Some Contemporary Forms of the Funds of Knowledge Approach. Developing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Social Justice

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Abstract

The population of children in schools is rapidly becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse. However, there is a mismatch between the cultures in children's homes and the cultures in their schools. The funds of knowledge approach emerged in Tucson (Arizona, USA) in order to counter the deficit perspectives common in depictions of working-class, Latin American families. In this paper we critically report on two contemporary research projects conducted around funds of knowledge and social justice pedagogy. In particular, this paper describes and discusses two projects, which have been conducted in schools with disadvantaged students in USA (Latino students in Arizona) and Australia (students with low socio-economic status, from diverse ethnic groups), examining how these projects exemplify social justice pedagogy. Both projects reviewed explore the application of a funds of knowledge approach, in which students focus on a key aspect of their identity and living circumstances and investigate it, seeking to understand the current situation and create positive options for possible improvements.

Keywords: Funds of Knowledge, Dark Funds of Knowledge, multicultural society, inclusive education, social justice pedagogy.

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Aproximaciones Contemporáneas del Marco Fondos de Conocimiento. El Desarrollo de la Pedagogía Culturalmente Congruente para la Justicia Social

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Resumen

En las últimas décadas, la geografía escolar se está diversificando étnica y culturalmente. Sin embargo, existe un desencuentro entre las culturas de los hogares y de las escuelas en la población de origen extranjero. La aproximación *fondos de conocimiento* surge en Tucson (Arizona, EEUU) con el objetivo de combatir la perspectiva del déficit. El propósito de este artículo consiste en explorar críticamente dos aproximaciones contemporáneas que permiten vincular la tradición del programa fondos de conocimiento con la llamada pedagogía de la justicia social. En particular, se describe y discuten ambos proyectos implementados en escuelas con estudiantes de minorías de Estados Unidos de América (estudiantes latinos en Arizona) y Australia (estudiantes con estatus socioeconómico bajo de distintos grupos étnicos), que permite ejemplificar la pedagogía de la justicia social. Ambos proyectos revisados exploran las aplicaciones de la aproximación de los fondos de conocimiento centrando su análisis en la investigación que hacen los estudiantes sobre sus identidades y circunstancias vitales con el fin de entender su situación actual y crear potenciales opciones de mejora.

Palabras clave: Fondos de conocimiento, fondos oscuros de conocimiento, sociedad multicultural, educación inclusiva, pedagogía de la justicia socia

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The emergence of the globalization and new technologies, in general, and the global knowledge economy, in particular, has put a premium on learning throughout the world. Mobility is becoming a necessity because it allows people to be in touch with informational networks (Castells, 1996). An informational-based economy relies primarily on the use of knowledge rather than physical abilities. Indeed, the global knowledge economy is transforming the demands of the labour market, which, in turn, is becoming more competitive and precarious.

According to Bauman (2006), a number of negative consequences of the global knowledge economy emerge such as the generation of surplus people (who have no place in the system), the liquid, fragile and unpredictable world over which people have no control, or of increasingly visible inequalities as the rich and the poor. In that context, international mobility of children, young people and families has become a key feature of globalization. Major sociologists like Manuel Castells, Zygmunt Bauman, Stephen Castles and John Urry argue that globalization and mobility are two sides of the same coin (Favell, 2001).

Schools are not immune to these processes. Quite the contrary: what is happening in the world is mirrored in school settings where, in recent decades, substantial changes have transformed school populations. On the one hand, there is a mismatch between the cultures in children's homes and the cultures in their schools. On the other hand, important differences in learning outcomes can be observed.

In short, disproportionately high numbers of students who are under-represented (due to low income, ethnic minority, foreign origin and so on) perform consistently lower academically than middle-class students. In that regard, OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA, illustrates the effects on learning outcomes of socio-economic disadvantages and the comparison between immigrant students and students without an immigrant background.

