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This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication.

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“SI SOLO NOS DAN ESTA OPORTUNIDAD”:
STORIES OF TRANSNATIONAL STUDENTS IN AN INTERCULTURAL SECONDARY PROGRAM IN
SANTA FE DE LA LAGUNA, MICHOACÁN, MÉXICO

BY

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DISSERTATION

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**“SI SOLO NOS DAN ESTA OPORTUNIDAD”:
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ABSTRACT

The long-term consequences of intercultural bilingual programs within transnational communities remain uncertain. This research investigated how these models impact the experiences of Indigenous bilingual students living in transnational settings. Through a phenomenological research design, this qualitative study involved interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, and artifact analysis. This phenomenological study sought to understand an intercultural education program at the secondary level and its roles in the life of transnational students, their families, and the teachers of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna in Michoacán, México. This study contributes to the emerging field of bilingual education research in México by addressing the connections between transnationalism and Bilingual Intercultural models of education in México as it combines the concept of transnationalism and bilingual intercultural models in secondary

education. I thus advance the concept of the possible existence of a phenomenon that indicates a transnational-interculturality.

A salient piece of information revealed throughout the study's findings is related to the complex interaction of the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna with geographic mobility. The effort to prevent early migration is a deliberate fight to preserve ancestral values and the health and integrity of the families and community. This process was methodical and looked at the data collected during my fieldwork in Michoacán, the months that followed and the conversations that took place over the phone. Through formal and informal conversations, the data collected became an organic body of knowledge that lent itself to an extensive inquiry process.

The findings of this study revealed the profound impact of transnationalism on the Purépecha community of Santa Fe de la Laguna and their ability to create a third space through the establishment of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bhabha, 1994; Handa & Tippins, 2013). The Purépecha values of *Jarhoapekua/Service*, *Sési Irékani/Well-being*, *Kaxúmbekua/Teachings and Honor*, and *Pindékuecha/Traditions*, the Purépecha set in motion a transformative process that returns control to the community over the transnational processes to mitigate early migration among youth and shape a system that supports an *educación para comuneros y comuneras/* a *comunero* education. The community intentionally reshaped, reclaimed, and produced a space to address the transnational nature of their experiences (Lefebvre, 1991).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Historical Context of Intercultural Programs in México and Latin America	3
Historical Context of Intercultural Programs in Latin America	4
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	10
Research Questions	11
Rationale and Significance of the Study	11
Need for the Study	12
Advancing Scientific Knowledge	13
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.....	13
Research Design Overview	15
Methodology	15
Research Participants	17
Data Collection Methods	17
Data Analysis	19
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations	20
Definitions and Key Terminology	20
Comunalidad.....	22
Self-Determination	23
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	25
Initial Considerations for the Selection of the Literature	26
Transnationalism	28
Transnational Education	29
Bilingual Intercultural Education	33
Intercultural Education in México	41
The Intersection of Auto-Determinación/Self-Determination and Comunalidad	45
Borderlands Pedagogies	52
Third Space Theory	53

Indigenous Bilingual Education and Secondary Education.....	57
Final Considerations	60
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	61
Purpose of the Study	61
Positionality.....	61
Research Questions.....	63
Organization of the Chapter.....	63
Research Participants and Research Sample.....	63
Site and Participants.....	63
Sampling Strategies	66
Perceptual and Theoretical Information	67
Data Collection	69
Interviews	70
Description of the First, Second, and Third Round of Interviews.....	71
Focus Groups	74
Classroom Observations	76
Artifacts	76
Data Management.....	78
Data Analysis	79
Ethical Considerations	82
Trustworthiness of the Study	85
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	86
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.....	89
Organization of the Chapter.....	91
Steps in the Data Analysis.....	92
Description of the Findings.....	94
A Note Regarding the Difference and Repetition of the Themes.....	96
Finding 1: Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity	98
Theme 1: Collaboration Among Transnational Teachers and Community Teachers....	99

Theme 2: Cooperation Between State Entities and Teachers	106
Finding 2: Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-being.....	109
Theme 3: Autonomy for Comunero Education.....	109
Theme 4: Purépecha Values	118
Theme 5: External Institutional Support.....	126
Theme 6: Intercultural Education	131
Finding 3: Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir through Pindékuecha/Tradition.....	136
Theme 7: Migratory Slow Down	137
Theme 8: Authentic Education	143
Theme 9: Collective Compromise	148
Theme 10: Change in Collective Experiences	150
Finding 4: Kaxúmbekua/Creating an Education for Comunero Youth Based on Honor ..	151
Theme 11: Impact on Community Life	152
Theme 12: Social Purpose of the School	157
Theme 13: Changing by Protecting Purépecha Language and Values.....	162
Conclusion	165
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS	168
Theory Development as Analytic Categories.....	173
Discussion of Finding 1: Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity	176
Discussion of Finding 2: Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-Being.....	185
Discussion of Finding 3: Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/Tradition.....	194
Discussion of Finding 4: Kaxúmbekua/Teachings—Constructing Comunero Education Based on Honor	199
Changing Perspectives and Elevating the Continuity of Purépecha Values.....	201
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations	208
Summary of Interpretations in the Findings.....	210
Closing Words on this Chapter	212
CHAPTER 6: <i>AUNANI/CONSEJOS</i> [CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS].....	214

Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Conceptual Axes—Findings and Conclusions.....	217
Research Question 1.....	217
Research Question 2.....	222
Research Question 3.....	224
Aunani/Consejos and Recommendations	228
Recommendations for Community Leaders of Santa Fe de la Laguna	229
Recommendations for Administrators and Teachers.....	231
Recommendations for External Educational Governmental Institutions	232
Recommendations for U.S. High School Teachers and Administrators	233
Recommendations for Future Research	233
REFERENCES	235
APPENDIX A.....	248
APPENDIX B.....	249

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study introduced the need to learn more from the experience of some of the people of Michoacán who have invested so much heart, effort, and work in creating a high school in a Purépecha community from a community grass-roots project. This dissertation is about their amazing stories of survivance and the struggle to rescue language and culture.

As a Mexican American with an identity built on a double nationality, I am engaging in this research from an awareness that my positionality as someone who has access to both countries can present a power imbalance when conducting research in an Indigenous community in the country of México where I was born. I identify myself and am always identified by people in México and the United States as a brown-skinned mestiza woman. My Indigenous features are visible, yet my Spanish is Mexican, and my family is from México. However, recently, after having lived in this country for the last 16 years, my confluence with the United States takes precedence over how I am perceived when I visit México. In the eyes of many people in México, I represent the United States; I represent immigration. In walking into this research, I also carry the presence of American institutions of higher learning, which may add to an unintended separation. While I recognize that doing this research under the umbrella of a flagship university in the Southwest furthers the privilege I carry into this community, I know this can cause unexpected tensions between the community participants and me. However, like many of the students, teachers, and families, I share many commonalities with whom I will be talking. I experienced transnationalism in my upbringing in México and the United States. Like many of the teachers, I experienced the struggles of economic survival of living as a single mother on a

teacher's salary. Like many families, I also wanted my children to find in their schools something that reflected their language and who they were. I wanted my children to have access to what they need in their community and their home language, and, more than anything, I understand how families try to hold on to family until it becomes inevitable that life separates us. The following dissertation's organization is divided as follows:

Outline of the Dissertation

- Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides foundational information by presenting an overview of the study's context. This chapter introduces the research questions and emphasizes the significance of the study. Additionally, it presents key terms and provides a general outline of the methodology employed.

- Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter examines and provides a review of the literature that served as a starting point to develop this phenomenological study. The literature review is divided into five key sections. This literature review is key to understanding the existing body of knowledge on transnational education, border studies, intercultural education in México and Latin America, and Indigenous autonomy in México and the United States.

- Chapter 3: Methodology

This third chapter further expands on the methodology, offering a more comprehensive explanation of the research approach.

- Chapter 4: Findings

The chapter presents the major findings of the study, offering an in-depth analysis of the collected data.

- Chapter 5: Discussion, Synthesis, and Analysis of the Findings

The chapter aims to provide deeper insights and interpretations.

- Chapter 6: *Aunani/Consejos* [Conclusion and Recommendations]

This chapter concludes the dissertation by presenting future recommendations and practical advice derived from the study's outcomes.

Historical Context of Intercultural Programs in México and Latin America

The Escuela Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna is located on shores of Lake Pátzcuaro in Santa Fe de la Laguna, Michoacán, México. Before the official establishment of the settlement by Vasco de Quiroga in 1540, there was already a community known as Vayámeo. This community's existence predates Quiroga's arrival and is mentioned in the *Relación de Michoacán*. Vayámeo derives its name from the original Purépecha language, meaning "volcano" or "place where things emerge" (Díaz Guevara, 2020). Close to 90% of the population of Santa Fe de la Laguna speak Purépecha, and the majority of them are of Indigenous descent. Socio-economic and educational marginalization are endemic in this town which currently has a 50% unemployment rate. The community is jurisdictionally tied to the municipality of Quiroga, which comprises a Spanish-speaking mestiza and mestizo population. Historically, there have been ongoing land disputes between Quiroga and Santa Fe de la Laguna, and the arguments commonly highlight the salient differences between both communities.

The drastic differences between Quiroga and Santa Fe de la Laguna led to the development of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural as a way to develop a venue that would allow students to continue their studies in their community without migrating to Quiroga or Morelia, the capital of the city. While students from Santa Fe de la Laguna were not easily accepted by Quirogan society and were often subject to abuse and unsafe conditions, the alternate option to continue their studies in Morelia was an economically strenuous project for many. The effort to develop the school responded to a 15% of literacy skill deficits among the population above 15 years of age (Díaz Guevara, 2020). In 2009, the town's community finally consolidated the project in liaison with the Universidad Michoacana of San Nicolas Hidalgo, the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, the Universidad Autónoma de México, and the delegates from the Mexican Teacher's Union-Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE)/ XVIII (Díaz Guevara, 2020). This school project is the focus of this study as the roots of its beginnings intersect with a range of epistemic categories that situate its existence within the struggles against racism, classism, and self-determination manifested in world views of *comunalidad* and social justice activism.

Historical Context of Intercultural Programs in Latin America

According to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), in Latin America there are 800 Indigenous groups recognized by the United Nations, and they include over 45 million people. These groups live in isolated communities, which the United Nations has identified as voluntary isolation, or they may also live in urban settlements (Del Popolo et al., 2014). Bilingual education in Latin America has embraced state-sponsored

models that operate under the umbrella of intercultural or multicultural. The programs have curricular structures to manage language targeted at Indigenous communities, thus, creating a separation of state curriculum for urban areas and their rural counterparts. The earliest precedents that exist of Indigenous Education programs date back to the early twentieth century in Bolivia. The description of the bilingual programs that exist in Bolivia originate from a land struggle that took place in the early 20th century where Aymara Indigenous teachers organized clandestine schools to prepare their fellow community members to take back their land. The Bolivian state responded by creating the *Escuelas Indigenales Ambulantes*/Indigenous Ambulatory Schools that attempted to assimilate Indigenous people into “civilization” along with a Christianization project (Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia, 2008). The Indigenous communities did not take long to respond with an alternate education system, and they developed the Escuela Ayllu Warisata which lasted until the 1950s. This was a community approach, and they strongly reacted against the feudal oppression in their community. It is important to mention that this system based on community and family units became a precedent for developing similar programs in Perú, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and México (Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia, 2008). The current Project of Intercultural Bilingual Education/PEIB- *Programa de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural* is self-described as a decolonizing educational program that strengthens local languages and Indigenous community cultural values. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) supports the current program, and pilot program implementation has taken place in Quechua, Aimara, and Guaraní communities (Consejos

Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia, 2008). The framework of interculturality is a proposed alternative to assimilationist/pluralist practices (Hornberger, 2000).

Currently, México has 65 identified Indigenous groups. There are 95 languages that belong to 42 groups which are part of 13 linguistic families; 103 grouped languages have been identified as Indigenous languages in México (Ramos Ramírez & Islas Flores, 2019). México, like all countries of Latin America, has lived under the shadow of colonialism. The resurgence of Indigenous culture and language has been a struggle that resonates across the continent, facing the lack of attention by institutional entities. For example, assimilation via curricular production was a key element in the United States that purposely disrupted cultural, political, and social dynamics within Native American Communities. Curricular production was integral to the educational project geared at Native American Communities.

Developing a curriculum designed to isolate students from their cultural values worked hand in hand with an attempt to physically segregate Native American youth (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018; Suina, 1985; Trask, 1987). Additionally, such a curriculum promoted a kind of social functionality that was ultimately designed to benefit the white population. At its core, it aimed to suppress belief systems by promoting Christian religious practices, abruptly changing names and attire, and mutilating family relations by forceful separation (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018; Suina, 1985; Trask, 1987). The compounding effect of having a school system that separated families and suppressed language and traditional belief systems was in large part the result of the intended and enacted curricular production

for Native American children that weakened the existing community ties in such a way that they still manifest into the 21st century.

México's history of Indigenous education shares many parallels with the United States. In both countries, generations of children were separated from their families. And while later generations of Native Americans attended school outside of the boarding school system (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018) and Indigenous Mexican students were not mandated to attend community schools, the generational trauma of family separation remains.

Native American communities posed a constant resistance to assimilationist policies. As in the case of modern-day Hawaii, they protected and reinstated cultural, community, and linguistic practices along with community participation (Trask, 1987). To different degrees and manifested in different ways, resistance and self-determination occurred concurrently within the process of white settlements in the Americas. While cultural oppression cannot be denied, the major struggles of survivance are equally evidenced.

The strongest intercultural programs that have originated in México are those found in the state of Oaxaca, which represents a key case study to observe the strongest ideological battles that have taken place within the construction and production of bilingual programs. Teachers and community members have demanded the integration of community knowledge as a fundamental part of their curriculum. Historical inequities have been identified as part of the educational damage caused by the schooling system. Nonetheless, the transnational phenomena proposed in this study are more directly observed in the context of states like Michoacán. Roughly 4 million people who originate from Michoacán reside in the United States, equaling the number of people who live in the

State of Michoacán as the state population is close to 4.5 million inhabitants. It is pressing that we consider the educational needs of children and youth from this state to ensure that the educational resources that they need are present in both countries. This migratory phenomenon has been linked to a lack of work opportunities and the search for better life conditions. From 2014 to 2015, the State of Michoacán had the highest migratory flow in México of all the states in the country. As the National Institute of Statistics and Geography indicate (Congreso del Estado de Michoacán, n.d.), the net migratory balance was of -136.1 for every 10,000 people in the state followed by Zacatecas (-115.8) and Guanajuato (-108), in addition to Durango (-108), Baja California (-75.5), Tamaulipas (-72.9) and Aguascalientes (-60.4).

New immigration trends reveal a complexity of mobility that challenges past migratory dynamics, especially for Indigenous transnational youth. For example, new research indicates a change in migration movement resulting in a zero-net migration in the past ten years as an unmatched number of U.S. citizen youth and children are returning to México and, between 2000 and 2010, the number of U.S.-born minors doubled from half a million to about a million (Masferrer et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Transnational communities are seldom understood as they are characterized by physical and conceptual mobilitie(s) that determine their dynamics in the locus and spatial context to which they belong. In Michoacán, México, transnationalism is a phenomenon that breaks away from the assumption that the phenomenon occurs due to a binary migratory relationship to the United States. The kind of transnationalism that occurs

expands to the movement within Indigenous nations, rural areas to urbanized centers, and community participation to the power dynamics that manifest in schooling practices.

It is unknown how and what the long-term effects of intercultural bilingual programs within transnational communities are. This study attempts to identify the interactions of the models in the lives of transnational Indigenous bilingual students. Indigenous students navigate life in close connection to a process of continued colonialism. While Latin-American and Indigenous students experience colonialism, this process manifests in different spectrums. Language is one of the first aspects to consider. Latin-American students navigate colonial languages and understand norms and codes that derive from Western thought. As a group, Latin American white and mestizo students can potentially adapt faster to the social and economic environment of the United States as they are navigating contemporary post-colonial structures that share strong connections to an imperial or colonial legacy. The situation is different for Indigenous students. For them, their language is not a colonial language. Their land is in close connection to their identity, and their native language is deeply rooted within the interconnectedness that exists with their land. Their land connects to the way language and nature interact. Thus, when looking at the process of migration, Latin American Indigenous students live through this process in a very different way as the structure of *comunalidad* may manifest transnationally. Latin American students seek to immerse themselves into existing capital structures. Within the migratory process, whatever capital structure existed in their home communities is amplified in the US, and different dynamics are playing out in different countries. Yet, they currently operate under the umbrella of a globalization process.

While there has been scholarship centered on studying intercultural programs in México and Latin America over the last decades, the connection between intercultural bilingual education and secondary programs in Indigenous communities is noticeably scarce. An example of one of the closest qualitative studies that have been done concerning youth compared the Indigenous communities of Hatun Shungo in Peru and the community of Cochiti, NM (Sumida Huaman, 2014). This is an important consideration due to the parallels related to the struggles of the communities related to language maintenance. Other studies have observed intercultural programs in Latin America paying close attention to language (Hornberger, 2000; Ventie, 2013), but neglect to bridge schooling practices at the secondary level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study sought to understand an intercultural education program at the secondary level and its roles in the life of transnational students, their families, and the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe teachers de la Laguna in Michoacán, México. The methods of inquiry included phenomenological reflections related to the data collected by the different stakeholders of this school. This study contributes to the emerging field of bilingual education research in México by addressing the connections between transnationalism and Bilingual Intercultural models of education in México as it combines the concept of transnationalism and bilingual intercultural models in secondary education. I thus advance the concept of the possible existence of a phenomenon that indicates a transnational-interculturality.

Research Questions

1. Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
2. How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
3. What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Other intercultural programs have been widely studied as the connections to comunalidad become relevant for articulating these programs. The recent scholarship that has observed communality as a pedagogic framework never isolates the host community's strong role in constructing these community-pedagogic structures. In 2018, Anthony-Stevens and Griño provided a definition of comunalidad as a worldview and theoretical framework that emphasizes community-based schooling and draws from Indigenous knowledge. This concept is familiar to Indigenous educators in neighboring states such as Puebla, Chiapas, and Guerrero, according to the authors (p. 103). In the words of Jaime Martínez Luna (2015), comunalidad entails a holistic, integrative, natural, and shared understanding of making life and builds on an absolute interdependence of its temporal or spatial elements within the capacity of the living beings that are part of it. Martínez Luna (2015) identifies four elements that are part of this framework: 1) nature, geography,

territory, the soil that our feet step on; 2) society, community, and the family that steps on that nature, geography, or soil; 3) work, labor, activity that is performed by a social group, community, and family that steps in that soil; and finally 4) what is obtained or gained, enjoyment, well-being, celebration, distraction, satisfaction, exhaustion from labor, or activity of that society that steps in this soil, territory or nature.

Need for the Study

The intersection of transnationalism as an epistemic category, situated in space and models of intercultural bilingual education, has not been studied in current contexts where transnationalism and interculturality are developing. This is especially relevant in the context of post-secondary education. In México, an extensive body of research observes Intercultural models of education; however, there is a need to advance the study of how the Intercultural Bilingual models are being bridged into a post-secondary context. This qualitative study adds to the existing body of research that observes education systems from the lens of students' personal narratives and *auto-historias* (Trinidad Galván, 2001). In the process of physical and intellectual mobility, the students engaged with institutions to center their identity and positionality to develop the curricula they will engage with.

Added to this need is the current lack of information that U.S. teachers and schools have about their current demographics. Currently, of the 20% of the U.S. student population, 75% is associated with a Spanish-speaking country; nonetheless, U. S. Latino population is manifesting a growing diversity, and there is an increased number of students with Indigenous linguistic backgrounds (García et al., 2011). "No longer it is possible to assume that U.S. Latino students are solely Spanish speakers, for many are also speakers of

Mixteco, Zaoteco, Quechua, and Garifuna, among other languages” (p. 4). It is important to understand some of the characteristics of the programs students access in their home communities before coming to the United States.

Advancing Scientific Knowledge

This study contributes to advancing scientific knowledge by addressing the gap in the study of intercultural educational programs that directly interact with a transnational Indigenous population. Much of the existing literature and studies focus on transnational education or intercultural programs of education, which are primarily programs designed for K-12 and in the context of bilingual education. There is a scarcity of studies that target these two elements side-by-side to explore the phenomena of transnationalism in a genuinely transnational context. Transnational studies reflect the applications of border thinking, the effects of movement within geo-politically assumed divides, and how people negotiate their existence around an imposed separation. In this study, I included work that addresses the experience of Indigenous communities within transnational/transborder dynamics.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

As part of my analysis, I intersected the idea of *comunalidad* with borderlands pedagogy. Border pedagogies are one of the key theoretical bases for data analysis in this study. The story behind the phenomenon present in the creation of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural of Santa Fe de la Laguna in Michoacán is grounded in the search for a third space of opportunity to reinforce community ties via schooling practices. In essence, the creation of this school is advanced as an act of self-agency and voice to enact action as

the location of schooling practices occurred as a means to find agency in their community and *world* (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, this study observed that the school aligns with the notions of de-colonial practices. As such, these pedagogies engage critically in the interaction of colonial legacy and their effects on the broader sociocultural and economic dynamic of the youth that experience them (Mignolo, 2000). Recognizing that this framework has been applied as a critical lens to deconstruct the modern-colonial (Mignolo, 2000), and that builds on observations emerging from the border pedagogies as they contribute to the discussion built around poststructuralists views (Giroux, 1988, 1991), I seek to find in its micro-contextual application (Cervantes-Soon, 2017) the comparisons that can help me establish solid analytic basis.

While the idea that the borders in México are highly defined by clear geopolitical limits that construct clear binaries resulting in striking political and economic differences is true, I want to extend the notion of a borderlands that occurs within the limits of state defined territories. Hence, many dynamics that are visible in the complexity of one country to another can also be visible in the context of Indigenous nations within a country like México. Cervantes-Soon (2017) brings to the fore the idea that the borderlands also represent spaces within the metaphor of cultural and linguistic peripheries and ruptures. This applies to the observations that will take place in looking at the intersection of Purépecha language and culture within a Mexican state with an entrenched connection to colonial practices within modernity. Furthermore, ongoing physical and economic binational movements have existed between these Purépecha communities and the United States. The alienation from official schooling systems that have questioned the cultural validity of

the heritage students grew up with in the México-US border (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016) is a phenomenon that is also visible in the interaction that Indigenous communities have within the country as they also confront the effects of neoliberalism, colonization, and patriarchy.

Research Design Overview

Methodology

For this study, I used a qualitative methodological approach as this research is concerned with perspectives and research methods aligned with educational and sociocultural studies. The constructivist nature of the study formulates questions that aim at connecting transnationalism to lived experiences and how meaning is made concerning the intercultural programs in connection to transnational phenomena in a geographical space that is culturally informed by a pre-existing cultural fluency (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study highlights the transnational experiences of the participants through the gathering of data directly from the participants. As a researcher, I was the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. Furthermore, this study intends to provide a *thick description* (Geertz, 1973) by providing a thorough description of the setting, the research participants, and their experiences to produce the right interpretations and to collectively draw meaning out of these.

To answer the research question related to the way transnationalism is manifesting in Intercultural programs in Michoacán, México, the study used a phenomenological approach based on the study of a small group of participants to observe and develop patterns that will guide us to the collective construction of meaning (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019). Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that emphasizes "the experience of people and the process of that experience turning into consciousness" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 26). As a research method, phenomenology requires the researcher to engage in direct interaction with the communities of individuals involved in the study or research project (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology does not seek to quantify experience or provide abstract explanations for the phenomena under investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, Phenomenological studies provide detailed descriptions of individual situations, which cannot be easily generalized in the same manner as survey research. In this study it was important for me as the researcher to meet the community of participants and have them know who I was prior to the idea of integrating any form of survey. As noted in the scholarship that exists about phenomenology, the development of general theories that apply to situations beyond the studied cases requires transparent interpretation of the researcher's findings to ensure the validity of the research (Lester, 1999).

As part of this phenomenological approach, interviews were conducted with the participants who have experienced transnationalism in connection to educational systems to extrapolate the meaning in its context. Through a phenomenological analysis, I gained a basic understanding of youth's stories about their experience in school and bilingual educational models. This qualitative study derived from my positionality as a transnational student teaching in a context where I have academic interactions with Indigenous students. In this process, I needed to understand more about addressing transnational students by implementing effective programs adequate for transnational communities.

Research Participants

The target population for this study encompassed stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. The selection criteria required that everyone participating has generational ties to the town, Santa Fe de la Laguna, and has attended the school or has some investment in the idea behind the creation of the school. The age range of the participants was from 14, the youngest, to people over the age of 50 but not older than 65¹. In México, 18 years of age is considered an adult.

To recruit participants for this study, I used the snowball sampling technique to expand the sample size of my study, where my initial participants recommended other people I could interview. The study had a maximum of 20 participants. The participants included a former principal of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, five former students at this secondary school that are all over the age of 18 and are no longer students of this institution, five teachers who teach or have taught in the school, and three families with institutional ties to the institution.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection included interviews, artifacts such as YouTube videos as teacher-made materials and classroom observations. To respect the participants' time, the semi-structured interviews did not exceed 45 minutes. The recordings were fully transcribed and later coded to quantify and have a better structure for the data analysis. Because of aspects related to the pandemic that affected the world in 2020, all the interactions were based on

¹ In this study, participants were not required to disclose their age. Age was estimated and did not impact the type of questions participants got as the questions were approved and screened through an IRB process.

a process allowing COVID-safe practices. This process also included interviews through web platforms such as Zoom or WhatsApp. The interviews were limited to personal conversations. I conducted focus group interviews to better understand the interaction between transnationalism and the program at Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. These interviews combined the lived experience of study participants with my experience as a researcher. I conducted two classroom observations. Each observation in *maestra Mary's Lectura y Redacción* class, centered on Spanish literature and grammar, spanned approximately one hour.

I communicated with the Santa Fe de la Laguna community for six months, during which I recruited voluntary participation in this study. The first round of conversations was based on a semi-structured interview guide that was part of the questionnaire I used with everyone on that first interaction. This questionnaire was from an initial individual interview to create rapport and create a space where the community members of Santa Fe de la Laguna felt free to ask any clarifying questions. After I identified the study participants, there was a second set of individual interviews where I asked questions specific to the three stakeholder groups: the former students, the families of the students, and the teachers and administrators.

A third round of group interviews was scheduled to have a collective conversation about the shared sense of the role schools like this play in communities like Santa Fe de la Laguna. Again, there was a semi-structured interview guide to start with an IRB pre-approved tool. These two sets of conversations allowed me to understand better how Intercultural programs such as this one have relevance in the lives of transnational youth and

their families. To ensure proper confidentiality among the study participants, I provided consent forms where they agreed to participate in the research. I described the research, including the procedures used. I also provided information related to the risks and benefits of the research and the voluntary basis of research participation. Finally, I explained how I kept all documents confidential (Groenewald, 2004).

Data Analysis

The information was processed as soon as the data had been collected by having a full transcription, noting the salient details of that interaction, specific times and dates, and highlights of the conversation. All interviews took place in person and some on platforms like Zoom or WhatsApp. These virtual tools like Zoom are referred in the study as interactive platforms for practicality. Still, these can include other video tools that the participants decided to use or felt more comfortable such as Google Meets, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Skype, or others. I have a transcription for each interview as part of the data analysis presented. At the beginning of the study, I projected using electronic software like oTranscribe, Dictation.io, or Dragon; however, the transcription was done manually. Each transcription was checked for accuracy. The information or data was grouped by meaningful content and themes explained in detail in Chapter 3. Axial coding was derived from the content analysis that looked at specific words, identified patterns, and interpreted their meanings. The thematic analysis grouped the data into themes related to the research questions directly related to the study conducted.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

One of the assumptions rested on the idea that transnationalism as a lived experience informs the participation of students in programs such as the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna in Michoacán, México. As a researcher, I assumed the phenomenon was not specific to this area. Thus, the study helped establish connections to other Indigenous communities interested in developing these programs. A second assumption was that transnationalism occurs within modern countries as groups such as the Purépecha are one Indigenous national entity among many Indigenous nations in México and the Americas. This transnational phenomenon includes geographic and social journeys within the country of México.

Definitions and Key Terminology

This study treats transnationalism as an epistemic category that contextually intersects with community frameworks that embrace forms of community participation that disrupt preconceived notions of capitalist economic functionality. While transnational studies consistently reflect the applications of border thinking, there exist considerations that problematize the assumptions of steady mobility patterns and how students might interact with their school institutions. I am also interested in the intersection of transnationalism in Indigenous communities and, for this particular intersection, I reacted to Chadwick Allen's (2012) term *trans-Indigenous*. He defines it as follows: "From comparative literary studies, the process of border—and context-crossing held forth the possibility of comparative learning and the emergence of a space border thinking, even in contradictory settings like the U.S- México Borderlands" (Anthony-Stevens & Griño, 2018, p.

97). *Trans-Indigenous* pedagogy reaffirms its critical position against settler-colonial legacies in the classroom, outside the classroom and across borders (Aikau et al., 2016, as cited by Anthony-Stevens & Griño, 2018, p. 98). Brittain (2009) introduces the notion of transnational social spaces as she observes where social spaces manifest in the new and the country of origin that create a productive relationship between both. In work by Hamann and Zúñiga (2011), the term transnational is seen as a way students who are in the process of mobility have been identified by their teachers and peers. Sánchez (2007) frames transnational work strongly tied to the effects of globalization, however, including dynamics that observe a simultaneous social and national connection to communities found in different national contexts. Similarly, the work by Villenas (2009) looks at transnational dynamics as a responsive way to navigate various communities and contexts as a manifestation of solidarity between two countries and where the resources for transnational people extend beyond one sole community. Sánchez (2004) has observed and expanded the definition of transnationalism to include relationships between nations that can be reinforced beyond patriarchal power systems to consider movement of people, currency, work, products, ideas, information, caring, and love (Sánchez, 2004).

Anthony-Stevens and Griño's (2018) study extends the discussion on Indigenous survivance, and through transborder Indigenous studies, it advances "Indigenous struggles for self-determination" (p. 92). The application of transborder/transnational pedagogies extends to the situations that occur in reincorporating into a school in a new country. Brittain (2009) found that transborder narratives have important implications for the school community as they reveal the needs of students, such as understanding the educational

system in the country of origin, identifying culturally established expectations in the family and the ethnic community, and understanding the role of teachers as a source of social capital.

Comunalidad

The ideas of comunalidad have rippled into other Mexican states, such as the state of Chiapas, where parallel ideas flourished politically and filtered into the education systems. In México, the concept of multiculturalism in education quickly evolved after the San Andres Agreements/ Tratados de San Andres in 1994 (de León Pasquel, 2010). In this case, the Bilingual Intercultural education model was in response to the Zapatista movement, the growing demand to respect the right to multicultural education, and a redefinition of the official discourse in México. By the end of the 20th century, in México, as in other Latin American countries, the collapse of democratic neo-liberalism fueled the demands in favor of “recognition, autonomy, and the right to Indigenous diversity” (Bertely Busquets, 2009, p. 180). These demands were based on the 169th agreement of the Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO), which addresses official school systems within the context of tribal and Indigenous rights (p. 180). Much of the debate arising from this legal framework aims at addressing the monoculturalism, interculturalism, multiculturalism, and plurinationalism of the state, thus accentuating the need for a dialogue regarding alternative citizenships (p. 180).

The first ethnopolitical organizations in Oaxaca became visible during the decade of the 80s, and this was an effort created by intellectuals and activists in the zone (Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). This project rose through organizational work and provided the basis for

the first organizations with an ethno-political purpose. The concept of *comunalidad* is based on the work created within the communities and the autonomy of community decision-making based on values and traditions surrounding community notions of space and time (Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). Within this framework, there were clear demands for absolute respect for the self-determination of Indigenous lands.

Self-Determination

The ideas related to *comunalidad* have parallel relationships with ideas of self-determination as presented in the context of the United States. Blansett (2011) notes that the Red Power movement is synonymous with the idea of self-determination as well as nationalism in the context of the twentieth century. This movement emerged in the 1960s, and they triggered a desire to challenge colonial or foreign powers. Furthermore, the ideas behind the concept of self-determination in the 20th century are politically rooted in Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" proposal that aimed at providing an alternative to the Treaty of Versailles in order to lay out the guidelines for ending World War One. In this context, Native Nationalism has been demanding respect for autonomy and sovereign status outside and apart from the United States (Blansett, 2011).

The occupation of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay on November 14, 1969 was a paramount event for American Indians in the last decades after the Civil Rights Movement. This movement reclaimed the dignity and pride of all Native nations that were part of the Western Hemisphere, and it became a catalyst that released the voices of Indigenous Peoples. The idea of sovereignty encompasses the connection of land, Nation, communities, familial relationships, and individuals (Blansett, 2011).

The next chapter in this dissertation offers a comprehensive overview of the literature that formed the foundation for the study's design. Chapter 2 consists of five sections, each exploring seminal works and landmark research. The first section focuses on transnationalism, presenting critical concepts related to transnational education. The second section examines bilingual and intercultural education within various contexts, encompassing the United States, México, and Latin America. The third section of this literature review delves into the diverse frameworks of autonomy and self-determination within Indigenous communities across North America, México, and Latin America. In the fourth section, the chapter explores the theories and ideas supporting border theory. Lastly, the fifth section addresses existing studies on secondary education in Indigenous communities in México.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I began to develop a research interest that looked at the intersection of transnational education, intercultural education, mobility, and language, as a transnational student growing up on the border of Juárez, Chihuahua, and El Paso, Texas. My interest in Indigenous education is rooted in childhood memories of when I lived in Sierra Tarahumara because of my mother's work as a cooperative organizer. During this time, I attended rural schools in the communities of Cusárare and Creel. I was identified as a mestiza by other children. I self-identified as foreign to this land, although I knew it was mine, too, ruled by another language. The schools and these communities were kind to my mother and me. I remembered that my grandmother was native to these lands; she grew up in the Sierra Tarahumara and was familiar with the foods and the daily struggle of life in these mountains.

I remember sitting in a wooden chair where two students sat at once in a single classroom with grades 3rd to 6th. Upon my return to the border, the schools would not recognize the education I got in fourth and fifth grade in the Sierra, and the schools made recommendations to hold me back one year, which in the end did not happen. Like so many students that grow up on the U.S./ México border, my family opted for my college to be on the U.S. side of the border, and thus a long international commute became routine for close to 5 years. I had the opportunity to participate in a community project in Michoacán. I then quickly noticed the complex cultural mobility that characterized the youth I was working with. They asked me how I cross "*al otro lado*" to the other side, meaning the U.S. They talked about how they cross the border detailing geographic landmarks, trails, roads,

highways, bodies of water, and tunnels. I felt a strong sense of unfamiliarity on my part as they knew so much more about México and the U.S. than I ever did. It seemed they were connected to the land in a way that I never did because all I knew was a bridge connecting México to the United States. In our conversations, these fourteen-year-olds taught me geographies, economies, survival skills, and language. Soon after, I began to pay attention to the rural schools that resembled the ones I had attended in that community; I did not know what to make of it, but I knew it was important to pay attention. Many years later, I am learning about the characteristics of these programs, the land, and the roads and highways that connect cultures, languages, people, and places and why these are important.

Initial Considerations for the Selection of the Literature

Community voice in the context of Indigenous education and intercultural programs in México has largely centered around the themes of self-determination and the implications of migration (Meyer & Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). I include studies that address why intercultural programs, even when they exist in Indigenous communities, can manifest a great disjuncture between the program itself and the community that has access to the program. This literature review aims at providing micro-contextual information related to a program where community involvement has been key to its success.

My interest stems from intercultural education issues, a need that extends beyond the state's proposed curriculum. Native communities are demanding that their voices be heard when it comes to articulating these programs. The research focus in this respect surrounds the results related to community participation in designing and fighting for this

project. This study centers on the educational developments around bilingual intercultural programs for two main reasons. One is that Michoacán is one of the states with the highest rate of net migration to the United States, and much of the population that migrates is part of the Purépecha nation. Second, it can be argued that the birthplace of Indigenous education is the state of Michoacán. The Mexican Department of Indigenous Language and Culture was created in 1934. As part of this Department of Indigenous Language, in 1939, the *Proyecto Tarasco* / Tarascan Project was developed to introduce the Spanish language through the alphabetization of Indigenous languages (Martínez Buenabad, 2015). These efforts led to the 1939 assembly of philologists and linguists that gathered in Patzcuaro in 1939 where it was determined that bilingual education would be the educational model given to Indigenous communities by providing instruction in the native language to incorporate later the “National Language” (Aguirre, 1992, p. 343, as cited by Martínez Buenabad, 2015). The implications for this historical precedent are of major significance for developing Indigenous bilingual education not only in the communities of Michoacán but also for the rest of México and other communities in the Americas. However, a more in-depth exploration needs to be done beyond the historical relevance of Michoacán as a cradle for the creation of bilingual programs.

There are five sections in this review of the literature. The first one looks at transnationalism as it intersects with education and migration. The second section provides a historical background of intercultural programs in Latin America, México, and in the state of Michoacán. The third section relates to self-determination and comunalidad. The fourth section provides an overview of borderlands pedagogy. Finally, I end with an overview of

Indigenous bilingual education. These sections are meant to support the overarching question of this study as described below.

This study looked at the long-term effects of Intercultural bilingual programs within transnational communities and aims to identify the interactions of intercultural models in the lives of transnational students. This study contributes to our current understanding related to the experiences and the narratives that originate from transnational students that, given these opportunities to further their education in their home community, engage with the curricular production of their programs as acts of self-determination. This study centers on the personal narratives of transnational students as they engage with institutions that focus their identity and positionality at the core of curricular production.

Transnationalism

What defines transnationalism is movement. What defines interculturality is culture and language. Movement, culture, and language are at the center of the development of programs developed in Indigenous communities for their youth that respond to dynamics that derive from conceptual, intellectual, and physical mobility. It is unknown how/why and what are the effects of dynamic migration movements where there is an influx of students who share ties in bi-national communities. Through the creation of programs that integrate an intercultural agenda, combined with the access to linguistic resources of their home communities, the impact on community members that will access these programs has not been researched as there are few precedents of these programs.

The literature reviewed for this section includes some of the precedents that exist in order to create a strong foundation for this study. The works reviewed contribute to

expanding our understanding of the experiences and the narratives that originate from transnational students who, given these opportunities to further their education in their home community, become producers of knowledge and part of this integrative process. Furthermore, I hope to explain through this literature analysis how I approach the research questions and how I narrowed the scope of observation to the identification of transnational phenomena in the context of a state that has the highest transnational mobility both within Indigenous communities to non-Indigenous communities as well as from México to the United States.

Transnational Education

To better understand how I will approach a study rooted in border theory and transnational education, I looked at past studies that inform the way Indigenous communities have been studied through this theoretical/contextual lens. The literature on transnational studies consistently reflects four themes: the applications of border thinking; the effects of geographical movement; the interaction with geo-politically assumed divides; and people's negotiations of their existence around an imposed separation.

The definitions that frame the idea of transborder studies largely stem from what Walter D. Mignolo (2000) articulated to advance concepts related to cultural practices that transfer across geo-political territories. Furthermore, Mignolo presented aspects related to a social postmodern resistance that have been useful in the framing of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1991). Giroux, as part of his research, relied on many aspects that Gloria Anzaldúa and Paulo Freire contributed to as she developed the basis for intersectional theory and the

possibilities that arise within the boundaries in the development of critical pedagogy (Anzaldúa, 1987; Freire, 1970).

Trans-Indigenous learning is built upon a belief that settler-colonial relations are to be critiqued not just in classrooms, but through Indigenous relationship-building, across contexts and borders (Aikau et al., 2016). We link border thinking to acts of educational survivance, which are not subsumed by the colonizer, even as they exist within and alongside colonial structures such as political, institutional, and linguistic boundaries (Allen, 2012).

