joaquín, on the other hand, was aware of indigenous peoples living in geographic centers. Joaquín, who worked in Guatemala’s capital, said that there were people in the city who spoke indigenous languages, however, “*el dialecto...en la ciudad casi—son diferentes. Rara la persona si lo encuentras hablando así tu dialecto*” (“the language, the dialect...in the city are almost—they are different. It is rare to meet someone that speaks your same language”). While Joaquín shows that indigenous peoples are found in geographic centers, the prevalent view, as evident in Pedro, Edward and Alexis’ understanding is that indigenous peoples are confined to distant geographic regions away from the geographic and linguistic center.

What is important about the centers and margins that coloniality created is that indigenous peoples are made to be invisible in the former. In her investigation of indigenous homeless people in Canada, Kingfisher (2007) discussed how indigenous people were made invisible by an “Othering” process that consisted of their physical removal from their ancestral homelands and relegating them to allocated lands. Once they were in these lands, some of which were close to cultural, social, and political centers, their bodies went unnoticed and accounted for by the larger population. These indigenous peoples were the margin, thus invisible, residents living in the center. Edward’s view that only Spanish is spoken in the city, conversely, that indigenous speakers and people are most likely found in departments (regional locations) has the unintentional effect of making invisible indigenous peoples in the cities.

Geographic location was an important maker the youth used for identifying or identifying others as indigenous. This is exemplified in their use of “*de donde vengo*” or “where I come from” in their explanation of what indigenous meant for them. For example, Joaquín said, “*la palabra indigena es, como de donde, donde nacimos nosotros*” or, “the word indigenous is, like where we, where we were born.” This, “where we were born,” for Hernández meant a geographic place of ancestors and other indigenous peoples, “*ahí vengo de una parte donde mis padres también ellos son indígenas*” (“I come from a place where my parents they are also indigenous”). Antonio said something similar, “I come from an indigenous town.”

For the youth, “*de donde vengo*” or “where I come from” was an important maker for self-identifying as indigenous and/or identifying others. To come from a “*pueblo indígena*” or “indigenous town” (Antonio), from a place where their ancestors once lived (Hernández, Adler) shaped their lived experiences and understandings. In particular, it grounded the youth’s understanding of who may be or not be indigenous. For Elías, who was born in Guatemala City,

he identified as indigenous because he grew up in El Quiché, a place, according to him, with a large population of indigenous peoples. “Where I come from,” therefore, constitutes an integral part of the youth’s understanding of indigeneity.

Labor Background: *Campesinos*

Their families and community of origin’s labor background provided the youth with an understanding of the types of socioeconomic backgrounds associated with indigenous peoplehood. Table 8 provides a visual representation of the youth’s family and community of origin labor background in their countries of origin.

Table 8

Family and Community of Origin’s Labor Background

Name	Community of Origin Labor Background	Family Labor Background
Pedro	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Father was a <i>campesino</i>
Edward	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Textile and crafts
Adler	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Grandfather was a <i>campesino</i>
Weas	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Family were <i>campesinos</i>
Joaquín	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Family were <i>campesinos</i>
Elías	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	Grandmother was merchant and <i>campesina</i>
Hernández	<i>Campesinos</i>	N/D

	(Fieldworker)	
Antonio	<i>Campesinos</i> (Fieldworker)	N/D

Table 8 shows that all of eight youth come from communities in which the labor they described people doing was *campesino* work. For example, four out of the eight youth mentioned sowing corn as types of work and livelihood people depended on in their communities of origin. Edward, for example, said “[en] Totoncapán, la gente, pues...sembramos milpa” (“in Totoncapán, people...we sow corn”); Joaquín and Weas said similar things, respectively, “where I was born...we look for work from our neighbors to do, [for example]...grow corn...clean...chop fire wood...but this is different from the city” and “sowing corn and [like] that.” While information is missing about Hernández and Antonio families’ background, six of the eight youth come from families that did some form of *campesino* work.

Maria L. Lagos’ (1994) analysis of class-consciousness in Bolivia illustrated that after the country, in 1953, passed “one of the most radical agrarian reforms in Latin America” (p. 2), the category *campesinos* was used as a proxy for *indio*. Lagos explained that the term *campesino* is “far from clear as it encompasses several differentiated groups” (p. 6). *Campesinos* can live in small towns, or as sojourners, may own land, livestock, farming equipment, and/or may be economically well off. However, *campesinos*, also, may have no land, farming equipment, and/or livestock, and /or may be poor. Furthermore, Lagos suggested that *campesino* was an “inclusive category glossing over class differences” (p. 6), while the term “*indio*” was an exclusive category, particular to ethnic or racial groups. From this perspective, an indigenous person can be, and most likely is, a *campesino*; however, a *campesino* is not necessarily an indigenous person.

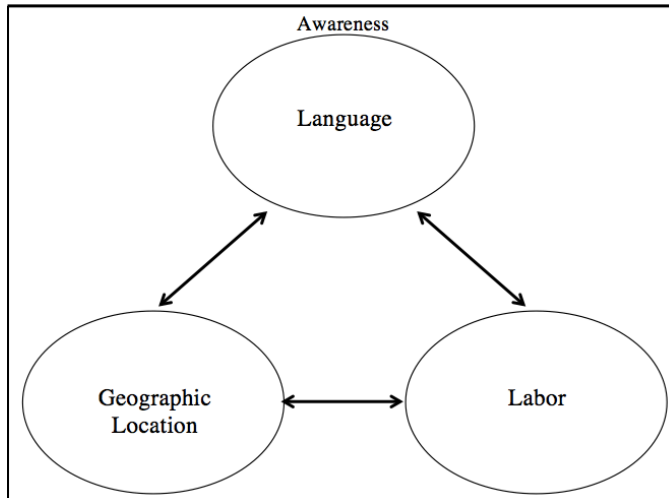
While it is true that not all indigenous persons are *campesinos*, for the youth—as illustrated in the table above—being indigenous most likely meant being a *campesino*. What this means is that the category *campesino*, or labor background, was used as an indicator of indigenous peoplehood. I want to go back to Joaquín’s distinction between the types of labor backgrounds found in this town versus the city. The distinction is important because it points to the intersection of region/geography with labor conditions. Moreover, it shows that indigenous peoples occupy specific geographic margins tied to economic margins. In Chapter Five, “‘Indio,’ Race, and Racism,” I pointed that the coloniality of power established a division of race along the same lines of a division of labor. In the examples provided above, we see this division of labor/race reflected in the lives the youth, their families, and/or other people in their towns as they were relegated to menial labor and/or *campesino* work.

