The function of teachers in the development of a democracy

A minor field study about opinions of the teacher role in Guatemala

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study of how teachers of Quetzaltenango in Guatemala view their role as teachers in relation to the pupils and their families, as well as their opinions of the Teacher Education, their colleagues and the government. Finally, we attempt to answer the question of what role school and teachers play in a new democracy like Guatemala.

The results of our study show that the teachers see school as a way to a better future for their pupils yet they lack a sense of pride for their profession. They are facing challenges in their work related to a lack of resources and the family situations. Leftovers from dictatorship, such as mistrust between people and towards the government and low power of initiative affect the teachers in a negative way. These leftovers are undesirable in a democracy. Power of initiative is a vital quality of the citizens in a country that wants to develop itself economically and socially and trust is necessary for people to be able to cooperate. Therefore, the design and quality of the Teacher Education is crucial, since the new teachers will act as a link between the democratic ideals and the young citizens who constitute the future of Guatemala. However, the Teacher Education does not only attract students who want to work as teachers. This has a negative affect on the ability to create a sense of mutual identity between the future teachers, which we believe is needed in order for the teachers to realize their great importance. We come to the conclusion that the teachers engaged in horizontal relationships of mutuality and cooperation manage to accomplish more in their profession. They have the ability to involve the parents and make them conscious of the importance of school, which makes it possible for education to have a positive impact on democracy. However, the vertical relationships of authority and dependence, which derive from authoritarian systems keep influencing teachers and prevent them to exert the positive influence they have the ability to do.

Keywords: education, democracy, trust, development, teacher role
Acknowledgements

We would like to give our warmest thanks to our two supervisors Kajsa Hallstedt and Silvia Santizo Alvaro who both has given us invaluable help. We want to thank Kajsa for believing in us, pushing us to improve our work and for always taking the time to help us and answer our questions. We want to thank Silvia for all her support and kindness, for helping us get into touch with many of our respondents and for helping us understand the political system of Guatemala. Without the help of Silvia and Kajsa, it would not have been possible to carry out this study. We also want to thank SIDA for giving us the MFS-scholarship that gave us this wonderful opportunity to write our final thesis in Guatemala.

We want to thank our respondents for their time and interesting conversations, and Delphina at AMOIXQUIC and Rebecka at CEIPA. We also want to give our thanks to Olga, principal at Sakribal, for taking us under her wings and for welcoming us into take part in all the interesting activities at Sakribal. We give our thanks to Luigi who invited us to a political meeting at Xel-ju and helped us get into contact with the Vice Minister of Education, to Pablo for giving us an interesting insight in the education system and to our Spanish teachers Luis Fernando and Rosario who with their patience helped us improve our Spanish as well as answer all imaginable questions. We also want to thank the other teachers at Sakribal for their support and the wonderful families we stayed at during the first two weeks of our time in Quetzaltenango. Finally, we want to thank Agneta Szwej for reviewing our English, and Maria and Turid who also did their MFS-studies in Quetzaltenango during the autumn of 2006 for exchange of ideas and for the best possible companionship.
Abbreviations

AMOIXQUIC
Asociación de Mujeres de Occidente Ixquic
(Association of Women of the West)

CEIPA
El Centro Ecuménico de Integración Pastoral
(The Ecumenic Center of Pastoral Integration)

CNEM
Consejo National de Educación Maya
(The National Council of Maya Education)

DIGEBI
Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural
(General Directorate of Bilingual and Intercultural Education)

EDELA
Escuela de la Calle
(The Street School)

ENBI
Escuela Normal Bilingüe Intercultural
(Bilingual and Intercultural Education)

FRG
Frente Republicano Guatemalteco
(Guatemalan Republican Front)

GANA
Gran Alianza Nacional
(Grand National Alliance)

IBE
Intercultural Bilingual Education

INSO
Instituto Normal para Señoritas de Occidente
(Institute for Women of the West)

INVO
Instituto Normal para Varones de Occidente
(Institute for Men of the West)

MFS
Minor Field Study

MINEDUC
Ministerio de Educación
(The Education Ministry)

PAC
Patrulla de Auto-Defensa Civil
(Civilian Self-Defence Patrol)

SIDA
The Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation

SOM-institutet
Institute of Society, Opinion and Mass media

TE
The School of Teacher Education

TEC
Teacher Education Curriculum

UN
United Nations

URNG
Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca
(Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity)

Glossary

AUTOGESTIÓN  Schools started by the parents
BÁSICO  Lower Secondary School
CASTELLANO  The Spanish language
COLEGIO  Private Upper Secondary School
DIVERSIFICADO  Upper Secondary School
PRE PRIMARIA  Pre Primary School
PRIMARIA  Primary School
QUICHÉ  A Mayan language, which is the second largest language spoken in Quetzaltenango (the largest is Spanish)
Presentation of the respondents and schools

Preprimaria teacher
JEANETTE is teaching at a public school in a rural area outside Quetzaltenango. Except for her teacher education, she has also studied psychology at university. She is in her 30s.

Primaria teachers
MARTHA is a young teacher educated at the Teacher Education INSO. She works at a school with 450 pupils in her native district in the outskirt of Quetzaltenango. To increase her competence she is studying law in the afternoons.

FRANCISCO is today retired from his work, but has life long experience from working at different schools in rural areas both within and outside the region of Quetzaltenango.

GUADALUPE is one of two founders of EDELAC. Before EDELAC, he worked with helping the street children with food, medication, alphabetisation, clothes etc.

MARIELLA is in her 20s and is Saturdays working at a school educating adolescents that have not completed their primaria education. During the weeks, she is employed at an autogestion school on level primaria and evenings she studies law to get competence for working at the colegio.

Diversificado teachers
IRMA is teaching at ENBI in Quetzaltenango, but has previously worked 7 years at level primaria.

EVA has during 14 years worked at different colegios and is now a teacher at INSO teaching at a public teacher education school in Quetzaltenango. She has studied 5 years at university to become qualified for level diversificado.

Principals
MARIA is a former teacher and today works as principal at ENBI.

OLGA is the founder and principal of Sakribal, a Spanish school for foreigners in Quetzaltenango.

Politicians
WILFREDO is a student politically committed in the local party Xel-ju and in CNEM, a national council legally founded by indigenous organisations in 2000. CNEM is the government’s counsellor concerning Maya Education- education built on the Mayan conception of the world.

JULIO is responsible for education issues in the municipal of Quetzaltenango.

CELSO is the vice minister responsible of bilingual & intercultural education.

Schools
EDELAC-The Street School, is based on the ideas of helping street children get along and prevent life on street. It was founded in 1995 and since 1997, the school is located in one of the outer zones of Quetzaltenango. The teachers are Guatemalans, but there are also voluntaries helping out with the education. The number of enrolled children was 190 in 2006.

INSO is a public diversificado for girls only (the corresponding school for boys is INVO).

ENBI is the only bilingual diversificado education in the city of Quetzaltenango. The school has existed since 2001 and had 500 students by 2006. The people studying at ENBI are all speaking the Mayan language Quiché. The annual inscription fee is Q250 per student.¹

¹ The currency of Guatemala is Quetzal (Q). Q1=0,92 Sek or 0,13 US$
Map of Guatemala
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1. Introduction

The idea of this thesis started two years ago with a journey to Quetzaltenango in Guatemala. Through her studies at Sakribal, a Spanish School for foreigners, Alexandra got acquainted with Olga, the principal of Sakribal. Some years before the mentioned meeting Olga had started the Spanish School partly to help foreigners learn Spanish and partly to help indigenous girls to improve their life conditions through getting the chance to education. From the profits of the school, it was possible for her to pay scholarships to girls living in rural areas who otherwise would not be able to study at all. The help Sakribal was offering and what the scholarships could offer to the less fortunate made us interested in the educational system of Guatemala and what the government of the country itself does to increase access to education for young girls with rural background. The right to free education for everyone, regulated by a law in 1966, is still not completely fulfilled since so many of the less fortunate children in the country, mostly with rural and indigenous background, are left without finishing the so called “compulsory” secondary school.

International pressure, through the eight Millennium Development Goals, is forcing the governments in the developing countries more than ever to focus to the educational issues in order to “Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling” by the year of 2015.\textsuperscript{2} In Guatemala, a country that is still recovering from civil war, education is only one of many improvements listed on the agenda of goals to achieve. Unfortunately, according to United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, is education often seen more as a cost than an investment among middle-income

\textsuperscript{2} UN
countries. Guatemala is a lower middle-income country. Sorry to say, not given the high enough priority level the lack of education in a country obstructs the development of the whole country itself. We find these conditions and how they will interact with the general development of the country interesting to investigate. Viewing things from that perspective, it is not only interesting but even crucial to see and understand how teachers in these countries see their part in the development as such.

1.2 Aim of research and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to understand how teachers and other people involved in educational matters experience the function and significance of the teachers in context of educating young people into becoming citizens of a developing democracy. During the civil war, parts of the indigenous Guatemalan population were vastly discriminated by the state in many areas. The school system was such. The indigenous pupils were for example forbidden to use their mother tongue in school during the 60-70s. This is not forbidden today but to certain extent, the education is still discriminative although in a more indirect way. Exclusion is nowadays for example caused by “hidden costs” that seemingly free from charge school can have. These costs could be travels to and from school, different fees, books and school material needed. The education in Guatemala is a complex area for research, which is intimately connected with the whole political situation of the country. We believe that the “leftovers” from dictatorship, like mistrust, corruption and lack of cooperation, are important to get rid of in a most efficient way and that is where we see teachers as key persons. With fresh attitudes and by implementing new values they are important tools to educate the young ones to become the new citizens of the future, equal and democratic Guatemala. Considering the above our research questions are:

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3 OHCHR
• How do the teachers view their role in relation to the pupil?
• How do the teachers view their role in relation to the children’s social context?
• What are the teachers’ and other education-involved people’s opinion of the Teacher Education?
• What are the teachers’ opinions of the work of their colleagues?
• What are the teachers’ opinions of the government’s policy of education?
• What functions do teachers and school as whole have in the context of developing a democracy like Guatemala?

1.3 Outline of study

This thesis will start by introducing the reader to our research questions in the 1st chapter. The 2nd chapter presents the method and the process during the writing of the thesis, while the 3rd chapter will explain in what context the study was made, giving background information about Guatemala. In the 4th chapter, our above-mentioned choices of theories will be accounted for. The results with following analyses are found in the 5th chapter, which begins with a presentation of our respondents and schools. While the 5th chapter will be focused on the first five research questions, chapter 6 will put emphasise on discussing the last of our research questions, the teachers’ possible contribution to developing a democracy. The reason we chose to answer our final question in the final discussion is that it is an all-embracing question not related to just one part of the result.
2. Method

2.1 Preparations for the study

This thesis started with an application for a MFS (Minor Field Study)-scholarship from SIDA (the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation) distributed by the University of Malmö. In order to prepare ourselves for the study we were invited to the University of Gothenburg to exchange thoughts and ideas concerning the subject of our thesis partly with a Guatemala-expert and partly with other holders of MFS-scholarships. Also, we had the opportunity to discuss the choice of method with a different expert at the University. Information and advices about staying, and carry through a study in a developing country were also given. During the preparations, our supervisor in field Silvia Santizo Alvaro, from distance helped us to form the study. When we came to Guatemala she was a great help in trying to understand the Guatemalan society, for example the politics, the school system and the form of government and also other areas where our knowledge was deficient.

2.2 Choice of method

Collecting information about opinions of the participants in a study, it is according to Bryman preferable to use a method that enhances the possibilities for the respondent to develop her/his meanings and thoughts. Since qualitative interviews had the potential of giving us rich and deep data, we chose to adopt this method for our research. To use quantitative interviews as method would not give us the space for spontaneous questions and would limit the respondents answers.
remarkably.\textsuperscript{5} Furthermore, we considered the semi-structured type of qualitative interviews with open questions to be a strategy that corresponded to the flexibility in interviewing we wanted. This choice of freely forming the interviews depending on the situation allowed us to leave our prepared schedule of questions to follow up an utterance and also vary the formulations or order of questions. We agree with Bryman who means that semi-structured interviews are to prefer when making interviews more of conversational feature.\textsuperscript{6} To make it possible for the respondent to answer freely we partly used open questions and gradually as we got new information, we reformulated and added questions. Our questions were adjusted depending on the respondents’ relation to school. Apart from questions that revealed the respondents’ opinions and background attendant questions were used to help us better understand the education system and Guatemalan politics. Thus, according to Patel and Davidson’s recommendation when wanting to do qualitative analyses, we formulated the questions and interviews aiming at a low amount of structure and standardising.\textsuperscript{7}

2.3 Our work with the collected data

Our first step of data analyses was to translate and transcribe the recorded interviews in Spanish into Swedish. These translations were necessary to give us both accesses to the interview material, even though working with translations in three languages may lead to a certain amount of distortion of material. To demarcate our research topic we then created the six research questions of which we categorized the, for our thesis, relevant material from the interviews. The categorisation reduced the amount of conducted data, which facilitated further work with our study. The quotations in chapter five: Results and Analyses are translated directly from Spanish into English and the original Spanish quotations can be found in the appendix.

\textsuperscript{6} Bryman (2004) p. 320ff
\textsuperscript{7} Runa Patel & Bo Davidson, \textit{Forskningsmetodikens grunder} Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2003), p. 71f.
2.4 Adversities and limitations

Our investigation focus has during the process changed some times. When planning the study our intention was to investigate the access of schools for indigenous girls. In field we met adversities since what we had planned for wasn’t executable; the schools closed for vacation and made observations impossible, we discovered that our original project had to be carried out in rural areas and we had our base in the city, and the access of education was not only a problem affecting indigenous children. Furthermore, how would we define indigenous? Hence, we made interviews with persons and organisations bounded to education to investigate the access to education generally among schoolchildren. The subject of research once more took an unexpected turn as we during the categorising of data discovered that the material actually was more focused on the teachers’ working situation. This knowledge made us change focus.

