Native Recognition and Public Education in Colombia in the Context of Latin American Countries: a Historical Approach

William García and François Gravel

1. Introduction

It is estimated that 54´654.142 Natives, from 600 ethno-linguistic groups, live in Latin America (Arango and Sánchez, 2004). In Columbia in particular, out of a population of 42 million, 2% are Natives belonging to 86 different Native groups, who still use 67 Native-local languages as well as Spanish as a national language. In addition, 15% of Columbia's population are of African descent who speak Spanish as well as local English or a Native-African language in the Caribbean islands (*San Andrés* and *Providencia*) and the coast (*San Basilio del Palenque*, *Bolivar*), respectively. There are approximately 15.000 Gypsies going back several generations in the North-Eastern region of Columbia who are predominantly bilingual (Romani/Spanish). Similarly, third and fourth generation immigrant communities from Arabic countries (Palestinian, Lebanese and Turkish) are settled mainly on the Atlantic coast. *Mestizos* (European and Native parentage) make up the majority of the Columbian population and they are spread all over the country. Similarly, few new comers and families from different countries have settled in the big and medium cities of Colombia lately (mainly Spaniards, Cubans, Chinese, and Ecuadorians). In addition to ethnic diversity, Colombia is also characterized by its historic and geographical regions: Costeños, Paisas, Cachacos, Vallunos, Opitas, Pastusos, and Llaneros are some of the main groups. Most of these groups gained political recognition in the new Constitution of 1991, which declared Colombia a multiethnic and poly-cultural country.

Nevertheless, the social and political recognition of all these groups did not come easily nor were they completely integrated into the official Colombian landscape. Different groups and sectors in the country still hold a general feeling of philosophical, political, institutional and pragmatic emptiness about the sense and meanings of such recognition, political rights to be granted, and the practices of inter-group relations to be promoted into a national political framework of rights and freedoms in the country. Unfortunately, history shows that coping with these types of matters in both social and political scenarios is a tortuous task for most societies. Colombian history proves that it is not the exception.

2. The Context of Latin America and Native Education

2.1 Assimilation Agenda

Despite their ancestral pre-Hispanic settlement, Natives have only gained political visibility in Latin America since the seventies. Reduced to minority status (along with other cultural groups), Native rights were excluded from all political participation in the building of the states, public institutions and social representations in the new "democratic" societies that were created in the early XIX Century. Furthermore, Native contributions to build the new Latin-American nation-states during and after the independence wars were totally ignored or rejected by the patriots[1]. Being reduced to a cheap labor force, Native participation in economic, political and social settings was totally suppressed. Furthermore, Natives were persecuted in order to be culturally and socially assimilated into the North-Western canon adopted by leading patriots from those European countries where they had been educated. Education, castilianization[2], and evangelization were some of the main devices of this ideological agenda of acculturation. The Catholic Church played a crucial role in this enterprise. The traditional Native ways of education, socialization, and cultural transmission were totally rejected (Findji 1985; Varese and Rodriguez 1983; Cortés and Suarez 1979).

2.2 Integration Agenda

In the late XIX Century, German, French and American commissions were contracted by the new republican governments to design and implement the policies and structures for the national public education system in several Latin America countries. At that time, the Vatican and several Catholic denominations signed contracts with Latin American governments in order to undertake educational responsibilities through mission-campaigns in Native regions (Batalla 1983; Calvo 2000; Cortés et al. 1985; Findji 1985). So, ideology and practice of cultural and linguistic assimilation inherited from the Colony characterized the beginning of inter-group relations in the new liberated Latin American nation-states since the XIX Century, bringing with it some problems that still remain. Since *Mestizos* became the new hegemonic majority in the new countries, Natives and other groups were referred to as the "others", the "minorities", the minority-status groups, the ethnicities, being commonly grouped under the label of ethnic groups to be integrated in the national dynamics.

Throughout most of the first half of the XX Century, Natives along with other minority and ethnic groups remained in a much subjugated condition. Poverty, starvation, social and cultural de-structuring, linguistic persecution as well as land and natural resource shortages made this period one of the worst in history for Natives after the wars of independence. Looking to solve their social, economic and political problems, Natives, with non-Native support, formed their own political organizations; gradually began community and later social movements, in the early seventies of the XX Century. Little by little, these local and regional movements grew in most countries, becoming a social phenomenon on the whole continen[3].

