Copyright

by

Melissa M. Forbis

2008

The Dissertation Committee for Melissa Marie Forbis Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

"Never Again a Mexico Without Us": Gender, Indigenous Autonomy, and Multiculturalism in Neoliberal Mexico

Committee:

Charles R. Hale, Supervisor

Edmund T. Gordon

Shannon Speed

Kamran Ali

R. Aída Hernández Castillo

“Never Again a Mexico Without Us”: Gender, Indigenous Autonomy, and Multiculturalism in Neoliberal Mexico

by

Melissa Marie Forbis, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2008

Dedication

In memory of Helen Ferraro & Zenaida Aguilar Moreno, grandmothers/*abuelas*.

You taught me much about love and struggle.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not exist without the collaboration and support of many people to whom I owe a great debt. Words cannot express my thanks to all who have crossed my path, and who, in their own way, have contributed to this work. First and foremost, I must thank the many Zapatistas I've worked with over the years. Jocolawal and gracias *compas,* for your patience, for sharing tortilla, coffee, stories, and struggle, and for your ongoing commitment to radical social change despite the violence and hardships. I cannot name you all, but know that your questions, interest, collaboration, and analysis have driven this work forward. I would like to extend my extra gratitude to the community members of La Garrucha, Zapata, the locutoras and locutores of Radio Insurgente, and "the Snake."

I could not have had a better group of interlocutors, Charles R. Hale, Ted Gordon, Shannon Speed, Aída Hernández Castillo and Kamran Ali, who, through their own work and engagement with mine, have pushed me to think critically about both theory and methodology. Many thanks for taking an intellectual and political interest in my project, and supporting me throughout my graduate career. I would like to give a special thanks to my advisor Charles R. Hale for his commitment to creating spaces for engaged

research in the academy, and for his insightful comments and openness to debate. Finally, I want to acknowledge the contribution of the late Begoña Aretxaga. Ideas that found their way into this dissertation were first discussed with her.

Thanks to my extended Chiapas "community" for debate, insight and the necessary reality check over the years, in particular the *bandas* in Chiapas, DF, Berlin, Oakland, Austin, Philly, and Bristol. In Austin, helping found MonkeyWrench Books during my second year was a crucial link to community work with wonderful people. Likewise, anarchist soccer was an important social, political and much needed physical outlet during the writing of this dissertation. I want to thank my graduate school colleagues over the years who have provided intellectual engagement and friendship, Nick Copeland, Halide Verlioglu, Fernanda Soto, Pablo González, Estevan Azcona, Andi Shively, and Manolo Callahan. Many thanks Jennifer Goett and Justin Patch, who went beyond the call of duty during my last year of writing, and Carlos Perez de Alejo for last minute editing.

Additional thanks go to Shannon Speed for encouraging me to come back to a PhD program while we were both working in Chiapas, for her valuable and tireless mentoring, her friendship, as well as careful readings and suggestions. A number of colleagues stepped in at various moments of this process to provide crucial support, Ashley Dawson, raúlsalinas, Rene Valdez, Toyin Falola, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Guiomar Rovira. Thank you Sue Sturgis, constant friend for years, for reminding me of the many paths we can take. This project has also been shaped by conversations over the years with a group of committed feminist activist scholars: Shannon Speed, Aida

Hernández Castillo, Guiomar Rovira, Irmalicia Velasquez Nimatuj, Keisha-Khan Perry, Millaray Painemal and Patricia Richards.

I have had the good fortune to receive financial support for this dissertation from the University of Texas at Austin, the National Science Foundation, and the University of California, Santa Barbara's Women's Studies Dissertation Fellowship. At UCSB, I was fortunate to share my work with an engaged community of scholars. I want to thank Laury Oaks in particular for her continued mentorship and the wonderful group of dissertation fellows I shared work with while there. At UT, I want to thank the excellent staff of the Anthropology Department for all their help and much-needed humor. During my time as an affiliate at CIESAS-Sureste, I encountered a group of serious and engaged scholars who took an interest in my project. Finally, thanks to Chiapas scholars Christine Eber, Christine Kovic, and Jan Rus. Thanks to the Museo de América in Madrid for providing the illustrations of the casta paintings and Jacob Rus for his maps.

My extended family provided unfailing support during this long process, especially my brother Scot, who pitched in at various critical junctures to make finishing a reality. Finally, I want to thank Cale, for his love and for a shared dream of a different and more just future, and for his commitment to create that world now.

"Never Again a Mexico Without Us": Gender, Indigenous Autonomy, and Multiculturalism in Neoliberal Mexico

Publication No.____________

Melissa Marie Forbis, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

Supervisor: Charles R. Hale

The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) rose up in Mexico's southeastern state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994. The Zapatistas' process of consolidating territorial autonomy and stance of radical refusal are a challenge and threat to the Mexican state and neoliberal governance practices. At the center of that autonomy process are changes in gender equity and gendered relations of power that are crucial to the gains of the project. This multi-sited ethnography of that process takes place in a zone of contact where local practices and struggles for indigenous rights, autonomy, and women's rights meet with solidarity and opposition.

My dissertation follows two strategic lines of inquiry. First, women's bodies have been central to both nation building and to alternative forms of nationalism and tradition. In Mexico, indigenous women have been the raw material of these projects. The EZLN included questions of gender and women's equity from the beginning of the movement. This contrasts with other social movements of the past few decades in Latin America, and with the conventional wisdom that it is necessary to elide gender contestations and

challenges to patriarchy in order to make gains as a movement. I argue that the overall struggle has not in fact been undermined, but strengthened. I examine the extent to which Zapatista women have forged new subjectivities (affirming both gender equality and collective cultural difference) in defiance of local patriarchal control, gendered state violence, and of discourses that characterize them as victims of their culture.

Second, I argue that the analysis of these changes in gendered relations of power reveals how the Zapatista autonomy project is integrating difference without reverting to previous models of belonging premised on assimilation or the recognition of difference solely at the individual level. The EZLN rejected a solution based on ethnic citizenship in favor of indigenous autonomy and collective rights; their autonomous governance offers important insights into state power and its effects, and into strategies and alternatives to inclusion in the neoliberal project.

Table of Contents

List of Figures xiii

List of Illustrations xiv

Chapter One: The Zero Degree of Dignity 1

- A Moment of Refusal 7
- Issues of Anthropological Engagement 12
- Formulating Militant Research Practice 25
- Our Word is Our Weapon 32
- Tensions, Dangers and Acts of Translation 36
- Chapter Outlines 39

Chapter Two: Productive Bodies: Biopolitics of the Colonial Past-Present 43

- Blackness in the First Moment 48
- Triadic Relations: Race/Gender/Nation 50
- Threatening Bodies 53
- Colonial Hierarchies in New Spain: Race, Mestizaje and Calidad 57
- Revolution and the New Mestiza 70
- Race and Ethnicity or Race/Ethnicity 78
- Conclusion 83

Chapter Three: From Finca to Ejido to Autonomous Territory: Cañadas Dreams 84

- Feminization of the Landscape 87
- Colonial Legacy, Liberal Equality 90
- Delayed Revolution and Sanitized Racism 97
- Tangled relations: Ejidos/Fincas/State 102
- Solicitando Parcela: Migration, Settlement and Foundation of Ejidos 105
- Campesino and Religious Organizing 112
- 500 Años Después 119
- Conclusion 122

Chapter 4: Consolidation and Conflict in Zapatista Territory 124
Emergence of Zapatista Political Identity 126
Insurgent Indigeneity 132
Multivalent Nationalism 143
Beyond Initial Demands 148
Zapatista Autonomy Project 152
Territorial Consolidation: The Juntas de Buen Gobierno and Caracoles ..158
Conclusion 164

Chapter Five: Engendering Autonomy 166
The Revolution Before the Revolution 168
Gender Inside the Organization 171
Complementarity and the Trouble of Gender 178
Zapatista Women's Rights 186
Social Construction of Space 190
Women's Work 195
Intimate Lives: Women's Bodies and Social Control 207
A Collective Experiment 217
Conclusion 220

Chapter 6: On Whose Terms? Tension, Encounter and Convergence 222
The Routinization of Violence: Low-intensity Warfare 227
War of the Projects and a Culture of Tolerance 234
Logics of Inclusion: Representing Diversity 242
Feminist Faultlines 245
Convergences, collaborations, and possibility 253
Conclusion 256

Chapter Seven: The Seductions of Multicultural Citizenship and the Challenges of/to Zapatista Autonomy 257
Areas for Further Research 263
Some Reflections on Solidarity, Activism and Method 264

Postscript: Repositioning and Other Geographies 267

Appendix A...272

Appendix B 274

Appendix C 278

Appendix D...280

Appendix E 282

Bibliography 284

Vita… 311

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Chiapas 5

Figure 2: Detail Map of Cañadas of Patihuitz and Altamirano 6

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1: Casta painting, ca. 1750 62

Illustration: 2 *De lobo y de India, albarazado*. 65

Illustration: 3 *De español y negra, nace mulata*. 66

Illustration 4: Collaborative mural in Zapatista community *Independencia* 129

Illustration 5: Sign at the entrance to La Garrucha 156

Illustration 6: Basketball Court and Church, La Garrucha 193

Illustration 7: Water tank in Zapata 199

Illustration 8: Embroidered Cloth "EZLN: The light of liberty" 203

Illustration 9: New Women's Collective Building, La Garrucha, 2005 207

Illustration 10: *Uno con Todos* (One with Everyone/I Unite with Everyone) 226

Chapter One: The Zero Degree of Dignity

No tenemos que pedir permiso para ser libre.
We don't have to ask permission to be free.

—Comandanta Ramona[1]

This dissertation is an ethnographic study and reflection on the Zapatista Army of National Liberation's (EZLN by its Spanish acronym) struggles for indigenous rights and autonomy in Chiapas, Mexico (See Figure 1).[2] The processes of autonomy put into motion by the Zapatista movement are a challenge and threat to the state and its neoliberal governance practices. The overarching argument I make is that at the center of the Zapatista autonomy project are changes in gender equity and gendered relations of power that are crucial to its consolidation. Through this research and analysis, my ethnography enters into an ongoing discussion about anthropological method, community engagement and knowledge production.

In this chapter, I introduce the problem space of the dissertation and briefly discuss my theoretical orientation. Since my research took place with and within a political movement, I consider questions of methodology central. Therefore, the majority of the chapter is a discussion of current methodological debates within anthropology and my own practice. I conclude with chapter outlines of the remainder of the dissertation.
The EZLN rose up in the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994 and rather than wait for a legal resolution of their demands, they created their own form of autonomy in practice by constructing 32 autonomous self-governing municipalities,

[1] Comandante/a means commander, the highest civilian rank in the EZLN.
[2] I am using the term "reflection" in recognition of the open-ended and collaborative nature of this academic work.

Municipios Autónomas Rebeldes Zapatistas (Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities, MAREZ), parallel to official ones.[3] Despite a historic change of government with the election of Vicente Fox Quesada to the presidency in 2000 ending 70 years of one-party rule,[4] and his promises to enact the San Andrés Accords,[5] the legislature passed a watered-down version, not acceptable to the majority of Mexico's indigenous peoples. In August 2003, the EZLN took a step to consolidate their autonomy and created the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Good Government Councils, JBG) comprised of representatives from local councils and political authorities in each of the five Zapatista zones, transforming the administrative and gathering centers from *Aguascalientes* to *caracoles*. During this time, the state waged a low-intensity war on the local population, with a "war of the projects," intensifying after 2000.

My study follows two strategic lines of inquiry. First, women's bodies have been central to nation building processes and to alternative forms of nationalism and tradition. In Mexico, indigenous women have been the raw material of these projects. Begoña Aretxaga argues, "when the experience of women from subordinate groups (nationalist women, lesbian women, loyalist women) is what is obscured, denied, excluded from public discourse, to foreground experience might indeed be a necessary political act" (1997:8). I argue that by including questions of gender and women's equity from the beginning of the movement, the overall struggle has not been undermined, but in fact strengthened. I examine the extent to which Zapatista women have forged new

---

[3] The *municipio* would be closer to the term "township" in English. Since this term is now consistently translated as "municipality" across the literature, I will be employing the latter.

[4] First founded on March 4, 1929, the National Revolutionary Party (*Partido Nacional Revolucionario*) became the Party of the Mexican Revolution (*Partido de la Revolución Mexicana*) under Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938, finally becoming the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido de la Revolución Institutional*) or PRI, in 1946.

[5] The San Andrés Accords are an agreement on indigenous rights negotiated between the Mexican Federal Government and the EZLN, signed on February 16, 1996.

subjectivities (affirming both gender equality and collective cultural difference), in defiance of local patriarchal control, gendered state violence, and of state discourses, which present them as victims of *usos y costumbres* (generally understood as traditional practices and customs).

Second, this study argues that Zapatista autonomy is a site of anti-representational politics and of the construction of a multivalent Mexican nationalism, which proposes to unite the nation together while maintaining individual and collective difference. The Zapatista autonomy project reveals important insights in how to understand and recognize difference without reverting to previous models of belonging premised on assimilation, or the recognition of difference solely at the individual level. The EZLN rejected a solution based on ethnic citizenship in favor of indigenous autonomy and collective rights; their autonomous governance offers insight into state power and its effects, and into incipient strategies and alternatives to inclusion in the neoliberal project.

My ethnography is multi-sited and follows from critiques within anthropology of the localized bounded community as subject. As Gupta and Ferguson note:

> With respect to locality as well, at issue is not simply that one is located in a certain place but that the particular place is set apart from and opposed to other places. The 'global' relations that we have argued are constitutive of locality are therefore centrally involved in the production of 'local' identities too. (1997:13-14)

This approach also acknowledges the nature of the EZLN as a spatially dispersed resistance movement; it is present in particular communities as well as circulating globally. Thus, I follow my lines of inquiry through three sites: the gendered space of race/ethnicity in the national that forms the social field of engagement; within Zapatistas communities and everyday practices; and the points of contact between Zapatista autonomy and state, non-governmental organization (NGO) and global practices and discourses.

This dissertation is based on three months of preliminary research in 2001 and a main period of research from 2003-2005. It is also informed by my ongoing engagement and visits to Chiapas since 1994, which includes four continuous years of community work and independent research from 1996-2000. During fieldwork, I lived for extended periods in the community and caracol of La Garrucha in the *Cañada de Patihuitz*, a canyon leading out from the town of Ocosingo to the Lacandon Jungle, and in the community of Zapata, recently founded on recuperated lands in the Altamirano canyon (See Figure 2: Detail Map). This is the region where the EZLN was founded and retains a strong Zapatista presence. These communities are mainly comprised of Tzeltal Mayans. Due to early colonial settlement and later waves of migration in the 20th century, there are also Tojolabal, Tzotzil, Ch'ol, *ladino*, and *mestizo* peoples in these regions. I also lived in the town of San Cristóbal, home to NGOs, civil society and human rights organizations, solidarity projects, academics, local elites, indigenous refugees, communities of expelled highlanders, tourists, Zapatistas, the influential Catholic Diocese, and a myriad of state government dependencies and agencies.

Thus, this dissertation takes place in a zone of contact where local practices and struggles for indigenous rights, autonomy, and women's rights meet with solidarity and opposition. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), this zone of contact itself is mobile, a continually "deterritorialized" social world that flees from moments of "capture," or reterritorialization under advanced global capitalism.[6] During this study, I followed the "lines of flight" or trajectories of potentiality emerging at the points of contact I had with the Zapatista "everyday." Knowledge and meaning is located in the particularity of events in their occurrence, or "situations." This dissertation is an effort to retrace those

---

[6] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe the State as an "apparatus of capture," one that lives off labor in all its forms.

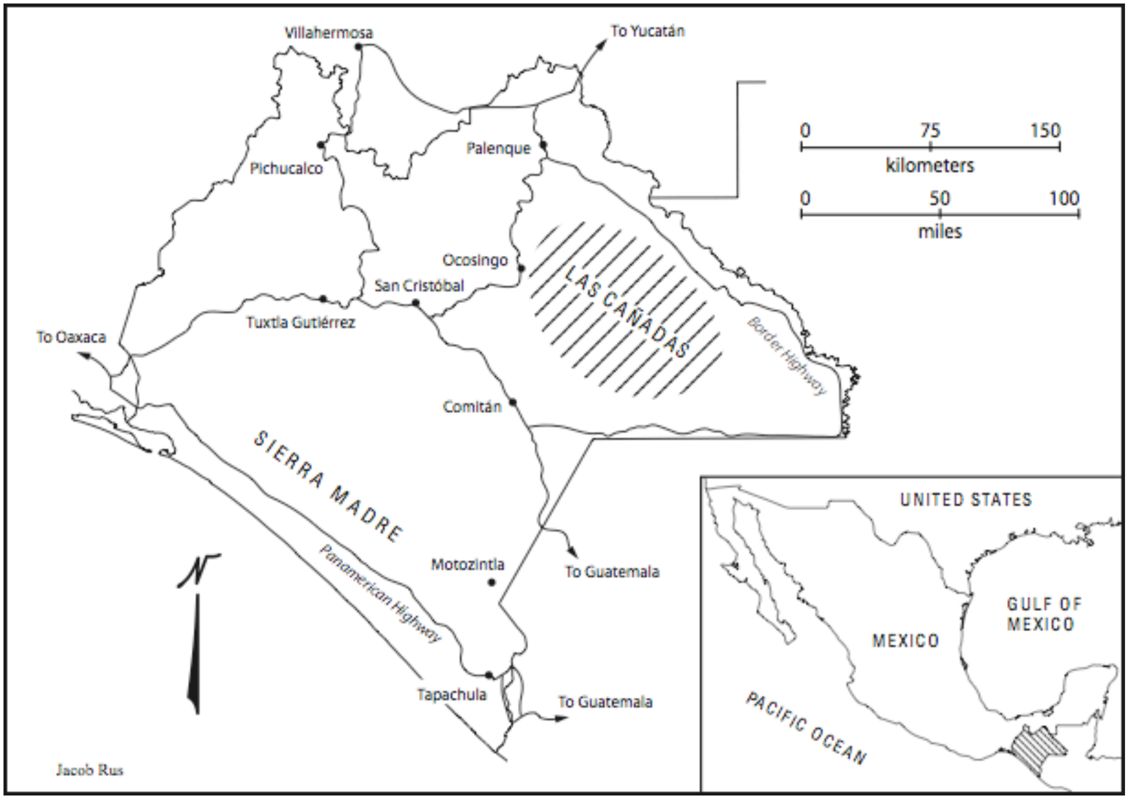

Figure 1: Map of Chiapas

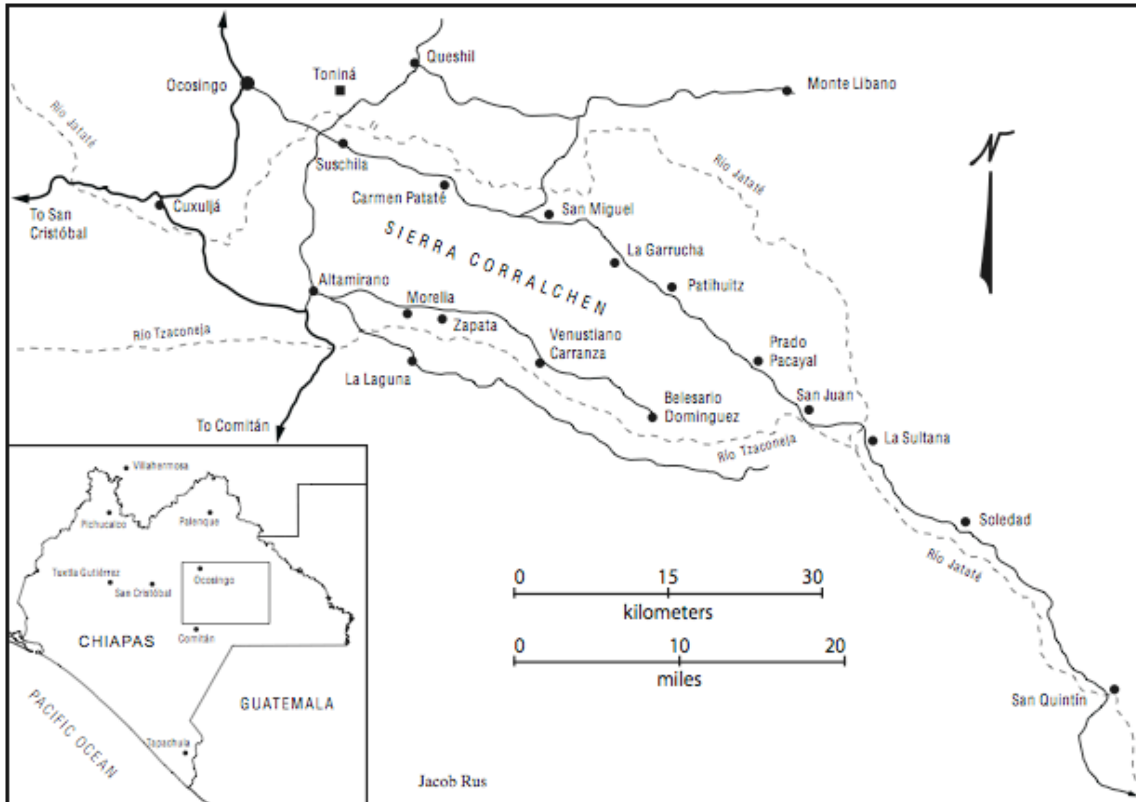

Figure 2: Detail Map of Cañadas of Patihuitz and Altamirano

lines in writing (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), and to track the practices and identities that are emerging as Zapatistas pursue their own lines of flight. By approaching the study in this way, I hope to shift the conception away from ethnographic totality, from describing and decoding "ways of life," but instead concentrating on the intensities, or the effects that people are living under.

A MOMENT OF REFUSAL

> People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth.
>
> —Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1983)

The EZLN emerged at a transitional period of political struggle in Latin America, marked by neoliberal restructuring and increasing corporate globalization. Over the past few decades, there has been a recontextualization of rural politics away from national-popular and class-based agendas toward a politics of indigenous identity, often transcending regional and national boundaries (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Foweraker and Craig 1990). This on-the-ground shift corresponds to a challenge to traditional Marxist theory posed by poststructuralist, autonomist, and non-Western epistemological approaches in the theoretical understanding of these (and other non-Latin American) movements. The Comaroffs (2001) note that the transition to neoliberalism has been accompanied by a proliferation of discourses in civil society and by a transition in political subjectivity. Identities are ascribed, contested, and produced as effects of these other processes. As Sandoval writes:

> [P]olitical subjectivity resides in a state of contingency, of possibility, readying for any event. Dependent on the chances provided by power, the differential mode of oppositional consciousness movement is conditional: subject to the terms of dominant power, yet capable of challenging and changing those very same

> terms. It is a mode of consciousness and activity that is not necessarily true or false—only possible, active, and present. It promotes social movement with purpose, both subject to the terms of power and capable of transforming them (2000:179-180).

This shift is reflected in the way that analyses of cultural forms have taken precedence in a political sphere that is no longer ruled by the idea that politics is a relationship between the individual and the state, or between two opposing classes.[7] Boaventura de Sousa Santos has referred to the networks of movements that have emerged as an "alternative counter-hegemonic globalization" (2005:xvii). This change in both politics and theorizing has been contentious.

While working on a project on indigenous land rights in Chile, I met a leftist Spanish anthropologist at the home of a colleague. After discussing my research, he launched into a polemic, expressing his disdain for the Zapatistas because they had refused to try to take state power. Fighting for space within a larger framework was what "special interest" groups like women do. He said he supported the Mapuche because they were demanding autonomy, but wanted to create another nation separate from Chile. I was surprised because unlike the EZLN, which rejects all relationships with the government, there are still some sectors of the Mapuche autonomy movement that argue Chile owes a historic debt to the Mapuche, so they must maintain relations with the Chilean government and receive funding. The Zapatista stance of refusal seemed like a necessary first step to autonomy. I found his gendered explication of this difference interesting since I argue that the Zapatistas' gender politics has contributed to their gains.

His was not a unique position. For many leftists, especially the orthodox, there is distrust of the EZLN, mirrored in the changes mentioned at the beginning of this section. The charge is that the refusal to take power has let the revolutionary potential of the

[7] An example of this new period is the "water wars" of April 2000 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, where insurrectionary means have become necessary to obtain even reformist gains.

uprising dissipate, resulting in tepid cultural reformism. At times in Chiapas, discussions of the current moment dominated by references to "gringo imperialism," reminded me of a sequence of scenes from the film *Goodbye Lenin* set during the end of the Cold War. The protagonist's mother faints when she sees her son at an antigovernment rally and remains in a coma as the Berlin Wall falls. When she finally regains consciousness, the doctors tell her family that a shock to her system would be dangerous, so the son attempts to recreate the world of the east, the speed of global capital undermining him at every turn. Many have tried hard to fit the Zapatista movement into a statist box, yet it always exceeds and escapes those attempts at containment, even from its supposed allies. I will discuss the Zapatista's formulation and of tensions with civil society further in Chapter Four.

The Zapatista movement thus presents a paradox for certain theorists of social movements, such as Laclau, who define the political solely in terms of the State, thereby making any anti-State position somehow naive or anti-political. This calls on us to consider the possibility that our propositions are no longer productive in theorizing resistance movements under these new conditions of global capitalism and what Agamben (2005) has characterized as the "state of exception."[8] As Virno notes:

> Nothing is less passive than the act of fleeing, of exiting. Defection modifies the conditions within which the struggle takes place, rather than presupposing those conditions to be an unalterable horizon; it modifies the context within which a problem has arisen, rather than facing this problem by opting for one or the other of the provided alternatives. In short, *exit* consists of unrestrained invention, which alters the rules of the game and throws the adversary completely off balance (2003:70).

Refusal is not the same as non-participation or apathy. Rather, it is an active process, one that engages the politics of the state, but refuses the playing field offered. A

[8] Through the state of exception, the Sovereign becomes the law outside the law. In this condition, knowledge production is a critical site of conflict and violence.

broader goal of this dissertation is to examine what I consider the anti-representational politics and multivalent nationalism of the EZLN, which presents a challenge to neoliberal multiculturalism. New governance practices emerged with the neoliberal restructuring of economies along free market lines. Key elements of these practices of subject formation are an emphasis on categorization, the organization of populations, and self-regulation. Assimilation as a strategy for resolving questions of difference in the populace was set aside. In its place, a form of multiculturalism emerged to "govern diversity" in many countries in Latin America with indigenous peoples (Van Cott 2000).

While this neoliberal multiculturalism purported to reform earlier exclusions and to recognize difference, it worked to bring indigenous peoples into the state as self-regulating individuals and to reduce collective action (Hale 2002). Speed (2008b) argues that the Zapatista uprising may have impeded the full implementation of neoliberal multicultural governance in Chiapas. The Zapatistas are not seeking power on behalf of the people of Chiapas, but with them. They are not speaking for people, but for themselves, forging a collective subject. This collective subject demands to be heard by those who would otherwise represent them. I will conduct a more developed discussion of Zapatista terms and practices, focusing on the centrality of changed gendered relations of power that helped develop and shape this element of Zapatista subjectivity in Chapters Three through Six.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) characterize these processes as "becoming minoritarian," a continual struggle against territorializing attempts to be brought within the categories and meanings of the logics of representation, one that affirms difference through rejection of the attempts to reduce difference to the same. Representation subsumes difference within identity and is passive. Denial is active and constitutive. In

this manner, autonomy can be viewed as a form of resistance rather than an achievement; it is a continuous positing and repositing of difference against territorializing logics.

My goal with this line of inquiry is to start from the moment of refusal, from the scream of *Basta Ya*!, (enough already) and follow Holloway's assertion that "the role of theory is to elaborate that scream, to express its strength and to contribute to its power, to show how the scream resonates through society and to contribute to that resonance" (2003:15). This calls for theorizing that emerges from political practice, which I will discuss in the next sections. I first wanted to conduct research with the Zapatistas while working with them in Chiapas because what was being written seemed so far from on-the-ground practices, pieces snatched and fitted into an already existing frame. This seems especially true for works that are based solely on textual analyses of EZLN communiqués.[9] I will incorporate those words as Zapatista theorizing, but always in tension with local practices where it is produced; these texts are map of a moment, drawn on a shifting location.

Others have analyzed the movement through universal logics, discourses and legal frameworks (indigenous rights, human rights, citizenship). The EZLN has at times utilized these discourses, yet there are tensions. In the case of human rights frameworks, the claims are often necessarily made as individualized responses to violence, undermining claims to collective rights. The work of Speed (2008b) shows that these notions can be subverted and contested. Rather than utilizing these frames, I want to use this privileged space of reflection to shift to consider the horizon. As Stuart Hall (2000) noted, the problem of the twenty-first century will be how to understand difference and, running the risk of being called naïve, I think that an examination of Zapatista autonomy

[9] For example, see Henck (2007) and Mentinis (2006).

can be a generative space for thinking about this problem. This investigation then requires separating out Zapatista demands and discourse, and Zapatista practices.

It is not my intention to elide the claims that the EZLN has made on the state, or to dismiss Zapatista demands as not "real" or important. However, to only see this as a struggle for material resources and state recognition is a mistake. Julia Kristeva writing on the social field asserts that for the subaltern in France, the immigrant, the zero degree of dignity is work (1991: 17-18). For the Zapatistas, "dignity" is something much more than production. To focus on emerging political subjectivities does not mean putting the material struggle to the side; it is impossible to forget the urgency of the marginalization community members face in their everyday lives. The struggle is not simply about ending discrimination or exclusion, but about a process of breaking free from forces of domination. Women's participation in the creation of Zapatista autonomy and changes in gendered relations of power are at the center of this process.

ISSUES OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT

> "I always liked to follow paths, see where they went, who they led to. A map, a new world, a strange country—they're all like puzzles where I have to put the pieces together to feel comfortable, to understand how things are. Once I understand, I feel too comfortable. Then it's time to move on, find a new place, new people. New discoveries."
>
> "Always?"
>
> "So far," she said slowly, suddenly unwilling to go any further with this.
>
> Thenike nodded. "And these places you go, the people you find, do you come to care for them? Or do you only study them like strange shells you might find on the beach?"
>
> —Nicola Griffith, *Ammonite* (2002)

In this section, I introduce some of the issues surrounding anthropological practice and engagement with social movements. I contend that an essential part of an

activist or engaged research project must be to try to break with this notion of "collection," of placing ourselves above or outside of. This is not the same as a self-reflexive recitation of our positionality, but the call to first make transparent our relationships. At the end of Timothy B. Tyson's book about racial violence in Oxford, North Carolina, *Blood Done Sign My Name,* he refers to his act of self-erasure in the first telling of the story in his master's thesis submitted to the Department of History at Duke University in 1990. In the thesis, he did not disclose the fact that Oxford was his hometown, nor that his family was marginally involved in the events.

> As I have pondered the past more deeply, however, I have come to see that my master's thesis, despite its research and documentation, constitutes a species of lie; that is, I failed to share my heart and my experiences with the reader, and hid behind my footnotes. (2004:324)

This dissertation project grows out of my longstanding engagement with movements for social justice and autonomy. My engagement with the EZLN began on January 1, 1994, on a snowy morning, far from the verdant hills of Chiapas. For many of the Zapatistas I have come to know, that moment was also the one they had envisioned as a possible end. "We made the decision to fight. We thought we'd die, that we'd never live to see another day." The Zapatista movement is not simply something I chose to study; it is part of an already globalized movement of resistance that I too am part of. Movements for autonomy are nothing new. The urge to be self-governing has appeared in many places around the world throughout history in many guises.

My own involvement grows out of my participation in the *Autonomen*, a loosely defined movement in the former West Germany, which tried to put ideas of self-governance, self-sufficiency, and opposition to the state into practice in urban areas. We occupied buildings and houses and attempted to create social relations outside of the state, while also being part of movements toward social justice. The practice of wearing

black ski masks—the "black bloc," as it has come to be called—grew out of this movement, one of many in Europe at the time dealing with the legacy of 1968 and the armed anti-imperialist groups of the 1970s. Returning to the US, I participated in building alternative infrastructure, constantly discussing, theorizing, how these efforts related to state power and whether our actions were just "revolutionary lifestylism," doing little to end domination. These questions of connection to our research are not just an exercise in self-reflection. They form part of our routes of circulation; they help shape our own subjectivities as we engage in the social world.

In the summer of 2002, I participated with a research group in the south of Chile focusing on the issue of state redistribution of lands to indigenous communities and to assess what impact the program had in those communities. My goal was to aid in the research and to use the experience of the Mapuche movement and autonomy as a comparative case study. Of the five members of the team, I was the only woman and the only foreigner. I met one of the other members, Wladimir Painemal, a young Mapuche anthropologist, for the first time on the day we were to conduct our initial community visit. As we sat in the back seat of the small car, waiting while someone bought mate for our meeting, he leaned over and asked, "So, you're an anthropologist? What do you think about anthropology and colonialism?"

I was a bit taken aback by his directness, but I wasn't surprised by the demand that I account for myself. Wladimir's question was a demand for an analysis of anthropology's history vis-à-vis colonized peoples and why, given this history, I would still choose to work in this discipline. In Chile, as in many other places around the globe, anthropology was (and often continues to be) part of the colonial enterprise.[10] What

[10] The first half of my master's thesis in visual anthropology was a historical analysis of the simultaneous development of the discipline of anthropology and the practice of photography as complementary tools in the service of "Enlightenment Empire."

transpired in our conversation was not simply some sort of well-worn recitation of liberal progressive politics, but a discussion of whether a process of decolonization of anthropology was possible, and if so, how. It is an unfinished conversation for Wladimir and me, and for all anthropologists. We live in a world where academic detachment, often fashionably ironic, is not sustainable.

Anthropologists working today are familiar with the moment of the "crisis of representation" driven by concerns with power relations in the discipline (Clifford 1988, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986), and by the "unruly" former subjects of research demanding a different relationship. This was a critical epistemological intervention, reminding us that narratives are produced in power, there are limits to our analyses, and there are silences that surround them. They will always be only partial. "Questions of narrative, structuring, constructedness, analytic standpoint, and historical provisionality of claims to knowledge direct sociology [and anthropology] to the way in which our stories can be understood as fictions of the real" (A. Gordon 1997:11). However, part of the legacy of that period is that the messy questions of potential complicity in neocolonial projects are generally elided in favor of textual affirmations of solidarity with our research subjects, and the enactment of a certain kind of progressive politics. An interrogation of methodologies as thorough as that of writing practices has yet to occur. Cultural critique is a generative space, yet this still has not necessarily changed practices on the ground and the relationship between researcher and our "subjects," continuing instead to place more emphasis on the content of the finished product.

I recalled Wladimir's words several years later when I returned to Chiapas to begin my dissertation fieldwork and I encountered hostility from friends and ex-project mates due to my new academic identity. Before I left Chiapas to begin a PhD program,

they were somewhat critical of academia, but not to the extent they were in 2003. I soon discovered the reason. During my absence, a man who had been working as a project volunteer submitted a proposal to conduct his PhD research to an autonomous council. This was not surprising; many researchers began their commitments to the movement through solidarity, and then formulated a project out of those experiences. However, his proposal had been rejected and he continued to volunteer in a community, conducting his research clandestinely. He eventually received a PhD, the community and his advisors presumably none the wiser.

I was in no position to judge the veracity of the story. What actually happened did not matter at that point; the story had made the local rounds and all academics were considered suspect. The ensuing discussions touched on questions of whether one could or should be held accountable for their discipline, since not all academics conducted their research in this fashion.[11] The concerns of those doing solidarity work brought up a secondary issue. Why did they assume the Zapatistas needed their "protection" from unscrupulous academics since they had not denounced this man for his practice when they had the chance? How do any of us hold others accountable for our actions? This calls into question what types of relationships we are forging with social movements and what conception of indigenous peoples we still retain—in this case, that of the victim who is easily duped by unscrupulous academics (or others). The EZLN hardly fits into this conception. The positive result of these conversations was collective discussion and theorizing about the role of research in movements for social justice, what it might offer and what an ethical practice might look like.

[11] Indeed many had worked for liberation. Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack was assassinated by the government in 1990, targeted for her work with Mayan communities. Activist anthropologist and historian Andrés Aubry worked for decades in Chiapas with indigenous communities and movements.

Another critique often leveled at academics—"armchair activists"—is that there is no time for sitting around thinking and writing while people are dying as a result of violence and inequality. This position presumes that activism and theorizing are incompatible. While the call to action may be necessary in certain circumstances, I am convinced that theorizing is necessary for political practice, but it cannot be theory divorced from that practice. The Zapatistas theorize their struggle continually; militant action is an important site of knowledge production and theorizing. In *Freedom Dreams*, Robin Kelley speaks to the possibilities that can emerge from this dual engagement, "Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression" (2002:8).

* * *

I will now turn to this question of methodology, to the practice of knowledge production. Methodologies are not just mechanisms employed to conduct research; they are tightly woven with theoretical inquiry. This dissertation enters into a necessary discussion that is active in some sectors of anthropology. In this section, I will briefly outline and discuss some current debates within anthropology over activist methodologies and then I will situate myself within this debate. I believe this is a critical ongoing discussion in the discipline since, as Gullestad (1999) notes, "The aim of knowledge for knowledge's own sake often covers other unacknowledged aims and effects, while explicitly stated political aims (for example to serve oppressed people) may be contradicted by the form, content and direction of research practices and presented results." I will briefly consider questions of pedagogy, often overlooked within the debate. Finally, I will outline my own methodological practice during my fieldwork and discuss the tensions involved.

Hale makes a compelling argument for activist research since it "affirms dual political commitments from the start. Activist anthropologists attempt to be loyal both to the space of critical scholarly production and to the principles and practices of people who struggle outside the academic setting" (2006:104). The import of this intervention within anthropology can be seen by the level of serious discussion and publications emerging, as well as the discomfort of some sectors of the discipline. However, the term "activist" can at times function as an empty signifier, often used without definition and relying instead on a presumption of a certain kind of left-liberal politics, frequently devoid of reference to specific practices, yet seemingly encompassing any that can be used to justify the political credentials of academic knowledge production. What is essential in Hale's formulation, also espoused by other anthropologists, is the recentering of "action" and engagement in the work, which I believe is critical.[12]

However, in Hale's characterization, he sets up a binary between "cultural critique" and "activist research."

> I also have argued that the mandate of activist research, of producing theory grounded in the contradictions that the actors themselves confront, ultimately requires us to straddle two disparate intellectual worlds…One foot remains firmly planted in the rarified space of cultural critique while the other returns cautiously, but confidently, to law, demographics, statistics, human ecology, geographic information systems, and other technologies of objective (no quotation marks allowed) social science…It certainly embodies a more accurate reflection of the utterly contradictory struggles of the people with whom we are allied, and more importantly still, it entails a commitment to generating the kinds of knowledge they ask and need us to produce (Hale 2006:115).

I do not think that this type of binary is adequate for addressing the many paths and approaches to either knowledge production or community engagement; there are more

[12] Although I remain uncomfortable with "activist" for the reasons described above, and the difficulties in translating the term with accuracy in other contexts. Despite its shortcomings, it is preferable to the concept of anthropological "witnessing" (see Scheper-Hughes 1993). For an excellent discussion of this issue see Angel-Ajani (2004).

than two types of analysis and practice. I am wary of the erection of "schools of thought" precisely because I believe they close down possibility and perform acts of silencing, while seeming to give needed stable ground to certain positions not institutionally accepted. Anti-doctrinal thought is generative precisely because it flees from reterritorialization.

While this formulation of activist research may be exactly what is needed for some situations, I am troubled that this formulation has such an emphasis on putting oneself at the service of the group or organization one is working with. Rather than participating, or walking alongside, the researcher brings the useful knowledge back to the group. I believe this can run the risk of reinscribing the anthropologist as an "expert," rather than contributing to processes of decolonization. This position also rests on the idea that we ourselves are not actors in these struggles writ large and our actions in these separate spheres are not somehow connected through our own practice. We are allies, but we are also in struggle and the process must be dialogic. If our activism not only exists "outside," we must make decisions about our participation and what we are willing to do.

It has become rather commonplace to quote Audre Lorde's maxim "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." If we believe this to be true, and that these methods of objective social science are inexorably tied to domination, then we must resist our own desires for closure and for success, which force us into accepting what may ultimately lead to defeat. I am cognizant that this will likely be dismissed as a utopian position, living as we do within this messy world that forces our participation within these structures of domination. However, our participation must be continually questioned. As Hale notes, these are difficult decisions, which often leave us with little company.

In Jemima Pierre's essay, "Activist Groundings or Groundings for Activism?: The Study of Racialization as a Site of Political Engagement," she proposes to expand from what she characterizes as activist research's demand for collaboration with "organized marginalized local groups" in order to help them, to one includes the deployment of marginalized positionalities.

> To me, what seems important for exploring the relationship between activism and research is that we recognize activism as an integrated process, as a combination of positionality/experience and politics. For the contextually marginalized Black academic, the acceptance and politically progressive deployment of our experiences during research can be potentially transformative. At the very least, it is activist—and patently so. (2008:132)

I am skeptical of the assertion that positionality/experience is in and of itself activist. A problematic assumption is that contextually marginalized positionalities and experiences of oppression correlate to liberatory politics. Positionality itself is not a radical challenge if the identities deployed remain at the individual level of action since this can ultimately mesh quite well with neoliberal governance, which requires the participation of the marginalized. However, this is not simply a question of ethics, the right politics, or positionality; activism implies action. What is missing from this definition of activism is how these experiences are deployed during research. What does this look like? While I am arguing against judging activist research solely by outcomes, I believe we can point to effects. Theory and practice are mutually constitutive. However, theorizing political or cultural practice cannot be conflated with practicing a certain cultural politics.

I view this line of reasoning as the other extreme from Hale's—and both positions strike me as partial. These questions of positionality are critical, but not because they are in and of themselves *necessarily* a challenge to structures and mechanisms of domination. Being an activist within academia is a distinctly different project than conducting activist research. Deploying these identities collectively through action can have effects. This

debate also calls into question how we see ourselves as "activists." If we are not engaged with struggle at home, how can we begin to call ourselves activists in a transnational research context? As Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes, "I define solidarity in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities. Rather than assuming an enforced communality of oppression, the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to *work* together" (2003:7; emphasis added). Her definition is premised on the idea of deploying identities, but always within the context of political mobilization.

Shannon Speed's formulation of a "critically engaged activist research" is similar to that of Hale. Rather than taking these two practices, academic and activist, as separate realms, however, Speed acknowledges that they are both always present and in tension.

> By *critically engaged,* I acknowledge the fundamental enterprise of anthropology: critical cultural analysis. This is what our specialized training prepares us to do, and can make a contribution not just to our theoretical understanding of social dynamics but also to concrete political objectives on the ground. By *activist research,* I mean the overt commitment to an engagement with our research subjects that is directed toward some form of shared political goals. What I want to argue—and the reason I use the term—is that the two can be productively practiced together, as part of one undertaking (2008a:215).

The challenge raised by this debate has been productive. Yet, there has also been a subtle backlash against the formulation of activist research as a particular practice. Although Richard Flores is actively engaged in debate on these issues,[13] he presents a common response from those engaged in cultural critique.[14]

---

[13] He was one of the main faculty sponsors of a Rockefeller Postdoctoral Program on Race, Rights and Resources in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin, which brought activists and scholars in residence.

[14] My conversations about activist or engaged research have lead me to think that the defense of cultural critique is influenced by a perception that "activists" are taking a morally superior position; therefore, those not engaging in activism often respond defensively, eliding the issue of critical debate on decolonizing the discipline.

> My point is that if knowledge production, like other ways of knowing, is positional then what matters is the effectiveness of what we do relative to the problems or situations we are addressing…[a land rights project] has merits if it achieves autonomy or whatever goal is at hand. But if its goal of autonomy fails, even when processes of collaboration were fully utilized, I would argue that the project was ineffective, countering any claims to its advantages over less collaborative forms of knowledge making (2005:16).[15]

Although hardly as facile as critiques of "nonobjectivity," requiring this type of test or criteria for activist research sidesteps questions of what grounds are being used to determine effectiveness.

Speed notes two reasons for rejecting this criteria, "…both because it suggests a certain positivist nostalgia for notions of controlled studies and measurable results, and because it seems to place demands on activist research that are rarely placed either on anthropological research or an political activism alone" (2008a:229-230). A problem I see with this model is the concept of failure. While the processual nature of struggle and domination is theoretically acknowledged, a residual notion of "failure" sneaks in to undermine that notion. What does it mean to "fail" in one's attempt to enact a different methodology, one that seeks to decolonize spaces within the academy and in the world more generally? Failure implies a finality that closes off further investigation of the effects of these processes.

This debate has not just been theoretical; a growing number of researchers have made explicit the project of decolonizing their research practice utilizing a variety of approaches. Perhaps one of the most common is a research/solidarity ethnography. In *Uprising of Hope: Sharing the Zapatista Journey to Alternative Development*, Jeanne Simonelli and Duncan Earle propose to conduct research on autonomy in Zapatista regions while aiding in alternative development projects and student service-learning.

[15] *On Effective Cultural Critique: The Re-grounding of Cultural Analysis*, unpublished ms. (2005).