During the working process we have detected an infinite number of interesting materials, but in order to limit our thesis rejected the interviews with the organisations working with education; CEIPA and AMOIXQUIC. These organisations were very interesting though and could definitely be recommended for future studies concerning education, women’s rights or indigenous people. Although it would have been most interesting to examine we as well rejected deeper investigations about following areas; the differences of private and public schools, what is done by the government to increase access to education in rural areas, the views of education in rural areas and how to create an education from a Guatemalan perspective et al.

2.5 Respondents and schools

Our respondents were all someway connected to the school system; either working as a teacher, being a former teacher, a principal or founder of a school or a politician working with matters of education. They are except for the Vice
Minister of Education all living in the city Quetzaltenango\textsuperscript{8} and its nearby surroundings, which is also the geographical delimitation of our study. Since many of our respondents are working or have previously worked in rural areas, this perspective will be brought into the study. A brief presentation of the respondents will be found just before the result chapter. In the thesis we will frequently use the names of our respondents, though we want to emphasise that the reader does not need to memorise whom the respondents are, but instead see that together they tell a story.

2.6 Validity and Reliability

The relevance of validity and reliability in qualitative studies has been wildly discussed among researchers. In different ways, experts have tried to adapt these quantitative conceptions to qualitative studies. Among others Stensmo have chosen to define validity as a measure of to what extent the researcher observe, identifies or measures the things he or she intend to.\textsuperscript{9} When arriving in field our intension was to make interviews about opinions of teachers and principals concerning education matters. Though our focus changed during the working process at home, the collected material was still relevant. Being able to make a selection from our collected data, a highly subjective phenomenon doing qualitative researches, we chose the most usable parts of our material. What we account for in this thesis are the opinions of our respondents and the results should not therefore be generalised. Since our respondents have not been randomly chosen, but have been recommended by different people, they cannot be seen as average teachers in Guatemala or not even in Quetzaltenango. What we can say is that our respondents’ stories contribute to form a picture of their reality.

The criterion for data to be reliable is according to Stensmo that the same information should be given when repeating the investigation, using the same

\textsuperscript{8} The city Quetzaltenango is the departmental capital in the department which is also called Quetzaltenango. When later on mentioning Quetzaltenango we are referring to the city.

respondents and methods. This Bryman means is more difficult in qualitative studies, since it is impossible to “freeze a social environment” and to copy the social role of the previous researcher. To make our measures as reliable as possible we decided to record all interviews. In this way we decreased the risk of distort our data, which would be unavoidable when for instance only writing notes. To reheart, transcribe and translate the questions and answers we believe increased the reliability of our study. Still, one must consider that making interviews in other languages than the mother tongue always involve risks of misunderstandings and wrong interpretations. Furthermore can cultural differences contribute to misunderstandings, not always easy for the interviewer to detect. Though we know that our results correspond to what the respondents have expressed we have no evidence of how the respondents are acting in reality, but this is a conscious demarcation of our study.

2.7 Ethic considerations

Influenced by Patel and Davidson’s ideas of ethic considerations when performing personal interviews our considerations are following. Since we wanted to create a comfortable environment and an atmosphere where the respondents felt free to express themselves we most of the times let the respondents make the decision of where to locate the interviews. In most cases, they took place at the respondent’s homes or at his/her place of work. After a short presentation of our study either to the respondent personally or over the phone we explained our purpose with the study more in detail before the interview started. We asked for their permission to record the interview, which was no problem except for one teacher, who hesitated before the permission. Except for her, we did not experience that the respondents felt inhibited during recording. Regarding the names of the respondents, we have kept all real names on the official persons and also when we think the teachers are not easily recognized. However, in two cases we chose to change the names, since

10 Stensmo, p. 30f.
they otherwise obviously can be identified, which would restrict the promise of anonymity.\(^\text{12}\)

### 2.8 Choice of theory

Once we had chosen our questions of research, we started searching for appropriate literature and theories to help us analyse our material. As our original focus was on the indigenous population, we wanted to use some linguistic theories that would help us understand problems related to being educated in a different language than one’s mother tongue and how a person’s identity is affected by a lack of school emphasis on her culture and reality. We decided to make use of Gunilla Ladberg’s book “Skolans språk och barnet”, which we had read during our first semester at the teacher education. The choice of the American pedagogue John Dewey, one of pragmatism’s most prominent predecessors who invented the expression “learning by doing”, was natural considering the important contributions he has done to philosophy concerning education and democracy. We chose to use his work “Democracy and education” and “Individ, skola och samhälle” which contains a choice of texts by Dewey. Finally, the investigations the SOM-institute\(^\text{13}\) at the University in Gothenburg has made every year for the past two decades concerning the Swedish people’s opinions of society, and the correlation between trust and the quality of democracy, inspired us to apply theories of trust to our study of the teachers role in a new democracy like Guatemala. This idea introduced us to some work by Bo Rothstein, professor in political science at the University of Gothenburg. His book “Sociala fällor och tillitens problem” led us to the American professor Robert D. Putnam at Harvard University, and his study of Italy in “Making democracy work”. His work has been widely acknowledged and recognized as applicable to the studies of developing countries. What is so special about Putnam’s study is that it focuses on the executive side of democracy, and goes beyond the more common studies of democracy that focus on participation in elections and representation. We found it

\(^{12}\) Patel & Davidson, p. 70f.

\(^{13}\) SOM = Samhälle Opinion och Massmedia
very interesting to, through this work be able to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes a well functioning democracy.
3. Background facts about Guatemala

In this chapter, we will briefly go through the demography, political history and education of Guatemala. We believe a comprehensive account will help the reader to understand the context in which our field study was made. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the school system and by investigating the Teacher Education Curriculum (later in the text abbreviated to TEC) we will bring out the government’s view of the function of new teachers in school and society.

3.1 Guatemala- the land of eternal spring

There are four ethnic groups, each with its own cultural identity, in Guatemala. Ladino, Maya, Garífuna and Xinca are contributors to the lingual variety of 25 different groups of which 21 of them are Maya. The above-mentioned ethnic groups Maya and Xinca are the native population of Guatemala, also called the indigenous population. The indigenous population is estimated to be approximately 40% of the total 13 million living in Guatemala. Social and economic gaps are immense and the Ladinos predominantly possess more economic resources and are well represented in society whilst resources and political influence are limited among the indigenous population.

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14 The expression is referring to the highland weather that is characterized by spring-like temperature year-round.
15 World Bank 2007 p. 6
16 The percentage of the indigenous population varies, according to different sources, from 40-50%. There lies a difficulty in distinguish the different populations which naturally affect the estimations.
17 Landguiden
3.2 History of the political situation

Ten years have passed since the different parties in the peace process after years of negotiations finally managed to conciliate about the Peace Accords in December 1996. Until then the civil war had lasted for 36 years and caused the death or “disappearance” of 200,000 civilians of which 83% were indigenous.\(^\text{18}\)

In 1945, Juan José Arévalo was the first president democratically elected and thereby Guatemala’s first period of democracy began. Arévalo brought up the citizen rights on the agenda, which ended up in a new constitution signed by his successor Jacobo Arbenz. One of the important social reforms was the law of redistribution of agricultural areas of the country, which gradually became a threat to the big landowners of the country, both Guatemalan and American. One of the most powerful American landowners in Guatemala at that time was a company called United Fruit Company, which naturally became the greatest opponent of the new redistributions plan. The economic and ideological interests made room for another great party on the scene of the upcoming conflict- the anti-communist United States of America. Through initiative and support from the government of the United States, who in the time of Cold War began to see Guatemala and its socialistic reforms as a threat, Guatemalan opponents to the government in 1954 managed to persuade the military in Guatemala to a military coup against the president. A prohibition of the communist party URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) and participation in other left oriented fractions and unions followed. Thirty years of military power, the above-mentioned civil war, started. This military oppression and the lack of equality in distribution of agricultural land among the Guatemalan peasants resulted in uprising and growing resistance, a guerrilla. The violence escalated remarkably, when in the early 80s, the general and president Efraín Ríos Montt and his forced affiliated militia called PAC (Civilian Self-Defence Patrol), in their search for guerrilla members, obliterated rural villages, most of them indigenous. The scrupulous violence of Efrain and his militia continued, but along with it also the opposition against him and finally in 1983 he was dismissed from his position. To

\(^{18}\) AAAS
return to democracy a new constitution was accepted in 1985.\textsuperscript{19} Along with promises of peace and democracy, Vinicio Cerezo was elected a new president a year later. Despite the given promises and aims Cerezo did not succeed in overpowering the power of the military and so political instability and diverse difficulties of the country continued. Peace negotiations were repeatedly stopped and human rights violated by increasing amount of crimes. The chaos and instability of the country followed until 1995 when things started to change. Alvaro Arzú was elected a new president who finally managed to conclude the peace process into Peace Accords in 1996.\textsuperscript{20} The Peace Accord was among all highly relevant for the education including aspects of the process of education reform, transformation of curriculum and the teacher professionalisation.\textsuperscript{21} However, the implementations of the social, economical and political reforms met resistance revealed when a crucial change in constitution, giving the indigenous population special rights, was rejected. The following election in 1999 resulted in a great victory for the populist party FRG (Guatemalan Republican Front) lead by none the less the already mentioned dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. Despite the victory of his party, this time Montt was not permitted to be president because of his coup and oppression in the past. Instead, Alfonso Portillo entered the new presidency. Some sources say, however, that he was only the formal figure - the real power was held by Ríos Montt. During Portillos/Montts presidency corruption and scandals started to reappear in political history of Guatemala. People were murdered for making “inappropriate” statements and general harassment of those who opposed the new president became a fact. All that once again overshadowed and gave a backlash to the peace process and development of democracy in Guatemala.\textsuperscript{22}

Since 2003 the president Oscar Berger, former mayor of the capital and leader of the right-wing party GANA (Grand National Alliance), has been mandated to govern the country.\textsuperscript{23} In September 2007, a new president will be elected and according to the human rights report published by the Swedish Ministry for

\textsuperscript{19} Constitución política de la República de la Guatemala (Guatemala: Editorial Piedra Santa, 2005)
\textsuperscript{21} World Bank 2007 p. 8.
\textsuperscript{22} Landguiden
\textsuperscript{23} Landguiden
Foreign Affairs in 2006, he or she will be challenged by a generated lawlessness, widespread corruption, low legal security and various insults of human rights that need to be taken care of.\(^{24}\) One of the candidates is Rigoberta Menchú, rewarded with Nobel’s peace prize in 1992, representing a coalition of the indigenous party Winaq and the left-wing party Encounter. If she wins, she will be the first woman and the first Maya on the position of a president.\(^{25}\)

3.3 Education

According to MINEDUC’s (the Education Ministry’s of Guatemala) Long-term National Education Plan 2004-2023 “Education is the means to overcome discrimination and transform a society that tolerates cultural differences into a society that prides on ‘intercultural’ values”.\(^{26}\) The education plan involves investments in compulsory education and in 2006, the World Bank approved to give the government of Guatemala a loan of $80 million for education related improvements.\(^{27}\)

3.3.1 Statistics

Investigating the education system in Guatemala involves a constant variable feeling of hope and despair. Hope when reading about sincere deliberate attempts of national and local projects that want to shape the future Guatemala. Despair when facing the figures of statistics telling that the Governmental allowances are just as low as the confidence in those managing and distributing them. The low confidence is shown in the “Global Corruption Barometer 2005” made of Transparency International, that measures incidences of corruption on a scale one to five, where one stands for not corrupted at all and five stands for extremely corrupted. Guatemala reached 4,2 points concerning political parties while

\(^{24}\) Regeringskansliet  
\(^{25}\) BBC  
\(^{26}\) World Bank 2007 p. 1  
\(^{27}\) World Bank 2006
education got 3,4 points. In comparison of corresponding categories, Denmark reached 2,7 and 1,9 points.\(^{28}\)

The education system suffers from deficiency in economic resources, a matter of wrong prioritizing according to the earlier mentioned United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education Vernor Muñoz Villalobos.\(^{29}\) The state budget for education is today the lowest in Central America and though the constitution declares that the nine years of compulsory school should be free of charge for all children this is rarely the case in reality. Inscription fees, expensive books and deficiency of nearby schools bring expenses that low-income families in rural areas, meaning 60% of the Guatemalan population and most of them indigenous, find hard to afford.\(^{30}\) The positive aspect concerning education in Guatemala is the fact that the amount of children beginning first class has increased from 64% in 1991 to 92% in 2004. The negative aspects are the high number of early dropouts and high absence from classes. This results in a much shorter duration of the education, on average 5,4 years of nine possible. Interesting to comment is that this figure is even lower among indigenous children. The average period of their education is only 3,8 years.\(^{31}\) In table 3.3.1.1 on the next page, describing the levels of education, we can notice that these averages of years not even fulfil the primaria education, which is six years. The levels of education will be referred to through the thesis. Therefore, we recommend reading the table carefully.

\(^{28}\) Transparency International, p. 19
\(^{29}\) OHCHR p. 1
\(^{30}\) Nationalencyklopedin
\(^{31}\) Regeringskansliet
### Table 3.3.1.1: Levels of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level (Sp)*</th>
<th>(Eng)</th>
<th>Age of students</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre primaria</td>
<td>Pre-primary</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primaria</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Básico</td>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversificado</td>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>Vocational training. The level of teacher education TE for teaching at pre primaria and primaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universidad</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>19+</td>
<td>Studies necessary for teaching basico and diversificado</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Spanish terms of education levels will from now on be used in the thesis.