2.3 A Necessary Struggle for Education

In addition to land claims, recognition of traditional authorities, and privileged treatment as First Nations in some public matters, groups demanded a revision and reform of school-based education in their communities. Despite school-based education Native culture was not being taken into account, school was not totally rejected, but structural changes in administration, boarding, curricula and budgeting were expected (Cortés et al, 1985; Varese and Rodriguez, 1983). Education literature from this period reports some good examples of some of the main educational problems which natives began to resist upon and governments began to overcome them since the late seventies (MEN-ONIC 1986; UNESCO 1980, 1982, 1983, 1985, 2002):

- Education is not well regarded in the productive and social processes of Native communities; it is for social, cultural and economic subjugation

- School reproduces an imbalance between ethnic identity and society at large

- Teaching-Learning processes do not take into account Native languages

- Schools are in bad condition and there is a lack of proper materials

- There are no curricula for Native education

- Nobody takes into account the Native cultural pedagogy or the traditional ways of teaching and learning

- Politicians use education to proselytize in Native communities

- Summer Institute of Linguistics[4] and other religious groups are creating a cultural and ethnic confrontation among Natives

- Native traditional authorities, political organizations and Native educational programs are not recognized

- Native culture is not valued in schools

- Continuity is not guaranteed from basic to secondary education for Natives

- Teachers are not well trained to teach in Native regions

- Institutions do not coordinate among themselves before they come into Native communities.

2.4 Active Resistance During the Seventies: First Wave of Education Change

Looking to move forward from this problematic situation in school settings, in the seventies and early eighties, Native organizations in Latin America initiated their own bilingual educational programs with the economic support and humanitarian help of non-governmental organizations from developed countries. In addition, social scientists during these years engaged in a more critical and activist role in their academic and intellectual agendas, looking for social and political changes in these countries. Therefore, Natives and some non-Natives alike joined to fulfill specific educational goals in Native communities, such as the recruitment of teachers, establishment of schools, administrative functions, research projects, teacher-training programs, school-media publishing and curriculum development. Thus, the late seventies and early eighties became years of active resistance against the educational policies set up by the national governments. The goal was to generate a kind of political resistance and social struggle (mostly symbolic, initially) to create an education system where Natives (and their organizations) would have presence, certain levels of control and empowerment. During the eighties, the first generation of Native teachers came from the peasants or community men and women chosen by political organizations according to their ideological affiliation and political commitment. These teachers had no pedagogical training at all. Most of the first generation teachers were, with few exceptions, illiterate Spanish speaking people with one or two levels of school-based education but very active militants in Native communities.

2.5 Negotiation During the Eighties: Second Wave of Education Change

If the seventies were years of resistance, the eighties were years of negotiation and reorganization for all the actors: states, international organisms as well as Native communities and their political organizations. The fight to have a profound impact on official education produced some negotiations and changes as well as united communities and foreign economic supporters in order to pursue other common and general social aims. During the eighties, Latin America began a gradual process of change towards recognition of some Native rights and how these rights could be respected and incorporated into some development sectors (i.e., education). Native political organizations grew stronger and increased in number during this decade. Different international forums to defend Native interests were created. Many conferences around the world were organized by international organizations like UNO, UNESCO, UNICEF, OAS, III and CREFAL. Most of the countries organized their own conferences, symposiums, and technical meetings in order to discuss and incorporate changes into public education systems regarding Natives' claims. Public education systems were impacted in each country, beginning a process of institutional change; in addition, non-Native professionals from different disciplines (sociology, anthropology, linguistics, biology, among others) entered institutions and political organizations willing to engage in the social movement, study all these social phenomena, or both.

Nevertheless, with very few exceptions, there is still no way to talk about own Native or Bilingual pedagogical models as such during these years, since pedagogy and didactic proposals were very similar to those carried out into official schools (curricula, texts, school calendars, physical locations, etc.). For Native political organizations, Bilingual school was just a flag to promote political autonomy, community unity and land recovery ahead of child development, language acquisition, culture promotion and so on. Therefore, political activists more than pedagogy experts came to be the main advisers, who oscillated between a partial rejection of school and public policies, because of its non-legitimate Native tradition, and a total acceptance of it but in Native's hands. In fact, educational programs during this decade were created more by non-Native sociologists, anthropologists or religious men and women coming from left-wing political parties than by Natives themselves. Then, traces of paternalism, positive discrimination, under-valorization, idealism and "*caudillism*"[5] became common features in the proposals and practices of Native education during this period, in addition to feelings such as solidarity, compassion, equality, fraternity and political militancy.