The result is a different type of ethnography, one that pays close attention to process and collaboration. However, the anthropologists, who fail in their initial attempts to remain "neutral," have shifted their position only slightly. "Theoretically, the book focuses on the notion of 'agency' and, deriving from this, the act of giving agency to those to be 'studied' as a creative response to the colonial experience, of which anthropology was a part" (2005:10). The ethnography offers many positive examples especially in its use of multiple narratives and personal experience. Yet, at the end, they separate themselves from the struggle and attempt to take a more "objective" stance, stating that it is "incredibly tempting to root for the slow and steady Zapatistas" (ibid.:276), but they are not quite willing to do so.

Melissa Checker's *Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town* (2005) represents another type of engaged project, in which the anthropologist participates directly in grassroots organizations, NGOs and networks. The ethnography is interesting account of her collaboration with an environmental justice coalition in the south. Checker's proposal to research in the south grew out of her ongoing activism and research on environmental issues in New York.

> In presenting the results of my ethnographic research on a new kind of activism, I hope that this book will accomplish some activism of its own. I therefore gear it toward multiple audiences; including activists, academics, students and others…It is my hope that this detailed ethnographic account will provide readers with a deeper and more personalized understanding of environmental injustice, and what can be done to combat it. (2005:11-12)

In her book, Checker provides a community-level analysis of her methods and her day-to-day engagement with the Coalition, including a process of self-critique and reformulation that was aided by her field notes. She also includes an appendix titled "Getting Involved" that provides a number of resources for readers who may be inspired to action by the struggle and gains presented in the text. The book succeeds at creating an opening for

engagement, but the accessibility at times obscures how these micro level practices are connected to broader processes of capitalism and governance.[16]

Finally, there is important interdisciplinary work and research being undertaken in the area of transnational feminism,[17] people of color organizing,[18] and by anthropology's former "subjects" to decolonize disciplines, methodologies, and their peoples.[19] A group of indigenous scholar-activists in the US wrote *For Indigenous Eyes Only, A Decolonization Handbook*, which is a popular education-style guide aimed at native peoples. The authors characterize themselves as "practitioner-activists" and speak to the tensions mentioned above generated as people move between multiple spaces:

> …we are advocating peaceful, intelligent, and courageous challenges to the existing institutions of colonialism as well as questioning our own complicity in those institutions. But make no mistake: Decolonization ultimately requires the overturning of the colonial structure. It is not about tweaking the existing colonial system to make it more indigenous-friendly or a little less irreparably flawed. (Wilson and Yellow Bird 2005:4)

While visiting the radical feminist group *Mujeres Creando* in Bolivia at the *Casa de la Virgen de los Deseos*, their community center in La Paz, I briefly discussed research and academics with Julieta, one of the founders. She directed my attention to a collaborative volume between the group and academics, based mainly in the US The book, *No pudieron con nosotras: El desafío del feminismo autónomo de Mujeres Creando*, grew out of a panel at the Latin American Studies Association in 2003 that *Mujeres Creando* participated in. In the preface, John Beverley relates a story about the process, "On this occasion, a prominent woman Latin American academic established in the US approached them, excited by the idea of obtaining the text of their talks to publish

---

[16] Also see Bickham Méndez (2005) for a similar approach in Nicaragua.
[17] See Mohanty 2003, Naples 2003, Ricciutelli, Miles and McFadden 2004
[18] See E. Martínez 1998, Pulido 2006
[19] See Tuhiwai Smith (1999) on methodology and M. Jacqui Alexander (2005) on the use of the erotic, desire and spirituality as tools to disrupt logics of power.

them in the US: 'it will give you great visibility'" (2006:14). *Mujeres Creando* and other participants in the session responded that this type of visibility was not their goal; their field of action was elsewhere. Beverley goes on to note that theirs was not a wholesale rejection of academia since they obviously took the time to participate in this Congress. Instead, "it is a recognition that the academy should not be hegemonic, there are things that happen in the world that academia does not know nor is able to know adequately" (ibid.:14).

FORMULATING MILITANT RESEARCH PRACTICE

My own thinking about activist research is informed by these discussions mentioned in the earlier sections and by other groups who are researching and writing outside the academy, including organizations I have participated in. Additionally, I have been influenced by feminist organizing and theory, which has directed us to the centrality of experience, and the dynamics of power and difference. Donna Haraway formulates this as "situated knowledges," and writes:

> I am arguing for a politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives; the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. (1991:195)

As discussed earlier, there are tensions between the demands of activism and academia. While we are negotiating a space for activist research within academia, there is also a third space outside of academia, which seeks to decolonize research. In the piece "On the Researcher-Militant," Argentine collective *Colectivo Situaciones* (2007) discuss a series of provisional hypotheses about research-militancy that has emerged from their work, which they and others, like *Precarias a la Deriva* in Spain, purposefully

maintain a space outside of academia.[20] Working from spaces within the academy, we are faced with certain constraints in our research and writing practices. However, these texts and discussions are useful for thinking about how to develop a militant research practice within a move to decolonize anthropology.

It is essential that researchers be active political subjects, and that we do not separate out research and practice, and that we maintain political alliances and shared goals. This corresponds to our militant commitments and is one of the elements that differentiates this approach from cultural critique conducted by a researcher in solidarity. This recognizes research as politics and our position as militants rather than participant-observers. Colectivo Situaciones defines this position as working in immanence, that is, "a constitutive co-belonging that transverses representations of the 'inside' and the 'outside.' As such, it does not derive from being there; rather it requires an operation of inhabiting, of composing" (2007:195).

The motives behind our research are another key element that separates out this approach from cultural critique. What is the process for generating knowledge? As militant researchers, this entails a type of theorizing that breaks away from constituting an object to be known since we are placing participation and subjective experience at the center. The nature of academic research demands that we formulate concrete research questions, yet following the call of Colectivo Situaciones, we must work in a tense space trying to "remain faithful to our 'not knowing'" (2007:187). This is difficult for those of us who maintain, as Hale says, a foot in academia. At the least, our theory cannot be

---

[20] See also Shukaitis, Graeber, and Biddle (2007).

separated out from practice and needs to grow out of mutual concerns rather than from a preexisting set of hypotheses.

My initial research in Chiapas began in 1997, and was parallel to my community work in infrastructure and public health. These projects and the intimacy of living in Zapatista communities made me realize that much of what I had read about the movement was distinct from my on-the-ground experiences, and in some cases, it was contradictory. This was especially so in the case of gender and autonomy and the dichotomous accounts emerging of either a new seamless gender equality or a reformed patriarchy, often derived from interviews or short visits. After many conversations with key women leaders in Morelia, in the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre, I formulated a research project. I petitioned the autonomous authorities and they granted me permission to interview community members and write an article. This resulted in one of the first texts focusing on gender and autonomy with participation from Zapatista women.[21]

I first conceived of my dissertation research as a comparison of women's participation, gender equity, and autonomy between two contrasting and contiguous areas of the Zapatista autonomous regions, the Autonomous Municipality of Francisco Gómez and the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre. Having worked in these regions on community projects for years, the contrasts were striking. I had many conversations with Zapatistas who traveled between the areas about the differences. One young man from a small community in Francisco Gómez even asked to take photographs of women working on a water project home with him to show others that women can and should be participating in public projects. Thus, the project developed from practice, growing out

[21] Forbis (2003). The article has been translated into Spanish and submitted to the Zapatista communities.

of mutual concerns, including mine around questions of women's liberation and social justice.

It was important to me to continue this work in the region known as the Cañadas, and specifically in the areas where the EZLN began. This area is the lowlands leading to the Lacandon Jungle, which was colonized by the landless during the twentieth century. The region was characterized as a *campesino* space, contrasting with the highlands, which was perceived as indigenous.[22] Many analyses of the movement had transposed anthropological knowledge and research of that "traditional" area onto the Cañadas, without acknowledging the historical differences. In fact, as my community work shifted me between the highlands and Cañadas, I was able to discern notable differences even within the framework of the Zapatista movement. I also planned to examine state projects in the region and modes of governance.

Another important factor in this type of approach is that the research be collaborative. By formally sanctioning this research, there was an explicit promise of participation and accompaniment of the project by the EZLN. I initially approached Zapatista authorities about my research plan during a short visit in 2002, hoping to involve them as well in a discussion of the questions. They told me that it could be possible, but that so much could change that I should present my proposal when I was ready to begin the research. After returning, I set up meetings with representatives in each of the autonomous municipalities. Although the project was proposed as a comparison, the representatives indicated that each region would decide separately since they were autonomous. Regional *responsables*[23] gave me permission first in Francisco

[22] Peasant. Due to the historic importance of this term, I will continue to use the Spanish "*campesino*" throughout the dissertation.
[23] Authority. I prefer the Spanish for its link to a sense of responsibility to the community, rather than authority over the community.

Gómez and I was told that I should conduct my research in the community of La Garrucha. The proposal and my presence were discussed during a community meeting and a local authority was named as my contact. When I returned to Morelia, the authorities told me that since I would begin my work in La Garrucha, they would hold off the decision until I was done in that region.

I began my fieldwork at a key transformative period in the movement; the EZLN underwent a major structural change and founded the caracoles and Juntas de Buen Gobierno. The dynamic and exciting nature of this development changed my research and I spent more time in La Garrucha than planned. Authorities in the other region were still interested in pursing the project, and I presented my proposal for the second region to the JBG of the Caracol IV *Torbellino de Nuestras Palabras* (Whirlwind of our Words). Still in the early stages of its formation, the rotation of members meant that I needed to return three times before receiving an answer. They gave permission for research to be conducted in the newly settled community of Zapata, located on recuperated lands outside of Morelia.

Cognizant that differences of power and privilege will always complicate the idea of collaboration, I proposed what I had devised as a collaborative method. Although the research questions and orientation had already been developed together with many Zapatistas, I wanted to further meet with community authorities and members, to discuss these questions further and incorporate other concerns. As discussed with authorities, the plan was to develop a product that could be useful in a practical sense, rather than having the contribution only be related to the global questions raised by the movement. This collaboration did not happen at the community level at the time of my research, however, I worked with the collaboration of specific communities members who became intermediaries. Thus, collaboration did happen in organic ways, through conversations

and discussions with community members, resulting in the coproduction of knowledge about the questions being researched in the context of the struggle. In terms of a possible collaboration on writing, local responsable *Rogelio* explained that since this research was part of a degree, I was the individual author and must retain that responsibility. "*Pues*, it's not that we aren't interested, it's just that we're really busy with our own [*trabajo*] and this, this is your part [of the process]."

During my research, both communities named a male responsable to be my main intermediary, or *enlace*, for the project and to help organize my formal taped interviews. At the outset, I assumed that these men would serve as minders, making sure that my questions did not wander to questions that the interviewees were not allowed to answer. This did happen at the beginning in La Garrucha, when *Antonio* told me that certain questions could only be answered by the JBG—generally any question that would require the person to take a formal position on the Mexican government. These men also worked as collaborators, suggesting which community members would be best suited to provide information on different topics, interjecting their own questions and analysis during discussions to draw out points, providing background and translating from Tzeltal to Spanish. Some of the topics led to interesting discussions among the men and women present. In La Garrucha, I conducted ten formal interviews of two or sometimes three community members at the same time, plus my *enlace*. These men also reported to the community on the project and spoke with me about community concerns. In Zapata, I conducted five single interviews. My informal research was gathered from living in the community, working and talking with local men and women, as well as people passing through from other communities and outside visitors.

A final element of this militant research approach within anthropology would be to ask what this research produces and what practical value it has. Militant research does

not always involve clearly marked strategic goals and outcomes, such as providing expert testimony or documentation, although it might.[24] Ethnography can also be a tool for collective analysis and reflection. One of the practical values of this research is the analysis of power relations, in this case, specifically gendered relations of power.

As an active political subject, I also did other tasks during my fieldwork. In La Garrucha, I trained regional authorities in computers, helped organize the pharmacy and made herbal preparations at the health center, worked on a collective garden, built a road and held bread-baking workshops. I was asked to repair computers, and transport people and materials. I also had ongoing projects with the organization, as the EZLN is also known, in another zone. An academic colleague commented on getting involved in this type of work, "Why do we always have to come into communities with a project?" Her option was to just share space with community members and conduct research. While I share the concern that projects can set us up as "experts" whose only relationship is what we can provide, I see this as the other side of paternalism. If we view ourselves as part of the *milieu*, then what we are doing is skills-sharing. My refusal to train local authorities in computer accounting methods would be as much an act of paternalism as is deciding what needs they have. The question that remains is whether the skills we offer a movement can ever be equal to what we are receiving from our work with them in terms of degree, publications and prestige.

My intention is not to dismiss, but to reaffirm the space of academia as generative and to encourage the development of relationships with other knowledges. We need to engage in as many spaces as possible, like Deleuze's nomad moving along lines of flight, our own practices as mobile and contingent as power. The point, rather, is to answer our

[24] Despite the ethical dilemmas involved, these practices have been materially useful in many struggles for social justice.

needs for theoretical expression and "offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities—as gifts" (Graeber 2004:12). Our ability to do this theorizing is inseparable from our engagement in struggle and action.

OUR WORD IS OUR WEAPON

> There are books of the same chemical composition as dynamite. The only difference is that a piece of dynamite explodes once, whereas a book explodes a thousand times.
>
> —Yevgeny Zamyatin, A Piece for an Anthology on Books (1928)

Anna Tsing writes that "Cultures are continually coproduced in the interactions I call 'friction': the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (2005:4). In addition to an interrogation of our research methods, the potential of this "friction" calls into question how we publish and disseminate the results of our research, our institutional positions, and our pedagogical practice. Activist opinion by itself can be a dangerous thing that shuts off debate and creates orthodoxies. Just as activism is an important site of knowledge production, academia produces theoretical knowledge that speaks to and is useful to social movements in conducting self-critique and analysis. One clear example is the circulation of the work of Frantz Fanon throughout many decolonization struggles around the world during the 1960s and 70s. Written work is clearly a key contribution we can make, which aids in our desires to figure out our "becomings." Yet, writing is not unproblematic. Maria Galindo, a founder of *Mujeres Creando*, speaks to the problems of academic writing and the circulation of texts:

> Situated between these two non-places of dialogue that are the relationship of social movement to academia and the relation north to south, I am perhaps trapped in mere anecdote, in the mere editorial routine, trapped in the curriculum of some professor whose street arguments cannot unleash or signify anything, nor

> open or close any debate. I want to make plain that possibility of writing dead words because it pisses me off. (2006:31)

These questions of publishing are related to the process of professionalization demanded by the academy. Aside from tensions that develop during fieldwork discussed earlier, one of the concrete difficulties with conducting activist or critically engaged research is that it is are often easier to conduct after completing a more conventional dissertation and being awarded a degree. There are fewer risks and less time involved trying to balance and work through the tensions described in the preceding section. Although there are examples of academics who completed activist dissertations, this process adds another layer of difficulty to an already marginalized practice. We run the risks of not being viewed as "serious" scholars before we've even begun our (formal) careers. Of course, this charge is ironic; activist research projects are quite serious since we hold the dual commitments as mentioned by Hale.

Even within our discussion of methodologies, while we talk about ethics and collaboration in the field, we gloss over the politics of publishing, receiving funding, and obtaining faculty positions. None of this is transparent, and it costs us to balance these real-life issues with our intellectual goals and our community commitments. It is a precarious position; sometimes we are forced to take diversions from the knowledge factory, where the emphasis is on production. Receiving a PhD separates us from many members of our communities who assume that a choice to remain in academia means we will only conduct discursive activism in the future. I have heard the lament from community organizations of how many they have "lost" to academia. Yet, as I stated earlier, while there are tensions between these spaces, they are not necessarily separate.

Knowledge circulates and we are part of the flow. A key piece to decolonization processes are radical pedagogical practices.[25] Questions of collaboration and networking are critical since we are being cultivated to live our own alienation under global capitalism. I was invited to participate in a conference on autonomy in Mexico City in the fall of 2006. One of the attendees was a longtime French activist and founder of the Zapatista solidarity group in Paris, serving as a travel guide for Raoul Vaneigem. I first read Vaneigem's book, *Revolution of Everyday Life*, along with other Situationist texts in the 1980s, and the impact they had on my theoretical thinking was immense. I was anxious to meet him and talk, but had to wait until a few nights later at a gathering on autonomy at the social center and club Multiforo Alicia. He refused to attend the conference because it was held in a university, in an institutional setting. While I was tempted to agree with his position, those lines are becoming harder to draw. Institutional power does not just inhere in institutional structures. As Deleuze writes:

> It's not a question of asking whether the old or new system is harsher or more bearable, because there's a conflict in each between the ways they free and enslave us. With the breakdown of the hospital as a site of confinement, for instance, community psychiatry, day hospitals, and home care initially presented new freedoms, while at the same time contributing to mechanisms of control as rigorous as the harshest confinement. It's not a question of worrying or hoping for the best, but of finding new weapons (1995:178).

The types of engagements described above, even within the space of the neoliberal university, are "situations," events that present creative possibilities, potentially deterritorializing of those institutional spaces if even for a few moments. This depends to some degree on whether we are consistent across our practices. While we discuss academic accountability to communities where we work, the question of accountability back "home" and issues of pedagogy are often left to the side.

---

[25] I do not have the time or space to conduct a full discussion here, but one of the important practices of Zapatista autonomy project has been creating alternative models of education.

> As committed educators, we cannot eliminate politics, but we can work against a politics of certainty, a pedagogy of censorship, and institutional forms that close down rather than open up democratic relations. To do this, we will have to work diligently to construct a politics without guarantees, one that perpetually questions both itself and all those values, practices, and forms of power and knowledge that appear beyond the processes of interrogation, debate, and deliberation. (Giroux 2007:37)

This challenges us as committed educators to develop other ways of working together, in a more horizontal fashion, finding ways to center the questions raised by the movements we work with back into our academic practice. The example of the Black Panther Party is instructive. They drew from academic writing, yet their practice of "each one, teach one" transformed the texts, drawing them from a certain rarified environment of critique to a consideration of the words within movement and struggle. What I am pointing to is a two-way process, as Dyer-Witheford explains, "No utopian pedagogy without a practical utopia! This should be a watchword for all anticapitalist educators, for it cautions against the bad faith of critique without alternative, and against the slippage from radical theory to reformist politics" (2007:324).

During a conversation about academia, xicanindio poet raúlsalinas reminded me of the "bridge" as a metaphor for our work, mindful that being a bridge is not a comfort zone.[26] As anthropologists, we are located at the intersections of where knowledge is produced and where knowledge is institutionalized. Positivist science gives us fictional separation; political action is about healing, reminding us that we are whole, and alerting us to the ways we participate in our own exploitation. The space of the bridge is also about working in immanence, of processes of radical becoming that can lead to theoretical innovation. When we diverge from the expected routes to our goals, it can feel like a long journey with no end, but often the moment when we feel most like giving

[26] Most well known iteration of this metaphor is *This Bridge Called my Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981).

up is precisely the moment when our alternate vantage point gives us a glimpse of what we need on the horizon.[27] In my own case, this involved facing what Jackson calls:

> Ethnographobia, which summons every author's fears about "writing culture," makes meta-ethnographic critiques of ethnography as a genre full of disingenuous conventions, and stresses the many unshakable fears anthropologists have about writing's intrinsic incompleteness, including the fear that we may never be up to the task of representing the political *fluidarity* and cultural complexity of the villages, cities, suburbs, and global networks within which we do our research. (2005:24)

It was only working through a series of doubts about the nature of the process that I was able to again see my own place within this larger struggle and to understand the value of this theorizing.

Thus, I believe that there can be no one way to do things right, one path or model that we can call activist or militant research, which could lead to the outcomes we want. However, I have outlined what I believe are some of the key components for militant research and ethnography. I will return to my process in chapter seven, and offer my reflections and evaluation, including what epistemologies this method entails and how the approach relates to my central findings. These methods and theorizing are practices that must remain contingent—working with social movements and the on-the-ground processes of change also transform our work. Too often, we yearn for material outcomes to determine the success of our work and neglect to recognize that one part of the "success" is in the process itself, in the refusal of certain positions and actions, despite the solid ground they offer.

TENSIONS, DANGERS AND ACTS OF TRANSLATION

As mentioned earlier, the engagement of academics with social movements has not always been a positive one. I approached this work with trepidation, knowing that

[27] Personal communication, M. Jacqui Alexander, February 2007.

the confidence people had in me also carried much responsibility. At one point, when I was complaining about traveling during the rainy season, a friend visiting asked why I didn't just have my research assistants carry out the interviews while I was in town like he did. I was a bit perplexed at the question at first since I knew he was cognizant of the context of conflict. This exchange points to the one of the tensions encountered when writing from a place in the movement. There are conversations that cannot be discussed with others not part of the movement and we are personally responsible for protecting our data from those who would use it to harm.[28] These silences and gaps result in moments of ambiguity in the narrative that might confound the reader, yet they are an integral part of this type of militant research process.

The Mexican government and its allies consider foreigners in Chiapas working with Zapatistas uncomfortable witnesses at best; at worse we can be seen as the "enemy," actively undermining the rule of law. In 1998, during the traditional burning of the Judas during Easter in the town square in San Cristóbal de las Casas, paper mache figures of the "foreigner who comes to make the Indians revolt" hung next to those of Carlos Salinas de Gortari and the paramilitaries responsible for the Acteal massacre. Until 2001, the Mexican government pursued a policy of deporting foreigners who were found to be in the zones of Zapatista influence, labeling them "*extranjeros perniciosos*" (pernicious foreigners).[29] I was aided to some degree because of my appearance, which allowed me to be often "read" as a mestiza from another part of Mexico. This phenotypical fluidity

---

[28] In *Threatening anthropology: McCarthyism and the FBI's surveillance of activist anthropologists*, David H. Price (2004) discusses government repression and activist anthropology in the Cold War context in the US This discussion is relevant in today's climate of increased FBI surveillance of social activists under the so-called "War on Terrorism." See also Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Nordstrom and Robben (1995).

[29]When the Army invaded Taniperla in 1998, a group of friends were captured, beaten and the foreigners deported. In 1999, my truck tire was tampered with and it miraculously stayed on until the bottom of the hill between San Cristóbal and Tuxtla, a 1500-meter drop with over 300 curves in the space of 80 kms. Other NGO workers had their tires sabotaged in a similar fashion at this time.

was helpful in situations from crossing checkpoints to taking public transport. However, the tension of this position and fear of deportation meant that it was impossible for me to speak with or interview government functionaries. Contact with the government would also be met with suspicion by the movement as well. Not all of us become the "reluctant activist" that George Marcus describes or are pushed into solidarities by government response as related by Jeanne Simonelli (Earle and Simonelli 2005); some of us are doing work precisely because of our political commitments.

As a formerly clandestine revolutionary movement, and still under constant threat of state violence, the act of naming in the EZLN is a political act. Most Zapatistas have two names, and some have three or four, interchanging these depending on the context. I asked all of my interviewees which name they wanted to use in the text. Most gave me a name of their own choosing, frequently their *nombre de la lucha,* or nom de guerre. Others told me that I could make up whatever I wanted, and in those cases, I have used pseudonyms. I have decided to make a differentiation between these sets of names by italicizing the latter, so the reader knows that I have selected the name. Rather than erasing identity, these multiple names, much like the ubiquitous *pasamontaña* (ski mask), act as an identity marker of public political struggle.

Due to the sensitive nature of my interview and research data, all of the translations from the Spanish to English are mine. For interviews conducted in Tzeltal, I relied on the help of community members for interpretation when needed. Where a word or phrase could not be adequately rendered in English, I have included the original for the reader. I understand these translations are movements of meaning loss and gain. Although my Tzeltal language skills are not fluent, I was able to discern gendered patterns of interpretation that have added to my analysis. There are a number of words I

have decided to define and leave in the original language throughout the text due to their historical and cultural specificity. All photos in this document are mine.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapters Two and Three examine the historical and geographical terrain, and the theoretical and discursive context of the dissertation through three sites: the figure of the "indigenous woman," the location of Chiapas as a national space of indigeneity and the emergence of the neoliberal state in Mexico. In Chapter Two, I locate indigenous women in the nation by tracing colonial biopolitics and the embodiment of shifting racial hierarchies through *casta* (caste) paintings and historical narratives, from the invocation of "blackness" in the first moment of Conquest to the subsequent race/gender/national relations formed in the colonial and early post-colonial period. I argue that although particular racial regimes are transformed during the Mexican Revolution, they are ultimately reproduced in the construction of a post-revolutionary national mestizo subject. I trace the development of *indigenismo* as a state discourse and practice with the aim of modernizing indigenous peoples and bringing them into the nation, which focused on indigenous women as a particular site of inscription as exemplified by "La India Bonita" and the New Mestiza. Finally, I discuss the displacement of "race" by "ethnicity" in Mexico, and in Latin America more generally. Although ethnic has been the preferred term to utilize when writing about difference and indigenous peoples, I argue that re-centering race in my analysis is critical because racialized gendered bodies are at the core of governance strategies.

In Chapter Three I build on the discussion of colonial race/gender/class hierarchies and examine Chiapas as a key repository for indigeneity in the nation. I first examine social memory and the feminization of the landscape, which ties in to the development of a micropolitics of rule based in the family, with the government situated

as patriarch. I trace both the literal and discursive construction of communities in the Lacandon Jungle, where the EZLN was founded, examining work on *fincas* (large landholdings or plantations), state-community relations, the late arrival of the Mexican Revolution and the foundation of *ejidos*,[30] local peasant and Catholic Church organizing, and the specific histories of the communities that are part of my study. Through fictional representations, government and secondary source narratives, and oral testimonies, I focus on finca work, including practices of debt peonage, as a particularly charged place of social memory and site of conflict. The colonization of this region and subsequent organizing produced changes in gender relations that played a strong role in the future development of the EZLN. Finally, this chapter briefly addresses the particularly Mexican forms of neoliberal governance that emerge alongside globalized indigenous resistance movements, including the privatization of ejidal lands through changes to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution and the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Chapters Four and Five are a fine-grained ethnographic exploration of gender and autonomy. I briefly summarize the EZLN uprising focusing on the Cañadas region, and then examine the practice of Zapatista autonomy on the ground and as it circulates through other sites. I begin by discussing the relationship between race, ethnicity, and social location to show how the uprising and the formation of Zapatista autonomous municipalities transformed the region. This formation marked the region as indigenous in the framework of the struggle, and has produced its own theorization of the movement through praxis. In 2003, during my fieldwork period, the Zapatistas consolidated local

[30] Ejidos are a type of communal land holding, with roots in indigenous communities, institutionalized by the land reforms in Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, and put into practice largely under President Cardenas (1934-1940).

autonomous governance and territory through the founding of the Juntas de Buen Gobierno constructing new relations with non-Zapatistas locally and globally.

Within this discussion of autonomy, I examine changes in gendered relations of power at various levels within the Zapatista movement and communities. There has been more focus on women and equality within the military side of the EZLN, based on early contact and accounts extrapolated from communiqués. Rather than using equality within a hierarchical formation as exemplary of the movement, I concentrate more fully on the lives of community women and the difficulties of changes at that level. I argue that it is precisely at this juncture that changes are being made that contribute to the liberatory possibilities of this struggle. Through participant observation in two Zapatista locations, I assess the relationship of women's participation and changes in gender equity to the overall autonomy project and the production of new political subjectivities. Central issues were: how women and men understand "women's rights," questions of Mayan cosmology and complementarity, family relations, work, reproduction, and sexuality. I discuss particular challenges to these changes including community social control of women's sexuality, the gendered configuration of public space and the destabilization of women's leadership.

In Chapter Six, I continue to focus on women and gender and move to relationships outside of the communities by turning to an analysis of state, NGO and solidarity projects. Each of these is positioned differently vis-à-vis the Zapatistas, yet the way each sector interacts with the movement and understands the rights of indigenous women and how they are positioned in Mexican society exposes the limits of discourses of citizenship and inclusion in the liberal national project. I examine the varied state responses to the Zapatista movement, including low intensity warfare and gendered forms of violence. The military offensive of February 9, 1995 was a key moment that figures

strongly in the memories of community members who experienced the violence. I then analyze how state and para-state agencies, through federal programs like *Oportunidades* and local programs like *Una Semilla para Crecer*, attempt to ameliorate poverty and inequality, but target the individual over the collective, which can undermine community cohesion simultaneously creating self-governing subjects for the state. I discuss the relationship with women in local feminist organizations focusing on how Zapatista women's location within an autonomous political movement creates fault lines in the midst of solidarity. Finally, this chapter considers convergences, collaborations, and the possibility of relationships with other indigenous groups and international solidarity.

I conclude my dissertation in Chapter Seven by evaluating Zapatista gender politics and the relationship of women's participation and changes in gendered relations of power to the success of the autonomy project. I highlight potentiality of this project of autonomy and its challenge to neoliberal multiculturalism and dominance. I consider how autonomy might dovetail with certain types of neoliberal decentralization and what challenges are posed by their anti-representational politics and multivalent nationalism. I conclude the chapter with final reflections on participatory research methodologies and transnational activist practice. I bracket the end of my dissertation a Postscript following the Zapatista Red Alert issued in June 2005, which announced another set of profound changes to the movement, launching a national campaign and tour, *La Otra Campaña*.

Chapter Two: Productive Bodies: Biopolitics of the Colonial Past-Present

1519, Cholula, New Spain

> And seeing this, the Spaniards resolved among themselves to make a slaughter there, or a punishment (as they call it), in order to cast and sow fear of them and of their ferocity throughout every corner of those lands. For this was always the Spaniards' resolve in all these lands they have entered it is to note: to wreak cruel and most singular slaughter, so that those meek lambs might tremble before them.
>
> —Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devasation of the Indies* (2003)

1968, Tlatelolco, Mexico City

> The municipal sanitation workers
>
> Are washing away the blood
>
> On the Plaza of Sacrifices.
>
> —Octavio Paz, quoted in *Massacre in Mexico* (1975)

1997, Acteal, Chiapas

> "We have to do away with the seed," they said. They removed the dead women's clothes and cut their breasts, they shoved a stick between the legs of one and opened the wombs of the pregnant ones and took out their little children and played with them, they tossed them from machete to machete. After that, they left.
>
> Micaela, quoted in *La Otra Palabra* (1998)

These words expose the blood and immanent violence that is at the heart of the project of the Americas and its continuity in the official project of the Mexican state, despite reforms and multicultural promises. The enactment of domination in these moments of violence, which simultaneously invoke the global and the local, condense and (re)produce representations of race, gender, nation, and relations of power. In the

US, liberal institutions remain monuments to the deferral of the promise of equality; in Mexico, the spirit of the Revolution and its cry for freedom joins in deferral. Aníbal Quijano's (2000) work on the coloniality of power points to how colonialism frames relations of power in Latin America, producing racial categories and relations that still operate. As Karen Till explains, "Although places are understood to be materially real and temporally stable, that is, they give a spatial 'fix' to time, their meanings are made and remade in the present. Places are not only continually interpreted; they are haunted by past structures of meaning and material presences from other times and lives" (2005:9).

This story begins long ago, even before 1492. However, 1492 is an unfinished piece of business, it is a condensation point, as we were reminded in 1992 by indigenous peoples and their allies across the globe. Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari attempted to escape its legacy by changing Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution in 1992 to officially recognize Mexico as a pluriethnic nation; he was mistaken. "The ghost of the Indian haunts America once more, not as a redeemed Indian, but as an irredeemable Indian" (Lomnitz 2001:114). The social memory of that moment of colonization and conquest still figures in the narratives that construct neoliberalism and the *mal gobierno* (literally, "bad government"), as the EZLN refers to the Mexican government, as new moments of conquest, as we will see in the following chapters.

In this chapter, I lay the groundwork for my argument that changes in gendered relations of power and indigenous women's new political subjectivities in the context of autonomy are central to the possibilities of the Zapatista movement's challenge to the existing order. The discussion of these historical constructions of the social body and the nation is important because despite the successive appearance of apparent ruptures with these colonial structures of power, there is a strong continuity at the site of the racialized

gendered bodies of women. This is a critical contribution to this dissertation because it lays the groundwork for understanding why indigenous women's refusal and participation in the Zapatista struggle is critical to its challenge. Just as the colony of Nueva España and the Mexican nation were constructed on matrilineal lines, the reformation of the Mexican nation under neoliberal governance needs indigenous women's public participation as both symbolic and material elements to prove its reformed nature. The public and contestatory refusal of Zapatista women challenges that type of inclusion, as it offers another vision of the nation, where women are not passive subjects to be acted upon, but active creators.

The EZLN has regarded gender, ethnicity/race and class as constitutive parts of the movement since the beginning of the struggle, and they are actively working toward the establishment of gender equity in autonomous governance.[31] These contestations taken together challenge not only the content of a system of rule and regimes of neoliberal governance, but also the legitimacy of its very existence. This rests on several assertions. Women's bodies, and in particular indigenous women's bodies, have been central to intimate hierarchies of colonialism. The indigenous woman has been the site of nationalist experimentation, seen as perfectible and reproductive. Zapatista women's political subjectivities challenge local and state-making projects, and also radical projects predicated on the individual subject of liberal law. At the heart of the conflict is a struggle over control of conceptions of gender and sexuality, the control of indigenous women's bodies and self-making.

---

[31] I am not trying to argue a case of Zapatista exceptionalism, however, the Zapatistas are one of the few movements of the past decades in Latin America to not prioritize one of these elements above the others.

I am centering this line of analysis, but not simply to counter the “add women and stir” method of gender analysis.[32] Gender is part of global structures of rule and knowledge, despite the lack of a unitary global system of gender oppression. As Audré Lorde points out, our struggles are particular, but we are not alone. Intersectionality theory—written by women of color, third wave feminists and non-western feminists—centers how experience is structured and lived through the embodiment of these modes of hierarchies and how it is lived through our cultural difference.[33] In order to discuss Zapatista women’s new political subjectivity that emerges as a gendered idiom of struggle, I need to start with a genealogy of race, gender, and class. By focusing on processes of subjectification, that is subject-making and self-making through movement we can trace what limits and what possibilities emerge. If subjectivity is based on the “authority of experience,” as ethnic/racial identity is changed, what it means to be a woman also changes. As Ferreira da Silva notes, “the historical national subject is always already racial” (2007:196). I would add that it is also always already gendered; racial subjection is also a gendered subjection. This chapter also shows why a consideration of gender is essential to any analysis of social movements and state relations.

I will first examine the invocation of an already existing notion of blackness during conquest that would come to configure later racial hierarchies. I then examine the place of the woman in the nation and the intimate hierarchies of colonialism. Visual structures and representational practices help constitute discourses of dominance. I will discuss the colonial genre of casta paintings as a particularly salient site to examine the

---

[32] Often exemplified by the insertion of a chapter or partial chapter on “women.” Perhaps this is better than accounts that simply note that questions of gender are outside the scope of the argument and gesture to a future project.

[33] See Anzaldúa 1991, Delgado Pop 2000, Hill Collins 1991, Jaimes Guerrero 1997, Trask 1993.

particular scopic regime of colonialism.[34] These are formal portraits of racial and gender regulation representing Spain's ideal ordered society far from the perceived barbarity of actual practices.

These casta paintings expose elite anxieties and are a visual representation of racial discourses coalescing into racial taxonomies tied to mechanisms of regulation. Who in Mexico can be a political subject? Who has the monopoly on humanity, and who is excluded? Notions of perfectibility, contamination, and reproduction are central to these images. Although reconfigured, these notions are also at the heart of the revolutionary nationalism that emerged with the Mexican revolution—a revolution with the goal of uprooting former hierarchies and ending discrimination. Yet, we can see the traces of colonial hierarchies in discourses of *mestizaje* (race mixing) and the centrality of women's bodies, the "new mestiza," for the production of the new nation. Although on the surface, it would seem that there is break or rupture between the time of the castas and revolutionary mestizaje, there are strong continuities.

The notion of lineage is retained due to the centering indigenous civilization as central to a mestizo identity. The notion of mutability of race through modernization centers on many of the same concerns as *calidad* (roughly, one's quality). This mutability caused colonial anxieties over mimicry, and drove elites back to biology (ancestry and blood) to differentiate bodies and keep them in their places. With mestizaje, the aim was not to assure racial hierarchies through separation, but to use the mutability for assimilation, to retain these hierarchies through a veneer of (modern) equality. I will discuss the mechanisms for producing indigenous bodies for the revolutionary nation, and then I briefly discuss the categories and terms of analysis that I will be employing in my analysis. Attention to these particular, if complex, processes is

[34] See Christian Metz, cited in Jay (1988).

necessary if we are to understand the force presented by alternatives to the powerfully homogenizing versions of the nation that control and oppress certain segments of Mexican society. Thus, this chapter is an examination of Mexican nation making as a racialized gendered process, which will inform later analyses of how this process is being contested.

BLACKNESS IN THE FIRST MOMENT

In this section, I call our attention again to the intertwined nature of race and gender, of afro-latin and indigenous peoples in the Americas, which continues to structure societies and create inequalities in the present. In Christopher Columbus' first letter to the Spanish Crown on February 15, 1493, he describes the people of the Americas in contrast and relation to black Africans, using words like "children," "docile," "wonderfully timorous," "timid beyond cure" and "generous."[35] In corporeal descriptions, the Indians were compared to Africans. "In these islands, I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected . . . nor are they Negroes, as in Guinea, but with flowing hair, and they are not born with excessive force in solar rays" (Jane 1930: 210). The comparisons were simultaneously gendered; the custom of wearing long hair was correlated with women. Interestingly, Indian social practices were compared to Europeans.' Relationships between men and women were adjudged as being similar, monogamous, except in the case of rulers. Columbus notes, "it appears that the women work more than the men" (ibid.:210), a description of Indian men's nature as lazy that later became a stereotype.

[35]Despite discussing a seemingly warm welcome—he notes that the Indians share what they have with the Spaniards—Columbus finds it necessary to capture several Indians in order to interrogate them, much as one would gather objects of evidence.

The *reconquista* and the social and religious categories operating in Spain at the time of Columbus' voyages to the Americas influenced the colonization of the Americas. As Sylvia Wynter notes:

> The new symbolic construct was that of "race." Its essentially Christian-heretical positing of the nonhomogeneity of the human species was to provide the basis for new metaphysical notions of order. Those notions provided the foundations of the post-1492 polities of the Caribbean and the Americas, which, if in a new variant, continue to be legitimated by the nineteenth-century colonial systems of Western Europe, as well as the continuing hierarchies of our present global order. Such legitimation takes place within the mode of subjective understanding generated from a classificatory schema and its categorical models, which, mapped onto the range of human hereditary variations and their cultures, would come to parallel those mapped onto the torrid zone and the Western Hemisphere before the voyages of the Portuguese and that of Columbus. (1995:34)

Thus, the racialization of Indians in the Americas is predicated on an already existing context of blackness.[36] Columbus locates the people he encountered at the edges of the civilized world, outside its boundaries. The process of determining a place for "Indians" in the European imaginary is already conditioned by a belief that black Africans were outside of civilization and fit for slavery. The "torrid zone" of the Americas was prefigured by the alterity of Islam. From these early accounts of the conquest, we can see how Europeans began to imagine themselves in the colonies as distinct from those they encountered, imaginings that would structure relations of rule to the present.

The characterization of the indigenous peoples of the Americas as children posited a problem for the Spaniards. Ascribing a potential rationality to local populations necessarily excluded them from slavery. However, those of African descent, seen as naturally disobedient and as the biblical sons of Ham, meant that they could be civil

[36] The year 1492 held another significance in Spain, also related to blackness, as the year of surrender of the last Muslim stronghold in Granada. The Muslims and Jews still remaining after the Inquisition were driven out. It is notable that the first places of contact, in the Caribbean, were and continue to be inscribed as the places of blackness in the Americas.

slaves, or legal merchandise. "It was within the structure of this social hierarchy that the *racial* caste hierarchy of Latin America would now emerge. In this hierarchy, the differing degrees of mixtures designated as *more human* the more they bred in the European and bred out the *Indio* and *Negro*, while the latter category came to serve as the *nec plus ultra* sign of rational human being" (ibid.:36). Although blackness serves as this referent on a global level, it is important to trace the local expressions of these hierarchies through genealogies, in order to better understand racial regimes in the present. I will discuss this triadic relationship and the development of racial hierarchies in Mexico in the sections below.

TRIADIC RELATIONS: RACE/GENDER/NATION

In this section, I will move from discussing the first moments of conquest and the inscription of blackness into the body of the New Spain, to a discussion of race, gender, and nation. At the heart of the EZLN struggle are questions of race, nation, and belonging; at the heart of questions of race, nation and belonging are the literal and metaphorical bodies of women. Although it can be argued that Mexico did not even emerge as a modern nation until the "liberal revolution" of the 1867 Constitution and the *Reforma*, the new relations of modern citizenship were already becoming sedimented in the colonial period. I want to draw attention to the central place of women's bodies in colonial hierarchies in order to track these relations to the present.

As McClintock shows in *Imperial Leather* (1995), imperialism cannot be understood without a gender theory of power. The construction of nationalism is a gendered phenomenon. Instead of being mere victims, women are at the point of production. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault exposes the ways that sexuality became an issue in the administration of the colonial apparatus:

> Through pedagogy, medicine, and economics, it made sex not only a secular concern but a concern for the state as well; to be more exact, sex became a matter that required the social body as a whole, and virtually all of its individuals, to place themselves under surveillance. (1978:116)

Although colonialism came to an official end by the first quarter of the nineteenth century in the Spanish-colonized Americas, this concern with surveillance continues to the present.

I find Foucault's notion of "biopower" to be productive in understanding these operations of power. Biopower is a form of collective regulation and group classification of the social body, encompassing both regulatory and disciplinary power. Thus, biopolitics can be seen as the "growing inclusion of man's [sic] natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power" (Agamben 1998:119); that is, the ways that power permeates our bodies and our forms of life. This directs us to examine the modes of inscription of individuals' lives within the state order through rights, liberties, citizenship, and spaces won.[37]

Mamdani argues, "*All* boundaries are artificial, none are natural" (2001:653). Boundaries must be naturalized. Located as biological and cultural reproducers, and gatekeepers of ethnic/racial/national boundaries, women serve as the embodiment of difference (Gutiérrez Chong 2004; Mani 1989; C. Smith 1996; Stolcke 2002; Stoler 1995; Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Further, McClintock reminds us, "all nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous—dangerous not in Eric Hobsbawm's sense of having to be opposed, but in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence" (1995:352). Whether intending to bolster the official national project or subvert it, these gendered interventions are signs of

[37] I will return to this in later chapters in my discussion of struggles around autonomy and rights.

the consolidation of new forms of patriarchy. Although the bodies of women are centered in the nation, Radhika Mohanram notes:

> In the discourse of embodiment as well as that of nation, the woman's body is posited as unchanging, constant, and timeless, just as are notions of space. Women are positioned like the present continuous tense form of the verb, but are curiously devoid of the notion of time, which is the fundamental purpose of tense in verbs. This construction of the woman's body as embodying timelessness is a feint, in that her body shifts in meaning according to the needs of history, nation and men, and signifies differently according to race, imperialism, nation or decolonization. Her body is enclosed, incarcerated, in a space, which has no meaning unto itself but functions to give meaning to others. The woman's body within representation is indeed the black body from Freud's dark continent. (1999:174)

In the case of Mexico, the reproductive/perfectible body of the nation is that of the indigenous woman. "Sexuality has always provided gendered metaphors for colonization" (hooks 1991:57). The arriving Spaniards viewed the inhabitants as an extension of the land—something to be conquered, raped and made to (re)produce for "the Good of the Kingdom and for the Kingdom of God," and for individual wealth and pleasure. Indigenous and African women were worth little more than that what they could produce. In contrast, European women, Spanish women in this case, were seen as upholding standards of virtue. The arrival of European/white women served to solidify boundaries and erect social hierarchies.

These racial regimes of colonialism are gendered through morality and proscribed subjectivities. Morality works through gender asymmetries that are raced and classed. As Agamben notes, the essence of State sovereignty "lies in the power to define and constantly redefine, where that line of legitimacy falls" (1998:16). In her work on British colonialism in Asia, Stoler describes the differing sexual norms for European men and women; men can have sexual relations or marry an Asian woman without losing status, but this is never true for European women. "State racism has never been gender-neutral

in the management of sexuality; gender prescriptions for motherhood and manliness, as well as gendered assessments of perversion and subversion are part of the scaffolding on which the intimate technologies of racist policies rest" (Stoler 1995:93). The situation in New Spain was similar. [38] These questions of morality and sexuality were central to the development of the Mexican nation and continue to the present in neoliberal governance regimes, the productivity of women's bodies shifting according to the historical moment. I will discuss their emergence in the next sections.

THREATENING BODIES

The acts described in the opening epigraphs of this chapter are not extraordinary moments. In 1968, before the October massacre of students before the Mexico City Olympics, rebellious students were feminized by the Mexican military.[39] The fear of women's ability to reproduce the threat to colonial order is also echoed in the chapter's opening narrative from Acteal. There are more recent accounts of violence in Mexico from Guadalajara, San Salvador Atenco, and Oaxaca, where women were again subjected to a particular brutality and sexual violence from police state agents.[40]

Non-virtuous bodies threaten. They are inherently impure, contaminated, polluted; in short, they are bodies that do not count.[41] As opposed to European/white women who are the paragons of virtue, "…Native women are the bearers of a counter-

---

[38] For Mexico see Lavrin (1989).

[39] For a similar case in Argentina, see Taylor (1997).