Forthcoming table shows the number of indigenous students in relation to the total share of students. According to table 3.3.1.2 below only about 3 millions were participating in school. The table also shows that 30% of the students are from the indigenous population and of those only 26% received IBE (Intercultural Bilingual Education), an education that in accordance with the peace accord gave the indigenous children the right to get education partly in their mother tongue. Unfortunately, none of the students enrolled received IBE in básico, grade 7-9.³²

### Table 3.3.1.2: Comparison of Indigenous Students and the National Student Population for 2004³³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>National Total Students</th>
<th>Total Indigenous Students</th>
<th>Indigenous Male Students</th>
<th>Indigenous Female Students</th>
<th>Students Receiving IBE</th>
<th>% of Indig students in IBE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>399,842</td>
<td>130,365</td>
<td>66,656</td>
<td>63,709</td>
<td>81,473</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2,163,760</td>
<td>754,483</td>
<td>404,640</td>
<td>349,843</td>
<td>174,321</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 7-9</td>
<td>444,345</td>
<td>74,382</td>
<td>43,638</td>
<td>30,744</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10-11</td>
<td>210,225</td>
<td>26,085</td>
<td>14,886</td>
<td>11,199</td>
<td>3,595*</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,218,172</td>
<td>985,315</td>
<td>529,820</td>
<td>455,495</td>
<td>259,389</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100,00</td>
<td>100,00</td>
<td>53,00</td>
<td>47,00</td>
<td>26,30</td>
<td>³³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Anuario Estadístico MINEDUC. DIGEBI. 2006.
*In Teacher Training Programs (Magisterio Bilingue)

³² World Bank 2007 p. 9
³³ World Bank 2007 p. 9
3.3.2 The Teacher Education

According to a report published by the World Bank, only five percent of newly graduated teachers are absorbed to the sector of primary education each year and knowledge tests of teachers in service showed a low quality. A lack of mechanisms to recruit the best candidates for the profession and insufficiency in preparing primaria teachers are considered to be two of the factors affecting the low quality of teaching.\(^{34}\)

In the education reforms, aiming at a society less discriminating against the indigenous population, the curricula has been reformulated with emphasis put on respect to linguistic and cultural diversities. One of the changes in 2001 was to expand the Teacher Education Institutes (Institutos Normales Oficiales) and to construct institutes training bilingual teachers. At present there are 18 Bilingual Teacher Training Institutes covering ten of the linguistic groups in the country. Looking at the amount of bilingual teachers below in the table 3.3.2.1, only 11% of the graduated teachers during 2005 are certified intercultural and bilingual teachers. The World Bank report where the table is presented also points out that a large number of teachers qualified to teach at primaria that actually teach at higher levels as well as indigenous teachers are working on non-indigenous schools. The report also claims only one third of those working as teachers to be qualified.\(^{35}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total National Teachers</th>
<th>Indigenous Teachers</th>
<th>Certified IBE teachers(^*)</th>
<th>% teachers IBE Certified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>11,680</td>
<td>3,907</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>63 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>58,032</td>
<td>16,089</td>
<td>5,964</td>
<td>37 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 7-9</td>
<td>4,841</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10-11</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>76,684</td>
<td>20,731</td>
<td>8,423</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Anuario Estadistico MINEDUC. DIGEBI. 2006.*

\(^{34}\) World Bank 2007 p. 10
\(^{35}\) World Bank 2007 p. 10
\(^{36}\) World Bank 2007 p. 10
3.3.3 The national curriculum and the knowledge of new teachers

Trying to understand the function of teachers in a democratizing process it is relevant to investigate what demands the present government requires from teachers. Hence, we have investigated the content of the TEC (Teacher Education Curriculum), to discover what qualities and knowledge newly graduated teachers ought to possess.

To build a society where tolerance and participation are cornerstones is the paradigm in the curricula. Examples of the values of democracy and the necessity of practicing them are aims recurring through the curricula. Among those are the striving for equality between men and women, respect for universal human rights and different populations and social groups in Guatemala some aims that seem to be highly valued. The aims concerning the teacher students are to develop their reflective, critical and creative thinking.37

To enter the TE certain personal characteristics are preferable. Except for having done an active choice to become a teacher, the student needs to have a good command of their mother tongue and mathematics. Furthermore, he/she should value and strengthen his/her cultural identity and have respect for other cultures. He/she should also be a dynamic person with a power of initiative and interest in self-developing. Good interpersonal relations as good manners are also expected from the student. 38

Expectations on the graduated student are acquired basic knowledge relevant for teachers e.g. methods, pedagogies and didactics. Furthermore, the student should be able to combine the content of the curriculum with the pupils’ life experiences, interests and context. The future teacher is also expected to be able to develop a classroom climate built on values of social life, equality, respect and solidarity. Other vital qualities are that the students shall adapt knowledge about children’s socioeconomic, cultural and psychological conditions and develop educational projects that increase the quality of life in the community where the school is

37 MINEDUC p. 22ff
38 MINEDUC p. 37ff
located. In addition to these criteria, students on the bilingual and intercultural teacher education should acquire a bilingual and multicultural perspective on teaching, when choosing methods etc., and have converse in both languages in school as well as in the community.\textsuperscript{39}

Concerning the subject of social science, a subject most relevant for educating democratic citizens, the curriculum proposes that investigations and reflecting about the social reality and historic processes of Guatemala must be done. In addition to this, the student should be able to identify and explain the national structural problems from historic, economic, social, politic and cultural points of views. Furthermore forming constructive dialogues about the citizens possibilities to contribute to solutions are considered important. Except for the skill to analyse Guatemala out of different points of view, the students should be able to critically analyse the globalisation process.\textsuperscript{40} These are some examples of the high aims the students should reach and from what we have seen there are in the curriculum no suggestions of \textit{how} to reach them.

\textsuperscript{39} MINEDUC p. 37ff  
\textsuperscript{40} MINEDUC p. 166ff
4. Theory

4.1 Language and identity

In majority of countries, more than one language is spoken and therefore the question of what language to use in school often appears, or should appear. However, from a historical point of view, it has been a custom when two or more linguistic groups meet, for the socially and economically inferior group to learn the language of those in power. 41

The difficulties a child comes across when being taught in her second language are many. Linguists agree that learning to communicate a new language at a level equivalent to a person’s age take approximately one to two years, for a schoolchild. However learning to think in that language may take five to eight years. Therefore, a common mistake is to confuse a fluency in the spoken language with an ability to use the language to learn other subjects. A problem of reverse nature is to underestimate a child’s knowledge in e.g. geography due to a deficiency in her language skills. This may cause the teacher to have low expectations in the child’s ability to learn which in turn means lower achievements on the child’s behalf. Listening to a lecture in a foreign language can be a demanding task. It differs from participating in a conversation by the difficulty of asking questions. It can also be difficult to achieve well at examinations because a person needs more time to think and express herself in a new language. Consequently, if the child is allowed to use her mother tongue in the process of learning a new language as well as when learning other subjects, this would in many ways facilitate the learning process since language and thoughts are so intimately connected. 42

42 Ladberg, p. 149ff
The importance of learning to read is not always an obvious matter. From a teacher’s perspective, the ability to read and write is fundamental because of its key role to higher education and its ability to help a person give a good account of oneself and participate in society. This however is not a self-explanatory matter. Children’s books teach children that reading is fun and a desirable skill, but if reading has not been a part of the child’s family life the child may lack the motivation needed to learn how to read, which makes the process more difficult. To read stories aloud in the classroom can awaken children’s interest in reading. A problem though is that many times the texts used in the classroom are not suitable for the children and accordingly do not encourage their interest.\textsuperscript{43}

Education has a cultural basis. If the examples given in class, related to a specific matter, originate from everyday life this facilitates the comprehension. But the question is; from who’s everyday life?\textsuperscript{44} Mikael Niemis book \textit{Populärmusik från Vittula} illustrates the historically common problem of a lack of marks of identification in schoolbooks for children from minority groups or peripheral places of a country. Niemis principal character Matti grows up in Pajala, in the north of Sweden, and he never succeeds in identifying the Sweden he learns about in geography in school with the Sweden he himself lives in.\textsuperscript{45} If the child does not recognize the examples given in school books it makes it more difficult to learn, since a lack of ability to associate with a text influences the motivation in a negative way. But what is worse, a lack of recognition affects a person’s identity. If education is not about her or her group of people, it is difficult to see the purpose of it.\textsuperscript{46} A person’s identity derives from the groups she forms part of, communities she wishes to be part of and roots in the past she considers herself having. If these groups and roots are not respected from society and if she tries to view herself differently, beyond these ties, her identity disappears.\textsuperscript{47}

Over-emphasizing a formal colonial language can easily cause alienation towards a person’s own culture and the problem of identification is also apparent in history

\textsuperscript{43} Ladberg, p. 162ff
\textsuperscript{44} Ladberg, p. 173
\textsuperscript{45} Mikael Niemi, \textit{Populärmusik från Vittula} (Danmark: Norstedts, 2007)
\textsuperscript{46} Ladberg, p. 174ff
lessons. In many developing countries a great part of the history subject talks about European and American history. This alienation-syndrome is due to a one-sided theoretical orientation, which does not relate to the children’s environment. The theoretical orientation easily creates a contemptuous attitude towards manual occupations, which is serious since that is what many parents do for a living. 48

A child’s attitude towards her language depends on the attitudes of school and society. If her language is disparaged, she feels that her culture is not accepted and can begin to interpret her language as uninteresting, old-fashioned, as being of a low level of importance and even stigmatizing. To avoid this it is of great importance that the teacher creates a positive feeling around the mother tongue and that the children have role models from minorities, e.g. teachers. That would help the children to have faith in their own ability to achieve something and to have faith in society. 49

To conclude, an individual’s mother tongue is of great importance. Intellectually it helps her think, reflect and learn, and socially it is essential as recognition of her identity. 50

From this part of the chapter, we will mainly bring with us the notions of identity and alienation to the analysis.

4.2 Democracy and Education

John Dewey (1859-1952) thinks of democracy as more than just a form of governing. He says the political and administrative institutions in a democracy should be seen as means to realize goals concerning human relations and the development of the personality. That is, he focuses on democracy as a way of life. In *Individ, skola och samhälle*, which contains a choice of texts by Dewey, he reminds the reader that the political forms of democracy are merely the best means that humanity has managed to come up with at a historically given point of

49 Ladberg, p. 132ff
50 Ladberg, p. 180
time. Democracy rests upon the fundamental idea that no single person is wise or good enough to rule over another without his or her consent. Since everyone is influenced by the institutions under which they live, they should, in return be able to exert influence over the institutions, thus participate in the decision-making. Democracy is also founded on the idea that if people get the chance they will develop and gradually generate the knowledge and wisdom required to lead humanity. Human intelligence and peoples’ united experiences will lead the way.\textsuperscript{51}

Democracy includes a set of freedoms of which freedom of thought is the most important. Freedom of thought is the basic condition for all free development without which society would be deprived of important contributions to its improvement. However, says Dewey, even in democracies, peoples’ way of thinking and feeling are influenced by thoughts of leadership from above. This attitude has been created through the history of humanity and is often to be found even a long time after democracies have been created. According to experience, democracy is not secured as long as this attitude exists.\textsuperscript{52}

In an autocratic or authoritarian system only a superior minority is believed to have the intelligence required to rule society and make decisions that affect the citizens. In this kind of society, there is always some form of constraint forced upon the citizens. It can be physical, economical, psychological or moral. Not being able to participate in politics is also a mild form of constraint. Dewey calls this an invisible constraint and claims it to be more efficient than terror or police regimes. When the invisible constraint becomes permanent and incarnated in society’s institutions it becomes normal and natural and people often do not even realize that they have an entitled claim to decide for themselves.\textsuperscript{53}

In countries with an autocratic regime, people are often indifferent to public concerns and the civic spirit is not well developed. According to Dewey, nothing else can be expected from the teachers. When a person do not have any influence,

\textsuperscript{52} Dewey 1998, p. 149 f
\textsuperscript{53} Dewey 1998, p. 147
it is difficult to feel any sense of personal responsibility. She settles with doing what she is obliged to do, and adopts a passive attitude towards the important matters. In some cases, being indifferent makes people shirk their responsibilities unless being supervised. This situation gives rise to a relationship between the teachers and their supervisors that resembles the traditional relationship between pupils and teachers. By shutting out people from actively participating in the solution of a task, they are made incompetent of just that; participating and coming up with solutions. Therefore, Dewey says, a good argument for democracy is that it is the best way to create initiatives and creativity in people. Dewey points out that developing character and good judgement in young people is a difficult mission that deserves all the support it can get. He believes the teachers’ work would be better carried out if they were allowed to take part in drawing up the guiding principals for their work, since that would provide the teachers with an insight in their own mission. A common problem is that teachers are forced to apply methods and curriculums they do not understand the purpose of and that this affects their commitment to their work in a negative way.54

In John Dewey’s classical work *Democracy and Education* from 1916, he discusses what part school and education has in a democracy, and says that each generation wants to educate their young people to get along in the present world, when what they should be focusing on is how to make humanity the best it can be. This is a very wide definition. However, when it comes to the function of school, he is more specific and calls attention to three specific functions of which the first is creating a simplified environment for the children. The civilization we live in is to complex to be taken in as it is and therefore needs to be broken down into smaller peaces. This way the initial knowledge can be used as tools to gain insight into what is more complicated. The second function is to create a pure atmosphere and to eliminate the influence of “dead wood from the past”. Each society carries around old ideas that no longer are applicable to the present situation. To omit these ideas and reduce their influence on the social environment is the school’s duty. The third function of school is to give each individual the possibility to

54 Dewey 1998, p.153
escape from the limitations provided by the social environment in which he was born in order to gain contact with a broader environment.  

Democracy and education are deeply connected. The reason is that democracy demands educated citizens since a government resting on popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and follow their leaders are educated. Democracy has rejected the principle of an external authority and it therefore needs to be replaced by voluntary commitment and interest, which can only be created through education. However, the teaching methods are of great importance in order to reach the aim of a truly educated people. A democracy has no use for people who do not know how to think for themselves, therefore education needs to appeal to the pupils’ own experiences and their individual composition. If active participation is not permitted, the pupils’ interest and eagerness to learn will slowly fade away, which brings about young citizens who lack a sense of responsibility.  

Also, when school does not provide an environment where the pupils can learn to interact thoughts and action, they are forced to lead their lives relying on routines and the ruling of others, who can be unscrupulous as to their means of achievement. A society of that kind is unacceptable when the aim of progressive education is to counteract unjust privileges.