2.6 The Power of an Idea

Something compelling took place during the eighties. The idea of ethno-development came to push political reforms in the region. Within a very interesting politic and academic conjuncture, the political and theoretical framework of ethno-development for integration, developed by etno-populist-social scientists from Mexico (Julio de la Fuente and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran earlier and, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla and Héctor Díaz Polanco later), was widely adopted by most governments and proposed to Native and ethnic organizations in Latin America with no resistance at all[6]. Ethno-development framework came to be a very useful political and institutional device for regularization, normalization and centralization of Native education proposals as well as other Native matters. Most Native education experiences –a great diversity of experiences because of different histories, foundations and goals- were leading to unification by the institutional offices, located in the ministries, in order to get funds, technical support, school media publishing, public acknowledgement and so on. Despite many education matters continued being decided at local and regional levels by Native political organizations, the institutional teams (mainly conformed by anthropologists, linguists and psychologists), undertook the task of funding projects, visiting and advising experiences, calling national and regional events and producing national guidelines for the groups under the political concept of interculturality, proposed by Mexican ethno-development framework[7].

Some developed countries became active defenders and promoters of this new proposal in the southern Andean region of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Central America as well, mainly Guatemala, under the label of "*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural*" (EBI or EIB). First world countries gave economic,

technical and political support to some Native movements through their international aid programs. Germany, Switzerland and Spain increased their presence in the Native communities of Latin America, almost always working directly with Native political organizations instead of public institutions[8]. Curiously, expressions, names, words, senses, meanings, concepts and practices commonly used before the governmental proposal of ethno-education (contained in "Bilingual Education", "Native Education", "Own Education", "Inner/Internal Education" and "Endogenous Education" experiences), disappeared from the literature as well as from the academic, institutional, community and political scenario at the end of the eighties. Taking into account a few exceptions where some groups claimed their own names for their own education experiences (Guambianos in Colombia for example), EBI and ethno-education are extensively used in Latin American and Colombia respectively, to deliver education and schooling for Natives (as well as for Afro-descendents in Colombia) today.

2.7 Officialization During the Nineties: Third Wave of Education Change

On this pace, the nineties were years of "officialization" and legalization of Native rights in most Latin America countries. All the past struggles came together in 1991 due to the commemoration of the "500" anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in America. Most of the governments were under pressure to introduce legal, political and social changes in each country because the crisis of the current state model which was characterized as central, vertical, hegemonic, non-inclusive, benefactor, against environment, against basic human rights, against ethnic rights, among others (Santos 1998). Most of the constitutions of the countries got changes in order to incorporate an active recognition and defense of human, Native and cultural rights in societies at large. With few differences in concept and expression, most of the countries were constitutionally declared multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural: Bolivia in 1994; Brazil in 1988; Columbia in 1991; Mexico in 1992; Paraguay in 1992 and Peru in 1993 (Sánchez 1996). Most of the cultural policies and ministries of culture were established in the region during this decade.

Finally, at the turn of the century, most of the Latin American states and governments eventually accepted a different concept and a segregated school-based education targeted at Natives and minority-status groups as an official proposal. Presently, official budgets are allocated to support Native educational experiences and specific teams have been incorporated into most institutions in order to address Native and ethnic demands. The second and third generations of Native teachers have grown in number and they have been trained by official institutions and Native organizations (sometimes together, sometimes separately), giving their professional identities a wider instructional focus. Undergraduate and graduate programs in several universities have been opened, taking into account new social and cultural recognition[9]. Several research projects and field studies have been carried out on different ethnic

education topics. Theories of popular and critical education (especially those of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux) have been adjusted to frame the pragmatic Native education proposals. New academic and intellectual agendas such as cultural studies and post-colonial studies have given further theoretical support to some of these proposals.

In fact, the Native social movement and its educational proposals reshaped the whole public education system in most of the countries of the region. These changes have impacted the public education systems and all social and political dimensions of Natives as well as non-Natives, bringing a necessity for further philosophical, theoretical, political and pragmatic studies in order to understand, envision and invigorate our democracies on the basis of social and cultural recognition as well as unity, peaceful inter-group relations and development. The single focus of cultural diversity based on ethnicity has begun to move, little by little, from just Natives and ethnic relations toward a whole array of cultural factors (gender, social class, religion, exceptionality, etc.) as well as a more comprehensive dynamic of the entire society and groups which should be targeted in any agenda of pluralism.

3. Colombian Distinctiveness in the Latin American Movement for Recognition of Ethnic-Segregated-School-Based Education

In addition to the three above mentioned decades, Colombia passed through quite similar periods of active resistance in the seventies, negotiation in the eighties and legalization in the nineties regarding Native and ethnic political rights as well as social accommodation of society at large. Therefore, pluralism and the acknowledgement of cultural diversity in Colombia have been mainly interpreted through the single dimension of ethnic recognition, as well. Despite the wider multicultural concept and statement of the new 1991 constitution, Colombian legislation, public policies, institutional development and social practices are stated entirely in the intercultural political concept carried out by ethno-development framework focused on ethnic political status. Then, factors such as gender, social class, exceptionality, regions, styles of life, and so on were buried from the Columbian scenario of cultural diversity. Those principles of intercultural agenda concerning with gaining "cultural control" on own cultural resources and a social capacity to incorporate foreign cultural resources were emplaced. Colombia came to be the only country in the region to name "Ethno-Education" the policy of "Intercultural Bilingual Education" (EBI) promoted by ethno-developers in other countries.