Brittain (2009) introduced the notion of transnational social spaces as she observed where social spaces manifest in the new and the country of origin, creating a productive relationship between both. This notion is applied to the experiences of transnational high school youth as they describe the advice and comments, they heard about U.S. schools before coming to the country and their own reaction to them as they experienced educational institutions. In work by Hamann and Zúñiga (2011), the term transnational is seen as a way students that are in the process of mobility have been identified by their teachers and peers. Transnational, as applied in this research context, stopped being an abstract entity to take form in the lived realities of students and their families. To them, being transnational meant specific classroom placements in both countries, preconceived perceptions by teachers and students, the constant questioning of their own identity.

Sánchez (2007) framed transnational work strongly tied to the effects of globalization, however, including dynamics that observe a simultaneous social and national connection to communities found in different national contexts. Thus, the effects of

mobility and globalization have been problematized by the complexity that exists in the lives of children that navigate these complex movement contexts. Similarly, the work by Villenas (2009) examined transnational dynamics as a responsive way to navigate various communities and contexts as a manifestation of solidarity between two countries and where the resources for transnational people extend beyond one sole community. Sánchez (2004) observed that transnationalism includes a system of binational or multinational connections, where sustained demographic, economic, labor, ideas, and familial and community emotional ties, coexist with a process of developing Westernized heteronormative capitalisms (Sánchez, 2004).

O'Connor's (2018) findings show the established power of development agendas through a critical look at hierarchical policy deriving from Intercultural Bilingual Education and its effects in the schools as Indigenous education is being delivered through these programs. Sánchez (2007) found that as youth return to their home country, where they encounter a less urbanized and industrialized way of living, they effectively adapt to the family and their way of life. Furthermore, they acquire what the author identified as "transnational funds of knowledge" (p. 508). This idea, derived from the observations of Moll et al. (1992), notes that the experience of transnational youth entails an understanding of the home community that allows sustainable living practices for their specific context.

Anthony-Stevens and Griño's (2018) study extends the discussion on Indigenous survivance and, through transborder Indigenous studies, it advances "Indigenous struggles for self-determination" (p. 91). The application of transborder/transnational pedagogies extends to the situations that occur in reincorporating into a school in a new country.

Brittain (2009) found that transborder narratives have important implications for the school community as they reveal the needs of students such as understanding the educational system in the country of origin, identifying culturally established expectations in the family and the ethnic community, and understanding the role of teachers as a source of social capital.

In their discussion on the collective construction of identity, Hamann and Zúñiga (2011) provided an idea on the complex web of interactions that geographic mobility entails. The authors provide multiple perspectives from their observations related to the lives of transnational students that navigate educational systems in the context of Georgia, Monterrey and Zacatecas, México. They can observe how the children live with ties to both countries, yet they are not perceived in their schools as fully belonging to either of their geo-political contexts.

The applications and definitions of transnational education branch into theoretical approximations that attempt to de-center power. For some of these authors, the discussions related to trans-border and border crossings are key to acknowledging the presence of alternate dynamics of geographic and ideological movement (Brittain, 2009; O'Connor, 2018). The displacement of center-periphery dichotomies delivers a substantial window of theoretical exploration that can only be achieved through dialogic actions that rupture existing systems. In considering the application and implications of these studies, it is worth noting that the arena of transnational education observes mobility as a process of epistemic production where there is a questioning of what is really visible in relation to those aspects that have been systemically erased.

The intersection of movement, language, and culture has contributed to the growth of transnational dynamics in México. Indigenous education evidences the need to expand the definitions of what transnational means. As such, the intersections mentioned above problematize all assumptions of what transnationalism is for México and Latin America; the dialogues of transnationalism need to keep growing in relation to the existence of the many Indigenous nations within the world's countries. These studies and the work on transnational education broaden the spectrum of considerations by education practitioners. As illustrated by studies such as the one by Sánchez (2007), community knowledge is localized in more than one geographic site and the funds of transnational knowledge are related to industrial communities as well as non-industrial contexts.

Bilingual Intercultural Education

Bilingual education in North and Latin America has embraced state-sponsored models that operate under the umbrella of intercultural or multicultural. The intersection of the intercultural within the implications of migration is a focal point in the development of this section. The study of intercultural programs has been researched almost in isolation of sociocultural phenomena from aspects that involve language. Nonetheless, while intercultural programs respond to native languages and cultures, more research has been conducted on the separation of state curriculum for urban areas (Martínez Buenabad, 2015; Tinajero & Englander, 2011) in relation to their rural counterparts and what this means for language and native biliteracy acquisition in these programs.

Being the central axis of culture, language instruction has played an important role in the development of intercultural programs in México. It is also important to consider

how much of the early notions of bilingualism adapted from the scholarship of U.S. and Canadian scholars is informing this practice. More specifically, how much does bilingual instruction in native communities base their understanding of language acquisition from models that included anglophone communities who embraced a subtractive approach for many decades (García et al., 2011, p. 2). One of the points of discussion is the linguistic stigmatization of the home language of Indigenous students before arriving to the U.S. as their native language has been discriminated against or deemed as a subaltern language.

Currently, of the 20% of the U. S. student population, 75% is associated with a Spanish- speaking country. Nonetheless, the U. S. Latino population is manifesting a growing diversity and there is an increased number of students with Indigenous linguistic backgrounds (García et al., 2011). As noted by García et al. (2011), “No longer is it possible to assume that U.S. Latino students are solely Spanish speakers, for many are also speakers of Mixteco, Zapoteco, Quechua, and Garifuna, among other languages” (p. 4). The considerations of bilingual education would benefit in incorporating a more dynamic approach to planning bilingual programs in order to best reflect the linguistic reality of the schools and their demographics.

Language revitalization is also a central component of intercultural/multicultural education, and Sims (2005) has noted how it needs to develop the context of a language as it is used in ordinary spoken interactions. She reacts to the efforts of universities to implement Indigenous language programs without taking into consideration the broader function of language and observes the limits of language revitalization through educational institutions as a challenge to create “critical language learning activities that are key to

successful language renewal efforts” (p. 104). Sims (2005) brings forth the efforts of Pueblo tribes in New Mexico that have created initiatives to revitalize their language through a more comprehensive social context that provides the opportunity to have specific “events” that are available to students in addition to their language immersion classes (p. 104). One of the challenges that exists throughout the establishment of language revitalization programs in Indigenous communities or in university-based Indigenous language programs is the lack of alignment with the oral traditions that engage the use of the language in their communities.

Recently, there has been research related to the intersection of linguistic diversity and identity politics in the Kichwa-speaking community of Tena, Ecuador (Wroblewski, 2010). This dissertation study notes that when, by a state mandate, the Bilingual and Intercultural Program was introduced into the school, the community was simultaneously going through an economic change due to the strong push for eco-tourism that strongly impacted the notions of identity by strengthening the ties with Spanish monolingualism as the interactions with tourism increased. The dissertation’s method combined theory and methodologies based on linguistic anthropology, ethnographic sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis to analyze language variation and the changes in ideology. Furthermore, this study looks at linguistic transformation as a product of linguistic experience.

Wroblewski’s (2010) dissertation studied linguistic resources in the context of political identity among Amazonian Kichwas in the City of Tena, Ecuador as Kichwa communities have been experiencing the effects of the introduction of bilingual and intercultural education (p. 10). Wroblewski argued that bilingual models of “interculturality” are informed by an Ecuadorian nationalism that is diluting Indigenous practices. Rather

than promoting unity and solidarity among separate communities, the implementation of *Unified Kichwa* is furthering tensions and fear of losing their cultural heritage (Wroblewski, 2010, p. 10). Wroblewski (2010) noted that “the move has been met with considerable backlash from Tena Kichwas who believe local Amazonian language identity and ‘natural’ socialization practices are under threat of displacement” (p. 10). This study investigated the ways the Kichwa community in Tena responds and affirms their identity through the use of semiotic media, folklore, and local performance, and language is used as a tool for self-determination (p. 11).

To examine the linguistic changes that were taking place, Wroblewski spent one year living in Tena and neighboring communities, where he conducted 100 hours of speech recordings, metalinguistic interviews, and speech performances with about 75 Kichwas. The participants were male and female, and their background and ages varied as well as their language practices (Wroblewski, 2010, p. 26). A variation of language practices was evident as the participants were on a linguistic spectrum from monolingual in Kichwa, bilingual in Kichwa and Spanish to monolingual in Spanish (p. 26). Furthermore, this study found points of contention between cultural preservation and how Kichwa culture has been portrayed to the rest of the world (Wroblewski, 2010, p. 345). Many people in the Kichwa community of Tena see the efforts and the implementation of language standardization as an infringement of the rights of the community to cultural and linguistic diversity along with traditional forms of socialization (p. 346).

Eschewing convenient models of hybridity and acculturation and reinventing identity are pursuits that create glaring paradoxes and bitter contentions both for disparaging

outsiders and suspicious Kichwas who are reluctant to shed closely guarded traditions in the face of a perceived threat of cultural 'death' (p. 33). This observation takes us back to the arguments presented by current scholarship that calls for an acknowledgment of hybrid literacy practices, yet there is a disconnection between the situations occurring in the school context and a broader discussion of the fluidity of language. In the context of the Intercultural Education implementation and function, there is a striking difference between the ways Indigenous communities are looking at this process versus what the communities in México that developed programs under the umbrella of intercultural as a way to ensure self-determination. In this sense, community needs and official mandates seem to clash consistently.

Regarding the difference between the educational experience Indigenous Latin-American students have versus non-Indigenous Latin-American students, some aspects kept weaving into the literature I found and the studies conducted. Beginning with educational systems, definitions matter. Programs that self-identify as Intercultural education programs assume a different epistemic stance from other programs that may be considered similar. While interculturality assumes a critical stance, multiculturalism is deemed as a pro status-quo that assumes a non-critical position against a system that reproduces existing structures of power that have roots in normative state-mandated educational systems (Meyer & Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). This can be more clearly visible in work concerning teachers' professional development programs in intercultural education.

Through an ethnographic study, Veintie (2013) studied the interaction and incorporation of native knowledge into the intercultural teacher preparation programs in

the Ecuadorian Amazon. This article is heavily focused on cultural knowledge within the intersection of bilingual systems rather than on a specific linguistic issue. There are two main research questions addressed in this study: 1) What is the pertinent knowledge in terms of educational practices in the student teachers' Indigenous communities? And 2) How may this knowledge be incorporated into schooling? The methods used in this ethnographic study were based on interviews with student teachers, teacher educators, and elementary school teachers of the following languages: Shuar, Achuar and Kichwa.

In this study, Veintie (2013) suggested that most teachers are aware of the importance of Indigenous knowledge yet have challenges related to its integration within their school systems and pedagogical practices. The author noted a disconnect between the official curriculum and the official multicultural education programs and observed that the program "does not help students cross the epistemological borders between Indigenous and Western knowledge" (p. 244). As part of the main pedagogical observations, Veintie (2013) identified that most educational programs designed for Indigenous communities are based on a Western paradigm that hinders dialogue and do not promote the respectful integration of practices across Indigenous groups and languages (Veintie, 2013).

Indigenous students navigate life in close connection to a process of continued colonialism. While Latin American and Indigenous students experience colonialism, this process manifests in different spectrums. Language is one of the first aspects to consider. Latin American students navigate colonial languages and understand norms and codes that derive from Western thought. As a group, Latin American white and mestizo students can potentially adapt faster to the social and economic environment of the United States as

they are navigating contemporary post-colonial structures that share strong connections to an imperial or colonial legacy. The situation is different for Indigenous students; for them, their language is not a colonial language. Their land is in close connection to their identity, and their native language is deeply rooted within the interconnectedness that exists with their land. Their land connects to the way language and nature interact. Thus, when looking at the process of migration, Latin American Indigenous students live through this process in a very different way as the structure of *comunalidad* may manifest transnationally. Latin American students seek to immerse themselves in existing capital structures. Within the migratory process, whatever capital structure existed in their home communities is amplified in the U. S., and, of course, different dynamics are playing out in different countries. Yet, they currently operate under the umbrella of a globalization process. Other work has centered on the relationship between language instruction in Indigenous communities and linguistic socialization practices.

Hornberger and Dueñas (2018) identified the challenges that Latin American educational systems have in effectively opening spaces that foster language diversity and identity, as it is noted that there is a privileging literacy in Spanish and going as far as prohibiting and limiting access to local languages (p. 7). The focus of this work took place in a Peruvian Kichwa community in Alto Napo, near Iquitos, Peru, which has a history of colonization and slavery. This study challenged constructs of student shyness and student voice by implementing an approach based on pedagogies that support student voice. This study considered how teachers negotiate communicative practices through implementing the continua of biliteracy to bridge instructional objectives to “language practices” (p. 22).

Spanish has been privileged in this community. In 1970, Catholic Missionaries and Kichwa teachers formed the PEIBAN, *Programa de Educación Bilingüe e Intercultural* en el Alto Napo. This model proposed a “Social justice oriented model of education for intercultural relations and transformation” (Hornberger & Kvietok Dueñas, 2017, p. 30). Currently, the *Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonia Peruana* or Teacher Education Program for Bilingual Teachers of the Peruvian Amazon- FORMABIAP, and the CEBES, *Comunidades y Escuelas para el Bien Estar*, Communities and Schools for the Good Life, have been programs that operate since 2008. The Alto Napo Schools follow a language maintenance program that aims at developing Kichwa literacy in first and second grade (p. 10). Some of the methods used in this research included mapping to approach ethnography monitoring (Hornberger & Dueñas, 2017). As part of the observations, the authors aimed to identify the tensions and inequalities that occur as Kichwa students are exposed to minoritized languages within interactions in an Indigenous context (p. 23). The article is based on the data collected by Kvietok-Dueñas during an ethnographic study that lasted two months in the six Alto Napo CEBES bilingual primary schools in 2013 (p. 11). These schools were served by 17 teachers whose teaching experience ranged from 3 to 30 years. All teachers were bilingual and self-identified as Kichwa and lived in the communities where they worked. The number of students in each school ranged from 30 to 168. Ethnographic monitoring included participant observation in the 6 schools as semi-structured interviews with five teachers. Kvietok-Dueñas participated in teacher and parent meetings and community events. While conducting the interviews, Kvietok- Dueñas considered gender and community roles to facilitate the process (p. 11). This study found

that Spanish remains a strong discursive force reinforced by institutional practices and the relationships of families-to-school associated the use of Spanish as a means of social progress or *superación personal*. Kichwa was identified as the language that relates to community dynamics (p. 12). Teachers are highly aware of the “unequal context of biliteracy/Spanish use” (p. 13). Furthermore, teachers see Spanish as a tool to gain social agency and expand access to educational, institutional, and state-run resources. In most cases, coloniality and resistance are identified as driving forces to navigating both languages.

Intercultural Education in México

Intercultural bilingual education models have been placed at the center of the tensions that have resulted from an accelerated process of globalization and continued industrial modernization and ongoing Indigenous movements and uprisings (Tinajero & Englander, 2011). Currently, México has 65 identified Indigenous groups. Within these, 95 languages belong to 42 groups which are part of 13 linguistic families; 103 grouped languages have been identified as Indigenous languages in México (Ramos Ramírez & Islas Flores, 2019).

Specific bilingual intercultural programs in México have been studied more comprehensively than others. For example, the work done in the Oaxaca Indigenous communities and the frameworks integrated in this state have evidenced a strong fight in favor of cultural and linguistic preservation from the community into the schools (Meyer & Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). Oaxaca represents a key case study to observe the strongest ideological battles that have taken place within the development of bilingual programs. In

the state of Oaxaca, teachers and community members have demanded the integration of community knowledge as a fundamental part of their curriculum. This work is critical given the historical inequities identified as part of the educational damage caused by the schooling system.

Maldonado Alvarado (2010) notes that some of the programs coming out of the Indigenous educational programs in México, such as the one that exists in Oaxaca, have not represented a consistent dialogic process as they are heavily weighed on the side of “dominant cultures vs dominated cultures” (p. 19). During the first decades of the 20th century, Indigenous students and parents were physically reprimanded for speaking their native language (p. 19). Notwithstanding, a constant struggle for self-determination has been noted as Indigenous teachers and families have been determined to retain and rescue their linguistic knowledge. Even when the school system has constantly challenged this process, the prevalent discrimination that exists in México, and the disinterest on behalf of hegemonic structures, has been met by the conscious efforts of community actors in Oaxaca that strive to fight against this constant wave of neglect that has existed in the country since the imposition of 16th-century colonial structures.

In the article “Bilingual-Intercultural education for Indigenous children: The case of México in an era of Globalization and uprisings,” Guadalupe Tinajero and Karen Englander (2011) examine the tensions that arise “between the political discourses which emanate from within the Indigenous communities and from the national government, and the actual implementation of educational policy models” (p. 163). The authors emphasize the shift from “spanishzation, assimilation, and integration of bilingualism, interculturalism, and

participation” (p. 163). This study observed the situations as the implementation programs that responded to Indigenous language diversity led to an abrupt change in the 1990s (p. 163). Furthermore, the authors found schools to be sites of cultural-social production and reproduction and, for Indigenous populations, schools continue to marginalize language (p. 173). The authors problematized interculturality as the word assumes a relationship between two equal parts as this notion is based on a fight against inequality and poverty. However, the Indigenous population is at a salient disadvantage in relation to the rest of the Mexican population. Tinajero and Englander (2011) found the following.

México’s policy of Indigenous education must begin by establishing a sociocultural frame of reference for the child as an active member of a particular ethnic group and, at the same time, an equally active member and participant in the wider society with a distinct culture, but not one is incompatible or contradictory. That is when diversity is accepted. That is when the educational policy can be termed bilingual and intercultural. (p. 174)

In the past decade, scholarship has emerged that addresses racialized dynamics that play a role in Intercultural Bilingual programs in México (Martínez Buenabad, 2015). There is a reference to language policy and the historical context and evolution of democratization efforts in intercultural bilingual programs. This recent research provides important perspectives concerning the continuing gaps around linguistic rights in México and how the linguistic policy that has resulted in the development of Intercultural Bilingual programs has not created the needed changes in the lives of the Indigenous students attending these programs in México. Furthermore, this research highlights the need to ensure that

Intercultural Bilingual programs respond inside and outside the classroom to develop intercultural citizenship. This intercultural citizenship goes beyond human rights, civic rights, and participatory practices to include critical engagement. However necessary this discussion related to the fundamental systemic failure of these programs to elevate the quality of education is, it is also necessary to find links between community voice and the results of these programs as they are rooted in the needs of a community and articulated to respond to such identified necessities.

Moving towards more specific engagement with the Indigenous Purépecha communities in Michoacán, there is research that has documented the implementation of an academic curriculum that initially failed when attempted in Spanish and was later successful when it began to incorporate Purépecha language in every subject area (Hamel et al., 2018).

The link between community voice and the development of Intercultural bilingual programs is an integral element in their function and success. Recently, Hamel et al. (2018) documented the T'arhexperakua/Growing Together project, which analyzed curriculum development practices that shed light on the relation to the ethnic identity politics and self-affirmative action of Purépecha teachers. They reacted to top-down state assimilationist practices by elevating the status of Purépecha as it became the linguistic focus and the central axis for instruction in this particular context. Prior studies such as these have increased our understanding of the ongoing work that teachers do and how much investment there is on the part of these teachers. Nonetheless, the role of the community in voicing their needs as these relate to secondary programs is one focus that needs to be

expanded and further explored. This study contributes to these particular areas as the many parts that make up the whole of advocacy work remain too isolated in these studies.

The Intersection of Auto-Determinación/Self-Determination and Comunalidad

Self-Determination. Blansett (2011) notes that the Red Power movement is synonymous with the idea of self-determination as well as nationalism in the context of the twentieth century. This movement emerged in the 1960s and it triggered a desire to challenge colonial or foreign powers. Furthermore, the ideas behind the concept of self-determination in the 20th century are politically rooted in Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" proposal that aimed at providing an alternative to the Treaty of Versailles in order to layout the guidelines for ending World War One. In this context, Native Nationalism has been demanding a respect to autonomy and sovereign status outside and apart from the United States (Blansett, 2011).

The occupation of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay on November 14 of 1969 is a paramount event for American Indians in the last decades after the Civil Rights Movement. This movement reclaimed the dignity and pride of all Native nations that were part of the Western Hemisphere, and it became a catalyst that released the voices of Indigenous people. The idea of sovereignty encompasses the connection of land, Nation, and communities as well as familial relationships and individuals (Blansett, 2011).

Rough Rock. During the eve of the Civil Rights movement, Rough Rock or Diné Biolta "The People's School" was built as a response to self-preservation, a revitalization of language, culture, and education rights. On July 7, 1966, leaders of the Rough Rock community, a Diné community in Arizona, met to decide the future direction of a school for

the community. Under the direction of Yazzie Begay, John Caboni, John Dick, Teddy McCurtain, and Ada Agnes Singer, the project for a Diné directed school began. The creation of this school is one of the most telling signifiers of institutional Native American self-determination projects (McCarty, 2002, p. 16).

As observed by authors like McCarty (2002), in Rough Rock, a web of cooperation existed extending across camps where work was a joint effort identified as the principle of communalism. In this communal system, community goods were shared and distributed, and way before the school's foundation, there existed a historical record of these dynamics as a resource to rebuild the economy after the Great Depression. Rough Rock became a symbol of democratic education, of the integration of the community and their voice rippling into their curriculum development. As described in McCarty (2002), the school felt the struggles of negotiating the intrusion of English later in the schooling project, and efforts to maintain community ties were challenged by assimilationist ideologies. McCarty (1989) noted too that Rough Rock means a lot more than bilingual and bicultural instruction; it demonstrated how Indian communities could take control of their community through an internal restructuring of leadership to change socioeconomic and political structures.

Through assimilation policies specifically inserted into curricular materials, institutionalized education consistently attempted to erase the shared knowledge of Native American youth through the development of the boarding school system. Nonetheless, resistance through the continuation of traditional practices, and the safe-keeping of Native American life, proved to neutralize the wide-spread institutional identity assault of colonial

settler society in the United States. Sakiestewa Gilbert (2018), Trask (1987), and Suina (1985) have approached in their analysis and writing institutional disruptions in the traditional life of Native American communities. These authors observe the effects of systemic assimilation efforts within educational curricular structures. Similarly, they acknowledge a parallel resistance among the same communities impacted by the imposition of the school system.

In addition, these authors address the effects of a colonizing educational system aimed at the assimilation of Western socio-cultural practices that impacted the dynamics of everyday living as well as self-determination. A shared sense of community and adherence to traditional Native American values permeates into the personal narratives where a strong sense of belonging precludes the moments when their cultural identity becomes institutionalized and their family units broken (Suina, 1985; Trask, 1987). Suina (1985) narrates how in his early years he felt safe as he was

Tucked securely beneath his blankets, I listened to one of her (grandmother's) stories or about how it was when she was a little girl. These accounts appeared so old fashioned compared to the way we lived. Sometimes she softly sang a song from a ceremony. In this way I went off to sleep each night. (p. 1)

The conflict of negotiating between tradition and the imposition of a settler system is manifested in the introduction by Trask (1987). In her narrative, she remembers the different versions of history that she grew up with; the story told by her family and the story she heard in school. Trask (1987) narrates,

From my 'ohana (family), I learned about the life of the old ones: how they fished and planted by the moon; shared all the fruits of their labors, especially their children; danced in great numbers for long hours; and honored the unity of their world in intricate genealogical chants. (p. 113)

The assimilation via curricular production was a key element that purposely disrupted cultural, political, and social dynamics within Native American communities. Curricular production was integral to the educational project geared at Native American communities. Children and youth experienced and suffered from being separated from their families and pressured to strip themselves from their language and home culture (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018; Suina, 2011; Trask, 1987). Nonetheless, generational differences determined whether members of the Native American community would be forced to be part of segregated schools such as boarding school institutions, where students were separated for years from their families as later generations of Native Americans could attend school outside of the boarding school system (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018).

Resistance and self-determination. The reactions toward the efforts of assimilation policies, segregation, and the family isolation practices of boarding schools were not passively adopted by the Native American communities. Resistance has been manifested in many aspects, such as the reincorporation of Native values and norms, strong community participation, and the re-acquisition of community language (Trask, 1987). Norms such as values provided by the elders, growing back their hair for the men, or using braids for women are some examples. A strong sense of awareness has led to a decolonizing spirit, yet

there is a necessary negotiation between the imposition of a system and the existing values and traditions.

Adopting the knowledge of the “White man’s world” became a strategy of survival for groups like the Hopi as in the promotion of “Hopification,” where Hopis “adopted or adapted certain aspects of western society so they could preserve their culture and survive as people” (Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018, as cited by Lomawaima, 1989, p. 98). Similarly, Trask (1987), by questioning the prevailing historical narratives that encapsulated the story of the people of Hawaii as the victims of a feudal system, reconstructed and decolonized the identity of the land and the generations that have inhabited it. Nonetheless, Suina (1985) presented resistance differently in his narrative, as in his story, resistance seems intermittent to the extent that he can reconnect with the community, as he is the boy he talks about in this story. The struggle to keep this connection was magnified as the continuous physical separation from his family and community reinforced acculturation practices much aligned with Western values and practices.

Comunalidad. The first ethnopolitical organizations in Oaxaca became visible during the decade of the 1980s, and this was an effort created by intellectuals and activists in the zone (Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). This proposition emerged from the efforts within an organization and formed the foundation for the initial establishments with an ethnopolitical objective. The notion of comunalidad relies on the labor and productivity within communities, utilizing communal values as a motivating factor for decision-making and establishing traditions centered around spatial and temporal concepts, all under the

governance of the community. Within this framework, there were clear demands for absolute respect to our self-determination of Indigenous lands.

Oaxaca and the educational efforts that surround teacher and community activism flourished out of a desire to recover community life as this state has lived one of the strongest aggressions against Indigenous cultures within the colonialism(s); Spanish viceroyalty/Mexican State, beginning with the arrival of the Spaniards and other European groups into the area of modern-day Oaxaca. As noted by Maldonado Alvarado (2010), if the Spanish rule was a source of spiritual and linguistic repression, Mexican colonialism has been notably more destructive as it imposed a set governmental and economic system that has crushed the power of communities over the education of their children. With this successful push to reaffirm its Indigenous identity, Oaxaca has advocated for true recognition of *comunalidad* in the schools vs interculturality as it identifies the intercultural agenda as the product of the state and not the people. A strong separation has been necessary as they were able to extend school instruction under this framework beyond elementary school as it has been characteristic of most programs that fall under the category of *educación indigenista* or Indigenous education.

The concept of *comunalidad*, as manifested in many Mexican communities, has been studied in the field of education and has been key in the development of multicultural and intercultural education in México, especially after the signing of the San Andres treaties in 1994 (de León Pasquel, 2010). Much of the pressure came from the demands of the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* who demanded a revision to the curriculum to have a more responsive attitude towards the visibility of Indigenous thought and culture (de León

Pasquel, 2010, p. 13). The arguments presented by the Ejército Zapatista looked at the 169th agreement of the Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO) and the way it highlights the educational rights of the Original People's in México (de León Pasquel, 2010, p. 180). 1994 was a year that was characterized by the collapse of the Salinas de Gortari neo-liberal agenda and a massive Mexican *peso* devaluation that fueled so much of the movement that was taking place in states like Chiapas.

The concept of *comunalidad* has transcended across time since the Spanish invasion of the American continent as, while it has been part of the manifestations of cultural, economic, and political resistance, it has operated under a premise of self-determination. The concept of *comunalidad* allowed Oaxaca to survive the suffocating process of globalization in a stretch of four hundred years when the communities of this federal entity were recovering from the abuse of mercantilism and the outright exploitation of human and natural resources of the region as in the rest of the Mexican territory (Martínez Luna, 2015). *Comunalidad* is a concept that is based on resistance; however, all the resistance movements that have taken place in México and Latin America are not necessarily based within such a clear framework. It is important to observe as it can provide a clear pathway to other forms of social organization and social movements that recognize the need to develop systems of autonomy and bridge these into their own educational institutions. Beyond resistance, *comunalidad*, as a group of actions, became part of public policy in the state of Oaxaca. It is now written into the "State Education Act of 1995 as one of the guiding principles of education" (Martínez Luna, 2015, p. 88). Furthermore, *comunalidad* is the

“epistemological notion that sustains an ancestral, yet still new and unique, civilizing process, one which holds back the decrepit individualization of knowledge, power and culture” (Martínez Luna, 2015, p. 88).

As *comunalidad* emerged from movements rooted in the 1980s, the movement became grounded on a confrontation against individualism as this emphasis in individual success and achievement is seen as an extension of colonial thought, ideologies of privatization, and early mercantile systems (Martínez Luna, 2015). *Comunalidad* as a world view “integrates diversity and reproduces it within collaborative forms of work and joint construction” (Martínez Luna, 2015, p. 89). Its elements—territory, governance, labor, and enjoyment—are articulated based on respect and reciprocity. As a result of the social movements of the 1980s, thanks to the teachers' advocacy, the concept of *comunalidad* as one of the guiding principles became as integral as the principles of democracy, nationalism and humanism. The Zapatista uprising of 1994 added pressure to pass the State Education Act of 1995. In this way, the framework of *comunalidad* seeks to integrate the specific, the local, and the regional into their educational systems and strengthen ancestral knowledge using pedagogical agencies and tools appropriate for this task that aims at reducing the individualization of knowledge.

Borderlands Pedagogies

Critical pedagogy has informed borderlands theory and borderlands pedagogies (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988, 1991). While much attention has been directed at binational dynamics within the field of education, little has been addressed about the dynamics that occur within a country through the mobility of its

Indigenous populations. Borderlands pedagogies are one of the key theoretical bases for data analysis in this study. The story behind the phenomenon present in creating the Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de La Laguna in Michoacán is grounded in the search for a third space of opportunity to reinforce community ties via schooling practices. Third space will be used as a framework of analysis in this study.

Third Space Theory

Third space theory has been effectively used to bridge the complex intertwining of home pieces of knowledge, native knowledge, and the realm of possibility as educational systems are disrupted to fit the needs of a community. Many considerations, reactions, and applications come to mind in properly articulating a personal understanding of the third space as an analytical lens. Most importantly and fundamentally unique is the function of this epistemic framework and the roots that hold together the proposed undoing of hegemonies. Furthermore, this lens of analysis intersects constantly within postcolonial perspectives as it magnifies the constructions that affect relations of gender, class, and race; the third space engages the different voices within the interplay of sociocultural-political participants. In bolder words used by Gloria Anzaldúa, the third space heals because it is made up of brokenness and wound, thus becoming the arena of the struggle (Lunsford, 2004).

Part of the importance of a framework such as a third space resides in the fact that while all individuals are somehow part of a society and socially constructed spaces, as Lefebvre (1991) observed, not everyone gets to be fully acknowledged, seen, or heard within these spaces. As there exists a continuation of ruptures with modernity, a deeper

conversation occurs here and there. The shining sparks of the third space shed light on the dynamics that occur as a result of struggle and voices of that interplay that takes place when power is challenged, and somehow, because of this opportunity, new voices are acknowledged. These voices include the subaltern, the post-colonial, the liberated voice, the voice of struggle, the voice arising from the cracks, or the voice of the threshold people that Gloria Anzaldúa proclaims as victors of this dialogic fight where *nepantla*, or the space in-between, is revealed (Keating, 2006).

In the work of Handa and Tippins (2013), the authors eloquently link the analysis of a “third space” and its deep connection to the funds of knowledge. Before, I had not considered how these two theories could be intrinsically connected; in this case, the local Philippine communities held key knowledge within their everyday practices. One of the aspects that is emphasized within Latino communities is that of bringing home knowledge into the classroom (Gonzalez et al., 1995). Handa and Tippins (2013) explore preservice science teacher preparation programs in the context of Indigenous and postcolonial identities. Through narratives and interviews, special attention is given to discursive practices arising from the 300 years of colonial occupation in the Philippines and creating a “third space.” As tensions over discursive practices were observed among the participants of these teacher preparation programs, this study placed emphasis on recognizing Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous as well as what was identified as science, foreign vs ours, and what has been borrowed. One of the study's goals was to provide an insight into the ideological tensions that develop and how these can prompt future teachers to explore deeper questions that may not be often considered. The authors explore the development

of a “third space” about funds of knowledge when these manifest in communities that have suffered displacement. One of the guiding observations of this study is concerned with the disruption of tradition within native “ecological knowledge” as Western educational ideologies permeate into science programs in school programs that are largely attended by students who have directly or indirectly experienced colonization (p. 240). In this context, the funds of knowledge acknowledge aspects of native knowledge that have been often overlooked by Western perspectives that privilege a Euro-centric scientific framework over native knowledge (p. 241). The article observes *Indigenous/Neo-Indigenous Knowledge* as it explores the negotiations within daily life practices such as fishing and other sustainability practices. The authors look at *Western/School Science and Ways of Knowing /Living with Nature* to develop a comparative framework that will further provide insight into the construction of knowledge in these communities about the hybrid spaces that develop as pre-service teachers negotiate between community values and more traditional ways of approaching scientific teaching.

Other aspects that are examined in depth are the *Context of the Study, the Setting of the Study, the Data and Analysis*, and the results. As hybrid spaces are identified in postcolonial societies, the study provides insight into the funds of knowledge created within the intersections of coloniality and modernity. The authors examined the connections to the natural environment, Indigenous beliefs, and Euro-Western science as they highlight the confluence of Indigenous, neo-Indigenous, and Western knowledge (p. 262).

In essence, the project’s basis is an act of self-agency and voice to enact action as the location of schooling practices occurred to find agency in their community. As Freire

(1970) observes, the world aligns with the notions of de-colonial practices that critically engage the interaction of colonial legacy and its effects in the broader sociocultural and economic dynamic of the youth that experience them (Mignolo, 2000). Recognizing that this framework has been applied as a critical lens to deconstruct the modern-colonial (Mignolo, 2000), and that builds on observations emerging from the border pedagogies as they contribute to the discussion built around poststructuralists views (Giroux, 1988, 1991), I seek to find in its micro-contextual application (Cervantes-Soon, 2017) the comparisons that can help me establish solid analytic basis.

While the idea that the Mexican borders are highly defined by clear geopolitical limits and clear binaries results in striking political and economic differences is true, I want to extend the notion of borderlands that occurs within the limits of state-defined territories. Hence, many dynamics visible in the complexity of one country to another can also be visible in the context of Indigenous nations within a country like México. In this sense, Cervantes-Soon (2017) presented that the borderlands also represent spaces within the metaphor of cultural and linguistic peripheries and ruptures. This idea applies to the observations that will take place in looking at the intersection of Purépecha language and culture within a Mexican state that has had an entrenched connection to colonial practices and ongoing physical and economic movements between these Purépecha communities and the United States. The alienation from official schooling systems that have questioned the cultural validity of the heritage students who grew up within the México-U.S. border (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016) is a phenomenon that is also visible in the interaction that

Indigenous communities have within the country as they also confront the effects of neoliberalism, colonization, and patriarchy.

For Trinidad Galván (2001), border theory cannot be detached from how it connects to gendered dynamics and practice as they relate to community engagement, agency, and the role of patriarchal legacies within their ties to oppressive systems that rule community dynamics. Trinidad Galván (2001) noted that when we address pedagogy, the observation of pedagogical events can erase the limits of the context where educational practices take place as they have been identified as actions that can be observed in the mundane and ordinary and learning as an action that can take place in multiple spaces (Hernández, 1997). This observation of the mundane and the ordinary and the learning practices that happened around the development of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural of Santa Fe de la Laguna has not been applied in the context of the development of a school as a result of a community ordinary need. Consequently, the situations that occur in creating this school are in turn reverse.

Indigenous Bilingual Education and Secondary Education

In the past, scholarship has focused on the implications and effects of ideological reproductions through bilingual programs and their effects on bilingual Indigenous-Latinx communities (Baker, 2001; Pavlenko et al., 2001). Nonetheless, it is important to understand and pay attention to the impact this has on youth as they navigate the process of negotiating perceived linguistic hierarchies that juxtapose native vs colonial linguistic/cultural practices that build on hybridity.

Christine P. Sims's article "Tribal Languages and the Challenges of Revitalizations," observes that language revitalization needs to develop the context of a language as it is used in ordinary spoken interactions (Sims, 2005). Her work reacts to the efforts of universities to implement Indigenous language programs without considering the broader function of language. This article looks at the limits of language revitalization through educational institutions. It is a challenge to create "critical language learning activities that are key to successful language renewal efforts" (Sims, 2005, p. 104). Sims (2005) brings forth the efforts of Pueblo tribes in New Mexico that have created initiatives to revitalize their language through a more comprehensive social context that provides the opportunity to have specific "events" that are available to students in addition to their language immersion classes (p. 104). Some of the challenges that exist throughout the establishment of language revitalization programs in Indigenous communities or in university-based Indigenous language programs is the lack of alignment with the oral traditions that engage the use of the language in their communities.

Rebecca Blum Martínez observed the interaction of Indigenous bilingual programs in Pueblo communities in NM. Using the Talpa School District in northern NM, she noticed the uneasiness of relations between the Pueblo and the school district (Blum Martínez, 2000). Despite the commitment of bilingual teachers in the 1990's and their advocacy to provide language instruction, Pueblo community members did not share their enthusiasm (p. 211). The Tribal Council declared that "no outside entity or person had the right to use their language for any purpose without the council's participation and official consent" (p. 211).

The article reveals that Native languages are entwined to “governance and sovereignty” (p. 212). Furthermore, Blum Martínez observes that Indigenous languages should not be under an instructional approach that emulates Spanish bilingual programs, as has occurred commonly (p. 212). Nonetheless, it has been noted by the author that Pueblo communities are embracing language instruction as they realize children are losing their language. These communities have begun the implementation of immersion programs (p. 215). As part of the communities' requests to embrace these programs, they want to have a sense that “the privacy of the language and its content is safeguarded when exposed to the public sphere” (p. 216). Again, in a parallel reaction to the tensions that have manifested in México and the Andean region, resistance on the part of the administrators and school staff has resulted as many refuse to give up control over the curriculum to the Native communities. In dealing with implementing these programs and ensuring their effectiveness, Dr. Blum Martínez recommends having a clear rationale for teaching, fostering intrinsic value, and a curriculum appropriate to the culture.

The definition of “hybrid literacy practices,” as used by Soltero-González (2009), is first taken from the analysis of “literacies” as a system of meanings through codification. Hybrid practices become a space, identified as a “third space” that allows for a negotiation of linguistic and social practices (Soltero-González, 2009). The use of “hybrid literacies” is a tool that enables children to negotiate a linguistic and a social space where an “official space” needs to be more carefully introduced in order to provide a smoother transition for the students. As explained by the author, that negotiation occurs between spaces and the

construction of an interpreted space that is both linguistic and social and develops a hybrid environment (Soltero-González, 2009).

Final Considerations

García et al. (2011) argue that bilingual education must be reconceptualized to fit bilingual education in the 21st century (p. 1). Furthermore, they question the homogeneity of bilingual minority populations, noting a strong heterogeneity in the student population. They argue for specific policies and practices designed for secondary education where “languaging” occurs among youth in their communication practices (p. 1). García et al. (2011) argue that “bilingualism is now acknowledged as the common way of ‘languaging’ in the world” and that language practices of bilinguals are “complex and interrelated, and simply not linear” (p. 2). This study contributes to advancing scientific knowledge by addressing the gap in the study of intercultural educational programs that directly interact with a clearly transnational population.