For instance, PISA 2012 analyzed mathematics scores from around 510.000 students across 34 OECD countries. Across OECD countries studied, a more socio-economically advantaged student scores 39 points higher in mathematics than a less-advantaged student. Indeed, disadvantaged students not only score lower in mathematics, and are more likely to report

skipping classes or days of school and arriving late for school, they also reported lower levels of engagement, drive, motivation and self-beliefs. For example, in OECD countries, while 85% of advantaged student agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel like I belong at school", only 78% of disadvantaged students did (PISA, 2012).

The presence of different languages, identities, religions and family traditions in schools requires radical thinking about how to deal successfully with this social and cultural heterogeneity in order to maintain and guarantee equality, social cohesion, and social justice. By social justice pedagogy it means teaching that explicitly address diversity and equity to against the inequities, social injustices, and oppressions in the world in which one lives (Erchick & Tyson, 2013; Gustein, 2003).

Gustein (2003) summarized the core elements of the social justice pedagogy through three interrelated main goals: 1) helping students develop consciousness in regard their life conditions and the socio-political dynamics of their world, 2) fostering a sense of agency in students, that is, students have to become actively involved in understanding and solving social inequalities, and 3) encouraging the creation of a positive social and cultural identities by recognizing students language and sociocultural practices. In doing so, teachers guide in this process of deep socio-political understanding through questions that address topics that have meaning in both students lives and world circumstances. "These processes of helping students understand, formulate, and address questions and develop analyses of their society are critical components of teaching for social justice and may be encapsulated as 'developing socio-political consciousness" (Gustein, 2003, p. 40).

To conclude, the main idea of social justice pedagogy is to develop what Freire (1994) called *conscientização* (socio-political consciousness) through learning subjects like mathematics, history, biology, reading or writing. To give a definition:

> The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and

behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part (Erchick & Tyson, 2013, p. 2).

It can be argued that *funds of knowledge* theory provides an approach that enables teachers to design social justice educational programmes. Indeed, there are several projects focused on social justice and based on the funds of knowledge approach. In particular, Cammarota, in USA, and Zipin and colleagues, in Australia, have developed advances in theory and practice of funds of knowledge approach.

In this paper we aim to critically revise the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), conducted in Tucson (USA), and the Redesigning Pedagogies in the North Project (RPiN) developed in Australia. Both projects illustrate how can be conducted social justice educational programs based on the funds of knowledge approach. We concentrate on presenting only these projects because we think both projects represent two relevant variants of the funds of knowledge original work that contributed advances in funds of knowledge theory. In particular, we think both projects contribute to funds of knowledge theory by emphasizing students agency and using their particular funds of identity or ways of conceiving -"lived experiencing"- reality (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Moreover, unlike other contemporary usages of funds of knowledge approach (Hughes & Pollard, 2006; McIntyre, Kyle, & Rightmyer, 2005), both projects described here are attempts to accomplish the principles of social justice pedagogy, specifically in regard to help students to develop consciousness on their life conditions and the socio- political dynamics of their world.

This paper is divided into three sections. First, we briefly describe the origin and context of funds of knowledge theory. Second, we illustrate two contemporary projects based on the funds of knowledge approach that explicitly address social justice. Finally, we critically discuss certain considerations which we feel should be taken into account during the development and implementation of the programme funds of knowledge regarding social justice pedagogy.

The Funds of the *Funds of Knowledge* Approach

The term '*funds of knowledge'* stems from anthropology, specifically, from studies focused on economic exchange networks of Mexican immigrants residing in the USA. These studies, conducted by Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez and James Greenberg at the University of Arizona, stressed the importance of establishing relationships and transnational social ties based on mutual trust. These social networks are manifested through the exchange of *funds*, i.e., "bodies of knowledge of strategic importance to households" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 314).