Understanding of Indigeneity

I posit that the youth revealed particular kinds of awareness and understanding of indigeneity, their and of others. Their sense of indigeneity, while particular, is also connected to more widely circulating indicators of indigeneity. Corntassel (2003) and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis (2003), for example, described language, sacred history, place territory, and ceremonial cycles as particular indicators of indigenous peoplehood. The youth also relied on similar indicators of indigenous peoplehood as previously illustrated in Figure 5, “Modified Peoplehood Matrix.” This modified matrix shows the relationships between the different indicators of indigenous peoplehood identified by the youth. Based on this modified matrix I developed a conceptual model that outlines the indicators particular to the focal youth in this study, as demonstrated in Figure 6 below:

Figure 6.

Understanding of Indigeneity: conceptual model



- *Language.* This indicator was utilized by the youth for self-identifying as indigenous and for indicating who are indigenous. While not all youth spoke an indigenous language (Adler, Elías, Pedro), they nonetheless identified as indigenous based on their geographic location of origin.
- *Geographic Location.* For some of the youth, indigenous peoples were associated with living or occupying specific geographic locations. These locations, I interpret, were the social, economic, and linguistic margins. Additionally, these marginal locations were often associated, except with Pedro’s case, with people who spoke an indigenous language. Moreover, geographic location was also associated with particular types of labor backgrounds.
- *Labor.* Their families and communities’ labor provided the youth with an understanding of the types of labor backgrounds associated with indigeneity. Based on their labor, they utilized *campesino* as a indicator of indigenous peoplehood.

The only indicator missing from the youth’s understanding and awareness of indigenous peoplehood is “Ancestral History.” With the exception of Hernández, the rest of the youth did

not provide substantial discussions of Ancestral History as an indicator of indigenous peoplehood. This omission is not meant to indicate that Ancestral History is not an important indicator of indigenous peoplehood, rather, it shows that it was not an indicator relied on by the majority of the youth in this study.

I have attempted to show that the indicators the youth utilized emerged out of their lived experiences. They utilize these indicators to make sense of themselves and others in relation to the larger linguistic, economic, and physical world they live in. All these indicators, acting independently and in conjunction with each other contributed to the youth's particular understanding and awareness of the category "indigenous" and of who is indigenous. This understanding and awareness is rooted in their lived conditions. Chicana feminist theorists have proposed that the way we describe, talk, or name ourselves not only arise because of the specific bodies we are born into, but also get embodied. Our bodies allow us to experience the world from specific standpoints (Harding, 1993). The experiences lived, felt, and/or shared with bodies, and because of them, give us specific awareness and ways of understanding, viewing, interpreting and living in the world. For the youth, their personal experiences: 1) as speakers of an indigenous language or their understanding of connections between language and indigeneity, 2) living in geographic places associated with indigenous peoples, and 3) growing up in *campesino* families or communities contribute to their particular understanding and awareness of indigeneity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I provided descriptions of the indicators the youth relied on when making sense of the category "indigenous." These indicators were language, geography, and labor. Such indicators aligned with Corntassel (2003, 2012), and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis' (2003)

definitions of “indigenous peoplehood.” In this case, the youth’s use of these indicators, and the people they associated such indicators to, revealed a process of understanding indigeneity, in particular, indigenous peoplehood. However, I cautioned that such indicators of peoplehood, while important, were not always reliable forms of self-or other-identification. Adler, Pedro, and Elías’ experiences as non-indigenous language speakers who, nonetheless, identified as indigenous demonstrate that being indigenous does not mean fitting into particular indicators of indigenous peoplehood. In other words, what the youth showed is that indigeneity does not mean being able to check off all items on a list of indigenous peoplehood indicators.

My central contribution in this chapter is that the sense-making the youth engaged in demonstrates particular kinds of understanding and awareness of indigeneity, including their own and of others. This indigenous understanding and awareness is situated in their lived experiences, in a material reality. As Chicana Feminist Theorists (e.g., Alarcón, 1990; Anzáldua, 1999; and Cruz, 2001) along with scholars on indigenous ways of being have proposed, our lived experiences provides us with particular understandings and awareness that arises out of the bodies, and the specific linguistic, cultural, social, and gendered contexts we are born into. The youth’s lived experiences as speakers, or not, of indigenous languages, growing up in places they associate (or are associated with indigenous peoples), and histories of *campesino* work, provided them particular understanding and awareness and ways to relate with one another and the world.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

En México nadie se preocupa por [gentes indígenas]. Allá no se ve mucho eso que alguien que quiera entrevistar a uno de cómo se considera [como indígena]...allá [las personas] no le toman importancia a lo que es el maltrato [de personas indígenas]...pues, están acostumbrados a escuchar eso [maltrato]. Y no se preocupan [las personas] por hacer algo (Pedro).

In Mexico, no one cares about [indigenous people]. Over there, you hardly see someone that wants to interview one about how they see themselves [as indigenous]...there [people] do not pay importance to the abuse of [indigenous people]...well, they are used to hearing that [abuse]. And [people] don't care about doing something (Pedro).

Pedro's poignant statement is an example of the type of understanding the focal youth in this study demonstrated about the treatment and lived experiences of indigenous peoples in Mexico, Guatemala, and the rest of Latin America. For Pedro, Mexicans (in Mexico) were not concerned about understanding the experiences of indigenous peoples. They cared less about their mistreatment and of doing something about it. I want to extend on Pedro's insight and posit that there is little concern for understanding indigenous peoples in Latin America. Moreover, there is little concern for understanding them from their own perspectives. In this qualitative study I sought to investigate how indigenous immigrant youth from Latin America made sense of indigeneity, theirs and of others, from their own perspectives.