Thus, in Colombia particularly, the main strategy of resistance used by Natives, since the late seventies, was to establish an *own* "*Escuela Bilingüe*" (Own Bilingual School) directly opposite an official school, removing children from one and placing them in the other with parents' support. A counter hegemony instead of transformative practices came to realize the principles of intercultural agenda. A

segregated education system for "ethnics" was conveniently emplaced by Colombian governments based on a particular interpretation of interculturality and ethno-development. "Bilingual School" and "Bilingual Education" were the very first names and practices coined by most Native political organizations during this decade. Nevertheless, curriculum, school organization and the general concept of schooling remained unchallenged at the time. A Native teacher, coping with a friendlier teaching role and being able to communicate in a Native language, was the single difference between a bilingual school and a public one. Most of the first generation Native teachers were bilingual peasants, without any pedagogical training, chosen by political leaders on ideological and community commitment basis. Taking into account the new Native dynamics, the Colombian State promoted the first educational reforms within some institutional settings at the end of this decade. Targeting both Natives and peasants located in rural areas, the government promulgated the Bill 1142/1978 (named "Native Education") to bring schooling to Natives as well as the "New School" program to bring schooling to peasants[10]. Education for Natives on one side and education for peasants on the other side; of course, education for urban areas and education for the elite also was emplaced, keeping in mind different political agendas.

During the eighties, while trying to cope with political, pedagogical and economic problems in Native schools, both Natives and governments (sometimes working together, sometimes working separately) began to negotiate and allocate some international aid and national funds for establishing formal and institutional programs of Bilingual and Native education in different regions of the country. One of the biggest economic investments in the education sector was made in the early eighties by the Colombian government through a foreign debt with the International Development Bank. The allocated economic resources were mainly destined to establish the "New School" program all over rural areas in the country. Nevertheless, intense lobbying and negotiations between government, Native political organizations and The University of Cauca at that time, allowed the allocation of some of these resources to promote Native education initiatives in Native rural areas through quite similar strategies (teacher training programs, school libraries, school building improvements and schooling furniture).

In addition, the first generation of Native teachers grew in number during the first half of this decade, being peasants with no teaching training but well-trained as leaders in the communities' ideological and organizational goals. "Native Teacher" or "Internal/Inside Teacher" was the most common name given to this new labor identity in communities in contrast with those "External/Outside Teachers" sent and funded by the government (Cortés et al, 1985; García, 1995; García, 1998a, 1998b). Since the mid-eighties, an open confrontation and competition between State and Native political organizations addressed the main political and pragmatic aims and programs of Native/Bilingual Education, under different concepts and understandings about education, school, pedagogy and teacher's roles in Natives communities.

Similarly, philosophical and political discussions about the country, nation, cultural groups, national identity, unity, common good and general well-being were totally absent in the speeches of cultural diversity. Those speeches on cultural diversity rights were specifically located in the Native dimension. Also, theoretical, political and practical frameworks, beyond those brought about from classical sociology, Marxism and Paulo Freire theories were absent in the discussions and debates about these reforms and changes in education.

Changes and adjustments reached at the negotiation tables and talks were based more on political levels of community mobilization, negotiators' abilities, international pressure, and official bureaucracy incapacities than in profound and serious discussions about the future of the whole country. Despite this, Bilingual Education experiences had come to produce some original and interesting proposals that challenged government proposals (maybe with the exception of some pedagogical propositions from the "School New" program). Bilingual Education proposals from Native political organizations had a momentum of creative and inspirational work regarding the participation of communities in school and education, bilingual immersion at school, community evaluation, community-school researching pedagogical practices, and grassroots editorial processes for publishing school media. Official proposals had not even stated some of these matters neither for Native schools nor non-Native schools into the public education system when Native political organizations were already promoting some of these pedagogical outcomes in regional and national conferences.

Observing the momentum of the Native dynamics during the eighties, the Ministry of Education in Colombia (MEN) formed a major status office into its official structure and engaged a non-Native team formed by two anthropologists and one psychologist to lead a process of regularization and normalization of Native educational proposals. Thus, the Ethno-Education Office at the Ministry of Education was created in 1984 and the intercultural policy coming from Mexican-ethno-development framework found a window to enter into the Colombian institutionality for the very first time[11]. In the following five year period, for example, the ethno-education office organized seven national events about different Native education matters as well as funded and published an immense quantity of projects and material from different Native political organizations. Similarly, it was during this period that at least five new regional Native organizations were created and around twelve educational programs were better established in the regional-Native organizations with the occasional support of MEN bureaucracy.