The authors refer to the pioneering work of Wolf who distinguishes between different funds that any household requires in order to survive and develop, namely: caloric funds, funds of rent, replacement funds, ceremonial funds and social funds. Expanding on this premise, they go on to say that: "public schools often ignore the strategic and cultural resources -which we have termed *funds of knowledge-* that households contain. We argue that these funds not only provide the basis for understanding the cultural systems from which U.S.-Mexican children emerge, but that they also are important and useful assets in the classroom" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313).

The underlying idea is that through networks of help and collaboration, based on mutual trust, exchanges are established that involve not only capital (i.e., money) for work, as in the logic of capitalism, but also of knowledge, skills and abilities. In so-called 'time banks' for example, people exchange "time, dedication, expertise" related to some task: thus, an English teacher will teach a plumber's daughter for one hour a week while the plumber will spend an hour each week fixing the English teacher's pipes.

Following this line of reasoning, the funds of knowledge are defined both as a knowledge-resources any household has –regardless their social, economic and cultural condition-, and as a social networks embedded in the household functioning. "We use the term 'funds of knowledge' to refer to these historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992, p. 133).

> We use the term 'funds of knowledge' to refer to the diverse social networks that interconnect households with their social environments and facilitate the sharing or exchange of resources, including knowledge, skills, and labor essential for the household's functioning, if not their well-being (Moll, Tapia, & Whitmore, 1993, p. 140).

The original work has three main objectives, namely: 1) to improve the academic performance of students who are grossly undervalued (often *hidden*, silenced and whose very existence may even be denied by the dominant culture and the school system); 2) to improve ties between family and school (through policies of trust, i.e., with teachers making visits to the homes of their students in order to discover their funds of knowledge) and finally, 3) to modify teaching practice by designing curriculum units based on the funds of knowledge discovered (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

The design of funds of knowledge approach includes three related elements: 1) research in households, 2) classroom analysis, and 3) study group meetings for discussion of theory, data collection and findings in relation to the study of the households and classrooms (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

In that sense, the "study group" is suggested as a "mediating structure" (Moll, 2014) in which teachers, in collaboration with researchers, learn how to conduct ethnographic studies of their students' families at home. Specifically, teachers analyze the family history and their labor history of the households of language-minority students to detect the bodies of knowledge, information, skills, and strategies found within households. These ethnographic visits allows teachers create representations of the underrepresented students households based on the documentation of their resources not on some stereotype deficit view on immigrant families. In the "study groups", teachers design educational activities incorporating the funds of knowledge detected during their visits. That is to say, funds of knowledge become educational resources because teachers incorporated them into their teaching and the curriculum. This is an example of a culture-based teaching because the families' culture and experiences are incorporated into the curriculum and school practice (McIntyre, Kyle, & Rightmyer, 2005).

Recent reviews have helped to shed light on the concepts and sources of people's funds of knowledge (Hogg, 2011), as well as analysing the pedagogical dimensions and the issues of power and agency in this approach (Rodriguez, 2013). In addition, the pioneers of this approach have revisited the origins and development of the project (González, Wyman, & O'Connor, 2011; Moll, 2014). Moreover, some theoretical and methodological advances have been suggested recently. For example, the consideration of the students' funds of identity as a complement to families' funds of knowledge (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, 2014a; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b).

As we mentioned above, in this paper we focus on two contemporary projects carried in the USA and Australia, which combines an interpretation of funds of knowledge legacy with social justice pedagogy. To us, both projects enrich the funds of knowledge theory illustrating how to bridge social justice pedagogy with funds of knowledge theory.

Students as "Researchers" of their own Lifeworlds and Communities

The *Social Justice Education Project* (SJEP) began in 2003 with a class at Cholla High School in Tucson (Arizona) as an attempt to engage Latino youth in the education process. Currently, Julio Cammarota, associate professor at University of Arizona, is the director of this project (Cammarota, 2007).