To conclude, education can have an immense ability to affect people’s way of thinking and, as Dewey states: democracy needs to be a part of people’s daily way of thinking if the political democracy shall stand a chance of lasting.

Later on in the analysis, we will make use of Dewey’s reasoning of how parts of an authoritarian system keep affecting people even a long time after democracy has been introduced in a country. We will also discuss the three functions of school.

56 Dewey 1999, p. 127
57 Dewey 1998, p. 152
58 Dewey 1999, p. 197
59 Dewey 1999, p. 162
60 Dewey 1998, p. 155
4.3 Trust

The political sociologists have long asserted that an efficient democracy is connected with socioeconomic modernization. Robert Putnam, however, shows in his widely acknowledged study of Italy “Making democracy work” that this does not include the whole truth. In 1970, the Italian government decided to decentralize the decision-making and execution of politics in a number of areas. Regional executive boards had never existed before and had to be created from nothing, which gave Putnam the opportunity to, during a quarter of a century, study differences in efficiency in the newly created institutions. The institutions’ efficiency shall here be understood as how well the institutions manage to provide health care and security, and in other areas meet the needs of the citizens, which is one of the tasks for a democracy. What is so special with Putnam’s study is that it investigates the executive side of democracy, and does not settle with measuring the participation in elections and how well the elected represent the people in matters of gender, race and socio-economic background.61

In his study, Putnam found there to be a great difference between the north and the south of Italy, where the northern regions held institutions of a more efficient kind. The conclusion Putnam came to was that there was a positive correlation between efficient institutions and the incidence of organisations. That is, in regions where the membership of sports clubs, bird watching clubs and stamp collecting associations were higher the civic spirit was stronger and the institutions were more efficient.62

The study of Italy can help us understand the complexity of developing countries in the third world. Putnam refers to Milton Esman and Norman Uphoff who summarize scores of studies of the development of the third world in: Local Organizations: Intermediaries in rural development, and come to the conclusion that local associations is a decisive component in successful strategies of the

62 Putnam
development of rural areas. Thus, the gap between the North and South of Italy and the theories trying to explain it can contribute to the debate concerning the development of the third world and why so many countries are stuck in underdevelopment.  

Scientists within political science, political economy and historic economy agree that the problems of permanent and aggravated poverty in the developing countries can be explained with the lack of efficient institutions that enables trust and confidence to establish in organisations and societies.  

So, now we know that efficient institutions are the key to democracy, and that a connection between an abundance of associations and efficient institutions has been observed, but how does a society manage to create these efficient institutions? Before we answer that question we would just like to further explain the difference between a society full of associations and clubs, and one where the citizens do not play football or collect stamps together to the same extent. A society with plenty of associations is characterized by a type of relationships that Putnam refers to as horizontal. In horizontal relationships mutuality and cooperation thrives and the members gain habits of cooperation. These are of course useful qualities for citizens of a democracy. In the other type of society, which Putnam found in the south of Italy, the relationships are rather of the vertical kind and characterized by authority and dependence. In these regions the citizens lack experiences of cooperating and are used to decisions being taken over the top of their heads. The civic spirit is very low and the inhabitants feel exploited, alienated and powerless, which are feelings that even well educated citizens struggle with. In this atmosphere, political corruption is a permanent guest. People expect others to violate rules and laws and therefore it would be stupid to be the only law-abiding citizen. Mistrust thrives and has the ability to be self-fulfilling. The participants have acted in a corrupt environment for so long that they do not have any reason to change their expectations. Often they keep their mistrust even after new organisations have been established and are,  

64 Putnam, p. 191  
65 Bo Rothstein, *Sociala fällor och tillitens problem* (Kristianstad: SNS, 2003), p. 34.  
66 Putnam, p. 106-136  
67 Putnam, p. 204
often for good reasons, suspicious towards political leaders trying to change the situation.\textsuperscript{68}

The description of this negative circle takes us back to how it is possible to create efficient institutions, free from corruption, which can help develop democracy. As Bo Rothstein concludes in the opening chapter of \textit{Sociala fällor och tillitens problem}, written as a reaction and continuation of Putnam’s study of Italy, political science do not have any good answers of how-to-do nature. It is merely a science that establishes correlations, and in retrospect explains how one particular country managed to develop from one state to another.\textsuperscript{69} However, some sort of answers can be provided. Putnam and Rothstein both agree that a society with a high level of social capital are less likely to end up in social traps like the one described earlier; “if every one else bends the law then why should not I?”. They do not, however, have the same idea of what the exact components of social capital are. Putnam defines social capital with three components; participation in associations, trust and mutuality. Rothstein argues that trust is the base for the other two and without trust, there would be no participation in associations or any mutuality.\textsuperscript{70} This conclusion takes him further in the analysis. Rothstein explains that trust has to do with how the relationship between the participants is perceived by them selves. Thus, social capital cannot be ordered or produced in any easy way, since it has to do with the individuals’ perception of reality. Perception of reality is the third key, after efficient institutions and trust, in the attempt to understanding the underlying layers of what constitutes a well functioning democracy. Perception of reality derives from collective memories. Rothstein exemplifies with collective memory of the discrimination, which has affected the Afro American people’s perception of reality and negatively influenced their trust towards others.\textsuperscript{71} Rothstein’s solution to how social capital can arise is therefore creating universal institutions, that is, non-discriminating institutions. Rothstein uses his Swedish perspective and refers to institutions that give every one the same right to, for instance, health care and school. But how can universal institutions possibly see daylight in a society of corruption, where leaders lack

\textsuperscript{68} Rothstein, p. 50
\textsuperscript{69} Rothstein, p. 13
\textsuperscript{70} Rothstein, p. 15
\textsuperscript{71} Rothstein, p. 154-196
incentive of giving up on their advantages? Rothstein means that in a situation when we cannot foresee what will happen to us, universal and impartial institutions become the second best alternative, (before partial institutions that favours the individuals own group).\textsuperscript{72} In addition to this, he reminds us of what many philosophers have claimed; that in an open debate in a democracy, where one has to defend one’s standpoint it is difficult to morally justify politics that only favours one’s own group.\textsuperscript{73} That is, according to this viewpoint democracy ought to lead to institutions that are less discriminating.

It is evident that making democracy work is no easy task, but Robert Putnam’s study of Italy and Bo Rothstein’s reflections based on Swedish examples provides us with some idea of what is needed; efficient institutions, which can arise in a society of social capital. The social capital in turn comes from membership in associations, according to Putnam, or from universal, non-discriminating institutions according to Rothstein.

This part of the chapter contributes to our analysis with notions such as; vertical and horizontal relationships, efficient institutions, social capital, trust, perception of reality, collective memory and universal institutions.

\textsuperscript{72} Rothstein, p. 287ff
\textsuperscript{73} Rothstein, p. 290
5. Results and Analyses

5.1 Result: The teachers’ view of their role in relation to the pupil

This chapter starts with introducing our key respondents and their opinions about their work as teachers as well as their opinions of preferable characteristics in teachers in general. Further, we will have a closer look upon teachers’ expressions about knowledge. Examining the material, we found three different kinds of knowledge and that is why we have chosen to account for them by dividing them in these groups. Furthermore, we will in this chapter include the methods used by our respondents in their work, since their choice of method, as the preferable characteristics and value of knowledge, also bring us a picture of the way they see their function as teachers.

5.1.1 The teacher’s relation to the pupil

To work as a teacher in a rural village, Jeanette sees herself as a link between the village and the rest of society. By living in the city herself, she brings in alternative points of view to the traditional ones dominating the village. She believes in encouraging the children to create aims for further education as a way to get out of the poverty. Martha works in her own native district. She values education highly and chose her profession because education is the best way of helping people. Her pupils are important to her and when we met her, she was spending her mornings during the first week of vacation by practicing writing and reading with some pupils, without salary. She believes an important quality in a teacher is to be able to pay attention to each child and to learn to recognize the different facial expressions, in order to help those who need help but are too shy
to ask for help. The preparations are a crucial issue for her since she is convinced that the amount of preparations correspond to the children’s learning. To be well prepared is also included in Eva’s opinion of what is a good teacher. She provides the semantic difference between two teacher synonyms “maestro” and “Professor” as follows:

“It’s a big difference between a professor and a maestro. The maestro spends time, prepares and actualises himself, to make the students understand the message and the professor doesn’t. The professor only concentrates on giving a lecture, explains and disappears. If the pupils understand him, fine, but if not, is not of his concern. According to me as a teacher, it’s important to know how to be a maestra”.

Forcing the students to make her questions has two purposes; firstly, they give her a better idea of what her students do not understand and in that way she can avoid to be surprised by students failing in tests. Secondly, this encourages her to improve her preparations even better. Eva further emphasizes the duty to have a reality perspective and the importance of adjusting the education to the students. This means that the choice of method must realistically correlate with the students’ energy. This kind of adjustment is also mentioned by the retired teacher Francisco. According to him the teacher’s interest in pupils’ personal development and social awareness about the needs related to living in Guatemala are most decisive for pupils’ learning. In addition, a good teacher is reflective and adjusts the content of education to suit the pupils. The critical view on modern history, instead of simply accepting the official view, is a quality Guadalupe thinks teachers in Guatemala need. Also wanting to be up to date with knowledge and methods are crucial for the teachers working at Guadalupe’s school EDELAC. To attain this he invites experts to further educate the school staff about themes of psychology, human rights, politics and above all education. Discussions and debates about aims and further educating those who already are teachers are gaining the pupils. To Irma education means a complete education of the individual including the aims of making the students reason, think and express what they’re thinking as well as vital improvements of speech, behaviour and dressing. For her, being a teacher means to be a student guide and facilitate the

74 Eva
learning, but clarify that the student has to create his or her own bank of knowledge. Maria argues that it is important for teachers to see their students as knowledge sources and make use of their previous knowledge and experiences by integrating them with the new knowledge she brings in. She adds that a student participative method of teaching has to characterize the teachers’ work, which is an opinion our last teacher Mariella agrees with. In advance Mariella often gives her students the task to examine the subject they are going to discuss later on. That gives the students time to prepare themselves and she does not have to do all the talking.

5.1.2 Values of knowledge

To examine what kind of knowledge the teachers value as important we categorized their expressions into three groups. The individually related knowledge we define as the knowledge important to the pupils/student’s personal development. The school knowledge is the subjects and facts that are traditionally recognised as important for the school to teach about. Society related knowledge is what favours the development of the Guatemalan society.

5.1.2.1 Individually related knowledge

The individually related knowledge we found most prominent in the work of EDELAC, where great importance is given to the work with increasing the children’s and adolescents’ self-confidence and children’s and indigenous rights. They have also seen the need of educating about preventive health, such as brushing teeth and cooking, learn about the physical and psychological development. Educating the children about their rights at such an early age is though difficult, according to Francisco, since the children are unable to understand. Furthermore, he thinks teachers will not educate about rights unless they are obligated by the curriculum to do it. At level diversificado different examples of individually related knowledge are integrated in education. At INSO, Eva encourages the students to bring delicate subjects into discussions and the girls are specifically interested in talking about marriage and sexual relations. In her courses at her Saturday job at the colegio, Mariella teaches her students how to write Curriculum Vitae and the students get to practice different elements, like
behaviour and language, to increase their opportunities in getting an employment. ENBI is a school where much attention is paid to indigenous culture, traditions, philosophy and language and experiences of the students to learn to derive advantage from their cultural identity. Half the courses must be taught in the Maya language Quiché with purpose to accept the students´ origin. Jeanette thinks it is hard to work with the school material sent out by government since it does not correlate with the surroundings recognized by her pupils. To relate the teaching to the children’s neighbourhood, she for instance uses materials from the surroundings familiar to the children. "How to relate the context of one’s reality to the school work in the classroom” is also something that the teacher students at ENBI learn to ask themselves.  

5.1.2.2 School related knowledge
The content of the previous and present education, the school related knowledge, is clearly less appreciated by most of our respondents. Wilfredo, student at university and politically engaged in education matters, thinks the education is too concentrated on results in reading and writing and wishes the school to be more focused on education about human rights. The education at level primaria is constituted of math, language (Spanish), geography, old history, science, health, art, sports, and music according to Francisco. As an example of content, he and Martha both refer to the work where the pupils get to look for information about authors and traditions, classifications of animals and herbs, meat-eating and vegetable-eating animals, the family or make collages with press cuttings. During Francisco’s years working as a teacher there has never been education related to present political situation, the history of the indigenous people or their traditions. According to him it should be an obligation for the schools to give education about the politics of Guatemala today and how to use this knowledge in pupil’s own social situation. He means teaching about politics is not a part of the curriculum since the government does not permit an opening in this subject, a view that not only he but also the columnists in the papers he reads expresses. Education about the civil war and the situation of the indigenous he thinks could be a help in psychologically developing the villages. Eva, who teaches students with experiences from civil war, says it is still an open wound and one must be

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75 Maria Salomé
careful talking about it. Olga, the principal at Sakribal, who has previously worked as a teacher, also brings up the wrong focus on knowledge. She tells that the children in school learn about rivers in China and the lakes situated in the United States but they do not know anything about the river next to their village. The loss of the Guatemalan perspective is a problem repeatedly mentioned by the respondents. For instance, the history is taught from a European perspective and excludes the Guatemalan modern history as well as the civil war.

5.1.2.3 Society related knowledge

The school that distinguishes itself in this category of society related knowledge is ENBI, which consciously works with discussing the real situation of Guatemala. According to Irma, they discuss the national, political and historical situation, the so-called real situation. This includes how political and social circumstances are affecting the country and the social situation in the rural village. By these discussions, she believes the students will get an increased consciousness. Since the students are indigenous and some of them will work as teachers in rural areas, the TE put emphasis on teaching the students to analyse the pupils’ requirements at rural schools. Furthermore, Martha discusses morality with her pupils and let them solve dilemmas regarding how to treat each other respectfully and how to help somebody out of troublesome situations. Martha’s own belief is that one has to behave for the sake of God: ”Imagine if there wasn’t anybody to behave well for, then the society would be very bad”. Her class has its own presidential elections, a good way for them to learn about democracy and be aware of the possibility to choose between alternative options. The internal presidential elections are also an idea that the staff at EDELAC works with. To make the pupils conscious they also discuss the national, the political, economical and historical situation from the reality connected perspective, Guadalupe tells.