In the field of Latina/o education, there is nominal work attending to indigenous immigrant youth's understanding of indigeneity. For instance, some studies have investigated adult indigenous immigrants' reflections on their previous K-12 schooling experiences (e.g., Casanova, 2012; Casanova, O'Connor & Anthony-Stevens, 2016; Urrieta, 2013b). Others have investigated indigenous young adults, who never attended U.S. schools, and their parents' perspectives towards education and schooling in the U.S. (e.g., Ruiz & Barajas, 2012). Additionally, others have travelled to indigenous youth's countries of origin, Mexico for example, in order to learn about the youth's cultural and social contexts that shaped their

upbringing (Ruiz, Baird & Hernández, 2016; Urrieta, 2013). Even in these examples where the experiences of indigenous immigrants are foregrounded, minimal attention has been given to the youth's understanding of what indigeneity means to youth, and how they identify indigeneity in others. Investigating indigenous immigrant youth's self-understanding of indigeneity is important because it gives insight into how they view themselves as compared to how they are viewed by others. This is also important because such self-understanding can combat negative views of indigenous peoples and give additional insights into how they adapt to their new contexts of reception (Dabach, 2014, 2015; Marrow, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Moreover, there are a handful of investigations that have begun to examine Latin American indigenous immigrant experiences through a coloniality lens (Barajas, 2012; Urrieta, 2013). For instance, current studies on the experiences of indigenous immigrants have begun to employ transnational or "binational" frames (Fox 2005, 2006; Stephen, 2007). Sociologist Jonathan Fox's (2005, 2006) work with transnational and binational associations bring to light intricate social, political, economic, and cultural connections that are created and maintained by indigenous immigrants between their places of origin and their new contexts of reception. Transnational practices are not confined to physical crossing over as Sánchez and Kasun (2014) and Lynn Stephen's work (2007), for example, shows. For these researchers, transnationalism also includes the social, cultural and linguistic borders immigrants cross and the links they maintain in multiple spaces at once. However, the crossings over and links that indigenous immigrants from Latin Americans engage in do not follow a circular (back-and forth) movement as suggested in the literature on transnationalism. Because of their unique experiences as indigenous in their countries of origin and as immigrants and indigenous in the United States, indigenous Latin Americans are in positions of in-between—not full participants in either places

because of their marginalized positions in both of them. As I discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, transnationalism provides a jumping off point from where to build on the immigrant and indigenous experience of indigenous immigrants.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to the field of Latina/o education because it fills empirical and conceptual gaps: the study of indigenous youth's own understanding of indigeneity from a coloniality of power conceptual frame. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of these contributions; beginning with the empirical findings, followed by the conceptual contributions. I end with a discussion of future work and implications for educators and researchers interested in working with indigenous immigrant youth.

Contributions

Empirical Contributions

In this study I analyzed and illustrated indigenous Latin American youth's understanding of language hierarchies and the treatment of indigenous peoples in their countries of origin and in the United States. Furthermore, I provided insights into how the youth understood the category "indigenous," along with how they viewed their and other's indigeneity.

Asymmetries of Power: Language Hierarchies Paralleling Division of Labor. Youth's understanding of asymmetrical relationship of power was evident in the language hierarchies they described. These hierarchies were similar to the ones that Rama (1996) described in his now classic, *Ciudad Letrada/The Lettered City*. Rama pointed out the social and political divisions in early Latin America based on literacy and race. The "*letrados*," by which Rama meant white European men, were placed in position of power because of their language, which was inseparable from their race. For the youth, Spanish was of transnational and national importance. Spanish was the language of social and cultural interaction. What is more,

indigenous languages occupied subaltern positions—as evident in the youth referring to them as “*dialectos*” or “*un otro/an other*.” Kovats (2010) and Pérez, Vasquez, and Buriel (2016) have also documented a similar practice by indigenous Mexican youth of referring to indigenous languages as “*dialectos*.” Nonetheless the youth, like other indigenous immigrants (Menchaca Bishop & Kelley, 2013; Velasco, 2010) and non-immigrant indigenous youth (Nicholas, 2014) were aware of the cultural importance of such languages.

This language hierarchy also paralleled a division of labor, whereby Spanish speakers were positioned at the top of the labor division, and indigenous language speakers relegated to menial, *campesino* labor. Missing from the study of indigenous immigrants’ understanding of asymmetries of language, in the limited studies addressing this, is an analysis of race and power. Relying on a coloniality of power lens, I argued that there is also racial component to this language hierarchy/labor division.

“*Indio, Race, and Racism*. In Martínez Salazar’s (2012) examination of the coloniality of power and racism in Guatemala, Mayan women described how non-indigenous peoples called indigenous peoples “stupid,” “*indio*” and “primitive.” The youth described similar forms of treatment of indigenous peoples in their countries of origin. The types of discrimination highlighted by the youth were based on “*indio*,” a racial epithet, and language. Just like in Martínez Salazar’s work, *indio* was seen through a deficit perspective: lacking intellectual abilities, being poor, and coming from “uncivilized” places. However, the use of *indio* was not confined to the youth’s countries of origin as they shared that they had heard this racial epithet being used towards themselves, their friends, co-workers, or others in the U.S.

Relying on Maldonado-Torres’ (2007) “coloniality of being” I interpreted this use of *indio* as a vestige of coloniality. In this case, *indio* was used to put down, subjugate, and

dehumanize indigenous peoples. Another outcome of this is the erasure of indigeneity. Unlike the systematic (and external) indigenous erasure that happens in the U.S. through schools, an historical example being Indian boarding schools (Pratt, 1973), the erasure that is evident in youths' description of *indio* operates on a more ideological level. An example of this is the youth's description of language discrimination. These forms of discrimination were explicitly and implicitly made. Adler, for example, described how his grandparents, who at one point were Náhuatl-only speakers, explicitly taught him to stop speaking the language. Implicitly, indigenous languages are discouraged because in order to be part of the economic and social spheres of power, indigenous people must learn Spanish. They are reminded of this whenever they are made fun of for speaking "bad" Spanish as Adler illustrated by his interpretation of the use of "*Oaxaquito*." *Oaxaquito*, as well as *indio*, in this case was used as a reminder of indigenous peoples inadequacies and shortcomings as others have pointed before (Barillas-Chón, 2012; Martínez Salazar, 2012; Ruiz & Barajas, 2012).