The SJEP is conducted in high schools in the Tucson Unified School District where high school students receive high school credit to examine and interrogate their own socio-historical contexts. In other words, the SJEP requires students to adopt a certain degree of serious academic subjectivity in order to analyze and address the social conditions that may undermine their future opportunities. The objective is to enable students to develop more sophisticated forms of critical analysis regarding the inequalities that affect their life experience. With the main focus being on racism, the aim is get students to think about this issue, to reinforce the central role that reflection should have in the difficulties and social prejudices experienced by themselves, their families and their communities and to start generating counter-hegemonic alternatives that transform the educational and social

realities; i.e., alternatives that result from initiatives by the students themselves.

With this premise, Cammarota (2007) developed his SJEP in the 3rd and 4th grade classrooms of 20 Latino children at a high school in Tucson, Arizona. By means of a transformative plan of studies, the teacher/student discussion groups became essential spaces to "unearth silenced voices". In a preliminary exercise, poems were used to bring into the open the life histories, narratives and experiences of students. Once the identity experiences were collected, four sub-themes relating to inequalities in education were established and these were then investigated by the students. These investigations, once carried out, subsequently had an impact beyond the classroom as they were presented to educators, families, administrators and community members. Students participated as holders of knowledge and this led them to increase their self-confidence, to create and develop their own voice and feel effective within the classroom and beyond it.

In the SJEP, Latino families are not perceived to have deficits such as cultural deficits, linguistic deficits and so on. On the contrary, families are viewed as possessing valuable cultural resources, knowledge, and experiences that can enrich students' education. Through "Encuentros" (encounters or public meetings among students, teachers, families, and community members) the injustices facing Latinos in education are discussed (Cammarota & Romero, 2014). Indeed the "encuentros" represents a translation and adaptation of the study groups described above. Here, the purpose of the study groups, or "encuentros", is to facilitate the extensive classroom dialogue, which in turn became the basis for presentations to other audiences. Thus, the students have to develop an elaborate symbolic repertoire for conducting research and representing the findings. Unlike the "study groups", the "encuentros" are not spaces for documenting household knowledge and practices. However, those can be potential spaces for developing the necessary relations of mutual trust among teachers, students and families, which is a crucial purpose of the funds of knowledge original project. Moreover, the project is closer to the social justice pedagogy in contrast to original work conducted by funds of knowledge theory. In that regard, the three main goals of the social justice pedagogy described above can be illustrated in the SJEP.

First, "Encuentros" help students to discuss important socio-political topics such racism. Second, students develop a sense of agency through "youth-centered participatory action research". Words and themes emerged from students' lived experiences elicited and collected by poems, notes, photos or interviews. For instance, some students selected the topic of border and immigration policies because family members had died crossing the desert. Students are active in choosing the topic, analysing it and showing their findings to family members, teachers, school board staff or district superintendents. Finally, "Encuentros" are safe settings for showing social and cultural identities by recognizing students' live experiences and forms of life through written reports, presentations, or video documentation. Encuentros would be an appropriate space for develop what Sepúlveda (2011) calls pedagogy of *acompañamiento*. Romero, Arce and Cammarota (2009) conclude:

> According to our students this foundation has helped them develop a strong social, cultural and historical identity that has allowed many of them to develop for the first time an academic identity, which also has helped the students develop a strong sense of academic proficiency (p. 219).

This is an illustration of a positive social identity (academic proficiency) produced by recognizing of students' language and texts such as poems written by themselves.

As in the case of the SJEP, the *Redesigning Pedagogies in the North* (RPiN) project, in Australia, requires the active participation of students with teachers in discussion groups in which they negotiate the curriculum units (Zipin, 2013; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). Teachers suggest to the students that they incorporate significant cultural artefacts (from outside the school) into the school reality. These cultural artefacts are mediators in the construction of the identity of the students as they are created by families and communities in ways that are historical, social and cultural. Again, the three core elements of social justice pedagogy can be detected easily.