[40] In the case of Atenco, both the National Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Center Miguel Agustín Pro A.C. have collected testimonies. One woman reported, "they started clubbing us on the head. Then they were touching my breasts, my buttocks. Then I felt a hand touching my vagina and penetrating me with the fingers." See report "Atenco, un Estado de Derecho a la Medida," www.centroprodh.org.mx.

[41] A current example of lives deemed not worth living is in Juarez, Mexico where over 500 women have been murdered with impunity since 1993, despite growing public outcry. The murders have included sexual mutilation and the vast numbers of those killed have been poor migrant women, including indigenous women from southern Mexico. See Balli (2003), Gaspar de Alba (2005), Portillo (2001) and Schmidt Camacho (2005).

imperial order and pose a supreme threat to the dominant culture. *Symbolic and literal* control over their bodies is important in the war against native people…" (A. Smith 2005:15; emphasis added). There are countless accounts of atrocities, mutilations, massacres committed during the conquest; many of these accounts are of specific forms of gender violence. As Mercedes Olivera observes:

> Not only because of the rapes and inequalities and denigrating sexual relations that the conquerors, landowners, storekeepers, religious men, priests and political authorities had with indigenous women, taking advantage of their servile condition, but also because her body was expropriated in the function of producing the largest number of tributes possible, to replace the effects of the wars and the epidemics. (2004:70)

In his account of the conquest, las Casas (2003) described a man boasting of his "hard work" raping Indian women to impregnate them. Selling pregnant women into slavery increased their price, both for the potential additional slave and the proof of reproductive fitness. As the period of conquest made way for colonial society and new technologies of governance, non-European women as threat and as "natural" resource, became a concern to be regulated and managed.

Needing to create a governable society, what begins to emerge is a micropolitics of rule based in the discourse of the family, with Spain (and Spaniards) as patriarch. This discourse becomes a tool of governance in Chiapas in the late nineteenth century and appears in paternalistic efforts to safeguard indigenous women's rights in present indigenous movements. The roots of these discourses are colonial. One effort to bring indigenous women into a docile state can be seen in the colonizers argument that what these women needed was freedom from the "oppressive" customs of their men. This particular discourse about indigenous women continues to the present and circulates globally. Andrea Smith, writing about Natives and US colonization reports, "The *Mariposa Gazette* similarly noted that when Indian women were safely under the control

of white men, they are 'neat, and tidy, and industrious,' and soon learn to discharge domestic duties properly and creditably" (2005: 23).

Another effort to bolster the idea that native women needed the protection of white men, exploited heightened tensions between afro-descendents and indigenous peoples.[42] The threat of sexual violence by black men against indigenous women was frequently invoked. In his essay on black-native relations, Carroll cites a 1560 document written by Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco who is worried about "negro depredations." "According to the viceroy, blacks preyed heavily upon native females, violating them at will, even in their own homes and in front of their families. Worse yet, blacks sometimes carried off indigenous women, never to be seen again" (2005:247). In this case, we can see that sexual violence against Native women also illustrates how gender violence is used as a tool for racism and colonialism against all non-Europeans in general.[43]

In Mexico, the virtuous native body was perfected in the Virgin of Guadalupe; she represents a morality for non-white New Spain. She first appeared to peasant Juan Diego in 1531 on the hill of Tepeyac believed to be a site for the worship of Tonantzin, the Mexica mother goddess. Many have charged that the Virgin was "created" by the Spanish priests in an instrumental fashion to facilitate processes of colonization. However, I want to focus on the Virgin of Guadalupe's complex meanings in light of

---

[42]In the collection of historical essays *Beyond Black and Red* (Restall 2005), most of the authors argue that the record generally disputes this "common-sense" claim, and that despite the real tensions existing between Black and Indigenous (partially growing out of Blacks' employment as overseers on haciendas and militia service) relations were more harmonious than thought.

[43] A recent case points to the contested nature of gender violence and women's bodies as sites of geopolitical conflict. The US sponsored a UN resolution to condemn state-sanctioned rape. The text as originally written was "Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including instruments to achieve political objectives." This was changed at the end to "including conflict and related situations" in response to criticisms from a group of African nations, spearheaded by South Africa and Angola. The African nations contended that this was a "politicization" of rape by the US, creating two categories of rape (military and civilian). The US's goal was to condemn the use of rape as a tool of war. Kristen Silverberg, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs is quoted as saying, "We would not have imagined that language along those lines would provoke controversy." *New York Times*, November 17, 2007.

colonial/postcolonial biopolitics. The Virgin has come to be a symbol of belonging and resistance, of incorporation into the nation and the struggle for a new national sensibility. Early in the struggle that would become the fight for Mexican independence, Father Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores* ended with "Long live Our Lady of Guadalupe! Long live Fernando VII! Down with the bad government!"[44] In the lead-up to the 2000 election, Vicente Fox utilized the Virgin for the first time since the Mexican Revolution instituted a separation of Church and State. Fox, a resolutely neoliberal candidate from the conservative opposition National Action Party (PAN), drew on the popular appeal of the Virgin to bolster his ultimately successful campaign.

Despite the imbrication of the Virgin in the mechanisms of state incorporation, she is also a complicated symbol of cultural resistance.[45] I attended a conference in Oaxaca in 1997 commemorating 75 years since the death of Ricardo Flores Magón.[46] The international audience included many foreigners who worked with the Zapatistas and in Mexico, as well as local grassroots organizers, independent unionists, and members of indigenous and other social movements. While discussing Magón's legacy, a Spaniard stood up to talk about his outrage over a distressing situation in Zapatista communities. "Why do they still have ties with the Catholic Church? Don't they know that this Church is the church of colonization? Why do they worship this Virgin of Guadalupe?"[47] The

---

[44] *¡Abajo el mal gobierno!* This trope of the "bad government" is repeated by the EZLN.
[45] See Castillo's (1996) collection for the variety of interpretations. US novelist Sandra Cisneros calls the Virgin the first mestiza and the original Chicana and to Gloria Anzaldúa, she is a symbol of the mestizo who values his/her indigenous roots.
[46] Flores Magón was born in San Antonio Eloxochitlán, Oaxaca and died at Leavenworth Penitentiary in Kansas. He was an anarchist and social reformer who inspired the Mexican revolutionary movement in the Mexican Liberal Party (Partido Liberal Mexicano) and was editor of *Regeneración*, aimed at organizing workers against the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. He was also a transnational organizer arrested in the US for "obstructing the war effort in 1918." His writings continue to inspire social movements, including those in Chiapas and Oaxaca.
[47] He also continued to vent his outrage at finding books by Pol Pot in a community library. Knowing this particular situation, I told him that he should be taking orthodox Mexican Marxists to task for donating

next day, Carlos Beas Torres of the Union of Indigenous Communities of the Northern Zone of the Isthmus (UCIZONI) arrived for his presentation and ostentatiously removed his denim jacket to reveal a sequined Virgin of Guadalupe covering the entire inside of the jacket, and then proceeded to talk about resistance to neocolonialism. In Chiapas, one of the most popular handicrafts in Zapatista-run artisan stores is a *retablo* (painting used as a devotional image) of the Virgin of Guadalupe wearing a ski mask. This reformulation of the docile Virgin as a Zapatista speaks to the position of women in the struggle; they are no longer passive bodies to be acted upon, but active subjects (re)creating their society.

At the same time as acknowledging the force of these interpretations, I question these narratives of resistant agency in figures like the Virgin of Guadalupe. She was not a national subject of resistance, not a body that threatened, serving more often as a figure of incorporation. Although the Spanish attempted to create a governable society through the regulation of bodies, the boundaries were constantly shifting and their regulatory mechanisms could not encompass all local practices. There was resistance to colonial domination, but certain kinds of accommodations were central to the continued intimate relations of dominance.[48] In the next section, I will continue to discuss the centrality of the regulation of bodies in the formation of racialized gendered hierarchies.

COLONIAL HIERARCHIES IN NEW SPAIN: RACE, MESTIZAJE AND CALIDAD

In this section, I will take a closer look at the micropolitics of rule and the inscription of life within the state by examining the regulatory mechanisms of New Spain through a body of artistic production known as the casta paintings, and through the

---

these kinds of materials in their quest to convert the Zapatistas to their ideology. This example illustrates a tension between Marxist and non-Marxist supporters of the Zapatistas.

[48] This speaks to the importance of the work of Frantz Fanon shifting the site of colonial subject production from the individual to the collective, while discussing the phenomenon of internal colonization and self-hate. See *Black Skin/White Masks* (1991) and his writings on the Algerian struggle for independence.

production of proscribed identities. In the colony, there was a shift in the techniques of governance, in the disciplining of the body and regulation of populations. Although a multiplicity of localized identities and identity markers in colonial Latin America gave individuals choices, these choices were limited by other factors. The regulation of labor, of determining whose bodies were good for what work became a central concern. Governmentality describes a rationality of the effective use of power expressed as a concern with populations, territories, and the conduct of subjects individually and collectively. Governmentality as a logic of rule relies on individuals making themselves subjects within particular spatial and social fields through the micropolitics of discipline (Foucault's biopolitics). Rather than a matter of power being deployed by the powerful against the powerless, power works through all subjects in a given social field by guiding "the conduct of conduct." In this, Foucault's approach differs from models of power expressed as coercion and/or ideological consent, as well as from classical liberal contract theories (Danaher, Schirate and Webb 2000). Examining this shift of colonial management sets the foundations for later chapters, as disciplinary power cedes to control.

It is important to understand how race functions in these micropolitics in specific national contexts, since the nation is a central terrain of inscribing race. As Rahier notes,

> Cultural, ethnic, or 'racial' identities must be understood within the always fluctuating political, economic, and social processes and inscribed in particular spatial-temporal contexts, constituted within local, regional, national and transnational areas. Identities and their representations are constantly imagined and reimagined, acted and reenacted in specific situations and in political and socioeconomic contexts that are always changing and that provide sites for their negotiation and renegotiation, their definition and redefinition. (Cited in Oboler 2006:13)

It has become commonplace to say that race is a social construction, however this neither explains nor accounts for the ways that physical and moral characteristics come to be

essentialized and made to seem "real," and to have material effects.[49] Colonial constructions of race do not correlate exactly to twenty-first century notions of race, which are also shifting. A genealogy can aid in the understanding of race in Mexico and indigenous movements and race.

My first experience with a casta painting in 1998 was by chance while accompanying visiting relatives on a gift-buying trip to the artisan market surrounding the Santo Domingo church in San Cristóbal.[50] We wandered from the main market area, spread around the side and front of the cathedral and into the plaza, to the back to visit an nongovernmental organization (NGO) artisan cooperative, with high-end items, nicely displayed including information about the artisans and their communities. Next to the store was the Museum of the City. One item stood out to me. It was a casta painting—the first I had ever seen, categorizing and detailing the racial combinations of the colony. I took a photo. The painting seemed simultaneously anachronistic and contemporary, openly acknowledging the racial regimes of the colony. Perhaps it might have seemed quaint if not for the continuity of the hierarchies inscribed in the painting. One of the first stories told to me in 1994 about San Cristóbal was that indigenous people could not walk on sidewalks until 1972, around the time they began to organize and demand rights.

---

[49] It is not within the scope of this dissertation to fully discuss the question or of race and blackness in Latin America. However, there is a growing body of work on this topic. Lewis R. Gordon makes a critique of social constructionist arguments around race and argues for examining how race and racism are lived. "A further complication is that most social constructionist arguments exemplify a rather skewed conception of biology. Human populations are talked about as though they do not generate offspring and are not born from previous generations. The social constructionist language suggests that there is a greater randomness in morphological similarity between parents and children than empirical reality attests. Try as we may, some traits could only emerge in one groups by having children from a member of a group or an offspring from a group from whom that trait originated. The fear, however is that the admission of any biological factor would open up the floodgates of biological reductionism" (L. R. Gordon 2005: 93).

[50] The market itself is an interesting site exposing race, gender, class, and national relations. At one point, local ladinos in the municipal government tried to move this market from the center of town to the outskirts, complaining that the largely indigenous women merchants, with their wares spread out on colorful plastic tarps in the cathedral plaza made the area look "messy, dirty and not the image that should represent a city that is a patrimony of humanity." *Coletos*, as the ladinos native to San Cristóbal are known, seemed to be oblivious that the artisan market was one of the main reasons tourists visited the city.

It was also a further clue that local ideas about racial and ethnic identity differed from that of the US I recalled my first landlord in the city and first confrontation with this different version of racial ideology. The day we were to sign the contract, he invited us in to his house to talk. He discussed the EZLN and the problems indigenous people face in Chiapas. His tone seemed strange at first, the indigenous were definitely an "Other," yet he looked similar to many men I had met in Zapatista communities. He then went on to talk about how his family "used to be indigenous." They were no longer indigenous since they moved from Oxchuc to San Cristóbal and he explained, "We don't speak a language, and I am a judge in the capital, Tuxtla." He said that his wife, hovering in the background, was a *coleta* and so were his children. This struck me—how could one "stop" being indigenous?

What this points to is that rather than a strongly demarcated color line, similar to that which developed in the United States. Spanish-colonized lands developed a black-white continuum of race.[51] The regulatory mechanism of social life in the colony was enacted through legislation, which converted racial differentiation into forms of social segregation that imposed restrictions, rights, and obligations on each racial group as it interacted with the others through the colonial period. Spatial division was to be maintained. The *Republica de Indios* (Republic of Indians) was created, which maintained *caciques* (indigenous nobles, or rulers) as local authorities; the black African slaves belonged to the *Republica de Españoles* (Republic of Spaniards). Spaniards were recorded into the Book of Spaniards. The mixed belonged to neither, so the *sociedad de castas* (society of castes) was created, and these people were recorded into Book of

[51] Although these racial taxonomies differ across national boundaries on the whole, they still operate across a black-white continuum. Non-Spanish colonies such as Brazil developed their own black-white continuum, but with a different racial logic.

Castes. As part of the Bourbon Reforms, the Crown added census reports, along with registries of baptisms and marriage, to this project of population control.

In eighteenth century New Spain, casta paintings were produced to explain the system and inscribe it in/on the public body through a racial and visual grammar. The casta paintings describe the regulatory practices of New Spain and conditions of law and orderliness. They represent a visual strategy of surveillance, a gendered and racialized text of subjection in the nation, and as such constructed an object: hybrid bodies, which must be classified, contained. "They were a visual practice that made the colonial body—both elite and nonelite—knowable and visible" (Katzew 2004:54). This practice represents the idea that blood lineage can be traced and identity mapped. While seeming to celebrate racial mixing, this pictorial genre aided in the legitimacy of social hierarchy. The caste schemes depicted in the paintings are an attempt to gain control over ambiguity and hybridity through an illusion of totality. They did not represent social reality, but attempted to engineer social practices, much in the way that neoliberal multiculturalism seeks to create incorporate diversity in the nation through acts of recognition.

The racial regimes were based around three figures: the Spaniard, the Indian and the black African. Racial taxonomies were created from these three categories, with Spanish blood as the hierarchical index (See Illustration 1). Within this system, black Africans are the negative pole of non-white as *raza* (race, used here as lineage), which correlates to the linking of skin color to a religious element (Christianity). Blood equals religious purity (Carrera 2003:10). Spain was the pinnacle of purity of blood and the top of the hierarchy. Black Africans were the lowest. As opposed to the African, "Spaniards believed that Indian blood was not blemished by infidel blood, and, thus, was essentially a pure blood. Concomitantly, unions between Spaniard men and Indian women that produced mestizo offspring resulted in diluted but not polluted blood" (ibid.:12). By the

Illustration 1: Luis de Mena, casta painting, ca. 1750, oil on canvas, 120 x 104 cm. Museo de América, Madrid

third generation, these children could become Spaniards. This was not the case with Africans whose blood was seen as polluting. There were no African nobles, only African slaves; their blood was corrupting and left a permanent stain. This did not only dilute the blood lineage but had social meaning. The caste category of the "*Torna Atrás*" (Return-Backwards) shows that despite being several generations removed from African ancestry, blackness can return.

However, this wasn't just a simple system based on blood and these identities weren't always easy to ascertain. In colonial times, a person's social body was ascribed within a hierarchy of social meanings and values. Identity was not fixed or derived from specific physical characteristics, but from one's calidad. "Calidad represented one's social body as a whole, which included references to skin color but also often encompassed, more importantly, occupation, wealth, purity of blood, honor, integrity, and place of origin" (ibid.:14). During the colony race was lived as lineage and through calidad, which did not inhere just in the physical person; the social body was assessed, classified, and inscribed within a hierarchy of social meaning and values. This is an important distinction and its legacy is important for understanding gendered racial regimes in Mexico today. Deriving from lineage, calidad was a fluid signifier. For example, a person could be perceived to be a Spaniard because she demonstrated herself to be one, to exhibit qualities that acted in ways that signified or demonstrated "Spaniard-ness," even if her skin were dark.

The paintings depicted skin color and clothing, but also work, bringing class into the equation. Certain jobs were also associated with casta identity. Despite having a light skin color or proving lineage, a person who was a laborer could also be given a casta identity. Privacy was equated with Spaniards and public situations implied a lower

calidad.[52] These spatial associations and hierarchies of home, family, and sexual life can be seen in many of the paintings.[53] A key site of inscription into the state that emerges in this period is the linkage between poverty and immorality. I will discuss the continuity of this linkage to state practices in the present in later chapters. "Three words emerge more and more frequently across this array of documents: *aseo* (hygiene), *limpieza* (cleanliness), and a heading that often appears with both of these terms, *policia* (civic order)" (ibid.:109). Thus, the further from Spanish blood, the closer to degradation. We can see this linkage in the category "*Albarazado*" (white-spotted), which shows signs of poverty and low status (See Illustration 2). The clothing of the darker-skinned *Lobo* (Wolf[54]) and the Albarazado boy are ripped, and the family is in public, his mother, an indigenous woman, is selling fruits and vegetables, the father holding work implements. The "*Mulata*"[55] is particularly interesting in its representations of violence (See Illustration 3). The mother, a *Negra* (black woman) is attacking her Spanish husband with a kitchen implement (marking her status), and she is pulling his hair, which is a sign of deep disrespect. The mulata child is painted between both parents, scared and appealing to the mother. This violence was a common in depictions of the mulata.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of calidad relates to a person's rights and privileges. These questions were also especially salient during the adjudication of mixed marriages. Who has the right to become a citizen? Whose offspring are deserving of rights? "When a person's calidad was requested in a legal proceeding, the response was usually the individual's age, sex, place of residence, legitimacy or illegitimacy, civic status (i.e., whether a landowner or not), occupation, or any combination of these. The

---

[52] See Stolcke 2002.
[53] For a similar analysis of Ecuador see Muratorio (2004).
[54] The several zoological terms used in the caste scheme all referred to African and indigenous mixtures.
[55] This category is generally represented by a female child in the casta paintings.

Illustration: 2 Miguel Cabrera, 11. *De lobo y de India, albarazado* (From Wolf and Indian, Albarazado), 1763, oil on canvas, 132 x 101 cm., Museo de América, Madrid.

Illustration: 3 Andrés de Islas, *No. 4. De español y negra, nace mulata* (From Spaniard and Black, a Mulata is Born), 1774, oil on canvas, 75 x 54 cm. Museo de América, Madrid.

amount of punishment one received depended on this information" (Gutiérrez 1991:191). In a case in Chiapas, Doña Crescencia Centeno's status as a Spaniard and the family property owner, helped her refute the charges brought against her before the Ecclesiastical Tribunal in 1819 in Ocosingo. Although her husband had left her for the city, she remained in residence on her fincas. However, her husband received word that she was sleeping with an unmarried servant. He used this charge as proof of her immorality, and to demand the right to a divorce, not easily granted. Doña Crescencia disputed the claim, stating that "since the time of four months, I came to this city to unite myself with my husband, forced to abandon my fincas." Although there was no final sentences in the records, in this document, her word is weighed equally against that of her husband.[56]

Since calidad was less fixed than other forms of identity, also being tied labor, dress, speech, and social location, casta and Spaniard identities were not easy to ascertain. As we know, identity is never about truth, and the threat of mimicry of Spanish identity created anxiety about the colonized not maintaining their subjected position. Legislation was passed that bound the indigenous to wear only their own traditional dress and not that of Spaniards. "During the seventeenth century the Spanish crown also decreed restrictive measures that forbade certain women, especially *mulatas* (women of African and Spanish descent), from wearing particular types of dress, principally garments of silk or jewels, but also indigenous clothing" (Castillo Palma and Kellogg 2005:116). These strictures are expressed in the representations of the casta paintings.

In Chiapas, the concept of castas and casta paintings existed, but local expression was slightly altered. Due to its closer relationship with Central America, the term ladino

---

[56] Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. Archival Folder: Haciendas Ocosingo, 1819.

was employed more often than mestizo. As opposed to mestizo, ladino was less tied to concepts of race and more to calidad (García de León 1985:117). "Educated" Indians who did not live in communities could also be considered ladinos, rather than *naturals* (indigenous). Due to the strong oppositional history between indigenous peoples and ladinos in Chiapas, the presence of Africans, mulattos, *pardos*, and castas who show up on census rolls is overshadowed, leaving an impression of their absence (ibid.:114).

Another anxiety that emerged out of the flexibility within the concept of calidad, was the fear of African/indigenous mixing. As mentioned earlier, the Spaniards promoted tension between both groups by denouncing black sexual depravity. Crime and social disorder were also attributed to blacks. Part of this divide and conquer strategy stemmed from wanting to protect the remaining indigenous population from the abuse of non-native overseers, since they were useful for menial work. Another reason was fear of a concerted effort to rise up against Spaniards. Spaniards and *criollos* (Spaniards born in the colonies) were a minority of the population in New Spain. "The state's demeaning of blacks, natives, and castas, as well as discouraging harmony between these subordinate groups, enhanced and protected Spanish control over them. The Church, too, encouraged racist and ethnocentric mechanisms of control over persons of color and non-Hispanic ethnicity for the same reasons" (Lutz and Restall 2005:198).

However, the idea that black-indigenous relations were conflictive is largely because those were the cases to pass into record through the courts. Despite laws forbidding Spaniards and castas from living in native communities—in order to force residential separation—there were many inter-marriages and shifting identities. Most of these marriages involved men of African descent marrying indigenous women. This was a plus for the women, who would no longer be required to pay tribute, and for the men who could also claim an indigenous identity and be spared certain types of obligations,

such as militia duty. The "law of the womb" meant that their children could not become slaves.

There was conflict, but there were also close relationships, despite the state's efforts to segregate and pit them against one another. Although Patrick Carroll writes about black and native relations, this example opens the door for understanding indigenous communities as other than closed homogenous spaces. I have added emphasis to particular sections that I will argue in Chapters Three and Four have resonance with present day Zapatista autonomy, where we can see a more open-ended indigenous identity developing and the resignification of "non-traditional" territory as indigenous:

> *To indigenous peoples, persons who lived like natives were natives even if Spaniards might define the same individuals as non-natives on the basis of their racial appearance*. Given such different definitions of 'indio,' it was not wonder that colonial record keepers left us with a very imprecise record of African presence and behavior within native spaces. (2005:253)

While racial labels themselves were one part of determining calidad, in the years leading up to independence, these labels began to coalesce around a small number of categories—Español, mestizo and indio—with the intermediate status categories disappearing. In 1822, after independence, casta designations were banned in legal records and in the 1824 Constitution, citizen's equality before the law was guaranteed. The liberal period brought with it the naturalization of inequalities, a shift to achievement and descent (civic status), the rejection of radical difference, and a singular collectivity of the nation replacing local and regional ones. After Mexican independence, civic status labels increased again. "Individuals formerly classified by their race, or presumed socio-racial standing, after 1820 were listed either by a nationality label such as *ciudadano* (citizen), *mexicano* (Mexican), or 'no mention'" (Gutiérrez 1991:194). The most despised body of colonial culture, the black African is erased.

During the later part of the eighteenth century, painters resurrect the figure of the Indian not touched by civilization (*indio bárbaro*), often depicted wearing little clothing, carrying bows and arrows and walking in the forest. These representations will figure strongly in later Mexican nationalism. I will be returning to these visual representations throughout the dissertation, as images of indigenous peoples circulate through the national imaginary and have played key roles in the creation of the national subject. They also play a role in the configuration of "Mexico" outside its borders. It is significant that the Zapatistas chose to wear masks not only for protection, but "to be seen."

Visual surveillance didn't end with the end of the castas; there was a reterritorialization of visual regimes. A new form of body trope begins to appear in the visual representations of the ideal nation. "With the move toward independence, the body of the Indian became the critical nexus in the discourse of origin and authenticity." (Carrera 2003:147). I would add that it was not just the body of any Indian, but also that of the Indian woman. As mentioned earlier, the matrilineal line forms the Mexican nation. Natividad Gutiérrez Chong argues that this has its origin in the castas. "No history or casta painting registers a Hispanic mother with an indigenous father" (2004:30). The racialized gendered hierarchies of the castas produced powerful unification myths utilizing the sexualized productive bodies of indigenous women. From these unification myths, I will discuss how they became symbols of the modern nation, and today are the necessary symbol of multicultural diversity.

REVOLUTION AND THE NEW MESTIZA

Under Spanish rule, indigenous peoples were regulated as a census category, through institutionalized identities, and as a fiscal category through tribute payments. When Mexico gained independence from Spain, tribute ended and the social and political

segregation enforced through the Republica de Indios and Sociedad de Castas was abolished. Ostensibly, by the mid-nineteenth century, all Mexicans were equal citizens. However, a racial census still existed, and although dark skin was still a referent, other "cultural" elements were used to classify bodies, especially language and dress. The centrality of these elements underscores the subjective and social nature of identity-formation and the mestizaje process in Mexico.

In some respects, racism became stronger in the nineteenth century, with the advent of racial science and neo-Lamarckian eugenics. "[P]owerful ideological as well as economic factors favored the development of a more virulent racism in the later nineteenth century. The heyday of European racist thought—dated from approximately 1850—1920—roughly coincided with Mexico's phase of liberal state-building and capitalist export-oriented economic development. Both of these processes, which culminated in the 'order and progress' dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911) lent themselves to racist interpretations and rationalizations" (Knight 1990:78). The Porfiriato mapped the patriarchal power of the family onto Mexican society, inscribing masculine authority, and instituting the public regulation of proper sexualities and domestic conduct based on standards of virtue that were represented by the white elite. As Robin Kelley states, "modern racism is one of the 'gifts' of the enlightenment" (2002:107).

During this period, a Mexican nationalism began to emerge, which would find its greatest expression in the cultural discourses of the Revolution in the early 1900s. As mentioned earlier, the historical figure of the pure and noble Indian emerges from the past, untouched by colonialism. As the Indian emerges to claim a central place in this new Mexican nation, afro-mexicans retreat, subsumed into the general population, the

particularity of their identities erased.[57] Although admired for their glorious civilization, indigenous peoples, standing in as ethnic difference, came to represent the nation's past.

As discussed in the previous section, national identities are constructed through racialized and gendered processes. The definitions of race and gender are also affected by nation building. In *The Embodiment of the National in Late Nineteenth-century Mexican Painting,* Stacie Widdifield points out that over the colonial centuries, the use of indigenous culture has provided an unlimited "source for Mexico to justify, if not reinvent, its own history and shore up structures of power and social control" (1996:147). National cultural representations used indigenous peoples, especially their material culture, as the foundation of nationalist aesthetics (Alonso 2004; Knight 1990).

National culture characterized contemporary indigenous peoples as degraded and they were marginalized. In his book, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation,* Tenorio-Trillo (1996) examines the shift from the modernizing discourses of the Porfirian dictatorship to the revolutionary period through Mexico's presence at the World's Fair. In 1889, the Mexican pavilion at the Paris World's fair involved the building of an "Aztec Palace." The Palace was presented as authentically Mexican, but modern, and was shorn of any aspects that might be viewed as "uncivilized." The Aztecs, creators of a great civilization and rulers of large territories, were the perfect image for creating a glorious past for the nation; other local groups were conveniently erased.[58]

[57] Yet, as a global discourse, racism also draws from the visibility of blackness.
[58] There is an interesting parallel here with early discourses of Chicano nationalism that have influenced radical Chicano organizing to the present. This can be seen in certain groups that claim indigeneity through mestizaje, such as those in Los Angeles that promote the study of the Nahuatl and Mexica cultural traditions.

The Mexican Revolution (1910–20) destroyed much of the Porfirian state in Mexico. Many works document and analyze the Mexican Revolution in detail.[59] For my purposes, I want to direct attention to several key processes. One is the development of mestizaje as a "revolutionary" state project, shaping relations, and creating and sedimenting new relations of power. As opposed to the Porfirian elites, mestizo intellectuals were to be the leaders of the new nation. The other process that is important to my study was the distribution of land and formation of the ejido, legalizing communal land tenure (and in some regions of Mexico, simultaneously institutionalizing indigenous forms of community), which I will discuss in the following chapter.

Corrigan and Sayer (1985) argue that states attempt to create a political culture that naturalizes one form of domination. In Mexico, there was no clean break with the prior regime, despite the rhetoric to that effect. Previous racial and social hierarchies were naturalized within the nation, albeit in a revised fashion. Mestizaje was the central trope in Mexican revolutionary identity formation. Revolutionary intellectuals revised the Porfirian Aztec past, recasting the mestizo as a purified Indian rather than as a degraded Spaniard.[60] The Indian past became the symbols of national present.

The architects of the new nation retained the Porfiriato's desires for modernity and its inherent developmentalism. The economic project of modernization was retained. Revolutionary discourses were filled with references to industry, technology and education. The nationalist aesthetic production was replete with images of tools and machines. The legacy of indigenous culture was only exalted in revolutionary nationalism for what it contributed to the mestizo race, at the same time as present day Indians were subjected to the assimilation projects of mestizo modernity, inscribing them

[59]See T. Benjamin (2000), Brading (1980), Gilly (2005), and Womack (1970).

[60] Saldaña Portillo (2001:404) discusses indigenous refusal of the citizenship offered by that process, a topic I'll take up in later chapters.

into state historicity.[61] Only the traits of indigenous culture considered “good” were retained. The current economic and political conditions of indigenous peoples resisting modernization were disregarded.

The state project of revolutionary mestizaje was also explicitly anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. In the fractured aftermath of the Revolution, Mexican official discourses promoted “racial and cultural intermixture” as the only way to create homogeneity out of heterogeneity and integrate the Mexican people in order overcome their colonial past and to fight US imperialism. The US policy of Manifest Destiny proclaimed the superiority of Anglo-Saxons over degenerate nations such as Mexico and “impelled Americans to pursue territorial conquests aggressively and to seek the spread of ‘civilization’ among ‘barbarians’ and ‘savages’” (O. Martínez 2001:56), thus threatening the sovereignty of the new revolutionary state. The Porfirian goal of attaining civilization reinforced a belief that (most) European countries and the US were at the top of a hierarchy. Revolutionary discourses dispensed with comparisons, instead arguing that the nation was born from the melding of two great civilizations to create a third better civilization and a new “cosmic race.”[62] This new race was borne on the backs on indigenous women.

The dual tropes of reproduction and perfection are retained in revolutionary mestizaje’s gendered idea of the nation. Mestizaje is a reconfigured patriarchy; the Spanish father and Indian mother, a passive body, bring forth the new nation.

> Whereas man's agency swells metonymically to national dimensions, woman's work is canceled by metaphoric evaporation. As the inanimate motherland, woman's very identity depends on him, because the feminine patria literally means belonging to the father. He is dependent too; the father needs the female land to bear his name, to give him national dimensions and the status of father. (Sommer 1991:258)

[61] In Chapter Four, I will discuss the EZLN as representing an alternate temporality to that of the modern nation.

[62] See Vasconcelos (1966). See also Hernández Castillo (2001) for a discussion of the myth of mestizaje.

The colonial state created a link between family and public patriarchy. In modernizing patriarchy in the twentieth century, this same gender order is inscribed in the state through legislation. Although there is an increasing presence of women in the apparatus of the state, the reform of the legal system undermines women's historical rights to property through family and property law.

These changes are not surprising given the centrality of women and a specific type of gender necessary for the project of creating revolutionary mestizo identity. The argument is painstakingly laid out in Manuel Gamio's book, *Forjando Patria*, first published in 1916. Gamio, who studied with anthropologist Franz Boas, argued that it was unjust for Mexico to be called uncivilized because culture is a relative concept. However, Gamio was simultaneously distinguishing Mexico from Europe *and* reinforcing the idea of modernity as civilization. In the chapter titled "Our Women," he writes of the three types of women: servile, feminist and feminine:

> The feminine woman—a redundancy, is opportunely distanced from the first two types; this is the ideal woman, generally the preferred because she constitutes the primordial factor to produce the harmonic development and material and intellectual well-being of the individual and the species. (1982[1916]:119)

Although the feminine woman is the pinnacle of Mexican womanhood, Gamio argues that it is unjust to blame "servile" indigenous women for their social status. They are from the "primitive tribes,"[63] and have no control over their status. He writes that indigenous men from these groups are to blame since their immorality has led them to disregard their duties as patriarchs, thus leading their families into a situation of depravity. As opposed to a certain attainment of biological lineage depicted in the casta paintings, it is the degree of assimilation to mestizo culture that indigenous women must

[63] Significantly, the Lancandon Indians in Chiapas are mentioned several times.

show to move her from this low status. As a woman's culture changes, she changes; she becomes less servile and more feminine.

The ideal Mexican woman gets her characteristics from the two lineages she is descended from: indigenous and Spanish.[64] The virtue and civilization of Spanish women is unassailable. In this new formulation, Gamio discusses a new category of virtue, that of the Aztec woman who stands in for the indigenous root. She is virtuous not only in the home, but in a social sense. He goes on at length to discuss the Aztec traditions of hygiene and their importance for mestizo practice. This site of bodily regulation exposes a clear link to colonial biopolitics and the relationship between hygiene and morality, which would be a focus of the campaigns to assimilate indigenous, or "rural," Mexicans to the new revolutionary modernity. The feminine mestiza woman is the hope of the race; the cultural-racial is never quite free of biology.[65]

"La India Bonita," a beauty contest held in Mexico City in 1921, made visible the construction of the New Mestiza. Gamio served as one of the judges. As part of post-revolutionary consolidation, the beauty contest shows that while indigenous women are still part of the past, their bodies are perfectible through modernization and assimilation.[66] The visual aspect remains an important element in the performance of citizenship.

> She was portrayed as a rural mestiza woman newly arrived in the modern cosmopolis of Mexico City and as a woman who maintained her ancient and enduring 'Indianness' while simultaneously demonstrating her capacity to become modern enough by virtue of her participation in a beauty contest. And while her beauty-queen status marked her as undeniably *feminine*, it was made apparent that

---

[64] Afro-mexican women are erased. While the indigenous have an illustrious heritage and can be recuperated, Africans were brought to the continent as slaves, therefore there was no room for African identity in revolutionary nationalism.

[65] Women's bodies were bodies to be experimented on. See A. Smith (2005) for accounts of sterilization of native women in the US See also Ana Maria Garcia's film "La Operación" (1985) about the sterilization of Puerto Rican women by the government in the 1930s to the 1980s as population control and economic reform.

[66] Gould's work (1998) shows how Nicaraguan nationalism in the early twentieth century was grounded a racial project based on the myth of the Nicaraguan mestiza.

> she was not *so* modern that she would become a *feminist*, a key distinction made by nationalists. (Ruiz 2002:284)

However, these ideals of citizenship and nationhood were contested. Feminist organizing was increasing in Mexico at this time and provoked anxieties among nationalists. The problem of the feminist woman is not her choice of labor or of having degenerate culture, but one of being too modern—adopting "masculine traits," such as modes of dress. Feminists transgressed the bounds of revolutionary citizenship. They had embraced modernity too completely and had destroyed what was uniquely Mexican. Women were expected to perform the past as part of the national self.

> Within the gendered division of cultural labor, women—particularly rural, indigenous women, wrapped in colorful *huipiles* (indigenous dress) and grinding corn on the traditional stone *metates*—embodied a bona fide *mexicanidad* that would seem to entitle them to revolutionary citizenship. Although they faced commonplace representations as benighted peasants and Indians, rural women frequently claimed an "authentic" Mexican femininity, distinguishing themselves from the bobbed-hair flappers of the urban middle class. (Olcott 2005:20)

Emerging from Gamio's discussion of the ideal types of women and these political debates were dominant tropes of good identification, "La India Bonita," and bad identification, the completely modern feminist, or the indigenous woman who refuses to modernize in the proscribed manner and become a mestiza. In this section, we can see that the new forms of domination and culture form new identities through techniques of the self and processes of subjectification. That is, the ways that individuals bind themselves to their own identities and consciousness, and at the same time an external power. Drawing on the discussion in this chapter of the centrality of the body as a site of production in Mexico, in the next section I will briefly discuss debates around the terms "race" and "ethnicity" and discuss what terms I will utilize in this dissertation.

RACE AND ETHNICITY OR RACE/ETHNICITY

As discussed in the previous sections, race is not just about objective physical traits, but is embedded in the social. Omi and Winant "…use the term racial formation to refer to the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings" (1986: 61). Thus, it is important to develop frames to follow how race operates—what is the racial field of our analysis? However, their construction of racial formation theory has not paid close enough attention to the traces of colonial biopolitics, the issue of blood, still resident in this process.

Although we can talk about race as a world system, local/national context, beliefs, practices, position in group, descent, education etc. all play a role in reproducing a social position and are at the heart of how race is understood and lived.

> The tendency to treat race or racial discrimination as a universal phenomenon is understandable given the nearly universal presence of prejudice and given that the European, Latin American, and North American racial systems all place white over Black. Yet, beyond these generalities, the differences among racial orders are crucial. Ignoring them dehistoricizes race, placing it beyond the political realm rather than within it. (Olson 2004:8)

Echoing the earlier discussion of the development of "race" in New Spain, Robin Kelley writes, "We [black people] have been the thing against which normality, whiteness, and functionality have been defined" (1997:3). Following Olson, we can support this assertion in a global sense, but there is a need to investigate where and how the boundary is drawn, and to be attentive to shifts. In the US context, blackness has remained the visible marker of boundaries. In the Mexican context, blackness was a key referent of racial regulation during the colonial period; after Independence, it is subsumed into mestizaje.

I am employing the term "race" as an analytic category rather than "ethnicity" because I am arguing that racialized gendered bodies (specifically here "the indigenous woman") are at the center of governance strategies and have been since colonization. Although it has become commonplace to use the term "ethnicity" when discussing indigenous peoples in Mexico (and Latin America generally), this term came into usage at a specific historical moment and the development of social projects to assimilate the indigenous to a mestizo identity, based on an explicit rejection of what was perceived as lingering colonial racism. This shift was also based on an US anti-imperialism that located racism as a condition north of the border, and a danger to Mexico.[67] Using "ethnicity" erases the lingering colonial racial structures from discourse.

Mamdani (2001) makes the distinction that ethnicities are demarcated horizontally and races vertically. Although he is writing from a different colonial context, this distinction is an important one. In a provocative essay on the topic, Grosfoguel writes,

> In sum, racial and ethnic identities cannot be understood as two different forms of identity. In the global coloniality that exists today, we need to understand that identities operate as both 'racialized ethnicities' and 'ethnicized races.' No identity in the modern world escapes the global racial/colonial formation formed by coloniality on a world scale. (2004:332)

For my purposes discussing Mexico, I will use the concept of race, generally to discuss processes of governance, reserving ethnicity for use when making distinctions between indigenous groups, attentive to the fact that the ethnic is at the same time racialized.

---

[67] The idea that racism is mainly found in the US still exists in Mexico. I had countless conversations with Mexicans in Zapatista communities who argued that the indigenous did not face racism, rather they were victims of discrimination. Certainly, this is not true for all Mexicans, but in general, ethnicity is seen as generating "discrimination," while race generates "racism," something more virulent and insidious. One of the reasons I was told is that given the blood kinship between *mestizos* and indigenous peoples, they could not be racist. Another reason given for this perception is that it is not phenotype, but culture that is the site of difference, therefore, those who face discrimination do so because they are culturally different.

However, I remain troubled by several things. One is despite the now well-worn assertion that race is a social construction, biology is still salient. Theorizing from the place of intersectionality directs us to shift how we analyze gender, race and class, not simply to take the additive approach, but to view them as mutually constitutive in processes such as colonization. Even in the excellent *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, Wade (1997) treats questions of gender and sexuality as secondary, although they are key to understanding how race/ethnicity work, and they point us to questions of biology.

Another is the tendency to simply ignore theorizing "ethnicity" when recentering race as an analytic, a move often accompanied by a slippage with US racial paradigms. However, we also have to deal with the problem of the dominance of the US racial paradigm that privileges a color analysis does not really address the shifting nature of racial categorization and identity making in other places. It tends to presume a fixed identity, bordering on the essential. As Kelley notes, "As if identities have some kind of intrinsic meaning irrespective of specific structures of domination" (2002:171).[68] Beyond simply being viewed as an imperialist move of the US academy, this type of analytical paradigm is not useful for analyzing how race works on the ground in Chiapas.

People in US tend to think of racialization as a completely transparent process. However, my own experience of being racialized differently in various locations and contexts has also made me think more about how to understand that link between race

---

[68] The complexities of the bio-cultural matrix are made is made clear in a recent opinion column by Gregory Rodriguez in the *LA Times*, September 10, 2007, titled "Racial flexibility 'in the blood' of Mexican immigrants." The article is about a federal investigation of the Kaweah Indian Nation in Kansas selling tribal memberships as protection from deportation to Mexicans because of their indigenous ancestry. The group is not a federally recognized Indian Tribe. Rodriguez makes the claim that "Mexicans have long used and manipulated race to improve their social status," due to the centrality of culture in Mexico. "They weren't socially 'white,' but between 1850 and 1920, the US Census counted ethnic Mexicans in the white column."

and biology. When I told a US colleague about experiences "passing" in Chiapas as Mexican in order to get through checkpoints without being stopped, she replied "that's not true." Another instructive example is that of a friend who grew up in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, a poor area on the outskirts of Mexico City. Although he is a mestizo, his class "darkened" him—he was often asked if he were indigenous—and other mestizos in the NGO we worked with treated him poorly. Even in the US, there is some amount of fluidity within definitions and identifications of race; the system is not as rigid as assumed.[69] Gender, class, culture, and other factors all have a role to play. Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing* (2001) speaks to questions of skin color in racial identification and the threats of ambiguous identity as mentioned earlier in this chapter. It is significant that both of the main characters in her novel are women, and issues surrounding the women's sexuality are central.

However, paying attention to processes of self-formation that are part of identity-making does not imply that structural categories vanish. Destabilizing these categories can have material consequences, such as the change in the US census process allowing for checking multiple identity categories, which undermines certain types of funding for minorities. Peter Wade asserts that ethnic boundaries are related to ideas of domination, but that the indigenous can shift categories (1997:68). However, like Larsen's story above, the categories "Indian" or "black" continue to exist and racism is not abolished.

Finally, how do we reconcile our usage of a term that our "subjects" and other researchers in our field might not employ. A racial sensibility is part of indigenous subject making, at least within the Zapatista movement. Although raza (race) is not generally used in the context of discussing indigenous peoples, racism, not discrimination

[69] There is also a growing and somewhat controversial body of scholarship on multi-racial identities. See Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, Mixed Race Studies: A Reader, New York: Routledge 2004.

is used to discuss types of domination, including on a cultural basis. This acknowledges the complex construction of colonial racial hierarchies. What makes this hard to parse is that as an identity, Zapatistas do not separate out race (indigeneity) from class. An example of this was a lengthy discussion I had with several Zapatistas about the "India Maria" movie franchise. The Zapatistas all agreed that she was an object of ridicule because she was indigenous and poor and this was racism. She was dark and looked different from the Mexicans (their word) in the movies who were *blancos*—white and rich. The choice of terms is part an ongoing theoretical debate, but for my purposes, it is important to use race in my analysis, especially in the examination of neoliberal multiculturalism.

In the case of specific terminology in Chiapas, as mentioned earlier, the state shares much with Guatemala in terms of colonial history and race relations. In Chiapas, indigenous-ladino opposition was pronounced and there was strong anti-indigenous racism (Viqueira 1995). Rus (1995) discusses political leaders viewing the indigenous and white races as sworn enemies. For this reason, the term "ladino" had, and continues to have, more salience as a category of identity. It is the word used historically to describe relations between local elites and indigenous communities, which community members consistently used during my field research, along with *kaxlan*.[70] "mestizo" and, interestingly, "Mexican," are the words that are employed when discussing people from outside of the region. Although some researchers have shifted from utilizing ladino to mestizo, this is unfortunate since the former, still utilized, conserves a local notion of calidad, of still existing structures of domination, that mestizo does not necessarily convey.

---

[70] *Kaxlan* is word in Tzeltal (and other local indigenous languages), which has a number of related meanings; it can mean "outsider," "rich person," or "mestizo," depending on the context.

I will not use the term "Maya" in this dissertation to refer to the Zapatistas, unless explicitly used by Zapatistas themselves. Although employed in other parts of Chiapas and Mexico, and utilized as shorthand by some scholars (J. Nash 2001), this was not used in community discourse in my fieldwork regions. Finally, following Bobby Vaughn (2005), I will also use afro-mexican and black instead of afromestizo because the unifying project of mestizaje obscures these racialized identities, and the desires for differentiation from the indigenous that many black communities had.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the central of racialized gendered bodies to colonial hierarchies, structures, which linger on to the present, despite perceived historical ruptures during independence and the Revolution. In Mexico, a micropolitics of rule centered on the regulation of indigenous women's bodies has developed. Although the particularities have shifted, their bodies have been the site of production of symbolic and material governance. This continues in today's neoliberal governance strategies and is important for understanding the particular challenge of Zapatista autonomy. How all this contributes to the construction of Zapatista political subjectivities is a question I take up in the rest of this dissertation. In the next chapter, I will move to an analysis of the specific case of Chiapas, examining at the historical construction of the jungle, the formation of ejidos and the emergence of the EZLN.