While the youth shared negative connotations ascribed to the word *indio*, for four of the eight youth (Weas, Pedro, Joaquín, and Adler), the term was not inherently negative. These youth were proud of being *indio* as evident in Weas and Joaquín's respective comments "it's what I am" and "for me it's all the same because I feel that is what I am."

Youth's Understanding of Indigeneity. As I explained in the introduction to this chapter, previous literature had not sufficiently investigated indigenous immigrant youth's understandings of the category "indigenous," nor of how they make sense of indigeneity. My findings revealed that youth relied on language, geographic location, and labor backgrounds as indicators when making sense of the category "indigenous." These indicators aligned with Corntassel (2003, 2012), and Holm, Pearson, and Chavis' (2003) understandings of "indigenous

peoplehood.” Indigenous peoplehood refers to particular indicators of indigeneity such as language, place territory, sacred history, and ceremonial cycles. These indicators, while not exhaustive, informs indigenous peoples’ sense-making of themselves and of others. I posited that the sense-making the youth engaged in demonstrated particular kinds of understanding and awareness of indigeneity, including their own and of others. I turned to Chicana Feminist Theorists (e.g., Alarcón, 1990; Anzaldúa, 1999; Cruz, 2001) along with scholars on indigenous ways of being to interpret how our lived experiences provides particular understandings and awareness that arises out of the bodies, and the specific linguistic, cultural, social, and gendered contexts we are born into. One idea that I put forward is that the youth’s indigenous understanding and awareness was born out of their particular lived experiences being or not being indigenous language speakers, originating in places they identified as indigenous, and their *campesino* backgrounds.

Conceptual Contribution: Coloniality of Power Framework

Darder and Torres’ (2014) *Latinos and Education (2nd Edition)* is a landmark contribution to the field of Latina/os and education that I want to use here as heuristic of the field. The anthology includes a wide range of studies/writings to illustrate the complexities of the Latina/o diaspora in the U.S. and its public schools. For example, the anthology is divided into seven themes, some of which focus on the history and politics of education, construction of identity, language and schooling, and immigrant youth, among others. Individual authors in this anthology wrote about the colonization of people’s natives to the Americas and their racialization through their “Mexicanization” and Americanization (e.g., Gonzalez, 2014). Other authors described the lasting legacy of this colonization through language suppression, of “non-dominant” languages in the U.S. as is the case with Spanish, and the concurrent internalization of

colonial thinking by the colonized of their presumed inferiority (e.g., Bartolome, 2014). Finally, other scholars writing about immigrant youth (e.g., Noguera, 2014) grounded their analysis in major theories of immigration (as I described in Chapter Two of this dissertation). Noguera, for example, described the major challenges immigrant Latina/os face, specifically their feelings of living in-between physical, geographic, social, and emotional spaces.

While individual works in this anthology, and the anthology itself, have made significant contributions to the field of Latina/o education, the same works are illustrative of some limitations in the field. For instance, while attempting to explain a Latina/o diaspora (e.g., historical differences between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans), there is a unintentional reproduction of the idea that Latina/os share similar lived experiences in the U.S. (e.g., pressure to learn English and racism) or in their countries of origins (as there is no disaggregation within immigrants coming from the same country of origin). This has the unintended effect of erasing the experiences of indigenous immigrants.

Moreover, while the frameworks reproduced in the field for understanding immigration are extremely useful, such frameworks still rely on structural and cultural theories of immigration. These frameworks contribute to particular understandings of immigration (e.g., economic integration, theories of adaptation, links/networks maintained by immigrants), yet, they do not account for the historical and conceptual shared experience between the colonized immigrant and the colonizing context of reception. Experiences that are characterized by power inequalities that are founded on race and racism.

I posited in this dissertation that understanding the experiences of indigenous immigrant youth requires an unpacking of racial formations, tied to racial and linguistic hierarchies and differential power dynamics. One conceptual frame that critically addresses this is Quijano's

(2000) “coloniality of power.” The coloniality of power is one frame that historically situates the construction of a racial/economic hierarchy in the Americas, whereby indigenous peoples were relegated to the bottom, and Europeans (and their descendants, *mestizos*) were position at the top. This racial/economic hierarchy and power dynamic became the fabric of everyday life in the Americas as it has rooted itself as ideology. What is more, people from Latin America cannot escape such history and ideology, regardless of their immigrating to the U.S. The conceptual contribution this dissertation provides is the examination of indigenous immigrant youth’s experiences from a coloniality of power lens that address power dynamics.

Future Research

The study on indigenous immigrant youth is principally relevant in the field of education because schools are often one of the most important contexts of reception that affect youth’s sense of self and of other (Dabach, 2014, 2015; Marrow, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Schools are important institutions that provide youth with spaces for developing a sense of self and of adaptation. Within schools, peer relationships also affect youth’s sense of self. I believe that it is in the ways indigenous youth engage with others, and their understanding of this engagement, that we can see processes of coloniality working. For example, what parts of their indigeneity do they emphasize or de-emphasize in their engagement or interactions with others at school and why? To whom, for example, do they reveal they are indigenous, and how do they do this? Pursuing such questions is important in order to understand indigenous youth’s sense of self and relationships, and peoples and events affecting them and their school adaptation.

Another important theme that I hope to explore in future work is the idea of awareness and understanding that I interpret as “indigenous consciousness.” My understanding of indigenous consciousness is similar to, yet distinct from, traditional views of “consciousness.”

Consciousness is usually understood as awareness of awareness. From Critical Theories, especially those informed by the “Frankfurt School,” consciousness is imagined as self and collective awareness of how power operates in peoples lived realities. The aim of this awareness is to transform power inequities. In the field of anthropology, one way of studying group membership is through the study of collective memory (Seixas, 2004). This collective memory relates to how people group themselves based on a remembered past. Philosophers view this collective memory as an historical consciousness (Funkenstein, 1999). Peter Seixas wrote that historical consciousness can be understood as a “collective understanding of the past” and “the cognitive and cultural factors shaping those understandings” (p. 10). The premise behind these ways of understanding consciousness rests on the notion of meta-cognition: an awareness of awareness.