> Teachers asked students to bring cultural artefacts from their lives outside school that carried rich identity resonances, and to talk/"teach" about their social-cultural meanings. Following this, class discussions encouraged students to name and analyse local lifeworld issues. Teachers took notes on what happened in the classroom, and brought them to a RPiN roundtable for discussion in small groups of teachers and university researchers (Zipin, 2009, p. 320).

By making them explicit (naming them and presenting them as life experience) in the school context, it can incorporate it and use this valuable material as a lever for transforming the curriculum and teaching practices that take place in the school. In this way, co-designed research projects emerge, with the students as protagonists, in which the community is re-imagined (Zipin, 2013; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012).

Indeed, the aim is to elicit/imagine and foster positive aspirations towards futures among young people in power-marginalised regions through curriculum processes. Zipin, Sellar, Brennan, & Gale (2013) use the expression 'funds of aspiration' to means alternative positive future possibilities, something like the funds of knowledge 'in a future tense'.

An example of this is the case of a teaching unit involving clay sculpture animations in Art classes within the RPiN project (Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). The students used the clay to incorporate life stories which were the fruit of their funds of knowledge and identity, actively participating in the co-construction of the curriculum and learning outcomes in what Zipin, Sellar and Hattam (2012) call a "double democratic approach".

> The authors describe a "double democratic" approach in curricular and pedagogical practices that seeks to give a voice to the students' funds of knowledge in a manner that puts students and teachers in positions of reciprocal learning in their joint pursuit of knowledge (Rodríguez, 2013, p. 96).

In this case, the teacher encouraged students to incorporate life experiences that were important to them. At first there were doubts, superficiality and little significance in the experiences they shared. When the teacher

introduced video as a device to encourage inspiration and increase interest among the students, there was more effort in the art projects and many of the students identified with videos that featured violent themes. The teacher took advantage of this to stimulate reflection on the subject. Thus, he helped the students to expand on the problem of violence as an important issue for them and their communities and to come up with solutions that were relevant to their community. The result was the creation of clay animation artwork that dealt with the violence in their lives but also gave them the opportunity to design encouraging solutions that helped them to re-evaluate this reality.

The programme, conceived by Lew Zipin (currently at Victoria University, Melbourne) and colleagues, consists of an action research project in which the researchers found need to conceptualize '*dark*' and '*light*' funds of knowledge (Zipin, 2009), in order to redesign curriculum and pedagogy in schools in a poor region (north of Adelaide, Australia) in which there was a pronounced heterogeneity and diversity of cultural backgrounds: students from Vietnam, Cambodia, Bosnia, Sudan and Somalia (Zipin, 2009, 2013; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012).

In that regard, by '*dark funds of knowledge*' it means knowledge about difficult aspects of life that some students experience, such as racism, violence, conflict and poverty (Zipin 2009). The claim, then, is that failing to acknowledge and create pedagogical space for both '*dark*' and '*light*' funds of knowledge. In other words, the challenge is to understand rather than avoid, the '*dark funds of knowledge*', the consequences for students of living in difficult circumstances.

As we mentioned above, the project created discussion groups, rather like the '*study groups*' from the original funds of knowledge project in Tucson (Moll, 2014). However, in this version, the teachers negotiated curriculum units with the students with the aim of becoming '*researchers*' of their local life contexts. This echoed the approach developed by Cammarota (2007) in the USA.

The stories they encountered combined positive elements in relation to the students' community but also dark elements, such as poverty, violence, drugs and alcohol, mental health problems, squalor or discrimination. As one of the teachers said: "Some (students) are actually quite worried about the community they live in; they see a high crime rate, they're worried about

drugs and alcohol; where other kids have a huge love for their community" (Zipin, 2009, p. 321).

According to Zipin (2009), living in difficult circumstances (poverty, violence, etc.) means accumulating and developing what he calls *dark funds of knowledge* - "the dark side of place" (Zipin, 2009, p. 322) - which mediates how students - and their families - perceive and participate in the culture of the school.