Chapter Three: From Finca to Ejido to Autonomous Territory: Cañadas Dreams

Aurelia and I hike up the narrow dirt path leaving her community Zapata, hidden behind fog and tall pines. The dirt is red and soft from the recent rains. Despite wearing plastic flats, she walks more quickly and surely than I do in my sturdy soled men's rubber boots. I push myself to keep up, not wanting to be that kaxlan, the one mocked so often in stories for not being able to withstand the rigors of community life. We round a bend and come to a *tranca*, a gate made out of heavy logs, shut to keep the cattle on the other side in the open field of softly undulating hills, grassy with small bushes and few trees. At that point, the buildings of the region's newly founded autonomous school where I had parked my truck for safety reasons was suddenly visible. [71] A bit further on lay the remains of the Finca Buenavista.

I first visited Buenavista in 1996 with my work team. We planned to inspect a broken pump, installed years earlier by the government to pump creek water to nearby Morelia. It was a clear day, with few clouds to obscure the view of the canyon stretching below us. *Felipe* told us that before 1994,[72] only a handful of families had owned almost all the land in the canyon, especially the rich bottomland closer to the Tzaconejá River. The *finqueros* (landowners) utilized the land for grazing cattle. I heard the same story in every community I visited over the years. Some versions added personal details of conflict, but one central feature was constant—the injustice of a society in which cattle were treated with more dignity than people.

---

[71] Locally trained education promoters staffed the school.

[72] "*Antes del '94"* (before '94) and "*despues del '94*" (after '94) came to be familiar phrases in conversation. Rather than historical periodization, "1994" was a figure, called up as a place marker, usually related to a shift in power and control.

Before driving out, I asked *Aurelia* how it felt to know that her new community was built on recuperated lands of the old finca San Martín, where her father had worked for many years.

> It's right that we should be here. So many suffered. They worked hard. We were treated worse than animals. The one here [Buenavista], she wasn't so mean as some others. But, it is right that the land should be ours because we work. We have respect.

Memory is not about discovering objective historical "facts." To the facts that are there, new ones are added, changing what we know and what we think we know. Memory is reflexive, we look for the past through places, remaking and remembering in the present. Scenes of the past, social memory and outcomes are fluid, often changing with the needs of the present. Jelin, writing on the social memory of violence in Argentina observes, "Furthermore, these temporal meanings are constructed and change in relationship to and in dialogue with others who, individually and collectively, can share and/or confront the experiences and expectations" (2003:4). There is an obsession with material traces because the past as we know it is a fiction.[73] Till writes, "Places of memory are created by individuals and social groups to give a shape to felt absences, fears, and desires that haunt contemporary society" (2005:9). Ghosts come to us through stories and images; they circulate. It is these memories that create certain idioms of struggle that have become part of the Zapatista movement and are critical to its force.

* * *

My research was on the most recent period of social movement and upheaval in Chiapas from 1994—2005. However, the roots of the current Zapatista movement go much deeper. They can be traced from the over 500 years of indigenous resistance, an idiom of struggle that emerged during the quincentennial celebrations of conquest in

[73] We can see this obsession with documentation and detail in the work of the INI in Mexico.

1992, to campesino struggles for land and citizenship rights in the twentieth century. In this chapter, I build on the discussion of the previous chapter moving from the context of Mexico to the particularities of these logics of rule and race/gender/class hierarchies in Chiapas. I do this in order to show the particularities of history that contribute to a political subjectivity to act within Zapatismo. I am arguing the region where the EZLN began has contributed to the development of a revolutionary movement and a process of autonomy that has transformed gendered relations of power, and produced a Zapatista political identity that resists easy inscription into neoliberal governance. This chapter will trace a path to the Zapatista uprising, through existing history and stories, pausing most at the points of saturation.[74] Indigenous autonomy is not just about land, but also territory; it is about place, space, and identity.

I begin by discussing the feminization of the landscape, as race, gender, and space are intimately intertwined. As well as a physical place, Chiapas is an imagined geography and a location of indigeneity in the nation. The construction of indigenous peoples as a natural resource sets the stage for their continued use in the production of the nation. I will then briefly discuss post-independence and post-revolutionary patriarchal state formation, paying particular attention to its gendered effects. Finally, I will focus on the area of the Cañadas where I conducted my research. There has been little written about my particular region of research, and even less about the presence of women. I then turn to the founding of the ejidos and work on the fincas, and the different struggles that lead up to the founding of the EZLN. I end the chapter with a discussion of Mexico's transition to neoliberalism, which provided a spark for the uprising.

[74] See Appendix A for a brief discussion of my archival research.

FEMINIZATION OF THE LANDSCAPE

In addition to the census and visual representations mentioned in the preceding chapter, mapping was (and continues to be) another tool central to colonial and postcolonial projects. De Certeau notes, "Maps are graphic tools of colonization, themselves colonizing spaces perceived as empty and uninscribed" (1984:94). Place and landscape are thought of as passive receptacles where events occur. However, they are saturated with relations of domination, which shape how identities are constructed (Mohanram 1999). The power of representation in the acts of naming and mapping gives weight to certain historical facts that serve national projects (Anderson 1991; Chatterjee 1993).

As mentioned in the last chapter, when the Spaniards arrived in the Americas, images and desires of the emptiness and discovery awaiting them drove their colonization efforts. This was particularly so in Chiapas. Yet, as we know, the lands were never empty. Sparsely inhabited perhaps, but inhabited nonetheless for millennia before the first Conquistadores set foot on the continent. In the casta paintings mentioned in the last chapter, indios bárbaros, depicted in lush forest backgrounds, appeared as a separate category from other indigenous subjects. Native peoples were perceived as biologically linked to the natural landscape and, therefore, not civilized and not fully human; they only appear when they bear the marks of civilization. [75] This allowed the Spaniards to retain the perception of emptiness of the landscape, a view that created a particular historical trajectory in the Lacandon jungle region where the EZLN began. As Moore notes, "Working together, race and nature legitimate particular forms of political

---

[75]Indians were initially not judged to have souls, and therefore fit for slavery, until las Casas' famous polemic, arguing they did have souls and were suitable for religious conversion.

representation, reproduce social hierarchies, and authorize violent exclusions—often transforming contingent relations into eternal necessities" (2003:3).

This colonial link between indigenous peoples and the landscape continues to the present, although its shape is altered by current power configurations. To prepare for the 1974 sesquicentennial of the *Mexicandiad Chiapaneca*, which coincided with a period of economic stability and improved infrastructure, Chiapas Governor Velasco Suarez commissioned a series of descriptive maps to represent the state's geography and resources. The stated goal of the maps were to aid in developing policies to "use and conserve resources for future generations," with an unstated goal of reaffirming Chiapas' potential for "progress" and its place in the nation.[76] The majority of the maps are details of either geographical features or representations of economic sectors. For instance, Map #24 shows the transportation infrastructure, Map #14 details the state hydroelectric system with current and future dams, and Map #12A depicts the milk industry, complete with Nestlé trucks and herds of cattle in the Cañadas and center of the state (Helbig 1976). Map #25, last in the set, was created specifically to promote tourism: "Rivers, lakes, oceans, mountains and a vast domain of archaeological relics, a welcoming climate and beautiful scenery.[77] Forest and jungle, along with the hospitality of the Chiapans awaits the visitor" (ibid.). The map is inscribed with birds, trees, lizards, and ruins. It includes the only representation of humans in any of the maps—a stereotypical drawing of an indigenous family in the jungle area, next to the Toniná ruins.[78]

---

[76] The celebration also took place as Mexico was facing internal unrest and conflict, and campesino and religious organizing was increasing in Chiapas. See Collier (1994) and J. Nash (2001).

[77] Several decades later, the Zapatista uprising would upset the tourism industry, displacing the image of the folkloric Indian with Indian as unpredictable rebellious subject. The US State Department issued repeated travel advisories throughout the 1990's citing violence in Chiapas, although at no time did the violence affect tourists.

[78] These materials also reference the creation in 1972 by President Echeverría of a Reserve in the jungle to be governed by the Lacandon Indians, characterizing it as a version of a primordial "state of nature."

Although land and physical spaces were already gendered in Indo-European languages, the empty, colonized landscapes were further feminized in the Americas. Spaniards encountered "virgin lands," and their descriptions alternated between the horrors of the unknown, of what might be awaiting them, and the succor received from those lands. Just as an idea of blackness in the first moment of conquest would configure colonial racial hierarchies, the land itself became a metaphor, a fetishization of the female body, entwining gender difference and spatial difference in the colonies. For centuries the Lacandon region was an example of this construction—empty, dangerous, yet beckoning.

Colonial literature furthers this connection, linking sexual imagery and the reproductive potential of women and land with fertility (Blunt and Rose 1994). The association of indigenous women with virgin lands legitimated perceptions of both as objects of colonization. We know that land is never just land. During colonization it was inscribed with masculine authority, and under a nascent capitalism "nature" was created as a wealth-generating resource. Although their reproductive potential was paramount, women were not active participants in this formulation. They were simply passive bodies to be utilized.

Running counter to these inscriptions, gender contestations have played a key role in the work to liberate the spaces of Zapatista autonomy. Recognizing that the landscape is constructed also means it can be liberated and used as a source of identity, "without implying the adoption of a masculine positionality or a fixed, naturalized or incoherent identity or a restricted notion of space" (C. Nash 1994:229). Unruly bodies are a threat and embodied resistance to these dominant spatial discourses suggests an alternative cartography. I will take up the issue of the resignification of the space of the Cañadas in the next chapter.

COLONIAL LEGACY, LIBERAL EQUALITY

One result of this complex understanding of nature and indigeneity was that it aided in the development of a colonial policy that afforded indigenous communities a certain amount of political autonomy. After independence, the Republica de Indios—separate from the rest of Mexican society and perceived as violating the principles of liberal equality—was abolished in favor of municipalities. This structural change largely destroyed indigenous political autonomy.[79] Independence from Spain did not sever the colonial power relations sedimented in Mexican society; it merely shifted the terms. The abolition of tribute and personal service was aimed at diminishing the political power of the Church, and only marginally about "freeing" the indigenous from the authority of parish priests. However, the liberal Constitution of 1857 also destroyed the legal basis for communal landholding leading to the confiscation of indigenous lands. The *Ley de Desamortización de Fincas Rusticas y Urbanas Propiedad de Corporaciones Civiles y Eclesiásticas* paved the way for the confiscation of indigenous lands, which were characterized as fallow. In the Cañadas, the Catholic Church held extensive tracts of land in the form of *haciendas* (large estates) administered by the Dominican friars. Titles transferred in the period between the late 1850s to 1860s went to prominent families, whose own interests overlapped with the Church. This was common throughout Mexico. Although indigenous communities were given a legal period of three months to apply for protection of their rights, most did not due to ignorance of the law or economic obstacles.

Thus, the reality of life in Mexico diverged substantially from the vision of equality and liberal citizenship set out in the Mexican Constitution. Indian-ladino

---

[79] Eric Van Young (2001) argues that contrary to many historical interpretations, not all indigenous peoples were pro-Independence. Some argue that post-Independence was actually worse than colonialism for indigenous peoples (Garcia de Leon 1985, Mallon 1994, Olivera 2004). Grandin (2000) also shows the complex relations between indigenous elites and non-elite rural communities, and the role that these relations played in the formation of the Guatemalan nation.

opposition had a much more dramatic and accentuated character in Chiapas than in the rest of the Republic, although this conflict was neither as peaceful nor as bloody as has been depicted in many historical and anthropological accounts and Church control remained strong (Rus 1995).[80] On July 7, 1848 in Chilón (now Ocosingo), a priest wrote about an uprising of "los indios," the Indians who "are working to emancipate themselves from the dominion that the 'clasa blanca' has over them, in the same way that we had motivation to get rid of Spanish domination, which we ultimately were able to do."[81] Many incidents stem from indigenous refusal of continued Church domination. In 1858, a parish priest wrote to the bishop complaining that the "indigenous neighbors of San Martin" will not pay tribute and volunteer their services anymore, and they were invoking laws and reforms to substantiate their position. However, the priest puts this down to them "being very contrary," as if they were obstinate children.

Other records from the fincas and parishes of the Ocosingo region discuss the "indios" as "*infelices*" (poor wretches) who were unable to pay. In 1874, a priest in the Ocosingo parish reported not charging for marriage even though this meant their coffers would suffer because indigenous parishioners were opting for civil marriage as a less expensive alternative. He wrote of one case, "I decided to favor him in order to segregate him from the bad that he was going to contaminate himself with because of his indigence." Although the state reforms had ushered in changes that contributed to their poverty, historical accounts of this period show deepening relationships between indigenous peoples and the state, as well as local elites becoming more powerful in the face of a diminished role of the Church as interlocutor.

---

[80] See Ruz (1989) and Viqueira and Ruz(1995). See also Garcia de Leon (1985) for a thorough account of Chiapas' social history of the past 500 years, and Viqueira (1997) for an interesting account of a pre-Independence women's rebellion in Cancuc, a Tzeltal area not far from San Cristóbal (then Ciudad Real).
[81] The data in this section is based on records from the Historical Archive of the Diocese of Chiapas, San Cristóbal de las Casas.

It was also during this post-Independence period that racial hierarchies in Chiapas coalesced into two broad categories. Both parish and hacienda census records of the time reflect the separation of the population into two classes: ladinos and indígenas (also called naturals and indios). For example, census records in 1843 at Hacienda el Rosario, located in the Cañadas close to La Garrucha, descriptions included "indígenas del lugar," and "naturales." Others were described as "no indios" or "ladinos." There are few systematic accounts of colonial and early post-colonial history in this region. However, there is a more complete historiography of the Comitán area and its fincas, only 50 miles from Ocosingo.[82] These materials expose this shift in a more systematic fashion. In a census taken in 1774, it was noted that the majority of the 43 individuals settled in the properties of Chicomuselo were mulattos. In a census taken in 1778 of the inhabitants of the Comitán region, the categories of classification were "Spaniard," "Castas/Mestizo," "Mulatto/Negro," and "Indios/Laboríos"[83] (Ruz 1992:275-276). The ecclesiastic census in 1814 reduces the categories to "Indios," "Spaniards" and "Ladinos" with no further mention of black and mulatto populations (ibid.:292).[84] By 1855, the only categories are "Ladino" and "Indio" (ibid.:310-11). Although post-Revolutionary nation making forged a strong mestizo identity, these colonial racial categories still operate in Chiapas today.

While communal lands were confiscated and indigenous political authority was reduced, new modes of domination, such as debt peonage emerged. Workers surrounding the haciendas previously owned by the Church became more dependent. Porfirio Díaz's tenure as president, and later dictator, was a period of capitalist modernization, marked by an intense desire for "civilization" (Tenorio-Trillo 1996). It

---

[82] See Balinas (1951) and Gómez and Ruz (1992).

[83] They were also denominated as *vecinos* (neighbors) and *tributarios* (those who owe tribute) in some census records at this time.

[84] Although the numbers do not indicate a large black/mulatto presence, this later absence points to an interesting reconfiguration of racialization that I was unable to find traces of in any other sources.

was also a period of strong state government. The modern community in Chiapas emerged as a complex of neocolonial relations, with a paternalist discourse toward non-elites who were considered too uneducated and not sufficiently mature enough for democracy (Paris Pombo 2001). These micropolitics of rule came to be known as the "Chiapan family," sedimenting patriarchal modes of governance in the state. Emilio Rabasa, Diaz's candidate, held the governorship of Chiapas from 1891-1894 and was a fervent local agent of economic and political modernization. He transferred the seat of government from San Cristóbal to Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and in November 1893 his government created 12 new departments for more centralized control. Among those was the department of Chilón, with the administrative center of Ocosingo. Among the towns of this new department was San Carlos (later Altamirano).[85]

In the 1870s and 1880s, these changes followed the huge expansion in the number of ranching and agricultural properties in the "frontier zone" with Guatemala that attracted immigrants, including a sizable number of Germans, especially in the Soconusco region. During Rabasa's tenure, he instituted a series of laws that further dispossessed indigenous communities of their land, leading to an increase in private landholdings from 1,000 in 1880 to 6,800 by 1909 (T. Benjamin 1989:86-87). His government also aggressively pursued foreign export, which led to a coffee boom, with additional revenues from sugar and cocoa crops. As a result, shortages of labor in the fincas and an increasingly poor landless population led to the revival of debt peonage (indebted servitude), an old system of labor.

This system bound the worker to the finca through loans, which were impossible to liquidate on the wages earned. *Enganchadores* (recruiters) were employed to secure labor through whatever means necessary, including utilizing gendered narratives, by

[85] Archivo Víctor Manuel Castillo, UNICACH, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, #814, 13 Nov. 1893.

encouraging men to join for the security of their wives and children. This practice of debt peonage was institutionalized as a basic part of the economic system in Chiapas by the late nineteenth century, despite being condemned in other parts of Mexico and abroad as early as the 1870s. By 1897 in the municipality of Chilón, the number of indentured workers was 3,530 with a total debt of $188,468 (T. Benjamin 1989: 65). *Jornaleros* (day wage laborers), *baldíos* (sharecroppers), or *arrendatarios* (renters) were also part of the economic infrastructure of the fincas. Many older Zapatistas worked on fincas as peons, *mozos* (servants), and baldíos. Even after the foundation of ejidos, many younger Zapatistas continued to work as contract laborers in order to supplement their income. The worst of these labor practices were the *monterías*, the mahogany labor camps in the Lacandon Jungle, which were able sidestep charges of slavery only by virtue of the contracts workers signed "voluntarily."[86] The labor practices also contributed to a capitalist gendered division of labor and the introduction of a public/private divide not previously present in indigenous communities. Women's work in the home and in family-level production became devalued.

The labor practices described above were widespread in the area of the Lacandon Jungle, the region where the EZLN was founded. Also called the *Desierto de Soledad* or *Desierto de Ocosingo*, it was a vast dense hot area, perhaps a bit dangerous and certainly inhospitable. Today little actual jungle still exists. However, in 1870 when logging began in earnest, precious hardwoods were in abundance and there was little habitation in the zone, save for several hundred *Lacandones* (Lacandon Indians). The Dominican priests in the haciendas of Ocosingo has been attempting to "civilize" the Lacandon

[86] I realize this is a generalization and there is some discussion that the work in the monterías was actually preferable to being a *peon acasillado* in a finca—better pay and less oversight of the work (Vos 1988, Palacios 1928). However, the majority of descriptions of this work support the more negative characterization.

Indians for years. A priest wrote on January 23, 1806 that they should be brought to the haciendas where the priests will offer "comfort and food and we will make these miserable creatures happy."[87] In general, they were thought to be "wild" Indians, jungle dwellers who would not pose many problems for industry.

Other than the Lacandones, most of the population lived in the *franja finquera* (finca fringe) (Leyva and Ascencio 1996), closer to the towns of Ocosingo, Altamirano, and Comitán. The jungle was seen as a fertile wilderness to be exploited by capital and, decades later, by people looking for arable land and/or to escape the onerous finca labor. Three powerful companies from neighboring Tabasco, Casa Bulnes, Casa Valenzuela and Casa Jamet y Sastré, entered into the jungle around 1880, setting up mills and lumber extraction enterprises, as well as labor camps. The monterías of Casa Bulnes were set up along the Jataté River, near Rancho San Quintín, now a military base at the end of the Patihuitz Canyon. By 1895, buoyed by foreign financing, profitable exports, and little state oversight, the region entered the "golden age of mahogany" that continued until the Revolution arrived from Tabasco in 1915 (Vos 1988).

Workers were *enganchados* (hooked) by monetary loans from recruiters, who often preyed on the inebriated. They were taken to the camps in the jungle, often as much as 100 kilometers away from towns and villages, making escape almost impossible. The work consisted of logging massive hardwoods, then cutting them into pieces by ax. These cut pieces were transported by oxen to the river, where they would float downstream to be prepared for sale and shipment. Although brutal punishments were not the norm—it was more profitable to have the *tarea* (task) completed—they were applied as needed to spread fear and keep workers from collective action. José Ramírez Garrido relates the testimony of a worker in a pamphlet published in 1915:

[87] Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. Archival Folder: Haciendas Ocosingo.

> There, no one's rights are worth anything. There, we aren't Mexicans, nor are there laws that protect us. If one of the enganchados protests about the horrible conditions he receives, he is sent to be tied up and is hit repeatedly with a stick [*una paliza*]. (quoted in de Vos 1988:197)

During this period in Chiapas, accounts of the treatment of indigenous and rural peoples found their most intense expression in the stark images of brutality and sadism in the novels of B. Traven, published in the 1930s in the period of post-revolutionary consolidation.[88] These fictionalized versions of his earlier travels in the region, along with other narratives by scientists and academics from the Secretary of Public Education, created the indigenous in Chiapas in the national imaginary as vulnerable bodies, the descriptions of the men portray them as feminized by the brutality.[89] Interestingly, there are a few hidden histories of women in these spaces and they are often heroic—women leading men into battle in Traven's *The Rebellion of the Hanged* (1984), or in the case of Jan de Vos' historical text (1988), of women actually escaping the monterías.

Although no one I worked with or interviewed had direct knowledge of the monterías, the stories still held currency as proof of ladino and elite disregard throughout the region and formed another part of Zapatista social memory. I worked with a woman in the Altamirano canyon and was surprised one day to hear her speaking Tzeltal to other women. She had told me that her father came from a Tojolabal region further south. She said that her grandfather had migrated from Bachajón to work in a montería near San Quintín, and had then moved around looking for land. When I asked why he didn't stay in that canyon, which was beginning to be settled by other campesinos, she remarked,

---

[88] The novels *Government, The Carreta, March to the Monteria, Trozas, The Rebellion of the Hanged,* and *The General from the Jungle*, called the Jungle Cycle, appeared between 1931-1940. The texts deal with the conditions leading to the Mexican Revolution and are a commentary on Revolution's subsequent failure to ameliorate those same conditions.

[89] For examples of the latter, see Basauri (1931) and Palacios (1928).

"*No quería, pues*. He didn't want to. He wanted to go very far away, as far away as he could."

DELAYED REVOLUTION AND SANITIZED RACISM

Several provisions of the 1917 Mexican Constitution responded to the agrarian demands of the Revolution. The reform of Article 27 distributed land and land rights as ejidos, or communal land holdings. [90] Although the Mexican Revolution in Chiapas had an impact on the monterías,[91] it played out more as a conflict between different factions of the political classes and less as a class demand generally. Thomas Benjamin cites the US consul writing in 1911 that the danger was:

> That a spread of agitation or revolutionary movement might reach the agricultural working classes and endanger the gathering of the coffee crop. . . . It is feared that should the masses awaken to the actual conditions of things danger might result to the coffee crop and even to the security of the plantations and planters. (1989:112)

In the end, the landowners' fears were assuaged. The effects of the Revolution, in part the agrarian reforms and nation-building project discussed in the previous chapter, two took several decades to reach Chiapas.

The integrationist project began in earnest during the Grajales government (1932-1936) before agrarian reform reached the state. He created the Department of Social Action, Culture, and Indigenous Protection on April 18, 1934, with the express purpose of civilizing the indigenous who were viewed as an obstacle to Mexico's modernization and progress (Hernandez 2001:24-25). This civilizing mission was, in fact, a project of

[90] Communal or collective lands should not be seen as a purely indigenous practice. This type of land holding also has a history in the West, for example in the commons. The idea of collectivity does not just inhere in indigeneity; it is mistaken to couch it in these terms because this ignores capitalist accumulation of all sorts. The "racialization" of this form of land tenure facilitates the denial of access to land/territory generally and restricts efforts to undermine liberal understanding of property rights. Currently, indigenous peoples must present evidence of origins, of "authentic" identities and practices in order to claim rights to land.

[91] They gradually reduced in number from 1920 until they were finally shut down by a government ban on logging and export in 1949.

forced assimilation. At the same time, Grajales continued to make concessions to the state's large landowners, including allowing them to have *guardias blancas* (private police forces) to protect against the encroachment of unions and campesino organizations.

With roots in colonial racial hierarchies and the concept of calidad, post-revolutionary integrationist solutions to the "indigenous problem" were not much more than sanitized racism expressed as paternalism, operating at national and local levels. París Pombo discusses how the formation of the "revolutionary family" as a principal mechanism of state legitimation, "mounted its institutionalization on corporativism, presidentialism and the territorial centralization of political power" (2001:68). Politicians and elites of the local Chiapan Family cultivated tight relations with the center of the country, and began a local practice of cultural enganche. The idea was to bring indigenous peoples into the nation as Mexicans citizens through modernization. With a similar ideology as the Church, indigenous Mexicans were seen as children needing the help of their superiors—their backwardness was not their fault, they were still perfectible. Rather than religion, the mechanisms of change were now education, health and hygiene, the Spanish language, non-indigenous dress, etc. The goal was to use the modernization of class to erase ethnicity and reshape the indigenous into rural mestizos who could be integrated into national society, thus assuaging fears of difference.

In 1923, a finca owner from the La Laguna del Carmen wrote a letter to the Bishop reflecting ladino fears and anxieties caused by the revolution, which had upset local racial and class hierarchies, and exposed their fear of the power of the new state.[92] He asked the Bishop to send a priest to visit. "Last year I founded a private school for the civilization of the indigenous class and despite being of the private character as I've told

[92] Zapatistas from the regions I worked in, including La Garrucha, worked on this finca.

you, it is always at the disposition of the government and subject to the laws of the state." He worried if the priest didn't come, the "youth would take up distinct ideas."[93]

In a two-part article in the newspaper *Excelsior*, at a key point in the post-revolutionary consolidation of power in Mexico, Emilio Rabasa, erstwhile governor of Chiapas, shared his personal blueprint for national integration in a two-part series of articles. Although the articles were written on December 30, 1929, Rabasa, a jurist and scholar of constitutional law, describes a series of trips he made through the indigenous community of San Bartolo Solistahuacán in 1880, 1891 and 1907. He states that the inhabitants first react with disdain and then fear, whites are their "legendary enemy." However, after setting up a lodge for visitors and installing a ladino couple as proprietors, Rabasa notes that on this third visit, the Indians are unafraid, and even welcoming.

> I don't know what has happened in that village in the last 23 years. I can't guess what effect the revolutionary period in which we have lived through has been able to produce. But I presume that, once the civilizing invasion began, it must have continued its initial work, that the constant and now inevitable contact with the ladinos has made them understand and even speak the national language, and I think that the school that 30 years ago would have been entirely useless, would now in our days be useful for continuing the moral and intellectual development of the people that I knew in their savage state.[94]

Few statements these days are as transparent as this account of the state working to bring the "other" within its bounds. His narrative also shows the connection to colonial racial hierarchies within revolutionary modernization. The Indians can become mestizos through culture, yet there is still an element of biological racism that remains.[95]

---

[93] Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. Archival Folder: Ocosingo.

[94] "San Bartolo Solistahuacan," Colaboracion exclusiva para "Excelsior," Emilio Rabasa, December 30, 1929.

[95] This contradictory discourse can be seen in some of the anthropological literature of the time. In Basuri's *Tojolabales, tzeltales y mayas breves apuntes sobre antropología, etnografía y lingüistica* (1931), in addition to compiling a list of indigenous practices, he includes anthropometric data, while mentioning the detrimental nature of neocolonial relations on the fincas. As late as 1969, the book *Geografía general de Chiapas* (García Soto), includes a section on "*Razas*" (races) along with descriptions of the physical landscape.

The writings of Rosario Castellanos reflect these changes and the ladino fears. Her own family had landholdings near Comitán, which were stripped during the presidency of Lázaro Cardenas. The family relocated to Mexico City in 1940. In the semi-autobiographical novel *Balún Canán*, she presents us with a view of these events through the eyes of a ladina girl. What emerges are the everyday relations of rule, the anxiety of the ladinos who fear that if they cannot practice baldiaje their fortunes will be ruined because no ladinos would ever do that work, regardless of the pay.

Although this is a fictionalized account, the emphasis on bodies, on smells and hygiene, mimics the obsession during state modernization with hygiene and health. Programs of the Secretary of Public Education focused heavily on these techniques of the body in rural areas.[96] The novel also touches on gender relations and the place of the indigenous woman in the fincas. While colonial domination is marked as masculine, the novel underscores the discussion in the previous chapter of the role of white women in the neocolonial order, women who derive their agency from race in serving to make colonialism less brutal, yet do not relinquish their privilege despite the apparent intimacy.[97] Race and class hierarchies undercut any pretense to gender solidarity. This exchange between the girl and her nursemaid in Castellanos' novel (2003:10) underscores the desire to maintain these hierarchies:

"God will punish you for the waste, affirmed the nana."

"I want to drink coffee. Like you. Like everyone."

"You're going to turn into an india."

—Her threat frightened me. From tomorrow the milk would not be spilled.

---

[96] This was not exclusive to Mexico. In the US, the anti-poverty campaigns of social reformers like Jane Adams also contained these types of concerns. The settlement houses often included gymnasiums and residents took part in hygiene programs.

[97] Toledo Tello's (2004) research on gendered relations in the fincas in Simojovel, she also illuminates the relations between ladina landowners and workers, as well as the relationships of both with men.

As a result of these concerns with modernization, Chiapas came to command a place in the nation as one of the spaces of radical alterity. Although the word indigenous may not have been mentioned in the 1917 Constitution, Mexico's indigenous were a central "project" of the state. For the post-revolutionary state, indigenous peoples only figured as passive receptacles of institutional action. The National Indigenist Institute (INI) was founded in 1948, as part of the integrationist strategy, becoming another mechanism of incorporation, in addition to the ejidos and unions.[98] The INI defined "'Indianness' as a subjective feeling, and an Indian community is any people who felt themselves to be so" (Hewitt de Alcántara 1984:41). Under Director Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran, the INI operated from an evolutionary and regionalist perspective; the Chiapas highlands were an excellent area for experimentation (ibid.:49). These so-called "regions of refuge," the urban centers of indigenous regions, were considered the best situated for the INI's work, which could then radiate outward to more remote The INI set up regional coordinating centers, strengthening the state's political power.[99]

In 1951, the INI started the Tzotzil-Tzeltal pilot project with "cultural promoters" as intermediaries. We can see a shift here from earlier work; integration is the goal, but not homogenization. These policies of indigenismo worked to maintain and mobilize ethnic difference (Martínez Novo 2006:62-68). The words of Dr. Alfonso Caso, the INI Director in Chiapas express this mixed sentiment:

> Inside these indigenous communities, noble aspects of their old cultures remain, characteristics that enrich the cultural environment of our peoples, elements that we should save from total destruction, if we want to be men who are conscious and attentive to the development of our peoples. (Blom 1961:45)

[98] Novelist Rosario Castellanos also became part of the INI.

[99] The work of the INI in Chiapas played a key role in the development of anthropology in Mexico. The Chiapas highlands became home to the Harvard Project in 1955, which provided practical and scientific training for undergraduates. In 20 years the Project produced 27 monographs, 100 articles, 21 dissertations (Vogt 1994).

Most of the anthropological and other scientific accounts produced by the INI of indigenous peoples focused on them as inhabitants of closed corporate communities. This reinforced a sense of separation and didn't address the constitutive nature of local, national, and global relations.[100] These narratives also elided how the changes reinforced the division that had developed between men and women; men were inserted into the market, but women were now responsible for the project of both retaining culture and transmitting changes. Women became the yardstick to measure how successful the programs were.

TANGLED RELATIONS: EJIDOS/FINCAS/STATE

At the same time as these micropolitics of state discipline described in the preceding sections were aimed at infiltrating individuals in order to reproduce the "modern" body, agrarian reform finally arrived in Chiapas. The reform was ushered in during the tenure of Governor Efrain Gutiérrez (1937-1940), an associate of Lázaro Cárdenas. In 1937, the federal Agrarian Department established the Division of Ejidal Promotion, a dependency of the state Agrarian Mixed Commissions. This office divided Chiapas into eighty ejidal zones, each with its own supervisor who was responsible for channeling government assistance to ejidos. It was not just *tierras nacionales* (national lands) that were available for land grants, but also the idle lands of fincas and small property owners, with the aim of breaking up the power of large landholders.[101] At that time, most of the large landholdings were being subdivided and many were converting from crops such as coffee and corn to cattle ranching. The establishment in 1937 of

[100] For further examination of how these kinds of accounts play out in more localized settings, see Castellanos Guerrero (2003).

[101] However, some plantation owners circumvented this by selling off these idle lands to family members before seizure by the government. The family members would then sell to others. When it looked likely that the government planned to approve an augmentation of La Garrucha's ejido after they invaded a piece of land, the neighboring landholder tried to sell them that piece, claiming it was his, even though it was tierras nacionales.

certificados de inafectabilidad ganadera exempted most pastureland from expropriation, reducing the amount of available lands significantly (Wasserstrom 1983: 167).

The ejido became the new interlocutor for indigenous people and the state, forming new institutional relations. The ejidal system set up a bureaucratic structure with a *comisariado* (board of directors), *consejo de vigilancia* (oversight council), and *agentes* (representatives). These local authorities met with federal officials and with other communities. The agency also organized labor and worked to regularize relations with plantation owners, which resulted in higher salaries, but from the stories of former finca workers, there was not a significant transformation in the nature of the work afterward (Favre 1973). There are few accounts of the Tzeltal fincas aside from Montagu's (1990) functionalist account, although the work did not differ significantly.

Timoteo, a 60-ish man living in Zapata on recuperated land shared his stories of what life was like *en aquel tiempo*, in that time, working at the finca La Laguna del Carmen. He was an orphan and was raised in the finca, expected to stay living and working there after growing up:

> I was raised by a Señor, I was a mozo. My mother died and I was an orphan. We didn't have a good time in those days. This Señor hit us a lot with a *chicote*. He raised me, but I couldn't take it. I left and went to San Cristóbal. I was a salesman for four years. But I came back to the land, to look for a wife.
>
> I worked as a *machetero*. We were paid by the tarea. There were 40 of us. One day clearing land, one day cutting sugar cane, one day grinding the cane, carrying firewood, cutting coffee, cleaning coffee. Everything. We grew up there. The owner had his mayordomo and his caporal who counted the work. We worked for 12 days and then rested for 12 days. He was really *bravo*(mean), the Señor. He kicked us.
>
> The single men were paid 50 cents. I had my woman so I was paid a peso.
>
> *Era muy jodido en aquel tiempo*. Things were really screwed up in that time.

> I passed 15 years there. I hurt my back and it wasn't healing, so I told the *patrón* that I was going to leave, he paid too little. He said, "I'll pay you more," but didn't. So we decided, we're going to the Municipal Office, the *Presidencia*, in Altamirano. We're going to complain that he should pay us more, five pesos. We went, but they ran us out.
>
> *En aquel tiempo, si, era muy jodido*. In that time, yes, it was really screwed up.

Accounts of women's work are even harder to come by, although when recounting their narratives, all of the men mentioned that the women were in the worst situation because they weren't even paid for their labor. Toledo Tello's account of the fincas in Simojovel is one of the few that focuses on gender relations within the finca. She discusses how male owners coerced young indigenous servant women into sexual relations, a common practice on the finca. These young women "were also symbolic objects in the reproductive strategies of the fincas" (Toledo Tello 2004:102).

I worked in a community with a responsable whose last name was the same as one of the largest finqueros in the Altamirano region. His light skin, which contrasted with his parents' made me wonder about his background. His mother had been a mozo in the finca and the patron had "enjoyed" her. When she realized she was pregnant, she left and moved around until she found a community. He said that his stepfather had married his mother even though she was pregnant, and had raised him like a son. "We were lucky. This man was honorable, he is my real father, not like the other one."

Elizabeth is a 60-something midwife. She came from a Tojolabal region, but moved to La Garrucha in the initial wave of settlement and now speaks Tzeltal, as do her children. She also spent time working at La Laguna and Buenavista, and recounted women's work on the fincas:

> The woman cut coffee, ground coffee, washed coffee, everything, women did everything in that time. Women also worked by the tarea, sometimes the tarea was three boxes. We were paid with a bit of salt, some fat, maybe a little coffee. *Era muy cabrón antes, muy cabrón*. It was really hard before, really hard.

Women had to make the tortillas for their husband early, he would leave for work early. Then they had to make the tortillas for the patrón. *Que vamos a hacer?* What can we do? Poor women, *pues* whether we want to or not, we have to do the work.

Worse the women who worked in the house. They were hit and told off. They had to wash clothes and cook and take care of the children and clean the house… La Laguna was the worst. The Doña at Buenavista, she wasn't so bad. She told the women they could gather firewood they found on the land. Once, her husband saw a woman with her wood and took her *mekapal* [tumpline]. The Doña, she yelled at him, and made him give it back.

Pobre las mujeres. Poor women. Everything. They had to do everything. And for what pay? Nothing. They had to work for their family and the patrón. Everything. I had luck. One day when I was out walking, I saw a woman giving birth and I helped her. God gave me my gift, so I could work for myself. I had to help everyone, but they gave me things and sometimes I was paid in pesos.

Teodoro, also in his 60s and living in La Garrucha mentioned the debt that tied workers to the fincas.

They paid us very little. And we had to buy clothes, hats, machetes. Sometimes the work was so hard our clothes wouldn't last, so we would have to keep buying them. We would owe 300 pesos. What an amount! And if we got sick, *ay tanta cuenta!* What a debt! Up to 1000 pesos. And the peso was worth a lot then.

SOLICITANDO PARCELA: MIGRATION, SETTLEMENT AND FOUNDATION OF EJIDOS

Solicitando parcela los años fueron pasando
Cárdenas daba la tierra y Alemán la iba quitando
Inafectabilidades y nos mandaron al cuerno que a mi me dejo sin tierra este bárbaro gobierno
Cuando invadí latifundios me echaron los federales y a punto de bayoneta me vaciaron los morrales
Luego fui caravanero descalzo en la carretera con miles de campesinos solicitantes de tierras.
Pasaron muchos sexenios y otros tantos presidentes y ahora los neoliberales reforman el 27
Soy campesino y conozco la ley por muchas razones pues la política agraria está en manos de ladrones,
Como aquellos que en chihuahua por valiente me conocieron y por pelear mis derechos a la cárcel me metieron
Indígenas campesino siguen muriendo en silencio

La matanza de Aguasblancas otro crimen no resuelto
Dicen que quieren matarme y les parece sencillo pues que preparen la tropa que ayer mato a Jaramillo.
Constitución Mexicana, válgame tanta belleza ya me canse del gobierno que hoy paga por mi cabeza
El gobierno engañando con sus modernizaciones los campesinos luchando tienen mejores razones
Vuela paloma ligera cuéntales de que se trata si he de morir que yo muera gritando
¡VIVA ZAPATA!

—Los Dos Vientos de Voz y Fuego

I conducted the majority of my research in the area called the Cañadas, mainly between and around the Rio Jatatéand the Rio Tzaconejá, the canyons leading out from Ocosingo toward San Quintín, and from Altamirano leading to Belisario Domínguez, (See Figure: 2 Detail Map). The former is called the *Cañada de Patihuitz* and is where the community of La Garrucha is located, the latter is where Zapata is located. This franja finquera contrasted with urban centers and constituted a geographic zone of indigeneity, although there were also ladinos who owned small plots of land in the region (Leyva 1995: 376). The first wave of colonizers of this region were the former peons, sharecroppers or laborers who left the original large fincas nearest to Ocosingo and Altamirano, looking to escape the harsh conditions by obtaining their own piece of land. Many of the land grants were on tierras nacionales, which left finca lands intact. Often the lands were rocky, inaccessible and without sufficient water; in sum, barely adequate.

In the highlands, 53 ejidos were founded between 1936 and 1944 (Wasserstrom, 1983:165-166). However, these lands were not enough and the land that was given was not productive. Later waves of colonization to the Cañadas included these campesinos from the highlands, and along with others from the North, they moved further into the jungle. They bought small ranches or settled lands, eventually soliciting ejidos. Their presence is notable by the community names, such as Nueva Chamula and Mitzitón, and

the distinctive dress of women, some of whom still wear traditional heavy wool skirts, even in the much warmer climate.

The ejidos tied the communities much more closely to the state in the highlands than in the Cañadas and created separate class-based interests (Collier 1994). Leyva and Ascencio (1996) describe the processes of colonization and the complexity of relations in the Cañadas as producing a more "open" society. Communities were often multilingual and comprised of people from different parts of the state, including non-indigenous campesinos. Indigenous identity was reconfigured through this process. The EZLN has described this region as being in "*el olvido*" (oblivion); state presence in this region was markedly weaker than in other parts of Chiapas, although not absent. The coexistence of different indigenous groups often with different traditions was also a barrier to ladino rule. Ejidal identity, mapped onto indigenous identity and coupled with the collective experience of oppression, created a powerful sense of community belonging. However, despite the indigenous substrate to rural life in the area, community members in this zone were racialized as campesinos. The ejidal regime granted collective property, but real Indians were distinct—they were visibly culturally different. In this region, the Lacandones stand in for authenticity, as the uncorrupted, ecological Indian.

* * *

Patihutiz is one of the oldest communities in its canyon and was the first to solicit lands from the government on April 15, 1934.[102] They requested land from Finca las Delicias, owned by brothers Hector and Ceciliano Fernández. Generally, campesinos leaving the fincas first occupied land, then started forming their communities, and finally solicited official ejido status. Although Patihuitz received their provisional grant on

---

[102] Ejidal data is from the National Agrarian Registry Archives, Mexico City and Chiapas National Agrarian Registry Archives, Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

September 8, 1954, they did not receive the final plan until May 9, 1975, over 40 years after the initial request. Most other communities in the region solicited lands in the late 1940s and early 1950s, such as San Miguel on August 6, 1947 and Laguna del Carmen Pataté on September 6, 1951.

On the other side of the Corralchén mountain range, several communities also solicited land early. The town of Altamirano became an ejido, filing their request on May 12, 1925 and receiving provisional status on May 30, 1930. They would also wait decades to receive their definitive plan, granted in 1966. Morelia, which later became the seat of the autonomous municipality of 17 de Noviembre and home to a JBG, petitioned on November 9, 1935, after having taken over lands of the fincas Tzaconejá and Buenavista, as well as tierras nacionales. They received the land, along with an express prohibition on logging in the national forests. Having almost doubled in size by 1975 they petitioned again for more land, which they received in 1992, with the final map arriving six years later. Jalisco was also an early ejido, but by the 1970s there was not enough land to partition for the children of the original ejiditarios, and a small group of families migrated to La Garrucha.

A group of campesinos who left the fincas first founded La Garrucha in the 1940s on a site in the mountain above the current community, about a two hour walk. They submitted their ejidal petition in 1952, hoping to receive lands from Finca el Rosario, a former Dominican hacienda owned by Enrique Solorzano, and Finca las Delicias. Instead of taking lands from the fincas, the government authorized the community a piece of tierras nacionales in the mountain. The land was poor quality, and rather than divide it according to the government plan of 20 hectares per ejiditario, they decided that working the land in common would be more *parejo* (just) since they had all struggled to receive land. In 1972, around the time a dirt road was built connecting Ocosingo to San Quintín,

they moved to lower lands, to be closer to the road. At this time, some of the families moved on to look for better lands, and others from Jalisco and the finca La Laguna del Carmen arrived. In the 1980s, they asked for an augmentation of ejidal lands, as the population had since doubled. They ultimately received the final plan of the first ejido in 1987, and shortly thereafter, the other request was rejected. In the intervening period, the finca el Rosario had subdivided in order to be legally exempt from expropriation. So, community members invaded the lands that they had solicited. In order to calm conflicts, the government bought the lands from the property owners, with the promise from the 33 ejiditarios registered at that time that they would be satisfied.[103]

Women also worked hard to clear lands to set up new communities and began sharing in tasks that had previously been the province of men. Gender relations were changed during this process (Garza Caligaris, Salinas and Ortiz 1993; Leyva and Ascencio 1996). However, as June Nash notes, "Only 15 percent of ejido lands are in the name of women and many of these were acquired by widows who had sons 14 years of age or older at the time of the father's death" (2001:50). Women were listed as ejiditarios on all the papers I reviewed in the RAN, with percentages that ranged from 2 – 20 percent. While some women told me that they had worked their parcels, few women actually exercised their ejidal rights in assembly. In Morelia, a woman's name is listed on the official documents as the Consejo de Vigilancia in 1998, after the Zapatista uprising. In La Garrucha, I asked César, an older man and one of the first ejiditarios, about women's names on the rolls. He told me that women can only receive ejidal lands if they are orphaned, their husband dies, he divorces them, or if a man leaves them with children. No single women receive land because "they will get married and receive land from their husband."

[103]Personal communication, *Aurelio*, February 2004.