One issue for me about foregrounding awareness of awareness as the main, or sole component, of consciousness is that it elevates thinking above other ways of knowing and understanding, or from which knowledge and understanding can emerge. Chicana Feminist theorists Alarcón (1990), Anzaldúa (1999), and Cruz (2001), for example, theorized that the body is an important site for knowing and understanding. For them, it is through the body, and because of it, that a specific consciousness (for example, queer, and/or Chicana) is possible. In a similar way, scholars addressing Indigenous Ways of Being point to how indigenous understanding and sense making is grounded in lived experiences and deep relations with the land and living beings on it (e.g., Barndhart & Kawagley, 2005, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Cordova, 2004; Whit, Roberts, Norman & Grieves, 2001). The knowledge that is generated from such lived experiences and relations provides indigenous peoples with “cognitive cultural maps” (Cajete, 1994) that allow them fluidity of movements between places, spaces, and time (Deloria,

2004; Waters, 2004). Moreover, these theorists write that there are ways of understanding and being aware that are located in ‘intuition,’ fifth dimensions and maturity (Anzaldúa, 1999; Cajete, 1994; Barnhart & Kawagley, 2008).

Important about ways of being in and understanding the world is that they point to how we make sense of the world with our whole being, our minds, bodies, and spirits. These ways of being, understanding, and operating in the world comprises an awareness that is not always, nor necessarily, self-aware. For me, indigenous consciousness is deeply grounded in lived conditions—as affected by language, geographic location of origin, and labor among other factors. In other words, the experiences that have been lived, and felt individually and collectively provide people with particular understandings and awareness of what it means to be an indigenous person.

In my future work, I hope to investigate this idea of indigenous consciousness and indigenous peoplehood formation. What I have captured in this dissertation is the beginning stages of what indigeneity means for recent indigenous immigrants. I am curious to see how their sense of indigeneity changes over time. How is an indigenous consciousness present among indigenous youth? Would they forget or de-emphasize their indigenous backgrounds? What roles, if any, would peers, schools and other institutions play in this?

Additionally, missing from this dissertation was a close examination of the youth’s immigrant and schooling experiences. I am curious to understand the intersections of immigrant and indigenous experiences. For example, what are some conditions in the U.S. that might affect indigenous youth’s sense-making of indigeneity? In particular, what might affect the maintenance of indigenous invisibility for indigenous immigrants? For example, in Nelson’s (2010) article, a gay immigrant student from Mexico found conditions in the U.S. relatively safer

for him to come out as gay in certain situations. While being gay and being indigenous are two different things, both experiences are marked by shared marginality. Nonetheless, one reason why indigenous peoples may selectively or strategically identify as indigenous has to do with coloniality. Are there conditions in the U.S. where coloniality grasp loosens its grip? If so, what are those conditions?

Scholarship on Latina/o Education

Until recently, there were very few studies that investigated the experiences of indigenous immigrants from Latin America through frames that took into consideration issues of race, indigeneity, and transnationalism (along with other theories of border crossings). As I was wrapping up this dissertation a special issue was published in the *Journal of Latino Studies* (2017) edited by Maylei Blackwell, Floridalma Boj Lopez, and Luis Urrieta that attempts to address how the presence of indigenous immigrants are transforming notions of “*Latinidad*” (p. 126). In this special issue the authors proposed a “Critical Latinx Indigeneities” frame as an “interdisciplinary analytic that reflects how indigeneity is defined and constructed across multiple countries and at times, across overlapping colonialities” (p. 126). More specifically, Blackwell in the same issue described Critical Latinx Indigeneities as:

[A] framework that addresses how indigeneity is produced differentially by multiple colonialities present on Indigenous land where different Indigenous diasporas exist in a shared space. It refuses the way migration scholars fail to see the “receiving countries” as Indigenous territories and nations, reenacting the terra nullius of settler colonialism. Thus, Critical Latinx Indigeneities works against the erasure of the Indigenous peoples and homelands that are transited and settled on. Further, it examines mobility as a global Indigenous process of displacement...It considers the shifts in racial formations and the ways Indigenous people are racialized differently across and between different settler states. (p. 159)

This is a very promising step towards paying closer attention to the binational, transnational, and other forms of border crossings that indigenous immigrants engage in as I argued in Chapter

Two of this dissertation. Moreover, it asks of researchers investigating issues in Latina/o studies in general, and for me in Latina/o education specifically, to examine the colonized contexts of departure and reception. It is important for researchers interested in immigrant indigenous people from Latin America to examine how colonial subjects, such as indigenous peoples as “*indios*” are created and re-positioned in their countries or origin and in the United States.

Building on the frame that I set-up in this study prior to the publication of the new issue of *Latino Studies*, I want to add to the Critical Latinx Indigeneities frame two important issues. First, examining the creation and re-position of indigenous peoples should include being attentive to racial formations, including the role of language and labor positions. As I demonstrated in this study, language was an important indicator of indigeneity and racialization. There was a racial hierarchy tied to a language hierarchy. Second, a language/racial hierarchy paralleled a division of labor. The scholarship on indigenous immigrants, therefore should closely examine how labor discourses are pulled through across transnational settings. In many cases, labor becomes a proxy for indigeneity as I demonstrated. Thus, Latina/o education scholars should be aware of how labor relations impact notions of indigeneity, both in their countries of origin and in their new contexts of reception.

Implications for Educators

Over the past decades substantial studies have been done on the linguistic assets of native Spanish speakers and other youth who speak a non-English language in the United States (e.g., Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 2002; Valdés, 2001). This, in part, was in response to deficit perspectives and harmful educational policies towards non-English language speakers. For instance, Nieto’s (2002) often-cited work provides compelling

evidence of non-English language speaking youth's linguistic strengths. Additionally, she advocates for teachers to tap into these strengths in the youth's education.