The next chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed in this dissertation study. Expanding upon the general outline presented in Chapter 1, the subsequent sections delve into greater detail and clarity. The chapter outlines the specific research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, and the theoretical framework utilized to guide the study. The last section addresses ethical considerations and measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship between transnationalism and Bilingual Indigenous Secondary Intercultural education models. This phenomenological investigation aimed to gain insight into how Intercultural education at the secondary level impacts the lives of transnational students, their families, teachers, and administrators at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna in Michoacán, México. The research methods involved reflecting on the data collected from various school stakeholders. The study contributes to developing the concept of Indigenous-transnational-interculturality, which refers to a category of pedagogical practices with unique characteristics. These practices embrace a framework that integrates Indigenous knowledge, transnationalism, and intercultural communication.

Positionality

Since 2006, I began working in different capacities at Albuquerque Public Schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Whether as an Educational Assistant, a Substitute Teacher, or a Teacher of Record, there were multiple times that I could not teach in a way that was clear enough to some of the students that came from México. Most of these students came from rural communities of Chihuahua and other parts of México. As I got to know them better, I realized that there was something that I was missing. These linguistic and cultural disconnects happened to me as a teacher even when I had lived in Mexican rural communities as a child, did fieldwork in areas like Michoacán as an undergraduate, and, most importantly, as I grew up in the country. Not knowing what these linguistic barriers

entailed, I began talking more to these students and paying attention to the accents and the use of Spanish and finding a wealth of diversities, cultural and linguistic, that problematize many notions of bilingual education that are part of current teacher professional learning in the United States.

Many of these students were part of bilingual programs, yet they had trouble understanding the work they were supposed to do, and I had trouble explaining it clearly. As a teacher, I wanted to know the context surrounding my students after realizing Spanish was not their first language, as many teachers among me assumed at first. The students I was teaching came with a rich repertoire of Native languages and were continuing the instruction they had gotten in their home communities. I later understood that they were transnational students, that I was a transnational student before, and that I am now a transnational teacher; even so, I could not grasp with certainty what the language dynamics were.

My intention for this research was to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the children, youth, and families who come from Indigenous nations within “nations”, such as México, to attend schools in the United States. These students possess a strong sense of identity rooted in their language and culture and their Indigenous nation sovereignty. I aim to present their narratives about their experiences in schools, the importance of their languages, and their communities' aspirations for well-being. This exploration provides insights into their unique learning needs and how we can better comprehend and support their educational journey.

Research Questions

To study the connections of transnationalism and Bilingual Indigenous Secondary Intercultural models of education, I included the following research questions:

1. Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
2. How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
3. What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Organization of the Chapter

This chapter is divided as follows: It starts with a brief overview and introduction. Next is a description of the sample, the types of information I collected, and the research and methods design. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical basis for the data collection methods used and why these were chosen. Then, a description of the data analysis and data synthesis is included. Finally, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and the limitations and delimitations of the study are provided.

Research Participants and Research Sample

Site and Participants

The Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna was founded on September 14 of 2010 as part of a community effort. This school is affiliated with the

Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo (U.M.S.N.H). The grade levels the school has include 10th, 11th, and 12th. The school comprises a faculty body and a group of administrators, typically a principal and one or two assistant principals.

As mentioned, the participants are current and former students attending this high school. All the names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms. The families that were recruited for participation in this study are all related to the students in the study, but they may also be related to students that are not part of the study if they have a link with the school. The teachers and administrators are or were part of the school. Table 1 presents the matrix that I used to collect demographic data collection.

Table 1

Organizational Schema for Demographic Information

Participant Code	Pseudonym	Years Enrolled	Occupation	Gender	Age
E1-ADMN	Carlos	NA	Educational Administrator	M	35-45
E2-ADMN	Santiago	NA	Educational Administrator	M	40-50
E3-TEA	René	NA	Researcher	M	35-45
E4-TEA	Mónica	NA	Teacher	F	35-45
E5-TEA	Mari	NA	Teacher	F	25-35
E6-TEA	Camilo	NA	Teacher	M	35-45
E7-TEA	Tomás	NA	Teacher and Radio Host	M	40-50
E8-FC	Guillermo	NA	Researcher	M	55-65

E9-FC	Zule	NA	Store Owner	F	25-35
E10-FC	Matías	NA	Store Owner	M	25-35
E11-FC	Elena	NA	Radio Broadcaster	F	25-35
E12-STU	Mariela	2	Student	F	15-20
E13-STU	Ricardo	2	Student	M	15-20
E14-STU	Diego	2	Student	M	15-20
E15-STU	Jannet	NA	Student	F	15-20

Note. This table depicts the information related to the demographic characteristics of all participants. The codes stand for I-Interview, followed by the interview number, followed by the role of the participant: ADMIN- Administrator, TEA- Teacher, FC- Family/community member, and STU- Student, NA- Does not apply.

The objective of the study was to recruit a minimum of five students from Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. During the two site visits to Michoacán, four students took part in the interviews and focus groups. The study involved two current and three former teachers, as well as two school administrators. Furthermore, four community members were involved in both individual and focus groups. The school was selected as the research site because it meets the criteria for the phenomenon that is the subject of study. It is an Indigenous secondary school that has been denominated an Intercultural program, and the student population is in a state in México that has been identified as the state with the highest transnational movement between México and the United States. This specific high school has been selected as it was created through a community-led effort that reacted to the need to establish a program that would provide a high school alternative for youth of the community to stay and not migrate to other larger

cities like Morelia, the capital of Michoacán or Quiroga, a nearby village, and thus, retain the students in Santa Fe de la Laguna with their families.

The participants were students currently enrolled in this educational institution. For this study, I did not restrict the number of years the students attended, the gender, or the age of the student participants. In the initial stage of the study, I hoped to get more than five former students participating within a limit of ten for proper data analysis. The recruitment of students was difficult, given the family consent it required. Only four students in the study were allowed by their families to participate. The family members who were recruited have a connection to the school as parents or family members of current or former students at this school. The maximum number of family member participants was five adults and in the study four family/community members participated. Due to the post-pandemic circumstances, it was not easy to locate many of the students' families. Additionally, the work schedules of most community members are during the morning and afternoon hours, making it difficult for me to find some of the people in the community. Finally, the number of administrators that were part of this study were two current principals of the school.

Sampling Strategies

For this study, I recruited participants through a snowball sampling strategy. This kind of purposive strategy is the most appropriate for this study as I wanted to identify a population specific to an educational context. In this kind of recruitment strategy, members are sampled and then asked to help identify other members to sample, and this process continues until enough samples are collected (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The initial

contact I established happened through a community member of San Juan Nuevo Parangaricutiro who worked closely with a scholar at the Universidad Michoacana and is originally from Santa Fe de la Laguna and whose father was one of the first principals at the school. One of the school's teachers had already been contacted, and I continued recruitment through this chain of contact information I have so far.

Perceptual and Theoretical Information

The information gathered concerning the participants' perception specific to an inquiry is defined as perceptual information. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), this kind of information served to record just that, the perceptions that relate to the stories of the participants. Since this is a phenomenological proposed study, all the information was highly regarded as perceptual. As illustrated in Table 2, the study included theoretical information stemming from the literature to support and provide evidence for the following: methods, theories that relate to the research questions, interpretation and analysis, and conclusions/future recommendations. Table 2 illustrates the structure I used to organize this perceptual and theoretical information. In this chapter, the presented table is a sample that was used in the data analysis. However, it is left empty due to size constraints. The actual table used was transferred to a Microsoft Excel document.

Table 2

Template for Gathering Perceptual and Theoretical Information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019)

Research Questions	Type of Information Needed	Information Yielded	Method of Data Collection
	a) Contextual	a) Background	
	b) Demographic	b) Demographic	
	c) Perceptual	c) Perceptual	

Question #1:

Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?

Question #2:

How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Question #3:

What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Note. This table is intended to segregate the different elements in the research questions to get accurate data points that informed the analysis of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

This proposed qualitative study focused on the perspectives of students and community members of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. I addressed questions that connected transnationalism to lived experience through a constructivist approach. The study highlighted how meaning is made concerning the

intercultural program as it intersects with geographical and conceptual spaces. This third space is culturally informed by a pre-existing cultural fluency (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

As a researcher, I was the primary instrument for collecting data and subsequent data analysis. To answer the research questions, I used a phenomenological approach. The data gathered allowed me to observe better and develop patterns that guided us to construct meaning collectively (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The interview's analysis provided the perceptual information I needed to better understand the intersecting contexts. I documented the stories of the lived life of youth, their families, and the teachers and administrators whose stories and experiences are woven and connected in the context of the development of this school. Central to this study is the interaction of the participants and the institution with language and culture.

This study provided a *thick description* (Gertz, 1973). Providing a thorough description of the setting, I described the research participants and their experiences to produce the interpretations informed by the participants through member checking to collectively draw meaning out of these by having the opportunity to debrief the findings. This process facilitated my ability to answer the research question about how transnationalism manifests in Intercultural programs in Michoacán, México.

Data Collection

In this chapter's first section, I described the research questions used to guide data collection, analysis, and alignment. The data were collected through various methods, including interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts (such as YouTube videos and

teacher-made materials). The following section describes and justifies using each data collection method.

Interviews

As a method, interviews have been widely used in qualitative research. One of the reasons why I opted for the use of this method was to elicit a conversation that would be focused and respectful of the time and privacy of each of the participants. Research by Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggests that interviews constitute an essential part of what phenomenological studies attempt to do; reinforce thick descriptions related to life histories, narrative analysis, arts-based inquiry, and visual methods. Furthermore, through this method of inquiry, I had the opportunity to provide everyone involved in the process of interviews to ask clarifying questions and make sure that there exists a complete understanding related to the questions and the reasons behind the questions. These interviews aimed to capture “perceptions, attitudes, and emotions” of the interview participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 193).

The interviews were semi-structured and did not exceed 45 minutes in length to respect the participants' time. The literature has noted that an interview's effectiveness depends on its correct documentation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Thus, every recording was fully transcribed and later coded for a better structure to guide the data analysis. Because of aspects related to the pandemic that affected the world in 2020, all the interactions were based on a process that allowed COVID-safe practices. This process involved interviews that complied with COVID-safe practices. The interviews were limited to personal conversations. These personal interviews were important as they

allowed me to reinforce a more personal connection and meaningful relationship with the participants. There were focus group interviews with an explicit focus; however, this was contingent upon the safety precautions taken through the COVID safe practices. Having the ability to have focus groups allowed me to combine the rich lived experience of the study participants and my own experience as a researcher to understand better how transnationalism interacts with the program at the Preparatoria Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Description of the First, Second, and Third Round of Interviews

I communicated with the Santa Fe de la Laguna community for six months, where I recruited voluntary participation in this study. The first round of conversations was based on a semi-structured interview guide that was part of the questionnaire I used with everyone. This questionnaire was an initial individual interview to create rapport and create a space where the community members of Santa Fe de la Laguna felt free to ask any clarifying questions. Figures 1, 2, and 3 provide an example of how the questions were presented to students, families, teachers, and administrators.

Figure 1

Initial Question Set for Students for First and Second Round of Interviews

Question Set #1- Students Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
Short Interview for Recruitment (Interview #1) Did you attend or are you attending the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? How long ago?

Are you over the age of 18?
Individual Interview (Interview #2) When did you attend the school or are you currently attending the school? What was a day like in the school? Can you tell me why you attended this school versus another high school? What is different about this school? Did you get an opportunity to participate in the design of some of the classes? After graduating, what happened to most of your classmates?

Note. This figure describes the information for the first set of questions for students related to their ability to participate in student engagement in curricular production.

Figure 2

Initial Question Set for Families for First and Second Round of Interviews

Question Set #2- Families How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
Short Interview for Recruitment (Interview #1) Did one of your family members attend or are any of your family members currently attending the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? How long ago did they attend?
Individual Interviews (Interview #2) What were some of the reasons behind the development of this school? How were the families involved in the process? How does a school like the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna help the community? How can you describe the experience of participating in this program? Why is it important for the community that this school exist? How is this school different than other schools and why?

Note: These two questions were intended to take place individually with the school's stakeholders.

Figure 3

Initial Question Set for Teachers and Administrator for First and Second Round of Interviews

<p>Question Set #3: Teachers and Administrators What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?</p>
<p>Short Interview for Recruitment (Interview #1) Have you worked as a teacher or administrator in the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?</p>
<p>Individual Interview (Interview #2) What are some of the ideas that guide the school? How does the concept of autonomy of comunalidad inform what happens in the school? How do teachers and school staff work with the community? What are some of the needs of the students?</p>

Note. The first question is intended to serve as a recruitment question, and the second one bridged the aspects related to comunalidad.

After I identified the study participants, there was a second set of individual interviews where I asked questions specific to the three stakeholder groups: the former students, the families of the student, and the teachers and administrators. A third round of group interviews was scheduled to have a collective conversation related to the shared sense of the role schools like this play in communities like Santa Fe de la Laguna. Again, there was a semi-structured interview guide. This allowed me to understand better how intercultural programs such as this one had relevance in the lives of transnational youth and their families. To ensure proper confidentiality among the participants of the study, I provided the consent forms and a description of the research procedures. I also informed participants of the risks and benefits of the research and the voluntary basis for participation in this research. Finally, I explained how I kept all documents confidential

(Groenewald, 2004). The final step was to have participants agree to participate in the research by obtaining their signatures.

Focus Groups

Focus groups in qualitative studies are a good way to incorporate interviews and participatory research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Much of my ability to plan these focus groups largely depended on the pandemic's state in the Santa Fe de la Laguna community. While the restrictions were lessening in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, organizing in large groups was discouraged by the Mexican health authorities. I conducted four focus groups throughout my visit with three distinct sets of participants. The first focus group was with a group of female students, Jannet and Mariela. We met prior to school hours, first in the school and later in the central square in front of the church, as we walked to get *licuados* and fruit juice while their teachers arrived to the school. This focus group conversation lasted around an hour, and the focus group questions alternated between the semi-structured questions I had prepared and talk informal comments about our favorite foods and places. The second focus group was my conversation with two community/family members, Zule and Matías. They are a young couple who have two small children and they are in charge of their woodworking business, where they produce wood-crafted products, and they help manage the *hostal*/hostel where I was living in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Since I was often the only resident in the hostel most of the nights, Zule and Matías would check on me every day around 9:00 PM when the nighttime activities resumed in the plaza. We had a conversation that lasted a little more than an hour as we cooked dinner and played with their two little daughters. We met in the outdoor kitchen and made mole enchiladas

with beans that night. The last third focus group was within the school space with two male students, Diego and Ricardo. This conversation lasted about half an hour and the two boys could not stay longer due to their family responsibilities and work. The last focus group took place in the hostel where I was staying. René and Mónica helped me organize a dinner where four teachers, one administrator, and one community member who has been a great part of the articulation of the school attended. The meeting lasted close to two hours, and between informal conversations and sharing food at the table we went over the focus groups questions. Table 3 provides a schema of the relationship between the major themes arising from the research and focus group questions. During the study interviews allowed for a more controlled situation related to the social distancing necessary in these conversations. During the time there were focus group conversations, these happened mainly in an outdoor setting or dining areas that allowed for proper distancing.

Table 3

Questions Related to the Semi-Structured Interviews for Focus Groups

Topic	Questions
Language Identity	In what ways do you feel the school is helping keep Purépecha language alive in the community? Can you think of the reasons behind the concern people in Santa Fe de la Laguna have in relation to the preservation of Purépecha language?
Cultural Identity	How can you describe Purépecha cultural identity? How is Purépecha culture fostered in the school (Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna)?
Role of the community in the development of the school	What were some of the concerns on the part of the families, students and teachers when creating this school? What can other schools learn from this school?

Role of the school in the community	How does this school help the community? How does the school help the students?
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Note. This table describes the major categories of questions that guided the focus group semi structured interviews.

Classroom Observations

During this study, I conducted two classroom observations. The dynamics of the school are central to the research, and having the opportunity to observe a classroom was key to the understanding of the teachers and students in this high school taking into consideration the scarcity of teachers caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns. Due to the limited availability of educators, I was only able to carry out two observations. This constraint arose because I had to assist in teaching a course while conducting fieldwork. The observations lasted approximately one hour each and were conducted in maestra Mary's Lectura y Redacción class, which focused on Spanish literature and grammar. It's worth noting that maestra Mary, an Indigenous woman with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and literature, hailed from a community in Michoacán. The entire class was conducted in Spanish, reflecting the teacher's cultural background and expertise in the subject matter. The students in this classroom belonged to grades 11 and 12. The observations were audio recorded only and later transcribed by me.

Artifacts

I incorporated the use of artifacts that relates to the production the students and the community have done to self-document and advocate for their school. Part of these artifacts was found using the internet as a way of data collection. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) have noted that the Internet is one of the most important tools for qualitative

research. In this study, I used the internet to access documents and for archival research. Before the onsite visit, I found one YouTube video done by this high school community, and a Facebook page that provided information about the school.

The artifact research also included archival research on the Internet and a planned visit to the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Morelia to look for documents related to the *Proyecto Tarasco*/Tarascan Project, which dates back to 1934. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, this document is a very important historical precedent related to the roots of bilingual education. This is the context of the state of Michoacán but also in México as it was the first version of a bilingual program meant to introduce Spanish into the Native communities of Michoacán. *The Proyecto Tarasco* became the groundwork for future implementations of programs in post-Revolutionary México and possibly in many areas of Latin America as Spanish became a major symbol of nationalism and political alignment (Martínez Buenabad, 2015). Additionally, it was important for me to collect this information to historicize and contextualize the school's development and the way it is interconnected with the various facets of bilingual education in the state of Michoacán. Table 4 illustrates how the methods and the data types informed the three different groups of participants that were included in the study.

Table 4

Data Sources, Methods of Data Collection, and Types of Data

Data Sources	Methods of Data Collection	Types of Data
Students	Interviews Artifacts	Semi Structured Interview YouTube videos Facebook page

Families	Interview Artifacts	Semi Structured Interview Focused Groups
Teachers	Interview Classroom Observation Artifacts	Semi Structured Interview Audio YouTube videos Facebook page
Administrators	Interview Artifacts	Semi Structured Interview YouTube videos Facebook page

Note. Table presents the schema of collection as it pertains to data sources, methods of data collection and the different types of data.

Data Management

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2017), one of the main purposes of data management is to organize, order, and make meaning of the data that has been collected. The first part includes the organization of the data. In this study, a substantial amount of data were extrapolated from the interviews, focus groups, and the classroom observations that took place throughout the research. All the data from the interviews and classroom observations were transcribed as soon as the interview ended to ensure the accuracy of the data. When these interviews and classroom observations were transcribed, they were not associated with any names or indicators of the research participants by using pseudonyms. I assigned an identification code to each of the transcripts that correlated to the participants. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) recommend that researchers transcribe the recording themselves to strengthen familiarity with their data. I always double-checked the transcription to ensure accuracy. After the recordings were transcribed, these were deleted to protect the participants' privacy. After the transcription was done, these transcriptions

were stored in a Word document that was password protected and converted into an encrypted PDF file as recommended by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019).

To ensure proper confidentiality among the study participants, I provided consent forms where they needed to agree to participate in the research. These consent forms describe the research, and I narrated what the procedures of the research were. I also provided information related to the risks and benefits of the research and that this was voluntary research participation. Finally, I explained how I kept all documents confidential (Groenewald, 2004).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process considered the data gathered from the interview materials, focus groups, and artifact collection. As Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) mention, “data analysis is the researcher’s attempt to summarize all the collected data in a dependable and accurate manner” (p. 231). This inductive process is concerned with narrowing information until the specific themes that are important for the study emerge to allow the study to happen. This inductive process narrowed the larger data sets into smaller groups. The process entailed data organization and the creation of logical categories. I then looked for themes and patterns and coded the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

The data collected from the interactions with the participants came from the sets of interactions; two individual interviews, two group meetings, and two classroom observations. The interviews were open-ended questions and did not exceed 45 minutes in length to respect the participants' time. Still, they were extended if the participants chose to keep a conversation going and I had multiple conversations over Zoom and WhatsApp.

The recordings were fully transcribed and later coded to find patterns and themes that emerged. Most of the interviews were done at the research site except those that took place over platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp from June to December 2022 and then from January to March 2023.

As part of the data analysis presented, I transcribed each interview manually verbatim. Each transcription was checked for accuracy as it was anticipated that there were electronic errors in these transcriptions. The Word files were secured and uploaded to an encrypted file. To help analyze this data, I used Excel, as my recordings had different variants of Spanish. Since I recorded in open spaces, the environmental sound was filtered into the recording. The first part of the coding was a structural coding process that helped me identify the major themes from the research questions guiding the study. This process resulted from different ways of organizing my data; I first isolated categories and created a matrix for triangulation in Microsoft Word, which became visually saturated and difficult to understand. Using Excel (Figure 4) became a more feasible option, allowing me to organize the data based on the research questions. Subsequently, I was able to integrate the themes that resulted from the open, axial, and selective coding to find a conceptual axes for each of the research questions.

To do this study I first Identified the main research themes after I had the interviews, focus groups and classroom observations transcribed. After that, the first step involved identifying the main themes or topics that the research aimed to explore in connection to the research questions. This step took different rounds of trial and error. I first attempted to do this in Microsoft Word, to realize that Excel would be the best option for me organize

these first codes that were coming from the first round of open coding (Saldaña, 2021). Once the main research themes were identified, an axial coding process was conducted. Axial coding is a qualitative data analysis technique used to categorize and organize data into meaningful units (Saldaña, 2021). It involves systematically examining the data, identifying relationships between categories, and assigning codes to different segments of the data that relate to these categories. The coded material and collected data were aligned with a phenomenological study. Phenomenology is a research approach that aims to understand and describe the lived experiences and meanings attributed to them by individuals. By aligning the coded material with a phenomenological perspective, the focus was on exploring how the identified themes and emerging categories contributed to the development of meaning for the participants of the study and how these connected to the research questions. The goal was to let the data speak for itself and derive insights directly from the information gathered, rather than imposing preconceived ideas onto the analysis. Extracting and illustrating the underlying essence, patterns, processes, and structures: The final objective of the data analysis was to extract and illustrate the underlying essence, patterns, processes, and structures that emerged from the data. This involved looking for commonalities, trends, and relationships within the coded material and data to uncover the fundamental aspects of the research themes. This was part of the selective coding process and it helped me identify the main conceptual axes that had informed the main theory or observation of the study. The aim was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied and to present the findings in a clear and coherent manner. By following these steps, the researcher sought to systematically analyze the data, ensure a

phenomenological perspective, minimize assumptions, and ultimately uncover the deeper meaning and insights inherent in the research themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 234).

Figure 4

Example of Excel Sheet with Open, Axial, and Selective Coding



Note. This figure depicts the process of thematic coding for Research Question #1.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical research practices to ensure that all participants were protected from any harm. To achieve this, the study obtained informed consent from the participants, which guaranteed their right to make an informed decision about their participation. Additionally, the study ensured that the participants' identities were kept anonymous, preventing deceitful practices. Participation was also voluntary, and personal information that could identify the participants was protected. All the interviewees were assigned a code and pseudonym corresponding to the interview. The interviews were

transcribed and secured in an encrypted PDF file which will be deleted upon approval of this study. During the stay in the community and during the time this study has been developing, the computer has been protected by passwords and secured and locked when not in use. Furthermore, the study disclosed any potential risks and benefits associated with the research, and it began after Institutional Review Board approved this study's protocol.

Respect for persons is one of the key concerns in this study. As aforementioned, participation was voluntary. A way to ensure this was by providing a detailed account of what was expected in participating in this research. Second, there was a consideration of welfare or beneficence. As a researcher, it was a priority on my end that the school and the overall community receive a direct benefit from this study. At the same time, this research attempted to reduce any possible risk or aspects that would interfere with the participant's life or workplace. This was a consideration as I worked with teachers with an exceptionally busy schedule and the students and their families. The distribution of benefits from this research was evident to ensure that the time the participants spent collaborating with me was met with an evident benefit for their community. During the stay, I had conversations with the participants where they shared their ideas about what they need in their school community. After multiple interactions with the community, it was clear that this study could benefit the Santa Fe de la Laguna community through the established collaboration of Purépecha teachers and teachers from New Mexico. This dissertation study can also serve as a needs assessment and facilitate external funding acquisition.

Additionally, disseminating this valuable information will empower teachers and educational programs across the United States, equipping them with a comprehensive

understanding of how to effectively cater to the needs of Purépecha students as they integrate into U.S. high school classrooms. Consequently, this study not only fostered community engagement and resource mobilization but also promises to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of Purépecha students in their new educational environments. The third concern in these ethical considerations was possible power differentials. During my stay, I knew that I was representing a powerful institution, and my presence did come with expectations of reciprocity that happened as this study mobilized resources needed for the school's sustenance. Nonetheless, while being in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, I found a welcoming community that saw me more as a Mexican national living in the United States. Most of the community members identified me as a teacher who could help them too in building a few courses for the community while I gathered data for my research.

During my research project presentation to the Institutional Review Board, I ensured that the language used in the prospectus was clear and easily understandable. Moreover, I considered any sensitive topics that may have caused conflict within the community hosting me, including potential points of contention within the community and the school institution. It is important to recognize that vulnerabilities existed at multiple levels. Certain vulnerabilities emerged from the disparities in age between the students and myself, as well as my limitations in actively participating in written and spoken Purépecha language. I also considered the difficulty of comprehending the academic intricacies specific to the United States in the consent forms. For that reason, all the language was written in a way that was straight forward and at a 5th grade level in Spanish.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The premise behind the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research is concerned with the way I, as a researcher, conducted research in the most precise, consistent, and rigorous way to establish the trustworthiness of this study, which includes internal and external validation (Nowell et al., 2017). To establish credibility in the findings, I triangulated the information I got from the interviews, focus groups, and artifacts. The triangulation of information was done using a matrix that had a brief description of the compiled information that I had to draw the specific categories that drove the final analysis.

To establish internal validity, I used member checking. Participant or respondent validation was vital to expand further all aspects of establishing trustworthiness and transparency as I presented the study results. During my stay in Santa Fe de la Laguna, I spent most of the time meeting the people, the neighbors, and community stakeholders. The interviews happened at unexpected moments and many times outside my designed schedule. The location of the interviews changed significantly as many events were taking place in Santa Fe de la Laguna that required the participants to be present. However, most of these interactions were still occurring in outdoor settings and with proper distancing protocols, which reflected COVID-19 guidelines at the time of data collection. After each interview occurred, I transcribed the material almost immediately, and sent the transcription to the participants to check for any questions they may have had. Some participants did not have an e-mail account, in which case the member check process took place in person. The data results were shared and returned to each one of the participants; we went over the questions and checked for necessary clarification. My goal was to ensure

accuracy in the data and that it reflected the experience of all of the participants. The materials that I shared were the transcription of the interviews, the notes that I gathered from the different meetings that took place, and the emerging themes.

To establish and develop confirmability in research and reinforce the aspects of external validity, I kept a log of the interactions within the research process context. Through a reflexive journal or research log, I recorded specific ideas, notes on perceptions, and biases that informed the interpretation of data. This journal-keeping exercise served to keep and record the specific steps that were related to this process of inquiry for it to be replicable in the future. Finally, external validity was achieved through check-in with experts in the field to address biases and assumptions in conducting a proper analysis and producing a coherent study. Throughout the study, I met almost on a weekly basis with the research principal investigators, Dr. Sylvia Celedón Pattichis and Dr. Carlos LópezLeiva, who guided this study from the initial stages. I consulted with Dr. Lucas Hernández regarding my interpretation of several conversations that took place within the community, given that he is familiar with the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna and is also a scholar in education and history.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study allowed close observation of the context and situations surrounding this high school's dynamics. However, there were important limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the study had limited scope as it only examined students and stakeholders from the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. Second, the phenomenon of transnationalism is complex and evolves constantly; in this dissertation

the migratory mobility that is observed derives from the conversations with the participants which included the efforts to mitigate early migration. Third, when this study took place, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a major consideration in México and visits to archives and government offices were not always possible. Last, the lack of Purépecha skills on my end affected my ability to fully engage with a community of stakeholders who are speakers of Purépecha. Finally, my own work schedule limited my stay in Michoacán.

This study is situated in the mobility that occurs in the context of the community of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, migration to adjacent communities, major cities, or to the United States. Migration in the state of Michoacán is a complex process. This dissertation study does not cover the scope of mobilities, such as significant numbers of youth and people from Michoacán returning from the United States since 2010 (Masferrer, Hamilton & Denier, 2019). Part of the assumptions of this study are that the community of students, their families, and the school's teacher and administrative body engage in practices connected to their transnational lives. While transnationalism is a crucial aspect currently informing the articulation of this research study, other conditions and determining factors intersect with what is essential for this learning community.

Furthermore, when the research began, I was assuming that stakeholders' lived experiences in this particular school in Santa Fe de la Laguna can be a point of generalization to other communities that may have Intercultural Secondary schools in México. I found out that the answer in some cases can be yes but, as the results of the studies show, the context that surrounds this high school responds to specific conditions of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The study suggests that transnationalism can be questioned by

examining transnational dynamics within Indigenous spaces and as Indigenous nations in the context of modern legacies of colonial rule.

The limitations related to the COVID-19 pandemic were mitigated by investigating more by using electronic archives and resources and consulting directly with members of the scholarly community in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Nonetheless, the pandemic affected the study because the school was still recovering from the lockdown restrictions, and many teachers were not back. Given the shortage of teachers, this affected the number of classroom observations I had planned to do. As for the last limitation, most of the participants were fluent in Spanish, making it possible for me to conduct the interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the content into four descriptive sections to provide a comprehensive overview. The first part presents the context and provides an overview of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, delving into its historical context and cosmivision, which profoundly impact the development of the local school. Moving forward, I address the three research questions that form the core of my study. Through a meticulous exploration, I present the major findings and themes that emerged during the theory development process, aligning with the principles of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014) and guided by thematic analysis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The historical narrative of Santa Fe de la Laguna encompasses various interconnected events that emphasize the significance of land autonomy and the comunero/comunera identity. In Mexico, the term "comunero" refers to individuals who are members of rural communities or ejidos, while "comuneras" specifically refers to female members of these communities (Estévez and Stavenhagen, 2002, p. 34). Prior to its official establishment in 1540, the region was already inhabited by a thriving community known as Vayámeo (Díaz Guevara, 2020). Over time, conflicts over land ownership have arisen between the Spanish-speaking mestiza and mestizo population of Quiroga and the comuneros and comuneras of Santa Fe de la Laguna, highlighting the persistent nature of these disputes and underscoring the fundamental importance of land sovereignty to the comunero identity (Díaz Guevara, 2020).

The Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920 played a crucial role in reshaping México's social and economic landscape, with land reform being a central objective. In the context of Santa Fe de la Laguna, the fight for autonomy and protection of Indigenous land became intertwined, drawing inspiration from historical moments such as the Farmers Movement, the 1917 Mexican Constitution, and President Lázaro Cárdenas's land redistribution efforts (Jasso Martínez, 2010). Cárdenas aimed to address the issue of unequal land distribution in Mexico by expropriating large estates and redistributing the land to peasants and indigenous communities. The community of Santa Fe de la Laguna found inspiration in Cárdenas's policies, which resonated with their own struggle for land

autonomy and reinforced their determination to protect their indigenous territories (Jasso Martínez, 2010).

The formation of the Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata in 1979 represented a turning point, as Indigenous comunero groups from Santa Fe de la Laguna successfully fought legal battles against mestizo farmers, leading to the creation of symbolic representations like the Purépecha motto and flag (Jasso Martínez, 2010). In the 1980s, the concept of comunalidad emerged as a resistance movement against individualism, colonial thought, and privatization ideologies, aligning with the struggles of the comuneros and offering alternative forms of social organization rooted in autonomy and self-determination (Martínez Luna, 2015).

The San Andrés Agreements of 1994, influenced by the Zapatista movement, recognized and respected the rights of Indigenous communities, including their right to a multicultural education, further solidifying the importance of comunalidad (de León Pasquel, 2010). Together, these historical events—encompassing land disputes, the Mexican Revolution's land redistribution, the emergence of comunalidad, the San Andres Agreements, and the fight for autonomy—shape the significance of land and comunero identity in Santa Fe de la Laguna, driving the community's pursuit of social justice and self-determination.

The purpose of this study was to explore the connection between transnationalism and bilingual Indigenous secondary intercultural education models by examining the dynamics at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. Using a phenomenological methodology, this study endeavored to gain insight into how

intercultural education at the secondary level affects the experiences of transnational students, teachers, administrators, and their families at the school in Michoacán, México. The research involved collecting data from various stakeholders at the school and analyzing their reflections to uncover the distinctive characteristics of Indigenous-transnational-intercultural pedagogical practices.

Organization of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into the following four descriptive sections. The first part briefly describes the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna concerning its historical context and cosmovision, which shape the development of the school. The next three sections respond to the three research questions of the study by presenting the major themes that emerged as part of the process of theory development that characterizes grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) through the thematic analysis that guided the findings. The research questions that were addressed were the following:

1. Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
2. How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
3. What are the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Steps in the Data Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from data analysis of artifacts, interviews, and focus groups of students, teachers, administrators of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna and families of the students, and community members of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, Michoacán. The research design that guided the study is rooted in the principles of phenomenology (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). As a researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection and subsequent analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). To answer the research questions, I used a phenomenological approach that led me to a thematic analysis characteristic of grounded theory. As explained by Charmaz (2014), “grounded theory is an inductive research method that involves the simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis through which theories are discovered from the data” (p. 9). Furthermore, grounded theory is a valuable research methodology since it allows for discovering new and complex phenomena and stresses the perspectives and experiences of participants. Its dynamic data collection and analysis approach makes it well suited to exploring emergent phenomena. Its participant-centered focus can result in authentic findings grounded in the participants' lived realities (Charmaz, 2014).

In this chapter, some of the themes presented are named in Purépecha to encapsulate ideas and concepts without a direct translation to Spanish or English. However, in this dissertation, I provide the closest concept in Spanish and English. Furthermore, these concepts are significant to the Santa Fe de la Laguna community. I followed the writing criteria of scholars and community members when presenting these concepts in the

different chapter sections. The places mentioned, such as Lake Pátzcuaro, Santa Fe de la Laguna, and Quiróga, are the current names used in Michoacán.

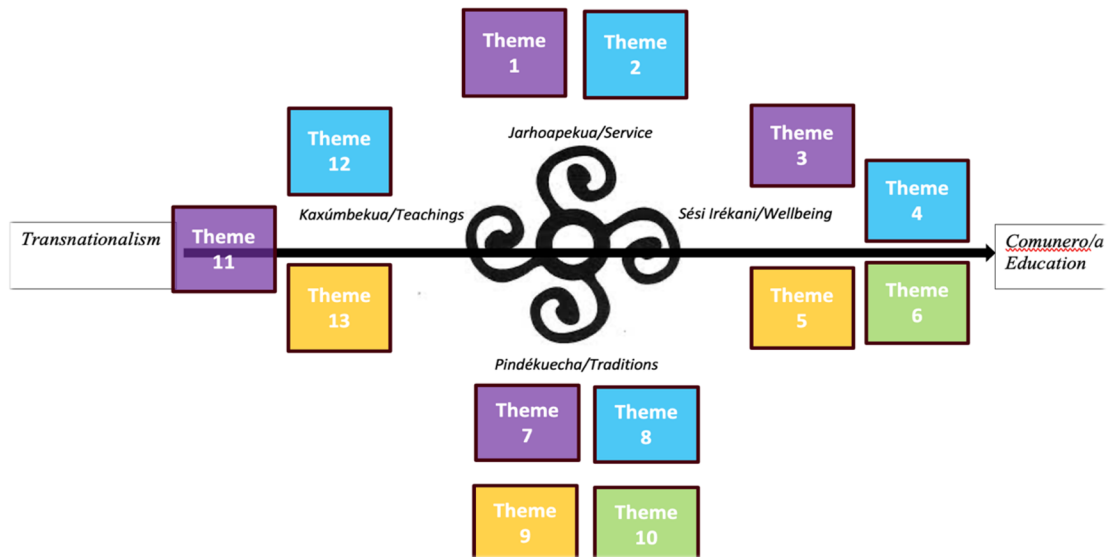
Web-based photographic images are included in this chapter, with some extrapolated from existing YouTube videos. The still images are screenshots from media that the community had already approved—the YouTube videos, as the community desired to include images of significant aspects of the school. The videos on YouTube were created by members of the school and the Santa Fe de la Laguna community to elevate the purpose of the school and the need to expand their intercultural programs in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Nonetheless, I integrated other pictures presented in this chapter during my onsite visits in May, June, and December, 2022.

Segments of quotes that are part of the conversations that took place support these themes as they co-construct the emerging conceptual axis or main findings and created the main finding presented and discussed in Chapter 5. These findings are further analyzed through the lens of border theory (Anzaldúa, 2012; Cervantes-Soon, 2017; Giroux, 1988; Mignolo, 2000; Trinidad Galván, 2001) and third space (Bhabha, 1994; Handa & Tippins, 2013) as the foundation of a theoretical framework. During this process, I have included information about every participant and their role in the study to avoid isolating and decontextualizing the voice and words of the participants. Since every interview and focus group rendered information related to more than one theme, the findings can present a quote that belongs to a single individual more than once. Similarly, a quote may be repeated to illustrate a thematic element of a single theory.

Description of the Findings

Figure 5

Transnational Dynamics to the Development of Comunero/Comunera Education



Note. This figure depicts the themes and corresponding conceptual axes.

The findings described below and referenced in the above visual pertaining to Figure 5, correspond to the research questions in the study. These research questions respond to the study's research problem, which presents the scarcity of information and empirical studies about the long-term effects of bilingual intercultural programs within transnational Indigenous communities, particularly in Michoacán, México. The study aimed at identifying how these programs interact with the lives of transnational Indigenous bilingual students who experience continued colonialism in this specific context. As mentioned earlier, for the sake of clarity, I grouped the themes of the findings of this study into four groups and also answered each research question. Finding 1—*Jarhoajpikua/Reciprocidad/Developing a*

Cycle of Help, connects to the first two parts of the first research question: Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? The themes discussed are Theme 1—Collaboration Among Transnational and Community teachers and Theme 2—Cooperation Between State Entities and Teachers. Finding 2— Constructing Sési Irekání/Bien Vivir/Well-being responds to the third part of the first research question: What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community? In this finding four themes are presented: Theme 3—Autonomy for Comunero Education, Theme 4—Purépecha Values, Theme 5—External Institutional Support, and Theme 6—Intercultural Education. Finding 3—Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/Tradition, responds to the second research question in the study: How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? The themes in this finding are Theme 7—Migratory Slowdown, Theme 8—Authentic Education, Theme 9—Collective Compromise, and Theme 10—Change in Collective Experiences. Finding 4—Kaxúmbekua/Teachings/Constructing Comunero Education, answers the last research question: What are the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? In this last finding, the themes presented are Theme 11—Impact on Community Life, Theme 12—Social Purpose of the School, and Theme 13—Changing by Protecting Purépecha Language and Values.

This chapter comprehensively analyzes the research findings in response to the research questions. Using thick description (Geertz, 1973), the setting, research

participants, and their experiences are thoroughly described, along with the necessary connections, details, and supporting evidence. This allows for accurate interpretations and a collective understanding of the meaning behind the findings. Through this thick description, the chapter highlights the participants' experiences, perspectives, and subjectivities through the lens of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. Through this method, the study brings attention to the importance of context and the participants' unique experiences within the specific setting of this high school. As the study narrates and presents the findings, it refers to the participants described in Table 1.

A Note Regarding the Difference and Repetition of the Themes

The repetition in the themes mentioned can be attributed to the interconnected nature of what constitutes comunero education, different angles of comunalidad, and what cultural preservation means in the context of collaboration mentioned. These themes are fundamental aspects of the educational project of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, and they often intersect and overlap in various contexts; some of these are academic, while others occur into the broader community and even extend to a state or national context. However, each theme has differences that set them apart and emphasize different educational development and/or community participatory aspects. For example, the themes of Jarhoajpikua/Cycle of Help, Sési Irékan/Bien Vivir/Well-being, and Kaxúmbekua/Creating an Education for Comunero youth share similarities in their focus on education, community participation/*saberes*, and cultural *sobrevivencia*/survival. In contrast, the theme of Authentic Education highlights the importance of providing education that is relevant, meaningful, and connected to the cultural and social context of

the community. It emphasizes the need to go beyond standardized curricula and incorporate local knowledge and practices into the educational process.