In their own way and in a context of community mobilizations and political negotiation between "Bilingual Education" from Natives and "Native Education/New School" from governments, Native organizations became stronger in communities and society at large, as well as, gaining international recognition like the new social movements in Latin America. In Colombia, in particular, Afro-descendents during these years gained more visibility and strengthened similar processes of organization

and political struggles for similar rights, but those processes were still behind than Native ones in social basis and political organization at that time. So, the second ethnic actor in Columbia (Afro-descendents) came to the social and political arena thanks to the new ethno-development framework and its intercultural policy. Afro-descendents before mid-eighties formed very active cultural communities and groups from all over the country, but their status as an official minority-ethnic group came after the government adopted its political framework of ethno-development. Ethno-development and interculturality gave the governments a general framework to set the official policy for dealing with Natives and the rest of new ethnic groups coming to the Colombian scenario in the following years such as Afro-descendents in mid eighties and Gypsies in late eighties.

As it was mentioned before, in the mid eighties governments in the region found a way to regularize, normalize and centralize all the Bilingual (from organizations) and Native (from governments) education initiatives through the single ethno-development framework promoted in Mexico, embracing the inter-group-relation policy of interculturality. In Colombia, the ethno-development framework and its concept of the political expression of "interculturality" generated and gave support to the ethno-education model officially established in the Ministry of Education since 1985. This model was designed and promoted from the MEN with the technical participation and political support of some national and regional Native political organizations. The Ethno-education model brought together, authorized, and grouped, all the different and original Bilingual and Native education experiences from all over the country at that time. All the past and new Afro-descendent educational experiences were also grouped under the same ethno-education policy and at the office at the Ministry of Education as well as adjusted to the same political and theoretical framework launched for Natives. In a very intriguing and quick turn, most of the official political platforms, legislation, education programs and educational literature were modified and carried out under the ethno-education label and its expression-concept of interculturality without any resistance at all from Natives and Afro-descendent groups to replace their own names[12].

In the early nineties in Colombia, the new Constitution (1991) gave broad recognition to the cultural diversity of the nation from the very founding principles of the Charter, overcoming the concept of ethnic diversity to other new social and cultural factors (age, gender, social class, religion, nationality, etc.). It has been stated in several studies that the Colombian Constitution embodied a concept of multiculturalism since it protects and promotes the very social, cultural and ethnic diversity of the country based on the principles of liberal democracy and the cultural-political citizenship, along with the construction of the nation -just a nation and a country- (Bonilla 2006; Gros 2000; Rappaport 2005). Nevertheless, the understanding and adoption of all the Constitution's new paradigms and its philosophy have neither come

easily and comprehensively in society nor in the institutions, academia, Native and ethnic political organizations. The Education sector, again, shows a very good example of this latest assertion.

The very same pre-constitutional term and focus of ethno-education (interculturality) from the eighties was re-entered in the new post-constitutional scenario in the nineties to develop the Organic Law of Education 115/94 as well as to guarantee the new multicultural rights. Education for cultural diversity in a multicultural nation and country like Colombia came to be understood and promulgated as the education service to be addressed and delivered in a segregated manner for/by ethnic-minority-status groups in the country (Natives and Afro-descendents). Therefore, public education policy to guarantee cultural diversity rights in a multicultural country such as a Colombia is currently formulated under the policy of ethno-education, which is based on the concept-expression of interculturality and delivered exclusively for/by Natives and Afro-descendents. There is something that does not fit very well here since we have a constitutionally declared multicultural country trying to cope with social and political development based on intercultural policies. Further explorations of meanings, principles, and theoretical and political frameworks about these two political expression-concepts are required. Since it seems that EBI resembles ethno-education in the rest of Latin American countries, the same can be expected, taking into account that EBI is brought to Natives exclusively in the rest of the countries, therefore, an ethnic focus could be still stronger. Regarding the cultural sector nothing really different can be said. The Ministry of Culture in Colombia was created in 1997 and the ethno-cultural policy to be addressed for/by ethnic status groups is still under discussion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, some final considerations are in order. During the nineties, two major trends in Colombia are worth highlighting. First of all, several official universities all over the country have taken the job of training the second and third generations of Native teachers as well as Afro-descendent teachers in the undergraduate ethno-education programs. These programs have been running with little cooperation from Native political organizations and in some cases even with levels of conflicts. In a few cases, Native political organizations have continued training their own teachers with foreign and national cooperation but ultimately, they looked for university agreements and validation in order to certify their teachers. Colombian legislation does not allow any other institution that differs from the university or "Normal School"[13] to train and certify teachers. Secondly, the official and public education system has split into at least four different education and pedagogical models to serve different populations throughout the country: Ethno-education for Natives, Ethno-education for Afro-descendents, "New School" programs for peasants and "Automatic Promotion" (*Promoción Automática*) for urban areas.