Yet, women had also organized for ejidal rights. *Doña Ale* talked about how her father died when they were up the hill in old Garrucha and her mother had to take on the work, telling her, "What can we do? We have to do something." When she was little, she accompanied her mother and some others who traveled from La Garrucha to Tuxtla to fight to get their final papers, since they were having land conflicts with the neighboring finquero. She told me that some of the people were worried about their conflicts with the finquero Don Enrique and thought they might be taken prisoner. She recounted that her mother laughed at this and said, "What more can they do to us?" She then confronted him asking, "Are we going to fix [arreglar] this?" *Doña Ale* laughed at the memory of Don Enrique responding, "Yes Señora, yes." Although women had participated in the process, once the communities had passed into the state land regime and were institutionalized, the ejido functioned as a formal exclusionary mechanism. Only those with parcels of land could participate in the ejidal assembly, and it was understood, with few exceptions, that this would be the men. Although the granting of ejidal lands was a positive benefit for campesinos, the structure also created rigid gender divisions in the communities, which I believe affects community gender relations today.[104]

I first visited La Garrucha in 1996. At that time, there was no electricity, but the center of town had grown to accommodate the influx of people for the Intergalactic *Encuentro* (Encounter). Meeting halls and sleeping quarters had been built and joined the already existing clinic, church, peace camp and government school building, no longer in use. By that time, the community had grown to around 100 families, and all but three were Zapatistas, the others belonging to the campesino organization ARIC Oficial. Of

[104] Whether communities created on recuperated lands reproduce this state governance structure is a topic that needs further investigation.

those families, two kept good relations with the Zapatistas, participating in the Church and community work. By 2003, the community had grown and there was electric, a water system, a larger clinic and collective stores.

One while we were drinking coffee in her kitchen, *Alicia* told me that it was her deceased husband who started inviting others to settle in the new community after the majority of the initial group left, moving further into the jungle to look for better land. He went back to the Altamirano canyon and spoke with others still working on the fincas, eventually persuading a group of Tojolabal families to leave the finca Carmen La Laguna and join them. As I was leaving she said, "I still have the original papers from the Agrarian Reform. Come by again and I'll show you. *Ángel* has them saved and he's not home." *Alicia's* son *Ángel* has developmental disabilities. When I first met him in 1996, he was playing with children half his age. Now, he works hard in his *milpa* (his fields) to support his mother since one brother had to leave Garrucha over an unresolved conflict, and an other brother was an insurgent killed by the army. He takes other people's community shifts when they can't do them, but work is not well paid—only 25 pesos a day, slightly less than the minimum wage. Still, the income is vital for him and his mother.

After this conversation, I discussed the founding of the community with autonomous council member *Gerardo*. He said that the community had already granted permission for my study, so I should see the land titles if I wanted to get a better sense of the process. He instructed me to go by *Ángel's* house and ask him and his mother to see the papers. When I went by, *Alicia's* was grinding coffee. Since her husband died, she's had many health problems requiring medication. Other women pay her for grinding their

coffee, café ganado,[105] or spices in order to help her out. We sit and chat for a while eating the cookies I brought and a few of her bananas. I eventually brought up the papers. I told her that the authorities have cleared me to look at them.

We went to get them, but *Ángel* was there and refused to let me see them.

"No. With these papers you'll rob the land."

I tried to explain that simple possession of the papers was not enough to own the land; my name would have to be on the papers for it to be mine. I reminded him that he's known me for years, and that I'm not going to do them harm. He was adamant. It took years for the community to finally receive their definitive plan, and he was not going to let me see the papers. His mother tried to intervene, explaining that the community authorities had cleared me.

"No. For years, years, the finqueros wanted to rob us. They wanted the papers, but I wouldn't let them. I'm guarding the papers, very securely, securely, for the community. This was my promise. To my 'apa, my promise."

Although I was annoyed at Andres for not showing me the papers, I decided not to push the matter with the authorities. His anxieties of kaxlan trickery aimed at dispossessing the indigenous peoples of the lands they've work so hard to acquire may not have been based on legal reasoning, but his argument, based in the history of their lives in the region, swayed me.

CAMPESINO AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZING

In 2004, I had lunch with an anthropologist colleague who had done extensive work in the region I was based in. I mentioned a recent discussion I had in the community about the finqueros. She waved her hand derisively and corrected me saying

[105] A fast growing legume with a taste that approximates coffee when toasted, but contains no caffeine. It is used to stretch real coffee, frequently in short supply. It is also jokingly referred to as "Niescafe." Women often sell their café ganado harvest to other women, adding to their families income.

that I shouldn't use that word to describe relations of power in the Cañadas at the time of the uprising. She pointed out that by 1994, the fincas didn't exist in their historic form—most had been subdivided and were now smaller ranches. These historical facts may be "correct," but they disregard the force of those local relations of domination, which affected community temporality; the time of the fincas never really ended since most community members do not characterize relations of power as changing significantly until 1994.

The ejidal process was slow. In many communities, by the time they received their final papers, there was not enough land to pass on to their children. Although the absolute number of ejidos had grown, wealth was concentrated in a smaller number of hands. By 1960, "the *latifundistas*—the large landowners who owned properties of more than 1,000 hectares and constituted only 2.4 percent of all landowners—owned nearly 60 percent of all land. Just 44 fincas monopolized 25 percent of the land" (T. Benajmin 1989:236). This state of affairs sparked unrest, prompting land takeovers and creating the conditions for diverse types of local organizing.[106]

One of the first contacts I had with the Catholic Church in Chiapas was a meeting with Bishop Samuel Ruiz in 1996 as part of a delegation for International Women's Day shortly before moving there. The notes I've kept from the interview reflect a defense of the human rights of the poor and indigenous, and a rejection of armed struggle and state intervention. His discourse reminded me of the (ex-)priests and (ex-)nuns I had met and collaborated with over the years who had worked in Guatemala and El Salvador with indigenous communities and the guerrillas. Yet, Ruiz began his tenure as a conservative sent to work on widening Church influence. He became the Bishop of the Diocese of San

[106] For an interesting account of these power relations post-1994, focusing on the point of view of the landowners, see Bobrow-Strain (2007).

Cristóbal in 1960, and by 1961 had established two schools, one for men, and one for women.

The catechists formed in the *Palabra de Dios* (Word of God) originally replicated the Church's top-down structure and participated in suppressing some indigenous cultural practices. When I asked *Marta*, a health promoter from Carmen Pataté, why there were so few young traditional healers left in the Cañadas, she told me that many of the plants were different in their new communities. A short time later, she admitted that part of the reason was that the older men and women healers had been called *brujos* (witches), and were threatened with excommunication. The ones who were still alive knew how to heal and what plants to use, but had been afraid to pass on the skills and knowledge to their children. I heard similar versions of the same story from others in the regions I worked.

Pressure from the communities and Ruiz's own transition to liberation theology changed the practice of the catechists. By 1968, they were discussing indigenous theology and had begun talking about liberation during their pastoral work (Meyer 2000), a process with parallels in parts of Central America. A key shift and rupture with the state's policy of class-based identification was the first Indigenous Congress of Chiapas, convened by Bishop Ruiz in San Cristóbal in October 1974. It is widely seen as the moment when a broad group of indigenous peoples, from a variety of organizations, came together to discuss and critique the paternalist and assimilationist indigenist policies of the Mexican state. At this point, there was a shift in strategies for fighting colonial domination and cultural reaffirmation began to be seen as a weapon in the struggle to achieve integration on equal terms within a pluriculturalist state (Hewitt de Alcántara 1984: 118).

Community frustration with state inaction can be seen in a letter addressed to President Echeverría May 19, 1975 from Patihuitz ejidal representative Francisco Gómez

Hernández.[107] He discussed the problems in his ejido and in the jungle, reiterating community requests for material aid and development projects yet to arrive. The organization *La Unión de Ejidos Quiptic Ta Lecubtesel* (Uniting our Forces for Progress) grew out of the Congress and these community concerns. With the aid of outside advisors, Quiptic was legally constituted on December 14, 1975 by 18 ejidos in the Canada of Patihuitz, including La Garrucha (Tello Diaz 2000: 77).

Quiptic grew rapidly and had a series of successful mobilizations. In 1980, the *Unión de Uniones* (Union of Unions, UU) was formed bringing together different campesino organizations across most of the Cañadas. "Before 1994, the Union of Unions was a strong and unified organization that functioned as a political broker and dealt authoritatively with external influences (political advisers, peasant organization, governmental agents, etc.)" (Leyva 2003:174). The UU helped broker the deal that gave La Garrucha their new ejido in 1987. Leyva goes on to assert that the success of the UU turned the Cañadas into an autonomous region. At the time of the uprising, most male and female Zapatistas had been part of the UU and this experience would contribute to their own subsequent autonomy project.

It is not my aim here to revisit the history of the foundation of the EZLN; numerous authors have amply recorded this across the political spectrum, including the EZLN during their "20 and 10 Year" celebration in 2003.[108] However, I want to briefly recount the emergence of the EZLN within the social context of Mexico and the Cañadas.[109] The Tlatelolco massacre is a node on one of the trajectories that set into

[107] For full text see Appendix B.
[108] See Benjamin (1996), Collier (1994), Harvey (1998), Le Bot (1997), Legorreta (1998), Montemayor (1997), Muñoz Ramírez (2003), Ross (1995), Tello Diaz (2000) and Weinberg (2000).
[109] Another possible influence that I am reticent to attribute much weight to without further investigation is the contact community members in the Cañadas have had over the years with Guatemalans. Chiapas shares a large and permeable border with Guatemala and was home to thousands of refugees during the war there. During one of my conversations with *Enrique* about life on the *fincas* and about what kind of early contact

motion the 1969 founding of the *Fuerzas de Liberacion Nacional* (National Liberation Forces, FLN), a revolutionary socialist group from the north of Mexico. The FLN, along with others such as the Maoist *Linea Proletaria*,[110] saw conditions for a revolution in the rural poverty in Chiapas. Members of the FLN first traveled to Chiapas in 1972. They didn't make many inroads until moving deeper into the jungle, close to San Quintín. The EZLN grew out of the FLN nucleus, and was founded on November 17, 1983 with six members, mestizo and indigenous. From there the group began to grow incorporating members who were also militants in the other campesino and church organizations mentioned previously. Bishop Ruiz once described this as the EZLN mounting a "horse already saddled."

The EZLN also shifted the position of the Church.[111] On January 7, 1997, in the center of Morelia, I attended a commemoration service for three men killed by the government on January 7, 1994. One of the nuns from the nearby Hospital San Carlos was seated next to me. The hospital was run by the Church and known to be "sympathizers" who had worked with Guatemalan refugees and community members before the uprising. After a sermon in Tzeltal and audience reflections about the organizing skills and leadership of the three men, the nun stood up. She gave a blistering attack on the mal gobierno and its violence. She ended her discourse with the admonition that Jesus was a fighter for his people and if he were here today he would be fighting

---

people in the region had with "outsiders," he casually asked, "Do you mean the man, el Chapin?" "What Chapin?" I replied, showing my surprise more than I wanted to. "Well, I don't know if he was really a Chapin, but he came from there. He came to talk to us several times about the Word of God and the importance of struggle. We met in the school with the priest from Ocosingo. He told us about his place (*su tierra*) and asked about our life here."

[110] LP boasted the membership of Raul Salinas, brother of future president Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), intellectual author of the most virulent of the neoliberal economic changes in Mexico.

[111] Raul Vera was appointed to be coadjudicator to Samuel Ruiz, with the idea that he would temper some of the more radical practices of the Church. After working with communities and later being shot at by paramilitaries in the Northern zone, Vera had a conversion similar to that of Ruiz. When Ruiz retired, Vera was not promoted, and was sent to the North of Mexico instead.

alongside them. While the church and campesino organizations laid a foundation for the EZLN's growth and were working toward many of the same goals, the new organization offered another more militant path that the neither was unable to provide.

Membership in the EZLN did not mean that people gave up their work in the other spaces. Francisco Gómez, from the ejido La Sultana, was the secretary of the UU, a catechist, locally known as a *tuhunel*, in the Catholic Church, and a regional responsable for the EZLN. He died during the battle of Ocosingo in January 1994, which is why the autonomous municipality bears his name. Women also held triple militancies. At age 14, *Rosa* became the secretary for the UU in the Altamirano region. She was one of the few girls who had finished primary school and her organizer father encouraged her. She was also a member of the Word of God (and later CODIMUJ, the Diocesan Coordination of Women).[112] She was later recruited to join the EZLN and became one of the most outspoken women's organizers in the region. After the uprising, her commitment to CODIMUJ waned as she took on more responsibility with the EZLN.

Adela spoke of this multiplicity when she talked about her own process of beginning to "*caminar*."[113] In the Ocosingo region where she lives, the Catholic Church's organizing with women was not as strong as in the Altamirano area, although she participated. She said that women became members of the EZLN in greater numbers early on. Some joined with their husbands, but others joined on their own. She recounted that at the time, "There were no big meetings to invite us. You had to be asked. My brother asked me. I didn't know he was involved, I thought he left us to go try to find work in other places like the men sometimes did. But he was doing work for

[112] For an excellent account of women's religious organizing in San Cristóbal see Kovic (2005).
[113] Literally, "to walk," used to mean organizing.

the organization. He saw that I was angry. Every time we campesinos went to march, nothing. With the organization we could fight and not only beg."

Antonio from La Garrucha relates that although they had their representatives from the UU, "the government wouldn't obey. Once we got the land, we never received aid. We stayed in poverty. They never gave us respect, that's why we had the struggle ." Mateo, also from La Garrucha, talked about the only government programs being loans. "During the [electoral] campaigns, they would promise to give everything and later not give anything. They didn't listen to our word. That's why we entered."

At the time of the EZLN uprising in the Cañadas, the state form was a "lack," a permanently incomplete promise of liberation to most campesinos. The state was felt as suffering, as need, and as violence in its absence; it was not the intermediary it claimed to be. People's lives had not changed a great deal since the founding of the ejidos, and the guardias blancas continued to terrorize local farmers and day laborers. The uprising grew out of long-term planning, years of organizing communities, and training insurgents and militias.[114] It was through actions, coupled with the inaction of the state, which contributed to the Zapatistas' development of autonomy after the uprising. As *Aurora* describes,

> It was before we decided to take up arms, before we decided. When we were still living up on the road. We were suffering. You've seen how we suffer without water. We, the women, we women had to walk over to there [points far away] in the morning to the cave where water drips and wait. Wait until our buckets filled. Then we would walk back in the dark to cook. We suffered. The government came one year to help us they said. They put in this thing, this big hole with rubber. To catch the water. You've seen it. It almost never worked. And it's open, the animals get in, the *chamacos* play there. So, we went to talk to the Señor, in that time. The finquero. To ask him, in the name of God, if he would

[114] The decision to take up arms was not made lightly. Community members talk about how it split organizations, communities, and even families. For this reason, in the Cañadas, few ejidos are without some divisions. While La Garrucha is almost one hundred percent Zapatista, Patihuitz was split into four parts. This has entailed another set of local negotiations of relationships in every day life.

share his water with us. You know what he said? "If I share the water with you, there won't be enough for my cattle." As if we poor campesinos were something less than animals. That night we went down and cut his tubes [water pipes]. And we kept cutting them until he left and didn't come back.

500 AÑOS DESPUÉS

For seventy years, the PRI was able to consolidate its corporativist rule in Mexico, tying individuals and communities to the state through diverse structural and discursive means including ejidos, social welfare programs, unions and nationalist rhetoric. When the debt crisis began in Mexico in 1982, neoliberal challenges to this mode of governance had already begun. However, these changes should not necessarily be taken as a rupture with previous policies in terms of government benefits, which had never adequately addressed poverty, but rather a change in the practices that accompanied them (González de la Rocha and Escobar Latapí 1991). Following Charles Hale, I define neoliberalism as:

> … a cluster of policies driven by the logic of transnational capitalism: unfettered world markets for goods and capital; pared down state responsibilities for social welfare of its citizens; opposition to conflictive and inefficient collective entitlements, epitomized by labor rights; resolution of social problems through the application of quasi-assessment based on individual merit, emphasis on individual responsibility and the exercise of individual choice (2002:486).

Although neoliberalism is often viewed as one set of strategies and practices, often spurred by multilateral organizations,[115] these logics are transformed by their national, regional, and local context. As the rural crisis intensified—in Chiapas, coffee prices fell by more than 50% between 1989 and 1992—campesino mobilizations and demands for land and credits were met with repression, which I will discuss more fully in Chapter Six.

[115] For example, the International Development Bank and its policies of "state modernization" that include modernizing indigenous peoples.

Several changes in Mexico stand out as central to the Zapatista uprising and continued conflict within Mexico by other indigenous and social groups and guerrillas. One of the more pronounced changes was the 1992 reform to Article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution, which granted and governed ejidos. Backed by the World Bank, the Mexican Government's action not only allowed for the demarcation, privatization, and sale of these communal lands, but included a strategy to actively enforce this process. In 1993, The Program for Certification of Ejidal Rights and Titling of Urban Patios (PROCEDE) began to operate and oversee the titling project. PROCEDE titles the lands, but is also proactive; there are goals at the federal level for completing the privatization process and dismantling the ejidos. Under the titling regulations, ownership of land is assigned to individuals as private property; even familial ownership is excluded.

The other key event was the negotiation with the United States and Canada of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Zapatista uprising was timed to coincide with NAFTA's entry into enforcement on January 1, 1994. NAFTA represented the Salinas government's disregard for the welfare of Mexico's people and was seen by many as a betrayal of the nation. Certainly, this treaty aided the collapse of Mexico's rural sector and the deepening of poverty. Roger Bartra publicly described this as a "genocidal restructuring." NAFTA and subsequent neoliberal economic proposals, such as the Plan Puebla Panama, have played a large role in Zapatista discourse, which has linked local politics to global processes. Until recently, Chiapas was one of the states with the lowest participation in PROCEDE. However, the rural economic crisis and migration have spurred more campesinos to participate. During my visit to the RAN in Tuxtla in July 2005, one of the men responsible for archiving mentioned that he noticed a distinct increase in ejidal lands being privatized in the past year.

Mexico's shift to neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s brought concomitant regimes of practices and discourses around the question of difference in the nation. In 1991, Mexico was the first Latin American signatory of the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. With the rise of local and global indigenous organizing, coalescing around the 1992 centennial celebration of Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas, President Salinas changed Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution in order to recognize Mexico's character as "pluriethnic." While these types of changes might seem contradictory given the economic changes, they are in fact in harmony, extending market relations into every aspect of life, as pointed out by scholars who have examined these policies in other parts of Latin America (Hale 2002; Postero 2007; Van Cott 2000). State multiculturalism relies on creating populations, inscribing them within the nation, on counting and inclusion. There is the need to fix identities in order to make people better subjects for governance. In Mexico, these identities shifted over the years from an expressly "racial" orientation to a "cultural" one that elides the racial hierarchies behind it. The shift from race to culture perpetuates racial hierarchies, thus creating racialized mestizos or campesinos.

Neoliberal multiculturalism would thus bring indigenous peoples into the national body as ethnic citizens. There has been much public debate in Mexico, and many who support indigenous rights champion this type of solution, seeing citizenship as a shift from the paternalism and assimilation of earlier policies to what I am calling ethnic citizenship. This type of citizenship recognizes a certain kind of cultural difference, but only when it is consistent with liberal regimes of individual rights. Collective rights, such as those to territory are not consistent with this type of citizenship. Rather than reformulating the nation, this is an effort to create docile bodies. The shift to culture has changed official and everyday discourse from the language of racism and discrimination

to the notion that racism has been overcome through opportunity. Multicultural solutions draw from discourses of recognition and tolerance. Although difference is expressed in ethnic or cultural terms, race/gender/class difference remains as a hidden index of hierarchy of inequality.

The linking of a policy of "multiculturalism" to neoliberal logics has meant that the project of the Mexican state is not just to recognize the indigenous community of the nation, but to re-make it into a governable population through NGO and other individual efforts, focusing on citizen participation, capturing oppositional energy and channeling it toward integration. An emphasis on resolving difference through the rule of law exposes colonial power relations in neoliberal reforms (Povinelli 2002). Democracy is strengthened because civil society is participating—community organizations and groups relieve pressure as neoliberal economic reforms dismantle the welfare state.[116] This creates specific technologies of the self, as citizens become self-governing and organize themselves for the state (Foucault 1991, Rose 1999). Techniques create state effects, giving the impression that the state is more than the sum of its parts and naturalizing the idea of the state as a necessary organizing principle in people's lives. For example, new economic programs to combat poverty in the rural sector such as PRONASOL emphasized "self-help," and constructed campesinos not just as producers, but also consumers. Many of these programs are aimed at rural women and indigenous women, seen as the most outside of the state and their inclusion is a measure of success.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I argued that gender has been a consistent organizing mechanism of the state in the region, both discursively and materially. I presented an account of a

[116]The period following the 1985 Mexico City earthquake is an interesting example to see deterritoralization and reterritorialization at work. The solidarity and mutual aid among residents fostered the creation of new social relations and at the same time, their efforts took the pressure off the government.

particular history of Chiapas and the Cañadas marked by lingering colonial relations, changes in gendered relations of power, and the development of an indigenous identity forged in struggle, which have led to the development of a Zapatista political subjectivity. The EZLN struggle has shifted indigeneity from historical ontology to political subjectivity. This Zapatista political subjectivity incorporates collective and individual rights and resists becoming self-regulating for markets and governance. Zapatista women's refusal to serve as a productive site for the nation, and their embodied resistance to neoliberal governance works to liberate spaces of autonomy.

As I will discuss in the next chapter, that while the EZLN made demands on the state for resources and inclusion early in their struggle, one of their central demands, "*Por un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*" (A world where many worlds fit), presents a challenge to the fundamental subject of the liberal state, the one world where many individuals fit. The Zapatistas are not against globalization, but are for "another" globalization, one that incorporates border thinking and different local histories, but has common cause against domination.[117] In the next chapter, I will discuss Zapatista identity and autonomous governance as practice and discourse in Zapatista communities and territories.

---

[117] Few things better express the contradictory nature of state neoliberal globalization in Mexico than former President Ernesto Zedillo vilifying anti-World Trade Organization and anticapitalist demonstrators as "globalfóbicos," globalphobes, while he fostered a xenophobic campaign targeting and deporting foreigners supporting the Zapatistas in Mexico, with the goal of portraying Chiapas as a local conflict. Ironically, many leftists Mexican supporters of the EZLN have done the same by trying to characterize Chiapas as a national struggle.

Chapter 4: Consolidation and Conflict in Zapatista Territory

> Autonomy is not a fixed, essential state. Like gender, autonomy is created through its performance, by doing/becoming; it is a political practice. To become autonomous is to refuse authoritarian and compulsory cultures of separation and hierarchy through embodied practices of welcoming difference... Becoming autonomous is a political position for it thwarts the exclusions of proprietary knowledge and jealous hoarding of resources, and replaces the social and economic hierarchies on which these depend with a politics of skill exchange, welcome, and collaboration. Freely sharing these with others creates a common wealth of knowledge and power that subverts the domination and hegemony of the master's rule.
>
> —subRosa Collective

"Autonomy. *Pues,* I don't know." Antonio and I sit on a wooden bench in the center of the community, to the side of the basketball court. I'm thankful that heavy afternoon rains have cooled the stifling air, blue patches emerging now behind the clearing clouds. His 4-year-old son, a seemingly tireless terror, throws rocks at a nearby tree trying to hit the birds. The more serious 6-year-old is glued to Antonio's leg listening intently, trying to ignore his little brother's exhortations to play. We're passing time, discussing the recent creation of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* and how things have changed since 1994. "Since '94" was a recurring phrase, a historical marker used in conversation to signal a new community time. "You know, in that time, all we were thinking of with the *compañeros* was the uprising, the 1st of January. I didn't think about what would come next. I didn't, we didn't, think that we would survive to see another dawn. *Asi es.* So, we are in this now, working, walking. But this autonomy, no…no, we didn't have this idea before, we had to make it." We watch the men play basketball for awhile, the screams punctuating the air. "Well, it's been some time now that you've all been doing this autonomy," I finally respond, during a break in the action. "*Pues, asi es.*

But sometimes it has to be changed, there are things that don't function (*no sirve*), they have to be changed. So, we change them and think maybe this will be better now."

*   *   *

The EZLN uprising was timed to the day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect and the majority of their initial demands were for material resources. The Mexican government quickly responded with military violence. However, the Zapatistas gained much public sympathy, and most analysts initially attributed the movement to the overwhelming poverty and political marginalization of those calling themselves Zapatistas. However, it became apparent that this was a revolutionary group with a different character, one that had a central demand for *dignidad* (dignity) and not attempting to take state power. The Zapatista stance of radical refusal, which was implemented after failed attempts to negotiate with the government has come to be a defining element of the movement. It involves denying all government aid and contact, and putting autonomy or self-governance into practice. In this chapter, I will trace the shift from demands on the state by campesino organizations in the region where the EZLN was formed, as discussed in the last chapter to the practice of *autonomía en los hechos* (autonomy in practice). I will first discuss the formation of Zapatista political identity. I will then move to the transformation of the Cañadas into a deterritorialized national space of struggle, and the consolidation of the autonomy project through the formation of the JBG.

One of the other defining features of the EZLN was the public presence and ample participation of indigenous women in the movement. Conventional wisdom of ethnic-national movements places the primacy of political struggle in an institutional arena, often with the goal of "taking power," therefore other contestations, such as gender-based demands can only be dealt with after this is achieved. In many cases, for

example, the FSLN in Nicaragua and the FMLN in El Salvador, the gains toward gender equity that were made in women's participation and leadership during revolutionary struggles were actually reversed at the moment of institutionalization.[118] Norma Vázquez, a former FMLN member writes:

> For the FMLN's campesina collaborators, the disagreeable surprises began when the FMLN zonal commissions began to enroll the potential beneficiaries in the land titling program: those whose spouses or life companions were included on the list were denied their own access to land property, even though they had sustained the production of the occupied parcels of land by themselves, and had fed the guerrilla columns from the same parcels for years. (Vázquez, Ibáñez and Murguialday 1996:216)

In the case of the Zapatistas, I argue that the inclusion and continued transformation of gendered relations of power and gains toward gender equity have contributed to the gains of the autonomy project, and have remained a priority of the movement, even as autonomy is being consolidated. In Chapter Five, I give an ethnographic account of women and gendered relations within this process.

Although I conducted majority of my fieldwork while based in two communities, this is not a community study, just as Zapatista autonomy is not an isolated experiment. Rather, it is an account of a contact zone, always being configured and reconfigured by relations external to the movement, as much as by internal community dynamics.[119] Although we know that the local is inextricably linked to the global, the local is still *located*; it is a place, a node where these relations touch ground.

EMERGENCE OF ZAPATISTA POLITICAL IDENTITY

In this section, I will discuss the formation of a specific Zapatista identity, which is essential for understanding the movement. One of the key elements that differentiates

[118] See also Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (1996),

[119] Just as colonial relations in Mexico have configured indigeneity, anthropological research, despite how collaborative or participatory, will always be prefigured by its history and the privileges of the researcher.

the EZLN from many Marxist-Leninist groups and guerrillas in Mexico and Central America was the transformation it underwent in the Lacandon Jungle. This produced a guerrilla and social movement whose early ethno-political demands on the state before 1994, were transformed into demands for self-determination and autonomy by December 1994 when they began creating autonomous municipalities. After unsuccessfully trying to impose their vision on the communities, the nucleus of the *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Forces) in Chiapas was changed. In an extensive interview with French sociologist Yvon LeBot, Subcomandante Marcos, a *mestizo* intellectual from northern Mexico and an original member of that small group, called this process a "defeat." He stated that through acceptance, "[L]ater the EZLN, in the hour that it becomes imbricated with the communities, passes to become one more element inside all of this resistance, it is contaminated and subordinated to the communities" (Le Bot 1997:149). That is, rather than yet another instance of domination even in resistance, the indigenous communities make the guerrilla their own.[120] However, he goes on to note that this rebellion against the orthodoxy, was not understood by the urban cadres. "It's not that they did not accept it, it is that they didn't *see* it. Only those of us *en la montaña* saw it.[121] It is very difficult when you have a theoretical scheme that explains all of society, and you come to society and come to the realization that your scheme doesn't explain anything"[122] (ibid.; emphasis added).

---

120 Obviously, as with all foundational myths, we could challenge the accuracy of this portrayal of the process of development. However, by 1994, this was certainly the case.
121 "En la montaña" [in the mountain], can be both a literal explanation of physical location and a code for membership in the guerrilla.
122 This speaks to the predicament of the orthodox Left at the end of the Cold War. While capitalism has been flexible and reinvented itself, the authoritarian Left has relied on static models and explanations of political and social realities. A joke that circulated around West Berlin in the years shortly before the Berlin Wall was destroyed was: "Where can you find a Marxist in East Germany?" "West Berlin." However, this should not be taken as a facile vindication of capitalism and the "West." I recall arguments between friends who were former citizens of East Germany and West Germans—arguments that always seemed to center on which rights should triumph, individual rights, such as freedom of speech and movement, or collective

In the previous chapters, I discussed some of the ways that indigenous identity has been constructed and mobilized by the state during the different stages of nation building in Mexico. In this section, I will discuss the ways that Zapatista organizing, building on previous efforts, transformed the Lacandon Jungle and reclaimed and reconfigured an indigenous identity, shaped in everyday practice and struggle. In this section, my concern is with how the space has been constructed and what implications this has for the Mexican nation.

The *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*, which was circulated in San Cristóbal the day of the uprising, reflects these changes that began a decade earlier. It links them to both transnational issues of globalization, by timing the uprising to coincide with the NAFTA, and to a rethinking of the nation, calling forth an already existing national idiom of struggle. By taking on the name "Zapatista," the EZLN conjured a vision of finishing a revolution whose promises were deferred in its institutionalization, as it simultaneously broke with previous movements by foregrounding indigenous claims on the nation.[123] Rather than indulge in a moment of national nostalgia, the EZLN employed this reference to serve as a bridge between past and present.[124] In the *First Declaration*, the EZLN proclaims:

> We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. . . .But today, we say

rights such as employment, healthcare and housing. I believe it suits both political ideologies to retain these either/or propositions, mired as they are in the state form. We have seen a wave of former avowed socialists in Latin America shift rather easily into neoliberal modes of governance while retaining a public social critique.

[123] Florencia Mallon (1995) discusses earlier uses of incipient Mexican nationalism in the anti-colonial struggle by indigenous communities.

[124] This could be contrasted with Chavez's use of the "Bolivarian Revolution" in Venezuela.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups. (*El Despertador Mexicano*, January 1, 1994)[125]

As *Aurelia*, a community elder stated, "We are the same Zapatistas, the struggle continues." The murals in Zapatista communities are a testament to this linkage.

Illustration 4: Collaborative mural in Zapatista community *Independencia*

[125] The EZLN also took over radio stations (notably XEVFS, the Voice of the Southern Border and XEOCH in Ocosingo) to read the first declaration. Radio was and continues to be a significant medium of communication in Chiapas, not just in rural areas.

They invoked these claims on the nation from the beginning, anticipating the government's accusations of outside agitation, that the uprising was nothing more than the work of radical foreigners or outsiders stirring up "our indios." This official response was aimed at undermining support for the movement by questioning its legitimacy, while attempting to delink it from other indigenous struggles, which had gained traction internationally since 1992. Not only did images of indigenous leaders and combatants undermine the government's assertion, but news also emerged that the government had known about the movement building strength in the Cañadas for several years.[126]

Through the link to the past, Chiapas also became a place of struggle in the national imaginary, in addition to being a place of the indigenous Other. The practices and politics of placemaking "mediate and construct social memory and identity by localizing personal emotions and defining social relations to the past" (Till 2005:8). A piece of this placemaking was the EZLN's proclamation of a War against Oblivion (*el Olvido*); each January 1 they celebrate the new year of struggle of that war. Although el olvido's literal translation is "oblivion," it should not be understood as a simple discourse on state abandonment and poverty, although it could lend itself to this type of reading.[127] Before 1994, state presence was minimal and indices of marginality ranked quality of life in Chiapas as low. Despite post-uprising rhetoric about remedying this situation, the situation was similar in 2000—Chiapas had the lowest life expectancy, use of medical services and the highest child mortality rate in Mexico, and the principal cause of death for both males and females was preventable gastro-intestinal infections (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 2005). Living in rural Chiapas for any

---

[126] In May 1993, the Mexican military entered an EZLN camp known as *Las Calabazas* above La Garrucha in the Sierra of Corralchén, killing one insurgent and sustaining a number of their own injuries.

[127] Some early texts written about the EZLN, such as Collier (1994) and Harvey (1998), focused their analyses at that time on the uprising as mainly a class struggle for land and tended to reproduced the dichotomy between the traditional highlands and the campesino lowlands.

length of time produces a visceral understanding of this reality that statistics can only hint at. Speaking with the JBG in La Garrucha in 2004 about their needs, they said that healthcare and water systems remained their top priorities.

El olvido signifies more than just isolation and official exclusion; it was and continues to be a generative and contingent space, an alternate temporality, which offered the possibility of creating an(o)ther indigeneity. The uprising as event did not signal a singular desire for a good state that could take up struggle for citizenship. This space of oblivion produced an emergent indigenous subjectivity that merges the local and the universal. It was a foil to an all-encompassing mestizaje, but not with an either/or proposition of indigenist fundamentalism. One of the key elements of Zapatista subjectivity is that indigeneity is not a question of essence, but a question of position, a subject-position defined in political terms,[128] not imposed from above, but emerging from below and growing out of this particular matrix of social relations in the Cañadas and in relation to capital. "Zapatista" encompasses indigenous, gendered, political-economic identities, plus a commitment to struggle.[129] This place called Chiapas is then an open signifier and a shorthand for a certain political identity and practice.[130] I am uneasy calling this a "hybrid" identity, although it certainly this moves us away from getting mired in discussions of tradition and modernity. However, it is clear within neoliberal multicultural policies, that the reach of the state in categorizing and classifying or

---

[128] We can see this as a process of "becoming minor" following Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

[129] The question of reform or revolution has been an ongoing point of debate and conflict, within the movement and outside. However, these are not the only two paths, I would posit another process going somewhere else. But this is certainly a valid question that I will discuss more as the movement has shifted to both anti-capitalist struggle and as the Otra Campaña has added elements of the authoritarian Left within its ranks.

[130] This is also true for outsiders who work in or have contact with Zapatistas. Saying, "I worked in Chiapas" or "I spent time in Chiapas," brings up a certain kind of image and with it places the speaker in a political context, as well as sometimes convey a credibility.

enabling other authorized identities is important. Identity works as a containment process, and hybrid has often lent itself to this kind of inscription.

Perhaps one of the differences is that in this case, the community is a fundamental and generative feature. In *Undoing Gender*, Judith Butler highlights the extent to which our bodies have a public dimension and reminds us that struggling for autonomy requires a struggle for conception of the self within a community. "To live is to live a life politically, in relation to power, in relation to others, in the act of assuming responsibility for a collective future" (2004:39). In a Western/Liberal context, this presents a paradox of individual agency. However, I want to turn to Partha Chatterjee's notion that identities are derived from the community, which is a concrete site, an embodiment of difference, where respective rights and duties are established and contested. He argues that both liberal theory and its critics suffer from an impoverished notion of community, failing to understand meanings espoused by popular political discourse and not recognizing the community as a network of obligations and solidarities.

> The most significant feature of the survival strategies adopted in the last few decades by thousands of marginal groups...is the way in which the imaginative power of a traditional structure of community including its fuzziness and capacity to invent relations of kinship, has been wedded to the modern emancipatory rhetoric of autonomy and equal rights. (1998:282)

This constitutes a different cultural domain, which can be anti-modern, anti-individual, and anti-capital, but not *necessarily* so. This alternate domain points us toward the possibilities for forms of political identity and solidarity beyond the liberal, which is a useful frame for examination of the Zapatista movement.

INSURGENT INDIGENEITY

A key element of Zapatista political subjectivity and a constituent part of their autonomy project is an insurgent indigenous identity that developed out of the particular

historical processes discussed in Chapter Three. We know that our lived experience (positioning and positionality) is mediated by discourses. In this section, I will focus on how this identity is shaped by discourses of mestizaje, authenticity and rights. As discussed earlier, post-revolutionary national consolidation in Mexico involved a project of assimilation to a mestizo national subject. This project takes "Indian" as an identity conceived by colonialism, degraded and transformed by the process and linked to a class stigma. The "indigenous landscape" is configured as an emblem of subaltern identity with the Indian village serving as a primitive social order (Tilley 2005:48). Until his removal in 1976, INI National Director Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran continued to promote acculturation. The explanation for this policy was that the emphasis should still be on the national because "the recognition of cultural differences might lead to the creation of 'fictitious nationalities'" (Hernández Castillo 2001:103). Thus, the logical conclusion was that these particular identities are not "valid" or real and therefore must be transformed.

Although the Zapatistas have not explicitly theorized mestizaje, beyond rejecting assimilation and affirming indigenous culture and rights, another process seems to be at play. This process involves the unassimilation of non-indigenous subjects who are part of the struggle and communities from oppositional ladino, mestizo and campesino identities (depending on how a person identifies) to one that encompasses "indigenous" as part of its shared sense of belonging. This will perhaps seem an untenable proposition to many who assume that there is some fixity to the ways that we understand belonging through ideas of race and color.[131] While it is true that there is a limit to how indigenous these non-indigenous can become, I believe this process of self-making is a central

[131] I am not arguing here that perceived race/color/ethnicity do not have effects in the way that people are marked by others, simply that they are not the only defining characteristics and that while culture is important, in this case it is the particular political identity that produces these shifts.

feature of Zapatista identity. The word "indigenous" is more open-ended, while specific ethnic signifiers such as "Tzeltal" are closed. *Antonio's* response to my question about this difference was typical, "Yes, we're all part of the struggle for the rights, the indigenous rights. But, we're Tzeltal because our father is Tzeltal. Or the mother, too. So, we're Tzeltal. Even if the child only speaks Spanish [*castilla*], it doesn't matter they are still [*sigue siendo*] Tzeltal." This also implies a calculated risk on the part of the movement in not putting forth an essentialized discourse of "indigenous."

I began wondering about this in the context of trying to understand the complexity of social relations in the Cañadas. What I argue has happened is that people have been acculturated to indigeneity. Through conversations with community members in both regions, it seems that a part of Zapatista subjectivity includes an understanding of oneself as indigenous through practice. This dynamic is not necessarily unique to Chiapas, it can be found in other rural areas, such as in Guatemala. However, I am arguing that this is important because it has been mobilized as part of a political identity. This exchange with *Chepe*, a local responsable, was standard.

> Melissa: And what about people like *Adelina* who doesn't speak Tzeltal?
>
> *Chepe*: She's not kaxlan, she's one of us. There are children who grow up now speaking pure Spanish, but they are not kaxlanes. They're indigenous.
>
> M: Are there ranchers who are indigenous?
>
> C: It depends. Some are Tzeltales, but if they are rich, they are kaxlanes. But if they live here with us side-by-side and are calm [*tranquilo*], then those are others.

During a party in La Garrucha, five ranchers drove up in a Volkswagen to bring a matter before the JBG. I assumed they were from "another organization," but they weren't. *Antonio* told me that quite a few ranchers in the region are Zapatistas, "they can work their way in like everyone else." He continued "it's not a problem to be a rancher if you're a Zapatista. They are part of our struggle, for the indigenous. And people of the

city, ladinos, they can be part of it, too. It's for everyone." Although he qualified this by saying, "they can become part of the indigenous struggle, but they can't become Tzeltal really."

Language is important, however, in this region, people have not fully internalized the state's criteria for defining indigeneity.[132] Speaking an indigenous language is a marker, but the historical conditions of migration added an element of fluidity. La Garrucha is considered a Tzeltal community, yet some of the first residents came from the Tojolabal region of Altamirano, and switched to Tzeltal when they moved to the other canyon. In the case of a non-indigenous family originally from the Comitán area, their children learned Tzeltal in school from other children. The children are now considered Tzeltales. I asked *Doña Ale*, their mother how that could be.

> Doña Ale: That's what they are. They learned in school, but they are part of the community, they are campesinos. They married Tzeltales and their children speak.
>
> Melissa: But neither you nor your husband is Tzeltal?
>
> DA: No, my family is from Comitán, but a long time ago. I'm a native here. But *Alfredo*, he is Tzeltal, but he became a traveling salesman. So he didn't speak anymore.
>
> M: So, then how do you define who is indigenous?
>
> DA: Well…we all are [indigenous]. We are part of this community and we are part of the organization.

Even the word "indigenous" is not necessarily one used or easily defined in all communities. However, it is clear from my conversations that when community members talk about being part of the Zapatista struggle, indigeneity is part of this political subjectivity. Although the word "indígena" had been used since colonial times

---

[132] For a contrasting process, see Speed (2008b). This is mostly likely due to the relative isolation of the Cañadas, the local racial hierarchy (ladino/indigena), and the minimal presence of the state.

in racial categorization, this type of insurgent indigeneity is a more recent phenomenon, becoming more common after the Indigenous Congress of 1972, and it has also developed from social memory of racist exclusion. Community members use the term "racism" to discuss their treatment at the hands of ladinos, finqueros, ranchers and the state. The term racism also appears in the Revolutionary Law of Women.[133]

Outside actors are also implicated in the regulation of processes of identification and belonging and in defining global discourses around questions of who is indigenous, not only from official, but also solidarity positions. A particular tension exists with those who would reinscribe a historical metanarrative of origins, projecting a past onto communities. One example is an account of anthropologists who invoke the Popol Vuh and Mayan culture to describe the experience entering the *caracol* and visiting the JBG as a mystical experience.[134] This elides the nature of the ejidal process and the way that participating in it and campesino organizing also shaped autonomous governance. In the region I worked, "Maya" was used in the past tense to refer to the *antepasados* (ancestors). For example, when *Pedro*, a health promoter, was discussing a certain kind of traditional medicine, he remarked, "It's the medicine of the Maya, the ancient customs. They knew a lot."[135] I spoke with a Zapatista musician at the New Year's Party in La Garrucha in 2004 who was composing a song about the link to his Mayan ancestors. As we know, history is not a linear process,[136] and we need to pay attention to the particularities of local understandings.

---

[133] See Appendix D.

[134] I am not arguing that indigenous culture is a not a constitutive element of Zapatista communities and identity, merely that a notion of authenticity is a mirage and a dangerous one.

[135] A young man in the 17 de Noviembre region spoke to me of finding bowls and other items in a cave that belonged to the Maya.

[136] Although there are those who would have us believe it is. During a workshop in La Garrucha by an education training team from Mexico City, I happened to walk by a classroom and caught a bit of the lesson. The teacher was explaining the history of Mexico and US imperialism from an orthodox Marxist position of class conflict. This other "official" history ignored the complex power relations between

I arrived in La Garrucha for an extended stay in late May 2003 after a long and aggravating bus ride; although it was a only 42 kilometers from Ocosingo to Garrucha, the two hours spent crammed into a US school bus designed to fit six-year-olds could stretch to five or more during the rainy season. Although the rains had begun, the holes in the road hadn't yet become lakes, so I was thankful for the mere three and a half hours. Walking into the center of the community, I noted that it seemed unusually quiet, even taking into account that it wasn't a vacation time.[137]

I entered the kitchen of the *campamento* (camp), as it was still too early to visit friends who would be just returning from the fields and the day's chores. This was part of a camp system set up in the most threatened regions and communities by the Human Rights Center Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and the EZLN for human rights observers after the military invasion of communities in February 1995. The Fray Bar, as it was known, would send out observers to live in the camps for periods of two weeks to several months to be witness to military movement and violence, and to report on their experiences. I encountered Manuel, a twenty-something Mexican from San Luis Potosí. After exchanging somewhat wary hellos, he began to make a fire for coffee, stoking up the embers and adding more grounds to the morning's pot.[138] He explained that he had been out helping one of the local families in their fields. He was living in the community

---

indigenous communities and the state in Mexico. This was someone else's past. It also provided an interesting contrast with the region of 17 de Noviembre where an autonomous education project was underway, which included compiling and writing community histories.

137 Later, after asking friends, I learned that the number of visitors had dropped off greatly since my last extended stay in 2001. A type of hierarchy of communities that *campamentistas* and *solidarios* (solidarity activists) wanted to visit had developed and La Garrucha ranked rather low on this list.

138 This is not the place for a full discussion of this issue, but campamentista territoriality was a common and perplexing phenomenon. As someone who worked in communities and occasionally would stay or cook in the *campamentos*, I came across this behavior repeatedly. Clearly, not all of the Mexican and foreign observers who came to the communities displayed these attitudes, but many did. It generally consisted of interrogating newcomers, asserting authority and knowledge about the community and often-petty nationalism. This was one of the reasons why I would sleep in other empty spaces rather than in the *campamento*.

for six months in order to teach and help *Ricardo*, the local education promoter. We began with the usual exchange of what we were doing, and I mentioned that I had spent an extended time in Garrucha in the past.

Looking out the kitchen door at the grey sky, I commented, "The one thing I didn't miss was the mud, the endless mud. Mud was one of the first words I learned in Tzeltal." Manuel gave me a dirty look, then launched into a lecture, "That's because you are obviously from the city and don't understand the indigenous way of life, their cosmology. It's the cycle of life. Without the mud there would be no crops and no food." Although my strongest desire was to lecture him back about how much locals also complain about the mud, I held my tongue. There was no use getting into an argument with the only person I'd be sharing the room with until I made other arrangements. For several days, Manuel served as a foil for my thoughts. One day I was in the library with Manuel having a discussion about "real" Indians, and a little boy was running in circles around us with the outline of the map of Mexico on his face like a mask. I was reminded of Wladimir's gentle mocking of me for becoming an anthropologist during my stay in Chile by frequently asking at random moments of conversation, "*es un dato* (is that data)?" In this case, I was certain it was.