All these themes recognize the importance of education for strengthening the Santa Fe de la Laguna community. They also recognize the need for active community involvement, and the preservation of their Purépecha *cosmovisión* or *cosmovivencias*. Within these they may differ in their specific context, stakeholder populations, or the goals they aim to achieve. For example, the Collaboration Among Transnational Teachers and Community Teachers theme focuses on fostering collaboration between teachers from Santa Fe de la Laguna and teachers from other Indigenous communities in Michoacán and other regions within México. Collaboration is key in developing effective teaching strategies. On the other hand, Cooperation Between State Entities and Teachers centers around the partnership between governmental bodies like the Secretaría de Educación Pública or institutions of academic authority such as the Universidad Michoacana. Throughout the study, this form of collaboration between power institutions and the stakeholders of the school is presented more as a need that is being demanded by the community to bring in the resources and support systems needed for the school.

The theme of Autonomy for Comunero Education focuses on the community involvement in decision-making, curriculum development, and the preservation of Purépecha community practices. The reason for emphasizing Purépecha values in education is to preserve and pass down community values, language, and history to their youth. The External Institutional Support theme acknowledges the importance and implications of outside organizations, like Universidad Michoacana, in offering assistance and resources to

Intercultural programs such as this one. The theme of Intercultural Education focuses on promoting understanding and respect for the interrelationship among the different Indigenous cultures in Michoacán, as there are also *otomíes*, *mazahuas*, and *nahuas* (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], 2020). Finally, Experiences and Pathways to Sési Irekání/Bien Vivir explores individual and collective experiences and pathways to well-being. It encompasses various aspects, such as migration patterns, authentic education, collective compromise, and changes in collective experiences. This theme emphasizes the holistic concept of well-being and the factors contributing to it in Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Finding 1: Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity

This first finding responds to the first two parts of the first research question: Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? Most of the participants (95%) shared that the participation of community and transnational teachers, community members, state entities like Universidad Michoacana and the Secretaría de Educación Pública, and community activists is key to the sustenance of the school. Broadly, the Purépecha concept of Jarhoajpikua, translated in Spanish as *reciprocidad* and in English as reciprocity, has been adopted to illustrate the forms of collaboration that occur in response to establishing the school and its sustenance. Although not every participant emphasized the importance of collaboration among the various interest groups, each participant mentioned at least two or more groups in the interviews. Even when the school aims at retaining its community members, collaboration with outside entities remains necessary.

Through the process of open, axial, and selective coding, I identified how the following groups of participants are involved in the collective construction of transnational education in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. In the following section, I present the themes that emerged from the analysis, providing an overview of their relevance to the findings in the study.

Theme 1: Collaboration Among Transnational Teachers and Community Teachers

This study involved two different groups of teachers. Among them, two teachers were from external communities within Michoacán, and three teachers were from Santa Fe de la Laguna's local community. These two groups of teachers shared content knowledge of the high school curriculum. Still, a fundamental difference is that Santa Fe de la Laguna teachers are Purépecha speakers. Four out of five participants interviewed (80%) mentioned that collaboration between teachers from the Santa Fe de la Laguna community and outside communities was necessary. Nonetheless, this theme has quotes by other stakeholders as they comment on how important collaboration among the two different groups of teachers is and the economic aspects that get in the way of this collaboration.

Collaboration is constructed among the teachers from Santa Fe de la Laguna and external communities by creating an intercultural program that benefits the students of comunero families who are the families of the students at this high school. Additionally, about half of the participants, including students, administrators, families, and community members, mentioned the need for this cooperation was compelling as the effort to create an autonomous education program was necessary. Throughout the findings, the idea of cooperation is referred to as *coperación* in the Spanish language or in the Purépecha

language as Jarhoajpikua. All interviewed participants mentioned that fostering the Purépecha language was a determinant factor for this cooperation, as the Purépecha language is seen as the placeholder of community values in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Moreover, there was an emphasis on the school's identity and purpose as a space that fosters education for the youth of comunero families, even when tensions exist between the necessary validation of outside educational entities such as the Universidad Michoacana for accreditation. For example, the following quotes illustrate how some of the teachers expressed these forms of cooperation that reinforce curricular and administrative autonomy ideas. Nonetheless, it is important to note all teachers mentioned in different ways that autonomy manifests for the teachers in the school. These quotes also express how the curriculum centers language developing an interdependence among the teachers. René, a former teacher of the Santa Fé de la Laguna community, provided a quote about his experience developing the school's history course curriculum during its early stages.

Como trabajamos, bueno ahora sí que tenemos la libertad de cátedra, es decir, los profesores hacen sus planificaciones para dar la clase. Hay un programa, como es una escuela incorporada a Universidad Michoacana, y la Universidad Michoacana tiene programas ya pre-diseñados para cada materia.

[How we work, well now we have the freedom to teach the teachers to make their plans for the class. There is a program, as it is a school incorporated into the Universidad Michoacana, and the Universidad Michoacana has pre-designed programs for each subject.] (René's interview, May 27, 2022)

The comment by René highlights the need for negotiating the curriculum given by the Universidad Michoacana, the more largest state university in Michoacán, and the desire to retain the freedom of instructional design for this high school. While the curriculum created by the Universidad Michoacana has been pre-designed, the teachers and administrators

have developed tools to contextualize the instruction, as mentioned in the following comment by Santiago.

De 1979 esto dio lugar a una lucha muy emblemática donde hubo muertos y finalmente a raíz de esos movimientos, es que también surge la necesidad de una educación contextualizada, no con los estándares que se manejan en la ciudad si no, con la cosmovisión indígena, con lo que es propio de aquí.

[From 1979, this gave rise to a very emblematic struggle where there were deaths and finally, as a result of these movements, the need for a contextualized education also arose, not with the standards that are handled in the city but with the Indigenous cosmovision, with what is proper to this place]. (Santiago's interview, May 24, 2022)

In having these conversations with the participants, the words of Guillermo stood out. This third quote is by Guillermo, a researcher and community member of Santa Fe de la Laguna. He mentioned the following about instructional autonomy. His comment emphasized how the community has a role in their participation and decision-making in the school. This includes the people and the leaders of Santa Fe de la Laguna. He highlights that the community teachers also have community roles such as *barrio* leaders and other roles sometimes within their local government.

Si, bueno pues la autonomía es una decisión, parte de la decisión de la gente, digamos vamos a hablar en términos generales de la gente, de la propia comunidad. Tenemos autoridades, tenemos encargados de barrios, junto con ellos decidimos; la comunidad. Hay que verla como una comunidad también. Como una comunidad académica donde están integrados los profesores, los directivos, de tal manera que la autonomía se debería de entender a partir de estas figuras.

[Yes, autonomy is a decision, part of the people's decision; let's say we will speak in general terms of the people, of the community itself. We have authorities, people in charge of the neighborhoods, and we decide with them: the community. We must see it as a community as well. As an academic community where the teachers and the directors are integrated, autonomy should be understood from these figures.] (Guillermo's interview, May 27, 2022)

With these three previous quotes by René, Santiago, and Guillermo, the complexity of collaboration becomes evident. Rather than having a closed circle of conversations and curricular planning among teachers, the teachers from outside communities are both collaborating with community teachers and with the larger community of Santa Fe de la Laguna.

This first theme in the first finding also addresses the need to establish collaboration to allow the community teachers to instruct in the Purépecha language. Language and instruction are central to the conversations with the community members. Meanwhile, five out of five of the teachers interviewed and close to 75% of the community members mentioned bilingualism as a necessary skill for teachers. Still, almost all emphasized how fundamental it is for the school to deliver instruction in Purépecha in the academic and social contexts. As it concerns language, one of the participants, a female teacher named Mónica, from the capital of the state who worked in the school intermittently over the span of several years, shared the following regarding the language support the teachers from Santa Fe de la Laguna provide to the students and outside faculty:

Bueno primero una de las primeras ideas es que sea impartida en la lengua Purépecha, es decir que mayormente estén involucrados los profesores que la enseñanza y el aprendizaje sea impartida en la lengua Purépecha. En la lengua nativa de los estudiantes.

[Well, first, one of the first ideas is that it should be taught in the Purépecha language, that is to say, that the teachers should be involved in the teaching and learning in the Purépecha language. In the native language of the students.]
(Mónica's interview, May 27, 2022)

This teacher, whose first language is Spanish and who is not a Purépecha speaker, notes how valuable it is that the instruction at the school be delivered in the community's first

language because of the teachers from Santa Fe de la Laguna. Language collaboration is also crucial to the teacher's support systems.

The interviews with the administrators and teachers revealed that even when collaborative efforts among teachers from the community and outside communities are necessary, obstacles make this cooperation difficult. Concerning the logistics and participation of teachers from outside communities, their contributions were acknowledged alongside the aspects that got in the way of continuing the collaboration. Among these obstacles were the difficulty of transportation, lack of salaries, and the daily commute from community to community. This next quote is by a current administrator in the school who expressed concern about the lack of funds that exist to support the teachers from outside communities economically.

Mire, pues ahorita las necesidades son bastantes. Primero pues como escuela no hemos tenido la oportunidad de compensar a unos compañeros que tienen que trasladarse de un lugar a otro para dar sus clases, pedir mínimamente sería contar con un recurso, un apoyo para mínimo compensarles la cuestión de los viáticos.

[Look, right now; there are quite a few needs. First, as a school, we have yet to have the opportunity to compensate some of our colleagues who must travel from one place to another to teach their classes; at least, we would ask for a resource and support to compensate them for their travel expenses.] (Santiago's interview, July, 4, 2022)

The inability to provide these economic supports manifests in significant attrition rates. The lack of resources to compensate teachers was addressed by one of the students who noted the absence of many of the teachers after the COVID-19 lockdowns: "*No sé, porque también los maestros no vienen, teníamos muchos maestros y ya los que venían solo viene la maestra Mary*" [I don't know why the teachers don't come, we used to have many teachers and now only Mary is coming.] (Mariela, focus group, May 30, 2022). The

comment about the absence of teachers from outside communities was prevalent and highlighted one of the many economical obstacles faced by this community, particularly in education. In another conversation with the same students, I inquired about their needs in the school, “¿Qué necesitan ustedes, los estudiantes de aquí?” [What do the students need?], and he answered, “Más maestros, que vengan y nos enseñen” [More teachers, we need them to come and teach us]. (Janet, focus group, May 30, 2022). The pandemic and other lack of resources have led to a shortage of teachers able to commute and participate actively in the school. This has impacted the overall economic capacity of teachers from outside communities to serve in the school effectively. These are additional statements made by Mónica, a former teacher of the school who is from an outside community:

Precisamente por la falta de presupuesto que hace que si un docente está empezando a trabajar pues igual le sirve de experiencia de estar frente a un grupo, pero no le conviene seguir allí por la falta de presupuesto y entonces están por muy poco tiempo por cortos periodos y creo que eso le daña en cierta medida a la prepa porque no hay un seguimiento de docentes si no prácticamente en cada semestre en cada asignatura están cambiando.

[Precisely because of the lack of budget, if a teacher starts to work, it is helpful for him/her to have the experience of being in front of a group. However, it is not convenient for him/her to continue there because of the lack of budget, and then they are there for a very short time for short periods. This damages the high school to a certain extent because there is no follow-up of teachers, if not practically every semester, in every subject they are changing.] (Mónica’s interview, May 27, 2022)

The role of teachers that are from other communities was a recurring theme. When talking to maestra Mónica, I could sense the shared concerns over the lack of economic support to allow the kind of collaboration they need. It evidenced that collaboration between teachers from the Santa Fe de la Laguna community and teachers from outside was needed and welcomed. In this context, transnationalism was manifested as action in

the schoolteachers' physical transit from non-Indigenous communities to Santa Fe de la Laguna, within the interplay of Purépecha and Spanish repertoire, and in the different skill set every teacher brings to school. While some of the teachers were from other Indigenous communities within Michoacán, other teachers were from cities like Morelia, the state's capital, or from major cities outside of the state like México City. Transnationalism was also present in language and the confluence of values and experiences from the teachers' home communities. The teachers who have been part of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna are recognized by the Santa Fe de la Laguna community teachers, administrators, families, and students for their effort, service, and contributions to the school. While the economic obstacles affect both kinds of teachers, these funding issues have particularly affected teachers from outside communities, making it difficult to sustain travel from their communities to Santa Fe de la Laguna or for the teachers from other cities to relocate, as most of them had existing work responsibilities. Transnationalism dynamics emerged through the confluence of ideas, languages, and practices of teachers from the community and the experiences of teachers from outside communities.

This first theme is evidenced through the quotes, the connection between collaboration and transnationalism as an aspect that is key to the school's success. The collaboration between teachers from different Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities underscores the importance of shared experiences, ideas, and resources in providing a well-rounded education for students. Transnationalism catalyzes this collaboration, as it brings together teachers from diverse backgrounds, languages, and cultures, fostering a rich exchange of knowledge and perspectives. The physical transit of teachers from outside

communities to Santa Fe de la Laguna exemplifies them. Despite economic obstacles, the recognition and appreciation of teachers from all communities highlight the value placed on their efforts and contributions.

Theme 2: Cooperation Between State Entities and Teachers

The first theme presented the idea that cooperation among teachers of Santa Fe de la Laguna, teachers from outside communities, the community at large, and state entities are an integral part of the first finding. This second theme delves deeper into the factors that contribute to the sustainability of a school. This second theme revealed that a school could only sustain itself with active involvement from its community members, transnational teachers, state entities, and community activists. This is presented in the following quotes. The study found that state entities' (such as the Secretaría de Educación Pública and the Universidad Michoacana) support and active participation are crucial and consistent themes in interviews with the teachers and administrators and focus groups. As a result, 70% of the participants suggested that all state entities cooperate to ensure the school's sustainability.

Entonces falta mucho por hacer, pienso que entre todas las autoridades de la preparatoria junto con las autoridades de la comunidad para exigir, al gobierno del estado o a la Secretaria de Educación Pública que mejore las condiciones de la Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe.

[So there is still a lot to do, I think that all the authorities of the high school, together with the authorities of the community to demand, to the state government or to the secretary of public education to improve the conditions of the Intercultural Indigenous High School of Santa Fe.] (Rene's interview, May 27, 2022)

The last quote magnifies the need for cooperation and how the process has been politicized to the point that this participant suggests it becomes a community demand to improve the

conditions of the school. One of the teachers noted that cooperation with entities such as the Universidad Michoacana was not ideal. The accreditation process that the Universidad Michoacana expects is not met with the economic support the school requires to meet these academic goals. Yet, as other participants noted, the Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna needs a functional relationship to accredit their program. The school administration and staff have made their best effort to comply with the university to ensure the state validation of students' work. This is what the teacher had to say about this existing cooperation:

Puesto que la universidad Michoacana tiene un plan, por ejemplo, de lo que está establecido y para pertenecer a ella hay que seguir a ese plan. Lo cual me parece que aleja un poco de los objetivos a la escuela preparatoria intercultural.

[Since the Universidad Michocana already has a plan, for example, of what is established and to belong to it you have to follow that plan. This seems to me to take the intercultural high school a little bit away from its objectives.] (Mónica's interview, May 27, 2022)

This participant noted the difficulties that the school goes through in trying to “follow the plan of the Universidad Michoacana” and the difficulty in aligning the vision of a comunero education with what the university has articulated in its intercultural curriculum. During a separate interview, a community member who focuses on environmental issues expressed the belief that tribal government and environmental affairs should be included in school curricula: *“Hay cuestiones de territorio y de recursos naturales de gobernabilidad, etc... que se tienen que abordar en los contextos educativos.”* [There are territory and natural resources issues, governance, etc., that need to be addressed in educational contexts.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022). This commentary highlights the importance of providing education that addresses the community's current issues, including

territory, natural resources, and governance matters. The community has a complex relationship with state entities, making these forms of cooperation and negotiation necessary. By including these topics in the curriculum, schools can better prepare their students to address the challenges of the world around them, promoting not only the sustainability of the school but also the sustainability of the broader community. In the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural, these issues of governance and territory are weaved into the curriculum as presented in the next sections related to the construction of a comunero education.

In these first set of findings, the Purépecha concept of Jarhoajpikua emerged as relevant. This term goes beyond the Western notion of help and involves the collective construction of transnational education processes built on community reciprocity. It was evident in this first category of analysis that community teachers are crucial in preserving and promoting the Purépecha language and culture within the school. The teacher's bilingualism and commitment to teaching their students' native language are key to the school's purpose of delivering a Purépecha education. Additionally, collaboration with teachers from other communities is welcomed as it helps strengthen the school's curriculum and provides more student opportunities to engage their community practices through the local teachers' knowledge and meet the expectations of a broader national system. This first finding also suggests the need to find more effective ways for collaboration with state entities as the functionality of the teachers, whether teachers from the community or teachers from other communities, depends on broader state and federal institutional support.

Finding 2: Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-being

This second finding responds to the third part of the first research question: What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?

This finding addresses how a transnational education project's mechanics rippled directly into the Santa Fe de la Laguna community, aiming to decrease adverse determinants tied to early migration. The Purépecha concept of Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir or well-being results from the interplay of curricular, administrative autonomy, Purépecha values, comunero education, and institutional support. Furthermore, these elements of curricular and administrative autonomy, Purépecha values, comunero education, and institutional support set a cycle that promotes the community's well-being. This is possible by enabling the school to sustain and create educational opportunities for young men and women of Santa Fe de la Laguna. As a result, this delayed migration furthers community participation, which in turn supports community retention and educational opportunities. Next, I explain the elements that constitute this cycle, derived from the themes that emerged from the study's relevant conversations and the elements that support the previous claim.

Theme 3: Autonomy for Comunero Education

The third theme highlights the idea that the school's autonomy surfaces in many of the responses as it relates specifically to its connection to the needs of a transnational community. In the interviews, the administrators (100%) and teachers mentioned the

interplay of autonomy and constructing an educational system that serves comuneros.²

While the first finding relates to the forms of cooperation necessary for the functionality of the school, this second finding contextualizes the idea of curricular autonomy from the lens of what it constitutes for a school that experiences and situates transnationalism at the fore. To understand where the ideas of autonomy and a comunero education are weaved in this presentation of findings, it is key to understand the historical–geographical context surrounding the school. One of the founders and teachers at the school who has an active role in policy making in Santa Fe de la Laguna explained it:

Y entonces entre ellos digamos como unos de los elementos fundamentales que deben de saber es que tenemos un territorio con más de 5500 de tierras comunales y de las cuales hay que defenderlas, frente a externas, frente a gente de fuera de la comunidad.

[And then among the elements let's say that one of the fundamental elements that they should know, is that we have a territory with more than 5,500 communal lands and that we have to defend them against people from outside the community.]
(René's interview, May 27, 2022)

This third theme stemmed from the interviews with community members, families, administrators and teachers at a school serving a transnational community, highlighted the interplay of autonomy and constructing an educational system for comuneros. The school's historical–geographical context contextualizes this idea of autonomy, including a territory

² As mentioned in Ch. 1 of this study, the concept of autonomy finds its origins in the Farmers Movement of the early 20th century and the establishment of the 1917 Mexican Constitution, which included land redistribution led by President Lazaro Cárdenas through the Confederación Nacional Campesina in 1938 (Jasso Martínez, 2010). In 1979, the Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata was formed to advocate for the rights of farmers, both Indigenous and mestizos in Michoacan. This union gained strength when Indigenous "comunero" groups from Santa Fe de la Laguna successfully fought legal battles against mestizo farmers from Quiroga. What initially began as agrarian demands evolved into ethnic claims, and symbols like the flag and the Purépecha motto were created, serving to legitimize and symbolize the struggles of the Purépecha community (Jasso Martínez, 2010).

with over 5,500 communal lands that must be defended against external forces. That relationship is evidenced in other interviews where there is an emphasis placed on the construction of this comunero identity and how this identity is educated to resist external colonization and arbitrary governmental pressures.

In one of the interviews conducted with Carlos, an educator and current principal, he was asked about the school's guiding principles. The question was: What guides a school like the Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna? This was his response:

Ahh, pues mira fundamentalmente es fortalecer la comunalidad a través de la escuela, la preparatoria. Sí claro, fortalecer la formación del joven comunero, joven y jovena pues. Muchachas y muchachos... Aja, por medio de la lengua Purépecha, en las clases que sobre todo tienen que ver con historia, de la comunidad, la historia de México, la historia universal. Sobre todo en las materias socio-históricas no?

[Ahh, well, basically, it is to strengthen the community through the school, the high school. Yes, of course, to strengthen the formation of young community members, young men, and women... Aha, through the Purépecha language, in the classes that have to do with history, of the community, the history of México, universal history. Especially in the socio-historical subjects, right?] (Carlos's interview, May 23, 2022).

En la fiesta de los jóvenes, básicamente ahí es donde hay una interacción mucho más estrecha de los jóvenes, y al igual que la de los profesores que varios son comuneros de la misma comunidad y ellos además de ser profesores son comuneros. O somos comuneros.

[In the young people's party, basically that is where there is a much closer interaction between the young people, and also with the teachers, several of whom are members of the same community and they are not only teachers but also members of the community. Or we are community members.] (Carlos's interview, May 23, 2022)

The guiding principles of this school, according to the words of this administrator, who is also a principal at the school, speak to the nature of the relationships it builds. First, he notes that at the fore the purpose is community building through the school. The school

shapes the roles of young comunero and comunera women in Santa Fe de la Laguna. This strengthening of community participation is done through language primarily as the Purépecha language is the language of instruction to talk and instruct about the history and the social sciences. Furthermore, this participant mentions the way social events nurture and feed the closer interactions they need to build a strong community around celebration. Through the words of this participant, we can see that celebration is just as important to Santa Fe de la Laguna as other forms of instruction that can happen in the school space.

The next quote presents a quote that illustrates some of the reasons why the school is recognized as an autonomous project. These are the words of Salvador, one of the former principals of the Preparatoria:

Director Anterior de la Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural: Actualmente este edificio donde se ubica la Preparatoria Intercultural es comunal, es propiedad del pueblo. Sin embargo, debido a la demanda que existe actualmente, se requiere de una infraestructura de mayor capacidad. Esta preparatoria tiene la característica de ser Intercultural Indígena. Primero queremos promover lo nuestro para poder entrar al mundo intercultural.

[Former Principal of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural: Currently this building where the Intercultural High School is located is communal, it is a property of the people. However, due to the demand that exists today, a larger capacity infrastructure is required. This high school has the characteristic of being Intercultural Indigenous. We first want to promote what is ours to be able to enter the intercultural world.] (Salvador, artifact, YouTube video transcribed on January 2, 2023, 10:27)

The quote highlights the concept of Indigenous interculturality and its importance in addressing the specific needs of Indigenous communities. This awareness is reflected in the observation made by a former school principal. Furthermore, it emphasizes the interconnectedness of Indigenous cultures with each other and with transnational dynamics. Similarly, Villanueva (2013) notes that Indigenous interculturality is based on the

“recognition of the diverse cultures and identities of Indigenous peoples and the need to establish connections and dialogue among them” (p. 452). The author emphasizes that this concept acknowledges the interconnectedness of Indigenous cultures, both within and beyond national borders.

The last quote that is presented in the study demonstrates how autonomy is tied to comunero education in highlighting the needs to establish systems of education that respond to the needs of their communities. The central theme of transnational education is intersected by the characteristics of the social organization in Santa Fe de la Laguna, framed by what a comunero education is. In one of the interviews conducted, the idea of *convivencia* in the form of community socialization practices around important celebrations that occur year-round and around the political events they have is of great importance and illustrates the relationship of community practices informing the teaching philosophy of the school. Convivencia, as defined by scholars like Trinidad Galván (2001), is the life that we live with others as a space where knowledge is shared and learned. Furthermore, the idea of *convivencia* entails moments where people come together to process difficult life situations and make sense of the world through their experiences (Trinidad Galván, 2001). That space of knowledge calls for an autonomy of education to respond to the needs of the community participation the stakeholders of the school aim at creating. This is a statement given to me by one of the study participants (personal communication, May 15, 2022), who is currently a teacher of law at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. This statement reflects the intentionality of community events as moments that allow a stronger integration of the students in their social organizing projects.

Hay momentos que se entrecruzan pues la convivencia de los estudiantes. Que es en el aniversario y las fiestas, en los procesos políticos. ¿En los procesos organizativos de la misma comunidad no? En el cuidado del bosque, en la faena comunitaria.

[There are moments that intersect the coexistence of students. That is, in the anniversary and the festivities, in the political processes. In the organizational processes of the community itself, no? In the care of the forest and community work.] (Santiago's interview, May 24, 2022)

This quote highlights the intersection of the curriculum with the convivencia of students, which includes anniversaries, fiestas, and community political events. The school is involved in community processes, such as caring for the forest and hosting community gatherings, and many professors are also comuneros. As this administrator stated, "In addition to being professors, we are comuneros." The Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna recognizes and reinforces the importance of family and community education in its curriculum, making it one of the most crucial learning experiences. Findings such as this one connects with prior studies such as the work done by Blum Martínez (2000), as it relates to the plans for establishing a primary language program in the Talpa School District in New Mexico during the early 1990s. While the program failed to be supported by the Pueblo community, it revealed the complexity behind how language is conceived. This study by Blum Martínez (2000) elevates the argument that "languages are tied to issues of governance of sovereignty" (p. 2). Furthermore, in another study in Cochiti, New Mexico, the Keres-speaking community helped create a language revitalization project conducted at a Montessori school in Cochiti Keres Children's Learning Center, New Mexico (Moquino & Martínez, 2017). This program aimed to revive and preserve the Indigenous language of the Cochiti Pueblo community. The project recognized the critical importance of language as a carrier of cultural identity, heritage, and knowledge. With the gradual decline

of Cochiti Keres, the native language of the people of Cochiti, the project sought to save and advocate for the language practices among younger generations and their families.

Among New Mexico Pueblos, as with the Purépecha communities of Michoacán, the conceptions of language transcend systems of language that have been codified in reading and writing systems. Language includes rich community practices emphasizing the connections to land and the ability to self-govern (Blum Martínez, 2000). Furthermore, Sims (2005) notes that in New Mexico, Pueblo tribes have articulated language immersion initiatives where there is an organized effort to engage learners in a context that builds on community events beyond instructional time. The studies by Blum Martínez (2000) and Sims (2005) provide an understanding of how key it is to authentically consider community voice within the articulation of school programs in Indigenous communities across geographies.

The school has conceived learning practices by directly emulating the local forms of traditional learning within the community. These situated learning forms are consistent and manifest in many community practices (Rogoff, 1993). However, there is a simultaneous process where the teachings of elders and community role models are re-situated to the school space. The school has adopted a learning practice that is deeply rooted in the local forms of traditional learning found in the community. This practice is consistent with the situated learning approach observed in community practices. However, there is also an intentional effort to re-situate elders' teachings and community role models within the school environment. The goal of this approach is to strengthen the community through the education of its young members. Several examples of these forms of situated learning exemplify how the school fosters students' community participation in local events such as

faenas, the care of their forests, and economic family endeavors. Almost 40% of the participants expressed that we need to consider various aspects of community living, including coexistence in schools and other related matters. This includes communal and religious positions because everything is interconnected in the efforts to assist one another as presented in the following quotes.

The tensions that accompany the school's curriculum for comunero youth will be informed by the tensions surrounding their historical context. The following quote comes from a conversation on a social media platform hosting a page dedicated to the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultura de Santa Fe de la Laguna. This Facebook post is from Santa Fe de la Laguna and was posted on April 28, 2012. The post expresses concern over the violent repression of students, the children of workers, peasants, and Indigenous people by the government, which has provoked the anger of large sectors of the population.

Con preocupación hemos visto el verdadero rostro del gobierno al reprimir violentamente a los estudiantes, a los hijos de obreros, campesinos e indígenas, provocando la ira de amplios sectores populares... desde este espacio convocamos a la sociedad a manifestarse en contra de estos actos del fascismo priista y paremos la violencia del estado... ¡juchari uinapekua!!

[With concern we have seen the true face of the government by violently repressing the students, the children of workers, peasants, and Indigenous people, provoking the anger of broad popular sectors... from this space we call on society to demonstrate against these acts of PRI fascism and stop the violence of the state... ¡juchari uinapekua/Our force!!!] (artifact, January, 2023)

This Facebook post calls for society to speak out against these acts of fascism by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI; in English, Institutional Revolutionary Party; MacAskill, 2000) and to stop the state's violence. The final phrase, "juchari uinapekua," is in the Purépecha language, meaning "our force." The PRI was founded in 1929 and held power

for most of the 20th century; it was the dominant political party in México and governed the country for 71 consecutive years, from 1929 to 2000. During its long rule, the PRI was often accused of corruption, authoritarianism, and repression of political opposition. The party has undergone several transformations over the years and is currently the third-largest political party in México. The concern over developing school programs that respond to the lack of support from federal entities led to a separation of governmental entities.

This Facebook post is based on the events of 2011 when Cheran's women and young men took action against organized crime, resulting in their expulsion. This marked the beginning of their efforts to regain control of their security forces, combat drug cartels, reclaim their forests and wood products, and establish an independent electoral process (Morales Velázquez & Lepe Lira, 2013). This struggle for autonomy, security, and self-governance inspired other Purépecha communities in the state to strengthen their own autonomy. Even Purépecha people who migrated to the United States have preserved these practices rooted in autonomy, thanks to the traditional ways of passing down ancestral knowledge (Urrieta, 2013). The importance of collective and community identity is maintained through the education youth receive within their families and communities from an early age (Urrieta, 2013). As a result, in Santa Fe de la Laguna, the establishment of an autonomous community-led high school became part of a larger movement among Purépecha communities. The development of comunero education was intertwined with the events that affected the state of Michoacán and its Indigenous communities. Urrieta's study highlights that the preservation of ancestral knowledge and traditional ways of fostering autonomy have played a crucial role in sustaining the practices described in this

Facebook post, even among Purépecha individuals who migrated to the United States. The sense of collectivity and community, which are vital for maintaining identity, are upheld through the family and community education that young people receive from an early age, as Urrieta explains.

Theme 4: Purépecha Values

The fourth theme in this study highlighted the significant role of Purépecha values in promoting transnational education within the community. Approximately 85% of the participants mentioned the influence of various Purépecha values in response to the question of what promotes transnational education in their community. The concept of well-being, known as *Sési Irekáni* in Purépecha, was among the values frequently cited, alongside tradition, transformation, and survivance. While acknowledging the existence of other Purépecha values, this study focused on these contributing factors as part of the second finding. It is essential to note that additional and more comprehensive Purépecha values were not included in this set of themes as these were not part of the values that emerged in the data analysis.

This fourth theme addressing Purépecha values shows how community members, teachers, and administrators mentioned service to the community and community cooperation as key to what constitutes community well-being. These are the words of one of the teachers in the community who is currently a researcher at a major state university in Michoacán:

Entonces, esa es una historia importante. Entonces, ahora, el tema de la comunalidad, ahí se pueden expresar varios valores. Y ahí se pueden expresar varios valores porque finalmente lo que se expresa en una comunalidad son los valores que posee una comunidad. Entonces en primer lugar, la comunalidad se entiende como el

servicio que tenemos que dar en la comunidad. De tal manera que por ejemplo partiendo de que los profesores que no recibimos ni un centavo, ni un peso por ofrecer nuestros servicios, entendemos que eso es parte del servicio que nosotros tenemos que dar a los estudiantes. Esto en términos Purépechas se llama Maruaspekua—Maruaspekua es un servicio a la comunidad.

[So, that is an important story. So, the issue of comunalidad, several values, can be expressed there. And several values can be expressed there because, finally, what is expressed in a comunalidad are a community's values. So, in the first place, comunalidad is understood as the service we must give to the community. So, for example, starting from the fact that we teachers do not receive a penny or a peso for offering our services, we understand that this is part of the service we must give the students. This, in Purépecha terms, is called Maruaspekua—Maruaspekua is a service to the community.] (René's interview, May 27, 2022)

This quote highlights the idea that a community's values and expressions of mutual and collective responsibility are manifested through the dynamics of what for Santa Fe de la Laguna entails. As expressed by the last participant, comunalidad is understood as the service individuals must contribute to their community. The example of teachers offering their services without any monetary compensation is given as an illustration of this concept. Through these statements we can learn that the process that promotes a transnational education is built in this capacity to engage in a collective responsibility. Hand in hand with this is the idea of community cooperation as another aspect contributing to Sési Irekání/well-being. The following quote is part of the conversation on May 22, 2022, when I had the opportunity to host a small focus group between a young couple who are parents of two little girls and who followed the development of the school:

Esposo: Pues porque los muchachos ya no querían ir a escuela al Quiroga. Y los maestros de aquí, o un doctor, no recuerdo, ¿quién impulsó hacer esta escuela...Y que los muchachos pudieran ir y sentirse pues confiados... cómo te diré? Y no ir a Quiroga.

Yo: Sí, era lo que había escuchado que ayudó mucho que abrieran una preparatoria aquí. ¿Y ustedes saben cómo apoyaron las familias a que se hiciera la escuela? ¿Si las familias querían que hubiera una escuela?

Esposa: Sí, pues yo creo que los primeros alumnos este, creo que hicieron faenas, para acondicionar la preparatoria y como que la primera vez sí se animaron muchos. Muchos de ellos que ya habían terminado la secundaria mucho tiempo antes y cuando se abrió la preparatoria aquí, empezaron a terminarla. La preparatoria.

[Husband: Well because the youth no longer wanted to go to school at Quiroga. And the teachers here, or a doctor, I don't remember, who pushed to make this school... And that the youth could go and feel confident...how can I tell you? And not go to Quiroga.] (Matías, focus group, June 17, 2022)

Me: Yes, I had heard that it helped a lot that they opened a high school here. And do you know how the families supported the school? If the families wanted there to be a school?

Wife: Yes, the first students did much work to prepare the high school, and many of them were very enthusiastic the first time. Many of them had already finished middle school a long time before, and when it opened here, they began to finish it. The high school.] (Zule, focus group, June 17, 2022)

The statements made by this couple are a window to understand the why and the how of the cooperation. As they explain, there is a strong logic to their community participation as they identify the hardships of early migration from the boys and girls in the community. The care they express in building the school collectively speaks to how well-being is constructed through community participation in such a way that allows for the development of these complex educational endeavors. In another interview with a community member, Elena, the current host of a radio station that grew from a broadcasting project of this high school, mentioned the way collective participation allowed the development of the school.

Se participó incluso donando el terreno donde está ubicada. Ahí empieza la participación. Luego se empezó a participar la comunidad entera al promover las aulas que son las familias que dejaron su trabajo por ir a levantar una barda, por ir a

pintarla, por ir a colocar una teja, por contribuir y de ahí empezó. Incluso hubo personas que contribuyeron con muy poquito como una flor para el jardín, y como cosas así.

[We even participated by donating the land where it is located. That is where participation began. Then the entire community began to participate by promoting the classrooms, which are the families that left their work to build a fence, paint it, put a tile, to contribute, and from there, it began. Some people even contributed very little, like a flower for the garden and things like that.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022)

This conversation highlights the importance of community cooperation in creating educational opportunities and promoting the well-being of community members. It suggests that establishing the high school was a hands-on, collaborative effort between community members and educators and that the community actively supported the school. Furthermore, it is essential to understand that beyond the community's disposition to help, this cooperation stems from Purépecha values of comunalidad as an organizing force in this community. According to Jaime Martínez Luna (2015), the concept of comunalidad encompasses a comprehensive, cohesive, organic, and collective perception of "creating existence." It relies on a complete interconnectedness of its temporal or spatial components, acknowledging the capabilities of the living entities involved. This cooperation and ideas related to community service promote and construct the well-being necessary to match the Purépecha ideals of community Sési Irekání/well-being as their existence. Nonetheless, the data analyzed also suggest an awareness that tradition or ancestral knowledge is an important piece that will protect Purépecha values as they intersect with comunero education in this transnational context. The next section explains how tradition ensures a future for this community.

The idea of *Pindékuecha* signifies the array of customs and traditions, celebrations, ceremonies, and rites of the Purépecha people. Still, it also highlights and deepens the understanding of the social bonds among children, parents, and grandparents. According to Morales Velázquez and Lepe Lira (2013), part of this process responds to a parallel concept of Indigenous knowledge identified as *Jánaskakua*/Indigenous knowledge. The Santa Fe de la Laguna community places great importance on certain values, and these principles manifest in the design of their school curriculum. In particular, the school emphasizes promoting using and preserving Purépecha as the instructional language. The knowledge of the home language, *Jakájkukua*, holds the community's beliefs and traditions. Language is centered in the curriculum, reflecting the close connection between funds of knowledge and education (Gonzalez et al., 2005). During the data collection process, conversations with community members highlighted the pervasive influence of these themes.

In an interview with a faculty member of the school that is part of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, he had to say this regarding the impact of the ideas of *comunalidad* as a driving force for a community organization:

La cuestión de la educación... Bueno, en la cuestión de la comunalidad... pues esos dominios que inclusive tenemos nosotros como maestros, tenemos el diario vivir, en nuestro entorno, en nuestra humanidad. Como humanidad viene formando parte de la educación como algo muy fundamental. Que los muchachos que tengan presente la cuestión justamente en su forma de desarrollo y de vida. Tomando en cuenta la cuestiones sobre las que camina nuestra comunidad o que evoluciona pues, tenemos que tomar en cuenta muchas cuestiones de la comunalidad como es la convivencia en la escuela, todo lo que tenga que ver en esa cuestión. Inclusive en la cuestión de los cargos. Nosotros tenemos en los cargos comunales, religiosos, porque a fin de cuentas todo tiene entrelazado en esa cuestión de ayudarnos mutuamente. ¿No sé si tenga que agregar algo más?

[The issue of education... Well, the issue of *comunalidad*... well, those domains that we as teachers have in our daily life, environment, and humanity. As humanity, it is

part of education as something very fundamental. The youths keep the issue in mind precisely in their way of development and life. Considering the issues on which our community walks or evolves, we must consider many issues of comunalidad, such as coexistence in school and everything that has to do with this issue, even in the question of the positions. We have communal and religious cargos because everything is intertwined in this issue of helping each other. Is there anything else to add?]] (Santiago's interview, May 24, 2022)

The last quote offers insight into how youth actively participate in their community by taking on responsibilities from a young age. Comunalidad goes hand in hand with the duties and roles shouldered by every member within the circle of comunalidad. It's as if the youth are in the midst of a fascinating process, slowly unfolding and embracing or becoming aware of these very roles and responsibilities. With each step they take on this journey of identity formation, they gain profound insights that shape their perception of the deep interconnectedness and reliance within their community. The high school students in this program gradually embrace the roles. This way they recognize the space they occupy in nurturing and preserving the communal essence. To further explore the dynamics of the community and the values of the Purépecha people that are integrated into the school's organization and curriculum and to add to the words of the previous participant, consider the following quote. During his interview, Carlos, who is a school leader, stated that within the school, the language of the community is elevated to academic language, highlighting its significance and value to the community's identity, educational objectives, and preservation of cultural values.

Mira, en el plano educativo pues es hacer lo que comentábamos ayer. Este un programa de interculturalidad sobre todo en la lengua que se utiliza en la comunidad en el lenguaje académico. Este en los programas académicos, ¿los contenidos, cómo se puede insertar las cosmovivencias indígenas de la comunidad en el programa educativo en el programa curricular no?