This concept and practice is reinforcing the establishment of a segregated[14] public education system in Colombia on a political basis and principles of interculturality.

At this point, two hypotheses should be further addressed regarding the Colombian experience on this matter in order to reflect on good practices on Native education for contrasting to other experiences in Latin America and other countries. On the one hand, a governmental education proposal for cultural diversity in Colombia, such as ethno-education (for Natives and Afro-descendants exclusively and separately) has been qualitatively and quantitatively improved after the turn of the century, but Native traditional proposals as such (educación propia, educación indígena y educación bilingüe) were totally unstructured or eliminated as the last century ended. General pedagogical, educational and political differences between the two must be researched and discussed in order to understand the transition or the elimination of Native traditional proposal more clearly. Ethno-education programs are well known over the country and certified teachers get easier into teaching positions than first generation teachers. Similarly, official budgets have been allocated to universities, Native organizations, boarding schools, and so on to promote ethno-education programs. Administrative and directive responsibilities are in Native´s hands in several regions of the country following a general plan of ethno-education settle down for governments and Native leaders.

On the other hand, during the last few years, ethno-education has had some advancement related to new educational legislation, co-administration of the system and official budgets in the country. Nevertheless, the general concept of cultural diversity, ethnicity and education has not been up-dated and remains unchanged despite the Constitutional acknowledgement. So, there is a necessity for a new philosophical interpretation and theoretical framework based on our idiosyncrasy as well as a new political vision toward the integration of all groups in society (including not only ethnicities) as one nation, in order to organize the country. Because the limited concept of cultural diversity in the etno-education framework, the public education system is going through new challenges, problems and limitations, reaching at times, levels of degradation and confusion that must be studied, explained and avoided in the future. It seems that taking into account a public policy for cultural diversity and education in Columbia, some differences between interculturality and multiculturalism, as philosophical, political and practical concepts, must be discussed, cleared up and promoted in order to move forward.

NOTES

1. It is very important take into account that Natives in Central and South America have had a different process of relationship in comparison to Natives in Canada. Most Native groups in Canada signed treaties as First Nations with explorers and Colonial governments, which have been added to the new Constitution. Therefore, Native groups and their confederations claim their status as First Nations and truthful negotiators of legal treaties that must be honored to protect their social, cultural, linguistic, political and economic rights at the present. Therefore, most of their claims can be resolved in legal courts. Natives in Central and South America were completely surrounded by war, dominated and subjugated. Therefore, their current position as negotiators has been reached through bloody struggles and social movements. Most of their claims have been carried out in political negotiations after violent clashes between communities and the states´ armed forces.

2. This refers to learning the Castilian language as the only official and national language. Brazil being the exception, Castilian is the most common language brought to Latin America by Spaniards.

3. These changes and social movements in Latin America were influenced by international, worldwide movements searching for new economic, social, civil and cultural rights. In 1975, UNO (United Nations´ Organization) consecrated two new generations of fundamental human rights well known as collective rights (economic and culture). Similarly, social actors' struggles for human and civil rights such as hippies, Afro-Americans, feminists and students, alongside the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Salvadorian revolutions, were part of such backgrounds. Lately, a set of international guide lines regarding this matter were issued by UNO and other different international organizations, mainly the Convention Against Racism (1968) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002), where the right to cultural-based education at public school settings is enacted, among many others rights.

4. SIL is an evangelical organization from the United States working in Latin America since the 50s. Their main goal is to translate the bible into Native languages; its doctrinal teachings have clashed with some Native cultural traditions in some regions and they have been accused of masked-colonialism and spy activities.

5. Caudillism is a common political practice in Latin America which consists of looking for a great leader (caudillo) who solves the community's problems instead of engaging in a democratic participative process of change.

6. Brazilian literature on the subject has not been reviewed in depth. So, most of these analysis are applied to Central and South American countries with the exception of Brazil.

7. Further illustration on these topics can be found on books like: Aguirre-Beltran, Gonzalo (1967). Regiones de refugio. El desarrollo de la comunidad y el proceso dominical en mestizo América; Bonfil-Batalla, Guillermo (1982). América Latina, etnodesarrollo y etnocidio. San José de Costa Rica; Diaz-Polanco, Hector.(1987). Etnia, Nación y política. Mexico, to begin.