We had another argument a few days later about the indigenous community members who supported the PRI. "They both have brown skin (*moreno*) and brown eyes (*café*), they are brothers. They were not like that, but the government has brainwashed them and tricked them into supporting the PRI." Not willing to accept his explanation of "false consciousness" for political divisions, I argued that perhaps some of them appreciated the material and social benefits of aligning with the PRI. Once again, I was dismissed as someone who didn't understand the nature of life in an indigenous community.

Although Manuel could see authentic indigenous culture all around him, one of the critiques launched at the Zapatistas (and one that resurfaces periodically) is that their struggle and notion of autonomy is not something authentically indigenous and is therefore illegitimate. This particular critique emerges from divergent sources. Neo-indigenists and groups that believe the most pressing need for social change is to have more indigenous leaders at the federal level who are participating in national political life have promulgated it. It has also come from people who believe in a romantic notion of "the Indians" and their authentic usos y costumbres. Some are disappointed and even reject the movement when reality does not match up to their ideals. During the Intergalactic Encounter in 1996, I participated in a workshop on indigenous culture and listened to a young US woman berate the Zapatistas in La Realidad for selling Coca-Cola and for wanting donations of computers.[139]

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, women's bodies have been the site of production for processes of both nation-building and authenticity. Although the Zapatista movement does not make recourse to women's bodies to justify their claim of indigeneity, it is still a point of contention. The exchange I had with a young teacher from the northern state of San Luis Potosí crystallizes the centrality of women's bodies for indigenous authenticity. *Gabriel* originally visited Zapatista communities as part of a solidarity caravan in 1999 and stayed six months. I had met him years before and was surprised to learn that after repeat visits to the region, he became the partner of a Tzeltal woman two years prior and had fathered a child.[140]

Melissa: What is it like to live in an indigenous community?

---

[139] The support of multinationals in this setting is a complex issue, and the EZLN has subsequently taken a stronger position against selling these beverages, but the freedom that this young woman felt to judge the EZLN, while retaining her own privilege was striking.

[140] He said they weren't officially married, but were together.

> *Gabriel*: Well, actually it's that my community has a principal defect. The indigenous culture and the Zapatista movement. [He makes a two thumbs down gesture and then flips through his notebook.] Here's the photo of a student. Look how she's dressing, like a kaxlan. [She was wearing jeans and a blouse]. They don't use the clothing anymore. Only the language, Tzeltal, but they're speaking Spanish more and more. And in the Church, they still have the flute and violin. But if one were passing by this community, it would be like any ranch in San Luis.
>
> M: They're more campesino then?
>
> G: Not even really campesino anymore. In the Church they have their *principales*, the tuhuneles and the flute. But only that. I'm making notes about this. I want to go to a community were they conserve their identity to see the difference.
>
> M: Have you gone back to San Luis?
>
> G: I went once when my daughter was six months old. I want to go again, but alone, to get things. It would be difficult with [my wife], she should stay in my community. I think it would be good to look for a job I can do there and here. I can't just stay here in my community.

This critique—externally defining what is and is not indigenous—is dangerous and neocolonial, especially so when it would undercut the important changes in gender relations underway in Zapatista communities. Solidarity does not do away with desires for fixity in these new rebellious indigenous bodies. This position does not recognize indigenous peoples as agents of change or indigenous culture as dynamic. Again, one of the challenges of the Zapatista movement is that it does not attempt to fit within the tradition and modernity dichotomy.

By dismissing state recognition without resources and territory as inadequate, the EZLN opened a national debate on individual vs. collective rights through demands and discourses of indigenous rights. In the liberal democratic nation-state context when there are demands for indigenous rights there is a juridical impetus for determining whether someone is indigenous and deserving of these rights. Is self-identification is enough?

How do we know someone is indigenous?[141] What criteria should be employed? Is indigenous code for the "pre-modern"?[142] How does desire for the indigenous Other create regimes of authenticity?

Gabriel's words expose the colonial relations that configure even his solidarity. However, indigenous culture is dynamic and we must recognize that the self is also constructed under the condition of Western modernity. Therefore one question we can ask of movements that call for indigenous rights is what does the production of "indigeneity" (a colonial concept), mean when it is politically mobilized to articulate a project of decolonization? In the case of Awas Tigni in Nicaragua, (Hale 2006) discusses the material gains of the community, but also points to potential negative repercussions, which have begun to be realized in the form of counter-claims by other indigenous groups. In the *Cunning of Recognition*, Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) exposes the centrality of colonial power relations behind this type of incorporation and the "rule of law." Her work also points to the dangers of using international human rights frames with can gloss over lived experience that doesn't fit within idea of indigeneity (the "incommensurable").

In any case, it has been productive for the EZLN that the option of arguing for rights on the basis of origins, continuous occupancy and "authenticity" was not a viable strategy since they emerged in the region of the Cañadas (although there was and continues to be participation from the more "traditional" highlands). That type of

---

[141] Throughout the world, different criteria are employed to make these determinations. In the US, with the practice of "blood quantum," a certain percentage of ancestors must be verifiable Native Americans. In the US, there is also the compulsory enrollment in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in order to be "truly" Indian. In Mexico, the criterion for being indigenous has been whether one speaks a designated indigenous language. This can mean that a family could shift from being officially indigenous to not in one generation. There is also shifting of identification with class-status. Perceived phenotype and color is still important, but not the only criteria.

[142] It is interesting how deep these questions go and how racial vs. cultural difference debates come forth almost despite themselves. During a student meeting to discuss a faculty hire, it was noted that a candidate was Native American. One person immediately responded, "What? She can't be. What language does she speak?" Another student, an indigenous woman quickly retorted, "Are we also supposed to be wearing special clothes and carrying bows and arrows?"

identification was also not available due to the presence of the Lacandones, who had already been marked as the "authentic" Indians—the least contaminated by modernity and most deserving of protection. President Luis Echeverría authorized a resolution giving the 300 Lacandones dominion over a communal reserve of more than 614,000 hectares in the Lacandon Jungle, with another 30,000 set aside for ecological parks and archaeological sites. This resolution went into effect on March 6, 1972, without regard for the future of the more than 40 existing *colonias* (communities) inside the reserve; "invasive colonists" were not seen as worthy heirs of the land.[143]

This emergent Zapatista subjectivity contrasts with movements that focus on reinforcing these already existing identities and epistemological frameworks. The tensions, the unreadability or illegibility that are part of the Zapatista struggle have been productive. It is about indigenous rights, and not. It is about land and material resources, but not exclusively so. It was about demands for dignidad and horizontality, rather than taking power and reinscribing new racial or cultural hierarchies. Frantz Fanon pointed out the pitfalls of the development of a particular kind of national consciousness in decolonization struggles, one that assumes sameness and unity, and ends up privileging male elite at the expense of others. In the Zapatista case, the presence and leadership of women from the beginning of the movement has been a key part of undermining the production of, in Albert Memmi's words, "a pyramid of petty tyrants."

---

[143] For an interesting account of anthropologist Trudi Duby Blom's role behind the scenes and the long-term conflict created by this decree, see Jan de Vos (2002). There has also been recent debate around this area, specifically centered on the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve and government efforts to dismantle non-Lacandon communities. An argument emerged that the Lacandones aren't really authentically from Chiapas, but are "*Caribes*," and therefore not deserving of the land. In conversations with community members before 2003, the *Caribes* were said to be *meros indígenas* (real indigenous people) who among other things don't wear clothing, but know how to live off the jungle in a sustainable fashion, and are not *cristianos*. However, after 2003, I spoke with some Zapatista leaders who had also begun to bring up the question of authenticity in reference to the Montes Azules, a dangerous tactic that I discuss elsewhere (See Forbis 2006).

In the end, the debate over the authenticity of the indigenous identity being mobilized is a smokescreen over the central issue of a challenge to sovereignty and the meaning of the nation. "The real debate is not over whether identities have political relevance, but how much and what kind. The theoretical issue concerning identities is not whether they are constructed (they always are, since they are social kinds) but what difference different kinds of construction make" (Alcoff et. al. 2006:6). Identity struggles that focus strictly on recognition and inclusion (citizenship, multiculturalism) are not opposed to capitalism or neoliberal governance. Zapatista identity refuses this false dichotomy between the material and the cultural in their struggle. In claiming this historical space of the revolutionary nation, the EZLN has reconfigured Chiapas' place as indigenous Other in the national imaginary from a marker of the past to an insurgent indigeneity.

MULTIVALENT NATIONALISM

Vamos, vamos, vamos, vamos adelante
Para que salgamos en la lucha avante
Porque nuestra Patria grita y necesita
De todo el esfuerzo de los zapatistas

Let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go forward!
To take part in the struggle ahead
Because our Fatherland cries out for and needs
All of the effort of the Zapatistas

—Zapatista Anthem[144]

[144]To the tune of "Carabina 30-30," a corrido from the Mexican Revolution. For full text of the hymn, see Appendix D.

The Zapatistas' indigenous identity is tied to an ambivalent and multivalent nationalism that suggests a move to (re)construct the nation outside of the liberal state, derived from a communitarian construction of agency and culture. National movements intend to achieve and maintain national political independence. In the Zapatista formulation, this is a bottom up nationalism that is democratic, does not exclude or oppress difference, and strives for independence from global capitalism. Seen as threatening to neoliberal multicultural policies in Mexico, the Zapatista conception of the nation appears as a series of paradoxes of belonging and exclusion, mapped across racial, ethnic and geographic borders. One of the most conspicuous of these is the Zapatistas' apparent contradictory embrace of Mexican nationalism. The expectation would be that Zapatista's political and social positioning would lead them to reject anthems, flags and other trappings of patriotism. This is not the case.

While working in the south of Chile on a research project, I was invited by the Mapuche anthropologist leading the project to give a talk about my experience with Zapatista autonomy to a group of Mapuche leaders in the ceremonial meeting center of the Hospital Makewe, an intercultural hospital. After my presentation, there was considerable discussion about two points that illuminate the paradox: "Why do the Zapatistas consider themselves Mexican?" and "Why do they reject taking any aid from the state?" In the Mapuche case, the opposite tends to be more common. Many do not consider themselves Chilean, but many groups collaborate with the state, believing that Chile owes a historic debt to the Mapuche.

It is this first question that also perplexes many visitors to Zapatista communities. Given what we know about the EZLN's formation, we can discard the facile explanation that mestizo Marxists, such as Subcomandante Marcos, instilled a sense of nationalism among the indigenous and campesino communities they encountered in Chiapas. This

type of claim erroneously privileges the authority of the (few) northern male revolutionaries and elides the complex history and creativity of community members.

Despite the constant references to the mal gobierno and an emphasis on local autonomous governance, the Mexican national anthem is sung at important Zapatista ceremonies before the Zapatista hymn, which also refers to the *patria* (fatherland). The Mexican flag is often present during public ceremonies. Although I had read communiqués and knew about this practice, I felt a disjuncture the first time I heard people singing the Mexican national anthem along with the Zapatista Hymn in a community before a public discourse about the conflict. Yet, for most Zapatistas this is perfectly compatible.

In September 2001, the autonomous municipalities of the zone of *Tzotz Choj* founded a Zapatista commercial center, *El Nuevo Amanecer del Arco Iris* (The New Dawn of the Rainbow), near the site of former military base at the entrance to the community of Moisés Ghandi and at the crossroads of Cuxuljá, with roads leading east to Altamirano, north to Ocosingo, and south to San Cristóbal or Comitán. Members of ORCAO, a campesino organization, destroyed the center. Collective members produced a pamphlet about the rebuilding of the project and stated, "We put our three flags: the flag of Mexico, the flag of Indigenous Culture and Rights, and the Zapatista flag to remember that We Are Mexicans, We are Indigenous and We are Zapatistas."

Rather than try to give an answer to the question "why," I want to argue that this multivalence points the deterritorialization of the official policy mestizaje, which is at the heart of the Zapatista national project. This points to the emergence of a non-exclusive nationalism. Comandanta Esther's words before the Mexican Congress on March 28, 2001 illuminate this concept:

> And without losing what makes each individual different, unity is maintained, and, with it, the possibility of advancing by mutual agreement. That is how we Zapatistas want Mexico to be. One where indigenous will be indigenous and Mexican, one where respect for difference is balanced with respect for what makes us equals. One where difference is not a reason for death, jail, persecution, mockery, humiliation, racism. One where, always, formed by differences, ours is a sovereign and independent nation. And not a colony where lootings, unfairness and shame abound. One where, in the defining moments of our history, all of us rise above the differences to what we have in common, that is, being Mexican. This is one of those historic moments.[145]

Esther also underlines the gendered dimension by pointing out the symbolic value of being "a poor, indigenous and Zapatista woman" speaking for the Zapatistas and speaking as a collective subject demanding a place in the nation. The notion of difference within this subject position cannot be subsumed by liberalism.

This multiplicity is tied to practices and shaped by struggle through a Zapatista identity that derives from community, from a sense of place and the intimacies of power. While the word "community" is utilized by the movement to signal a physical space of dwelling, organizing and belonging, I want to avoid the fetishization of community. Both communities and discourse of community must be situated in the social processes, in which they are constituted and help constitute. Communities are locations of conflict as well as belonging.[146] The theoretical assumptions of some theorists, such as Kymlicka (1995) are that nonliberal nationalism presumes an essentialized identity, one that would necessarily oppress minorities.[147] However, in the Zapatista case, they link a sense of collectivity derived from nonliberal nationalism to a call for bottom-up democracy, not where the multitude fit into one world, but for *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*

---

[145] The question still remains about how national borders, the relationship with Guatemala and the US figure into this embrace of Mexicanness.

[146] I am cognizant of academic critiques of community as a romantic ideal (Joseph 2002). As an organizer, I am also weary of how often the imagined "heroic community" is invoked in struggles in lieu of working to actually consolidate the social relations and networks that constitute community.

[147] I will take up this question specifically around the question of gender rights when this turns on individual women in Chapter Six.

(a world where many worlds fit). Here we can perhaps see the Zapatistas using democracy politically, in the sense of Laclau's empty signifier (1996). We can substitute democracy for Clohesy's discussion of the concept of justice in his explanation that the "theorization of [democracy] as an empty signifier is important. It is precisely because it is a signifier that can accommodate so many different interpretations that it must always be understood as empty or, at least, partially empty in that, although its meaning will always be contested, at any time there will always be a dominant discourse that will be controlling and delimiting its meaning" (2000:74). By tying their vision of Mexico to democracy, the Zapatistas challenge the assertion that any nationalism not based solely on liberal notions of individual rights is inherently oppressive and anti-democratic.

I argue that it is precisely the creativity and open-ended nature of the Zapatista's indigenous identity that offers a challenge to reinscription in the Mexican nation as ethnic citizens, to fulfill a role in the racial regimes of neoliberal biopolitics. Although I am calling this identity "open-ended," I do not mean to imply that Zapatistas do not differentiate between people; they do, often in contradictory ways. I recall being in a community to do a training project speaking with a local responsable, when a caravan of visitors from Mexico City arrived. He leaned over and after a quick nod of his head said, "We can't talk here, there are Mexicans around." This phrasing stuck with me and I began to notice other occasional uses, almost always to refer to mestizos from other parts of Mexico. However, there are mestizos who have become insurgents, and mestizos and foreigners who have joined communities.[148] One of the main cleavages is expressed

[148] I have had discussions with insurgents and community members who disapprove of *mestizos* joining the insurgent ranks, but also with others who think that if *mestizos* can join, foreigners should also be allowed. There is a tension between the primacy of indigenous and local identity vs. political commitment as the basis of belonging.

through the trope of the mal gobierno,[149] which would include anyone associated with the Mexican federal government, including its programs. A subset of the mal gobierno is the army, or as it is called in communities, *los ejercitos*. Another is with *sociedad civil* (civil society), which diverges from classic and updated Habermasian senses of the term. The EZLN sets itself apart from civil society, but those they consider *solidarios*, or in solidarity, are also set apart. There are also other minor categories of difference that operate within the movement.

We must also acknowledge the nature of *Zapatismo* as a transnational social movement, a network of movements and organizations, rather than as simply a politico-military organization located in Chiapas. One of the elements from the beginning that helped this develop was the EZLN's explicit rejection of the NAFTA and neoliberal globalization. Although the movements, actors and demands are diverse, this anti-neoliberal framework has allowed for collaboration and participation. The burgeoning human rights and indigenous rights frameworks and discourses have also expanded the frame beyond Mexico's borders.

BEYOND INITIAL DEMANDS

In the beginning, the EZLN challenged the legitimacy of the Mexican government and made demands for basic material necessities such as land, housing and health care, as well as for more abstract ideals such as freedom, democracy and justice, stating "We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic." A common assumption is that the Zapatistas were engaged in a struggle to take state power.

[149] Father Hidalgo supposedly yelled "Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe y abajo el mal gobierno" (Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe and down with the bad government) during the Grito of 1810. The continued usage of this term invokes the call for independence from the colonizers and the centrality of the state in Mexican political discourse.

However, in their refusal of this action, and the subsequent deprioritization of reformist demands, we can see in this case the formation of constituent power. By claiming their own sovereignty, the EZLN contested national sovereignty and reclaimed Mexican popular sovereignty from the state (Negri 1999). The Zapatista space of Encuentro, a process of learning as we go, of coming together to network, listen, discuss and resist, contrasts with constituent assemblies, such as those in Bolivia or called by López Obrador in Mexico in 2006, where the turn to a process of constitutionality and representation transforms this *potenza* into constituted power.[150] I am not trying to argue here that the Zapatista struggle has not engaged with or made demands on the state. I am arguing, however, that the state arena was never the sole focus of attention and has become less so each year of the struggle.

National and international pressure forced the Mexican government to declare a unilateral ceasefire on January 12, 1994. In 1995, the EZLN entered into negotiations on indigenous rights and culture. The San Andrés Accords (SA Accords) signed by the EZLN and the Federal Government in February 1996, have become the paradigmatic reference for the debate of indigenous peoples and the state in Mexico, with important antecedents in the changes to Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution and ILO Convention 169 as mentioned in Chapter 3. Although the Accords were never enacted and the

[150] In Agamben's discussion he asks how constituent power ends up alienated and inverted as constituted power (1998). In answering how the state is "effective though fictional," he focuses power as an affective form. In the permanent state of exception (post-WWII), the state is still fictive, but serves as an articulating mechanism whereby potential is displaced. Or, as Negri writes, "[Constituted power] is a foundation contrary to constituent power; it is a summit, whereas constituent power is a basis. It is an accomplished finality, whereas constituent power is unfinalized; it implies a limited time and space, whereas constituent power implies a multidirectional plurality of times and spaces; it is a rigidified formal constitution, whereas constituent power is an absolute process. Everything, in sum, sets constituent power and sovereignty in opposition, even the absolute character that both categories lay claim to: the absoluteness of sovereignty is a totalitarian concept, whereas that of constituent power is he absoluteness of democratic government" (1999:12).

dialogue was broken on August 29, 1996, they were seen as giving juridical grounding to what form an indigenous autonomy could take.

The SA Accords were able to articulate, despite the political and conceptual differences over what exactly constituted indigeneity, that the Mexican state was obliged to recognize the cultural differences of a significant sector of the population and through that recognition, authorize the rights of self-determination and autonomy based on the principle of difference. This in turn would require a promise to devise policies and development to raise the living conditions of indigenous communities, eliminate discrimination and secure the equality of opportunity, based on the principle of dignity. From the government perspective, the acceptance of these principles did not necessarily imply the transgression of the existing constitutional framework. However, in the view of the EZLN and supporters, the acceptance of these proposals constituted the foundation to construct another state, one based in cultural collectivity and not on principles of liberalism.

After 1996, one of the key EZLN demands was for the government to "comply with the San Andrés Accords." However, in 2001, the government passed the Indigenous Rights and Culture Act that reformed the Constitution, but indigenous communities were classified as instances of submunicipalities, rather than as autonomous. This new legislation negated the territorial rights that were included within the SA Accords. The EZLN and many other indigenous groups, including the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) rejected this change.[151]

The government put forth several arguments against enacting the SA Accords and continuing dialogue. The first was that the EZLN could only negotiate on the basis of local rights and necessities; any attempt to broaden discussion to the sphere of the nation

[151] The CNI was founded on December 25, 1994)

was not considered legitimate. The other was that granting indigenous autonomy would lead to the disintegration of the Mexican state, or the creation of a state within a state only for the Zapatistas. Behind this argument was the idea that a process of the "balkanization" of Chiapas would occur. This topic was the subject of countless articles and news broadcasts during the mid- to late-1990s, and constituted an attempt to sway public opinion against the EZLN with the specter of an increase in inter-community conflicts, the violation of individual rights by the exercise of collective rights, and the possibility of extreme violence.[152] One of the arguments used to bolster this position was that indigenous women needed protection from their patriarchal culture. By granting autonomy, women would have no legal recourse for ensuring that their rights were not violated. Autonomy does indeed challenge state sovereignty, but not as balkanization; it offers the potential of a new way of calling forth the national community that creates a new nation, but not necessarily new states (Chatterjee 1993).

The EZLN struggle for autonomy fits into a broader process of the last decade, as indigenous movements have shifted from a politics of national inclusion to one of making demands for autonomy and specific rights and resources. There has been a plethora of experiences and responses. Some countries have opted for limited regional autonomy and integration via constitutional reforms, such as in Nicaragua and Colombia, and in others, such as Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous leaders have formed or joined political parties and have assumed formal leadership. Yet others, such as Chile, have refused to formally recognize the multi-ethnic character of the nation. In Mexico, there have also been a variety of demands and experiments in autonomy, and of definitions of what

---

[152] Violence was understood in this iteration to be dangerous precisely because it would be random and uncontrolled, unlike the already existing military violence, which was aimed only at those who transgressed.

autonomy might mean, principally in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero (Burguete Cal y Mayor 1999).

Authors such as Hector Diaz Polanco (1991, 1997) have focused on analyzing indigenous autonomy almost exclusively within framework of the state. One notable difference between the Zapatistas and many other movements is that they did not wait for a juridical resolution to their demands, publicly announcing the existence of 32 autonomous municipalities (MAREZ) in December 1994 to begin practicing self-governance. Since then, either inspired by or emboldened by the continued presence of the Zapatistas, other indigenous communities in Mexico have also declared themselves autonomous.[153] In the next section, I will focus specifically on what I refer to as the Zapatista autonomy project. I will attempt to outline the contours of the project and some of its main attributes. I believe a key to its success is that autonomy is conceived of as a process rather than a model, and it is this constant state of change, rather than stasis that give it force. Is autonomy really more about revolutionary politics and working in a state of contingency (indefinition) than finding a way to fit within the state?

ZAPATISTA AUTONOMY PROJECT

Previously, community members were subject to traditional types of representation through mediating authorities, although these differed between Zapatista zones. In the highlands these authorities were generally *caciques* aligned with the PRI, and in the Cañadas most local governance was carried out through ejidal structures, relationships with finqueros, and later campesino organizations and catechists. In their

---

[153] The day after the watered-down Indigenous Rights Law went into effect, more than a dozen indigenous communities representing 300,000 inhabitants declared independence according to their legal advisor Joaquin Ortega. He stated that their declaration of independence "is an act which decrees the communal appropriation of land, water and natural resources, as well as the lands surrounding Indian villages. In addition, (the decree) establishes the communities' autonomy as public bodies, their solidarity for the defense of their basic rights and a pledge to resolve land disputes that will guarantee the unity of all Indian people." Agencia EFE, September 9, 2001.

pamphlet mentioned earlier, the collective from the Commercial Center *El Nuevo Amanecer del Arco Iris* asks, “Why is the agrarian law of the government worth more than [the law] of the Autonomous Municipalities?” When the Zapatista autonomous municipalities were founded in 1994, this fiction of legitimacy was exposed.

Autonomy is the quality or state of being self-governing, yet under capital, this is not necessarily a positive proposal. Zapatista autonomy began with the negative, the *grito*, the scream of “Basta Ya!” producing a negative subject, and the emancipation of the being toward self-determination against capital (Holloway 2002). The Zapatista movement did not begin explicitly as an anti-capitalist struggle, despite discussion about neoliberal governance and NAFTA, however, this aspect has developed more fully through the practice of autonomy. Autonomy breaks with the capitalist temporality of the west (past, present, future). Zapatista autonomy has avoided being defined despite desires for containment via the state and laws or civil society’s desires for a blueprint or model. As discussed earlier, “Zapatista” has emerged as a fluid politically identity. We can see this in the ski masks, the maxim “*todos somos Marcos*” (we are all Marcos) and the idea of becoming visible only through concealment.[154] To seek definition and be anti-capitalist are incompatible. Every time there is a refusal, it changes the geographies of power.[155]

Zapatista autonomy has had its share of critiques. One of these claims that is not territorial, but only imagined. Zapatistas do resist traditional mapping, which served as a tool of colonization (Anderson 1991). Marcos reaffirms this link in the communiqué “The Speed of Dreams,” when he discusses the so-called fourth world war. “This war

[154] This undermines “visual fetishism,” which privileges the act of seeing the other as proxy for knowing the other.

[155] The protests in Seattle during the WTO meetings in 1999, inspired by the Zapatista struggle, are a good example of this

which, according to us (and, I insist, tendentially), is attempting to destroy/depopulate lands, to rebuild/reorder local, regional and national maps, and to create, by blood and fire, a new world cartography. This one which is leaving its signature in its path: death." Although the Zapatistas resist official demarcation, Zapatista autonomy is territorial and community members in the different regions understand this.[156]

The Zapatistas took land, declared themselves autonomous and began to put this into practice. A common statement was, "the land is now ours," or "the most important thing is that we now have the land." Before the uprising, most communities were ejidos or *comunas* and many were *revueltos* (mixed politically). These *tierra recuperadas* (recuperated lands) allowed for the foundation of new communities, which became spaces of intentional living, without the overlay of state structures. These new communities have been a key aspect to the dynamic process of autonomy in the Cañadas region. However, Zapatista autonomy *is* also imagined; territoriality is something beyond seeing boundaries. Central to the Zapatista theorizing has been an alternate cartography, one of new geographies, mobile deterritorialized zones and rhizomatic networks that produces a nomadic subjectivity, not marked as a vague set of hopes or possibilities, but dwelling by moving (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The intent is not to conserve originary plurality, but to transform that plurality, with a complex of political formations.

Amalia told me "the government is for the rich. That's why the campesinos rose up. Autonomy comes from the campesinos." It is a struggle against abstract work. I asked *Miguel*, a young man from a ranch who had moved to a new community, about

[156] This is a contrast to recent efforts to conduct mapping as a way to secure land rights in Honduras and in Nicaragua, which did not have the same political options available to them. The resistance is political and also reflects the different idea of "ownership" of land and the mixed status of many communities (ejidos and also recuperated lands).

what autonomy mean to him. He answered, "*Pues*, it's this, dignidad. We're no longer asking. The struggle is a reality. We have the land. And the children will no longer have to suffer." Gustavo Esteva (2006) interprets dignidad as power by another name, which people already have, as opposed to concepts such as empowerment, which are top down. This presents a contrast with Kristeva (1991) and other's definition of dignity as work; in this case, it is about affective power, not just labor power.

This particular conception of dignidad emerged out of the movement's theoretical production, which has been critical to the formation of a Zapatista collective subject. The maxim *caminando preguntamos* (as we walk, we ask questions) reflects the fact that knowledge is produced in struggle and this knowledge contributes to the ongoing theorization and practice of autonomy. The Zapatistas do not vote or belong to political parties. They use a consensus decision-making process and authorities are named to their positions, holding a *cargo*, an indigenous from of governance whose positions of responsibility carry obligations to the community and/or the autonomous municipality. Although some of these positions part of the ejidal structure (such as *comisariado*) or to the municipal assembly, they are still seen as a *cargo*. *Efrain*, a middle-aged man, had served for many years in a series of positions at local and regional levels and had hoped to convince the region to allow him to retire, but they would not let him. He joked that it was his fault for doing his job too well, but then turned serious and said, "*Es cuando uno tiene cargo, es como cargo*" (when one has a *cargo,* it is like having a load/burden).

Another key Zapatista tenet, *mandar obedeciendo* (to lead by obeying) is reflected in the consensus process, where leaders act by following the decisions of the community members. The virtue of patience is reflected in this type of process. I have participated in meetings about projects that lasted most of a day; no final decision was taken until all had been heard and compromises were worked out. Finally, I believe another important

part of Zapatista autonomy is the practice of *autocritica*, which involves self-critique as well as critique of the movement. This works at the community level and in the movement. Subcomandante Marcos received a strong rebuke from the Zapatistas for his *protagonismo*, his individual action, sending communiqués about the Basque conflict without their approval in 2002. This process undermines the routinization of governance and supports reinvention in the face of domination. Zapatista theory cannot be viewed simply as the negative, the "Basta Ya!," but is also about creation and the development of this anti-representation politics is also an attack on capital.

Illustration 5: Sign at the entrance to La Garrucha. "You are in rebel Zapatista territory. Here the people command and the government obeys."

The Zapatista autonomy project challenges the spatial-temporal changes that accompany processes of neoliberal economic globalization. Despite the characterizations of the EZLN as the first "postmodern guerrilla," there is still an underlying slowness to life, especially in rural Chiapas. There are the rhythms of life that no new technology can speed up; waiting on crops to grow and produce, waiting for the rain, waiting for transport. Walking is used repeatedly as a metaphor by the movement. Consensus decision-making takes time, sometimes days or weeks. Waiting for the Zapatistas to speak, to make decisions, to give an audience frustrates some and angers others. It's a choice for outsiders; learn to live with the silence and waiting, or leave. I recall the first meeting I had arranged with women in a community. I arrived at the time indicated and waited several hours before asking someone whether they knew anything. I was told that the women probably weren't going to come, but I should try again at the same time the next day. *Al rato* (in a while) was code for another day. President Fox famously claimed before the 2000 elections that he would fix the Zapatista conflict "in 15 minutes." Two years after his departure, the conflict continues. If speed is at the heart of global capital, then patience is a guerrilla virtue.

Virilo has argued that the military-industrial complex is the driving force of social cultural development; history progresses at the speed of its weapons systems (1986). Now, the speed of information is linked to the changing speed of warfare, through technologies such as global surveillance networks.[157] Surveillance is not useful when the subject is in the light. I will discuss the particular nature of Mexico's low-intensity warfare in Chapter Six, but one of the insights of Virilio's work on the logic of speed is

[157] Surveillance, whether real or imagined, creates fear that produces self-policing subjects. I can now laugh at the paranoia friends and I felt leaving the action film, "Enemy of the State" in San Cristóbal in 1999, during the campaign against foreigners. We knew that the type of high-tech equipment in the film was not available to the Mexican state and we also knew that even if it were, we would not be targets. Yet, we still felt an uneasiness walking home through the streets that night.

that possession of territory is central in this matrix (2004). He differentiates carefully between land and territory—whoever controls territory possesses it. Possession of territory is not primarily about laws and contracts, but a matter of movement and circulation. In the communiqué titled "The Speed of Dreams," in September 2004, Subcomandante Marcos asks "what is the speed of dreams?" He then immediately shifts to discussing the speed of nightmares—the fourth world war against humanity. I believe that controlling the speed within the autonomous territory has been a crucial hedge against neoliberal globalization, pitting the temporality of el olvido against the "speed of nightmares." In the same communiqué Marcos wrote, "In any event, we give life to our wise moves and to our mistakes. I sincerely believe that, ever since the dawn of the first of January of 1994, we have won the right to decide for ourselves our path, its rhythm, its speed, and its accompaniment, continuous or sporadic. We shall not cede that right. We are willing to die to defend it." Perhaps one of the greatest blows against an all encompassing neoliberal globalization has been this fusing of the immediacy and speed of information technology to the "real time" of the local struggle.

TERRITORIAL CONSOLIDATION: THE JUNTAS DE BUEN GOBIERNO AND CARACOLES

On July 16, 2003, I woke to a flurry of activity in La Garrucha. Some type of meeting was taking place with visiting responsables from other regions and select members of the General Command of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee (CCRI). I recognized old friends from other zones and asked them what was happening. "There's going to be a big meeting, an important meeting." Zapatistas are masters of secrecy. In the early afternoon people began to file into the large auditorium. What followed was an interesting discourse on neoliberal economic globalization and indigenous rights, involving references to what I thought were snails (caracoles). When

the presentation ended, I was told I had to leave and the meetings continued on among Zapatistas for another day. After a few days, people from other municipalities began showing up in groups to build new structures and prepare for the event. The water system, which had been a source of conflict for years was suddenly deemed a priority, and a group of *solidarios* was contacted and asked to help fix it.

On August 8, 2003, the EZLN publicly celebrated the death of the Aguascalientes and the founding of the caracoles and JBG, a moment that was supposed to mark the full devolution of the struggle to the civilian authorities. In addition, this was to signal a new relationship between outsiders and Zapatista authorities, the "good" government instead of the "bad." The public celebrations of this event were held in Oventic, the most public of the Zapatista centers, located only an hour-long drive from San Cristóbal. It was an edgy celebration to be sure, people wondering if the police, military and immigration were going to reappear despite Fox and Salazar's assurances to the contrary.[158] It was strange seeing the van of Televisa, the government television station, inside Oventic and surrounded by people in ski masks without there being a conflict.

I was present during the first year of the JBG *Camino del Futuro* (Road of the Future) in the Caracol[159] *Resistencia Hacía un Nuevo Amanecer* (Resistance toward a New Dawn) based in the community of La Garrucha. The caracol is formed by four autonomous municipalities: Francisco Villa, Francisco Gómez, Ricardo Flores Magón and San Manuel. The turns of the JBG would serve for 10 days and then be relieved by

[158] Additional threats came in the form of paramilitary groups.

[159] The term "caracol" has several meanings. One is the snail shell, another is to represent the spiral and invoke an indigenous cultural symbol (in a communiqué during the National Democratic Convention in 1995, Subcomandante Marcos discusses the way that the Zapatistas are creating the buildings as in the shape of a "caracol").

others from their municipalities. In addition to the JBG was the *Vigilancia*, comprised of CCRI members, all civilian authorities, despite common perceptions to the contrary.[160]

A long-standing summer caravan from Mexico City came in August and soon, more murals were being painted on the new buildings. A talented artist leading the group told me that they were going to be collaborations. She was working on a new mural on the clinic with a group of excited children. After looking at the huge eye with arms of corn being painted on the side of the *Vigilancia* building, I had my doubts. I asked the muralists why they were painting a giant eye. "Who are you?" "I work here. I'm just curious why this mural is of a giant eye." "Obviously, for *vigilancia*, oversight." I responded that it seemed so contrary to the whole autonomy process. I was given the "shut up, what do you know" look. I asked *Junta* members later what they thought. "I think it's okay that they painted it. They must like that. It's ugly though." The giant eye so clearly linked the idea of governance to surveillance, and exposed the micropolitics of state power, even in a space resisting that power, like the caracol.

From its founding in August 2003 to September 2004, I observed an attempt to develop a system of autonomous governance based on what were considered indigenous forms of adjudication, coupled with mechanisms to undermine consolidation of authority and corruption. Interestingly, the form was also adapted from ejidal and governmental structures (including the idea of a tax on projects as a percentage versus the rotating system of work and donation already in place). Difference was not put aside (or "tolerated"), but was frequently at the center of decision making. Critical to this form of governance was a sense of responsibility to a collective, weighing how decisions would affect not only the parties involved, but other communities and the broader struggle. The JBG was formed where I was already researching, and as such, it is part of the field of

[160] For more information, see Speed and Forbis (2005).

social relations in the community and gendered relations of power. I will discuss this new type of governance from my impressions, public discourses and pronouncements, and conversations with other actors.

It was late afternoon, a blazing hot February *cuaresma* day when I returned to the center of town from lunch with *Lupe*. A shiny ruby red pick-up truck that had been in caracol in the morning was back, but something seemed odd. I walked over and noticed that it the whole side of the truck was ripped up. It was missing an entire side panel and I finally understood what people meant when they said bumpers could fold like an accordion. *José* was leaned up against the wall of the JBG building. I asked if it was the same truck. "Yes, he's back to make a *denuncia* (complaint) with the *Junta*." I sat down on the bench next to *José,* and we chatted while staring at the truck.

After a short time, the owner emerged. He was a road engineer and had been to the JBG in the morning to negotiate over road repair work he had a contract to complete and seemed eager to tell his story, embellishing certain details for me, and others for *José*. After leaving the caracol, a military jeep (*los federales*) ran into him. They were coming around the curve in the middle of the road, and he tried to evade and almost flipped his truck. They all got down with their rifles and threatened him when he demanded payment. He said that since their truck had no tags, he took the drivers name and took a photo. Since his brother-in-law working in the President's Office in Ocosingo, he was going to file a complaint and then speak to the general at the base. I asked him why he had come back to the JBG to file a denuncia since he obviously had other resources. "Because it is the other authority where this accident occurred and this was an acts of injustice. And this doesn't cost anything." He left with a copy of the denuncia.

One of the differences of this type of system, with indigenous culture as its basis, from positive law is that the JBG treats each case as particular and the emphasis is on compromise, on reaching an accord that all parties are satisfied with, rather than winning or proving right and wrong. Obviously, this is the ideal and the reality of the situation can differ. *Alfredo* remarked, "We want to organize between brothers and sisters. It's more just that way. We worry and even become ill because we want to make decisions that will make everyone *contentos* (happy) and that are more just, not only [for people] from our organization."

One of the critiques has been that the JBG and Zapatista autonomy are something exclusive. From my perspective on the ground, the JBG attended to Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas alike, regardless of whether they were sympathizers or not. They did not try to homogenize the space, and justice was not generally partisan. A surprising variety of cases came before the JBG. I was shocked one day to see the VW of a political candidate parked in the caracol, his electoral propaganda taped to the rear windows of the car. It turned out that he had a land dispute that he wanted to bring before the JBG. When I said I thought that it had perhaps been to make sure he was allowed to visit communities in the region, he laughed, "No, it's changed. There is no problem, but I only visit the communities where they are interested. The others I don't bother."

This inclusiveness made it even more striking the day that there was a car parked outside the caracol on the main road and not inside the gates. Although I frequently engaged in small talk or conversations with visitors to the community if they addressed me, in this case, *Lupe* told me to stay away from the men waiting. I spied on them over the course of the afternoon. They were never received by the JBG and finally left. *Chismes* (rumors) circulated about them, confirmed the next day by radio reports that members of the COCOPA, the government peace commission, had been traveling in the

area and had "talked" to some Zapatistas. Sneaking in a meeting with the JBG would have been a propaganda coup, and this incident reminded us that there were still military positions throughout the region and reinforced the necessity of the Vigilancia in screening visitors.

There were also critiques that emerged from the founding of the JBG from within the movement. The communities did not hesitate to register their complaints. These critiques were taken seriously. But, they also showed their support of the Junta members hard and unremunerated work, sending gifts of food and leaving messages to be broadcast by Radio Insurgente, a *saludo* and a song to let them know they were not alone. At the end of the JBG yearly cycle, they spend time preparing their accounts, reports and an *autocritica*.

With the institution of the JBG, the relationship between civil society and *solidarios* and the MAREZ changed. A central piece to Zapatista autonomy is self-development (*autogestión*), that is, the right to decide what their own priorities are and to find collective solutions to reaching their goals, rather than being managed from outside. Although it was not my project to investigate autonomous economics, this remains an important area of analysis. Outside aid has supported the movement as it has developed and the relationship has become more of an issue since the founding of the JBG. As the amount of aid has diminished over the years, it calls into question what possibilities for material sustainability exist. How does entering into market relations, even in areas such as fair trade coffee and artisan production, affect the autonomy project? Until recently, the priority was to obtain enough land for land for subsistence farming for all. The ongoing low-intensity warfare continues to affect Zapatista economic options. Certainly, these are issues that are becoming increasingly important to the movement.

Over the years, communities complained that aid and projects tended to be distributed to a small group of places, especially ones that were home to a campamento or were close to San Cristóbal. Now, all aid and projects must be authorized by the JBG, in order to assure equitable distribution. This caused some problems in the beginning when groups proposed projects and were told that they had to do them in all of the autonomous municipalities, often a financial and logistical impossibility for solidarity organizations. One of the solutions has been creating "partnerships," pairing groups and municipalities.

Another part of this oversight is to decide what aid and projects to receive. Marcos' communiqué on the birth of the caracoles addressed the problem of charity and stated that the EZLN would no longer receive leftovers, such as the famous single "pink high heel shoe (size 6 and a half)."[161] This change produced anxiety among some groups, especially NGOs that received funding from larger agencies with paternalist policies. I spoke with some agency members who feared corruption if they were not personally involved to manage expenditures, and the fear of failure if they did not control the progress of project. This fear was partially related to the constant rotation of JGB members creating what was characterized as a lack of "institutional memory." Yet, it was precisely this rotation that was critical to the notion of self-governance; anyone could learn to govern, and this learning was a collective process. As articulated by the Zapatistas, this rotation and anti-representational politics was precisely what should reduce corruption and profligacy.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the emergence of Zapatista political identities and the creation of territorial autonomy. The Zapatista stance of refusal has been a key element

---

[161] While I was working in La Garrucha in the 1990's, a caravan with aid arrived from Pastors for Peace. Among the items donated by North Americans for the communities were lawnmowers, wedding dresses and high-heeled shoes.

of this autonomy project. At the one-year anniversary party in La Garrucha, Comandanta Rosalinda spoke, addressing her comments to members of the "Organization," as the EZLN is also known, but also to the non-Zapatista community members from the region who had been invited for the first time to an official Zapatista party. She said:

> We no longer need to ask permission to govern ourselves. We have already seen that we can do it and we have learned much in this first year of work. We are here. We did not sell out. Only in resistance and rebellion can we continue to construct our autonomy as indigenous peoples, because we don't expect the permission of the '*malos gobiernos'* in order for the indigenous peoples (*pueblos*) to live with liberty and with autonomy.

In the next chapter, I analyze how autonomy and gendered relations of power work on the ground and how Zapatista women are utilizing a variety of resources, including refusal to demand their rights.

Chapter Five: Engendering Autonomy

> Our hope is that one day our situation will change, that we women are treated with respect, justice and democracy.
>
> —Comandanta Ramona, January 6, 2006

"Can I borrow the photograph?" asked *Eliseo*. He was participating in a workshop on building ferrocement tanks for water storage, so that he could help build one in his community. We were in Nueva Revolución, a new community on recuperated land in the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre. The women had assembled the water taps for their system and I had taken photographs at their request. Looking over the copies in my hand, I was suspicious. "Why?" Knowing he was single, and having overheard the men's sexual banter for days during tank construction, Tzeltal no longer being a secret-enough language, I wondered whether he had found a young woman he fancied and wanted to show her to his friends at home. "To show it to the people in my community, so that they can see that women do this kind of work in other places. They are more advanced here."[162] His home community was in the Autonomous Municipality of Francisco Gómez. "Well, I can't just give you one. But, we could ask the women and see what they say." "Good," he replied enthusiastically, "Let's ask the women."

This was one of the early encounters I recorded in Zapatista communities in the late 1990s that began to form the heart of this dissertation. As I worked with both women and men, and moved between regions, community members asked me about my work and how "things were going" with the women in each region. These conversations

[162] Zapatistas consistently used the word *avanzado*, although I argue this usage does not contain within it a Western notion of advancement and progress.

seemed to indicate a curiosity beyond the usual small talk. I remember an early conversation with the woman responsable of 17 de Noviembre who told me that strictly speaking, they didn't compare these things, all autonomy being equal as it were. However, she proudly noted, hers was the only region at that time where women had their own leadership structure and ongoing projects. Women's participation and gender equity varied greatly across Zapatista regions. These conversations frequently led to musings on why this might be the case and what influences this had on Zapatista advancement.

Comandanta Rosalinda spoke at the 2004 anniversary of the JBG in her home region of La Garrucha; she was one of the inaugural speakers in Oventic in 2003.[163] It was significant that a woman was chosen to speak about the success of the Zapatista autonomy project, just as Esther was the first Zapatista to address the Mexican Congress. The creation of the JBG illuminated the presence *and* absence of women's participation in leadership positions, revealing the uneven nature of changes of gendered relations of power. In this chapter, I will briefly discuss women's presence and participation in the EZLN as insurgents and comandantas, and then I will move to a fine-grained ethnography of community-level contestations of gendered relations of power and the movement toward gender equity. One of the ways that these changes are measured is through the visibility and participation of women in the autonomy process.

In this chapter, I will focus more on gendered relations of power and autonomy in two contrasting communities located in two adjacent autonomous municipalities, corresponding to different Zapatista zones. La Garrucha, was one of the five

---

[163] To reiterate, this was the first year of a new process and certainly there have been conflicts and the process has changed since that time. However, seeing what is positive in refusing domination and characterizing these developments as gains does not make one an idealist or apologist. The reality of autonomy is hard, and that is part of what makes these gains meaningful in the long run.

Aguascalientes, or Zapatista regional centers, transformed to a caracol in 2003.[164] Working in this site was more complex than most of the other communities. The caracol was a center, a place of mobility, of comings and goings; it offered me opportunities to follow stories to other places. At the same time, it is difficult to parse the extent to which local community dynamics and social relations are configured by this contact and mobility in ways that they would not have been in a community that did not also double as a regional center. Zapata is a newly-formed community on recuperated lands, comprised of former residents of Morelia, which is also home to a caracol.