Inspired by Bourdieu's perspective, Zipin (2009, 2013; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012) holds the view that there is a cultural capital in schools that benefits a cultural elite; a cultural capital that reflects the cultural codes that this elite share in their homes and in their community of reference. However, other cultural codes, such as those of ethnic minorities, are unjustly alienated by the dominant culture both in the curriculum and in the pedagogy used. Thus, using these undervalued cultural codes and making them explicit and practicable within the curriculum is crucial to the academic success of students from these ethnic groups. Funds of knowledge -involving practices that recognize, appreciate and make use of family and community knowledge pertaining to the less empowered students within the school- are a highly valuable tool for advancing social justice in schools.

What is new in this case is the use of the *dark* funds of knowledge as an asset for the social transformation of the curriculum itself and as an inherent part of these students' participation and involvement in the activities within the school. Indeed, some of the topics addressed by the SJEP can be considered *dark*: racism for example. However, far from suggesting that such *dark* knowledge be used to reproduce situations of poverty through deep-seated cultural processes and practices, i.e., through the 'culture of poverty' (Zipin, 2013), the aim here is to use these the full range of lived knowledge to mobilize transformation programmes which use creativity and imagination to move from "darkness to light" through curriculum that encourages reflection and pro-action towards social change, generating a desirable future for living in the community (Zipin, 2013). "Difficult lifeworld knowledge can indeed fund lifeworld-vitalised curricula to engage learners" (Zipin, 2009, p. 323).

Social Justice Pedagogy in Funds of Knowledge Tradition. A Critical Examination of the SJEP and RPiN Projects

It can be argued that both projects aim to facilitate a critical understanding and reimagining of the "at-risk" students cultural historical present. In other words, the primary goal of the projects is to engage students academically while helping them conduct critical research on social issues that matter to them. The students, for example, would carry out collaborative research on inequalities they might have experienced in their lives, whether in or out of school. This is a form of civic engagement because the students can learn how to improve conditions in their schools and communities. In addition, in both projects the students learn how to apply ethnographic methods to the study of their schools and communities. In that sense it can be assumed that the role of students change abruptly from passive (to receive instruction from teacher) to active (observe, record and produce knowledge on social problems, such as racism and other forms of discrimination). These insights can facilitate the incorporation of new identities such as advocates for social justice, a pedagogical goal of both programs.

According to Bell (2007): "The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (p. 1). However, normally in school contexts, the relationships between the teacher, the pupil and the family are dominated by asymmetrical power relationships in which teachers have expertise over children by means of an academic assessment of them. The parent/teacher meetings concentrate on "accountability" with the discussion being about the child's performance in school. In this scenario, the role of the student is to learn, internalize, reproduce and display academic knowledge administered by the teacher.

In contrast, one of the more notable aspects of the funds of knowledge programme is the modification of these power relations, and the fact that it empowers teachers, families and pupils (Rodriguez, 2013). The teacher abandons the traditional role of expert and becomes a researcher; the families lose their traditional passivity in the context of the school and become suppliers of resources that can be turned to educational advantage; and the children construct knowledge by creating cultural and identity artefacts (funds of identity, Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b). In the contemporary projects described here it can be explicitly illustrate the

transformation of students role. The students construct knowledge by creating particular artefacts such as poems, in SJEP project, or a clay animation artwork, in RPiN project. Through these artifacts students recognize the dark funds of knowledge as poverty, racial discrimination, economic disparities, and other conditions in their schools or neighborhoods elicited/imagined by students themselves.

As we suggested above, despite some differences on procedure, these projects have pertinent features in common: most fundamentally, students are both the researchers and the focus of the study, and the teaching content directly counters racism and racist stereotypes or difficult circumstances through contextualization of the students' social, economic, and cultural realities. This view emphasizes learning as mediated processes of collective knowledge creation from artifacts and shared objects of activity. The key is to provide a setting –study groups in the original work, *encuentros* in SJEP or discussion groups among teachers and students in RpiN– for discourse or dialogue among participants that promote expansive models of teaching and learning based on funds of knowledge.