5.1.3 Values of methods

Frequently used methods among our respondents are discussions, researches and investigations, preferably in groups. At ENBI Irma let the students analyse

76 Martha
different themes, do conclusions and presentations to practice their social ability. The cooperation is usually between three or four students. Francisco thinks the work gets more productive when the pupils ask each other questions and have to agree, compared to work alone. He illustrates this by stating "Two give off more heat than one. And three give off more heat than two. /.../ That, the Bible says." 77

As mentioned earlier, role-playing is used by both EDELAC and Martha when learning about the president election procedure and democracy. Eva tries to vary her methods but likes her daily themes the most, where she and her students’ converse, explain, discuss and make questions to each other. Theoretic investigations are also a preferable method she thinks.

There are also examples of methods that are associated with the traditional, teacher-controlled, way of teaching. Though Francisco says he spends more time on tasks than lectures he at the same time maintains that at the level primaria the education mainly works on the basis where the teacher is the one talking and writing about things and the pupils are ‘taking it all in’ only by listening and writing. According to Jeanette, it’s a very common teaching situation when teachers let the pupils copy texts instead of letting the pupils interact in the teaching. Irma, who has had the possibility to take part in further education where teachers shared their experiences, learned how to improve her work by new methods seeing teachers more as supervisors and the students as constructors of knowledge. How to change the methodology among teachers to be more active and participative, to improve learning among the pupils among those teachers who prefer things to remain the same, is one of Celso’s challenges. This change is also Julio Aguilar, regionally responsible for the matters of education, concerned about, saying that the teachers have to develop and further educate themselves. Because now the classes have to be more interactive, which means both teacher and pupils have to be more participative.

77 Francisco
5.2 Analysis of the teachers’ view of their role in relation to the pupil

We will in this chapter see how the theory of trust may be applied on our results from this section. To recall, Rothstein means to create efficient institutions, trustful relations must be build between the citizens. An environment based on trust does not allow “social traps” to develop as a norm. Both Putnam and Rothstein agreed on that the higher social capital that exists in society, less likely is the risk that citizens break the laws, betray confidences etc.

We will first try to answer how it is possible for the school to generate social capital. Dewey wrote that the schools are responsible for the formal learning and implementation of the present values of democracy, today characterised in the national curricula. In this implementation, that we also call education or learning process, the teachers are the final link of the school system and the ones interacting with the students, meaning the teachers are major responsible of how the student apprehend the education. Dewey also asserted that citizens’ way of thinking and feeling is affected by the leadership and hence, it is important that the teachers themselves have accepted and are acting according to the democratic values in school. The indigenous population was during the 60-70s prohibited to speak their native languages and although the law officially disappeared, many of the teachers, indoctrinated in this discriminating education spirit, kept working. Not until the peace accord was signed the alterations in education were made, but the process is still very slow according to statistics showing the enrolled indigenous students and their lack of access to appropriate education. The fact that the education system still can neither offer a cost-free education nor fulfil the obligation of bilingual and multicultural education especially for indigenous and poor acknowledge school as a still discriminative institution. To change this, which can be described as a kind of collective memory, the school of Guatemala must manage to establish trustful relations with the part of the population that experience discrimination. In this, the teacher has a huge responsibility and possibility to make a change. Significance must be put on the relation with students, but in order to change opinions among the adults that keep up and pass on the negative collective memory also the parents must be involved. To create
trustful relations both parties in cooperation must experience the relation as positive. Assuming the dependency position that exists between teacher and student, the experience must primarily be evaluated out of the students’ and to some extent their parents’ perceptions.

In our attempt to discover what perception the teachers had regarding knowledge related to the individual we wanted to find out how they work with the students’ individual development. We believe the more attention the teacher put on education developing the student the greater are the possibilities of creating trustful relations between teacher and student. Teachers who during the interview put emphasis on the individual related knowledge, instead of school related knowledge, we therefore think make a larger contribution to the social capital. The principal of EDELAC gave the most examples of the individual work with the students’ but also Eva, Jeanette, Irma and Martha expressed by their view of their role great ambitions of strengthen the individual with knowledge of rights, skills, their neighbourhood and culture.

A teacher focusing on the school related knowledge exhibits a traditional view of his/her role as teacher. Using Dewey’s perspective on the functions of school the traditional teacher at his/her best only manage to fulfil two out of three functions, which are firstly; using initial knowledge to simplify the complex reality and secondly; give the students qualifications that can make an escape from the social environments limitations possible. However, the teacher cannot create an atmosphere of new thinking since she herself is locked in an old way of thinking.

Finally, the teachers focusing on the knowledge related to society see their role and the students from a socio-related perspective, prioritising knowledge that makes the students understand and handle their surroundings. This group of knowledge can be seen as extension of the individual related knowledge. It’s our opinion that students can by the society related knowledge understand their own active role in a wider context in the big world, while the individual related knowledge is about the students’ role in the small world, e.g. their familiar surroundings, their village or city. Examples of this were on lower levels the democratic presidential elections in class and morality discussions, learning how
to choose between different options and recognize the consequences of one's actions. At higher levels, discussions were mostly about politics and social circumstances affecting the citizens differently. Many of the teachers talked about the important aim of making the students conscious about the situation in the country.

Let us now apply Rothstein’s and Putnam’s second component of social capital (where the first component was trust and the third is mutuality), participation in associations, to the teacher role in relation to the pupil. The correspondence to the participations in associations would in school be the participation and possibility to interact during classes, in other words the methods used. If the teacher chooses to use methods with a high rate of student participation, the students learn to cooperate and from this, we believe both trust and mutuality will be generated. They in our case may increase the occurrence of one another in a positive spiral, meaning participation gains the mutuality and trust, mutuality gains the trust and participation and trust gains the participation and mutuality. Looking at our results the respondent claims to prefer discussions, researches, tasks and investigations. The numbers of students in groups vary, but the teachers agree that the purpose of the methods is to develop the students’ social ability, which is crucial. To what extent the teachers use these methods we do not know, but the above mentioned methods give us an opposite suggestion to Francisco’s declaration that most of the education on level primaria is based on the teachers’ accounts by the black board. Still, there are requests from the superiors that teachers have to further educate themselves about new methods. From the interviews, we understand our respondents are or have been very dedicated to their profession as a teacher and have a positive viewpoint about the significance they have in the students’ life. By using participating methods teachers can function as generators of social capital.

5.3 Result: The teachers’ view of their role in relation to the children’s social context

This section discusses the teacher’s role in relation to the context of the child and in what way school and family interact. We have chosen to divide this context
into two parts. The first is related to the child’s family and the second to the child’s language and identity. In the first part we have chosen to mention problems such as alcoholism and teenage pregnancies. We also want to show how the families’ economical situation affect the children’s possibilities to receive education. Problems of alienation, which appears as a result of a cultural clash between the Mayan culture and international influences, and difficulties related to language will be discussed in the second part.

5.3.1 Family

The family situation is of great importance in a child’s learning process, therefore the teacher needs to take aspects related to family into consideration when teaching, and in his or her commission in general. Our interviews show that the active relations between the teacher and the families are of two different kinds; the teacher goes to visit the home of a child in order to convince the parents to send their child to school, or the teacher takes part in a school programme with the aim to involve the parents in school activities. Jeanette and Guadalupe, both working in rural areas, tell us about how they visit the homes of the children who do not come to school. At EDELAC, Guadalupe’s school, they have a visiting programme in January when the semester has begun, where the teachers pay the parents of the absent children a visit to find out why their child has not come to school and tell the parents that it is important to attend school. Jeanette too talks about the struggle to make the parents conscious of the importance of school:

We, the teachers, visit the homes to... “please come to school it will benefit you”, make the parents aware that they should not send them to work, that they should send them to school... We have told them that if they don’t send them to school it's a crime. /.../ Because the child has a right to study, not work. But the parents don’t understand. We have turned to the police, we have asked the police to talk to the parents so they will be frightened... 78

At Guadalupe’s school EDELAC and at ENBI, the bilingual Teacher Education where Maria is principal, they have school programmes designed to establish

78 Jeanette
connections between school and parents with the aim to make the parents collaborate with the teachers and to raise the level of consciousness of the importance of education. ENBI works with a programme from the Ministry of Education called ‘la mano educame’ which is directed to rural areas with no preprimaria schools. The idea with the programme is to educate the mothers so they can teach their children at home. The mothers are educated in the child’s developing process related to age, with the aim of facilitating the entrance to school. During the first year of the Teacher Education at ENBI, the students take active part in this programme. Another example is ‘Escuela de padres’ at EDELAC, which is a programme for the parents to help prevent different kinds of problems in the families. EDELAC has 170 children enrolled, which mean 65 mothers. 60 of them together with two fathers are engaged in the classes that ‘Escuela de padres’ gives ones a month. Guadalupe tells us about the context of their programme:

According to the studies we have conducted here, there is a lot of maltreatment in the families, there is a lot of violence within the families, there is a lot of alcoholism, there is a lot of... neglect, a lack of self-confidence, a lack of communication in the families... So, this makes the children have a low self-confidence, low level of concentration... ehm... They are all the time in the streets here in the area, relationships are not good, since an early age they have seen bad things in a lot of parents like alcoholism, maltreatment etc. This makes them vulnerable to end up in the streets and when they are twelve, thirteen, fifteen years old they are practically in the streets. Since early ages they are using drugs, they are in gangs, smoking, drinking. Therefore, our idea is to make a programme that includes the dads and mums. Preventive; helping them with their self-confidence, their relationships, their communication with their children, education with affection, with tenderness the... self-confidence in general.  

A small group of mothers from ‘Escuela de padres’ also takes part in a programme where EDELAC teach the parents literacy. This emphasis on family is manifested in the first of the five principles of EDELAC: “To consider the family as the primary place of influence for the general development of children”.  

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79 Guadalupe  
80 EDELAC
The problems related to alcohol, which Guadalupe speaks of, are something that also concerns Jeanette. She says children are sent to buy alcohol for their parents and then take the opportunity of tasting it, which brings problems of alcoholism down to young ages. Other social problems mentioned are pregnancies and early marriages. Eva, who is a teacher at the Teacher Education INSO, talks about pregnancies as a reason for some students to drop out of school and Jeanette with her rural perspective has seen the problems with marriages at as early ages as thirteen-fourteen. At these ages, the girls are not physiologically developed and therefore not ready for pregnancies. Jeanette tells us about a girl in the area where she works that married at the age of thirteen and got into trouble with her mother in-law over the fact that she could not get pregnant. School has the ability to play an important role in enlightening the children on the physiological development and in issues related to sex. The problem though, as Jeanette points out, is that these topics do not appear in school before fourth grade and then the girls that marry early have already left school.

Several of the teachers talk about the families economical situations as an obstacle for education. Even though the public schools up to level basico are free, in accordance with the constitution, there are still costs related to studies, such as paying for books and pencils not to mention the loss of income that a child in school represents. At level diversificado, where the Teacher Education is situated, and at private schools, there is also a registration fee each year. In addition to this, travels increase the cost of studies for the adolescents studying at level diversificado since these schools are situated in towns, that is, far away from the rural areas where many students live. Irma, teacher at the bilingual Teacher Education, says that many young indigenous people want to study but are prevented to do so by the family’s low income and therefore have no choice but to work. Mariella working with adolescents given a second chance to study, point out that in rural areas the families are often large which, in combination with low incomes, dramatically affect the economical situation.
But what happens in many other families is that the father doesn’t have any land, and he goes away to work from eight until one, right. From eight until one, two, three in the afternoon. And they pay him twenty-five quetzales. What’s twenty-five quetzales?! He has eight children to support. /…/

Therefore, to go and study is not an option. And this is what affects here in Guatemala; there is no work, the family is very large. So, they scarcely have enough to eat and therefore they cannot study. 81

The necessity for children to work in order to contribute to the family income is according to Mariella the main reason that children do not complete school. She says: “school is there, the teachers are there” but “the parents bring their children with them to work.”82 Guadalupe concludes that even though education is important to many parents, the families’ day-to-day survival issues are more important. That is, the value of education is recognized and the choice between education and work is a matter of prioritizing. Other parents, however, do not see the purpose of education and therefore neither do their children. Jeanette tells us that some girls say that to them it is not important to know how to read and write because they will marry and have children. The children's lack of visions for the future is something that makes Jeanette frustrated. She, as a teacher, sees potential in her pupils and wants to convey the message that the children have the ability to study and become e.g. a teacher or an engineer.

5.3.2 Language and identity

School has the ability to support or confuse, or in the worst case demolish a child’s identity. It all has to do with the school approach. Jeanette has reflected upon these issues and is frustrated about the unsuitable material she has to rely on for her tuition. She says the schoolbooks they receive from the Ministry of Education are not suited for the children from the countryside and that the children cannot relate to the content. It does not reflect their reality.

Francisco expresses that it is important as a teacher to understand the needs of the village where one is working and that development should occur on the basis of

81 Mariella
82 Mariella
these needs. He tells us about how he worked with pupils in sixth grade and spent time with them in the afternoons just to play football with them and to chat about this and that. By doing that he managed to identify himself with his pupils, which is something Francisco considers essential to be able to help the children.

Identification is also a topic that Maria, principal at ENBI, raises, in connection with important Mayan values and cultural identity. She sees how the influence from TV and the United States affect the students and make the girls reluctant to wear their traditional clothing and instead prefer clothes of fashion and novelty. She believes the influence of media will eventually destroy the Mayan cultural identity and fears that values will be lost. Maria says that the students know more about the life in the United States mediated via TV, than they know about Guatemala and therefore don’t identify themselves in their own reality. This problem with alienation is also affecting the students’ at the bilingual Teacher Education willingness to speak their own language. Therefore the education at ENBI is a process of sensitizing the students and make them susceptible to accept their own language. Wilfredo is a student at the university, politically committed and engaged in educational issues. He explains to us that in the area of Quetzaltenango the mayan people have lost their language two generations ago, because they were forbidden to speak it during the civil war.