[Look, at the educational level, it is to do what we discussed yesterday. This is an intercultural program, especially in the language used in the community in the academic language. This is the academic programs, the contents, how can the Indigenous cosmovivencias of the community be inserted in the educational program, in the curricular program?] (Carlos's interview, May 23, 2022)

The use of the concept of cosmovivencias, as used by this participant, can be better understood by the words of Javier Dosil (2014), who explains that cosmovivencias are the expressions of that integral and sacred nature which includes their existence and which becomes the daily cycle of life. In this last quote, one can capture the connection between the ideals of interculturality as a way to safeguard the ways of life of the Purépecha people by centering Purépecha as the academic language. This is important to consider, as the Purépecha language holds the knowledge and concepts the community needs to self-support. Furthermore, this participant mentions, *"Por medio de la lengua Purépecha, en las clases que sobre todo tienen que ver con historia, de la comunidad, la historia de México, la historia universal. Sobre todo en las materias socio-históricas, no?"* [Through the Purépecha language, in the classes that have to do with history, the community, the history of México, universal history. Especially in socio-historical subjects, right?"] (Carlos's interview, May 23, 2023). The use of Purépecha, in this sense, is multilayered; it is recognized as a communicative venue to preserve ancestral teachings as it also becomes central to curricular practices.

The conversations indicate that the safekeeping of traditional values must be protected, reproduced, and kept safe through proactive actions that ensure the future of tradition or cultural survivance. The next quote calls for the attention that needs to be given

to the school and presents future implications related to the existence of the school for the whole community:

Bueno, sin duda la necesidad de tener una educación en la comunidad contextualizada y propia que no sea impuesta por el estado de manera vertical. Pues esa es una de las prioridades que hacen que una escuela propia sea muy necesaria. Hay cuestiones de territorio y de recursos naturales de gobernabilidad, etc... que se tienen que abordar en los contextos educativos. Para que esas mismas gentes que se están formando bueno en un momento dado sean quienes en un futuro asuman el papel que ahorita tienen las autoridades de bienes comunales o que tienen un rol protagónico dentro de los movimientos de lucha en esta comunidad.

[Well, undoubtedly the need to have a contextualized education in the community that is not imposed by the state in a top-down manner. Well, that is one of the priorities that make a school of their own very necessary. Issues of territory and natural resources, governance, etc... have to be addressed in educational contexts. So that these same people who are being trained well at a given moment will be the ones who, in the future, will assume the role that the communal property authorities now have or who have a leading role in the movements of struggle in this community.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

As part of the same interview, the participant ties in the relationship of Purépecha values embedded into the language:

Entonces, sabemos que un árbol existe a través del lenguaje o una casa y una serie de cosas de las que se compone nuestra realidad, pero esa realidad es muy distinta si nosotros la hablamos en Purépecha. Entonces desde ahí viene la necesidad de tener una educación en el idioma propio. Y no solo eso sino conociendo las plantas, los animales que hay aquí en la región. Tratando de inventarnos el hilo negro pues si hablamos de la región del desierto, por ejemplo, tres cuartas partes del territorio de México son desiertos, pero aquí no tenemos desierto. Obviamente aquí tenemos que hablar del bosque. Tenemos que hablar de los hongos. Tenemos que hablar de los pinos pues es lo que tenemos aquí. Entonces por eso mismo necesitamos tener una educación en el contexto...

[So, we know that a tree exists through language or a house and a series of things that make up our reality, but that reality is very different if we speak it in Purépecha. So from there comes the need to have an education in our language. And not only that but also getting to know the plants and animals in the region. Trying to invent the black thread, if we talk about the desert region, for example, three-quarters of the territory of México are deserts, but here we do not have deserts. Here we have to talk about the forest. We have to talk about mushrooms. We have to talk about

the pine trees because that is what we have here. So that's why we need to have an education in the context...] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

These last comments by this community member highlight the interplay of Purépecha values as a critical component of the well-being and survivance of the community. This community is proactively responding to the global changes threatening human existence. Anthony-Stevens and Griño's (2018) study sheds light on the concept of Indigenous survivance and its relevance to the struggles of Indigenous communities. In the context of Santa Fe de la Laguna, this is a critical theme that is part of the second finding. Their work emphasizes the importance of transborder Indigenous studies in advancing the self-determination efforts of Indigenous communities. Transborder/transnational pedagogies can also play a vital role in supporting the education of Indigenous students who have migrated to a new country. Brittain's (2009) research highlights how transborder narratives can inform the needs of students, such as understanding the educational system in their country of origin, identifying cultural expectations within their family and ethnic community, and recognizing the role of teachers as a source of social capital. These insights are highly relevant to the challenges Indigenous communities face in Michoacán as they navigate their struggles for self-determination and cultural preservation in the face of displacement and marginalization.

Theme 5: External Institutional Support

The next theme that corresponds to the second finding suggests that the successful integration of Purépecha values, comunero education, and autonomous curricular administration, coupled with external institutional support, creates a sustainable cycle that promotes the *Sési Irekání*, or the well-being of the community, and helps to curb the

adverse effects of early migration. However, of the six faculty members interviewed, counting teachers and administrators, the six (100%) agreed that cooperation with external institutional entities is essential to achieve a transnational education system. This cooperation ensures that the necessary resources, funding, and expertise are available to implement effective educational strategies that align with the community's cultural values and goals. It also fosters collaboration between local and external stakeholders, creating a collective effort to support the education and development of the community's youth. Without external institutional support, the community may face significant challenges in sustaining and advancing its education initiatives, hindering its ability to provide its youth with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. Therefore, collaboration with external institutional entities is critical for promoting the Sési Irekáni and ensuring the long-term success of the community.

To establish a good program, it is necessary to seek institutional accountability that allocates a state budget for the community, improves facilities, and redirects funding from entities like the Secretaria de Educación Pública. Almost 80% of the participants that are or were part of the school mentioned the need to have the state respond with an allocated budget for the school. These are the words of one of the teachers, Mónica, responding to the school's budgetary needs.

Bueno, en algunos casos, es como muy estrecha la relación, incluso muchos de los profesores son parte de la comunidad. Pero otra gran parte no lo es. Creo que los motivos son precisamente por la falta de presupuesto que hace que si un docente está empezando a trabajar pues igual le sirve de experiencia de estar frente a un grupo, pero no le conviene seguir allí por la falta de presupuesto y entonces están por muy poco tiempo por cortos periodos y creo que eso le daña en cierta medida a la prepa porque no hay un seguimiento de docentes si no prácticamente en cada semestre en cada asignatura están cambiando. Y creo que eso me parece que sí se

necesita fortalecer. Por otra parte, pues como la prepa nace del proyecto comunitario, tiene gran aceptación. Incluso de los profesores, aunque seamos, me incluyo, externos. No precisamente que seamos de la comunidad. Eso también tendría que revisar, que tan positivo o negativo pueda ser de acuerdo con los objetivos del proyecto que tiene la prepa.

[Well, the relationship is very close in some cases, even though many teachers are part of the community. But a large part of them is not. I think that the reasons are precisely due to the lack of budget, which means that if a teacher starts to work, it is helpful for him/her to have the experience of being in front of a group. Still, it is not convenient for him/her to continue there due to the lack of budget, so they are there for a very short period for short periods. This damages the high school to a certain extent because there is no follow-up of teachers, if not practically every semester, in every subject they are changing. And this needs to be strengthened. On the other hand, since the high school was born from the community project, it has excellent acceptance. Even among the professors, even though we are, I include myself, an external. Not precisely that we are from the community, we would also have to review how positive or negative this could be following the objectives of the high school's project.] (Mónica's interview, May 27, 2022)

This comment calls attention to the need for increased budgetary allocation to support the teachers and to ensure that teachers can have a sustained presence within the community.

The lack of financial resources currently hampers the ability of teachers to remain in their roles for an extended period, resulting in frequent turnover and disruption in the high school's educational continuity. Additionally, other members of the community and the school added the following about the need to have available money to support the students, but this is what female students, Mariela and Jannet, mentioned about the financial help that they need:

Yo: ¿Por qué piensan ustedes que es importante una preparatoria así en la comunidad?

Estudiante: Porque hay, como se llama, personas o alumnos que no tienen mucho dinero y no les alcanza para el pasaje y para ir a otra prepa. Y esta como les queda cerca pues pueden venir, no ocupa tanto dinero.

Yo: Sí, porque es caro estar trasladando y...

Estudiante: Además lo que gastan de comida.

Yo: Si, había escuchado que las comidas son como lo más caro. Más que el pasaje. Aparte de que vengan maestros, ¿qué más les gustaría ver aquí en esta prepa?

[Me: Why do you think having a high school like this in the community is important?

Student: Because there are, what do you call it, people or students who don't have much money and can't afford the bus fare to go to another high school. And this one is close by so they can come, it only takes up a little money.

Me: Yes, because it is expensive to travel and...

Student: Plus what they spend on food.

Me: Yes, I had heard that food is the most expensive thing. More than the ticket. What else would you like to see in this high school besides teachers coming here?]
(Mariela and Jannet, focus group, May 30, 2022)

The student in this interview is highlighting the importance of having a high school in the community for students who come from low-income families and cannot afford transportation costs to attend another high school. They believe that having a high school nearby will allow students to save money on transportation and food expenses, which can be high. This comment is essential as it is crucial to hear how economic budgetary aspects also impact the student's lives in the school. These quotes are examples of the different angles that promote transnational education and accountability seems to have always been a driver of success for the school. Similarly, the absence of accountability also indicates severe implications such as the lack of sufficient teachers in the school.

Upon examining the opinions of other community members like Carlos, it has become evident that the school's teaching capacity is directly affected by the absence of a fixed budget:

Segundo, a la cuestión de la infraestructura misma de la escuela, no hay laboratorios por ejemplo donde los estudiantes, no hay equipo computacional, computadoras, laboratorios, más salones, por ejemplo, para albergar más estudiantes y más bachilleratos, por ejemplo, la universidad ofrece cuatro bachilleratos y en la comunidad solo tenemos uno. Entonces ya falta más espacios físicos y eso pues estamos hablando de una inversión mayor. Sin embargo, con el espacio que tenemos pues este nos hace falta un presupuesto que pudiera solventar gastos de la escuela.

[Second, the question of the infrastructure of the school itself, there are no laboratories, for example, where the students can study, there is no computer equipment, computers, laboratories, more classrooms, for example, to house more students and more high schools, for example, the university offers four academic strands and in the community, we only have one. So we need more physical spaces and are talking about a more significant investment. However, we need a budget with our space to cover the school's expenses.] (Carlos's interview, May 23, 2022)

The demands for accountability were clearly stated by members of the academic community of the school. This is a quote of a comment given by one of the former history teachers at the school:

También consideramos debe de haber más salones, salones más adecuados, en mejores condiciones, y también que tengamos proyectores para que, en cada salón, cada profesor pueda contar con los medios de comunicación para poder proyectar cosas que a ellos les interese enseñar a los estudiantes. Entonces falta mucho por hacer, pienso que entre todas las autoridades de la preparatoria junto con las autoridades de la comunidad para exigir, al gobierno del estado o a la Secretaria de Educación Pública que mejore las condiciones de la Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe.

[We also consider that there should be more classrooms, more adequate classrooms, in better conditions, and also that we should have projectors so that, in each classroom, each teacher can communicate to project things that they are interested in teaching the students. So, there is still a lot to be done, I think that all the high school authorities, together with the authorities of the community to demand, to the state government or to the Secretary of Public Education to improve the conditions of the Intercultural Indigenous High School of Santa Fe.] (Rene's interview, May 27, 2022)

These quotes attest to the needs the school currently faces and the clarity on the part of stakeholders as to what could be helpful for the overall school community. The quotes are

important because of how consistent they are in terms of the accountability needed. In addition to addressing the need for better infrastructure and resources, members of the academic community of the Intercultural Indigenous High School of Santa Fe also emphasized the importance of intercultural education. The quotes in this fifth theme of external and institutional support answer the second part of the first research question by providing an idea of that building block of support the community of stakeholders wishes to see working as a support for a transnational education.

Theme 6: Intercultural Education

This study's second finding, related to the second part of the first research question, has also shed light on the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna stakeholders' understanding of interculturality. The following quotes help the reader understand the foundations of interculturality through the lens of the school. The analysis revealed that the school's community ties, its curriculum, the prominent and methodical use of the Purépecha language in the program, and the structured forms of instructional cooperation constitute the foundational pillars of what the stakeholders identify as an intercultural program. This finding is a testimony to the school's firm commitment to fostering culture, language preservation, and revitalization. The school has created a unique space that celebrates diversity and promotes mutual respect by emphasizing the significance of community, language, and collaboration. The findings of this study highlight the school's exceptional efforts in promoting intercultural understanding, making it a model for other educational institutions to follow.

The community's Sési Irekáni/well-being occurs through educational opportunities and community, participation, and community retention. The autonomy of the school and its emphasis on Indigenous interculturality allows for the recognition and connection of diverse cultures and identities of Indigenous peoples, both within and beyond national borders. Additionally, the curriculum incorporates traditional community practices and emphasizes the importance of *Kaxúmbekua/* family and community education, making it a crucial learning experience. The interplay of curricular, administrative autonomy, Purépecha values, *comunero education*, and institutional support sets in motion a cycle that promotes Sési Irekáni/well-being of the community and delays adverse determinants tied to early migration. The chapter's next section highlights the third finding in this study, which corresponds to the second research question in the study.

The importance of community ties to the program was addressed in the following quote from Elena, a community member, who participated in the first interview and is involved in community radio:

Yo: ¿Usted sabe cuáles fueron algunas de las razones que motivaron el desarrollo de esta escuela Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Elena: Pues uno de los problemas que yo tengo entendido es pues, ayudar a la comunidad en lo económico ya que varios de los muchachitos no podían ir a otras escuelas porque nos quedaban muy muy lejos. Así es que lo primero que se hizo fue hacer algo pensando en la economía de la comunidad y que los niños siguieran aprendiendo y que no se estancaran. Una de las cosas que la hace intercultural es para seguir promoviendo nuestra cultura y nuestra lengua no perderla.

[Me: Do you know some reasons for developing this Intercultural Indigenous High School in Santa Fe de la Laguna?

Elena: Well, one of the problems that I understand was to help the community economically because many of the children could not go to other schools because they were too far away. So, the first thing that was done was to think about the

community's economy and that the children would continue learning and not stagnate. One of the things that makes it intercultural is to continue promoting our culture and language and keep it.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022)

In this quote, the participant remembers how establishing an intercultural Indigenous high school in Santa Fe de la Laguna aimed at addressing the economic challenges faced by the community. She recalls how many young men and women in the area could not attend schools that were far away, which led to the establishment of the school to ensure that children continued to learn. The school's identity is evident to this participant as she mentions how it serves as an intercultural center that combines traditional knowledge and modern education and acknowledges the school's key objectives to promote the community's culture and language to prevent it from being lost.

Another way the school has constructed its intercultural program is through a curriculum taught in Purépecha. The participants recognized that this had challenged the school as finding enough Purépecha-speaking teachers to teach the different content areas was difficult. The following quote from Mónica, a former teacher who is not from the community, reveals that necessity:

Bueno se supone que es un poquito seguir con la línea que tiene la secundaria intercultural que está también ahí en la comunidad. Aunque creo que la prepa no ha estado como, no ha tenido el impacto que debería tener. Pues por muchas razones, incluso el hecho de la dependencia de la Universidad Michoacana, creo que le ha generado bastantes conflictos. Puesto que la Universidad Michoacana tiene un plan, por ejemplo, de lo que está establecido y para pertenecer a ella hay que seguir a ese plan. Lo cual me parece que aleja un poco de los objetivos a la preparatoria intercultural. El beneficio es que los docentes mayormente son por lo menos bilingües. Es decir que hablan el Purépecha y hablan el español. Y me parece que eso sí genera un poquito el seguimiento a este proyecto. Pero sí me parece que todavía falta cuajar muchas cosas más.

[Well, it is supposed to be a little bit along the lines of the intercultural high school that is also there in the community. However, the high school has not had the

impact it should have. For many reasons, including the fact that it depends on the Universidad Michoacana, it has generated a lot of conflicts. Since the Michoacan University has a plan, for example, of what is established and to belong to it you must follow that plan. This seems to take the intercultural high school slightly away from its objectives. The benefit is that most of the teachers are at least bilingual. That is, they speak Purépecha and they speak Spanish. And this generates a little bit of follow-up to this project. But many more things still need to be done.] (Mónica's interview, May 27, 2022)

The importance and awareness that Purépecha as the home language has a deep connection to community participation were highlighted, and a need to preserve the language is crucial for the community. The quote below is from an interview with a former teacher, Tomás, who was one of the school's founders and taught mathematics. He currently has extended his ideas of interculturality and has created a curriculum that serves students who left the community and are now living in the United States in places like Tacoma, Washington. He said:

La radio y eso para la comunidad tuvo un impacto muy fuerte. Tiene un proceso muy largo. Y pues la radio no es solo para fines comunicativos es una forma de comunicar. Y de educar a la comunidad. Yo creo que todas las cosas con las que también he estado trabajando. Han impactado ahorita como lo que usted comentaba. De las migraciones es un tema que tal vez yo no lo veía desde hace 2 años y yo lo veía normal de pronto he visto otras cosas. Estos aspectos culturales nunca van a morir en el caso de la cultura Purépecha. Y entonces viene un auge muy fuerte. Por ejemplo, yo nunca había visto que se estén organizando fiestas patronales. Y ahorita lo que estoy viendo es que sí se están haciendo. Y después, la creación de organizaciones musicales para todos sus eventos. Pero también lo que he visto es que se está viendo una transculturización muy fuerte en el área de educación. Hay mucha inquietud de querer aprender el Purépecha. ¿Y por qué le digo? Yo ahorita estoy trabajando con varios alumnos, la mitad de los alumnos con los que estoy trabajando son de México y la otra mitad están en los Estados Unidos. Este año empezamos con un grupo. Que radica en California. En el caso de esta señora, que tal vez usted la ubica en eventos. La señora Zamora. Por medio de la invitación de ella, trabajamos esa parte por unos 6 meses. Pero este 10 de enero cumplimos ya un año con otro grupo. Ellos radican en el área de Tacoma, Washington. Por eso le digo que sí hay una necesidad, haya una interculturalidad muy fuerte.

[The radio and that for the community had a very strong impact. It has a very long process. And the radio is not only for communication purposes but also a way of communicating. And to educate the community. I believe that all the things that I have been working with. They have had an impact now, like what you were saying. Migration is an issue that perhaps I have not seen for the last two years, and I saw it as normal, and suddenly I have seen other things. These cultural aspects will never die in the case of the Purépecha culture. And then there is a very strong boom. For example, I had never seen that. Patron saint festivals are being organized. And now, what I am seeing is that they are being organized. And then the creation of musical organizations for all their events. But I have also seen that we are seeing a very strong transculturation in education. There is a lot of interest in learning Purépecha, and why do I tell you this? I am working with several students, half of whom I am working with are from México, and the other half are in the United States. This year we started with a group in California. In the case of this lady, you can locate her in events. Mrs. Zamora. Through her invitation, we worked on that part for about six months. But this January 10th, we are already one year old with another group. They are based in the Tacoma, Washington area. That is why there is a need for a very strong interculturality.] (Tomás's interview, January 20, 2022).

This last quote provides insightful information related to the way interculturality functions in the context of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. In the different sections interculturality manifests through its community ties, curriculum, use of the Purépecha language, and structured instructional cooperation. Furthermore, interculturality extends beyond borders and supports Purépecha language development across México and the United States. One of the most beautiful aspects of this last quote is the connection this radio project has with the origins of the school as this is a branch radio project that grew out of the first radio broadcasting station created in the school around 2011. While the school's intercultural program includes a curriculum taught in the Purépecha language, the challenge of finding enough qualified teachers proficient in the language is acknowledged. This highlights the importance and necessity of addressing this issue for the successful implementation of the intercultural program.

Well-being is the result of various factors such as curricular and administrative autonomy, Purépecha values, comunero education, and institutional support. These interconnected elements created a cyclical process that promoted the community's well-being by enabling the school to sustain and establish educational opportunities for the youth of Santa Fe de la Laguna. As a result, this delayed migration not only fostered greater community participation but also supported community retention and the expansion of educational prospects. This way the factors that promote a transnational education are better understood. While there will certainly be other factors that might emerge in the future as new situations arise, these were the salient themes that provide a system that puts in motion a transnational education.

Finding 3: Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir through Pindékuecha/Tradition

The third finding in the study responds to the second research question: How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

The third finding in the study is compelling, as it highlights the transformative power of transnational and trans-institutional cooperation that the participants have identified in what evolves at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna (see Appendix A). This transnational and trans-institutional collaboration can create significant change in individual and collective experiences, as evidenced by reduced migration rates and improved community quality of life when students and their families are involved. This third finding also highlights the connection to the school's effects on the community and

further deconstructs the process of the Purépecha Sési Irekání, which translates to the Bien Vivir and embodies the concept of social well-being. Through this approach, vulnerabilities that previously necessitated the establishment of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna are being reversed, resulting in decreased social and economic vulnerabilities among the Santa Fe de la Laguna community students. The significant turnaround emphasizes the importance of collaboration across borders and institutions, as it has the potential to bring long-term improvement to communities such as Santa Fe de la Laguna.

This finding presents the themes of social well-being, migration slow-down, authentic education, language, cultural autonomy, and shared governance. These thematic elements are presented as they emerged in the data analysis, capturing the experience and the fight for the educational autonomy of former students and stakeholders of the school.

Theme 7: Migratory Slow Down

Migration patterns in Santa Fe de la Laguna exhibit similarities with those observed in the state of Michoacán, México. In Santa Fe de la Laguna, like the rest of the state, the statistics related to migration show that individuals often migrate due to various push factors such as economic causes, lack of employment opportunities, and the desire to reunite with their families (INEGI, 2020). These causes often drive people to search for better economic opportunities and a higher standard of living in other regions. Nonetheless, one of the findings of this study is that early migration among youth in Santa Fe de la Laguna responds to a need for educational access.

Although migration is common in many communities, the economic and social strain caused by early separation prompted the establishment of the school. As noted by Elena when responding the question related to the purpose of the school, she mentions, *“Una de las principales razones por las que la escuela tuvo éxito en su origen tiene que ver con la forma en que se pretendía frenar tempranamente la emigración entre los jóvenes de la comunidad.”* [One of the main reasons the school was successful at its inception is how it was intended to curb early emigration among the community's youth.] (Elena’s interview, May 17, 2022). Curbing migration has been, from the start of the foundation of the school, a strategy to reduce health-associated risks among its youth and decrease economic stressors. Zule, a mother of two and owner of a wood shop in the community, mentioned, *“Este ha sido siempre el objetivo de la escuela, y es muy importante porque así prevenimos situaciones como el acceso a sustancias ilegales y la disolución de unidades familiares.”* [This has always been the goal of the school, and this is very important because this way we prevent situations like access to illegal substances and the dissolution of family units.] (Zule, focus group, June 17, 2022). Furthermore, the quotes presented by Zule and Matías suggest clear economic benefits for the families and students, as mentioned here: *“Porque hay, como se llama, personas o alumnos que no tienen mucho dinero y no les alcanza para el pasaje y para ir a otra prepa. Y esta como les queda cerca pues pueden venir, no ocupa tanto dinero.”* [Because there are, as it is called, people or students who don't have much money and can't afford the fare to go to another high school. And this one is close to them, so they can come, it doesn't take up so much money.] (Matías, focus group, June 19, 2022). These conversations support that the creation of the school was motivated by the economic

and social stress derived from early separation caused by migration. Furthermore, education can help mitigate the adverse effects of early migration, as was supported by the quotes from community members who noticed this point.

In 2010, the Santa Fe de la Laguna community came together to create a school that holds great importance to its residents. Attending school can be a significant financial strain for many students and their families. However, accessing a diverse range of high school programs provided greater sense of choice and more autonomy to decide. The notions of autonomy are complex as they are tied to the history of a land that has been contested. A teacher at the high school acknowledges this significance:

Y entonces entre ellos digamos como unos de los elementos fundamentales que deben de saber es que tenemos un territorio con más de 5500 de tierras comunales y de la cuales hay que defenderlas, frente a externas, frente a gente de fuera de la comunidad. Y entonces bueno deben de estar conscientes de la importancia que tiene nuestro territorio Purépecha en Santa Fe de la Laguna.

[And then among them, let's say that one of the fundamental elements that they should know is that we have a territory with more than 5500 communal lands and that we have to defend them, against outsiders, against people from outside the community. So they should be aware of the importance of our Purépecha territory in Santa Fe de la Laguna.] (René's interview, May 27, 2022)

The distribution and allocation of the land has been an axis of social organization and is closely tied with the notions of autonomy that prevail among the Purépecha people. The people of Santa Fe de la Laguna know they are to guard the land given to them to live and work in. There is an awareness that outside entities and people desire and threaten this land. As the teacher mentioned, "We have to defend them, against outsiders, against people from outside the community" (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022). This last statement illustrates the struggle to retain community values by being aware that the

Purépecha way of life can be subject to external forces that can have adverse effects in the community's language and culture.

Delfina, one of the women who worked for Radio Purépecha, notes:

Yo soy originaria de Santa Fe de la Laguna. En esta comunidad viven como 5,000 personas. Se dedican a distintas labores. Algunos son pescadores, otros se dedican a la agricultura, algunos se dedican a elaborar jarritos, otros son leñadores y otros se van al norte.

[I am originally from Santa Fe de la Laguna. There are about 5,000 people living in this community. They work in different jobs. Some are fishermen, others are engaged in agriculture, some are engaged in making small jars, others are lumberjacks, and others go to the north.] (Delfina, artifact, transcribed from YouTube video on January 21, 2023)

Based on Delfina's observations, there is a thriving economy despite ongoing migration patterns. The long and multifaceted history of migration to the United States from Michoacán supports this movement; there are established community networks and ethnic enclaves in states like California and Illinois. Many Mexican immigrants in Chicago, Illinois, have roots in Michoacán; the first group arrived in Illinois in the early 1900s, and this migration has continued steadily since (García, 2010). Many people from Michoacán have also moved to California, including those who settled in Illinois. The Los Angeles area has been a popular destination for Michoacanos who have migrated to the United States over the past century. Family reunification is a significant reason for this migration. Delfina's observations are consistent with the conversations I had with various members of the community. In stating their desire to learn English, they mentioned how important it was for them to communicate with their relatives in the United States. Thus, while traditional economic practices tied to the existence of natural resources still provide a strong economic

sustenance for the community, the notions of land are themselves becoming a transnational concept.

Throughout the interviews, participants consistently discussed the impact of migration on their autonomy. The pressure to migrate, whether through early migration or intentional efforts to prevent it, can be oppressive and limit individuals' decision-making ability. Autonomy becomes a crucial factor in enabling decision-making. For example, the distance between schools can increase economic stress for students and their families, but having a variety of high school programs provides greater autonomy and options.

This was exemplified in a video segment featuring Cesar Barajas singing about the school. This is a song about a girl attending school in one of the YouTube videos created by Santa Fe de la Laguna community members about the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural. He sings, *"Te veo como una niña mi Rocita. Por eso no quiero que tengas compromisos con los jóvenes. Quisiera que este año terminaras la escuela primaria, que cumplieras el sexto año y te inscribieras a la secundaria"* [I see you as a child my Rocita. That's why I don't want you to have commitments with the young people. I want you to finish elementary school this year, complete the sixth grade and enroll in junior high school] (artifact, January 22, 2023). He later explains that many students he attended school with discontinued their education. This seems consistent with the message all the students in this video mention, where they note the high attrition rate of high school students. They also argue for further extension of this high school project into a higher educational institution for them to attend the level of *licenciatura*. All the students interviewed spoke about their school, the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural.

Joven estudiante canta: "En mi generación de la secundaria terminamos 28 alumnos entre hombres y mujeres. La mayoría ya no va a la escuela y muchos prefirieron trabajar. ¿Somos 3 o 4 los que seguimos estudiando, pero yo también empiezo a preguntarme, todavía continuaré con mis estudios? El problema son los recursos económicos. Pero si tuviéramos una licenciatura como esta preparatoria que tenemos en Santa Fe probablemente de los 28 que salimos de la secundaria más de la mitad todavía estaría estudiando. Me gustaría seguir estudiando arte y patrimonio. Pero como me queda lejos la escuela, pienso que no voy a poder continuar con mis estudios. Muchos amigos de la infancia han emigrado a los Estados Unidos. Algunos trabajan en la comunidad y otros como jornaleros en las bodegas de Quiroga.

[Student sings, "In my high school generation, we finished 28 students between men and women. Most don't go to school anymore, and many prefer to work. There are 3 or 4 of us still studying, but I am also starting to wonder, will I continue my studies? The problem is economic resources. But if we had a degree like this high school we have in Santa Fe, probably more than half of the 28 of us who graduated from high school would still be studying. I want to continue studying art and heritage. But since school is far away, I don't think I will be able to continue my studies. Many of my childhood friends have emigrated to the United States. Some work in the community, and others work as day laborers in the bodegas of Quiroga.] (artifact, Jan 22, 2023)

This quote provides an idea of the migration patterns that are present in Santa Fe de la Laguna. The words by the student help us put a face to the effects on migration on families and among the youth. When reading about binational immigration, the voice of those who stay in the communities can become diluted in the statistics such as this one where, according to the Consejo Nacional de Población [National Population Council of México; CONAPO], Michoacán did experience significant migration between 2015 and 2020, with a net migration loss of approximately 28,000 people (CONAPO, 2021). The high number of people who migrated out of Michoacán suggests that various factors likely drove this trend. These could include economic, political, social, or even personal reasons. For instance, individuals might have left the state due to a lack of job opportunities or better economic prospects in other countries. Additionally, some people might have left the state to escape

violence or insecurity in their communities (INEGI, 2020). The last quote allowed us to see how education is viewed to mitigate the negative effects of early migration and provide students with a sense of choice and autonomy. The land's distribution and allocation are an axis of social organization and are closely tied to the notions of autonomy among the Purépecha people. There is an awareness that the land is desired and threatened by outsiders, and the community values the protection and defense of their land.

Theme 8: Authentic Education

The community of Santa Fe de la Laguna holds a profound and involved cosmological perspective that is intricately intertwined with its surrounding natural environment. Their unique worldview manifests their Indigenous heritage, which is deeply rooted in their traditions, beliefs, and practices. This deep connection to the land has been passed down through generations and has played a pivotal role in shaping their migration patterns and the current territorial disputes that they face. Purépecha language and culture and the specific community practices of Santa Fe de la Laguna serve as a structure to understand how in creating a program that pays close attention to the authentic characteristics of the community, elevates the notions of collective autonomy. During various conversations, interviews, and focus groups, the participants shared their experiences in the school and stressed the importance of sustaining the project for the community. However, they expressed concerns about funding sources and state requirements that they must meet to prevent the school from disappearing. This is especially important as external community pressures mount to maintain accreditation and comply with the Universidad Michoacana's

standards. This program has been recognized as having unique characteristics, as mentioned by Guillermo, one of the community members who participated in the study:

No solo en el estado de Michoacán sino en toda la república Mexicana porque eh pues eh, al parecer no hay algo similar en otras partes. ¿El sistema lo que nos ofrece es una educación estandarizada al sistema capitalista y a sus propósitos, no? Y creo que esta es una escuela única que nos permite abordar la educación de manera distinta y por lo mismo no la queremos dejar caer, ni la vamos a abandonar. Queremos ver las maneras de hacer entender a las autoridades universitarias de la Universidad Michoacana, que este es un proyecto que vale la pena, y sí bien es un tanto distinto, es algo único, algo que vale la pena sobre todo en el contexto indígena.

[Not only in the state of Michoacán but in the whole Mexican Republic because, apparently, there is nothing similar in other parts. The system offers us an education standardized to the capitalist system and its purposes. And I believe that this is a unique school that allows us to approach education differently, and for this reason, we do not want to let it fall, nor are we going to abandon it. We want to see the ways to make the university authorities of the Universidad Michoacana understand that this is a worthwhile project. Although it is somewhat different, it is something unique, something worthwhile, especially in the Indigenous context.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022).

This statement recognizes the program's uniqueness, which stands out among all others in México. As it challenges the models derived from capitalist structures, it invites the option to re-think education and how valuable of an opportunity it presents. Furthermore, it states the need to communicate this project to external entities such as the Universidad Michoacana.

Another example of this idea of authentic education emerges within the instruction in the classrooms of this high school program. This next quote is the transcription that took place in one of the classroom observations when I was collecting data in the community. The teacher who is a teacher of Lectura y Redacción, a class largely focused on Spanish grammar and literature, guides the students to understand phonemes' functions and how

meaning is constructed. Her approach is highly dialogic and elevates orality as the primary way of processing information:

Maestra M: No! Nosotros construimos una palabra, precisamente decíamos que tenía una huella psicológica. ¿No? Que tenemos al significante, el significado. (Espacio inaudible 2 segundos) Vamos a leer y a repasar un poquito lo que habíamos preparado la clase pasada. ¿Sí? ¿Nos van a ayudar... quienes son los muchachos que nos estaban ayudando? Que nos ayude este compañero. Vas a exponer. ¿Vamos escuchando? Los que no tienen material vamos a escuchar. Y vamos a poner atención. (Se escuchan risas de estudiantes) ¿escuchamos? Empezamos. Vamos a escucharlo porque cada párrafo que nos lea, nosotros lo vamos a estar deconstruyendo y vamos a estar construyendo el significado, ¿sí? Y vamos a estar también para nosotros comprendiendo. Y nos vamos a estar contextualizando. Si ahorita estábamos todos indecisos de qué estábamos hablando, al menos sabemos que es comprender. ¿Sí? ¿Qué es leer? ¿Leer? Vamos a escuchar al compañero y vamos contextualizando.

[Teacher M: No! We built a word; we were just saying it has a psychological imprint. Right? (Inaudible space of 2 seconds) We will read and review a little of what we had prepared last class. Yes? Are you going to help us... who are the youth who were helping us? Let this classmate help us. You are going to present. Shall we listen? Those who don't have material are going to listen. And let's pay attention. (Students laugh.) Shall we listen? Let's start. We are going to listen to him because in every paragraph he reads, we are going to deconstruct it, and we are going to construct the meaning, yes? And we are also going to be understanding. And we are going to be contextualizing. If we were all undecided about what we were talking about right now, at least we know what understanding is. Yes? What is reading? Reading? We are going to listen to our classmates and contextualize.] (Mary's classroom observation, June 1, 2022)

This classroom discussion and presentation of concepts by the teacher is highly illustrative of the decolonizing approach that the teacher took. While she is delivering a state-mandated class, *Lectura y Redacción*—the equivalent of a Spanish Language Arts class—the delivery, through dialogue and conversation, elevated oral language processing. Furthermore, her concepts are problematized and analyzed through a deconstructive lens where psychology serves as an analytical framework to understand grammar. The instructional approach is consistent with the findings related to the articulation of an

educación auténtica or education for comunero youth, in that Purépecha values are weaved into the lessons even when the lessons are tied to the larger state program.

Another example of how Purépecha language is used to teach grammatical concepts in Castilian—as the community refers to the Spanish language—is seen in how this teacher deconstructed the concept of help.

Maestra: Pues vamos a escribirla como la estamos pronunciando. En Castellano. Bueno y a donde vamos es precisamente porque nuestro tema se relaciona con otras disciplinas y porque también el símbolo y como pronunciamos otras palabras es muy importante dentro de la comprensión. ¿Sí ven la relación? Si yo diría ... me dicen "Jarho..." ¿Cómo podría escribir Jarhoajpikua?

Voz de estudiantes:

Voz masculina: Jarho

Voz femenina: G E

Maestra M: ¿Una G? Una G

Voz de estudiantes deliberando: ¿G? ¿J?

Voz de femenina: La "J" La jota, la jota

Maestra M: ¿O equis (x)?

Voz de estudiantes deliberando

Maestra: La J—ya estoy utilizando fonemas aquí. "Jarho..." Ja? Jar?

Voz femenina: R, H,

Maestra: Jara.... ¿Cómo sería? A ver quién me investiga cómo se escribe ayudar, a ver si aparece en una de las ilustraciones Purépechas. A ver busquen si encuentran por ahí la palabra escrita, mejor que cómo le estamos haciendo. Pero bueno ya estamos construyendo algo, ya estamos con los fonemas, estamos precisamente dándole un poquito más contenido. Ya estamos con los fonemas y estamos viendo que Jarho, Jarhu...

Voz de estudiante masculino: Jarho-a

Repite Maestra: Jarho-a-pe-kua, Jarho, ¿no iría una p aquí?

Voz de estudiante masculino (1): No, una T

Voz de estudiante masculino (2): No, una P

Maestra M: (escribe en el pizarrón)

J/A/R/H/O/A/P/E/R/A/K/U/A—así?

[Teacher: Well, let's write it as we pronounce it. In Spanish. Well, where we are going is precisely because our subject is related to other disciplines and also because the symbol and how we pronounce other words is very important in the understanding. Do you see the relationship? If I would say ... they tell me "Jarho..." how could I write Jarhoajpikua?

Student voices:
 Male voice: Jarho
 Female voice: G E
 Teacher M: One G? One G
 Student voice deliberating: G? J?
 Female voice: La "J" La jota, la jota
 Teacher M: Or equis (x)?
 (Student voices deliberating)
 Teacher: The J—I'm already using phonemes here. "Jarho..." Ja? Jar?
 Female voice: R, H,
 Teacher: Jara.... How would it be? Let's see who can find out how to write "ayudar," let's see if it appears in one of the Purépecha illustrations. Let's see if you can find the written word, better than how we are doing it. But well, we are already building something, we are already with the phonemes, we are precisely giving it a little more content. We are already working with the phonemes and we are seeing that Jarho, Jarhu....
 Male student voice: Jarho-a
 Teacher repeats: Jarho-a-pe-kua, Jarho, wouldn't a P go here?
 Male student voice (1): No, a T
 Male student voice (2): No, a P
 Teacher M: (writes on the board)
 J/A/R/H/O/A/A/P/E/R/A/K/U/A. - like this?]
 (Mary's classroom observation, June 1, 2022)

During a Lectura y Redacción class, maestra Mary used Purépecha to help her students better understand a concept. Through a dialogue with her students, she was able to create a community-like atmosphere, which helped to enhance their understanding beyond the text. In addition to this, maestra Mary used the example of Jarhoajpikua to encourage a collective analysis of the concept of community reciprocity within the Santa Fe de la Laguna community. This approach to teaching allowed her to address symbolic meanings, community responsibility, and grammatical functions in the Spanish language. As one of many examples of the high school program's approach to education, it highlights the intercultural experience for both students and stakeholders.

Theme 9: Collective Compromise

Real transnational and trans-institutional cooperation emerged in the conversations throughout this study. It often appeared when participants noted how cooperation helps decrease marginalized communities' economic and social vulnerabilities with an explicit mention of Santa Fe de la Laguna. For example, the community members involved in the El Jardín Etnobiológico project recognize the importance of creating a sustainable and self-sufficient community that can provide for its own needs without relying on external institutions or market forces. This finding advances the idea that promoting education tailored to the community's needs and creating job opportunities aligned with the local culture and values can decrease its vulnerabilities and achieve higher economic and social autonomy.

The theme of effective Transnational and Trans-Institutional Cooperation calls for support owed to the community. One of the community participants in this study, Dr. Guillermo, works in ethnobotanical studies at the Universidad Michoacana of San Nicolás de Hidalgo. He is currently developing work around the El Jardín Etnobiológico project in the Santa Fe de la Laguna community.

Recordemos que aquí hay una deuda histórica. Los Purépechas sobre todo de Santa Fe fueron los que construyeron con sus manos el antiguo colegio de San Nicolás que fue a sede de la antigua Universidad Michoacana. Y Vasco de Quiroga dejó en sus ordenanzas y por escrito que para la gente de Santa Fe no habría ningún cobro por su educación. Y creo que esta educación tiene que ser de acuerdo a las necesidades que hay esta comunidad y no tratarla de forzar a los estándares y el sistema neoliberal porque verdaderamente no es algo que se necesite.