An important outcome of these shared settings is to support the development of the teacher's pedagogy, the creation of a network among teachers, researchers, families, and students and the production of an additive schooling, that is, to develop theoretical and transformative education for the children. The *encuentros* and the discussion groups facilitate discourse practices that enable students to think and research together about social topics. In both projects, the students discuss actively how to improve conditions in their communities carry out collaborative research on inequalities they might have experienced in their lives, whether in or out of school. This is a form of civic engagement. In addition, the students learn how to design and apply ethnographic methods to the study of their life conditions, bringing and analyzing cultural artefacts from their lives outside school as in the RPiN project, or through youth participatory action research in the SJEP project. In both cases, the process of researching led to the creation of new funds of knowledge and identity regarding social justice: social problems such as racism and other forms of discrimination, inequitable distribution of resources, and so on.

Both projects represent attempts to determine how social justice pedagogy can be conducted based on funds of knowledge approach. However, these variants of the funds of knowledge approach did not conduct teacher visits to student households, a central aspect of the original work. In particular in the RPiN project the focus is on students and teachers, and families are not taken into account. Regarding SJEP, families are part of *encuentros*. Both projects are based on the idea of funds of knowledge as pedagogical resources, focused on students' funds of knowledge –funds of identity (Esteban-Guitart, 2012; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a)– rather than families' funds of knowledge. It can be supposed that the lack of teacher visits to families has negative effects on necessary transformation of teacher and parent roles, and their relationships. In other words, families' funds of knowledge are not visible because there is not an exchange through teacher visits. Then the process of establishing *convivencia*, by which it means a mode of conviviality based on forming relations of trust through interpersonal communications between teachers and families, becomes problematized.

Further developments should take families seriously, as other relevant children environments and artefacts such as digital devices. To us, putting students identity at the core of the educational practice in order to engage them in discussions on social justice should be compatible with fostering relationships among teachers and families based on mutual trust.

We share with social justice pedagogy an interest in understanding socio-political circumstances and to foster students' agency and responsibility. However, the problem of social reform is that it often does not involve only individual change in a micro cultural level, rather it is the result of macro cultural forces (Esteban-Guitart, 2014b; Ratner, 2012). It is important to emphasize here that the solution would be to eliminate exploitation and developing cooperative environments and practices, not simply to enrich and empower oneself personally. Moreover, all students, not only students at risk (as in both projects described here), should attend social justice programmes in order to be aware about the inequalities and power relationships between social groups.

To conclude, as we understand it, the two experiences briefly described here suggest three major challenges ahead for the funds of knowledge approach.

First, there needs to be an empirical analysis of the new relationships of power and agency that have arisen from the implementation of school practices based on funds of knowledge -including when such relationships lead to the use of funds of knowledge that may be uncomfortable for schools or for the teachers themselves, but of great significance to students, families and communities, such as, for example, the so-called *dark* funds of knowledge (Zipin, 2009, 2013). In this sense, we feel that the analysis can be enriched by incorporating Foucault into the theoretical corpus (Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Bourdieu's sociological theory).

Secondly, it is necessary to design and exemplify teaching and learning procedures that place the learners' *funds of identity* at the heart of educational activity, and to recognize the *multiple literacies* that emerge from using different semiotic resources in different contexts of life and activity (Reyes & Esteban-Guitart, 2013). Recognizing the *funds of knowledge* and *identity* does not mean we end up chaining ourselves to them. On the contrary, they can serve to create cultural artefacts, leading to new funds of knowledge and identity.

Finally, there is a need for a critical analysis of the practices that shape the ever-changing conditions of contemporary times that underlie the lives of schoolchildren and their families in their struggle to deal with adversity and to ensure their well-being and quality of life.

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