They identify themselves as Mayas, but they don’t speak the language. Because it was forbidden... they threatened the parents with expulsing the pupil from school, and to imprison the parents, for teaching their mother tongue. That is, they forced them to only speak castellano. /.../ The bilingual education is... only... for the Mayans. For the indigenous people. But with the intention of assimilating them and turn them into ladinos. That is, assimilate them and take away their language. 

In other areas, however, the Mayan languages have survived the civil war. A common situation in these regions is that the pupils speak their mother tongue but receive classes in Spanish. Wilfredo says this is the answer to why there are so many drop outs from schools in these areas. “The children don’t understand anything, and prefer to leave school.”

Francisco shares with us his experiences
of, working as a young teacher in Sololá, around 40 km east of Quetzaltenango: “But where I first worked, in Sololá,... there hadn’t been a lot of castellanisation, Spanish. So I had to... try to make myself understood with the pupil with some words in their mother tongue, and a little spanish”. To be able to teach the pupils Francisco was dependent on the help from pupils who better than their classmates mastered the Spanish language. These pupils filled an important function as translaters in the classroom. Francisco turned to them and asked them to explain to the other children.

Even though Quetzaltenango has undergone a linguistic transformation and most people have forgotten their Mayan language, there are still students at level diversificado who have problems understanding the Spanish spoken in school. At level diversificado many students travel a long way to receive their education and thus come from regions where Quiche or other Mayan languages are spoken at home. Eva working at the Teacher Education INSO says she has several students with a mother tongue other than Spanish and that this makes it more difficult for them to understand the classes. As many of our respondents testify it is difficult as a teacher to know when the pupils or students don’t understand, and most pupils don’t let the teacher know when the class is beyond their comprehension.

5.4 Analysis of the teachers’ view of their role in relation to the children’s social context

The social context will here, as in the previous chapter be divided in: family and language and identity. We begin with analysing how the teachers view their role in relation to the children’s families.

5.4.1 Family

The relationships between the teachers and the families were, as we mentioned in the discussion of results, of two different kinds. Applying the vocabulary of Robert Putnam, we call these relationships vertical and horizontal. Jeanette

85 Francisco
presents us with an example of the former, when she explains how the teachers of her school visit the families in order to persuade the parents to send their children to school. The teachers tell the parents that it is a crime not to let the children study and have even gone as far as to involve the police. This is a clear illustration of vertical relationships. When persuasion does not have any effect, the teachers refer to the police as a source of authority, aiming to scare the parents into sending their children to school. The consequence of this is that school becomes just another compulsion. As Dewey says: when a person does not have any influence over her situation she becomes passive, which is what happens to the parents. They become passive in the issue of education. The parent programmes of EDELAC and ENBI on the other hand, are examples of horizontal relationships. They aim to involve the parents in school activities, and through their participation make them aware of the importance of school.

The difference between these two kinds of relationships is that the parents engaged in the vertical relationships send their children to school because they are being persuaded or threatened. That is, the motive is external, whereas the other group of parents who are being initiated into the school world in horizontal relationships gain an internal motive to let their children receive education. Internal motives are what is needed in a democracy since the idea of an external authority that makes all decisions has been rejected.

One of the functions of school, according to Dewey, is to give each individual the possibility to escape the limitations provided by the social environment, which is a perspective of school we observed in all our respondents. They put great value in the ability to read and write, and see school as a way to a better life for their pupils. Most of our respondents also had aims for their work and tuition that went beyond the strictly school related tasks and had thoughts and ideas of the challenges they face related to the children’s social context. These challenges; related to the parents’ perception of school, to alcohol, teenage pregnancies and early marriages, lack of economy and lack of visions, are being viewed differently by each teacher as a result of their individual perception of reality and of what they can accomplish. Some of the aspects related to the children’s social environment are within the teachers’ range of influence whereas others are
beyond their reach. An example of the former can be the children’s lack of visions for their future and the latter can be exemplified with the families’ economy. However, some of these challenges are in the borderland between what the teachers can affect and what not. The crucial aspect affecting the teachers’ potential to exert influence in these issues is their power of initiative. Power of initiative makes the teachers place these issues on the agenda and act according to it. Nevertheless, power of initiative is not something a person who has spent her life obeying the saying of others possesses. If the teacher is engaged in vertical relationships at her place of work, she has little experience of being able to exert influence and therefore, as Dewey says, will have difficulties feeling any sense of personal responsibility. The individual will then settle with doing what she is obliged to do, which in this case is teach the children how to read, write and count, and adopts a passive attitude towards the important matters.

5.4.2 Language and identity

The first step towards leaving the old discriminating school system behind is to raise the level of awareness of discriminating factors and that the teachers learn to put attention to the pupils’ different conditions. The assimilation process which Wilfredo speaks of, aiming to make everyone ladino has had a deep impact on the school system. It managed to erase the Mayan languages and their culture from school. Guatemala now has extensive work ahead implementing the Mayan languages in all levels of education. Focus is however on the lower levels, which means that bilingual education is not that common at level basico and diversificado. The indigenous children, that live in rural areas outside the city of Quetzaltenango and study at level basico and diversificado in many cases have Quiche or another Mayan language as their mother tongue but are being taught in Spanish. The linguist Gunilla Ladberg puts attention to the difficulties that a child experiences when being taught in her second language. She explains that it is a common mistake to confuse a fluency in the spoken language with an ability to use the language in other subjects. This makes studying harder for these children. Eva at INSO told us that she has several students that do not master the Spanish used in school situations and that this makes it more difficult for them to
understand the classes. As we mentioned earlier this awareness of the children’s difficulties is the first step towards being able to provide them with the help they need.

The discrimination from the assimilation process also excluded the Mayan culture from school and it seems to have a hard time finding its way back into the classroom. Jeanette told us about the unsuitable books with a content the children cannot relate to, that the Ministry of Education sends them to work with at her school. According to Dewey, the teachers’ work would be better carried out if they could have more influence over their tuition and education in general. Dewey also states that one of the functions for school is to break down the complex reality into smaller pieces so the children will get a chance to understand it. The problem however, is that it is not their reality that are being broken down into pieces and presented in the schoolbooks. In stead, they learn about European and American history and not about their own culture. This is equivalent to using operating instructions for a chair to build a bookshelf. The result, when you put all the pieces together is neither a chair nor a bookshelf. This gives many children problems with their identity and can make them feel alienated towards their own culture.

The Mayan language and culture are at focus at ENBI. The principal Maria is struggling to counteract the alienation many students experience towards their own culture due to assimilation into becoming Ladinos and the influence of western culture from the United States via TV. This brings us to another function of school according to Dewey, which is eliminating the influence of ‘dead wood’ in school. However, people do not seem to agree on what constitutes dead wood. Is it the Spanish inheritance from the colonial time or is it the Mayan culture?

5.5 The teachers’ and other education-involved people’s opinions of the Teacher Education

In this chapter, we will deal with some of the obstacles the informants are struggling with at the Teacher Education, mainly at ENBI. The points of views
include comments on how the deficiency of governmental responsibility and the lack of motivation among students affect the education.

TE schools get, like a few other public vocational educations, financial support from the government. This make the education the cheapest choice compared with private schools, colegios. Maria explains that on public schools only an annual inscription fee is required, which means the majority chooses the public TE to avoid having to pay every month, which is common at colegios. The government only possesses twenty percent of the diversificados, whilst the other eighty percent are colegios and since the demand of students to diversificados is far higher than the supply of schools there is a great competition among students who cannot afford the more expensive options. The Vice Minister of Education means this is the reason to why so few students attain level diversificado. However, the government is only obliged to give the compulsory education and since diversificado is not compulsory, the teacher training schools cannot be guaranteed any financial support from the government, which affects the schools very negatively. According to the principal Maria, problems concerning infrastructure is obstructing the teachers to perform their work at ENBI. From time to time, the lack of buildings forces three different schools to share the facilities, an impossible situation since no material can be left in the facilities. This, she thinks, makes the school mismanage the quality of education. In order to improve the circumstances, schools with necessary infrastructure, equipment and resources are needed.

Another problem dealt with at ENBI is the unmotivated students who do not want to work as teachers. According to Maria this constitutes a problem difficult to solve since: “We can’t deny them this opportunity, that doesn’t gain society, but gain the individual to get another work”. She definitely thinks a possible solution would be to claim for increased educational options under governmental responsibility. The Vice Minister confirms the problem but also expresses his deficiency of time in power solving it, stating; “When other educations don’t exist, I become teacher even though I don’t want to, because that’s the only

86 Maria
education. This needs to be improved in the system. I’m sure we can’t solve this. We only have 13 months left.”

Except for the reason of being a low-fee education, an explanation to why unmotivated students are registered at the education is according to Irma that the education is chosen out of the parents’ opinion of an appropriate education instead of the students own will. This cause distraction and when the students are not paying attention to the education, they obstruct the education to be more dynamic. Distracted students with no aims in life aggravate the teaching circumstances even for Eva. A third explanation to the lack of motivation among students is as expressed by Maria that; “Here in Guatemala the TE is for lots of students a way to apply for another education at university” 88. This occurrence we found among our youngest generation of teacher respondents, Martha and Mariella, who are combining their present jobs as teachers with evening and weekend studies of law at university. The work is for many students necessary to be able to pay for the studies.

Our informants were not the slightest stingy with critics against their own education, all of them had suggestions of improvements that have to be done. Concerning the teachers’ own education Maria and Irma think improvements of knowledge about methods and didactics must be made, but unfortunately, the wages are too low to make it possible to buy the books about didactics themselves. The Vice Minister of Education, however, considers knowledge of maths, language and communication to be the subjects most urgent, since the teachers in Guatemala are less competent in international comparison. Trying to find solutions to reach these goals the government is influenced by foreign models, a solution Maria do not see as an advantage. She means models that are not proposed by its own society do not correspond to it, since the models are shaped in a special context and cannot be expected to have the same success in another country with a very different reality. The Guatemalan school is today working in an education institutional project from Colombia, which in Colombia have had great results. The disappointment over not trying to find the solutions

87 Celso Chaclan Solis
88 Maria
within the country among the population is contributing to the sense of mistrust that Maria feels towards the government.

5.6 Analysis of the opinions of the Teacher Education

The opinions about the TE revealed dissatisfactions mainly concerning the lack of infrastructure and unmotivated students. At ENBI the staff experience that they are not given the basic conditions for prosecuting good work, consequences of the absence of governmental responsibility. In the earlier chapter, we discussed the importance getting engaged teachers executing the work to increase the trust, participation and mutuality and change the attitude towards education among students. In the same way the teacher training must be responsible for educating the students into becoming these teachers, a hard work that presuppose support.

The fact that the public diversificados are not compulsory gives the government an easy way out of responsibility of supporting the schools economically. This is well noticed at ENBI, where resources of all kinds are small and the sense of not being able to influence ones situation of work is obvious. The lack of power is easily understood when investigating the highly set aims for the students and teachers in the TEC. Not distributing enough resources is limiting the teachers in their work and hence, the conditions do not seem to correlate with the demands given. The relationship between ENBI and the government we see is an example of Putnam’s vertical relationship, based on authority and dependence. The government maintains that diversificado is not their responsibility, and the vice minister is further struggling with international goals and standards. Through applying international models on Guatemala instead of letting the population be a part of the solution the government in a way send signal of seeing them as incompetent, seen from Dewey’s viewpoint.
5.7 Result: The teachers’ opinions of the work of their colleagues

This part of the chapter discusses the teachers’ opinions of the work of their colleagues. The reader will here encounter positive conceptions concerning the cooperation between teachers and negative opinions related to the teachers’ level of commitment to their work, their knowledge, attitudes to learning another language and their lack of visions. The Vice Minister of Education is given space for comments.

Opinions of colleagues and their work were on several occasions mentioned by our respondents when expressing their view on their own work as teachers. These remarks were of two different natures. A majority of the teachers let us in casual comments know that they felt a sense of connection with their fellow teachers working at the same school. The other type of comments, which were more about teachers in general, expressed disbelief towards the teachers of Guatemala and their commitment to their work. The positive comments were most clearly expressed by Guadalupe at EDELAC and Irma at ENBI. Irma says the teachers at ENBI help each other, which is an important part of their school philosophy, and that they get plenty of support from the school head office. Guadalupe, who is part of the head office at EDELAC, has the same view of the work at his school. He also says that EDELAC puts a lot of resources on further education, and believes it is important that the teachers learn about more perspectives in the history of Guatemala than the ones presented by for instance the United States. This includes continuous discussions between the teachers at EDELAC, which favour the ability of critical thinking. Guadalupe talks about ‘learning form each other’ and ‘constructing ourselves’ as teachers and human beings. Guadalupe also has a positive impression of the work at other schools, which he has gained through contacts with teachers and principals. However, when it comes to teaching the children about their civil rights, which is given a lot of emphasis at EDELAC, Guadalupe says there is still a lot missing at other schools. "There are many
schools where they don’t like to talk about these things. /…/ It’s not important to them.»

Other remarks on the negative side were for instance that some teachers only work to make money and not because they want to be teachers. Both Francisco and Eva are of this opinion. Eva adds that there are many teachers that do not care if the students pass their classes or not, and Francisco says that some teachers teach the children what is in the curriculum without reflecting if this is a good content or not. Francisco explains that a teacher has the freedom to elaborate the classes in whichever way he feels best suited but that many teachers do not think for themselves.