[Let us remember that there is a historical debt here. The Purépechas, especially from Santa Fe, were the ones who built with their own hands the old college of San Nicolás, which was the seat of the old University of Michoacán. And Vasco de Quiroga left in his ordinances and in writing that for the people of Santa Fe there

would be no charge for their education. And I believe that this education has to be according to the needs of this community and not try to force it to the standards and the neoliberal system because it is not really something that is needed.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

This conversation segment is centered around encouraging collaboration between different groups or entities between the Purépecha nation and state-federal nations such as Michoacán and México. The goal is to model and embody real transnational cooperation between these groups. Nonetheless, the community has experienced the effects resulting from dismissiveness on the part of these institutional bodies which has escalated adverse educational conditions for their students.

The reference to the historical debt concerns the direct participation the Purépecha community in Santa Fe de la Laguna had in the construction of the Colegio de San Nicolás, which was founded in 1540. The original construction—The Colegio de San Nicolás—was built originally in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, and commissioned by Vasco de Quiroga, who indicated in his testament that every person from Santa Fe would be entitled to free education. The name of this institution has changed over time, and during the 19th century it was called the Colegio Primitivo y Nacional de San Nicolás de Hidalgo. In the 20th century, this institution was absorbed by what is now the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo (Díaz Guevara, 2020; Peredo, 2006).

Dr. Guillermo observed that the way the education in the schools is articulated needs to be rooted and designed with the community's needs in mind. Furthermore, he challenges the imposition of an education circumscribed by the existing national standards as a product of a neoliberal agenda. The cooperation that is required is juxtaposed with the freedom that is being demanded for curriculum development.

El sistema lo que nos ofrece es una educación estandarizada al sistema capitalista y a sus propósitos, no? Y creo que esta es una escuela única que nos permite abordar la educación de manera distinta y por lo mismo no la queremos dejar caer, ni la vamos a abandonar. Queremos ver las maneras de hacer entender a las autoridades universitarias de la Universidad Michoacana, que este es un proyecto que vale la pena, y si bien es un tanto distinto, es algo único, algo que vale la pena sobre todo en el contexto indígena.

[The system offers us an education standardized to the capitalist system and its purposes. And this is a unique school that allows us to approach education differently; for this reason, we do not want to let it fall, nor will we abandon it. We want to see the ways to make the university authorities of the Universidad Michoacana understand that this is a worthwhile project. Although it is somewhat different, it is something unique, something worthwhile, especially in the Indigenous context.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022).

The way cooperation is understood is meant to lay the foundation for autonomy, yet the community is demanding the economic support of institutions working across communities. In this case, the transnational cooperation needed is framed as an Indigenous Purépecha-to-state cooperation. The conversation is not limited by national or institutional boundaries, which means it can involve various actors, including government agencies, organizations, and community groups. The topic of collaboration and communication is seen as important and could be part of a broader effort to promote cooperation and coordination across different sectors and organizations.

Theme 10: Change in Collective Experiences

The ideas related to change were highly conceptual and tied to a shift in perspective. This change calls for a redefinition of what quality of life entails beyond the superficial benefits of the money that could be earned by leaving the community. These are the words of Elena, a community member who is active in her role in advocacy through journalism.

Porque ya hay muchos profesionistas formados en este sistema dentro de la comunidad y ahora lo que necesitamos es darle la vuelta a todo eso para realmente

aterrizar todo ese trabajo que se hizo afuera en empleos de la comunidad que nos ayuden a fortalecer todo lo que es la cosmovisión con la identidad, etc. Muchos jóvenes se van atraídos por el dinero por las oportunidades que dan las ciudades, pero yo estoy convencido que también hay muchos que están conscientes que hay otra forma de hacer las cosas y que vale mucho la pena.

[Because there are already many professionals trained in this system within the community, and now we need to turn all that around to land all that work done outside in jobs in the community to help us strengthen all that is the worldview with identity, etc. Many young people are attracted by the money and the opportunities that cities offer, but I am convinced that many know there is another way of doing things and that it is worthwhile.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022)

This quote by Elena recognizes the presence of members of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna and their post-secondary studies and professional activities beyond the community. She notes how this should be “turned around” and brought back to Santa Fe de la Laguna. Furthermore, she mentions how these skills should be tied to the Purépecha cosmovision and strengthen identity. It is important to mention as well that the construction of identity in this context is largely defined by those ideas of comunalidad that were previously mentioned in findings 1 and 2. Finally, this quote related to the idea of change and a shift in perspective necessary to redefine what quality of life entails beyond material benefits. This idea of valuing community and identity over material gain is consistent with the theme of change and redefining what is truly important in life.

Finding 4: Kaxúmbekua/Creating an Education for Comunero Youth Based on Honor

This fourth finding answers the last research question: What are the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? This finding concludes that the collective experiences of stakeholders and students at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna result from the structured change the school offers while revitalizing and elevating

community values in the lives of students and stakeholders. Providing access to education for Indigenous comunero youth, the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna contributes to individuals' economic empowerment. It fosters a sense of cultural continuity and community empowerment. The program helps lower economic stress for individuals and their communities, as economic stressors are a consistent concern among the different stakeholders. Through the existence of this educational opportunity, students and families have the potential to attain heightened financial stability. Subsequently, this newfound financial stability can initiate a positive ripple effect of improved community outcomes, better living conditions, and an overall elevated quality of life for the students and their loved ones. This significant discovery provides further reinforcement to the results of the data analysis that pertain to the three previous research questions. In essence, the findings confirm the need to articulate systems of support that ripple into the various groups of stakeholders, reinforcing the well-being of the community in this transnational context.

Theme 11: Impact on Community Life

During the interviews, the theme of impact was prominent. It shed light on the experiences that occurred both before and after the school was established. There was a recognition that the school adds to the community's health by expanding the possibility of improved quality of life. The previous findings showed that more than 60% of the participants noted the primary reason the school was created was to prevent the incidence of early migration among the youth of the community. Moreover, early migration into other communities in Michoacán such as Quiroga or Morelia elevates economic stressors and

further exposure to drug use among teens. The frequency of these concerns among the participants is important, as it could attest for the wider community preoccupations related to the effects of family separation.

Some of the family members interviewed narrated the reasons behind the desire of the community to have a school. Even when the city of Quiroga is less than 10 minutes away from the community, doing this commute implied economic stress to the families and the students. The presence of the school meant economic support for them but also a sense of safety. In the next quote, we have the words of Zule, a community member and aunt of one of the students who had previously attended the school. She addresses the economic reasons behind attrition rates among high school students. She is referring to moments prior to the existence of the school.

Pues porque los muchachos ya no querían ir a escuela al Quiroga. Y los maestros de aquí, o un doctor, no recuerdo, quien impulsó hacer esta escuela.... Se hablara...Y que los muchachos pudieran ir y sentirse pues confiados... cómo te diré? Y no ir a Quiroga.

[Well, because the kids didn't want to go to school at the Quiroga anymore. And the teachers here, or a doctor, I don't remember, who had the impulse to make this school.... They were talking about And that the kids could go and feel confident... how can I tell you? And not go to Quiroga.] (Zule, focus group, June 17, 2022)

The families residing in Santa Fe de la Laguna have shared their compelling reasons for wanting to establish a school in their community. As mentioned by Zule and Matías, who are store owners, and Elena who works in the Radio Purépecha, despite being situated within a short distance of less than ten minutes from the nearby city of Quiroga, commuting to attend school in the city has put considerable financial pressure on families and students alike. Participants like Zule and Matías mentioned not only the costs of transportation but

also uniforms, books, even notebooks that students need to buy within the schools in towns like Quiroga.

The establishment of a school within the community has brought much-needed economic assistance to the families, making education more accessible and affordable. Furthermore, the presence of the school has also given rise to a sense of security within the community, as parents are reassured that their children are not traveling long distances to attend school, thereby reducing the potential risks associated with travel. Establishing a school in Santa Fe de la Laguna has also fostered a sense of safety and community. It has created opportunities for social and economic growth and development, benefiting the community. One example can be seen in the broader participation of high school youth in the community events such as Día de los Muertos or the Corpus Christi, when the community receives large numbers of tourists. Students participate in commercial endeavors or organizing activities.

One important aspect to note is the complexity of the student community's life circumstances. In the quote below, one of the community members, Elena, who is part of the Radio Purépecha project, explained:

Porque no solo asisten personas este solteras, también asisten pequeñas madres de familia, a veces madres solteras, que por ya no poderse transportar a otra ciudad ya no pueden cargar con sus bebés entonces al estar aquí dentro de la comunidad pueden seguir asistiendo

[Because not only single people attend, but also young mothers, sometimes single mothers, who can no longer travel to another city, can no longer carry their babies, so by being here in the community, they can continue to attend.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022)

In the school, there exists a steady enrollment of students who have adult responsibilities. Not only are some of them parents and have their own families to support, but they are also charged with specific community roles they must attend. However, there are other ways in which change is identified and able to impact people within and outside the community as the leaders and teachers at the school see that the success of this educational program can be a catalyst of change for people living in other areas, Indigenous communities, and larger cities. In the words of Guillermo, *“Y como dicen, si hay esos resquicios, esas porosidades, dentro del sistema capitalista pero hay que trabajar en ello para poder jalar gente, convencer de que sí hay posibilidades de un mundo distinto.”* [And as they say, yes, there are those loopholes, those porosities, within the capitalist system, but we must work on it to pull people, to convince them that there are possibilities for a different world.] (Guillermo’s interview, May 24, 2022). At another point in the conversation, he added, *“¿pues es la visión indígena la que nos puede proporcionar esa salida no?”* [“well, it's the Indigenous vision that can provide us with that alternative, isn't it?”]. The transformational possibilities that are mentioned by this participant are more concerned with the internal shifts in vision individual people experience as they open their awareness to an Indigenous way of life. While previous quotes referred to pedagogical or transformation in their school systems, the reference here alludes more to the way this process of self-decolonization manifests. In his closing remarks, Guillermo acknowledges the school's role in the community's impact. His interview concluded with these words:

Porque ya hay muchos profesionistas formados en este sistema dentro de la comunidad y ahora lo que necesitamos es darle la vuelta a todo eso para realmente aterrizar todo ese trabajo que se hizo afuera en empleos de la comunidad que nos ayuden a fortalecer todo lo que es la cosmovisión con la identidad, etc. Muchos

jóvenes se van atraídos por el dinero por las oportunidades que dan las ciudades, pero yo estoy convencido que también hay muchos que están conscientes que hay otra forma de hacer las cosas y que vale mucho la pena.

[Because there are already many professionals trained in this system within the community, and now we need to turn all that around to land all that work done outside in jobs in the community to help us strengthen all that is the worldview with identity, etc. Many young people are attracted by the money and the opportunities that cities offer, but I am convinced that many know there is another way of doing things and that it is worthwhile.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2024)

This last quote highlights the perceived cycles of the interactions of outside institutional practice and the need to redirect that potential back into the community. During the interview, this expert in the community in the field of environmental research, noted that Santa Fe de la Laguna comprises many experts in various professional fields. The last quote also presents the concern families have due to the city's appeal and how this separation affects the future continuation of language and culture. For this participant, tradition and cosmovision are critical aspects of students' education that should not be undermined or lost in the larger curriculum. The interview revealed there is a need to harness the expertise and knowledge within the Santa Fe de la Laguna community to create more job opportunities for the people in the community. Despite the allure of urban areas, many young people are aware of the value of their traditional ways and are willing to invest in it. The school established in the community promotes traditional cosmovision and ensures that the community's values are passed on to future generations. Overall, the participants' perspectives underscore the importance of community involvement in shaping the community's future. Transnationalism is illustrated by the ways these conversations brought in the need to further support the professionalization of the community while keeping values and comunalidad alive. These connections to tradition and the future of the

community play an important role in the social purpose of the school. This is the focus of the next theme.

Theme 12: Social Purpose of the School

The theme of social purpose emerged in the interviews as participants elaborated on the need to elevate the quality of life, the recognition of their historical rights, and the importance of having a site that fosters transnational participation. Much of the social purpose of the school was built on the idea of maintaining a legacy and practices that form part of the integrity of the community.

Social purpose and the impact on community life present an interdependence. Traditional cosmovision and community values are critical aspects of the student's education that should not be lost in the more extensive curriculum. The school ensures that these values are passed on to future generations and underscores the importance of community involvement in shaping the community's future. Despite the allure of urban areas, many young people are aware of the value of their traditional ways and are willing to invest in it. Overall, the participants' perspectives highlight the school's role in promoting traditional values and the importance of community involvement in preserving cultural heritage and shaping the community's future.

As discussed by Guillermo when talking about the importance of the school, he mentions that the importance resides "*en la formación de gente que al final de cuentas preserve la identidad, los principios, la cosmovision.*" [in the formation of people who, at the end of the day, preserve the identity, the principles, the cosmovision.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022). Guilleromos' statement further emphasizes the importance of the

school in forming individuals who can maintain the community's identity, principles, and worldview. Preserving a legacy and practices is highlighted as a necessity tied to the idea of survivance. The goals are academic, but they also entail carrying the values and history of the community, ensuring they are preserved over time. The school plays a crucial role in this process by educating and socializing young people through shaping comunero identity to embrace and embody these values and practices.

The study revealed that four out of five faculty members expressed a desire to preserve the school's connection to its historical legacy, specifically referencing Vasco de Quiroga and his testament to the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. As previously noted, the community places great importance on recognizing and honoring the contributions of the Purépechas, particularly those from Santa Fe, who played a significant role in building the College of San Nicolás, which eventually became the esteemed University of Michoacán de San Nicolás de Hidalgo. The people of Santa Fe dedicated their labor to establish this institution, and the testament and written works of Vasco de Quiroga ensured that they would receive free education as the community moved forward.

This is a critical piece that needs to be acknowledged. It serves as a central argument for the support that the community demands of the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo and the state educational entities, as the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna are historically owed a free education as stipulated in the testament of Quiroga. It is also important to remember that in the state of Michoacán this university is in charge of creating the curriculum for intercultural secondary programs in Indigenous communities. In his testament, Vasco de Quiroga manifested ideas of communal property that were

characteristic of the social and political institutions he fostered in Michoacán but more evidenced in the town of Santa Fe de la Laguna than in other communities, as observed by Peredo (2006) about the project of Pueblos Hospitales in the following quote:

As for the economy, in Utopia there are no private owners but usufructuaries. Agriculture and some crafts of common utility are tasks that everyone has to learn and practice from an early age; in the case of agriculture, in biannual shifts, with a six-hour workday. The fruits and objects produced are distributed equitably, so that no one is in need. There are no luxuries. Everyone dresses modestly and similarly. At substance, Quiroga establishes the same for the towns of Santa Fe, with the caveat that the communism is more evident in Moro. (p. 90)

Fast forward into the fall of the Spanish colonial period (1521–1810), and the consolidation of México as a republic leads to the different projects of modernization. Among these was the interest to develop a national identity through education. One of the landmark ideas behind this attempt and first of its kind was the Proyecto Tarasco. The project initiated on July 19, 1939. It started as a course for native teacher from Paracho, Michoacán. There were 20 participants when it began, and the teachers were tasked to teach Purépecha students. Prior bilingual projects like the Proyecto Tarasco in Michoacán became the experiment for a national project. The students and teachers worked on the drawing of the letters to create a collective *periódico mural*—translating to literacy methods, story writing, and other materials—in Tarascan. After the learning took place, there followed literacy missions in different Tarascan communities and literacy classes for students who lived in the boarding schools. In the morning there were classes for children and at night there was language instruction for adults. In addition, because some of the Indigenous people were reluctant to go to school, they were also taught in the streets and in private homes.

As part of this project, brochures were developed that explained the Tarascan alphabet in Spanish. Other literature included guides such as the *Disposiciones legales que tiene que saber todo campesino*. In addition, several health bulletins have recently been published, as well as a series of advice on the cultivation of corn and wheat. It was their intention to continue the work of the missions, village by village. Once a village was literate, study groups would be established under the direction of itinerant promoters to continue the dissemination of useful knowledge to the Indigenous people. The project took off in 1940. Prior to that year, it had been at a very experimental stage. Believing that literacy in the native language is the most important means for the cultural development of Indigenous groups, the Proyecto Tarasco proposed the following research and literacy plan for the Tarascan area, hoping that the work will serve as a model of rural education and a general solution in all of México.

The selection of a standard language will be based on the dialectological and anthropological data collected by the body of researchers, with the common agreement of the representatives of the various peoples. Far from being difficult to use two slightly divergent forms (local and standard) of the language, their use will have the advantage of making each student fully aware of the problem of social communication and, as a consequence, will lead to a deeper understanding of the problems of communal cooperation in general. Moreover, it will make him understand the basic principle that differences in language do not imply differences in social level or value. It is likely that the use of a standard language over the course of a few years is likely to tend to the natural leveling out of dialectal and social differences.

No student will be forced to give up his or her native language for Spanish or to use it at the expense of the knowledge of Spanish that he or she deems necessary and desirable. The general result of this procedure will be a cultural advancement and broader integration of the Indigenous communities and, at the same time, an effective and deeper contact with national life. (artifact, Proyecto Tarasco, 1940)

Projects like these left an imprint among the Purépecha peoples of Michoacán, as they were targeted for piloting programs such as this one. Moving into a more recent context, the purpose of the school is rooted in need to break from power dynamics that have affected the use of land for the comuneros of Santa Fe de la Laguna. In the statement given by one of the community members, who is also an active member of the Universidad Michoacana, Guillermo notes:

Bueno, todo esto de la educación parte de los movimientos de lucha y la defensa por el territorio. Ha sido una constante con los vecinos de la ciudad de Quiroga que están queriendo apoderarse de los terrenos no. Y Quiroga es uno de polos económicos de la región. Y sin duda pues mucho dinero sale de las vacas y del ganado. Y ahí en Quiroga hay mucha venta de artesanías de piel, pues de todo lo que proviene del ganado. Entonces pues necesitan pastos para tener ese ganado y pues al invadir las tierras de Santa Fe. De 1979 esto dio lugar a una lucha muy emblemática donde hubo muertos y finalmente a raíz de esos movimientos, es que también surge la necesidad de una educación contextualizada.

[Well, all this education is part of the movements of struggle and the defense of the territory. It has been a constant with the neighbors of Quiroga, who are trying to take over the land. And Quiroga is one of the economic poles of the region. And without a doubt, much money comes from the cows and cattle. And there in Quiroga, there is a lot of sale of leather crafts, of everything that comes from the cattle. So, they needed pastures to keep the cattle, and when they invaded the lands of Santa Fe, they invaded. From 1979 this gave rise to a very emblematic struggle where there were deaths, and finally, because of these movements, the need for a contextualized education also arose.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

This statement attests to various issues that are dictating the need to activate educational spaces that would serve to reinforce the education of the students, as it relates to the reinforcement of communal values among the students. In this quote, Guillermo highlights the struggles for land autonomy, tying it to the need to create politically responsive forms of education. Furthermore, the connection to the memory of coloniality is present in this quote as it encapsulates the memory of occupation, displacement, and land struggles of

Indigenous communities in light of the hegemonic hierarchies that resulted from the colonial occupation of the Spaniards in México from 1521 to 1810.

Theme 13: Changing by Protecting Purépecha Language and Values

This study concludes with a reminder of the school's original purpose: to preserve and pass on Purépecha ancestral teachings to future generations. The ideas that were shared in this conversation have had a significant impact, prompting even those from other communities or the city of Morelia to reconsider their relationship with their language and culture. The following quote by this community participant highlights that advocating for change and the resurgence of traditions is not limited to the local community:

Por decirlo así, yo tengo más o menos desde el 2013 que tomé clases de Purépecha. Y bueno de ahí fue que me interesé mucho en esta cultura y me di cuenta de que es un mundo muy diferente de lado indígena que vale la pena conocerlo, porque lo que nos enseñan en la ciudad en este sistema neoliberal, ¿simplemente nos utilizan de mano de obra para las empresas no? Y no hacen personas libres. No pretenden hacer gente con pensamiento crítico, simplemente uno más que va trabaja y lo que quieren es que uno se regrese a su casa, se tome su cerveza enfrente del televisor, ¡que grite gooooo! Y al otro día van a trabajar. Entonces vale la pena intentar ser una persona diferente. Creo que de lado Indígena hay principios colectivos. Principios de ayuda mutua, vale la pena porque si pensamos en una sociedad distinta a esta que nos está llevando a un precipicio, ¿pues es la visión indígena la que nos puede proporcionar esa salida no?

[So to speak, I have taken Purépecha classes since 2013. And well from there, I became very interested in this culture, and I realized that it is a very different world from the Indigenous side that is worth knowing because what they teach us in the city in this neoliberal system, they use us as labor for the companies, don't they? And they do not make free people. They don't try to make people with critical thinking, just one more person who goes to work, and what they want is that you go home, drink your beer in front of the TV, and shout gooooo! And the next day, you go to work. So, it's worth trying to be a different person. I believe that on the Indigenous side, there are collective principles. Principles of mutual help it is worthwhile because if we think of a society different from this one that is taking us to a precipice, then it is the Indigenous vision that can provide us with that way out, right?] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

The advocacy for change in this context is reaffirmed by the observation that a change in how life is conceived and lived is necessary for the survival not only of the community but also for all of humanity. As this community member mentioned, *“Entonces vale la pena intentar ser una persona diferente. Creo que de lado Indígena hay principios colectivos.”* [So, it is worth trying to be a different person. I believe that on the Indigenous side, there are collective principles.] This participant acknowledges his outsider/insider position and the opportunity to reinvent himself with a new set of values that in his view are liberatory practices. This liberation is viewed as a way to confront a neoliberal system and its degrading consequences to the ordinary citizen, and the idea of self-reinvention is brought up. Furthermore, he presents the need for a transformational change that elicits critical thinking in its community members beyond life around the motions of work and instant gratification. Clearly, for this community member, this Indigenous vision is a way out of structured suffering and a way into an authentic living cycle that honors respect of the land, nature, and life not only for the members of the community, but it is also a vision of liberation for people that are not tied to the Purépecha lineage. In essence, generational/ancestral practices are centered in this previous commentary, but the importance of generational knowledge and participation is captured in the next quote. In it, we can hear the words by Elena explaining how The Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna presents an opportunity to foster the generational knowledge of the community. In doing so, there is an awareness that the school is different from other schools, as mentioned in the next conversation by Elena, a young woman who works in the Radio Purépecha across the high school:

No sé qué tan diferente sea a otras escuelas. Lo que sí sé que es muy diferente es porque esta preparatoria no solo es una escuela, prácticamente es una familia porque los maestros que ahorita en la preparatoria son aparte de maestros son amigos son personas de la comunidad que vieron crecer a los niños que quizás estos estudiantes ya sea su vecino, ya sea su sobrino aparte de ser una preparatoria es una gran familia y no sé qué tanto tenga de diferente a otras pero lo sí sé es que es un ambiente muy familiar el que está en la prepa.

[I need to find out how different it is from other schools. What I do know is that it is very different is because this high school is not only a school, it is practically a family because the teachers that are now in the high school are not only teachers but also friends, they are people from the community that saw the children grow up and maybe these students are already your neighbor, maybe your nephew, besides being a high school it is a big family, and I don't know how different it is from others but what I do know is that it is a very familiar atmosphere in the high school.]
(Elena's interview, May 17, 2022)

The different sections of the previous quote by Elena yielded valuable information related to the role of community participation in the development of the school. Even if the participants were not instructors in the school, they knew who is teaching and what the function of this high school was to care for each student's education as if they were a direct family member. The acknowledgment that an essential function of the school is to see the “children grow” is worth noting, as it speaks to the maturity process the school fosters. Furthermore, the school's culture is emphasized as it is tied to the familiarity students encounter daily. The Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna plays a crucial role in preserving the ancestral teachings of the Purépecha people and promoting their language and culture. This promotion of ancestral teachings was noted in the conversations with the school and community leaders that participated in these interviews and focus groups. Through change, it has inspired individuals from other communities to reevaluate their relationship with their cultural heritage, emphasizing the need for change to ensure the survival of the community and all humanity.

Conclusion

This research focuses on transnational education in Santa Fe de la Laguna, with a particular emphasis on the significant role of Purépecha values in fostering the success and well-being of students within their community (see Figure 5 below). At the center of the findings are the people that make everything happen people shaped by ancestral practices and values. This iteration of transnational dynamics aims at reducing the phenomenon of early migration that rendered harm to students and families, and this is precisely because the school project reflected the tremendous investment the community has in their youth. Whether the school increases stronger bonds to the community or ensures that they safely navigate larger cities or binational migration, reinforcing language and Purépecha values strengthens the whole community as young men and women are seen integral to the survivance of this Purépecha community in Michoacán.

At the core of transnational education resides a shared vision of what a proper standard of life entails. The teachers at the school, like maestra Mary, bridge on a daily basis the academic responsibility they carry, and they never forget who the students are and why they are in their classroom. The Purépecha concept of Sési Irekáni is put into motion by factors that allow a school to elevate the living conditions of its students and, in turn, directly impact the overall community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The internal motions that result in this kind of school wellness trigger a cycle of delayed migration, community participation, and further reinforcement of Purépecha values. Beyond the findings, there is an evident manifestation of clarity of action on the part of the stakeholders and a common orchestration of ideas that resulted in this school project.

This chapter presented the major themes that emerged and inform the thematic axes related to the dynamics revolving around the transnational phenomena that have been examined in this study. Overall, the historical evolution of Santa Fe de la Laguna is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including cultural traditions, social dynamics, and political developments. Historical memory is alive in the comments made by the participants in the study; it makes it clear that there is a deliberate decision not to forget. The campesino movement and land distribution policies during the Cardenas administration were pivotal events that impacted the community and continue to shape its development today.

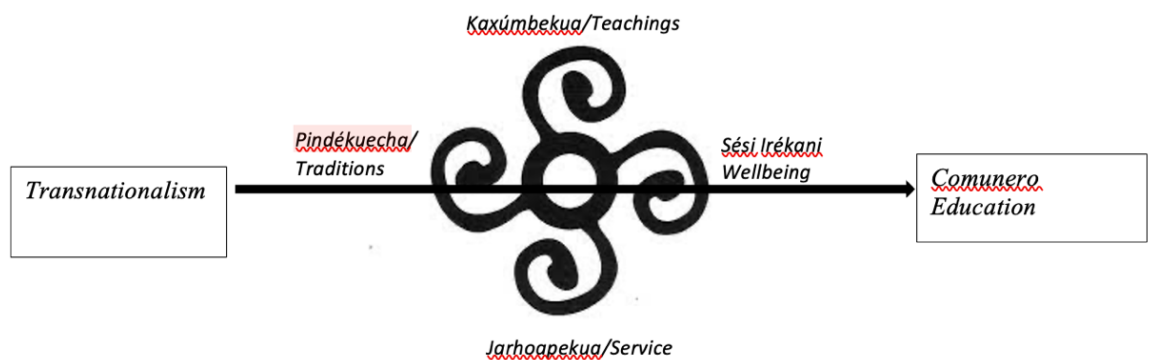
Through the words of the community members and families expressing the pain of seeing their youth not cared for the way they care for them, one can understand the urgency of saving the school. The conception of a school was motivated by the economic and social stress from early separation caused by migration. The decisive factor that supported the establishment and maintenance of this high school was the economic effect resulting from the transition experienced by its students from attending school in Santa Fe de la Laguna to accessing schools in other communities or cities.

When reading the interviews, it is key to remember that it is people—mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters—who experience the separation. When participants expressed that there was an over exposure to illegal substances, families are mourning for someone they might have lost to street drugs or the drug cartel. The school was intended to curb early emigration among the community's youth, reduce health-associated risks, and decrease economic stressors. One of the goals was to prevent situations such as access to illegal substances and the dissolution of family units. This argument is supported by the

words from community members who mention the reasons for the school's success and its objectives. The creation of the school was a proactive measure to address the challenges faced by the community due to migration and to provide a safe and supportive environment for the youth. The school's social mission is based on preserving a legacy and traditions integral to the community's integrity as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Transnational Dynamics and Purépecha Values Behind Comunero Education



CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

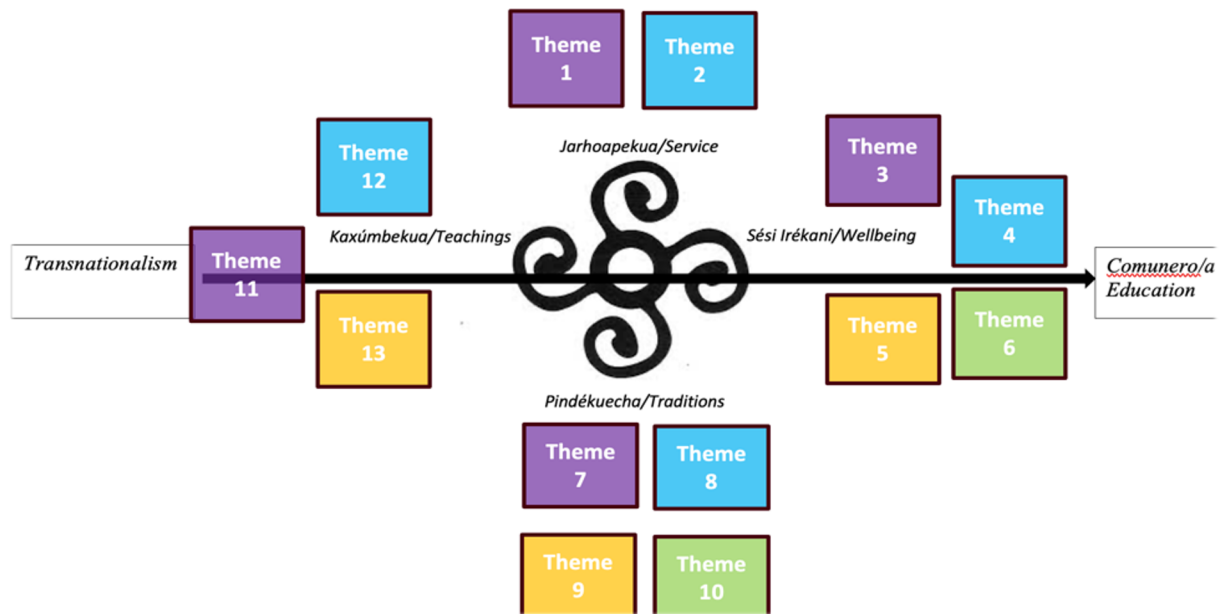
The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between transnationalism and bilingual Indigenous secondary intercultural education models through the lens of the dynamics that occur at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. The findings in Chapter 4 revealed that the establishment of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, guided by Purépecha values and creating an education for comunero youth, takes control of transnational movement and vulnerabilities within the community and empowers the community to shape and address the determinants of vulnerability actively, thereby constructing a transnational education system that responds to the specific needs of comunero youth. In the case of the Preparatoria Indígena, a third space (Bhabha, 1994) of possibilities and transformation co-exist, in which Purépecha Indigenous knowledge and values of comunalidad intersect with the contemporary demands and challenges posed by the transnational context. Figure 5, which appears in the previous chapter, is shown again below for context.

The collective construction of what a transnational education for comunero youth of Santa Fe de la Laguna meant more than the articulation of a curriculum or the logistics of building a school and its facilities. The transcendence of the community knowledge filtered in and out of the walls of the school into the community and into an intricate flow of ideas that reach other Indigenous communities in Michoacán. The flow of languages and ideas rooted in Purépecha values took a distinct character when introduced to the students to confront modernity and the implications of coexisting within national modern states like México and in some cases, the United States, as many students have family ties to different

areas within North America. The Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna represents what occurs within physical and metaphorical spaces that defy discursive limits. Through *comunalidad*, *faena*, and a determination to heal the community, the school's stakeholders pushed and continue to set aside the boundaries to a limitless re-centering of Purépecha language and culture (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016). The transformation that takes place within and outside of the school walls and in between them transforms and creates new dialogic spaces held by the values and *cosmovivencias* of Purépecha culture (Bahba, 1994).

Figure 5

The Transformation of Transnational Dynamics to the Development of Comunero/Comunera Education



Applying a phenomenological approach, this study sought to comprehend how intercultural education at the high school level impacts the lives of transnational students, their families, teachers, and administrators at this school in Michoacán, México. Data were

collected from various school stakeholders, and their reflections were analyzed to uncover the unique characteristics of Indigenous-transnational-intercultural pedagogical practices.

This study collected data using a qualitative method, including interviews, focus groups, classroom observations and artifact analysis. The interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups provided experiential data from the participants as there was a focus on the personal experiences and perspectives of the participants as these relate to transnational comunero education in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Some of the analyzed artifacts also provided information about experience and participants as they derived from short documentary pieces and conversations on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube. Other artifacts analyzed provided insights into historical data that were key to broadening the socio-historical connections that exist in the community. The participants in the study included four students, six teachers, two administrators, and four family members. The artifacts analyzed included one YouTube video, the school's Facebook page, the *Proyecto de Plan de Educación Indígena en Lengua Tarasca*, also known as Proyecto Tarasco, and the *Testamento de Vasco de Quiroga*/Testament of Vasco de Quiroga as documented by Peredo (2006). The data obtained went through an analytical process of open coding, axial, and selective coding in direct relationship to the study's research questions. Four main conceptual axes were then derived from this process in adherence to the grounded theory as a procedure for analysis. The research questions that guided this study are the following:

1. Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
2. How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
3. What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

The emerging themes directly answer the research questions presented above. The data was coded responding to the thematic relevance of each research question but also looking at specific aspects within each question. In Chapter 4, the findings are presented drawing from this process. Every step of the coding process was an integral part of the analysis. While the initial open coding can seem more fluid and organic, the themes that surfaced resulted from multiple attempts to find the right way to have the initial codes emerge. The axial coding process paid close attention to the relationships present in the first round of coding—open coding. These two first steps helped me get to the next layer of analysis where a further correlation of the axial codes led to identifying what would be the themes part of the selective coding process. From this process, I was able to extrapolate a conceptual axis corresponding to each one of the research questions and develop a visual representation for each of the findings.

This chapter derives from the findings presented in Chapter 4 as a narrative. In this chapter, the four major conceptual axes are presented as four major findings. Each of these

conceptual axes corresponds to the research questions in the study. The findings and their related themes are presented in the last chapter and are compared to existing literature that has looked at the phenomenon of transnationalism in the context of Indigenous education. First, this chapter explains the theory development based on the analytic categories. The following sections discuss the four major findings based on the 13 themes that are presented in Chapter 4. The sections are as follows: Finding 1—Jahroajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity, Finding 2—Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-being, Finding 3—Experiences and Pathways to Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/Tradition, and Finding 4—Kaxúmbekuea/Creating an Education for Comunero Youth. The last part of the chapter presents the researcher’s positionality and a discussion around the research process, assumptions, biases, limitations, and other variables that are important to consider against the study's findings. The limitations and delimitations are subsequently discussed, followed by a final summary of interpretations in the findings. In Chapter 6, I discuss the implications of the findings for policy and practice in Indigenous/bilingual education that impacts transnational communities.

This chapter weaves the findings with relevant studies that have addressed transnational education in Indigenous communities, *transfronterizo* critical pedagogies, studies related to Indigenous bilingual education in México, and work that has been done around the experience of Indigenous students from México as they navigate high school education in the United States. This chapter will provide an overview that accounts for research at the national level as well as a discussion is also directly connected to the

statement of the problems presented in Chapter 1 and as observed and previously mentioned.

The first research problem in the study notes that transnational communities are seldom understood as they are characterized by physical and conceptual mobilities that determine their dynamics in the locus and spatial context to which they belong. The kind of transnationalism that occurs expands to the movement within Indigenous nations, rural areas to urbanized centers, and community participation to the power dynamics that manifest in schooling practices. The second research problem addressed in Chapter 1 notes that it is not known how and what are the long-term effects of intercultural bilingual programs within transnational communities. This study attempted to identify the interactions of the models in the lives of transnational Indigenous bilingual students through the lens of the dynamics occurring in the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna and why this program has important implications for the community.

Theory Development as Analytic Categories

This study was based on the principles of phenomenology. As the researcher, I collected and analyzed the data using a phenomenological approach that led to a thematic analysis characteristic of grounded theory. All of the interviews and classroom observations were transcribed by me and color-coded in order to identify the patterns and codes that emerged consistently throughout all the interviews and conversations. After organizing everything in Microsoft Excel, I was able to organize these patterns visually and conceptually through an open coding process that would permit the next phase of thematic analysis through axial coding. The process of axial coding involved looking for the

relationship between the codes listed in open coding. The same process was developed again to allow for the selective coding to emerge. This process facilitated the identification and organization of meaningful themes and categories, thereby contributing to a thorough analysis of the data. This process allowed me to extrapolate four contributing conceptual axes that correspond to the findings in the study and develop the process of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). The four major conceptual axes that emerged are the following:

- Conceptual Axis 1—Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity. The participation of community and transnational teachers, community members, state entities, and community activists is key to the sustenance of the school. The Purépecha concept of Jarhoapikua/reciprocidad, which closely resembles the Westernized notion of mutual aid or reciprocity, serves as a framework that supports this form of collaboration. In Purépecha societies, mutual help is instilled as a characteristic social value among its community members. Even when the school aims at retaining its community members, collaboration with outside entities remains necessary.
- Conceptual Axis 2—Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-being. Through an autonomous intercultural program that serves the Purépecha community, there is a better opportunity to support student community retention. The way members of Santa Fe de la Laguna and in the context of the school, the construction of Sési Irékani or bien vivir, is tied to the notions of mutual help or Jarhoajpikua mentioned in the first finding or conceptual axis.

- Conceptual Axis 3—Experiences and pathways leading to Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/tradition. The themes connected to this conceptual axis indicate a process where Sési Irékani/bien vivir/well-being is achieved through a collective effort to put in place the educational structures that will support a system of education that will allow for conditions that improve the quality of life of students and their family members. Through effective transnational and trans-institutional cooperation, the collective experiences of the students and the families of the students that attend the school have manifested in a migratory slow-down that promotes well-being among the community. The school in turn depends on steady transnational cooperation. The migratory slow-down or mitigation adds to the well-being of the youth and families of Santa Fe de la Laguna. In turn, the absence of the school adds to economic and social vulnerabilities encountered within the mobility that occurs when students need to continue their high school schooling in outside communities.
- Conceptual Axis 4—Constructing a comunero Education. As the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna and the broader community of Santa Fe de la Laguna go through both changes and continuity, their overall quality of life improves by reducing economic and social stressors. As Purépecha values such as Jarhoajpikua and Sési Irekání take part in the process of constructing the social safety nets for the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna, this finding centers comunero education as a key element related to social transformation within the school, into the community and beyond the community.

The next part of the chapter looks at each one of the findings in the study. The findings that emerged are situated in the context of existing research. These main conceptual axes are being listed first as they are the result of the three cycles of coding, and each one of them informs the four major findings in this study. Moreover, each is composed of the themes described in Chapter 4 and discussed in this chapter and are directly tied to the research questions of the study.

The major conceptual axis that derived from the open, axial, and selective coding form a singular theory for this dissertation. This axis proposes the creation of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna as a community that created a system guided by the principles of comunalidad which built comunero education. This was in response to the transnational dynamic and vulnerabilities within the community. In turn, this educational project empowered the community to actively shape and address the determinants of vulnerability, thereby constructing a transnational education system that effectively caters to the specific needs of comunero youth. The next sections explain how this theory resulted and the themes that constructed it.

Discussion of Finding 1: Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity

The first finding responds to the first two questions in Research Question 1: Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process and what impacts their participation?