THE REVOLUTION BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

At the end of the caracoles' first year of operation, Marcos wrote a series of communiqués as a self-critique and a rejoinder to certain civil society complaints about the participation and status of women in autonomous governance. In "To Read a Video Second Part: Two Errors," Marcos writes about two specific failings that need to be addressed. One is the continued structural relationship between the military and autonomous governance. The second is the level of participation of women, which is not just an issue with the JBG, but a chronic problem that also contradicts the EZLN's principles. Marcos estimates that the percentage of women in the CCRI as between 30 and 40 percent, but the JBG as under one percent on average and explains:

> The women are still not being taken into account when the ejidal comisariados and municipal agents are named. The work of governing is still the prerogative of men. And it's not that we're in favor of the 'empowerment' of women, so in fashion there above, but that there are still no spaces in which the feminine participation in the Zapatista social base is reflected in the offices of government.

While women have made significant gains in movement leadership, it is at the community level that these changes are most closely contested.

---

[164] See Zylberberg (2006) for an ethnographic account of women's daily lives in La Garrucha.

The majority of guerrilla and ethnic-national movements of the past decades in Latin America have espoused a "not now, later" approach to issues of gender equity, premised on the belief that other axes of struggle are primary for victory, which can be achieved without to issues of gender. However, as Cynthia Enloe argues the idea that "what happens during the struggle won't ultimately make it harder to transform this situation and will be more open to women's analysis later has not been borne out by history. That, in fact, this is a replication of patriarchy; it's not just men who are involved, but women too. It's not about people, but power" (2000:62-3). The public visibility of indigenous women leaders such as Major Ana Maria, in charge of the takeover of San Cristóbal de las Casas on January 1, 1994, and Comandanta Ramona, a monolingual Tzotzil-speaker who participated in the first talks with the government, were a early indication that the EZLN was not a typical guerrilla. Women were part of the founding nucleus of the EZLN and have remained integral to the movement, although there have been constant tensions. Community women were also visible in marches and in peacekeeping cordons during the EZLN's talks with the government in 1995. This public participation can be seen as a moment of consolidation of women's importance in the struggle.

Ramona spoke the words in the epigraph shortly before she died of cancer in 2006. Her own political trajectory stands as a testament that the EZLN's desire to improve the lives of women was not simply empty discourse or about numerical equity. There was a simultaneous commitment to building new social relations in practice as evidenced by the EZLN's Women's Revolutionary Law, described as the "Revolution Before the Revolution".[165] As Marcos writes, "Why is the Women's Law—which the women imposed on us on March 8, 1993—not among the demands to the government?

---

[165] See Appendix C.

Zapatista women replied: 'Some things must be asked for, and others must be imposed. . . [O]ur freedom and dignity are things which we shall impose, whether or not they are recognized by the government or by our partners.'"[166] Although this may sound like more EZLN myth-making, I have spoken to many women who participated in this process to make their rights a central part of the Zapatista movements demands, visiting communities and convoking public discussions. This idea that certain things must be imposed also set a precedent for the subsequent "imposition" of autonomy in Chiapas.

This gendered aspect of the Zapatista movement caught the interest of women's and feminist groups. The Zapatista-convoked Consultation for Peace and Democracy took place in 1995. This was the first of a number of efforts to make links with "civil society." There were initially only five questions, focusing on the structure and political content of the struggle. However, critiques from these groups pressured the EZLN into adding a sixth question about the role and participation of women in the political and social life of the country: "Should there be equitable presence and participation of women in all positions of representation and responsibility in the civil organizations in the government?" The answer of the one million, three hundred thousand people in Mexico and 60,000 abroad who participated was an overwhelming "yes."

Yet, despite what appeared to most observers to be considerable changes, a number of high-profile mestiza feminists disputed the EZLN's commitment to ending patriarchy because it was not explicitly addressed as a goal. Further, some feminists and solidarity activists criticized Zapatista women for being part of a guerrilla movement and using arms as a form of resistance. Many of the critiques were based on assumptions about the essentially pacifist nature of women (Rojas 1999).[167] Few of those making

---

[166] *La Jornada*, May 11, 1994.

[167] In my opinion, these claims are not only erroneous, but also patronizing in their refusal to consider community self-defense as an option. Some feminists such as Mercedes Olivera have presented more

these critiques were able to evaluate changes because they were ignorant of the reality of Zapatista women's lives before 1994, and their dismissal of women's testimony is troubling. Beyond this basic lack of experience, the continued mobilization of "women" as a homogenous subject category overlooks the critical differences *between* women. I will discuss the relationship between the EZLN and feminist organizations more fully in the next chapter.

Although there is no overt language by Zapatistas characterizing their demands and practice as feminist, the increased presence and participation of women in the organization is an explicit goal and practices are changing (Eber and Kovic 2003; Garza Caligaris 2002; Speed, Hernández Castillo and Stephen 2006). A critical element of these changes has been Zapatista women engaging in their own critique as individual and collective political subjects, casting off the mediators who would decide what is best for them, whether it be indigenous men, mestiza feminists, government welfare agencies or international activists. It is also clear that Zapatista women have supported other indigenous women's movements in Mexico and internationally, bringing attention to the triple oppression faced by indigenous women, and the importance of "double activism," that is, supporting women's rights within the struggle for collective rights (Hernández Castillo 2006).

GENDER INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

Mujeres asesinados por el mal gobierno

Recordamos a todas
La caída de la mujeres
Que lucharon por su derecho.

---

nuanced arguments. See Forbis (2003) for a larger discussion. Also see Ward Churchill's provocative "Pacifism as Pathology" (1998) for an excellent discussion of the issue. Solidarity activists also critiqued Zapatista gender politics, often based on short periods of residence in communities perceiving the existence of a gendered division of labor as patriarchal in and of itself.

Son mujeres valientes
Que enfrentaron con el mal gobierno
Murió luchando por su trabajo
Por no tener libre y Buenos

A todas las mujeres se debemos de tener
Libre sus derechos lo que ellos gustan como
Hacer para que así vamos tratando igual respeta todos.
Nadie se pueden decir que no lo saben hacer en le nuestro
Trabajo hombres y mujeres se pueden hacer.

—Primary School Students, San Nicolás, Municipio Autónomo Francisco Gómez
8 March 2000, International Women's Day

Individual men and women have varied roles within the EZLN. Both women and men can be insurgents, comandantes (CCRI) and hold a variety of positions in the base communities, such as health and education promoters, catechists, and responsables. They also take part in production collectives and work on regional projects, such as making videos. These diverse roles are conditioned by different structures of leadership in the organization, and also affected by interactions with outside actors—running the gamut from soldiers to *solidarios*—at various points in time and in different places.

Both women and men founded the EZLN. This original group of insurgent women, *insurgentas*, became actively involved in recruiting other women and in supporting women's community organizing. It's estimated that a third of the insurgent troops are women, some holding high rank (Kampwirth 2002). My own experience suggest that the number of women in the troops in the region I worked may be even higher, although there were still few holding high rank. Since the dawn of open struggle, Marcos has penned a number of communiqués to celebrate International Women's Day, praising the insurgentas, naming some as exemplars and speaking to the difficulties they

still face from men in spite of the more egalitarian gender norms.[168] Insurgent women risk their lives for the struggle, generally cutting ties with family and setting aside desires they may have for children.[169] Their reasons for entering the guerrilla are varied, some seeing taking up arms as the only option for survival, and for others their wishes to serve the struggle are also fueled by desires to escape restrictive expectations (Muñoz Ramirez 2003; Miranda and Roqué 1995; Rovira 1994, 1997).

Insurgents learn to speak Spanish and to read and write, critical skills they might not have access to in communities. Chiapas has one of the highest rates of illiteracy in the nation of those over 15 years old, 28.9% of women and 16.6% of men. The average in Mexico is 11.3% and 7.4%. In Chiapas, the municipality of Ocosingo has the highest volume of "speakers of indigenous languages greater than 5 years" at 80.2 % of 91,046 inhabitants. In Altamirano the same figure is 66.7%. In Ocosingo, monolingualism is one of the highest in Chiapas, with twice as many women as men.[170] Of those who speak an indigenous language, illiteracy rates increase—in 2000, the figure was 56.2% for women and 42.9% for men (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 2005). Men also learn to cook, make tortillas, wash clothes and clean, that is, to share in the work previously seen as "women's."

In 2003, I returned to a community where I used to work, hoping to visit *Juanita*, a young woman health promoter. I was not surprised when her aunt told me that she had entered the ranks. *Juanita* and I had talked extensively about her community work and she was feeling the pressure to choose a fiancé. Her older brothers had been counseling her to postpone marriage, so that she would be tranquilo in her organizing. I heard many

[168] For an example, see the communiqué "Insurgentas! The Sea in March. Letter 6e," March 2000.

[169] This was also a point of contention with some feminists in the years following the uprising who claimed that this perverted women's "maternal peace instinct" and undermined women's reproductive freedom.

[170] This was one of the reasons I began learning Tzeltal during my community work, and later took courses to improve my comprehension.

similar stories from young women who had grown up with the insurgentas as role models, asking their families for permission to join them as soon as they were of age.

Perhaps from the outside there is a romantic view of insurgent life—certainly the fetishization of Marcos gives this impression. In La Garrucha, after a dance, a young woman *solidario* decided that she wanted to become an insurgent. She told us that she had fallen for an insurgent and wanted to be with him. Locals jokingly gossiped that perhaps she was an *oreja* (spy). At the heart of this gossip was a sense of disbelief at her cavalier attitude. Deciding to become an insurgent is a serious matter, one to be discussed with family and other confidants. The romantic view is far from reality. I heard stories of not bathing for 30 days and itching so badly that sleep was impossible, of contracting leshmaniasis that slowly eats away at your flesh because you are living in the jungle and don't have access to the proper medicine, of food scarcity and having to learn to live with hunger. And of taking orders and holding one's tongue.

Make no mistake, insurgencies are still military in form. A portion of national and international solidarity activists support the communities, but refuse to support the military wing of the EZLN because of its authoritarian structure. A significant question, that cannot be fully answered at this time is whether the insurgency has conformed to masculine military standards or has transformed them. Despite the hardships, most insurgents do talk about a high level of gender equality in their lives, for women especially in the area of intimate relations.

After these experiences, it has not always been easy for insurgents to reintegrate into civilian life where the desired social relations are not subject to authoritarian enforcement, but contested and negotiated on a daily basis. This is the case for men, as well as women. *Alicia* was an insurgent who spent many years in the jungle. During her time there, she fell in love with a man from a different region and they were married.

They eventually decided they wanted to have children. She talked about how hard it was for them to make the decision to leave the ranks. She said it was like leaving people behind and letting them down. They moved to his home community and had three children in quick succession. *Alicia* said that life was good and she was participating in community organizing, but her husband decided to go north to find work to make more money. Recognizing that the economic hardships faced in communities, Zapatistas can ask for their community and the organization for permission to work outside of Chiapas for a period of three months. He didn't return.[171]

Although *Alicia* felt close to his family and had inherited his land rights, she decided to move with her children to her parents' house until he returns. *Alicia* said that she has found it hard to normalize relations with other women in the community because of her time in the guerrilla. She is seen as different, marked as an outsider, doubly so since her husband left her. It was the case that she held herself differently than many local women; the changes she had undergone were written on her body.[172] She went from a more or less egalitarian gender structure to being a single mother, not even eligible for remarriage because she still has a husband. She had to support herself by making and selling handicrafts. *Alicia* was smart, funny and insightful about community dynamics, but couldn't see a way out of her situation.

Civilian women live in communities where these changes in gendered relations of power are more sharply contested. Community women have also borne the brunt of the low-intensity war over the past 14 years. As mentioned earlier, women who are

---

[171] Before 2003, few Zapatistas left the Cañadas. During my last years there, I spoke with many women whose husbands had left and heard more stories. This issue was beginning to have an impact on families when I left.

[172] In communities, the status of women is often written on the body. *Insurgentas* are women who wear boots, *comandantas* are women who wear watches. Interestingly, the watch has become an accessory for women and young girls, a sign of respect and mimicry of these leaders, but also a fashion. Frequently, the watches didn't work, but were worn anyway.

comandantas, also known as *comité*, have regional positions of responsibility in the EZLN and they make up roughly the same percentage as insurgent women. Men and women who are comité are a select group of Zapatistas who have generally attained these positions through years of community and regional organization cargos. They take the maxim mandar obedeciendo seriously and receive political training and study, learning public speaking and other leadership skills. They are required to voluntarily give their time and energies as needed. Many of these women choose to postpone marriage and continue to live with their families. One woman told me that her father's counsel was to marry when she turned 37, then her work would be established and she would have fewer children. Comité members earn the respect of community men and women through their efforts. During my years in Chiapas, I heard gossip and rumors about male and female leaders, but their leadership was not often challenged. If there were challenges, these tended to be around issues of corruption, the same as male leaders.

In the Comité de Vigilancia, which is comprised of regional political leaders (CCRI), and those in training for these positions, women were always present, reflecting the participation that women have had at this level since the uprising. In La Garrucha, it was not unusual for a turn to have equal number of men and women present. However, in the JBG, at the first anniversary in 2004, there was only one woman member, from the Autonomous Municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón, and she was a *suplente*, or back-up; in Oventic and Morelia that year, there were no women members.

Zapatista autonomy has stressed the ability of all to govern and most male comité members work diligently to share their skills and knowledge with others who may not have had the same opportunities previously. However, women sometimes face challenges by male comité undermining their authority through silencing. I observed one strategy employed by women who used humor as a way to bring this behavior to men's

attention indirectly and diffuse tensions.[173] I had a conversation with men about *groserias* (vulgar language) after they made a comment about how kaxlan women swearing so much. One man told me that they speak in Tzeltal when they want to speak in that fashion, but that they move apart from the women. It's a question of *generosidad* (gentility). I noticed later that several of the women would engage in sexual joking, using certain of those "bad words," and prompting men's laughter. This women's joking enabled them to subtly reduce the exclusive male spaces of discourse and insert themselves, while still retaining their status as women.

As Marcos mentioned in the communiqué of the JBG's first anniversary, women in the base communities do participate in a variety of ways, such as horticulture collectives, as educators, in the Word of God, etc. However, that work is not often reflected in community leadership. Although community women participated in the militias, their numbers were relatively few. It is at this level that the changes in gendered relations of power espoused by the movement are most highly contested, yet are the most critical site of transformation, where attempts to resolve competing notions of difference and equality are put into practice.

I want to turn back to *Eliseo's* questions about the differences between gender relations. There are notable differences between Zapatista communities and regions. Gains have been made strongly in some areas, but not others. In the two regions I mentioned, the Sierra of Corralchen seemed like a natural dividing line between the positive and negative. This was even more curious since women in both regions participated in settling new communities and agitating for land rights. There were fincas in both regions and many of those who settled in La Garrucha and surrounding communities came from the neighboring canyon and still have family there. I can point

[173] See Goldstein (2003) for a more in-depth account of the uses of humor in situations of domination.

to processes that may be factors including the more intense military pressure in the La Garrucha region and a stronger presence of religious organizing with a specific gender perspective in the other. There are elements that I can point to, including the leadership and also the presence of the EZLN military that might have had a detrimental effect. One intriguing difference was between ejidos and mixed communities, and those founded on recuperated lands. Communities on recuperated lands tended to have more parity and stronger women's leadership.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore how these differences are mapped out and what their relationship is to Zapatista autonomy. However, I first want to set out some of the terms for this discussion. I will first address the concept of indigenous gender complementarity and the complications this raises in terms of notions of authenticity. I will then discuss the concept of *parejo*, as used by the Zapatistas, which I argue contains individual and collective notions of the self and rights. I will then discuss what changes are critical to the "advancement" or success of the Zapatista autonomy project.

COMPLEMENTARITY AND THE TROUBLE OF GENDER

> February 8, 2004
>
> XERA 760AM
>
> A news report on Bishop Arizmendi's work aired part of a recent speech in which he discussed the struggle between indigenous men and women and stated that there is more than a "complementarity." Men can damage the family and the woman by not respecting their place. Men need to defend the rights of women.

The naming of Arizmendi was widely seen as an effort to dismantle the work done by Bishop Samuel Ruíz—there would be no further ordination of married catechists, instead an effort was made to entice indigenous men into the priesthood. This

would have the effect of ending women's pastoral work as part of a married couple. In his visits to rural communities, Arizmendi highlighted his own community origins and how he overcame poverty. "A *snake*," *Lupe* called him, "so we need to watch him carefully." A good friend who is a priest and who was removed from his work supporting the indigenous church by Arizmendi, calls him very smooth, neoliberal smooth. It was intriguing that this controversial Bishop was supporting the rights of women against culture and making his discussion public. In this section, I will discuss the concept of complementarity and introduce the concept of parejo as it emerges in Zapatista communities as an alternative to the former.

Anthropological research has promoted and criticized the concept of gender complementarity as a cornerstone of indigenous culture. Indigenous movements, such as some sectors of the Mayan movement in Guatemala have also vindicated complementarity as an essential part of Mayan cosmology. Recently, writing about the Zapatista movement and autonomy, June Nash writes "[The] balanced cosmogony of the Sun and the Moon related to human gender differences is a metaphor for gender complementarity that is widespread in the American hemisphere" (2001:246). While this may certainly be the case in some places, she goes on to assert that "…women are phrasing their rights in words that provoke a primordial sense of balance on the cosmic level related to gender balance in the communities" (2001:249).

Anticipating criticism for couching present-day indigenous women's mobilization in this essentialist frame, Nash suggests that Western women are made uncomfortable by discourses that stress motherhood and reproduction as part of cosmology. Certainly, many Western women are not convinced by this essentialist argument, but not all respond with "ethnocentric feminism." Motherhood is important to Zapatista women and there are burdens as well as joy; most women I know have lost at least one child. I have

argued against a critique of the Zapatista movement based on liberal feminist notions of rights, however I question Nash's interpretation of women's rights claims.

Indigenous women have also questioned the concept of complementarity, in their struggles as women, and make a concomitant critique of the concept of gender. In the edited volume *Identidad: rostros sin máscara: reflexiones sobre cosmovisión, género y etnicidad,* the Mayan women authors discuss these questions in the context of struggle for women's rights. Luisa Curruchich Gómez discusses the changes after invasion and the privations women faced—the violence, the exclusions from inheritance and property—but calls forth historical memory, language and religion to affirm that "the dual, complementary—equal—practice exists" (2000:45). Millaray Painemal, a Mapuche feminist and organizer has written and talked about her experiences in mixed groups and Mapuche women's groups. She also places blame on Western society with causing disharmony and disequilibrium in Mapuche family relations (2004:10).

One of the concepts that she and other Mapuche women have contested is the utility of the term "gender," while affirming the importance of Mapuche culture for self-theorization. She writes:

> For indigenous women, the concept of gender, or the denomination that ones gives to the relations between men and women, should be discussed and constructed by indigenous organizations themselves, rescuing elements of the Mapuche cosmovision, which is duality and complementarity, as a Mapuche woman pointed out, 'We [women] cannot live thinking of only one, instead one must consult things with your man, this is better. (2004:10)

The Guatemalan women writers point out the western nature of the analytical category gender and stress that their theorization emerges from Mayan cosmovision (Delgado Pop, et. al. 2004).

In the context of highland Chiapas, Rosenbaum discusses how interdependence, or equilibrium, between husband and wife for survival counteracts *machismo* and states,

"Traditional Maya values and activities complementarity between the sexes and a view of spiritual strength based on collective rather than individual achievement foster respect for women" (1993:39). I believe that these types of conceptions of complementarity necessarily call up the need for authenticity, based as they are in tradition, origins, and cosmology. What can complementarity mean when people are removed from the relations where this concept was seen as a value? Where women's work had prestige? These are not just semantic discussions or poststructural feminist discomforts when confronted with political movements based on gender essentialisms, this can have real political implications since rights predicated on notions of a static unchanging indigenous culture precludes efforts to change that culture from within. Additionally, these types of categorizations can easily mesh with neoliberal governance.

As discussed in the previous chapters and in the story of *Gabriel* from San Luis, indigenous women continue to bear the burden of authenticity even among *solidarios*. Indigenous women are caught in the vise of tradition and change or modernity. For some, women are the victims of their indigenous culture, and for others, they are the last hope of keeping that culture intact.[174] Yet, for most Zapatistas, these arguments are specious; indigenous culture is dynamic and relates to practice. One day I was talking with visiting doctors from Mexico City who began complaining that the women of the community were no longer donating tortillas to them during courses, only to the campamentistas. They had to bring their own from a tortilleria, but they were not like the

---

[174] Some of these accounts offer up fantastical desires of indigenous purity. A number of foreigners (on separate occasions) accused groups working with Zapatistas to install gravity-fed water systems of "stealing Mayan women's strength" because they would no longer have to walk long distances several times a day to carry water for drinking, cooking and cleaning. A corollary argument was that this would also destroy women's space since the water source was naturally, where women would meet to talk. This was far from the reality since having no water system entailed extra work, women had less leisure time. These imported visions ignore women's agency in pressing for these kinds of projects and would deny indigenous peoples the necessities of life that these foreigners would never think about going without.

authentic campo tortillas. I agreed with them that tortilla made fresh from dried corn was not the same food as Maseca tortillas at all.

They then began to bemoan the disappearance of "real tortillas" in Mexico and complained that most women, even in the community were now using tortilla presses instead of shaping each one by hand. "*Lastima*, it's just not the same and the women are losing their tradition. It's important to preserve these arts," one of the women doctors commented. Later, I went to *Lupe's* house for lunch. We sat in her ample kitchen on the wooden chairs her husband made, eating tortillas with salt and chile, drinking sweet coffee. Since I often cooked food and ate with her family, I shared in the corn-grinding and made tortillas with her press. I learned to make them by hand, but it was a time-consuming process and she joked that we would starve by the time I finished any. I asked her if my ugly tortillas or the ones using a press or made by men tasted different. She answered, "no," looking a bit confused.

> Not really, it's much faster. Some of the older women are still fast, but for me, it takes too long. The same [if it's men], my little brother can make them really well. You know, the *kosh*, he helps my mother out.

I'm not trying to make the argument here that women should not take pride in their tortillas, but that these cultural elements to "save" are often chosen by those who never have to practice them. Most of the Zapatista women I asked about this question were more worried about genetically modified corn than preserving handmade tortillas.

Other cultural elements took precedence. The statistics on religion in Ocosingo municipality list Catholics are 46.3 %, Evangelicals 40.1% and None 11.8% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 2005). I find the "none" category interesting because this seems to be where traditional religious practices are filed. Most Zapatistas I know are Catholic, some are atheists and others are spiritual, but outside

formal religion. *Ricardo* was one of the people who talked to me in depth about the *no creyentes* (the non-believers).

> *Ricardo*: More important is the culture. Before it was the culture, the ancient ones. Praying to the mountains, the wind, the water. Now it's just church. Now with science there are many lies. I respect it, but I don't believe. Catholicism is also a product of the conquest and wants to do away with tradition, with the culture." He is satisfied that Zapatistas are respectful of religion, but it's not obligatory.
>
> Melissa: What about the argument that women having to visually preserve indigenous culture?
>
> R: What? I don't understand."
>
> M: About women and dress, you know, their dresses with ribbons, skirts, *traje*, how important is that for keeping traditions.
>
> R: You already know it.
>
> M: Know what?
>
> R: Melissa. Look. It's not how you dress that makes you that way, of the culture. It's what you have in your heart. How you live. You, you look like a *kaxlan*.
>
> M: Hey! I bought this skirt in Ocosingo!
>
> R: [waving his hand, laughing] Ah, but look at your boots. You are a *mera gringa*. No, listen to me. But you came and you're here with us walking. So, then no. You have a different heart. That's what matters in the struggle. Not just having something on the outside.

With respect to the arguments about this inherent complementarity and its authentic origins, Mercedes Olivera points out that it is impossible to separate out what is "originary." She notes that many investigators from other countries point to the original sexual division of labor. "But from then to now, the real and symbolically egalitarian complementarity in the couple has suffered changes and disequilibriums, according to the dynamic of the social system" (Olivera 2004:154). She makes an astute comparison that

the current "complementarity" of men and women in practice would be akin to that of plantation owner and peon.

*   *   *

Iguales, todos somos diferentes.

Because we are different, we are equal.

—EZLN

Over the years, I have had conversations and disagreements with other anthropologists about the concept of complementarity, having been told at one point that I was just unable to see the "inherent gender complementarity in their [indigenous culture]." It almost seemed to be a sacred concept, used to solidify the link to authentic indigenous culture. Yet, I had asked women and men in communities over the years about this concept and had not heard it phrased in the standard formulation. In my research experience what was repeatedly mentioned was the term "parejo." What I am arguing here is that while there may be an element of complementarity that exists or is a cultural element of the Zapatista struggle, it is not narrated in this fashion in the regions where I worked, or in the struggle generally. Some put this down to the "contaminated" nature of the EZLN. I've heard men and women from highlands communities comment on the EZLN as not being truly indigenous due to outside influences including the Catholic Church and Marcos.[175] As discussed earlier, Zapatista indigeneity is not articulated in terms of the ancient Mayan culture or cosmology, but on current cultural practice, which may include these elements.

[175] The critique from highland indigenous communities, most of which are aligned with the PRI is interesting because in many ways, it replicates a colonial notion of race to organize geographies. This critique also conveniently sidesteps the issue of the long-standing state and community relationships in the Highlands. See Rus 1994.

My understanding of parejo grows out of hearing its usage and asking people to explain the concept to me. This concept is not exclusive to the regions I worked in or the Zapatista movement. However, the argument that I am making is that this term has come to serve as a central Zapatista trope for equitable relationships. Parejo, which can mean "similar to" or "parity," differs in key ways from traditional conceptions of complementarity. It is telling that the world *igual* (equal) is not employed. Instead, parejo retains a sense of being an equivalent, but not necessarily always *exactly* the same. It incorporates difference and sameness, and individual and collective meanings. Parejo derives from dignidad as defined above, as power one already possesses, which grows out of the collective and presents itself as potential. Everyone is not the same, but everyone has dignidad.

In a collective sense, it is about fairness. Material resources should be allocated equally, the same amount to everyone who needs the resource. This is a part of the EZLN's refusal of government aid—they won't receive aid until it is allocated to everyone equally. In a community, if aid arrives, it will be given out equally. This is to maintain a sense of collective fairness. Zapatistas holding any kind of position, from comandante to JBG member to horticulture collective secretary, receive no remuneration. It is a cargo, work that is being done for the collective and no one should get paid. Anyone in the community could be named to a position at any point and would have to serve voluntarily; in that way it would be parejo.

However, parejo in work and participation takes on another meaning, they don't have to be the same, but similar. It is not exclusively gender-based, but contains a notion of gender equity. Women making pozol for a party while men cut firewood and butchering a cow could be considered parejo at the community level. Parejo is deterritorializing in its multiplicity exposing the reterritorializing nature of certain

critiques, such as those of liberal feminists discussed previously, due to their singular approach to power and identity. It cannot be the same as complementarity or liberal equality because its terms may shift in practice. This undermines liberal solutions to the problem of difference in the nation that require an essential sameness of the individual subject for equality.

Although I will discuss this more in-depth below, I'll present a few brief examples. Although the EZLN is in "resistance" and refuses government aid, they allow non-Zapatistas to use their health care system. Projects like water systems were offered to everyone, even in mixed communities. In 2004, word was sent by a Zapatista community down the Patihuitz canyon to the JBG that bus and truck drivers were charging Guatemalan migrants exorbitant prices to transport them to Ocosingo. The JBG issued a decree that this practice had to stop because the transport should be parejo, without regard to whether one is a Guatemalan or a local resident. The JBG also instructed people not to charge the Guatemalans for food or lodging, but to treat them like brothers who were in desperate circumstances.

ZAPATISTA WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Cowan (2001) suggests that the hegemonic human rights model crowds out alternative ethical visions based on qualities such as need, well-being, care and responsibility. I suggest that *Derecho de la Mujer* (Women's Rights) within the Zapatista autonomy project has developed as an alternate ethical vision, emerging from this concept of parejo and from local understandings of global human rights discourse.[176] Of course, rights are not emancipatory in themselves; they are both enabling and constraining. How are women's rights understood locally? One of the first noticeable

[176] See Speed 2008b for a full discussion of the global discourses of human rights and indigenous rights and indigenous communities in Chiapas.

things is that rights are not often spoken of in an abstract form by women. Not I have *the* right, but my right, his right, her right.

Human rights discourse focuses too narrowly on the state as primary duty bearer and the legal formalization. The Zapatista understanding of women's rights is not about protecting the individual woman from the state, or in this case, the EZLN. Local juridical practices, emerging from indigenous usos y costumbres transformed in political practice, do not divide the world into victim, violator and witness, but are alternate justice model premised on moral complexity. This is opposed to liberal rights discourse, which is premised on the sovereign individual as a passive entitled recipient. In some ways, this diverts us from looking at the structural injustices built into this understanding of the individual outside the community. It ignores the deferral of liberation in liberal political freedom and relies on the past conditional temporality, the "what could have been," reproduced in liberal institutional discursive practices.[177]

In this case, I am not making an argument against human rights per se, but urging us to understand women's rights in another fashion, one that emerges from the Zapatista's alternate temporality of the nation, the present-future. One case that captures some of the moral complexity involves a woman's suicide, which took place in a nearby community during my stay in La Garrucha. Her husband had a mistress and would often leave his wife alone at home with her children. She became increasingly despondent about his absence and betrayal. Finally, she committed suicide by drinking pesticides. The woman's family brought the case before the authorities of the autonomous municipality. The burden of the blame was placed on the husband for not respecting his wife and her right to live a dignified life. In addition, they told him to sell all his cattle to pay a large sum of money to the woman's family, including the children, because his

[177] This thinking emerges from discussion with Lisa Lowe.

actions had "deprived them of the rest of her years of company." This notion of responsibility attached to personal action goes against normal understandings. The Revolutionary Law of Women has become the reference for women's rights in the EZLN. As a series of individualized women's rights, it is an important tool for women to invoke in many situations, but it is not the only tool. There are other forms of power exercised in the community that marginalize women—power as control of space, as chisme—and women must seek other alternatives.

During the Zapatista march in 2001, which culminated in Mexico City, many were disappointed that the Zapatistas refused the lure of representational politics and did not offer a road map or model for struggle. Yet, when Comandanta Esther, whose Zapatista identity draws on a collective and individual sense of self, spoke to Congress, she was offering lessons about the transgressive possibilities of identity. Although her name was Esther, she was any Zapatista woman, any indigenous woman, made visible as a political subject in the nation through struggle and refusal. Women are making a critique of the terms of neoliberal discourse through their words and actions by asserting the right to difference and to alternatives to national modernity and their challenges have also changed the political landscape.

One criteria for assessing the gains of the movement is "advancement." Advancement includes women's participation, but not only as individuals as in neoliberal multicultural projects, or as token representatives, such as Xochitl Gálvez, who President Vicente Fox named director of the Indigenous Affairs Department. Women are not obligated to participate, but this is a sign that the necessary conditions have been created for their working to serve the collective, and it is a marker of change in the communities. A straightforward argument is that women's participation and gender equity will equal success for autonomy in a material way and, conversely, where these conditions don't

exist, the material gains of autonomy are threatened. This is accurate on many levels. However, the Zapatistas have also redefined their territory in a political sense and I suggest that it is also precisely women's visibility and participation in this autonomy process that conditions its strength, and is what distinguishes it from being just another movement that would replicate either state structures, or as the women say, "the bad customs that we want to change." Autonomy is also about self-determination, about deciding how one wants to live and structure sociability.

An EZLN goal is gender equity as understood by the concepts parejo and derecho de la mujer. In the Zapatista autonomy project, women are agents in the process of transforming social relations, theorizing, creating, narrating, and participating. Thus, they are not simply participating in already defined structures, but the new gender relations of power emerging from the movement have been productive in developing more horizontal relations that then transform of social relations. Participation and visibility of women in this process works as legitimation.

In this next section, I will focus on several areas of community life and autonomy from both regions that highlight this argument, women's work, collective and individual, and leisure activities. Next, I will move to more family life, reproduction, and marriage. Finally, I will end this chapter with a discussion of sexuality and the intimacies of control.

I ran into *Rosa*, a Tzeltal women in her late 30's, during a party to celebrate the founding of the caracol in La Garrucha and promised to visit her in her community. We came to know each other well when I first began working in the region in 1996. At that time, there was a women's health project and she attended the courses. She is a war widow whose husband was killed in Ocosingo during the fighting in January 1994. She received payments for a time, but has since had to rely on her skills as a tailor to make

money to support her three children, who are remarkably self-assured. She also takes care of her mother-in-law, whose family came from Comitán before moving to work in the fincas in the region.

Rosa's older sister, not a Zapatista, lives a few houses down from her and came over the night I was visiting to discuss their uncle's mental illness. We had just finished our meal of fresh beans and sweet coffee and had moved to the front house where the whole family sleeps. *Rosa* also has her sewing workshop in the room. Her sister spoke only Tzeltal and unlike *Rosa*, she wears the traditional clothing of the region—a skirt with ribbons and a white blouse embroidered with flowers, her hair braided with more ribbons. After her sister left, *Rosa* spoke with me for a long time about how close she is to her sister and how sad it is that her rights are *tapada* (blocked). "She doesn't even have money for new shoes. Her husband won't give her any, so she doesn't wear her good ones, only to church. And he gets angry if she's here visiting me too long. She married badly. Before my dearly departed husband died, we did things equally [caminamos parejo]. We both had our meetings for the organization, and we respected each other." She said that even though she has had to suffer so much as a single mother, being part of the organization has been important to her as a woman. This is part of the idiom of struggle of Zapatista women; dignidad is worth their suffering.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE

Women were the driving force behind the ban on alcohol in Zapatista communities, known as the "Dry Law," that took place around the time of the formation of the Women's Revolutionary Law. In La Garrucha, nearby finca owners would sometimes pay workers in alcohol resulting in almost lethal fights. As *Doña Ale* told me, "We women were tired of having to deal with these men and their problems." Although

not without controversy, this ban transformed the nature of space in the community, drastically reducing domestic violence and the drain on family finances.[178]

As we know, space is constructed through power relations (Massey 1994), and although La Garrucha is not divided politically in a profound way, a striking feature if the gendered spatial and temporal construction of the community.[179] While this may have changed in some ways after the ban on alcohol, the center is a masculine space. This contrasts sharply with Zapata. Although women generally worked around their homes, or walked to carry firewood and water, they also gathered in the center, talking to both men and women present. While living in La Garrucha, my room was in the center of town and to visit or work with women, we would always make plans to meet at the houses or on the road. On Mass days, the catechists would ring the bell repeatedly. Slowly, women wrapped in their shawls would appear and quickly walk into the church. Men and youth lounged on the grass or basketball court in front of the church until the final bell and all the women were already in. As soon as the mass finished, women would quickly leave and head home. For community meetings, they would also appear from side paths, then disappear again as soon as it ended.

In the afternoons, men occupy this space, relaxing, meeting, joking, and playing basketball. Men walk through, women walk around. Women send children or ask men to buy items at the stores, which are all in the center. The one place women do feel comfortable is the clinic, although usually with a friend or relative. I am not making the argument that women are never present in the center, but rather it has been constructed as

[178] The ban on alcohol as also important to the security of the movement. See Eber (1995) for an engrossing account of women and alcohol issues in highland Chiapas.
[179] This may be more common to ejidos than new communities formed on recuperated lands without the vestiges of former structures since positions of ejidal authority and participation in assemblies were exclusive to landholders who were men.

a masculine space and this limits women's agency. Even during the church reflection periods when men and women gather outside in groups, men serve as scribes for the women's group, despite the fair number of middle-aged women who can read and write.

Movies were occasionally projected by members of the video project in the evenings on the side of a building in the center. I found it curious that the audience was always all male, save for the women campamentistas or visitors. When I asked, I was told that women just didn't want to come, had work or didn't like the films. However, another man told me that they used to screen videos at the clinic, at an earlier hour and with advance notice and then women would show up, but the man in charge of the project felt that it was too much work. Men have repeatedly told me that women have permission to participate, and if they don't then it's their fault. However, this overlooks some of the obstacles to their participation. If women are rendered invisible or excluded from public space, this has real consequences and undermines their work in the organization as I will discuss below.

Sport is also a site of gender contestation and public space, one that is important in the Zapatista movement and is often overlooked. As I mentioned, the center of the community in La Garrucha has been constructed as a masculine space, with the basketball court as a main focal point (See illustration 6). Men play most afternoons for fun and sometimes on the weekends for bottles of soda. The afternoons in the center are punctuated with their screams of "*Verga*!" Basketball courts are ubiquitous in communities in the Cañadas. This is not surprising since under President Salinas' PRONASOL aid program, basketball courts were installed in almost all rural

communities earning the distinction of being one of the few traces of the state in the area.[180] This is not a coincidence.

Illustration 6: Basketball Court and Church, La Garrucha

During the period of post-revolutionary consolidation, the Secretary of Popular Education (SEP) introduced sports for men and boys.[181] While none of these were specifically targeted to indigenous communities, they were part of a program of assimilation in the Mexican countryside. Team sports became a solution to masculine degeneration and promoted productivity, specifically basketball and baseball since they

[180] During the early years of the uprising, one rumor was that these concrete courts had been built to facilitate helicopter landings.

[181] Vaughan (1997) notes hat some programs involved girls, but these were also closely linked to ideas about hygiene in ways that are reflected in current social programs.

required less space than soccer. Many communities incurred debts to build basketball courts before it became a program of the state to install these courts. The so-called rural teacher was to use these games to "stimulate horizontal competition between communities and regions, and at state and national levels, so as to build national identity and citizenship" (Vaughan 1997:42). This focus grew out of the obsession with hygiene and health of the time. Teachers were to instill discipline.[182] Physical exercise had a symbolic value linking of the physical body to the development and health of the nation.

The Zapatista movement considers sport, especially basketball, to be an important element of promoting cooperation and cohesion in the movement and in community life. Most Zapatista celebrations include basketball tournaments for men and women, some have concurrent soccer tournaments.[183] Community women did not traditionally play sports. In the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre, a Zapatista policy was passed that all communities should form women's basketball teams if they didn't already have them. Not all women had to participate, but the teams should be supported. This was considered to be a sign of promoting women's status in the communities and fostering gender equity.[184] It was not a difficult process in that zone. Married women with children also played, although teams were generally comprised of youth. In the caracol of that region, I even observed men and women of the JBG playing basketball together during a break. Since Zapata was a new community, they had not yet built their

---

[182] Remnants of this can also be seen in some autonomous education, which retained the marching and saluting and physical drills at the beginning of the school day.
[183] The only coed teams I have ever observed are comprised of solidarios.
[184] Sports are also one of the measures outsiders use to measure Zapatista gender politics. I played a few times with women, but told them I preferred soccer. They told me they didn't like soccer, it was too violent. I laughed because basketball is played with an intensity by men and women that we dubbed the "no blood, no foul" rule. In various communiqués, Marcos has referred to insurgent soccer matches and the importance of women playing sports.

basketball court, but boys and girls gathered on the concrete patio of the old finca house to play ball. Many of the women I knew there were avid players waiting for the court.

In La Garrucha, *Benjamin*, a regional authority who actively supports women's organizing, tried to form a women's team. The effort failed after a few half-hearted games. He was disappointed, he thought that at least the young women would join in. He told me, "The women refused." This is not a surprise considering that most women do not feel comfortable even walking through that area, much less being on public display.[185] The only women who play on the court there are insurgentas, and the only ones occasionally watching the men's games are from other areas and who are present for meetings or other business. Rather than work on changing this dynamic first and making the space open to women, they tried to use women's bodies to force a change.

WOMEN'S WORK

Although there is a gendered division of labor in most communities, the boundaries between what constitutes men's work and women's work are fluid and have changed over time in Zapatista communities. Women are responsible for making tortillas, cooking food, gathering firewood, washing and repairing clothing, taking care of children (although this is often a shared responsibility), collecting water and taking care of gardens and small animals like chickens if they have them. Men are responsible for the milpa and taking care of any larger animals. Women also work in the milpa, weeding, planting, doubling the corn, and harvesting. I was told that women don't help with burning of fields and planting, but several of the war widows I knew had taken over their

[185] I went bathing in the river with a group of women from different communities and we began to discuss clothing styles. Local women said they did not want to wear "traditional" clothing, but they were "embarrassed to wear pants because everyone can see your butt." The woman comité member bathing with us laughed and said, "But what does it matter, we're women and have all the same stuff. And we can see the men's butts too!"

husband's rights and did plant some corn and beans. Men also cook and help with some of the tasks listed above, though not generally making tortillas or washing clothes.

Women's work is hard and continuous. In both communities, women's daily household labor was essentially the same, varying more by family than by community. In La Garrucha, I accompanied *Lupe* to get firewood. She said that it was lonely to gather firewood alone and usually women go in groups. Before 2001, we would have had to walk a distance down the road and then up the hill to avoid going through the military encampment, which had occupied community land. It was strange to walk through this area where there had been a checkpoint and soldiers and constant harassment of community members. We looked for fallen trees since she told me that it's better for the forest to leave the living trees and use the dead ones. When we found a good dry log, she chopped it into smaller pieces. She said that this is one of the tasks that more men are helping with—cutting the firewood into logs and leaving it in piles, although it is still not routine. We loaded the wood on our backs and walked back. I told *Lupe* that the wood felt incredibly heavy, that I hadn't imagined exactly how heavy it would be. "*Pués*, that's how it is for us women."

Women told me although men's work in the milpa is harder, women's work doesn't end until they sleep. Men do often recognize the extra burdens women face. I interviewed Mateo about the fincas, but he began talking about changes after 1994. "The women aren't really free. There's nothing easy, the hard work continues. For men, it's a bit easier because we fought for the land." The first day that I helped *Lupe* make tortillas, she told me to come over at 8:00 am. I was surprised. I thought she would have to make them much earlier since her husband had already left for work. She laughed, "Not anymore. Before we were peons, but people still thought like this even when that time was over. Now many women make more tortillas and put some aside for heating the next

morning. I make his *pozol*, but that's just grinding some corn, one pass only. If the man complains, *ni modo*." I noticed that most women now followed this practice. I asked men what they thought of not having fresh tortillas in the morning. *Antonio's* response was common. "If we have something to eat, then it is fine because the woman is carrying out her responsibility for the food. It is her right to decide this."

Knowing his family situation, *Antonio's* words were the Zapatista equivalent of the politically correct response, of how it should be, of how people want it to be. Women's rights are part of the movement and gender equity is a goal, yet those are not always put into practice. In contrast, in Zapata, I arrived one day to find *Efrain,* a local responsable, building a new kitchen. He told me that there was a meeting and men were told that they should make a new kitchen and stove with a chimney so that the smoke would leave the kitchen area where women spend hours at the stove each day. He said, "My wife suffers a lot. The smoke burns her eyes." He also said that the new roof is going to be made out of a special grass. "It's better, it's *cultura* [indigenous culture], they said it's cultura. The tin roof isn't cultura. This doesn't cost anything and it's silent [when it rains]." There are times when practices and discourse matches up, and other times when the gulf separating them is vast.

In the case of water, it is generally the latter. Water is women's responsibility and, for many, it is a constant source of tension in their lives. Government infrastructure projects were almost nonexistent in the Cañadas. Most communities had no potable water systems before the uprising. Although this has been a priority of the autonomous municipalities, these projects are slow-going due to the financial investment needed and the time it takes to construct them. When they were installed, as was the case in La Garrucha and Zapata, women had no control in the process. Men did the work and remained in charge.

Although both La Garrucha and Zapata had water systems, there were problems with the water arriving consistently, especially in the dry season. In Zapata, there were two water storage tanks, but only the tank at the bottom of a steep hill had water continuously. This tank served only five families. The majority lived above it and near a tank that did not fill, so the water responsables would only open it for short periods (See Illustration 7). This meant that women and children had to walk down the hill to fill water receptacles and carry them back up to their houses several times a day. This confused me since Zapata was a community built on recuperated lands in 2002. *Juana* told me that the men didn't want to clear sites down below because there was more forest to clear, even though that was how it was planned. "The men didn't tell us that they didn't want to make the sites there." The women were annoyed and complained, and the men were rebuked, but it was too late to change their sites. For Mother's Day, the men opened the tank extra long.

In La Garrucha, the problem was often sediment in the tanks or at the source, easily remedied with cleaning, but I was told "the person in charge doesn't care if women suffer." Men did not rush to do the work because there was always enough water for them at home, even if it meant extra labor for women. There had been proposals for another water system, since the community served as a regional center and often visitors would use up all the water needed by families, but many men didn't want to invest time in the work. In this situation, Women's Revolutionary Law would not be of service and although women complained, they hesitated to raise the issue in meetings. Although women are most affected by water issues, they also have the least say, since these projects are considered male labor. In this case, the gendered division of labor hurts women. As *Rosa* noted, "Mandar obedeciendo is also something that should be practiced in the household."