The knowledge of the teachers also received negative comments. Francisco has met several students studying at the Teacher Education when they have been doing their practice in his classroom and concludes that the future teachers do not know how to teach the children to read and write: “This is the failure of Guatemala, that the teachers go to teach first grade but don’t know how to teach first grade.” Francisco also tells us that he has worked with teachers who do not know a lot about Guatemala’s civil war, because they have not taken the time to understand what happened. Wilfredo, the student politically committed, agree that there is, amongst some teachers, a lack of interest in raising their academic level or in other ways learn more. Wilfredo says the ancient view of the teachers as walking encyclopaedias with nothing more to learn still exists. Celso Chaclan, Vice Minister of Education, also expresses concerns about the teachers’ knowledge. According to an evaluation that the Ministry of Education has done, the teachers of Guatemala got less then 50 points out of 100 when evaluating their knowledge of subjects as maths and language. The Vice Minister says the low results make it impossible to compete with international standards and that the educational reform waiting to be implemented expects the Teacher Education to focus more on these two subjects.

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89 Guadalupe
90 Francisco
The conservative attitude towards learning more, which Wilfredo speaks of, also includes the teachers’ willingness to learn another language. Through his political work, he has encountered a lack of interest on the part of the teachers, concerning learning a Mayan language. The teachers say Maya is part of the past, which consequently makes Spanish or other international languages part of the future, but Wilfredo says the teachers are also uninterested in learning a foreign language such as English. Olga, principal of the Spanish school for foreigners – Sakribal, where we had our research-base in Quetzaltenango, is of the opinion that it ought to be natural for all Guatemalans to be bilingual, not just for the Mayans. Olga, whose mother tongue is Spanish, feels the bilingualism should be mutual and that the Spanish-speaking population ought to learn the Mayan language used in the area they live in.

The final remark on the Guatemalan teachers come from the Vice Minister of Education who says the teachers of Guatemala do not have visions of the future. This is an observation he has done when speaking with teachers. The Vice Minister considers this to be a serious matter and explains that the government has, to help the young generation escape this trap, introduced a programme at level diversificado called ‘claves para la excelencia’, which in a free interpretation means keys to success. In this programme, that has the form of a seminar, the adolescents write down their view of their future, which is an exercise meant to help the young people create goals in their lives and try to fulfil their dreams.

5.8 Analysis of the teachers’ opinions of the work of their colleagues

We will in this analysis take you back to the notion of horizontal and vertical relationships. The interviews conducted shows that the teachers working at schools with a special profile were more engaged in horizontal relationships than the teachers working at ordinary public schools. We observed that Mariella, working with teenagers given a second chance to education and Martha, working at an autogestion school held a positive tone all through our conversations, whereas Francisco, Eva and Jeanette, all working/having worked at public schools
at different levels, added negative comments on the work of their colleagues even when this was not specifically asked for. The most positive view of their colleagues came however from Maria and Irma at ENBI, and from Guadalupe at EDELAC. Irma explained that the teachers at ENBI help each other and that they get a lot of support from the school head office, and Guadalupe told us about the continuous discussions between the teachers at EDELAC. These are the clearest examples of horizontal relationships. The leadership at the two schools is democratic and the daily work is characterized by mutuality and cooperation. Through our conversations, we observed a sense of mutual identity between the teachers at ENBI and EDELAC, which we believe is a result of the cooperative atmosphere, and the reason for the positive attitudes towards work and colleagues.

Vertical relationships of authority and dependence make people feel powerless, and that is what Francisco, Eva and Jeanette expressed. They are unsatisfied with their working situations but do not feel there is anything they can do to change it. When speaking of colleagues, Francisco and Eva are of the opinion that many teachers lack important qualities such as devotion towards their students and their results, as well as the ability to reflect over what is a good educational content. Of course, our respondents do not want to identify themselves with teachers who lack these qualities. However, a sense of mutual identity would most likely have a positive effect on the colleagues’ ability to reflect as well as their devotion towards the students. Thus, the vertical relationships that dictatorship left behind as a remembrance of old times prevents people from reaching out to their colleagues and improve themselves together.

5.9 Result: The teachers’ opinions of the government’s policy of education

This part of the chapter discusses the teachers’ opinions on the governments work in school related matters, such as education in rural areas and bilingual education. The teachers also give their opinions on working in a public school and on lack of resources. The Vice Minister of Education is given space for comments on these issues.
In the interviews, our respondents often came back to the question of how the government and their proposals affect them in their work as teachers. Their view of the government in general is characterized by a sense of disbelief. Maria, the principal at ENBI, describes the problem of constant changes of those in power. She says that every fourth year, when a new government has been elected they start new processes and that it is difficult to foresee what new decisions will be taken and how they will affect her and her teachers’ work at ENBI. Irma, also working at ENBI, says that those in power are more concerned with their own earnings than with the needs of the children living in poverty. Jeanette adds that there is a lot of corruption in Guatemala in general and “it’s the same with the Ministry of Education, there is a lot of corruption”.\textsuperscript{91} She also states: “Each president wants to become a millionaire; he is not concerned with his country, nor with education nor health care.”\textsuperscript{92} Even Celso Chaclan, the Vice Minister of Education, contributes with a negative comment on the government he is a part of: “I would say; in previous years, in other governments, and this still applies to some extent to this government; no one has visions for the future.”\textsuperscript{93}

The constitution says that school should be free for everyone up to and including level basico but there is a discrepancy between the constitution and reality. As Mariella says, there are still many children that do not have the opportunity to study. The Vice Minister agrees that all children do not have the same access to education and talks about the need to construct schools in the most remote villages. In the villages there are schools up to sixth grade, and to be able to study at level basico (7\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} grade) the children have to go to a municipality, which are often far away. The government is obliged to offer all children education at level basico, but the vice minister says: “It is a challenge. And this will not the next government manage. The next government will make some progress, but it will take two or three governments to be able to make progress in the entire country.”\textsuperscript{94} As a temporary compromise, the Ministry of Education is

\textsuperscript{91} Jeanette
\textsuperscript{92} Jeanette
\textsuperscript{93} Chaclan
\textsuperscript{94} Chaclan
implementing a programme called ‘telesecundaria’, which is a programme that gives the children in rural areas education at level basico via TV.

Jeanette, working at level preprimaria in rural Quetzaltenango is disappointed with the inadequate support she and her colleagues working in rural areas get from the government. She says there are injustices between the urban and rural schools and exemplifies with the small amount of money her school gets to give the children something to eat, whereas the urban schools in addition to the money receive milk, and also more school material. She feels there is a lack of focus on the rural situation, and that the government does not have knowledge about the children living in these areas.

The government also receives criticism for not focusing more on the bilingual education. Irma, teacher at the bilingual Teacher Education, says the Ministry of Education does not see the value of bilingual education, and that they do not meet the needs of the Maya-speaking population. She points out that there is a deficiency of bilingual schools and teachers. The vice minister’s comment on this is that he would like there to be bilingual schools for all linguistic communities, but that it is not possible because the budget cannot cover such a proposal. Another problem, he adds, is that there are no graduated teachers from these communities and therefore it is a long process. First, the children from these areas need to study in primaria, basico and then graduate from level diversificado as teachers. There is also a need for people from these areas to study at the university, because with no teachers with a university degree there can be no Teacher Education teaching the smallest Mayan languages. From the principal at ENBI’s point of view however, the problem is the government’s lack of interest in bilingual education. If there had been a genuine interest there would be more economical resources addressed to bilingual education. An additional problem is mentioned by Irma at ENBI and Wilfredo, the politically committed student. They say the match between teachers and schools is unsatisfactory. Wilfredo tells us that the educational organisation he is part of has spoken with teachers at bilingual schools at level primaria and discovered that many of these teachers only speak Spanish, whereas the children speak their Mayan language. Sometimes the teachers need help from an interpreter to be able to teach the children. The match
between the teachers and the schools is the government’s responsibility since they are the ones employing the teachers, but Wilfredo is critical towards the government’s lack of commitment in this issue:

The government says: “We need teachers”, but they don’t care to see if the person is from the area. Imagine for instance that a person from here in Quetzaltenango who speaks Quiché, is sent to teach in an area where they speak Kachiquel. He won’t understand his pupils.  

In Guatemala, there are many different types of schools educating the children. The Ministry of Education’s deficient resources has created a breeding ground for other types of schools to fill the education gap. Apart from the public schools, there are the private ones, colegios, which can be catholic, evangelic or non-religious and directed to either people with resources or people with less means. There are also schools of autogestion which are schools started by the parents. Our interviewees let us know that working at a public school provides the teachers with a sense of security that the other schools don’t offer. Eva, teacher at the public school INSO, has experience from working at several colegios and tells us that the public schools give the teachers benefits such as pension, an increase of wage every five years and a salary during the school holidays.

A problem several of our respondents talked about was the shortage of resources. The teachers do not have the material they need and there are not enough schools. The government needs to build more schools and Wilfredo claim that Quetzaltenango has not gotten a single new school in fifteen years. The lack of further education for the teachers also receives complaints. Eva at INSO says: "I believe a teacher needs to keep up to date. And ought to be competent, ought to receive further education in order to teach more modern, to teach content closer to reality. But this has been neglected", and she explains that not all teachers get the opportunity to learn more. There are many comments on how the government uses their resources poorly, but the Vice Minister of Education says this government has dedicated a substantially larger amount of money to education than did the previous one. He agrees however, that it is not enough: "Yes I would
say there is a lack of resources. There are *a lot of resources lacking for all the schools.*"\(^{97}\)

### 5.10 Analysis of the teachers’ opinions of the government’s policy of education

Guatemala is a very young democracy and only ten years have past since the peace agreements were signed, which means that all adult citizens have experiences from living in a non-democratic state ruled by an external authority. So even if the situation has changed; civil war has ended and dictatorship has been replaced with democracy, people still keep their disbelief towards the government. Irma, Jeanette, Maria, Wilfredo and Francisco do not have faith in the government’s intentions and Jeanette says that the Ministry of Education, as well as the rest of Guatemala is full of corruption.

The sense of disbelief towards the government has to do with our informants’ perception of reality, which derives from their collective memory of dictatorship, corruption and discrimination. The disbelief towards the government may be well deserved in many cases, but when the government’s intentions are good and honest; those in power will still be questioned and mistrusted. The Vice Minister of Education says the government is committed to increase access to education and that this government has dedicated more resources to education than the previous one. Nevertheless, the government’s efforts are being viewed and judged through the historical glasses of mistakes of previous governments.

Rothstein speaks of the importance that universal institutions have in affecting people’s perception of reality, and thereby increase the amount of trust between people. However, Guatemala is a long way from universal institutions. The government is far from fulfilling the constitutional right of free schooling up to level basico for everyone. The rural areas do not have enough schools, and the ones that exist do not receive sufficient support. Furthermore, bilingual education

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\(^{97}\) Chaclan
is not available to all Mayan communities. These deficiencies of course fill the teachers with a sense of disbelief towards the government.
6. Conclusions

To conclude we would like to use the results of our study to discuss our final question concerning the role of teachers and school, in the process of strengthening the democracy of Guatemala, or as Putnam says *making democracy work*. This discussion derives from all the results and analysis in the thesis, using our chosen theory to help us answer the question: What functions do teachers and school as whole have in the context of developing a democracy like Guatemala?

Guatemala has a dark history of civil war, massacres, dictatorship and discrimination. These memories accompany the citizens of the newly democratized Guatemala, and affect the way they view Guatemala of today and their view of the future. We would here like to put focus of three leftovers from dictatorship: First of all, it takes time to replace the vertical relationships of authority and dependence, with relationships of a more cooperative nature. Vertical relationships of this kind makes corruption thrive. Secondly, these vertical relationships, characteristic of dictatorship, have made people used to decisions being made over the top of their heads, which inhibits people’s power of initiative. The third leftover is mistrust, which derives from people’s collective memory of civil war and discrimination. People are suspicious of new institutions and political leaders trying to change the situation.

As we mentioned before political science do not possess the answers of how to come to terms with problems like corruption, low power of initiative and mistrust. It merely says something about conditions in specific states, which are not possible to generalize. However, scientists agree that the problems with poverty in the developing countries can be explained with a lack of efficient institutions. Efficient institutions are also one of the components that constitute a well functioning democracy. So, to what extent are the institutions of Guatemala
efficient? Our focus is on one specific institution, namely school: The mismatch of schools and teachers, in linguistic aspects, is a huge source of lost resources. Resources are also lost at the Teacher Education where the teachers educate students that have no desire to work within the field of education. Other signs of inefficiency are the lack of further education for teachers as well as the lack of schools.

As we explained in our theory chapter, trust, which derive from people’s perception of reality, is the base for a well functioning democracy, according to Rothstein. The perceptions we came across in the conversations with our respondents were gloomy and can help us understand why the school of Guatemala is not an efficient institution. The teachers’ view of the government and the government’s view of the teachers were both characterized with a sense of mistrust. Both of them are also critical towards the knowledge of the teachers, which has been described as poor in several areas. The teachers’ perception of their own group, as well as what they can accomplish are also on the negative side. They lack a sense of pride for their profession, and according to the Vice Minister of Education, visions for the future.

The question is, how is it possible to escape from “the dead wood” and collective memories from the past and create a more positive perception of reality, than the one described above? And how is it possible to create the efficient institutions necessary to make democracy flourish? The conclusion Putnam came to in his study of Italy was that there is a positive correlation between the amount of clubs and associations, and efficient institutions. In the case of Guatemala that would mean that organisations like EDELAC, created from voluntary commitment play an important part in creating habits of cooperation and power of initiative, which is vital for a democracy. Rothstein address the matter from a different perspective. His starting point is: how can a society avoid social traps like corruption? He concludes that trust, based on perception of reality, originating from peoples collective memory can be created through universal institutions. Universal, impartial institutions would generate confidence in the system and trust between people. The indigenous population of Guatemala have long suffered from discrimination and been victims under partial institutions. However, in a
democracy it is impossible to justify such a treatment of people and the fact that those in power need to defend their decisions and argue for them makes it difficult to hold on to such discriminating ideas.

Thus, making democracy work is a process, and there is no one end to start at. The work needs to be approached from different angels. The voluntary organisations, like EDELAC, play an important part in creating the abilities desirable in democratic citizens, and the open debates that exists in a democracy, where one has to argue for one’s ideas, will help to remove the discriminating partial institutions from the past, and help create the trust needed to build a well functioning democracy.