Through work with the community, I learned that the participation of the community—the transnational teachers, community members, state entities, and community activists—is key to the tangible and intangible aspects related to the sustenance

of the school. Even when the school aims at retaining its community members, collaboration with outside entities remains necessary. The data analysis that relates to this first part of the question revealed the necessary interrelationship between participants. The findings illustrate the interdependence that exists between teachers, whether they are part of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna or from an outside community, the role of community members, and the necessary ties to state entities. This interdependence is manifested in pedagogic, instructional, and linguistic cooperation. The needs for cooperation between state entities such as with the Universidad Michoacana and the Secretaría de Educación Pública involve a necessary negotiation. This is intended to get the necessary support from these institutions or the freedom to establish the programs of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. The mobility within the role of teachers from outside communities adds to the mechanics of how transnationalism manifests by bringing together the different experiences and instructional practices that allow students to navigate the world inside and outside their communities. Furthermore, the teachers in Santa Fe de la Laguna are also part of larger scholarly communities. The intellectual and physical mobility that exists encapsulated a big part of these transnational dynamics. This interrelationship among teachers and stakeholders was part of the plan from the initial conception of the school and keeps being an integral part of the school's existence. This process is crucial to the school's ability to exist as it allows for the support that community teachers need rich perspectives for the students that benefit both the school and the larger community. This first part of the question attempted to understand the different roles of the participants involved in creating a transnational education.

Transnationalism as an analytical category is an idea that begins to materialize as the participants live through this process.

Past studies provide other contexts illustrating how transnationalism is expressed and manifested through other groups and in different geographic situations (Trinidad Galván, 2001). The work by Brittain (2009) advances the notion of social space and looks closely at how high school students negotiate a new social location with the memory of their country of origin. In contrast, Hamann and Zúñiga (2011) observe how the term transnational operates as an imposed identity marker by their teachers and peers. This study finds that transnationalism functions as a space of possibility where deliberate actions such as the integration of Purépecha language in the school curriculum take place to protect language and community practices. Integrating Purépecha language in the school and creating a system built in Purépecha values the particular concept of Jarhoajpikua.

Transnationalism as a phenomenon is presented throughout the study. This study considers the idea of transnationalism from various angles and intersections, considering geographies but also *saberes*/ancestral knowledge, shared practices, and the preservation of community rituals. The liminal nature of transnationalism has connections with prior observations that encounter spaces of possibility in bilingual communities where languages tied to colonial processes, or in the play of power between one language over another, overshadow Indigenous forms of communication that are filled with possibilities (Anzaldúa, 2012; Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016; Handa & Tippins, 2013; Keating, 2006). Many considerations, reactions, and applications come to mind in the process of properly articulating a personal understanding of the third space as an analytical lens. The play

between Spanish and Purépecha and what occurs in between their use in the classroom space emerges as a third space of possibility by having Purépecha enunciations such as Jarhoajpikua emerge among words in Spanish (Handa & Tippins, 2013). Most importantly and fundamentally unique is the function of this epistemic framework of third space and the roots that hold together the proposed undoing of hegemonies. Furthermore, this lens of analysis intersects constantly within postcolonial perspectives, as this lens magnifies the constructions that affect relations of gender, class, and race. The third space engages the different voices within the interplay of sociocultural-political participants. In bolder words used by Gloria Anzaldúa, the third space heals because it is made up of brokenness and wound, thus becoming the arena of the struggle (Lunsford, 2004).

In this study, the idea of a space of possibility presents itself situated within the school's presence. In the words of one of the community members involved in environmental justice in Santa Fe de la Laguna,

Queremos ver las maneras de hacer entender a las autoridades universitarias de la Universidad Michocana, que este es un proyecto que vale la pena, y si bien es un tanto distinto, es algo único, algo que vale la pena sobre todo en el contexto indígena.

[We want to see ways to make the university authorities of the Universidad Michocana understand that this is a worthwhile project, and although it is somewhat different, it is something unique, something worthwhile, especially in the Indigenous context.] (Guillermo's interview, May 24, 2022)

This participant's quote highlights the centrality of those aspects that have developed into a space of possibility where the learning occurs within a space of pedagogical transformation. This transformation calls attention to the necessity of establishing a two-way dialogue to establish practical cooperation with the Universidad Michocana and the community of

Santa Fe de la Laguna. In this quote, this community member notes that the idea behind the school pushed the status quo aside and brought new possibilities to adapt a school to an Indigenous context, creating a third space for these instructional practices.

In Chapter 4, it was discussed that the Purépecha idea of Jarhoajpikua involves working together for the betterment of the community in Santa Fe de la Laguna and Purépecha society. The research showed that this collaboration tied to the Purépecha concept of Jahroajpikua was necessary for community teachers, transnational teachers, community members, and state entities. The process parallels the concept of la faena—a helpful community activity. As noted by one of the participants, collective work is of tremendous importance for the community, and many of the community endeavors require this kind of participation. One of the participants describes the intensity that this kind of collaboration entails:

También parte de esta comunalidad pues es la ayuda, la ayuda mutua, nosotros decimos en Purépecha es un valor cultural también que se asocia con la palabra haruaperakua. La palabra harapekua es la ayuda que todos los integrantes de la comunidad, en este caso de la preparatoria aportamos para el beneficio de algo, ¿no? En el caso de la comunidad pues todos hacemos faena. Todos cooperamos con despensa o en dinero para realizar una actividad, para limpiar una calle, para pintar un edificio, digamos de carácter religioso o civil. Y entonces ese es otro valor importante que tiene que ver con la comunalidad. Otro concepto tiene que ver con el acompañamiento, es decir en el caso de la preparatoria, sentimos que el acompañamiento de los estudiantes hacia los estudiantes debe de estar presente de manera cotidiana. También, en este caso las autoridades, digamos en este caso el director, subdirector, secretarias y demás gente, que colaboran en la preparatoria deben de estar al servicio y acompañando a todos los integrantes de la preparatoria, profesores, alumnos, ¿y trabajadores mismos no? Eses es otro valor, y bueno terminaría diciendo que otro valor importante es el respeto.

[Also part of this communality is help, mutual help, we say in Purépecha it is a cultural value that is also associated with the word *haruaperakua*. The word *haruaperakua* is the help that all the members of the community, in this case of the high school, contribute for the benefit of something, right? In the case of the

community, we all do chores. We all cooperate with food or money to carry out an activity, to clean a street, to paint a building, let's say of a religious or civil nature. And so this is another important value that has to do with communality. Another concept has to do with accompaniment, that is to say, in the case of the high school, we feel that the accompaniment of the students towards the students should be present on a daily basis. Also, in this case the authorities, let's say in this case the principal, assistant principal, secretaries and other people who collaborate in the high school should be at the service and accompanying all the members of the high school, teachers, students, and workers themselves, right? That is another value, and well I would end by saying that another important value is respect.] (Rene's interview, May 27, 2022)

In this quote, community cooperation and *acompañamiento/accompaniment* are important descriptors of support networks that exist to establish a system of mentorship between the adults in the community as guides for the young men and women. This idea of walking together is a value that represents a unique angle of *comunalidad*. Furthermore, the interdependence of teachers from the community and teachers who came from other communities was noted by observations made by the participants as it related to the compensation some of the teachers from other communities should get. The comment highlights the desire to reciprocate the work by outside community teachers. As Camilo, one of the former teachers, noted:

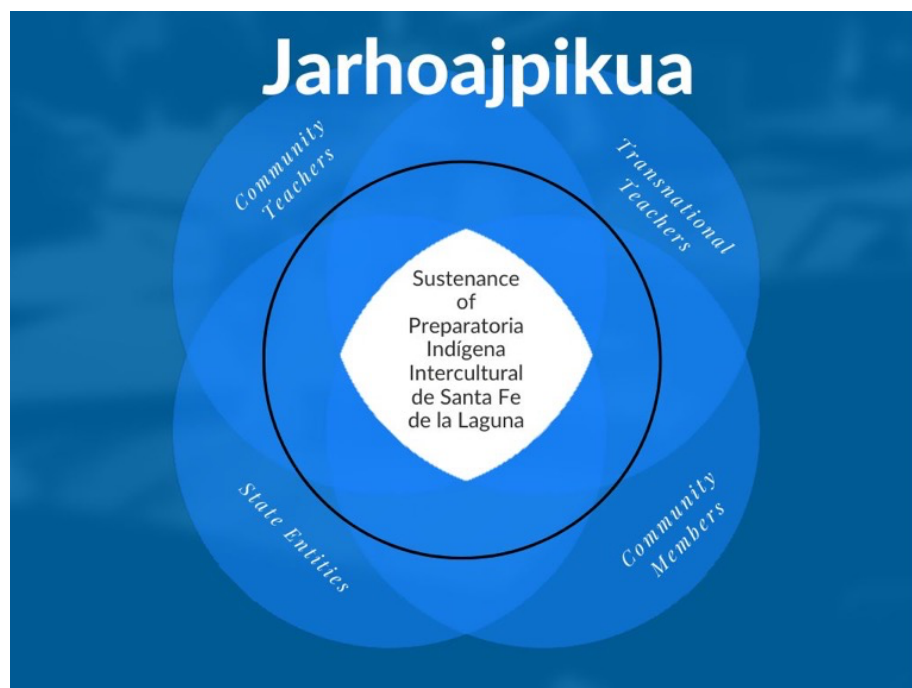
Mire, pues ahorita las necesidades son bastantes. Primero pues como escuela no hemos tenido la oportunidad de compensar a unos compañeros que tienen que trasladarse de un lugar a otro para dar sus clases, pedir mínimamente sería contar con un recurso, un apoyo para mínimo compensarles la cuestión de los viáticos.

[Look, right now there are many needs. First, as a school we have not had the opportunity to compensate some colleagues who have to move from one place to another to teach their classes, at least we would ask for a resource, support to at least compensate them for their travel expenses]. (Camilo's interview, May 27, 2022)

The experience of transnationalism is not only shared by the student body. As mentioned in the quote, there is a complexity found in the dynamics of the school and the aspects related to geographic mobility are present in the lives of the teachers. Both the teachers from the Santa Fe de la Laguna community and the teachers from outside communities recognize the need to rely on each other through instructional practices that teachers from other communities bring and the way Purépecha language is shared in the classroom. Prior explorations on transnational dynamics have addressed the relationship of critical pedagogies across geo-political divides (Anzaldúa, 1987; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988, 1991; Mignolo, 2000). The theoretical explorations of Giroux (1991), basing many of his ideas on Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and Paulo Freire (1970), formulate the foundation of intersectional theory and critical pedagogy. Figure 7 illustrates the creation of Jarhoajpikua.

Figure 7

Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity



Note. This figure depicts the cycle of cooperation among stakeholders.

While there is a strong recognition that the collaborative work between the teachers from Santa Fe de la Laguna and the teachers from other communities is key to the success of the school and the development of the criticality that was previously mentioned, there was an evident concern related to the support these teachers need, as it was noted that they do not receive any economic incentives to teach in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Past studies have looked at the way teachers mediate the transnational space for students who arrive in the United States. Villenas (2009) conducted a study on how teachers can respond to students in new communities, emphasizing the importance of solidarity within a binational context. The importance of collaboration and mediation has been key in building a body of literature around the definitions of transnationalism; nonetheless, the findings in this study revealed important insights related to teacher dynamics in this context.

The aspects related to the school's sustainability directly connect to the functioning of these forms of cooperation. Previous studies and work have addressed the need for cooperation that comparable programs have. However, the literature notes the tensions that exist over the imposition of the state over Indigenous programs in their communities. O'Connor (2018) directs the attention to power hierarchies and policy deriving from articulating intercultural bilingual education models when developed without community input. This study pays close attention to its effects on the student community. Vine Deloria, Native American author and activist, extensively discussed the concept of cultural sovereignty, emphasizing its significance for Indigenous peoples (Deloria, 1994). He argued that cultural sovereignty encompasses self-determination, self-governance, and the

protection of cultural practices, languages, and territories (Deloria, 1994). Deloria contended that cultural sovereignty extends beyond political and legal autonomy, encompassing social, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions of Indigenous life (Deloria, 1994). He called for the recognition and respect of Native American sovereignty and urged a shift in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies towards mutual understanding and cooperation (Deloria, 1994).

Similarly, the intersection of linguistic diversity and identity politics related to intercultural programs has been studied in the Kichwa-speaking community of Tena, Ecuador (Wroblewski, 2010). Wroblewski's study found that state-mandated bilingual and intercultural programs like the one observed by the author clashed with the needs of the community while the growing business of eco-tourism impacted the identity of youth by fueling a disproportionate Spanish monolingualism as tourism grew.

Space and physical and metaphorical movement manifest not only in the lives of the students but also in the experiences of the teachers within the educational space (Anzaldúa, 1987). The recognition of these complexities is shared among teachers from both the Santa Fe de la Laguna community and the teachers from outside communities. They recognize the need for interdependence and collaboration, embracing instructional practices introduced by teachers from diverse backgrounds. Lefebvre's (1991) production of space theory emphasizes the social production and transformative nature of space. In this context of cooperation, the space being produced emerges as the third space (Bhabha, 1994). It highlights the ways in which space is not just a physical entity but is actively shaped, experienced, and appropriated by social actors (Lefebvre, 1991). In the case of the

educational space in Santa Fe de la Laguna, the complexities arising from geographic mobility contribute to the production of a dynamic and multifaceted spatiality because this spatiality is nuanced as the interactions between the teachers and the state authorities contribute to shaping the educational environment, incorporating external influences and power dynamics into the production process.

Discussion of Finding 2: Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-Being

The third part of the first research question in this study attempted to understand the factors that contribute to transnational education as a more tangible phenomenon related to the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community? To better understand and explain this, it was important to identify the participants in this process, the roles they take in this development, and what factors allow the stakeholders to participate effectively in creating and sustaining the school. Furthermore, it was necessary to understand the factors that promote a transnational education at the high school level in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. While the last finding focuses on what sustains the school, this finding looks at the elements that constitute a transnational education. This second finding, Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/ Well-Being suggests that through an autonomous intercultural program that has transnational education at its core and serves the Purépecha community, there is a better opportunity to promote student community well-being through a migratory slow-down and community retention. Furthermore, this finding explains how comunero education sets in motion and promotes the necessary changes to foster the process of a transnational education in a Purépecha community. Through the

establishment of an autonomous intercultural program rooted in transnational education, specifically designed to serve the Purépecha community, a unique opportunity arises to promote student community well-being. This program not only addresses the educational needs of the students but also aims to slow down migration and enhance community retention.

The analysis of the data revealed the importance of community retention and encourages a slow-down of migratory patterns by the establishment of a school that instills and is built on Purépecha values that create the basis of a comunero education.

Transnationalism in this context is also considering the community efforts to have an intentional slow-down in this process of demographic movement within their youth.

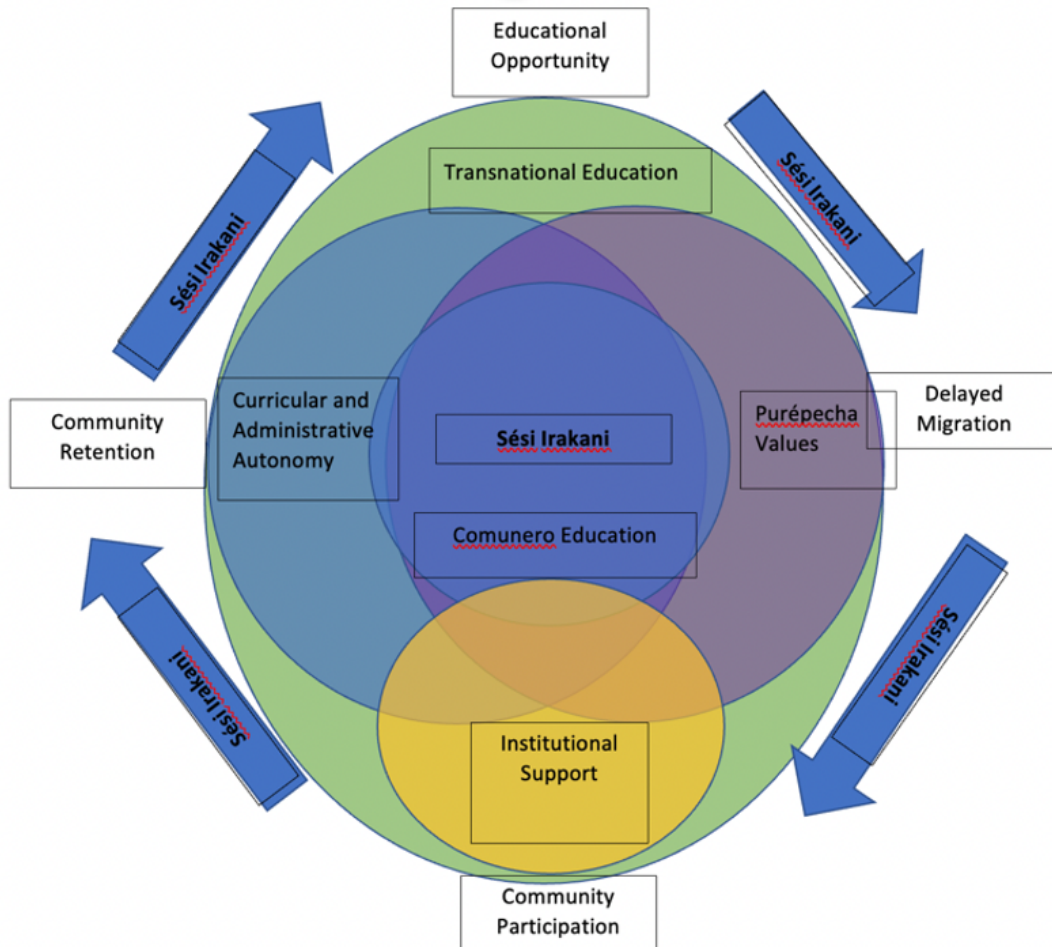
Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 1, this study is looking at transnationalism as an epistemic category that contextually intersects with community frameworks that embrace forms of community participation. These forms of participation work simultaneously in tandem with larger national economic structures yet can concurrently disrupt preconceived notions of capitalist economic functionality.

The findings in the study suggest that the following combination of factors are the primary vectors or contributing causes that make possible a transnational education in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna: Purépecha values, educación para comuneros/comunero education, curricular and administrative autonomy, and institutional support. All these aspects are part of what constructs the necessary elements for Sési Irekáni to occur (see Figure 8 below). Past research (Blansett, 2011; Jasso Martínez, 2010; McCarty, 2002; Sakiestewa, 2018; Stevens & Griño, 2018) has looked at aspects related to

autonomy in various ways, and within the research, I had to look closely at my use of terminology; what was the term I was using to understand the dynamics of autonomy in an Indigenous community? My positionality as a Mexican-Mestiza national woman who has lived in the United States for most of my adult life got in the way of capturing how nuanced the term self-determination can be. In an attempt to use the term *autodeterminación*/self-determination and trying to add meaning as it pertains to the context of Michoacán, I found it was important that I change the term to “fight for autonomy,” as this better frames the efforts to gain autonomy and agency specifically when addressing the political activism that has taken place in Santa Fe de la Laguna, Michoacán. For example, the work by Ivy Jacaranda Jasso Martínez (2010) provides an analysis of Purépecha demands that relate to disputes for the territory and autonomy in different historical moments. In her study, the following points are essential to understand what autodeterminación means in this specific context. The idea of autonomy is rooted in the farmers movement of the early 20th century and the articulation of the 1917 Mexican Constitution and the land repartition under President Lázaro Cárdenas under the Confederación Nacional Campesina of 1938 (Jasso Martínez, 2010). In 1979, the Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata was created to organize the demands of farmers, Indigenous people, and mestizos from Michoacán. The Unión de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata was strengthened after the Indigenous comunero groups of Santa Fe de la Laguna won legal fights against mestizo farmers from Quiroga. This fight began with agrarian demands but evolved with ethnic revendications and the creation of symbols such as the flag and the Purépecha motto that legitimized this fight and later became emblematic of the Purépecha struggles (Jasso Martínez, 2010).

Figure 8

Constructing Sési Irékani



Note. This figure depicts the cycle of structural elements that contribute to a transnational education.

For the research, I used the term “fight for autonomy” to describe the context of the fight for land and legal control more appropriately; nonetheless, the term self-determination plays a significant role in how people in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna explore this concept. Anthony-Stevens and Griño (2018) investigated Indigenous survivance and advanced the notion of Indigenous struggles for self-determination in the

context of Indigenous struggles. To understand how this concept has been critical to the constructions of autonomy considering indigeneity in North America and how the movement surfaced in the 1960s and elicited a desire to challenge colonial-imperial powers, it is essential to consider the work by scholars situated in the Indigenous U.S. context (Blansett 2011; McCarty, 2002; Sakiestewa Gilbert, 2018; Suina, 1985; Trask, 1987). The ideas of self-determination and Indigenous Purépecha autonomy have conceptual and practical connections that emerged in the study's findings. For example, there is a connection to land disputes that occurred in the decade of the 1970s between the peoples of Quiroga and the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna. These events contributed to a path of community school design that seeks to find its own space to serve the needs of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Additionally, these elements of curricular and administrative autonomy, Purépecha values and the need for institutional support set in motion a cycle that surrounds them, wherein there are tangible effects on the community as they relate to transnationalism and center comunero education. With the school's existence, there is an alternative to a geographic movement among the community youth, manifesting in a migratory delay. This, in turn, promotes further community participation that allows for future community retention of community-engaged youth and will further support the growth of educational opportunities for future students. At their core, these cycles promote a healthier community and reduce social and economic vulnerabilities identified by several participants.

This cycle responds to the participants' observations related to the driving forces that fueled the desire to create the school in the first place. For example, Elena, a young woman and community member who has been active in radio broadcasting mentioned: *“Una de las principales razones por las que la escuela tuvo éxito en su origen tiene que ver con la forma en que se pretendía frenar tempranamente la emigración entre los jóvenes de la comunidad.”* [One of the main reasons for the school's original success has to do with the way it was intended to curb early emigration among the community's youth.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022). Several participants noted this observation. As part of the support for this need to reduce early migration among the youth, there were several concerns like the following: *“Este ha sido siempre el objetivo de la escuela, y es muy importante porque así prevenimos situaciones como el acceso a sustancias ilegales y la disolución de las unidades familiares.”* [This has always been the goal of the school, and this is very important because this way we prevent situations like access to illegal substances and the dissolution of family units.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022). The frequency and consistency of these observations support the concerns for the community's well-being. In the Purépecha language and society, well-being constitutes an important core value for them captured in the Sési-Irékani/Bien Vivir concept.

While the idea of Sési Irekáni lives in the context of Purépecha culture and informs the rationale behind the creation of the school, well-being has been a theme that prevails in other Indigenous groups throughout the Americas. Precedents that date back to the 1970's, like the Programa de Educación Bilingüe e Intercultural en el Alto Napo (PEIBAN), were established by Catholic Missionaries and Kichwa teachers, proposing a model of education

for intercultural relations and transformation. This model has evolved into current programs such as the Teacher Education Program for Bilingual Teachers of the Peruvian Amazon (FORMABIAP) and Communities and Schools for the Bien Vivir/Good Life (CEBES), which aim to develop Kichwa literacy in first- and second-grade students. The study found that Spanish remains a dominant language, reinforced by institutional practices and associated with social progress, while Kichwa is viewed as relating to community dynamics. Similar to the way the participants perceive the school's function, the teachers of the Napo region are aware of the unequal context of biliteracy/Spanish use and see Spanish as a tool for social agency and access to resources, navigating both languages through coloniality and resistance (Hornberger & Dueñas, 2017).

In other research relevant to the specific context of Michoacán, the concepts of *comunalidad* and *Sési Irékan/Bien Vivir*, which refer to communal living and a full understanding of health and safety, are relevant to understand the strengths and impacts of community agency and social movements as presented by Cendejas et al. (2015). The authors challenge presuppositions built around the idea of modern *desarrollo*/development and contrast this notion with the idea of *desarrollismo*/deployment-ism, which is tied to superficial community development at the expense of natural resources, loss of language and community practices. Furthermore, another recent study by Marco Ricardo Téllez Cabrera (2022) suggests an intricate connection between Purépecha values and notions of social well-being. The study notes:

People are worried because diseases such as diabetes and substance abuse are high and rising; however, they continue lifestyles that support them. Through the health capability paradigm and the right-to-health approach, it is found that health and health capabilities for the P'urhépecha must comprise their idea of good living (*bien*

vivir) or *sési irékani*, which in turn requires the right to development. In this sense, current P'urhépecha demands converge with those of other Indigenous peoples in which autonomy, as a right to self-determination, is a necessary condition to design their health policy and allocate health-related resources in a globalized world. (p. 989)

The right to a healthy community is an important theme that intersected with the three research questions in this study. This approach suggests that the Purépecha individual and community health must align with their concept of *Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir*, which requires the right to a development redefined for the community. Nonetheless, one aspect that is not being considered is the connections that exist between *Sesi Irékani* and the establishment and sustainability of the Preparatoria Indígena Interucultural in Santa Fe de la Laguna. One of the fundamental aspects that this study notes is the interrelationship between Purépecha values, educación para comuneros/comunero education, curricular and administrative autonomy, and institutional support. The findings suggest a layered construction of community well-being as these themes intersect and reaffirm each other. This finding is supported too in work done by Morales Velázquez and Lepe Lira (2013) on the study of pedagogical praxis around the *fogatas*/firepits as spaces of situated learning community of Cheran. Purépecha values such as Pindékuecha traditions, Jánaskakua/Indigenous knowledge, Jakájkukua/home language, for example, provide the basis for the rules that govern the instruction of women and men who are comuneros in the state of Michoacán. The connections between Purépecha values and the frames for education have taken center stage in previous studies. The re-centering of Purépecha language as cultural praxis has a strong presence both in this study's findings and in the way language is being brought forward as an epistemic category in recent scholarship (Dietz,

1999). This suggests a paradigm shift as we see how Purépecha language was treated by the academia in the early part of the 20th century when the Mexican Department of Indigenous Language and Culture was created in 1934. As mentioned before, as part of this Department of Indigenous Languages, in 1939 the Proyecto Tarasco was developed to introduce Spanish language through the alphabetization of Indigenous languages (Martínez Buenabad, 2015). The implications of the Proyecto Tarasco were of major significance for the conception of Indigenous bilingual education in the state of Michoacán and the rest of México. The project of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna is driven by the principles of comunalidad and autonomy for the development of this space of possibility that is curricular and is part of the socialization of comunero values. Furthermore, the school project directly related to the necessity of building systems of support for comunero youth that promote Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-Being. This involvement ensures that the systems of support and education provided by the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna are fit to meet the specific needs of comunero youth, taking into account the challenges and opportunities arising from the transnational dynamics that they encounter within the cultural borders of what is rooted in Purépecha community practices and the intersections of other national entities such as México.

The Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna acts as the foundation for the creation of a comunero educational space, facilitating the process of transnational education within the community. The integration of Purépecha values contributes to the production of a hybrid space within the educational setting, aligning with the concept of in-betweenness as articulated by Bhabha (1991). It challenges dominant

educational norms, creates a space for dialogue and negotiation by recentering Purépecha values once marginal within the systems of traditional high school curriculum in México. This educational institution plays a vital role in promoting transnational education while ensuring that stakeholders in connection with the community regain control over the dynamics of transnationalism. Integrating Purépecha values such as comunalidad and autonomy contributes to the production of space within this educational setting. As a result, the community experiences social well-being and a sense of agency in shaping their own educational environment.

Discussion of Finding 3: Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/Tradition

This finding responds to the second research question: How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna? This finding highlights that the collective experiences of students and stakeholders play a crucial role in constructing a transnational autonomous education system. Through their shared experiences, the students and their families contribute to the development of necessary mechanisms within the school. These mechanisms aim to slow down migration and promote community well-being. This finding is centered on the experiences of the community and the comunero youth. Furthermore, the migratory slowdown or mitigation adds to the well-being of the youth and families of Santa Fe de la Laguna. In turn, the absence of the school adds to economic and social vulnerabilities encountered within the mobility that occurs when students need to continue their high school education in outside communities.

The focal points of community discussion and prior studies regarding Indigenous education and intercultural programs in México have mainly revolved around self-governance and the implications of migratory movement (Meyer & Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). The findings in this study reaffirm the importance of migration and transnational education from the lens of this high school's effects on the community. The cooperation on the part of the stakeholders to create the school has led to a significant role in retaining youth as the elements of cooperation are key to the school's success as was noted in this study.

The complexity of the effects of this collaboration is seen in how the stakeholders and the larger community experience the prevention of determinants of substance use, unsafe conditions for youth, separation of the family, loss of primary language, and family and community detachment. Through collaboration, the school can exist and thus prevent, mitigate, and reverse these vulnerabilities. At the core of this finding was the way it reiterated across the participants the need to elevate the purpose of the school. This two-fold purpose negotiates the students' academic requirements under the umbrella of a national educational agenda with the community's needs for a comunero education as a parallel to well-being. The themes that supported this finding, in addition to social well-being, were migration slow down, authentic education, Purépecha social and academic instruction, and shared governance. The description of these will be presented in the next paragraphs to understand how the experiences of youth and stakeholders of the school and how they created a system of comunero education to grapple with the intricacies of their own transnational dynamics.

The experiences shared by the stakeholders name the points of tensions, the possible solutions and enunciate what has worked in the years since the creation of the school. Central to the findings is the emphasis on how the participants enunciate what needs to change and be transformed to elevate the social well-being needed to make this project do what it was intended to do. In essence, the community enunciates and names what needs to manifest for their community. The ideas of Sési Irékani/well-being have been widely explored. Still, the construction of Sési Irékani, in the specific context surrounding the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, has not been thoroughly investigated. A study done in 2014 is also centered on the experiences of stakeholders in intercultural programs focusing on the teachers (León León et al., 2014). The authors looked at the relationship between teacher discomfort and well-being as an opposite binary and the association to personal, institutional, and social factors from an Indigenous-intercultural perspective. This research was conducted in three intercultural bilingual elementary schools: two in Arantepacua and one in Capacuaro, both Purépecha villages in the State of Michoacán. The study's results emphasized the incidence of stressors related to social factors such as migration, discipline, changes in educational policies, and teacher professional learning (León León et al., 2014). This study by León León provides a picture of what well-being meant for the teachers in his study. Well-being was identified in individual circumstances that respond to the individual experiences of teachers tied to the tensions between state demands and the lived realities of being a teacher in a Purépecha school. Many of the studies done in the last decades are beginning to look at youth retention and community well-being through opportunities created at the high school level, yet the

research is still limited (Sánchez, 2007; Téllez Cabrera, 2022; Tucker et al., 2013; Woo Morales & Flores Ávila, 2015).

Even when the process of migration is a familiar action for many in the community, the economic and social stress derived from an early separation led to the creation of the school. As noted by Tomás, one of the participants and teacher at the school, the purpose of the school was to "*frenar tempranamente la emigración entre los jóvenes de la comunidad*" [curb early emigration among the community's youth] (Tomás's interview, January 20, 2022). This was one of the main reasons for the school's initial success and why it had full community support. In this study, curbing migration emerged as a strategy to reduce social and health-associated situations conditioned by early family separation among the youth and ease economic stressors. As one community member mentioned, "*Este ha sido siempre el objetivo de la escuela, y es muy importante porque así prevenimos situaciones como el acceso a sustancias ilegales y la disolución de unidades familiares*" [This has always been the goal of the school, and this is very important because it prevents situations like access to illegal substances and the dissolution of family units.] (Zule, focus group, June 17, 2022). The comments by the two participants, Tomás and Zule, allow us to see the underlying reasons that served as the basis for the creation of the school and the benefits it brought to the community.

The findings add to an existing body of youth migration studies in Michoacán, as this study in Santa Fe de la Laguna highlights transnational movement stemming from a desire to look for educational opportunities. In contrast, the work by Tucker et al. (2013) is still primarily centered in the context of binational movement between the United States

and México. This study centers the causes of migration as a response to the economy.

Tucker et al. (2013) explored how individual and family characteristics influence the migration decision among youth aged 15 to 24 to the United States. Their work compared youth who have migrated to the United States and returned to México with those who have not migrated to México. By comparing decision-making between return migrants and non-migrants across different communities, they assessed the influence of individual, family, and community factors on migration behavior and motivations. The motives found in this population were driven by economic opportunity, family ties, or status processing (Tucker et al., 2013).

The studies that center community voice in the context of Indigenous education and intercultural programs in México have primarily positioned around the themes of self-determination and the implications of migration but have not addressed intersections of autonomy and identity in the context of youth migration seeking to expand their educational opportunities (Meyer & Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). Furthermore, interculturality in Michoacán is an important theme that has been researched regarding teacher preparation (García Segura, 2004, 2021). García Segura (2021) presents the result of a study in which the researcher interviewed nine teachers in a Purépecha community. The study by Segura (2021) revealed that teacher professional development is important to serve a diverse population successfully. Educational policies should focus on providing resources and professional development to develop a quality intercultural education system at all levels. In earlier study conducted by Segura in 2004, the author identifies the lack of access to proper economic and instructional resources that would support Purépecha

teachers in creating an effective program that centers language and culture (García Segura, 2004). The connections between Indigenous education at the high school level and community wellness have yet to be covered.

The role of collective experiences in the establishment of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna inform the way autonomous education system is guided by Purépecha values. This transnational education initiative empowers the community, particularly comunero youth, by actively addressing vulnerabilities and shaping the determinants of vulnerability. Returning to the central observation of this study, by taking control of transnational movement, the school responds to the specific needs of the community and promotes the well-being of youth and families. Additionally, the presence of a local school mitigates the economic and social vulnerabilities associated with sending students to outside communities for high school education. Overall, this transnational education system not only caters to the community's needs to revitalize language and a Purépecha way of sharing ancestral knowledge through this school but also contributes to a migratory slowdown, fostering a more resilient and empowered community in Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Discussion of Finding 4: Kaxúmbekua/Teachings—Constructing Comunero Education

Based on Honor

The fourth finding that emerged from the data analysis presents elements that highlight the participants' experiences as they interact in different capacities in developing this high school program. This finding responds to the third research question which asks:

What are the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

The finding highlights the presence of a shared sentiment within the community, where both change and continuity are embraced. While change facilitates an active engagement with the modern context surrounding the community, the preservation of Purépecha values and traditions plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for all individuals involved. This harmonious balance not only mitigates economic and social stressors but also fosters improved social and economic conditions. The duality of change and continuities as a dichotomy is challenged by the presence of an in-betweenness that emerges within the negotiation and coexistence of the ancestral and modern worlds (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bhabha 1991). Santa Fe de la Laguna creates a new space of negotiated practices. The third space created grows out of these nepantla spaces (Anzaldúa, 1987; Keating, 2006).

The findings pointed to the collective experiences of all participants in developing this program and how they take root in specific events related to land struggles. The struggle over land rights led to the construction of a framework for education based on the Indigenous cosmovision of the community that reinforced the importance of land for the inhabitants of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The purpose of this education was meant to reinforce the identity of the comunero/comunera student and to create a curriculum tailored to the needs of the community. In various interviews the phrase “*Somos comuneras/comuneros*” [We are comuneros] (Carlos’s interview, May 23, 2022) was so prevalent that the idea of *a comunero education* is in itself the key to understanding the

collective experiences of everyone who was involved in the development of the school. Comunero education emphasized a deep connection to the struggles behind the communities' ties to their land. Being a comunero in this context can be understood in light of previous studies that emphasize the importance of comunalidad as a social structure that is tied to the ancestral Purépecha territories. This structure supports the legal frameworks that define what it means to be part of a school that nurtures educational pursuits related to land ownership, as well as the belief systems and cosmovision that shape Purépecha identity (Anthony-Stevens & Griño, 2018; de León Pasquel, 2010; Maldonado Alvarado, 2010; Martínez Luna, 2015). The finding that emerged from this data analysis section involves a process that holds on to and rescues traditional Purépecha values while reinforcing necessary changes that impact the families and the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. This finding relates to the three previous findings as it builds on them to present aspects that were tangible experiences like migration and the need for schools, and the effects of not having a high school for comunero youth in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Since this educational project is based on the concepts of comunalidad to create the basis for an education for the youth of Santa Fe de la Laguna, the relationship between all four findings is key to understand how a school for comunero youth serves as the engine or agent of change in the aspects related to the well-being of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna and the reduction of early risk exposure in light of early migration.

Changing Perspectives and Elevating the Continuity of Purépecha Values

To better illustrate this section, there was a very special moment during my stay in the Santa Fe de la Laguna community where the idea of change within continuity

materialized in one of the daily lessons that were taking place in the school. One of the teachers and I had gone to Quiroga to reconnect the internet service; the students had been struggling to engage with the materials for several of their lessons since many of the resources are acquired electronically. That day, we connected the router for them to have wi-fi access, and then we noticed we were going to need a cable. In the absence of that cable that would never be located, maestra Mary reminded them that cooperation is a guiding principle in the community. Sometimes referred to as Jarhoajpikua/reciprocity or faena, this is the reminder that community forces are more potent than the challenges that are presented. That day everyone contributed the money they could contribute to purchase the extension cable. In that moment, technological change was being leveraged to foster the continuation of values and community practices in the school.

Early migration among the youth of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna was clearly the primary concern of the community. As one participant mentioned, *“Una de las principales razones por las que la escuela tuvo éxito en su origen tiene que ver con la forma en que se pretendía frenar tempranamente la emigración entre los jóvenes de la comunidad.”* [One of the main reasons why the school was originally successful has to do with the way in which it was intended to curb early emigration among the community's youth.] (Elena's interview, May 17, 2022). As the school ensured a space that would foster safety and decrease vulnerability among the youth and their family members, the next concern had to do with the purpose of the school beyond providing a space to retain youth.

First, the findings highlight the importance of education in the struggle and defense of territory in Santa Fe de la Laguna. As mentioned in the previous section, the people of

Santa Fe have engaged in the defense of their land and territory over time as the economies of the nearby communities create conditions that have resulted in land appropriation. This aspect related to land rights is one of the main driving forces for the interest in creating an educational opportunity for comunera and comunero students, thus creating an academic program specific to a comunero education. In Santa Fe de la Laguna, the idea of education for the community's youth was an ambitious project that had to negotiate institutional constraints and the needs of the people. In embracing the idea of an intercultural program, the school's stakeholders kept in mind the ideas of cultural interconnections and interconnectedness to surrounding Indigenous nation entities, the wider country of México and migration to other countries like the United States.

While there have been recent studies related to the experience of Purépecha Indigenous students, these have been looking mainly at their experiences in a university context where the findings correlate with this present study in presenting the effects of forceful migration in response to educational access (Dimas Huacuz, 2017; Chávez González et al., 2022). In the study by Chávez González et al. (2022), the findings direct attention to access and university programs in which students face the need to negotiate socio-economic circumstances in their households, community versus personal expectations, tensions related to gender dynamics, and anxiety related to leaving the community and their families. In these studies, the conditions that hinder the student's ability to continue an education are addressed, yet there are no explorations related to the experience of the same students during their high school years. By looking at the context of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna the experiences of youth in search of

educational opportunities are elevated. In juxtaposition to the narrative presented by Dimas Huacuz (2017), the Preparatoria in Santa Fe de la Laguna provides a counterstory of what is possible when the school does exist in their Indigenous community. However, Dimas Huacuz (2017) presents staggering statistics about the high rate of attrition in intercultural programs across middle and high school programs.

While there is a strong investment in strengthening the education of Purépecha language, values that foster the roots of *comunalidad*, and community practices tied to the traditional ways of living like the care of the forest, fishing, and ancestral knowledge there exists a desire to make a change. This kind of change will allow students to improve their academic opportunities inside and outside the community, however, highlighting a critical lens to what youth will find outside of the community. For example, one of the participants mentioned: *“Y como dicen, si hay esos resquicios, esas porosidades, dentro del sistema capitalista pero hay que trabajar en ello para poder jalar gente, convencer de que sí hay posibilidades de un mundo distinto.”* [And as they say, yes, there are those spaces, those porosities, within the capitalist system, but we must work on it to be able to pull people in, to convince that there are possibilities for a different world.] (Guillermo’s interview, May 24, 2022). This idea of change involves a critical reflection related to the influence of capitalism on the lives of the people in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Change is seen to question the dynamics of life for the survivance not only of the community but also for all of humanity.