The scholarship on native Spanish speakers continues to focus on the richness and complexities of their "home" languages. The scholarship referenced above positions the "home language," which is proxy for the Spanish language, as assets to be utilized by teachers and other educators in order to enrich the learning of all students in their classrooms. This type of work continues to be of utmost importance; however, when it relates to immigrant indigenous youth, this work operates under at least one problematic assumption. This assumption is that the youth's home languages are situated under the same matrix of linguistic, social, and economic power as other languages spoken in their countries of origin. As we saw with the youth in this study, indigenous language speakers, and their languages, are marginally positioned in their countries of origin. In many cases, such indigenous languages are invisibilized as evident in that the language of everyday social and linguistic interaction in their countries of origin is Spanish. Therefore, when focusing on the strength of home languages, educators must be attentive to the fact that such "home" languages may not be the languages of origin for the youth. I use educators here to refer to practitioners and school staff. In some cases, the home language became a language that was adopted in order to navigate the broader linguistic and social spheres. In the case of some of the indigenous youth in this study, a home language included their indigenous language of origin and Spanish. For this reason, educators working with Latina/o youth, including immigrants from Latin America, must be aware of the complex language relations between different groups of youth in their classrooms and schools. Such language relations operate under more nuanced ways than educators are aware of. Simply relying on a home language, for example Spanish, as an asset can have the unintentional effect of

reproducing inequitable power dynamics, which can contribute to a furthering of invisibilizing and marginalizing indigenous languages.

The youth in this study are very aware of codes of power and the matrix of the coloniality of power. For the youth in my study, Spanish is already a language of power that they know and speak. Within this system of power, they are also aware of English being an additional code of power—one that in the U.S. does not replace Spanish, but supersedes it in many cases. The youth still have to speak and continue to learn Spanish because it is useful for their everyday life and work. This language will not go away for them anytime soon. English, however, can supersede Spanish as it is the language of power in the United States—one that they are learning and a primary reason why they attended Northwest High. Under this matrix of power, indigenous languages slowly fade and become invisible.

For these reasons educators working with Latina/os, Latin American immigrants, and specifically indigenous immigrants should be attentive to the power dynamics between different Latin American groups—dynamics that youth are already well aware of. One way of being attentive to how power dynamics play out within Latina/o youth is to notice forms of discrimination that indigenous people are subjected to by their own Latina/o/Latin American peers. One form of discrimination that indigenous peoples face is being called the racial epithet “*indio*.” There are other proxies for the racial epithet “*indio*.” For instance, Oaxaqueña/os in Mexico are called “*oaxaquita/o*” and this practice continues to take place in the United States by their Mexican-descent peers as I and others have previously documented (Barillas Chon, 2010; Casanova, 2012). When this happens, it is the educator’s role to intervene and stop such forms of discrimination. Finally, because indigenous languages are subaltern languages, it can be the case, as I showed in this study, that some youth might be reluctant to speak their indigenous

languages in public settings. Educators must pay attention to such moments of silence by indigenous immigrant youth. Speaking or not willing to speak an indigenous language is both a form of survival and resistance. At no point should indigenous youth be forced to speak their indigenous language, among other reasons, because that may expose them to unwanted negative attention.

Concluding Thoughts

In this dissertation I have provided the reader with an analysis of how eight self-identifying indigenous youth understood the category “indigenous” along with indicators they relied on for thinking about indigeneity. I also pointed out some of their accounts of discrimination directed at indigenous peoples by Latina/os both in their countries of origin and the U.S. Three of the eight youth (Hernández, Pedro, Antonio) called these forms of discrimination “racism.” I believe that the youth’s view of discrimination as racism should be taken seriously and should provoke a close examination of the concept. For example, if race is to be understood as a colonial invention, and racism as a system that upholds race (privileging particular racial groups regardless of country of origin), then certain people from Latin America operate as racist within their own countries. What happens when such racists immigrate to the United States and the systems that upholds their race is no longer present? Do they stop being racist as they are included in the larger “persons of color” category? Additionally, is it possible for Latina/os, especially if they privilege from skin color and language, to privilege from a system of racism if they were to visit countries in Latin America that exist because of the invention of race and continue to operate based on racism? In other words, can we have racist Latina/os? These are serious and difficult questions that I struggle with and I ask from place of honesty.

I believe that such questions are necessary to address or engage in the study of Latina/os and education. By foregrounding race, we can historically situate its invention, perpetuations, and the power differentials that are in place because of it. Such invention, as I have shown in this dissertation has its roots in colonial interventions and its legacy of coloniality. For researchers and practitioners along with others who want to engage with studies of indigenous people, youth in particular, issues of race, gender, language, and class must be closely examined. To not address the historical invention of indigenous peoples as distinct human beings, for example as “*indios*,” can contribute to historical denial; thus, perpetuating power differentials, the marginalization, dehumanization, and invisibility of indigenous peoples.

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APPENDIX A – STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT LATIN AMERICAN TALKING POINTS

Study: Indigenous Immigrant Latin American Youth (IILAY)

Purpose: The talking points are designed to screen for indigenous Latino students among the students who have shown an interest in the study.

After students have positively responded to the invitation letter, I will meet individually with them and informally ask them for the following information:

- Speaks a language other than Spanish? ____ YES ____ NO
 - What languages _____
 - Probe for: Do they speak an indigenous language?

- Does a family member speak a language other than Spanish? ____ YES ____ NO
 - What languages _____
 - Probe for: does anyone in their family speak an indigenous language?

- What region of their country were they born?
 - What is the population like?
 - Can you describe the type of people that live in the place you were born?
 - What did they do for livelihood?

- Do you have siblings?

- How do they identify?

Next Steps:

Eligible for all study activities only: _____ Yes _____ NO

- If eligible for all study activities students I will tell students that I will contact them via phone or in person within one week of this meeting to set up a time for the initial interview, and plan ahead for days that might work for the focus groups.

Eligible for only one interview: _____ Yes _____ NO

- If eligible for only one interview, I will tell students that I will contact them via phone or in person within one week of this meeting to set up a time for the initial interview.

If not eligible use the following prompt:

Thank you for being interested in this study and for taking the time to meet with me.

Unfortunately this study would not be a good fit for you. Everything that you shared with me will not be shared with anyone else and I will not retain copies of any information that I may have written down. Once again I appreciate your time.

APPENDIX A1- STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH FIRST ROUND OF INTERVIEWS

Topic: Students' immigrant and schooling experiences

Informant: Indigenous immigrant high school student at Northwest High School.