We will now take a closer look at the role that school and teachers play in the process of developing democracy. The teachers’ perception of reality and what they may achieve is affected by their experiences from teacher education. The quality of the teacher education is therefore decisive for how the future teachers take care of their profession. Today this education is one of few options and hence it also attracts students that do not want to work as teachers. Another source for the lack of motivated students could be the awareness about the low share of graduated teachers that actually get the work they are qualified for. These factors put together results in lower prospects of success and the students lose the chance of creating a sense of mutual identity that can be created within a group that strives towards a common goal, in this case their future profession. The lack of motivation among students not only affects the other students, but also the work and motivation of the teachers at the teacher education, negatively.

One can argue whether the education in Guatemala best can be developed by concentrating on broadening the education of lower levels or by concentrating on deepening the education through focus on the higher levels. The former suggestion makes more people get the compulsory education, which is a step closer to the millennium goal that aims for basic education for all children, whilst the latter suggests an increasing quality of level diversificado. Investments in diversificado would lead to a higher competence among the future teachers and well-educated teachers could be one way to bring the primaria education closer to
the international quality standards. To attack the problem with the lack of motivation among teacher students, admission tests would be a solution to recruit the best candidates to the profession, resulting in an education more vocational.

What significance has then the teachers and the school in the development of the pupil and the country? To be able to make any changes the teachers must firstly be conscious about and believe in their enormous significance in the pupils’ life. Secondly, they must actively embrace the responsibility they are given and not act routinely, since that is not a successful approach in a democracy. Aware of their influence the teachers can initiate new generations into a democratic way of thinking and purge the old ideas no longer applicable to society. We understand that our respondents, like Dewey, see school as a way to something better, a chance for the pupils to escape the limitations of their social environment. Teachers have the ability to exert positive influence on the pupils’ self-image and to be good role models as well as create visions in the pupils that gain the country. Through choosing knowledge relevant to the pupil in relation to society, the teacher can make the pupils conscious about what part they play in the developing process of Guatemala. Creating positive feelings about one’s cultural identity, rather than alienated citizens, gains consequently both the individual and the country. A democracy needs people that are independent thinkers, which make the teachers’ choices of methods vital for the development of the pupil as well as for the democracy.

We have previously shown that the type of relationships people are engaged in have a decisive affect on the level of democracy in society. When the working relations at a school are characterized by vertical relationships, the teachers do not have a lot influence on their working situation, which makes the teachers feel powerless. A lack of influence deprives a person from personal responsibility and makes it difficult for her to take any initiatives. She is left to rely on acting according to routines. Routines, unfortunately, do not help a society develop, and do not help the teachers face the challenges related to the children’s social context. The teachers know that school can provide the children with better possibilities for the future. But not all children attend school, which calls attention to the parents role and influence. There are many factors preventing children from
studying, of which family economy is the most significant. If the teachers shall manage to persuade the parents to send their children to school even though this would strain family economy, there need to be trust between parents and teachers. The parents need to trust the teachers in order to believe them when they say that school can help their children to a better life. This trust can only be created through horizontal relationships that include the parents in school activities and only the teachers that themselves have experience from horizontal relationships can create this kind of relationship with the parents. Thus, positive and negative circles are created from the different types of relationships and to be able to develop a democracy that includes all layers of society and help people take positive initiatives, focus needs to be put on these relationships and how it is possible break the negative circles and tear down the hierarchic structures.

Referring to Dewey’s idea that democracy needs to be a part of peoples’ daily way of thinking to stand a chance of lasting, we conclude that qualified teachers and an efficient education must be seen as the keys to a development of democracy. Education is an investment that does not lose value on the Stock Exchange but causes huge loss of competence when not being invested in. Therefore, investments in teachers and thereby education is necessary and inevitable for the development of democracy in Guatemala.
6.1 Examples of further studies

Our trip to Guatemala gave us a deeper understanding of the challenges that a newly democratized country face and of the role that teachers have in the democratizing process. However, it also left us with a lot of questions and curiosity. There were many interesting aspects of education and development that we had to leave aside in order to gain some focus to our study. For future studies, it would be interesting to examine the differences between the private colegios and the public schools. It would also be interesting to study the impact of an organization like Amoixquic, working with educating and strengthening women in order to raise their level of self-confidence. Furthermore, it would be interesting to do observations in classrooms and study the tuition in rural areas to see how difficulties with language affect the teachers and the children. Or do a study with an exclusively political focus in order to understand the intentions of the politicians in the area of education.
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7.3 List of respondents

Celso Chaclan Solis  (2006-11-29)
Eva  (2006-11-23)
Francisco  (2006-11-08)
Guadalupe  (2006-12-06)
Irma  (2006-11-21)
Jeanette  (2006-12-07)
Julio Aguilar  (2006-12-04)
Maria Salomé  (2006-11-16)
Mariella  (2006-12-07)
Martha  (2006-11-14)
Olga  (2006-12-05)
Wilfredo  (2006-11-07)
Appendix 1

An outline of questions to the respondents

Teachers & principals

Questions related to the school and the education
- Please tell us something about how this school started.
- What’s the name of the area where you are working or have worked?
- What kind of area is it?
- What’s the difference between the rural areas outside Quetzaltenango and other places where people have better economy?
- Have you worked at other places?
- How many are studying at the school today?
- How many pupils are there in each class?
- What mother tongue do the children studying here have?
- Are there any difficulties related to language among the students?
- Does this school follow the national curriculum?
- Is there a national curriculum for the bilingual schools?
- What expectations does the school have on what kind of knowledge the pupils must have when graduating from here?
- What subjects are the children taught on the primaria-level?
- What is taught by the teachers during the social science-classes?
- What is learned during history classes?
- Do the pupils/students learn about the political situation in the country?
- Do you think there is sufficient education about the political issues in school today?
- Is it a part of the curriculum to educate the children about their rights?
- How does the bilingual education work?
- What methods are used in your education?
- What is your opinion about this method of working?
- What kind of difficulties/problems do you struggle with when teaching?
- According to you, is the teacher free to make his/her own decisions concerning his/her education?

Questions related to education system and government
- Does the school get any financial support from the Ministry of Education?
- What is needed for your school from the Ministry of Education?
- According to you, what challenges are there within education in Guatemala?
- Do you have any ideas about how these problems could be solved?
• What is the most important thing to change in the whole system of education?

Questions about the teacher

• How long have you worked as a teacher?
• How do you like your profession?
• What kind of Teacher Education do you have?
• Did you feel well prepared for your work after graduating?
• Why did you choose to work as a teacher?
• Why did you choose to work at a rural school?
• Why did you choose to work at a public school?
• Why did you begin to work at a bilingual school?
• Have you worked at other schools before?

The Vice Minister of Education

• How big percentage of the state budget is spent on education?
• What is done to improve the access to education for young indigenous?
• According to you which are the main problems related to education in Guatemala?
• In what way is it necessary to improve the Teacher Education?
• What is your opinion about the high number of private schools?
• What function does the education have in the process of developing the country according to you or the government?
• What except education is needed for development of Guatemala?
Appendix 2

Quotations in Spanish

5.1 Result: The teachers’ view of their role in relation to the pupil

Page 33
Quotation 1: Eva (43.01 min)
Hay mucha diferencia entre un profesor y un maestro. El maestro se dedica, se prepara, se actualiza, sí. Para que sus alumnos le entiendan el mensaje, el profesor no. El profesor solo sabe que va a dar un punto lo explica, y se va. Si el alumno lo entendió es bueno, y si no lo entendió, le da igual. Entonces, para mí como maestra, lo importante es saber ser maestro.

Page 35
Quotation 2: Maria (11.37 min)
Como relacionar el contexto de su realidad con… el trabajo escolar adentro del aula.

Page 36
Quotation 3: Martha (37.40 min)
Por que imaginase si no hubiera… alguien por que comportamos bien podríamos decir, imaginase la sociedad seria malísima

Page 37
Quotation 4: Francisco (43.41 min)
Dos calientan más que uno y tres calientan más que dos. /…/ La Biblia dice eso.

5.3 Result: The teachers’ view of their role in relation to the children’s social context

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Quotation 5: Jeanette (8.08 min)
Nosotros, los maestros visitamos sus casas para “por favor vayan a la escuela es de aprovechar tu tiempo”, hacerle conciencia a los papas que no los manden a trabajar, que los manden a la escuela… Les hemos dicho que, sí no los mandan a la escuela es un delito. /…/ Por que el niño tiene el derecho de estudiar, no trabajar. Pero los padres no entienden. Hemos llevado a la policía, hemos pedido a la policía que hable con las papas para que tengan temor…
Quotation 6: Guadalpe (7.56 min)
....raiz del nuestros estudios que hemos hechos aqui, en las familias hay mucho maltrato, hay mucha violencia intrafamiliar, hay mucho alcoholismo, hay mucho...eh descuido, falta de autoestima, falta de comunicación en la familia…
(dörr öppnas, en kollega kommer in, byter några ord med Guadalupe och går igen) Entonces, eso hace que los niños tienen poca autoestima, poca concentración…
ehm… estan todo el tiempo en la calle en el campo aquí, no hay buena relación, desde temprano estan viendo las cosas malas de muchos padres como alcoholismo, maltrato etc. Eso hace que son vulnerables que ir a la calle y cuando tengan doce, trece, quince años estan prácticamente en la calle. Desde temprano estan endrogandose, estan (…) empandias, fumando, bebiendo, Entonces lo que pensamos es hacer un programa con tambien papas y mamas, preventivo, apoyarles a ellas el autoestima, la relacion, la comunicacion con los hijos, educacion con peranura, con amor el….. eh autoestima en general.

Quotation 7: Mariella (41.09 min)
Pero que pasa en otros casos, en otras familias, el papa no tiene terreno, y se va a trabajar de ocho a una, verdad. De ocho a una, dos tres de la tarde. Y le pagan 25 quetzales. Que son veinticinco?! Tiene ocho hijos en su casa que mantener. Que (…) comer a sus hijos. Entonces ya no no hay para que vaya a estudiar pues. Y eso es lo que afecta aquí en Guatemala: no hay trabajo, la familia es muy grande. Entonces, apenas tiene para comer, entonces no pueden ir a estudiar.

Quotation 8: Mariella (45.18 min)
O sea la escuelita esta allí, los maestros están allí, los papas se llevan a los ninos a trabajar.

Quotation 9: Wilfredo (42.27 min)
Se identifican como Mayas, pero que no hablan su idioma. Por que era prohibido. Eh.. amenazaban a los padres con expulsar al alumna de la escuela, y a los padres encarcelarlos, por estarles enseñando su idioma materno. Entonces los obligaran a solo hablar el castellano. (…) La educación bilingüe la tiene como… solo… para los mayas. Para los pueblos indígenas. Pero con el objetivo que asimilarlos a que se vuelvan ladinos. Es decir, que asimilarlos y quitarles el idioma.

Quotation 10: Wilfredo (41.58 min)
Los niños no entienden nada, prefieren irse de la escuela.

Quotation 11: Fransisco (8.39 min)
Pero donde trabajé primero en Solola, si por que… no había mucho castellanisación, mucho español. Entonces habia que…que tratar de darnos a entender con el alumno con un poco de palabras en el idioma materno, y un poco de español.
5.5 The teachers’ and other education-involved people’s opinions of the Teacher Education

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**Quotation 12: Maria 4 (21.12 min)**
Entonces tampoco podemos negar esa oportunidad, que muy bien no sirve para la sociedad pero para individualmente puede ser un beneficio para tener opción a otro trabajo…

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**Quotation 13: Vice Minister of Education (36.33 min)**
Como no hay otra carrera… me voy a ser maestro, sí, aunque no me guste, pero es la única carrera. Eso falta que arreglar en el sistema. Y yo estoy seguro que nosotros ya no lo podemos arreglar. Solo nos queda trece meses.

**Quotation 14: Maria (18.46 min)**
Aquí en Guatemala el magisterio es una carrera más para muchos de nosotros es un paso, para buscar otra carrera en la universidad.

5.7 Result: The teachers’ opinions of the work of their colleagues

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**Quotation 15: Guadalupe (19.28 min)**
Hay muchas escuelas que ellos quieren hablar nada de eso. Muchos maestros no conocen nada de eso. /…/ Para ellos no es importante.

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**Quotation 16: Francisco (23.56 min)**
Ese es el fracaso de Guatemala, en que los maestros llegan a dar primer grado, pero no saben como van a dar primer grado.

5.9 Result: The teachers’ opinions of the government’s policy of education

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**Quotation 17: Jeanette (14.37 min & 64.23 min)**
Igual en el ministerio de educación, hay mucha corrupción. /…/ Cada presidente que viene quiere hacerse millonario, no piensa de ver así en su país, ni en educación, ni en salud.

**Quotation 18: Vice Minister of Education (41.21 min)**
Yo diría lo siguiente, en años atrás, en otros gobiernos, y todavía un poco en este gobierno, nadie tienen visiones del futuro.

**Quotation 19: Vice Minister of Education (48.12 min)**
(Es ampliar la cobertura, que haya educación básicas en todas las aldeas rurales.) Eso es un reto. Y eso no lo va a poder hacer el otro gobierno. Va a avanzar un
poquito el otro gobierno pero faltarían como dos gobiernos o tres para poder avanzar todo el país.

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Quotation 20: Wilfredo (40.55 min)
El gobierno por ejemplo dice, va a ver tantas plazas para maestros. Pero ellos no mandan viendo que sean de la comunidad sino que por ejemplo, es una persona de aquí de Quetzaltenango, imagínate que habla quiche e ir a dar clases in un área Kachiquel. No se va a entender con sus alumnos.

Quotation 21: Eva (54.10 min)
Yo considero que un maestro, debe de actualizarse. Y debe estar capacitado, debe (...) capacitando para enseñar más modernamente, Para dar contenidos mas reales. Pero eso esta descuidado.

Quotation 22: Vice Minister of Education (39.43 min)
Sí, yo diría que si hace falta recursos. Hace falta muchos recursos para todas las escuelas.