Aspects related to these ideas are tied to exposure to the existing ecological resources in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna and the care that the land requires. In

pair with this idea, teachers also noted the need to develop critical thinking skills in their students as it relates to the consumption of media. All these aspects give the school a social purpose that stands out in relation to how other high schools might be operating. Many aspects that characterize the kind of transnational education that is taking place through this school involve preparing the students as community members who fully understand the ideas of self-determination and what *comunalidad* entails. This education has been centered on aspects that go above and beyond a traditional high school as there is a strong emphasis on including, for example, law courses taught in Purépecha. The findings also highlighted the importance of education in preserving the cultural identity and *cosmovision* in Santa Fe de la Laguna. Furthermore, the findings indicate a strong interest in the need for students to be mentored to become future leaders and continue the defense of the territory.

Another aspect that informs the purpose of the school is the revitalization and preservation of language practices. Transnational education in the context of this Purépecha community depends significantly on reinforcing *comunera/comunero* identity, where language is the placeholder of values, memories, and *costumbres*/customs. For all the participants of this school, the school's identity, *cosmovision*, and community practices stem out of Purépecha language. Language has been the subject of scrutiny in contexts related to the teaching of literature in the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna (Díaz Guevara, 2020). In his work, Díaz Guevara (2020) presents the conditions that led to his curricular modifications at the school. He presents the scenario that informed his decision-making where this school project's roots intersect the fight against racism,

classism, and self-determination manifested in world views of *comunalidad* and social justice activism. The findings also denote the effects of lessening economic stressors by the sole existence of the school in Santa Fe de la Laguna where the families and the community benefit from an improved quality of life.

The establishment of a transnational education for the youth of Santa Fe de la Laguna, with a focus on *comuneros*, encompassed much more than designing a curriculum or constructing a school. It involved a profound integration of community knowledge that flowed in and out of the school, permeating the entire community. This knowledge exchange, rooted in the values of the Purépecha culture, took on a unique character when introduced to students, who were confronted with the challenges of modernity and the complexities of coexistence within national modern states like México and, in some cases, the United States, where many students had familial connections.

The Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna is a reminder of transformative power of enunciation (Bhabha, 1994). In this process the community of stakeholders engaged in the naming of that that existed and what needed to exist to ensure the well-being of the community. In this process, a third space produced through material and symbolic actions began to emerge (Bhabha, 1994; Lefebvre, 1991) within physical and metaphorical spaces, transcending the limitations of conventional constraining policy and economic hurdles. Through the principles of *comunalidad*, *faena*, and a collective determination to heal the community, the stakeholders of the school have persistently pushed boundaries, paving the way for an endless re-centering of the Purépecha language and culture responding to the transnational nature of the community of Santa Fe de la

Laguna (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016). In the context of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, comunalidad values refer to a worldview and theoretical framework that view schooling as community based. It draws on Indigenous knowledge that has been developed over thousands of years (Stevens & Griño, 2018). This approach relies on the efforts of community members and respects their authority in making decisions. It considers the values and traditions related to how the community views space and time (Maldonado Alvarado, 2010). Faenas are a practice of community mutual aid that result from the structures derived from comunalidad. This transformative process has caught the attention of those who become familiar with the projects, as these elicit hope for many communities that house Indigenous transnational students.

All findings and the themes presented contribute to the structure of how a program built for and by the comuneros and comuneras of Santa Fe de la Laguna provides a system of support for the high school students in the community. The community was sensitive to mechanisms needed to fulfill the needs of the students in the face of the 21st century yet keeping in mind what was necessary to ensure the physical, spiritual, and economic health of their youth to ensure the future survivance of Santa Fe de la Laguna. In light of the persistent dangers of illegal substance use and the economic stressors, language loss, and separation of the families, comunero education became the response to a transnational dynamic. Through the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, the community takes control over the transnational phenomenon that is creating the determinants. The school in many respects becomes the agent of transformation and a third space, an allegory of third space represented in its capacity to transcend Purépecha

language, values and community practices from the school to the community to other Indigenous communities (Bhabha, 1994; Lefebvre, 1991).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

It is important to revisit the assumptions and limitations presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation. These assumptions were related to my own experience in the field of bilingual education as it relates specifically to high school students. Furthermore, my own transnational/binational upbringing can add to the biases in interpretation. The limitations anticipated were related to language limitations, situations related to COVID 19, and finally the timeframe for the study.

This first assumption rested on the idea that transnationalism as a lived experience informs the participation of students in programs such as the Preparatoria Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna in Michoacán, México. This assumption advanced the idea that this is a phenomenon not specific to this area and thus it will help to establish important connections to other Indigenous communities.

A second assumption is that transnationalism occurs inside modern countries beyond the dichotomy of binational dynamics. In Michoacán, México, transnationalism is a phenomenon that breaks away from the assumption that the phenomenon occurs because of a binary migratory relationship to the United States. In fact, the kind of transnationalism that occurs expands to the movement within Indigenous nations, rural areas to urbanized centers, community participation to the power dynamics that manifest in schooling practices. In this dissertation, I challenge the idea that transnationalism only entails a relationship between modern nations that have been legitimized by colonial/imperial

dynamics as I look at the phenomenon considering nations-within-nations and their complex interactions of language, culture, and ideas as groups such as the Purépecha are one Indigenous national entity among many Indigenous nations in México and in the Americas. This transnational phenomenon includes geographic and social journeys within the country of México.

The limitations that I presented in Chapter 1 and 3 were as follows. The first limitation is related to the languages that I speak. Since I did not share the participants' language in a conversational capacity, this played a factor in my ability to navigate the community and have more Purépecha context-engaged conversations with the study participants. One aspect that mitigated this limitation was the bilingualism between Purépecha and Spanish that exists among the community members, students, and teachers of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Since this study allowed me to engage in onsite conversations with Purépecha scholars and community members, the process of member checking contributed to the clarification of terms, words in Purépecha, and specific contextual information. On some occasions, the command of English is also common. A second limitation that is important to consider is all the restrictions related to the pandemic. To plan in case there were pandemic-related situations, I took precautionary measures when interacting with the community; low exposure to crowded settings, consistent COVID testing, and wearing masks in indoor spaces. A last limitation I noted was the geographic distance from Santa Fe de la Laguna and the state of Michoacán and my own work schedule. While there was an initial main visit to the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna that took place over the month of May 2022, I kept communication with the members of the community via WhatsApp and

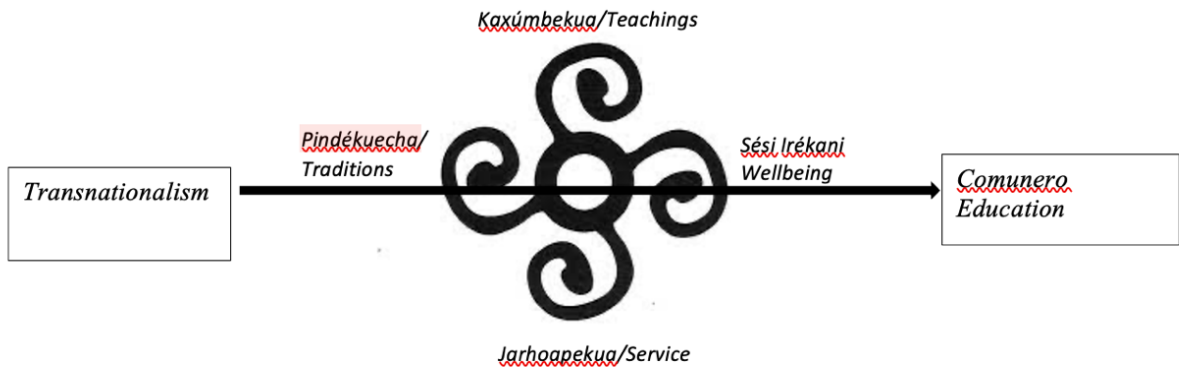
sometimes Zoom. I did an additional visit during the month of December, 2022, and part of January, 2023. Again, the communication has continued through Zoom and WhatsApp.

Summary of Interpretations in the Findings

The image depicted in Figure 6 serves as a visual representation of the primary findings of this study, which investigate into the complex dynamics of transnationalism. Within this dynamic, various Purépecha values, including Jarhoapekua/Service, Sési Irékani/Well-Being, Kaxúmbekua/Teachings and Honor, and Pindékuecha/Traditions, interact and exchange fluidly. These deeply ingrained Purépecha values hold great significance as they act as a driving force, propelling the conceptualization and establishment of a comunero education system within the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Figure 6

Transnational Dynamics and Purépecha Values Behind Comunero Education



The establishment of comunero education represents a response to the transnational dynamic experienced by the community. Through the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna, the community actively takes charge of the

transnational phenomenon of early migration within their terms and identifying the unique needs of this transnational Purépecha community. This educational approach empowers the community by allowing them to exercise control over their cultural heritage, traditions, and values, while also providing the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the challenges posed by transnational influences. Figure 6 visually encapsulates these findings, providing a visual cue to the intricate relationship between transnationalism, Purépecha values, and the creation of a comunero education system within the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna.

This chapter presented the experiences of students, teachers, administrators, and family members in connection to the development of a high school program that responds to transnational dynamics in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The different sections present the main findings that emerged from the data analysis. This synthesis layers the understanding we get from the findings concerning the existing literature and theoretical frameworks. A salient piece of information that was revealed throughout the study's findings is related to the complex interaction the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna have with geographic mobility. The effort to prevent early migration is a deliberate fight to preserve ancestral values, including the health and integrity of the families and community. This process of interpreting findings was methodical and looked at the data collected during the period I spent doing fieldwork in Michoacán the months that followed and the conversations that took place over the phone, and the times I was able to share a meal or two with the participants. Through formal and informal conversations, the data collected became an organic body of knowledge that lent itself to an extensive inquiry process.

To continue this discussion, Chapter 6 considers the implications for the ideas that have been constructed around transnationalism and mobility in connection to education and programs such as the one that is part of this Indigenous intercultural high school in Santa Fe de la Laguna. These elements form the foundation of youth programs developed in Indigenous communities that aim to address the effects of conceptual, intellectual, and physical mobility. However, the impact of dynamic migration movements on bi-national communities, particularly with an influx of students who share ties, is still unclear and needs to be further considered to ensure equitable access to education when transnational students arrive in U. S. classrooms. To address this issue, programs that incorporate an intercultural agenda and provide access to linguistic resources from home communities have been developed, but their impact on community members has yet to be thoroughly researched due to the scarcity of similar programs.

Another aspect to be analyzed in the next chapter is around the considerations related to the student communities that are returning from the United States and continuing their studies at the high school level in Indigenous communities. There has been research around this topic in the last two decades (Hidalgo Aviles & Kasun, 2019; Montoya Zavala et al., 2020; Woo Morales & Flores Ávila, 2015), yet it is necessary to investigate the nuanced realities of Indigenous communities that respond actively to transnational dynamics.

Closing Words on this Chapter

With a heavy heart, must mention that as I was finalizing this dissertation, I got news of the closure of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. This is a

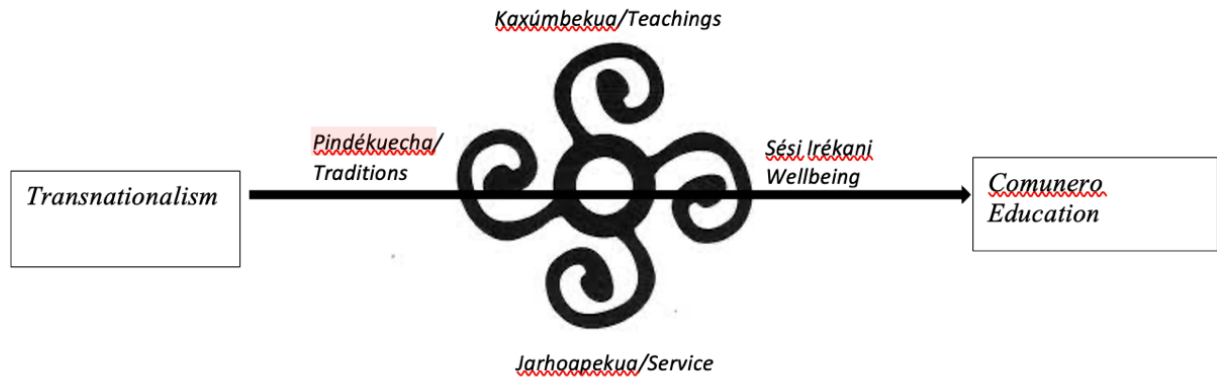
school that has played a pivotal role in shaping the lives of countless Purépecha Indigenous students, their families, and the community. This heartbreaking decision comes because of the harsh economic circumstances exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, further compounded by the deep-rooted structural inequalities that have left the institution vulnerable after the events that led to closures and budget cuts during the pandemic. The devastating impact of the pandemic and the existing economic situations have taken an insurmountable toll on the school's finances, making it impossible to continue its operations. The closure of this educational haven is an irreplaceable loss for Santa Fe de la Laguna. Considering these challenging circumstances, I hope with all my heart that this dissertation study will shed light on the invaluable role the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna has played in the lives of its students and the wider community. By documenting its impact on so many levels, I aim to raise awareness and re-organize to support its reopening.

CHAPTER 6: *AUNANI/CONSEJOS* [CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS]

This study explored the manifestations of transnationalism and its profound impact on the Purépecha community, connecting it to the concept of the third space (Bhabha 1994), Lefebvre's (1991) production of space, and Anzaldúa's (1987) challenges to existing epistemic notions of borders. The exploration focused on the interplay between various Purépecha values such as Jarhoapekua/Service, Sési Irékani/Well-Being, Kaxúmbekua/Teachings and Honor, and Pindékuecha/Traditions within the transnational context. These deeply ingrained values drove the conceptualization and establishment of a *comunero* education system at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. By actively asserting their agency and taking control of the transnational phenomenon of early migration on their own terms, the Purépecha community created a third space through the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. In this space, they navigated fluid borders, blending their cultural heritage, traditions, and values with the necessary skills and knowledge to address the challenges posed by transnational influences. Drawing from Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the production of space, the establishment of the *comunero* education system represented a deliberate effort to reshape and reclaim space in response to the transnational nature of the community. Figure 6, which appears in the previous chapter, is reprinted here for further context and visually encapsulates the study's findings, illustrating the intricate relationship between transnationalism, Purépecha values, the creation of a *comunero* education system, and the formation of a transformative third space.

Figure 6

Transnational Dynamics and Purépecha Values Behind Comunero Education



This synthesis of ideas from the study, along with the concepts of the third space, Lefebvre's production of space, and Anzaldúa's fluid borders, deepened the understanding of the Purépecha community's response to transnational dynamics and their active engagement in redefining and preserving their cultural identity.

Chapter 6 provides a succinct explanation related to how the previous chapters answered the research questions in this study. It also provides a summary that highlights the significant findings and presents corresponding conclusions and implications. The last part of the chapter introduces and elaborates on the recommendations from each chapter. This part of the chapter is a practical guide for readers who may wish to implement some of the recommendations from the study in their work or research. At the same time, the implications and recommendations derived from the observations of what occurs in the context of the Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The implications and recommendations are also consejos from the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna on what

this means for the state of New Mexico and other state entities in the United States that receive students from Purépecha communities.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between transnationalism and bilingual Indigenous secondary intercultural education models through the lens of the dynamics at the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna. Through a phenomenological approach, the study attempted to understand how Intercultural education at the secondary level impacts the lives of transnational students, their families, teachers, and administrators at this school in Michoacán, México. This chapter presents specific recommendations related to the research questions:

1. Who is involved in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?
2. How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?
3. What are the collective experiences of students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

From these research questions the following findings surfaced from the data analysis providing these four conceptual axes:

1. Jahroajpikua—Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity
2. Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Well-Being

3. Experiences and Pathways to Sési Irékani through Pindékuecha/Tradition and Collective Experiences

4. Kaxúmbekuea/Creating an Education for Comunero Youth

Next, this chapter summarizes relevant findings with their corresponding conclusions. After presenting these findings and conclusions, the chapter offers specific recommendations.

Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Conceptual Axes—Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1

These research questions were: Who are the participants in the process of transnational education? What is their role in the process, and what impacts their participation? What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community?

The first research question led to a thematic analysis, which revealed a main conceptual axis identified as Jarhoajpikua/Developing a Cycle of Help or Reciprocity. This concept relates to the overall idea of developing comunero education based on Purépecha values to address early migration caused by transnational dynamics. The analysis emphasizes the importance of involving community and transnational teachers, community members, state entities, and community activists to sustain the school. The first conclusion related to this significant finding illustrates the cycle of support necessary to propel the school's project that responds to the community's needs as it conveys its transnational nature.

This finding advances the notion that a functional cooperation with external educational state entities such as the Secretaría de Educación Pública is needed for school staffing. As the findings suggest, there is an openness to work with teachers coming from state-run programs such as schools that are part of the Secretaría de Educación Pública or Instituto Nacional de Educación para Adultos (INEA). It is important to note that past studies suggest tensions within the relationship between state-designed programs and their interaction with the communities they serve (Bertely Busquets, 2009; Blum Martínez, 2000). The interaction between the teachers sent by the state to the Indigenous communities has not always resulted in a productive relationship. Previous research found that the state largely sponsors bilingual education in North and Latin America and operates under intercultural or multicultural education (Martinez Buenabad, 2015; Tinajero & Englander, 2011). One key focus of these programs is the intersection of intercultural education with the implications of migration. However, research on intercultural programs has tended to ignore the sociocultural aspects related to language. While intercultural programs aim to preserve native languages and cultures, more research has been conducted on the manifested divides between state curricula for urban areas compared to their rural counterparts (Martinez Buenabad, 2015; Tinajero & Englander, 2011). Furthermore, according to Brittain's (2009) research, transborder narratives are significant for the school community as they expose students' needs, including the comprehension of the educational system in their country of origin, recognition of culturally established expectations in their family and ethnic community, and understanding the teachers' role as a source of social capital.

This study does not deny the previous points of possible contention between the more prominent entities and the community; however, the findings indicate that teachers' instructional role and cooperation reinforce the school's ability to preserve local/ancestral knowledge while maintaining high educational standards, even when some of these teachers may be from outside communities. The findings suggest that Santa Fe de la Laguna community teachers value this collaboration. Similarly, teachers from outside communities recognize the indispensable need to have Purépecha teachers in the school to reinforce the community identity of the students. These teachers include those from the community and nearby Indigenous communities and teachers from cities such as Morelia, the state capital.

Keating (2006) reminds us that as ruptures with modernity continue, the third space serves as a beacon of hope, revealing the problematic dynamics that unfold when power is contested. In this context, marginalized voices such as the subaltern, the post-colonial, the liberated, and the voices of those who struggle emerge and are recognized. Gloria Anzaldúa celebrates the threshold people, who triumph in the dialogic battle in nepantla, the liminal space between opposing worlds (Keating, 2006). These ideas speak to the need for strategic dreaming and action. A second conclusion relates to the necessity of more active cooperation from state entities. At the same time, there is a clear history of participation with entities such as the Universidad Michoacana of San Nicolás de Hidalgo; it proves necessary to expand external institutional engagement due to the necessary validation and accreditation process of the school. As mentioned, the tensions within internal and external entities have not always provided suitable structures to support intercultural programs.

Nonetheless, the willingness to find solutions and heal require cooperation, as this was deemed necessary for the stakeholders in this project.

A third conclusion presents the need to keep amplifying community voices and the voice of environmental activists that assist in developing the school curriculum and the sustenance of the school. This finding emphasizes the critical importance of a support cycle in setting in motion the development of a school that effectively meets the needs of a transnational community. Prior studies have found language revitalization efforts in educational institutions face challenges in creating effective language learning activities that align with the oral traditions of Indigenous communities (Sims, 2005). In alignment with Sims (2005), this study supports that the connection between language and traditional practices ensures the safekeeping of the community's natural resources. The overlap between language revitalization and preservation and the environmental concerns in this Purépecha high school program is central to the instructional design and the way the community listens closely to those who are also advocating for the protection of Lake Pátzcuaro and the forests of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Such language and cultural revitalization efforts protect the autonomy of the community. In previous studies, autonomy has been considered central to how Indigenous communities construct educational and governmental systems (Hamel et al., 2018).

The finding that responds to the second sub-question of the first research question centers on community Retention through educational autonomy leading to community well-being or *Sési Irékani*. This finding responds to the question: What promotes the process of transnational education in a Purépecha community? The emerging second main

finding based on the second conceptual axis Constructing Sési Irékani/Bien Vivir/Wellbeing. This conceptual axis extrapolated from the thematic analysis advances the idea that, through an autonomous intercultural program with transnational education at its core and serving the Purépecha community, there is a better opportunity to promote student community Sési Irékani/bien vivir/well-being through a migratory slow-down and community retention. The findings indicate that these are the contributing factors that make possible a transnational education in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna: Purépecha values, educación para comuneros/comunero education, curricular and administrative autonomy, and institutional support. The first conclusion relates to student retention in the school and the community; this aspect is central to the creation and need for continued support for the school. This second finding exposed how the Santa Fe de la Laguna community viewed retention as a venue to prevent language loss, family disengagement, use of drugs, and an elevated rate of economic distress. Transnationalism in this context also considers the community efforts to have an intentional slow-down in this process of demographic movement within their youth. This finding can be correlated and corroborated with parallel studies on the effects of migration among youth, where it is noted that exposure to crime and unsafe conditions follow this form of mobility (Díaz Guevara, 2020; Donnelly, 2014). The connections to the main argument in this study related to the transformation of patterns of early migration into a transnationalism dynamic re-centered in the hands of the community through the school. This main finding is reaffirmed, as Sési Irékani plays a fundamental role in developing the strong reasons behind the existence of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna.

A second conclusion in this finding highlights the importance of community Sési Irékani/well-being as a critical factor in the community's decision-making as it relates to the concerns regarding the school's sustainability. These findings have led to a third conclusion, highlighting the significance of preserving the high school's curricular and economic autonomy. This will enhance its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission of promoting well-being through educational opportunities for students. It will also provide a foundation for formative retention, which will help to continue the preservation of the Purépecha language, values, and cosmovision. Furthermore, these factors initiate a process that creates a flow effect within the community. The school offers an alternative to the youth's geographical relocation, resulting in a postponement of migration. Consequently, this fosters greater community involvement, leading to the retention of engaged young people. As a result, the growth of educational prospects for future students is enabled and ultimately helps the community develop future leaders.

Research Question 2

This research question was: How do transnationalism and the fight for autonomy inform the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

The third significant finding, Sési Irékani/Well-Being through Pindekúecha/Tradition, proposes that transnational and trans-institutional cooperation has led to a migratory slowdown that promotes the well-being of students and their families in Santa Fe de la Laguna. This finding explains how a transnational autonomous education is constructed and has a deep connection to community well-being. The school depends on this cooperation

for stability, as the absence of the school leads to economic and social vulnerabilities when students need to continue their high school education outside of communities. The findings in this section are more centered in a sequence that presents the development of well-being as a central element that the school fosters.

The first conclusion related to this finding: The cooperation of the stakeholders to create the school has led to a significant role in retaining youth, as the elements of collaboration are vital to the school's success. The interviews by the participants like Elena and Zule who are involved in the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna in different capacities, emphasized how a migratory slowdown was needed and activated to promote the well-being of students and their families in the community. While migration is a transnational dynamic that will continue to exist in Santa Fe de la Laguna and the rest of the state, the experience of this community feels empowered to reshape mobility. Metaphorically speaking, it is a molding of space and time that takes place in the incorporation of Purépecha values to re-direct emigrational movement through the school. This finding highlights the construction of a transnational autonomous education system and its profound connection to community well-being. The school's stability relies on this cooperation, as the absence of the school creates economic and social vulnerabilities when students must pursue their high school education outside of the community.

The second conclusion related to this finding is: Transnational and trans-institutional cooperation directly affect the lives of students and families of the community that supports a migratory slowdown. This, in turn, adds to the community's well-being by decreasing the incidence of drug use and economic strains that have affected the youth of

Santa Fe de la Laguna. This is a key piece in understanding what these experiences entail and how they reinforce the construction of autonomous identities in comunero and comunera youth as the communities' experiences re-center youth at the core. It will only be until youth voices are centered in these conversations that policymakers can gain a deeper understanding of the needs, aspirations, and challenges faced by young people in the context of transnational education and autonomy. This inclusive approach allows for the development of policies that address the immediate concerns and empower and support the youth in their educational journey and overall well-being. By fostering a dialogue that actively involves young individuals, stakeholders can continue a healthy pressure to ensure that policies are responsive to their needs of the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Research Question 3

This research question was: What are the collective experiences of former students and stakeholders of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna?

The fourth significant finding advances the following conceptual axis related to collective experiences that lead to a structure that support comunero education. I named this conceptual axis Kaxúmbekua/Creating an Education for Comunero and Comunera Youth Based on Honor. The finding highlights the presence of a shared sentiment within the community, where both change and continuity are embraced. While change facilitates an active engagement with the modern context surrounding the community, the preservation of Purépecha values and traditions plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for all individuals involved. This balance mitigates economic and social stressors and fosters improved social and economic conditions.

The exploration and the conclusions related to what collective experiences exemplify what takes place in the in-between spaces of each collective experience. Handa and Tippins (2013) explored teacher preparation programs in the context of Indigenous and postcolonial identities. Their study paid particular attention to discursive practices that arose from the 300 years of colonial occupation in the Philippines and the creation of a third space. As tensions over discursive practices were observed among the participants of these teacher preparation programs, their study emphasized recognizing Indigenous versus non-Indigenous, what was identified as science, foreign versus ours, and what has been borrowed. Several aspects of Handa and Tippins's (2013) study were reminiscent of the dynamics occurring in the Preparatoria Indigena intercultural context *in Santa Fe de la Laguna*. Their study provided insight into the ideological tensions that develop and how they can prompt future teachers to explore more profound questions that may not be considered. The development of a third space regards funds of knowledge when these manifest in communities that have suffered displacement. Border crossing or negotiating the borderlands, Anzaldúa (1987) considered multi-dimensional identity as a crossing of borderlands as individuals traverse social and cultural terrain. The study by Aguilar-Valdez et al. (2013) concluded that nepantler@ teachers must acknowledge that their job is not to try to subtract their students' non-dominant cultural aspects so that they can just "become" the dominant, but rather, a nepantler@ teacher takes the last steps of *conocimiento* and embraces *la naguala*, where one can shift their realities and in shifting, acknowledges that others have realities that differ from our own. They critique science

education as a rigid form of Euro western domination that does not allow neptlanter@s to make sense of the natural world around them.

The conclusions from this fourth finding related to language and community practices/values are directly relevant to developing a curriculum that would support comunero education as it relates to two major themes that emerged and intersect to construct the spaces of learning: change and continuity. The first conclusion advances the idea that comunero education, approached from the perspective of maintaining and preserving cultural continuity, is essential to maintain, protect, and revitalize the Purépecha language as a primary means of communication. This ensures that education for comuneros can help to promote a continuation of community practices that will reinforce and maintain identity. In essence, comunero education is the capsule for developing a transnational education edified in tradition and change; that third space brings the possibility of authentic transformational pedagogic practice reminiscent of a nepantla space that centers language and Purépecha practices and culture at the forefront of this instructional space.

This conclusion adds to previous research that critiques the limited approach of educational institutions in implementing Indigenous language programs without considering the broader functions of language and without further consideration of learning events that take place within the community (Sims, 2005). In another study, Wroblewski (2010) concluded that nationalist ideologies can inform bilingual models of interculturality and dilute Indigenous practices if the community's voice is not considered a guiding mechanism for program articulation. A variation of language practices was evident as the participants were on a linguistic spectrum from monolingual in Kichwa, bilingual in Kichwa,

and Spanish to monolingual in Spanish. Furthermore, this study finds points of contention between cultural preservation and how Kichwa culture has been portrayed to the rest of the world (Wroblewski, 2010). Many people in the Kichwa community of Tena see the efforts and the implementation of language standardization as an infringement of the community's rights to cultural and linguistic diversity and traditional forms of socialization. The Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna provides an example of how community dialogic practices create, sustain, and buffer external pressures that can impact the individual characteristics of this intercultural program. These dialogic practices tied to what constitutes comunero/comunera education for a transnational community speak to the weaving of participation among the study participants and the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of participation among the participants and the people of Santa Fe de la Laguna, emphasizing the significance of the community's involvement in language and community-based education.

The second conclusion of this fourth finding relates more closely to the economic aspects and how they impact a transnational community. This conclusion is important, and it is essential to remember the context surrounding this economic canopy. In Latin America, there are 800 Indigenous groups recognized by the United Nations, including over 45 million people (Del Popolo et al., 2014). These groups live in isolated communities, which the United Nations has identified as voluntary isolation, or they may also live in urban settlements (Del Popolo et al., 2014). The historical context determining the conditions these groups share is linked to the socio-political context as they continue living a process that starts with the invasion of European groups into the Americas and the territorial

dispossession. These Indigenous groups were also disposed of the cultural and social spaces as well as their cosmovision and ways of relating to nature (Del Popolo et al., 2014). In this executive report, *Los Pueblos Indígenas en America Latina*, it is noted that:

The minimum standard of rights of Indigenous groups is articulated in five dimensions: the right to non-discrimination, the right to well-being and development, the right to cultural integrity, the right to property, use, and control of their territory and their natural resources and last, the right to participate politically with free previously informed consent where in the context of free determination the exercise of collective rights is practiced as well as the respect for institutions and systems of self-governance. (p. 12)

By promoting the appropriate changes and exposure to critical pedagogies, students will rethink practices that align with a neoliberal agenda that has harmed the social and environmental ecology of Santa Fe de la Laguna. These changes propose breaking away from media and material consumption cycles that have created a great disbalance for the community. Critical pedagogies via the development of a comunero education promote the rescue of ancestral and community practices yet foster changes that further a cultural and linguistic identity that reinforces community participation. Furthermore, by reducing stress associated with early migration, the community is released from different economic and social pressure levels as vulnerabilities are reduced.

Aunani/Consejos and Recommendations

These recommendations are presented recognizing that COVID-19 has amplified many disparities and challenges that schools face. It is necessary to mention that the comunidad Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna comprises people prepared to model how you create a program designed for a transnational community and sustain it through such challenges. Nonetheless, I present the following reflections/recommendations in the

humblest spirit as I learned so much in interacting with the participants that the entire process became a set of learnings for myself, aware of the existing structural inequalities.

In México, the unequal distribution of resources only magnified the ability of many school programs to continue or recover from the devastation of this world event. As in many parts of the world, Indigenous communities still face teacher shortages and sometimes the dissolution of whole school projects. In articulating the soundest recommendations, I draw from my experience as a teacher, an instructor in a teacher preparation program, a mother of two children who have been through the schooling process through this catastrophic event, and as an emergent researcher in qualitative research. One clear aspect that informs these recommendations is the need to face these challenges together; however, cooperation among entities is most effective when a plan and a clear structure are visible.

The following section presents recommendations that have a basis of support for the analysis, findings, and conclusions of this study. The proposals for the high school project's viability and existence involve cooperation among stakeholders and external state entities. These recommendations are presented to Santa Fe de la Laguna's community leaders, administrators and teachers, external educational and governmental institutions, high school teachers and administrators in the United States, and future researchers.

Recommendations for Community Leaders of Santa Fe de la Laguna

Since 2010 the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna project has been launched successfully despite the economic obstacles mentioned in the findings. Given the precedent of curricular success, creating a multidirectional strategy to support

the school further would be beneficial, and the reopening of the school would be facilitated.

The Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna is recognized as an example of a program that successfully incorporates community dialogic practices, which create, sustain, and buffer external pressures that can impact the program's transnational identity.

The following recommendations propose that the Leaders and Council of the Santa Fe de la Laguna should:

1. When the school reopens, establish a pathway between the existing intercultural programs in the community to further access to a high school preparation with Purépecha language and community practices at the core of its curriculum. Furthermore, the teachers participating in the Escuela Secundaria Técnica Intercultural Num. 7 Profesor Elipidio Domínguez Castro in Quiroga, Santa Fe de la Laguna, could be invited to collaborate with the high school teachers. The secondary program has classes that have been taught in the Purépecha language. The continuation or pathway created for students would be beneficial. The close communication of teachers and students from both communities would ensure more robust participation from both the student and teacher communities.
2. In various interviews, the participants mentioned the practical results of community cooperation in the construction and development of the school. Since this form of cooperation, faenas have existed concurrently with the development of the school, this practice has proven beneficial for the community. Faenas are based on communal work or a collective effort to meet a

common goal. Faenas can include tasks such as farming, construction, or cleaning a public space and often involves voluntary participation from community members. The concept of faena emphasizes the importance of collaboration, mutual support, and reciprocity within the community. However, it is recommended that further structures of support that already exist among the community members allocate specific community-school faenas to care for the school's infrastructure such as the ones mentioned in Chapter 4 where the community joined efforts and got together to build the school. Many people contributed with what was in their capacity.

3. Community-led activities for fundraising could greatly benefit the school economically.

Recommendations for Administrators and Teachers

1. The findings revealed the need to design a structured curriculum that would capture the unique needs of the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe la Laguna students. Starting with defined curricular maps and unit plans would ensure a better dialogue when presented to state entities for cross-community articulation. The Preparatoria Indígena of Santa Fe de la Laguna has been asked to rely on the curriculum developed by the Universidad Michoacana for intercultural high schools in Indigenous communities in Michoacán. This aspect has limited the school's curricular needs by limiting teachers' ability to integrate community-specific courses. Although the teachers and administrators of the school have inserted the Purépecha language as part of the instruction, there is a

joint call to articulate a curricular structure more suitable for the needs of this high school.

2. The administrators and teachers of the school could work closely with community leaders to request funding from external foundations such as the Inter-American Foundation (supports sustainable development initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, including education projects for Indigenous communities); the Ford Foundation (supports projects that aim to advance social justice and equity in Indigenous communities); and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (currently has Indigenous communities in a category of high importance and provides funding for projects in Latin America). Given the budget constraints and the problems resulting from conflict within the state's budget appropriation for school programs such as this one, more can be done with external resources that the school can manage.

Recommendations for External Educational Governmental Institutions

1. It is imperative to provide teacher salaries with parity with state teachers across Michoacán. Significant stress was associated with the school's attrition level throughout the findings. It was evident, too, that the most considerable anxiety among the students was due to the lack of sufficient faculty members and teachers' inability to sustain their jobs without economic remuneration.
2. A culturally responsive form of state accreditation is needed to fit the needs of an autonomous curriculum in the school designed to support education for comuneros and comuneras of the community of Santa Fe de la Laguna. The

Secretaría de Educación Pública should step in to help with the curricular design of the teachers in the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna.

Recommendations for U.S. High School Teachers and Administrators

1. It is imperative to acknowledge and consider the diverse linguistic repertoires of students who immigrate from Latin American nations where Spanish is the official language. The placement mechanisms need to avoid the immediate assumption that a transnational student's first language is the national language.
2. The experience of transnationalism is complex and is not limited to binational transit for our students. Students from Indigenous communities like Santa Fe de la Laguna need to acquire new paradigms in their language systems and social conceptions that do not have such strong consideration of communal values.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Examining the long-term effects of a program such as the Preparatoria Indígena Intercultural de Santa Fe de la Laguna is essential as their model of education can continue to inform parallel implementations in other Indigenous communities in México, the United States, and communities across the Americas.
2. The phenomenon of transnational education will continue to evolve along with the community. The effects of climate change and globalization may play a future role in migration dynamics. A follow-up study in the next 5 to 10 years is

recommended to investigate the effects of the continuation of this program or observe the results of a lack of this kind of educational opportunity.

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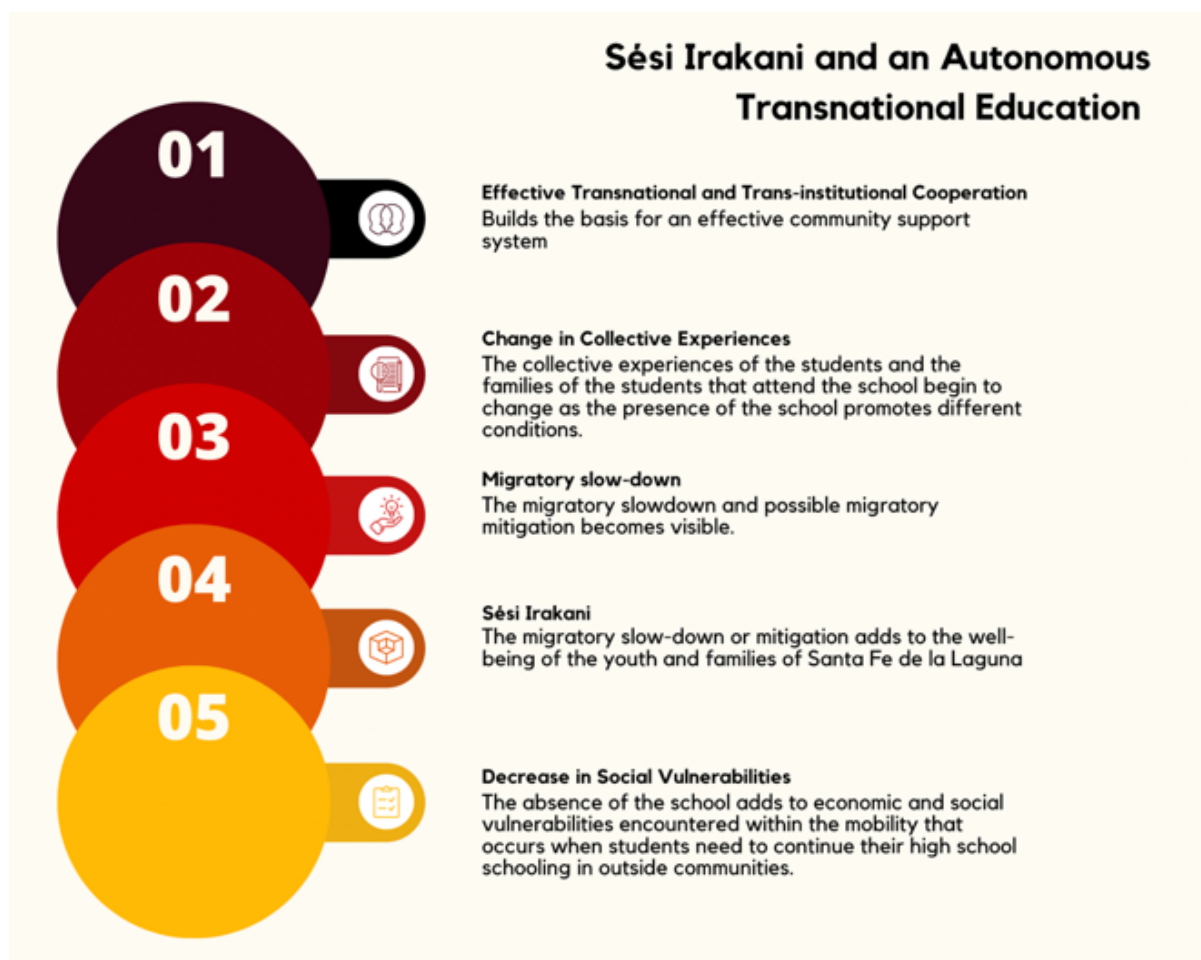
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APPENDIX A

Sequence of Contributors to Well-Being through the Establishment and Existence of the Escuela Intercultural Indígena de Santa Fe de la Laguna



APPENDIX B

Experiences of Stakeholders in the Construction of Transnational Education
for *Comunero* Youth