Grade Level: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Student Pseudonym: _____

Introducción: Gracias por reunirte conmigo. Te e invitado a participar en este estudio porque estoy muy interesado en aprender acerca de ti. Quiero aprender acerca de tus pensamientos y experiencias acerca del tema indígena. También quiero aprender acerca de tus experiencias como inmigrante. Acuérdate que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Para mí, yo no me consideraba como indígena hasta cuando llegué a la universidad (estaba en mis 20s). El ser indígena, o la identidad indígena, tiene un significado específico y muy especial para mí. La identidad indígena significa diferentes cosas para diferentes personas. No hay una sola definición de indígena. Y, así, quiero aprender acerca de tus pensamientos sobre el tema indígena. Quiero comenzar por preguntar acerca de los idiomas que hablas. En el pueblo en el que yo crecí, la gente habla un idioma llamado Poqomam No aprendí a hablarlo y tampoco mis padres y hermanos. Las únicas personas que conozco que lo hablan son algunos de los miembros de la familia de mi abuelo.

Idioma

- ¿Qué idiomas hablas? ¿Qué tal tus padres / abuelos, qué idiomas hablan?
- ¿Qué piensas sobre los dialectos?
- ¿qué piensas sobre las personas que hablan dialectos?
 - ¿Son tratados de manera diferente comparados con los que hablan español solamente? En los EU y en tu país?

Ahora voy a preguntarte acerca de tus pensamientos sobre el tema “indígena.”

Reflexiones sobre Indigenismo:

- ¿Cuando escuchas la palabra indígena, que es lo que se viene a tu mente?
- ¿Para ti, quién es indígena?

Como te decía, para mí , el ser indígena, o la identidad indígena, tiene un significado específico y muy especial. ¿Qué tal para ti?

Auto Identificación

- ¿Cómo te identificas?
 - ¿Te identificas como indígena?
- ¿En que lugares no dices de donde eres? ¿O que hablas un dialecto?
- ¿A quienes no le dices de donde eres? ¿O que hablas un dialecto?

Para mí, ser indígena afecta mi forma de ver las cosas. También afecta como trato a los demás, y también como soy tratado por los demás.

Las experiencias con Indigeneidad

- Para ti, ¿qué significa ser indígena ?
 - ¿Qué significa ser indígena en tu país? ¿Es algo que se habla en tu país?
 - ¿qué significa ser indígena en esta escuela?
- Si alguien te dijera que quiere ser indígena, que le aconsejarías? [esto es lo que tengo que vivir]
 - ¿Sientes que la gente te trata de manera diferente porque eres indígena?
 - ¿qué tal en esta escuela?

La identificación de los demás:

- ¿Tienes una idea de quién es indígena en la escuela?
 - ¿Cómo puedes saber si los demás son indígenas?
- ¿Tienes una idea de que países son los otros estudiantes en esta escuela? Como lo sabes?

APPENDIX A2- STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH SECOND ROUND OF INTERVIEWS

Topic: Students' immigrant and schooling experiences

Informant: Indigenous immigrant high school student at Northwest High School.

Grade Level: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Student Pseudonym: _____

Research Question #2: How do Indigenous immigrant Latin American Youth understand and make sense of their immigrant experiences?

Ahora quiero preguntarte acerca de tus experiencias como inmigrante. Como ya he compartido contigo, llegué a los EE.UU. cuando tenía 9 años de edad. Tengo 26 años en los E.U. Estaba sin documentos durante los primeros 13 años, por lo que significaba que no podía volver a Guatemala. Aquellos eran tiempos muy difíciles para mi familia y para mí y tuvimos que aprender cuándo y con quien hablar acerca de nuestra situación migratoria. Después de todos estos años todavía extraño Guatemala y todavía me considero un inmigrante, un Guatemalteco y Maya. Para mí, ser inmigrante es muy importante y el término inmigrante tiene un significado específico para mí también.

Que tal para ti?

Reflexiones sobre la inmigración

- Cuando escuchas el término “inmigrante,” ¿que es lo que se te viene a la mente?
- ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las razones por las cuales viniste a los E.U?

La experiencia de inmigrante

- ¿Piensas acerca de tus experiencias como inmigrantes ?
 - ¿Cuándo piensas acerca de esto?
 - ¿alguna vez hablas de esto con los demás? ¿Con quien?
- ¿Qué se siente ser un inmigrante en los EE.UU. ?
 - ¿Cosas similares/diferentes entre aquí y tu país?

Experiencias en la escuela

- ¿Qué ha sido ser un nuevo estudiante en esta escuela ?
- ¿Qué se siente ser un nuevo estudiante en esta escuela?
 - cosas similares / diferentes entre aquí y tu país?

APPENDIX B- STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH PEER INTERVIEW

Topic: Peer immigrant experiences and understanding of indigeneity and indigenous students

Informant: Student peer at Northwest High.

Grade Level: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Student Pseudonym: _____

Introduction: Thank you for meeting with me. I invited you to participate in this study because I am very interested in learning about you. I want to learn about your immigrant experiences. I also want to learn from you about how you identify.

I want to start by asking you some background information:

- Age, Country or origin, languages spoken, grade level, attended school in your country of origin

Now I will ask you about your immigrant experience.

Immigrant Experience

- What is it like to be in the US?
- What is it like to be an immigrant in the US?
 - Any similarities/differences between here and where you are from?

Experience at school

- What is it like to be a new student at this school?
 - Similarities/difference between here and where you are from?

When people come to the U.S., sometimes they are required to identify or they identify in different ways. How about for you,

Self Identification:

- How do you identify?
- When and where do you identify as you do?

Now I will ask you about your thoughts on the word “indigenous”

Thoughts on Indigeneity:

- When you hear the term indigenous, what comes to mind?
 - Is it a good or bad thing to be called indian?

Identifying others:

- Do you have a sense of who is indigenous at the school?
 - How about in other places? How can you tell if others are indigenous?

- Do you feel that they are treated differently at school than other students?
 - How were they treated back in your country?

Appendix A4- PEER INTERVIEW: Study of Immigrant Indigenous Latin American Youth (IILAY)

Topic: Peer immigrant experiences and understanding of indigeneity and indigenous students

Informant: Student peer at Northwest High.

Grade Level: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Student Pseudonym: _____

Introducción : Gracias por reunirte conmigo. Te he invitado a participar en este estudio porque estoy muy interesado en aprender acerca de ti. Quiero aprender acerca de tus experiencias como inmigrante. También quiero aprender acerca de cómo te identificas.