8. The consequences of this view and practice have still not been fully evaluated in the region. While the local political organizations and social movements became strengthened, public representatives in Native areas, besides government and states became weaker in these regions. Presently, this situation is reflecting a deep crisis of governability and stability in Native areas of several regions, making the states and governments weak in international arenas and, of course, for any international negotiation.

9. In Colombia for example, seven undergraduate programs of ethno-education were opened in different universities as well as some undergraduate and graduate programs in cultural management and ethno-linguistics during the nineties. The University of Cauca launched the first undergraduate program of ethno-education in 1994 following the general tendency of intercultural education of this period. In addition, The University of Cauca is the first and only university offering a graduate program in Multicultural Education since 1995 and it is also launching a Masters Program in Education with a research-major in Multicultural Education and Ethno-education (August, 2008).

10. While the first Native education programs designed by both political organizations (Bilingual Education) and governments (Native Education) have come into multiple modifications in names, concepts and contents in the following decades, the "New School" program is still running in most rural areas of the country.

11. Checking the memories book of the International Conference on Ethno-development held in Costa Rica in 1982, one notices that a Colombia team attended the Conference bringing later some of the same proposals into practice in 1984; like the intercultural policy of ethno-education into the MEN that finally affected all of the public education system.

12. In April 1985, The University of Cauca organized the First National Meting (Conference) of Native Education in Colombia. During this event, several regional experiences carried out by Native political organizations, Catholic Church and Public institutions gathered to discuss core issues of the social, political and pedagogical experiences in bilingual education, Native education and "the New School" program. The governmental policy on

this matter, contained in the General Guide-Lines of Native Education (1984) was one of the most quoted materials during the event. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1985 (a few months later), the Ministry of Education in addition to the National Native Organization (ONIC) called the First National Symposium of Ethno-education in the city of Girardot. During the event, they also delivered the same material (a new print release, 1985) to all the participants with the only exception that any single Native or bilingual-education word was replaced by the ethno-education term. The philosophical, theoretical and political foundation of such a radical and quick change is still an unsolved mystery that nobody questions. The data from both of these events was published. Something quite similar is happening today in some native political organizations where the term ethno-education is dynamically replaced back and forth for "*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural Indígena*" or "*Educación Indígena Comunitaria*" with no further discussions on conceptual and political conceptions and understandings behind these changes. It seems that the sense and meanings embodied in all these terms reflect the social and pragmatic experience; or maybe that, words, meanings and concepts are not so important, leaving the mystery still unsolved.

13. Normal School is a public institution in the range of College which is dedicated to a vocational training for teaching child education and elementary school (I to IX grade). It is an institution inherited from the German missions in Colombia during the late XIX Century.

14. It could said that the model is more self-segregated since most of the groups' struggles have been to segregate their own educational models, schools, funding and practices from the others in the country. Of course, the intercultural concept of ethno-education gives further support to this initiative.

References

Arango, Raúl y Sánchez, Enrique. (2004). Los pueblos indígenas de Colombia en el umbral del nuevo
    mileno. Santafé de Bogotá: Quebecor World

Batalla, Bonfil. (1983). Lo propio y lo ajeno: una aproximación al problema del control cultural. In:
    Educación, etnias y descolonización en América Latina. Vol. I. México: III UNESCO

Bonilla, Daniel. (2006). La constitución multicultural. Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores.

Calvo, Gaspar. (2000). La educación Kuna. Introducción del sistema educativo occidental en la
    cultura Kuna de Panamá. Salamanca: Colección Vitor Ediciones, Universidad de Salamanca.

Cortés, Pedro., Ramírez, Teresa., González, Omar and Pardo, Carlos. (1985). Educación indígena en e
    nororiente caucano. Diagnóstico y propuesta de formación docente. Popayán: Editorial Universidad
    del Cauca.

Cortés, Pedro and Suárez, Teresa. (1979). Apuntes Acerca de Educación Indígena. Bogota: CINEP
    (not printed out)

Findji, María-Teresa. (1985). Territorio, Economía y Sociedad Páez. Cali: CIDSE-Editorial
    Universidad del Valle.

García, William. (1995). Elementos históricos para la comprensión del fenómeno educativo en las
    zonas indígenas del nororiente caucano. Rev La Piragua. Santiago de Chile: Editorial luz.

García, William. (1998). Historia de las políticas educativas para grupos étnicos en las tres últimas
    décadas en Colombia. Memorias Coloquio de Historia de la Educación en Colombia. Popayán:
    Editorial Universidad del Cauca.

García, William. (1998). The Teaching Profession in the Multicultural Educational Framework. A
    Case Study in Native Communities of Cauca, Colombia. M. A. Theses in the Education

Department at Concordia University. Montreal: Original copy.

Gros, Christian. (2000). Políticas de la etnicidad: identidad, Estado y modernidad. Bogota: Instituto Colombiana de Antropología e Historia.