Quiero comenzar preguntándote acerca de tu información básica:

- Tu edad, el país de origen, idiomas hablados, nivel de grado, asististe a la escuela en tu país de origen

Ahora voy a preguntarte sobre tu experiencia como inmigrante

La Experiencia De Inmigrante

- ¿Qué se siente al estar en los EU ?
- ¿Qué se siente ser un inmigrante en los E.U.?
 - cosas similares / diferentes entre aquí y de dónde eres?

La Experiencia En La Escuela

- ¿Qué se siente al ser un nuevo estudiante en esta escuela ?
 - cosas similares / diferentes entre aquí y de dónde eres?

Cuando la gente viene a los E.U., a veces están obligados a identificarse, o a veces son identificados, de manera diferente. ¿Qué tal para ti?,

Auto Identificación

- ¿Cómo te identificas?
- ¿Cuándo y dónde te identificas como lo haces?

Ahora voy a preguntarle acerca de tus pensamientos sobre la palabra “indígena”

Reflexiones sobre Indigenismo:

- Que se te viene a la mente cuando escuchas la palabra “indígena”?
 - ¿Es bueno o malo ser llamado indio?
- ¿Pienzas que se les trata de manera diferente? ¿Aquí (US) y en tu país?

La Identificación De Los Demás

- ¿Tienes una idea de quién es indígena en la escuela?
 - ¿Y en otros lugares ? ¿Cómo sabes si los demás son indígenas ?
- ¿Sientes que se les trata de manera diferente en la escuela que otros estudiantes ?
 - ¿Cómo son tratado en tu país?

APPENDIX C - “OBSERVATION GUIDE”- INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH

Field notes will be recorded during observations wherever indigenous youth may be present. Special focus will be given to the following observation sites:

Classroom

- Indigenous youth’s interactions with other students
 - Are there cliques in the classroom? Who makes up these cliques?
 - Do indigenous Latino students talk to other students in the classroom?
 - Do they seem to have friends in the classroom?
 - Do other students interact with or listen to Latino students? If so, what are their interactions like?
 - Do other students interact with or listen to indigenous Latinos students? If so, what are their interactions like?
 - Do students call each other names? What names? Do students call indigenous Latino students names?
 - Who do indigenous youth interact with and in what ways?

- Indigenous youth’s interactions with teacher.
 - Do students ask questions? Does the teacher listen?
 - Do students feel they can share personal information with teacher?
 - Do students hang out in the classroom after class?
 - Do students have a friendly relation with teacher (e.g., joking around)?

- General classroom environment
 - How are students arranged? Do they decide their sitting arrangement or is it assigned?
 - What students are more vocal in the classroom?
 - Do indigenous youth ask question to the teacher, to other students?
 - Do indigenous youth participate in any discussions?

Cafeteria/Lunch room

- Observing for indigenous youth’s interactions with other students
- How do students group themselves?
 - Are there cliques? Who makes up these cliques?
 - Where do students sit during lunch?
- Do indigenous Latino students talk to other students?
- Do other students interact with or listen to Latino students? If so, what are their interactions like?
- Are there tensions between students?
 - If so, between what students?
 - Are there fights? Who fights?

Lunch-time break and Hallway Interactions

- Who do indigenous youth walk with in the hallway as they switch classrooms?

- Who do indigenous youth talk to in the hallway as they switch classrooms?
- Are the interactions that students have friendly?
 - If so, what seems to be the friendly interactions about?
- Are there tensions between students?
 - If so, between what students?
 - Are there fights? Who fights?

Looking for evidence of indigenous youth positive peer and social interactions during lunch-time break:

- Hanging out in “popular” hang-out spots during lunch time?
- Hanging out with other non-indigenous students.
- Hanging out with non-Latino students.
- Use of space: How are students moving around the space? Students alone? With peer groups?
- *Interaction patterns*: Where do students tend to spend the majority of their time? For example, in what parts of the school they spend their time?

Looking for evidence of indigenous youth’s negative peer and social interactions:

- Hanging out in the margins of the school physical setting?
- Are they being called names by other students?
- Use of space--How are students moving around the space? Students alone? With peer groups?
- *Interaction patterns*: Where do students tend to spend the majority of their time? For example, in what parts of the school they spend their time? In what parts of the school do they not spend time in?

Data record: These observations of students throughout their school day will be detailed in field notes (things said by student subjects, movement and actions, body language, salient happenings during the event time frame, etc.).

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT/INVITATION MATERIALS
D (Email) Invitation to Principals

College of Education, University of Washington
BOX 353600, Seattle, WA 98195

Dear [Principal],

I am writing to ask you allow me to spend some time gathering information at your school. The goal of the study is to examine the schooling experiences of indigenous Latino immigrants at your school. I am particularly interested the students' interactions with their Latino peers and how they make sense of those interactions. Little is known about the schooling experiences of indigenous Latino students from in the United States.

I am undertaking this study as part of doctoral studies at the University of Washington. This study will inform my doctoral dissertation.

In this study I hope to conduct interviews and observe six Latino/a indigenous students, in their everyday school day, which includes their interactions in the classroom with teachers and other students. I also plan to interview the Bilingual Student Services Facilitator, instructional assistant, non-indigenous Latino students, and 2 teachers. All of these events will take place between October 2015 and June of 2016. The following are activities that will be done with the student subjects in the study:

- Two interviews (each interview lasting 25-60 minutes) with student subjects in which they share with me their high school experiences in the U.S and in their home-country.
- Two focus group interviews (each focus group lasting between 25-60 minutes) with student subjects in which they share experiences in school and with peers.
- Shadowing student subjects for one school day
- Ask the indigenous Latino student who agree to be in the study to write a personal narrative
- Observations in hallways, library, before and after school, and in the classroom I tutor

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Participants can stop at any time, and all information is confidential. If the results of the study are published or presented, I will not use the names of people, names of schools, or any other information that would identify participants, the school, or the district. If you have questions about subject rights, please feel free to contact the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (206) 543 – 0098.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I will be contacting you shortly by phone or in person discuss this with you further, and to seek a brief letter of cooperation from the school. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone (206) 641-0075 or via email at davidb44@uw.edu.

Yours sincerely,

David Barillas Chón

Graduate Student
Curriculum and Instruction