Rappaport, Joanne. (2005). Intercultural Utopias. Public Intellecturals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia. Durham and London: Duke University Press

MEN-ONIC. (1986). Memorias Primer seminario de etnoeducación. 25-31 de agosto de 1985. Bogotá: MEN.

Santos, Bonaventura de Sousa. (1998). De la mano de Alicia. Lo social y lo político en La postmodernidad. Santafé de Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Ediciones Uniandes.

UNESCO. (1980). Reunión Regional de Especialistas sobre educación bicultural bilingüe. Ponencias Pátzcuaro, México: CREFAL-OEA.

UNESCO. (1982). Seminario técnico de políticas y estrategias de educación y alfabetización en poblaciones indígenas. Informe final. Oaxaca, México: UNESCO

UNESCO. (1983). Educación, etnias y descolonización en América Latina. Una guía para La educación intercultural bilingüe. Vol. 2. México: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (1985). Educación en Poblaciones Indígenas. Políticas y Estrategias en América Latina. Ponencias del seminario subregional de Lima. Santiago de Chile: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2002). Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Paris: www.unesco.org/culture

Varese, Sergio., Rodríguez, Nemesio. (1983). Etnias indígenas y educación en América Latina: Diagnostico y perspectivas. In: Educación, etnias y descolonización en América Latina. Vol. 1. México: UNESCO.

Abstract

The acknowledgement of indigenous educational rights in Colombia passed through a period of active resistance in the 70s, negotiation in the 80s and legalization in the 90s. The recognition of separate ethnic educational rights is the way that the right to cultural diversity has been understood in Colombia. Although the 1991 constitution declared Colombia to be a multicultural state, legislation, public policies, institutional development, and social practices are framed entirely by the political concept of a segregated ethnicity and "interculturality." This focus must be taken into account in any study of the Colombian experience with indigenous education.

Keywords: Columbia, Public Education, Indigenous Education, Ethnic Education, Multiculturalism

Resumen

El reconocimiento de derechos educativos a los grupos indígenas en Colombia paso por un periodo de activa resistencia durante los setenta, negociación durante los ochenta y legalización durante los noventa. El reconocimiento de derechos educativos étnicos –de manera exclusiva y separada para indígenas y afrodescendientes- es la manera como en Colombia se ha entendido y reconocido los derechos políticos para la

diversidad cultural. Aunque la Constitución de 1991 consagró al país como una nación multicultural, la legislación, las políticas públicas y el desarrollo institucional se promueven desde una óptica étnica segregada bajo el concepto de interculturalidad contenido en el modelo del etnodesarrollo. Este enfoque y práctica para asegura los derechos educativos de los grupos indígenas en Colombia es una experiencia que vale la pena estudiar y contrastar con las experiencias de otros países.

Palabras claves: *Colombia, Educación pública, Educación Indígena, Etnoeducación, Multiculturalismo*

Resumo

O reconhecimento dos direitos à educação aos grupos indígenas na Colômbia passou por um período de ativa resistência durante os anos setenta, negociação durante os anos oitenta e legalização durante os anos noventa. O reconhecimento de direitos educativos étnicos –de maneira exclusiva e separada para indígenas e afrodescendentes- é a maneira como na Colômbia são entendidos e reconhecidos os direitos políticos para a diversidade cultural. Embora a Constituição de 1991 tenha consagrado o país como uma nação multicultural, a legislação, as políticas públicas e o desenvolvimento institucional são promovidas a partir de uma ótica étnica segregada sob o conceito de interculturalidade existente no modelo do etnodesenvolvimento. Este enfoque e prática para assegurar os direitos educativos dos grupos indígenas na Colômbia é uma experiência que vale a pena estudar e contrastar com as experiências de outros países.

Palavras chaves: *Colômbia, Educação pública, Educação Indígena, Etnoeducação, Multiculturalismo*

William García. Ph.D. Humanities: Studies in Society and Culture. Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (2009). Professor at The University of Cauca, Colombia where he is engaged in teacher training processes to address cultural diversity in community and school settings. The main areas of interest are public policy developments for education in multicultural territories, teacher training and school curriculum development for multicultural areas, and inclusion and diversity agendas in public policies. He has developed his expertise in Indigenous Education in Colombia. Contact: wgarcia@unicauca.edu.co

François Gravel. Bachelor in Basic Education. *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Colombia* (2006). Professor at The University of Pacific, Colombia where he is engaged in teaching and researching activities to improve education programs in the Pacific Afro-Columbian communities. The main areas of interest are new technologies and cultural inclusion in education, multimedia school tools to improve teaching-learning processes in multicultural settings. Contact: bikookib@hotmail.com