Illustration 7: Water tank in Zapata

Mutual aid is part of women's lives; they do what they can to help their families survive. Women take care of children when needed, and they share and barter resources if their circumstances allow. Women also help out other family members or community members who due to circumstances are unable to make ends meet, generally with remunerated tasks, not as charity. As mentioned earlier, *Alicia's* husband died, one of her sons was killed during battle, and she takes care of her other son who has a mental disability. Her own health is precarious. She often takes in jobs from other women, grinding their coffee and spices for them in exchange for money or food. Although the other women don't necessarily need someone to do these tasks, it's a way of ensuring *Alicia's* well-being.

Bartering is a strategy that can cross political organizations. I was sitting in *Lupe's* house one day drinking coffee, when I heard the sonorous voices of women outside the gate. "Good morning…" "Good morning, enter *comadre*." The women entered and stared at me distrustfully. As *Lupe* beckoned them in, I got up to leave. She gestured at me to stay seated. We shared tortillas and they begin to chat in Tzeltal. I understood much of what they were saying. Finally, they nodded their heads over to me. I was described as a "friend." They removed packets of government soymilk and other handouts from their bags. *Lupe* examined the products and began bargaining, settling on a chicken as payment. After they left, I asked her where they were from, figuring by their dress that they're from somewhere further down the canyon. They were from the neighboring community and were *priistas* (PRI supporters).

Although some women choose to belong to the PRI and other organizations, some are trapped into supporting them by marriage. I spoke to the wife of a one of the three ARIC men in La Garrucha. She said that wants to participate with other women, but can't. However, in my experience, Zapatista women are generally more accepting of women from other organizations than the men are, even if their differences separate them in collective ways. Part of this has been explained for religious reasons, but *Alicia* also told me, "They suffer, the poor women. It makes me feel bad. Like it was for us before. They don't have their rights. Their husbands treat them as if they were animals. But they are another organization. *Me da pena*."

There were two particular sites where the contrast between La Garrucha and Zapata was most revealing. One was collective work and regional participation and the other was reproduction, which I will discuss below. As part of its governance structure, the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre instituted a regional assembly that would meet periodically to address matters pertaining to the municipality. The assembly

is comprised of two men and two women who are the responsables from each community. They're usually husband and wife teams, but not exclusively so. They are responsible for informing their communities of regional matters, seeking consensus and bringing community proposals forward. I was impressed that women who had large families were also named to these positions. There are other *cargos*, shared by men and women as well, such as human rights defender, president of collective project, health and education promoter, etc., and the age range varied considerably.

The Autonomous Municipality of Francisco Gómez did not have a similar regional assembly, although most other structures of governance were similar. In La Garrucha, the responsables were all men during most of the time I spent there. In March 2004, the community had a discussion about the importance of having a responsable of men and a responsable of women, who was actually a woman and named four women. I talked with *Antonio* about this and told me this made sense because "maybe the women are embarrassed to talk and with another woman, they won't be embarrassed. When we ask the women questions, they don't really want to talk. That's why we thought that each should have its own responsable." By June, two women had dropped out and the other two didn't want to continue. He said that that the male responsables asked them to take eight days to think it over in the hopes that they would continue. What this means in practice is that women have less spaces to articulate their needs and desires and the concrete effects of this could be seen in the water issue. No women from La Garrucha and just a handful from other communities held other *cargos* in autonomous projects.

Women do hold positions of authority in the Church in both regions, again usually along with their spouse. Catechists in the Church are generally named as a couple. The male catechists officiate mass, marriages and baptisms. Priests only visit on special occasions. While this gives women an element of visibility and authority in the

community, the church is not directly related to the autonomy project. I was intrigued by a local instance of subversion by young women in this space. Two young women are named to cargos in the church each year. Their responsibilities are to clean the church, make sure things are in their proper place, to help decorate the saints, and to walk in the front of processions with incense. Their official title is "Little Mother of the Church." I talked with the two young women about their work, which they enjoyed greatly. However, they were careful to tell me that the title they used was "President" because they didn't like the other title. They were in charge of the work and should be called presidents, just like in other cargos.

The participation of women in collective projects varied considerably, but it is clear that the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre had more advancement in this work. On a zonal level, women took turns working in "The Zapatista Kitchen of Compañera Lucha,"[186] a small collective restaurant at the crossroads of Cuxuljá in the Zapatista shopping center discussed earlier. Women in Zapata participated in the Kitchen, and also made embroidered cloths to sell in San Cristóbal. *Adela* is the regional responsable and once a month she gathers the cloths from all participating communities and travels to San Cristóbal to settle accounts (See illustration 8).

The women met twice a week in Zapata to work on their horticulture project. The collective had a president, secretary, and treasurer who keeps track of which women work and decide what to harvest and how much everyone gets. On the days I was staying there, I worked on the project with them. Most of the women in the community speak excellent Spanish, but frequently switched to Tzeltal when I was around, laughing to see if I could follow their joking conversations. The horticulture project supports community

---

[186] Named after Lucha because "She is the first of the first of our Zapatista women, she is our memory, and for that reason, we put her name on our kitchen so that the memory lives on."

autonomy by increasing self-sufficiency in food production and increasing family nutrition, but it is also a women's space where women discuss political and community issues, gossip and laugh. In Zapata, women are visible in town and the men's spaces aren't exclusive.

Illustration 8: Embroidered Cloth "EZLN: The light of liberty"

One day as I was leaving Zapata, I ran into some friends from another community in the caracol of the 17 de Noviembre municipality. I asked about people in the community and *Jaime* told me that people were well. He asked what I was doing and when I explained my project, he eagerly offered that in his community the autonomy was

very good. They have two male and two female health promoters, four husband-wife teams of responsables, an education promoter, and a woman on the Vigilancia at the caracol. I asked about the women's collectives and he reported excitedly that there are "more than ever now with the new organizing…chickens, horticulture, bread and milpa." On the one hand, as I mentioned at the start of the chapter, the presence and participation of women is one measure of gains and these types of efforts toward economic self-sufficiency are a critical part of autonomy. However, as the example of La Garrucha makes clear, just having collectives or women participating is not necessarily enough to change structures of patriarchy in the community. It can be a first step, however.

Explaining my project usually resulted in people telling stories about their communities. When I spoke with the different teams of men working on the center of La Garrucha to prepare for the caracol inauguration in 2003, a man asked me what I knew about local education promoter work. I told him that they had one, but that it had been hard for him to find support. He told me that in his community, in one of the adjacent autonomous municipalities and founded on recuperated land, that they have a male and a female health promoter. He continued, noting that men and women plant beans and corn collectively, and the women harvested and sold 12 *latas* (big cans) of beans, which brought in 1200 pesos. With those funds, they bought a cow and now own 12 cows. The women also have horticulture and bread collectives, and they sell the bread in the area. From the money the men raised with their projects, they bought a guitar, a marimba and a keyboard, so they don't need to pay bands to play at their parties. The community also has an education promoter, and the women used some of the money from their projects to support the school's needs. "We just had a big party for education. This is autonomy," he proudly told me. The next day, *Rosa*, also in town for meetings about the caracol introduced me to a friend of hers who tells me that she's part of a women's cooperative

store, also in a newly formed community. They started the store with 3500 pesos and now have 13,500 and, she added, "it's still being run by women."

These experiences of collective projects sharply contrast with experiences in La Garrucha. Women who participated in collectives tended to enjoy the work immensely. I visited *Maria*, a young woman and single mother who had been one of the shopkeepers at the women's collective store in La Garrucha. She talked to me about the course she and three other women participated in five years earlier. "It was nice. But, the women won't want to do it anymore. Men entered." She told me that one of the women was lucky because she married and moved to her husband's community where she worked in the women's store. I asked if they could start it again. "No, the men took it over. You have to be there at four in the afternoon every day and that's hard. There were bread collectives too. Who knows why?" But she then goes on to talk about how there was gossip about the women who worked at the store because they would be there in the afternoons until early evening in the center of town. There were rumors of them meeting up with men. "The women were tired of the gossip. When the men tried to get us to come back, we said not anymore [*ya no*]."

I happen to mention to *Lupe* one afternoon while walking to the old finca of Delicias to gather tiles for her bread oven from the floor of the main house, that the woman doctor was upset that the local women didn't show up to help cut mosquito netting. There was a malaria outbreak and the doctor was livid that the women didn't take her order seriously. She asked, "Do these women really have rights to exercise if the men don't block them? You wouldn't know it here." *Lupe* said the women refused to go. "*Ya no*. It is always the women who are called to do someone's work when there are visitors and caravans. And for what?" I asked about collectives. "It can't be done. Collectives don't function here. Everyone does their own thing. When we first began the

organization, they told us that we had to form collectives, of bread, horticulture…" "When? 20 years ago?" "Yes, since then. But people don't want to anymore. Here no, it won't work. Maybe in their own house."

Yet, men in La Garrucha work in countless collectives. They take turns doing community labor, they work in the four collective stores, a boot factory, a bike repair shop, a video project, they are health promoters, catechists, militia members, and they participate at all levels of autonomous governance. Clearly, there is something else going on when the women speak of collectives in a resigned or dismissive fashion, yet many of the men I spoke with were eager to figure out what the problem was and to find a solution.

In La Garrucha, many women do extra work for money in their homes. I visited *Luz*, a war widow who sews to make money to support her family. She had been part of a sewing collective and said it was good, especially when one of the members was separated from her husband. When the woman went back to him, problems started because her husband didn't like *Luz's* brother. *Luz* characterizes this as men putting their problems on women. She said one who left knew the most about sewing and the rest of the women were unable to continue when people stopped buying their dresses. So, they divided the dresses and fabric between all the women in the community and folded the collective. She said there was also a collective bread project. Community men built an oven, but the oven didn't work correctly and they wouldn't listen to the women's complaints. When she told me that the young women were interested in another sewing project since there are still machines somewhere, I asked her if there was a women's responsable who could arrange it. She laughed. "No. We don't have one. I was it. But not anymore. There weren't any problems with the women, but with the men and respect. I won't do it again. No woman wants to do it anymore."

Illustration 9: New Women's Collective Building, La Garrucha, 2005

INTIMATE LIVES: WOMEN'S BODIES AND SOCIAL CONTROL

I return now to the topic of the social control of women's bodies and sexuality discussed earlier. I argue that this is the terrain of struggle in community gendered power relations.[187] Foucault observes that "[Sexuality] appears as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power…" (1978:103).[188] In Mexico, indigenous women's sexuality has generally been restricted to two particular types: either they are hypersexual (e.g. la Malinche) or not at all since they are merely reproductive bodies. Sexuality is a site of excess and a lower world unworthy of narration, yet it is crucial to social legibility.

[187] See Aretxaga (1997) for an excellent account of the social control of women's bodies in the Irish national struggle. As she notes, "Women's sexuality become then a material and symbolic arena of political demarcation, and a political battleground itself" (1997:153).

[188] Foucault continues, "It is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (1978:103).

Sexuality is a public secret; the subtext is constant, yet it is never named (Taussig 1999).[189]

The normative heterosexuality of the community results in the family of wife-husband and children as a basic structuring feature of the community. Generally, the woman will move to where her husband lives, often sharing her living area with his extended family. In conversation, people will use the term "su mujer" (his/your woman), but I have yet to hear "su hombre" (her/your man). Unmarried, divorced and widowed women live with their parents. I asked, carefully, about homosexuality in the communities. The community members I spoke with told me that the Zapatistas support the rights of homosexuals, but there really weren't any in the communities. There were people who didn't want to marry, but they weren't considered homosexual, in fact, it wasn't a local concept at all. People were reluctant to speak further and I was reluctant to push them at that time.

Marriage is seen as more than just two people in love deciding to be together. One consideration is the struggle. I was told that men should choose their wives wisely. A woman responsible described *Ignacio* as an example of a leader who "chose poorly. He should have picked a compañera who knew how to organize the people, who knew how to speak. That one [his wife] doesn't know." Making poor choices is seen as undermining the movement. Although the Women's Revolutionary Law states that women have the right to choose their partner, the pressure of community norms and Catholicism often limits their choices. Women are not "bought," but the prospective fiancé is expected to ask permission of the girl's father. If the parents agree, they ask the girl and she is the one who decides. Only after she gives her consent, does the fiancé

---

[189] See Chirix García and Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla (2003) and Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla (2004) for accounts breaking the silence written by Guatemalan Mayan women.

settle an amount that he will pay. In the Cañadas, I heard amounts ranging from 1500 to 6000 pesos. On top of this amount are presents, which can include meat, fruit, cookies, etc. However, many young couples are *huyendo* (eloping) because they don't want to have to pay and wait for a church wedding. This could be interpreted positively, as a result of the movement changing restrictive practices. However, this also puts the woman in a precarious position due to unchanging patriarchal norms of women's purity.

Alberto has a position in the Church and is disturbed by this trend. We were discussing a young couple that were going to get married in the church and had already asked permission, but then they eloped. They were punished with six days in jail (it was three previously) and a fine of 1000 pesos.[190] If either is from another community, they have to honor that punishment as well, although there are some communities where elopement is accepted as legitimate. He claims the punishment is for not respecting their parents and because the authorities need to make sure they are not cousins. He says that the community is Catholic and no one has civil marriages, but almost half of all young people are now eloping.

> Melissa: But that's nothing secure for the woman…
>
> Alberto: No, it's not good like that. It's deceiving the woman because by eloping like that you can't marry [in the Church]. But legally if they do elope, the man has to pay. If there is a child, he should pay for the clothing, shoes, and food. And if he doesn't want to, his land can be taken and given to the woman. That's how people come to an agreement. It's not just to deceive.
>
> M: And if a woman has already gone with a man?
>
> A: They don't like it, the people get agitated. The men aren't going to want her because they already know. If I see my fiancé chatting to another man, I don't want her anymore. That's how it is.
>
> M: And these women can get married?

[190] Community jail is a small locked room, with partially open door so that people can pass by and talk or give food.

N: Not in town anymore. Only if a man from somewhere else comes and doesn't find out, he'll marry her, but if he later he discovers it, he can leave the woman even though they have children because she didn't tell him.

M: But, that's not fair because the man is free then.

N: It's not just, but that's how people are. And anyway, it's not good to get married so young because it's too much work.[191]

Disturbing rumors were circulating of young men writing letters to the fathers of girls they wanted to marry stating, "I've been with your daughter," so that the girl will be forced to marry. There was also a case brought before the autonomous council of a man who wanted to marry a woman that his father didn't approve of. They eloped and thought she might be pregnant. The father argued that she had "problems" with other men and was therefore not eligible. In this case, the son's desire triumphed.

In the Autonomous Municipality of 17 de Noviembre, although marriage norms were similar, I knew of several cases of couples simply deciding to live together without problems. *Estela*, a 30-something woman who was a responsable and had recurring problems with her in-laws over the years, once asked me about my marriage customs. When I mentioned dating before marriage, she exclaimed, "That's it. Your system is better, you can test out the men first and then pick the best one. We have to choose before knowing if he is a good one or not."

However, women's discussions of reproduction and family planning were distinct. Although it was a woman from La Garrucha who angrily informed me that

[191] It is interesting that community discussion and decision-making surrounding these topics parallels colonial discourses. In women's sexuality, the church and state had overlapping interests of protecting racial hierarchies in the nation and patriarchal control in general. Lavrin discusses sexual relationships and courtship and says that the exchanges of verbal promises of marriage in the courts could constitute a binding agreement, to protect the poor woman whose honor is fragile. During this period, elopement was interpreted as inequality, again putting the honor of the woman at risk. "If the promise was not carried out, a question of honor was raised, and the woman was portrayed as having lost her public 'credit,' stained her family's name, and lost her chances to marry someone else" (Lavrin 1989:61).

Bishop Arizmendi had announced that women are supposed to have all the family that God gives you, and that the Zapatistas fought so that women could decide, family planning is still not widely practiced outside of the insurgents. As a childless woman with a long-term *compañero*, my status would open conversations. Often this involved women telling me that I must be sad since I was *stukel* (alone). "Aren't you sad here alone?" "No." "Don't you want a child so you don't feel alone?" "No." When I explained how having a child would impede my work, then I was usually given some leeway. However, the fact that I am not single undermines this answer. People understood that it is a choice I've made, but that isn't always acceptable, despite what the Women's Revolutionary Law decrees. A woman leader, also childless and in her late 30s, would jokingly tell me off every time she would see me, "It's already time. Where is your baby?" I would joke back that I had forgotten it in San Cristóbal.

In Zapata, conversations with women often turned to these issues. Women say they know the condom is best, but most men are not interested. The health promoters dispense family planning at the clinic, but only to married couples and condoms are not always available in the clinic—that's how *Aurelia* says she "got" her daughter, there were no condoms. But now, she's getting injections because she wants to stay at two children for a time. She said that some women are trying natural methods, but it's not as effective. *Zora*, a health promoter I worked with has just had her seventh child. She tells me it's fine, that her mother told her she had 12 and could still walk in the milpa and was able to maintain them. *Zora's* sister *Maribel* is livid. "That's not true, she abandoned me, and I had nothing to eat. My mother tells them they shouldn't block their children and they listen to her." After her third child, she had a tubal ligation, "the operation," but was afraid to tell her mother. *Maribel's* niece only has two children and said she might not have more. Her grandmother is upset, but she said she doesn't care since she can do most

of her work in the morning and has time to relax. "It's a lot of work, the women who have many children don't rest. Worse, the women who have married children and still have babies! *Estela* agrees and is upset that she's having her fifth child, she wanted the operation, but the Hospital San Carlos, which used to be politically aligned with the EZLN, has changed its procedures under Arizmendi. They're no longer doing the procedure. She's unable to go to the government-run IMSS because she's a known Zapatista, so she's considering going to either Ocosingo or Comitán.

In this region, men also had conversations with me about birth control, asking how it was that I didn't have any children yet. What was interesting is the disconnect in our conversations between reproduction, which we could talk about without problems, and sex, which would have been off-limits. Men also expressed the desire to limit their families to avoid the hardships their parents faced. Yet, when an NGO began holding courses on sexual health for women, they were told to change the name to women's health because the men don't understand what the former means and would react negatively.

In La Garrucha, the open conversations were limited, although some women confided that they had the operation. One woman was worried because she couldn't have another child and her husband wanted more. The last baby had to be born at the hospital in Ocosingo by cesarean and since then, she hasn't been able to conceive. My immediate thought was whether she had been sterilized without permission. Her worries were elsewhere. As one man explained to me, if his wife can't have another child, then he's worried she is taking family planning, so that she can be with another man. There is still the lingering idea that pregnancy is an outward sign of women's transgression and shame.

Watching *telenovelas* with friends in the evening felt strange.[192] The first time I visited La Garrucha in 1996, there was no electricity. I also felt strange and out of my depth. I had no idea what the plotline of the story was and I felt like I should be making a statement against these kinds of racist, sexist, and classist representations. Instead, I settled in with coffee and cookies. The women never seemed to express admiration or desire for these characters anyway. What we did talk about is who was good and who is bad, clearly alternate interpretations of the telenovela master narrative. In their favorite show, the young (blond) woman protagonist was in love with an older man, a playboy who couldn't yet see how good she was and how pure her love was. He was repeatedly trapped by the bad (black-haired) sexual woman who was consumed by her jealousy of the young pure-hearted woman. Women periodically made noises of disapproval and shook their heads, but they felt no identification or sympathy for the young woman. She was an idiot, wanting to go with that rich man who was obviously bad because he played with women's emotions. For the women I was with, there was nothing redeemable about this kind of man who abuses the confidence of women (*abuso de confianza*), and there was no sympathy for a woman who would want him.

One day at dusk, I visited *Adela*. Her house is outside the center of town, almost at the base of the hill. She chastised me and said that I should be careful or the S'pakinte will get me.[193] She was half-teasing and half-serious. In the context of almost a decade of war, military invasion, and low-intensity warfare, I could understand her fears. But, she was also communicating a subtext of sexuality; there are things women should not be doing because men are dangerous.

---

[192] Similar to soap operas in the US, but the series are produced as discrete stories with a limited number of episodes.

[193] A woman character similar to la Llorona.

Fiestas punctuate the calendar just as planting and harvesting do. Parties are thrown for religious celebrations, Zapatista holidays, and other special events. Some are held just for the community, others are regional with visitors arriving from the neighboring communities or the zone. Although there may be sports tournaments and speeches, there is always food and a dance. Dances were a key event for seeing how intimate and spatial gender relations are enacted.

Married women sat off to one side with their children, often grouped by families. Unmarried women huddled together near the dance area. Men hung back, generally grouped by age. In La Garrucha, the campamentistas and solidarios tended to stay together, but moved between these different community groups. Girls began the dancing, always in pairs. Two boys would ask them to dance. Often the girls rejected them repeatedly before saying yes. If one group was rejected, another might try. All this was done under the watchful eyes of parents looking for signs of sexual intimacy and the community authorities who would intervene if it was deemed that anyone was dancing too close.

Several people told me an interesting story about this subtext. In neighboring San Miguel, a politically mixed community, they passed a law to ban dancing *abrazada* (hugging/touching) because it lead to pregnancy. When Bishop Arizmendi held a regional pastoral meeting there, the community held a dance to celebrate. Apparently, the elderly nun Mother Doris was dancing holding the hands of a man, just as she had done in other communities during visits. The agentes intervened and were planning to lock her up for violating community norms. Only through strenuous efforts from the pastoral commission and other local authorities, was she released. Although we all laughed, there was an underlying seriousness. Although the campamentistas generally danced with anyone, I found myself subject to other norms. Although I was an outsider,

the women knew me and my partner, and when any men came to ask me to dance who were married or who they considered trouble, they would give me a slight shake of the head. Generally, I spent my time safely dancing with other women to avoid the chismes.

The doctor who complained about the lack of women's participation cited chisme as a reason. She said, "Why don't women leave to participate? Men abuse their confidence here." *Adela* told me "if women do something, people don't forget, they remind you, it never goes away." Some women even feel too much *vergüenza* (shame) to go to church. I suggest that the young women who are refusing to participate have seen their mothers, aunts, older sisters suffer from being the object of chismes. When women work in collective projects like the store, they feel at risk of being taken advantage of by men, so they say its better for them not to do the work. One of the male shopkeepers said that the men don't care about their families and take advantage when women participate. He said that Zapatistas can bring an issue forward and make a demand against someone spreading chismes. If found guilty, the person would be fined, but this outcome is rare. In the communities, chisme is used by men (and women) as a subtle rebuke, a way to publicly undermine those members who are seen to be trying to take too much power or control, or who are not living up to their responsibilities and obligations in their cargos. It is also used to marginalize women who are seen to be getting "above" themselves, agitating too strongly for their rights, or who dispute decisions made by the male councils in their communities. The majority of cases I have seen where chisme is used to discipline these women who were, in Brackette Williams' (1996) words, "out of place," has come from men toward women who are acting alone and therefore, more vulnerable. Chisme is often a powerful mode of communication used by social conservatives to destabilize efforts to change relations of power (Lomnitz-Adler 2000).

A few months before the caracol inauguration in 2003, I met a Catalan representative of a Spanish medical project and NGO. I had been informed that he was *de confianza* (trustworthy), so I felt comfortable discussing community health issues with him. He began to subtly sexually harass me. He also used my name as a source of information, something I told him that he could not do, and he tried to use me to circumvent the need to get authorization to discuss issues with community members. I discussed this with *Lupe* and her husband *Alfredo*. *Alfredo* was horrified and thought we should bring it up with the doctor and arranges my immediate move to another building. He interpreted this as someone's chisme trying to make trouble in my relationship, in addition to being an abuso de confianza (what men do to women). He talked to me for the first time about his problems with chismes and counseled that it is stupid to believe them. Later that day, I talked to the doctor, a solidario who I've known for years. He told me that they'll find a way to tell the group that the project is approved, but that they would have to send another representative. I wondered if that will happen.

The next day, I sat in *Lupe's* kitchen. We finished making tortillas and were drinking coffee. She asked me again about the situation and how I felt. I told her that I was fine, just angry. She was also angry with men abusing women's confidence. She told me the story of a solidario who had been harassing women in the campamento a few years earlier and had eventually been thrown out. We moved on to other stories about her and incidents in the community. I shared more stories as well. It occured to me later that we shared these intimacies, not out of a sense of our common victimization, but from a deep anger and desire for change.[194]

---

[194] Also, we talked because it is not the custom in the community to discuss the kinds of personal issues so openly, yet many women welcome the chance to do so.

Afterward, I went around the back of the building I was living in and vomited. One of the stories about sexual abuse was like a punch in the stomach, one that I continued to feel each time I read my notes. It's a story that I cannot tell. The silence is for political reasons and I understand that this is a contradictory impulse, one that has left me conflicted.[195] Obviously, these incidents and the social construction of women as vulnerable bodies is not just a feature of Zapatista culture, or indigenous culture. It's the prosaic nature of this social control, of being constructed as vulnerable bodies that women are struggling against, at the same time as they struggle against the mal gobierno and fourth world war together with men.

A COLLECTIVE EXPERIMENT

> *Radio Insurgente* sponsored a contest for the EZLN's 20th anniversary celebration on November 17, 2003.
>
> The instructions were:
>
> 1. Married men should prepare a message to their "brother" about why they should join the EZLN. The prize is EZLN made boots.
> 2. Unmarried men should write a love song to a woman. The prize is a guitar and strap.
> 3. Married women should write a message about why they're in the struggle. The prize is a radio and tape player.
> 4. Unmarried women should write a message to men about why they should respect the rights of women. The prize is a radio tape player.
> 5. Children should make a drawing of how the struggle began. The prize is a box of crayons.

[195] Several writers in the anthology "Shout Out Women of Color Respond to Violence" (Ochoa and Ige 2007) take on the accepted practice of hiding sexual violence in oppressed communities.

The tasks for each group are revealing. Women are given space to narrate their the commitment to struggle, yet must still explain why they have the right to do so. During my discussions in the La Garrucha of my research, some responsables saw the utility of the data for understanding the conditions placed on women's participation. They were eager to incorporate more women in community and regional projects. When I proposed a bread-baking workshop, they were supportive and hoped that it might lead to other projects.

The bread-baking workshop grew out of conversations I had with a number of community women about the kinds of bread we eat in the US. Some of them baked the small sweet white breads common in Chiapas. I told them about growing up eating my grandmother's cornbread. "Like our cornbread (*pan de elote*)?" "No, this one isn't very sweet and it's made from corn meal, not fresh corn." *Adela* wanted me to teach them and since there were several women who wanted to learn, she suggested that I hold a bread-baking workshop. She helped me with the proposal and we passed through the JBG.

In the absence of a bread oven—the old one had long since turned to dust—we used a makeshift set-up that women could replicate at home. I wasn't sure what to expect, but women came to the community kitchen in the center of town and donated their cups of maíz. They took turns grinding and mixing. We made five large loaves, some savory and some sweeter at the request of the participants. At the end, the bread was shared, parejo, the sweeter version much preferred by everyone but me.

Later that day, when I was sitting outside the regional store and *Antonio* came over to ask how the workshop went.

Melissa: Good, lots of women showed up. Eighteen women and various girls.

Antonio: Are they learning?

M: It seemed like it. Some other women told me that they didn't show up because they thought there would be too many women and they would only be standing. They wanted to work.

A: You should have done turns with 10 women and at fixed times.

M: Perhaps, but I didn't know if they would show up or not. Sometimes, not even one woman shows up.

A: Yes, that's true. But you'll do it again?

M: Yes, we have another date.

Antonio turned to talk to *Jorge* in Tzeltal about people not showing up. The men are interested and want things to go well. One even mentioned a possible bread collective project.

On the next date, I went to see if women were there at the appointed time. The kitchen was empty. A short time later, a man passed and said the women were asking about me. I walked back to the kitchen. There were four women. We waited a short time for others to show up and then started taking things out of the warehouse. Four more showed up and started getting the stove area ready, while others continued to arrive. Of the eighteen from the first workshop, sixteen returned and one new woman came. This time, everyone donated money for ingredients and brought sardine tins so that they could take their breads home. We also made the small white breads. Two women emerged as natural leaders, both single mothers, and noted down women's names and their donations. Although there were some tensions, women tended to stay grouped by family and neighborhood, everyone shared the work, while joking and catching up on the news. At the end, the two assertive women stayed to help me put the utensils away in the warehouse. They asked cautiously about the possibility of trying to find funding for a bread collective. I told them that I would think about it, but it seemed that the first step would be having a group of interested women. We make plans to talk again.

In the end, nothing more organized developed. Some women began baking bread in the home and their male family members made them small ovens. *Carmela* was disappointed. Her analysis was that because not everyone enters, it's not parejo and that's why things fall apart. "If everyone has to work together, parejo, they can't make chismes. It's better that way."

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented a closer look at women's participation in the EZLN and its autonomy project. I discussed specific ways that women participate in the project, the changes in gendered relations of power and the new political subjectivities that are emerging as a result of these changes. I was conditioned, by my own feminist assumptions and by the rhetoric of the movement to see La Garrucha as an example of the failure of Zapatista gender politics and change since few women participated. In contrast, Zapata, where women participated in collectives and in local and regional governance, was an example of advancement. Yet, through the conversations and experiences with men and women in La Garrucha, I came to a different understanding of the dynamic. Over the many years since the ejido's founding there has been continuous women's participation, from clearing land for that first settlement, to risking their lives in a guerrilla uprising to providing visitors with fresh tortillas and insurgents with corn. During my time in the community, women pointed out the contradictions of the men asking for their continued participation in masculine and exclusive spaces where conditions aren't parejo and their rights aren't respected.

The anxiety provoked in La Garrucha by women's nonparticipation ("they won't do it, and we can't obligate them"), and women's own narratives of nonparticipation, caused me to rethink my analysis of how the process of changing gender relations of power is unfolding through Zapatista autonomy and how women are using the Zapatista

strategy of refusal against their lack of rights locally. Women in La Garrucha did not say that they don't want to participate, but that they will no longer participate. In this way they are challenging what has become a normative Zapatista subjectivity, by recourse to elements of Zapatismo, drawing on their own experiences of struggle over the years.

This is their refusal. Not resistance, but a refusal. Their visibility and participation is key to the success of the Zapatista autonomy project, so withdrawal is also an act. This is one way that they can agitate for change at a moment when discourse and practice are at odds, yet there is nothing tangible to cite as a violation of women's rights or of Women's Revolutionary Law. The options for putting their desires into practice is limited and change is slow. One thing is clear, the changes can't come from "empowerment" or from above, but only from changing social relations in practice and these changes are important to the viability of the Zapatista autonomy project.

Chapter 6: On Whose Terms? Tension, Encounter and Convergence

> *Deep South of the Border: In the heartland of Mexico's lost empire a wild world rises again.*
>
> Mexico's southernmost state is a realm of jungle-choked ruins, cedar- and pine-scented mountains, and sleepy villages where latter-day Maya farm plots of grain on steep, forested slopes. In 1994, Chiapas made headlines as the scene of the Zapatista uprising, an armed attempt at indigenous autonomy. The region has since reinvented itself as one of the country's untapped adventure destinations. Colorful colonial-era towns are the base camps for cloud-forest trekking, waterfall hiking, and mountain biking through rugged highlands. In the verdant lowlands, the vestiges of ancient Maya culture are among the greatest archaeological marvels on Earth. In Chiapas everything old is new again.
>
> —Howells, National Geographic Adventure

When ex-PRI senator Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia won the election for Chiapas governor in 2000 as the opposition coalition candidate, he promised to reduce military presence and to improve living conditions across the state through new development initiatives that he was pursuing with the European Union and multinational corporations. In 2002, the Sprintex maquiladora relocated to San Cristóbal thanks to a payment of 17 million pesos by the government agency *Marcha al Desarollo*. One of Salazar's pet projects was promoting ecotourism and ethnotourism (Chiapas' natural resources and human resources) as a source of community self-development. The article cited in the epigraph, produced as a result of these and other private efforts, continues in the same tone providing readers with suggestions for itineraries. You could "Float Back in Time" to Yaxchilán. All of the images of Chiapas accompanying the story are of the archeological ruins or colonial churches save one of an indigenous Highland woman using her backstrap loom. She is "Local color: Hike to a Homestay" in San Juan

Chamula or Zinacantán. This example exposes the late capitalist focus on immaterial labor, that is, on cognitive and affective labor that serves more as the idea or relation than a physical product. Under processes of globalization, this produces a desire, an international fantasy of the local, the authentic, and the unique. This example reinforces the continued existence of colonial biopolitics and at the same time, exposes the continued centrality of indigenous women's bodies as productive of the Mexican nation, now in its globalized iteration.

In this chapter, I will shift from a focus on the Zapatista autonomy project to addressing the intersections of the Zapatista movement and the state, NGOs, and feminist and women's organizations. Through these relationships, patterns emerge that illuminate the construction of indigenous women not as autonomous actors, but as a particular project of the state and so-called "civil society." While the power relations between these groups and the EZLN are obviously distinct, each project carries within the seeds of containment of the Zapatista autonomy project.

I will first discuss the climate of violence pervasive in Chiapas and the shift from open military aggression to low-intensity warfare (LIW). I will then turn to discuss what many have termed the "war of the projects." These new initiatives did not displace the violence. I argue that they are part of the same strategy of governance, rather than two separate strategies. I will then discuss local feminist and women's organizations. Within each construction and set of relationships, are a complex web of power relations and desires for Zapatista women to "be" something else.

* * *

Claims have been made that processes of globalization have weakened the nation-state (Basch et. al. 1994; Hannerz 1996; Ong 1999). However, projects of globalization

are both projects of disintegration and integration. Rather than vanishing, states are being reconfigured under globalization and remain the frame of reference for most people.

Building on Abrams (1988) and Sayer (1994), Trouillot characterizes the state, not as a set of institutions, rather a "reworking of processes and relations of power so as to create new spaces for the deployment of power" (2001:127). The state is thus an effect of power rather than a unified agent. In order to study the state, we must look for its presence and manifestation through its effects, this moves us beyond notions of legitimation and institutional spaces. Where is the state? Can we see it in the individuals who carry out the deeds, in their everyday ordinary actions? How is it incorporated into the social body?

The Zapatista uprising came at a critical juncture of the reconfiguration of the state in Mexico, which intensified after the debt crisis of 1982 and collapsing world commodity prices. Multilateral organizations lead by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank promoted the so-called Washington Consensus, a set of neoliberal economic policy prescriptions for structural adjustment reforms to be carried out by countries in crisis throughout Latin America. This restructuring of the economy to limit state intervention and the downsizing of the state, in essence letting it run according to market forces, reflected the neoconservative ideology behind the reforms. As the state reduces social welfare and assistance, private corporations and agencies intervene and become the new intermediaries. This process has also bought many NGOs into these state logics; I characterize these NGOs as para-state organizations.

Discussing the state, Nikolas Rose (1999) argues for attention to the ways in which power relations are territorialized through both the production of certain kinds of places and forms of conduct. These "governable spaces" make new kinds of experiences possible and produce new modes of perception. As the article in the epigraph states, "In

Chiapas, everything old is new again." The new forms of conduct include modes of citizenship that focus on self-regulation and responsibility (Postero 2007). In the case of Mexico and other countries in Latin America where indigenous organizing was gaining traction, these neoliberal economic reforms were accompanied by strategies of recognition and inclusiveness, usually a type of "ethnic citizenship." In few cases did this include rights or resources (Postero and Zamosc 2004; Van Cott 2000). Hale (2002) terms this linkage "neoliberal multiculturalism."

Neoliberal multiculturalism is a form of governance that emerges as a cluster of state effects, rather than an overt strategy of rule, which operates by producing discursive boundaries and authorizing practices. This has meant that the project of the Mexican state is not to just recognize the indigenous community of the nation, but to bring it back in through NGO and other individual efforts. Governmentality, central to modern capitalism, is not only about the regulation and control of subjects, but the *authorization* of certain kinds of subjects. Bodies are reconfigured into populations, which can be managed and limited through dispersed networks of power, including non-state actors. This project involves identifying and absorbing indigenous contestation.

This type of move can be seen with Governor Pablo Salazar's 2000 project in Chiapas to build a culture of tolerance as a way of resolving conflicts. His slogan (See Illustration 10), "*Gobierno de Chiapas: Uno con todos*," (Chiapas Government: One with Everyone/I Unite with Everyone) is a play on the Zapatista maxims *Todos somos Marcos* (We are all Marcos) and *Para todos todo, para nosotros nada* (For everyone everything, for ourselves nothing). There has been a resurgence of discourses of tolerance in the US and transnationally. Wendy Brown has tracked these diverse discourses and the governmental and regulatory functions they perform:

> Put slightly differently, tolerance as a mode of late modern governmentality reiterates the normalcy of the powerful and the deviance of the marginal responds to, links and tames both unruly domestic identities or affinities and nonliberal transnational forces that tacitly or explicitly challenge the universal understandings of liberal precepts. Tolerance regulates the presence of the Other both inside and outside the liberal democratic nation-state, and often it forms a circuit between them that legitimates the most illiberal actions of the state by means of a term consummately associated with liberalism." (2006:8)

Illustration 10: *Uno con Todos* (One with Everyone/I Unite with Everyone)

With the timing of the uprising, the EZLN set the stage for a struggle over the distribution of wealth and resources in the nation, but also about confronting the grounds of subject-making and of representation. That is, a refusal to be remade by the state and a desire and effort to be self-making, a process of becomings.

THE ROUTINIZATION OF VIOLENCE: LOW-INTENSITY WARFARE

Ejército Mexicano

Que ama a su bandera

Que mata a su pueblo

¡No a la militarización de México!

—Graffiti, Mexico City Metro, July 17, 2005

Sovereign power has continued relevance for the nation-state and its boundary-making practices in the globalizing present (Agamben 2005). Sovereignty, resides in the exception, which exempts the sovereign from the field of rule and then defines the parameters of "bare life," those who can be killed, but not sacrificed. Sovereignty embodies a judicial order that cannot be held accountable; it is law that stands outside the law. Walter Benjamin notes that the purpose of violence is "…not to punish the infringement of law but to establish new law. For in the exercise of violence over life and death more than in any other legal act, law reaffirms itself" (1978:286). It is this "state of exception," not longer exception but now rule, Agamben argues, which defines what forms of human life the sovereign will protect and those it will not.

Chiapas is home to everyday forms of violence—the poverty and the erasure discussed in previous chapters. It is a zone of bodies that do not count.[196] Militarization increased drastically after the uprising in 1994, complementing the already existing paramilitary forces in the state. Guardias blancas (white guards), mentioned in Chapter Three, had already been in existence since 1934, operating outside the law and terrorizing

[196] For example, between June 1991 and January 1993, fifteen gay men were murdered in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Most of the killings were carried with impunity, using high-caliber weapons reserved by law for the exclusive use of the Mexican army and the judicial police.

the local population. In 1961, the Chiapas legislature issued a decree that permitted ranchers to contract private police. In 1988, in an effort to "modernize" in preparation for the passage of NAFTA, Governor Patrocinio González disarticulated their government support. This measure did not stop their existence and there is evidence that after 1994, the state government began training and arming paramilitary groups, using army and police forces.[197] Until recently, most state and federal government officials denied the existence of paramilitary forces in Chiapas, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, including testimony from the paramilitaries themselves[198]

Writing about Bolivia, Gill (2000) notes that violence and repression undermine legitimacy to maintain political power. Drawing heavily on social science and human rights research, the US Army War College published a report about the uprising at the close of 1994. The report claims that the uprising was a surprise to the Mexican government.[199] They counsel the Mexican government away from military strategy toward economic means at the precise moment when the Zapatistas were preparing to make their autonomy project public.

> One of the priority tasks of the Zedillo administration should be to explore to co-opt the Zapatistas and their supporters, both economically and politically. On the one hand, that means fulfilling the promises that have been made to alleviate the poverty and desperation that drove so many *chiapanecos* to support the guerrillas. On the other, it means reforming state and local power structures to assure the rule of law and the access of those who have been shut out of the system (Schultz and Wager 1994:26).

The Mexican Government did not heed their advice. On the February 9, 1995, just over a year after the government declared a cease-fire, they launched an offensive

---

[197] In 2000, there were an estimated 16 groups in existence, concentrated in areas of Zapatista support (Anaya 2000: 137-149).
[198] Jesús Ramierez Cuevas, *La Jornada*, personal communication (2001).
[199] However, based on the government's own reports, it seems that this was less a massive intelligence failure than the inability to comprehend the nature of the struggle, which resulted in an analysis of the EZLN as a group only interested in forcing a democratic opening.

aimed at the capture of Subcomandante Marcos and other leaders of the Zapatistas. At the time, they announced that they had determined his identity.[200] The 1995 Offensive affected dozens of communities who fled their homes, some for up to several months. The violence was intimate; soldiers destroyed houses, stole livestock, wasted food, and even "stole women's underwear." The incursion had a lasting effect since the full year's harvest was lost, and although NGOs and solidarity groups organized aid, it was not quite enough. *Adela* in La Garrucha said, "When the soldiers came in 1995, they ate everything, they used up everything." She used to grow "big watermelons" with her mother-in-law, but said they were unable to obtain the seeds again. People in La Garrucha had already been forced to flee for two months once before, in 1993 after the skirmish in *Las Calabacitas*.

The government used the offensive to further militarize the zone and effectively "circled" the communities in the Zapatista zone of influence. However, the violent physical threat and the violence of increased poverty did not have the desired effect; instead, it actually fostered community cohesion and autonomy, often in subtle and surprising ways. In La Garrucha, a staunchly Catholic community, *Pepe* told me that their only saints (wooden or porcelain representations), used to be San Juan and San Antonio. Before 1995, people had their own saints in their houses and held private fiestas.

> When *los ejercitos* entered, we fled into the mountains. When returned home, we found the saints thrown on the ground, in the fields. We made an agreement that no one can have a saint in their house and celebrate alone anymore. They had to give their saints to the church and the agreement is that we will all celebrate together. That's why we have so many saints now.

---

200 On February 20, 2007 the Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información (IFAI) announced the CISEN (Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional) needs to present to the public the documentation of it's information on Marcos' identity that led to the arrest warrant issued by then President Ernesto Zedillo, which was an excuse for the offensive.

The invasion also sparked interest in forming community health promoters, including ones trained in medicinal plants that could be found in the region, and family planning was more openly talked about and practiced since pregnancy was seen as making women more vulnerable during military attack.

Despite the Mexican government's strong nationalist stance, Mexico received the second largest amount of US military aid in the hemisphere in 1997. It also sent the largest number of students—a full one-third of the total—to the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia to learn the finer points of military strategy. Since the Zapatistas were immediately classified as an "internally belligerent force," rather than terrorists, an anti-narcotics discourse has been used to justify this aid and training. Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the White House drug policy director, traveled to Mexico in March 1996 and left with an agreement to train Mexican Soldiers at US Army bases. The President requested $9 million in military aid for fiscal year 1998 (up from $3 million in fiscal year 1996) for the purchase of new weapons from US arms manufacturers.[201]

By 2000, combined state forces (military, police and immigration groupings) held 502 fixed positions (camps, offices, bases, etc.), 60 permanent checkpoints and 93 intermittent checkpoints. This varied according to the "hot spots." For example, in the Ocosingo municipality, there were 81 fixed positions and checkpoints and 32 intermittent checkpoints. There were between 60,000–70,000 soldiers stationed in Chiapas. This figure represents about 30 percent of the total Mexican military for only four percent of Mexico's population (Anaya 2000: 132-133).

When the dialogues between the Mexican government and the EZLN were irreparably called off in 1996, the LIW intensified, making the repression less visible and

---

[201] Federation of American Scientists (FAS), "US Arms Sales and Military Assistance to Mexico," January 11, 1998, http://www.fas.org/asmp/profiles/mexico.htm, accessed March 30, 2004.

more difficult to trace. Although a strategy of LIW continues, after 2001 there was a marked reduction in the tension. However, the unpredictable quality of LIW means that Zapatistas (and others affected) cannot relax—violent conflict continues to exist in Chiapas. Writing about Argentina, Taylor states, "Everyone was vulnerable; the unexpected attack could come anytime, from anywhere" (1997:125). It is in this context of LIW that the Zapatistas are carrying out their autonomy project.

For many communities, this meant constant surveillance, harassment, and restricted mobility (Harvey 1998). These features of LIW make it mesh well with neoliberal logics of rule; fear is productive and the state only need appear as traces. Soldiers could be confronted, and were confronted by women and men, but LIW is waged through others as well—police and security forces, paramilitary groups, etc.—in an extrajudicial fashion, outside of the law. An effect of this strategy was the increasingly violent community conflict in the highlands in 1997, culminating with the Acteal massacre on December 22, 1997.[202] Paramilitary men in the highlands paramilitaries killed forty-five people, the majority of them women and children. "It was as if the shock of a ghastly 'real' had erupted through the cracks of democratic discourse, disturbing it with a growing anxiety about the (bad) nature of the state" (Aretxaga 2000:43).

LIW is hard to fight and affects a broad portion of the population. As Kay Warren notes for Guatemala, "*La Violencia* has claimed many more victims than merely those who suffered physical harm" (1993:47). The military was constantly in motion on the road in Zapatista territory, often disguised behind a white banner reading "Social Labor." There were almost daily flyovers, sometimes so low I could see the pilot's eyes. These acts broke communities' daily routine and made the state visible for a moment.

[202] For an account of the gendered nature of this violence see Hernández Castillo (1998).

People suffered from stress and anxiety; these were everyday forms of violence in the skin mapped onto other already existing forms of violence in the communities.

The quality of the violence in Chiapas was that it was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Kay Warren writes that she would "argue against conceptions of violence that privilege physical harm and that fail to question way in which cultural and political practices mediate the experience of violence" (1993:3). A colonial culture of terror existed before the uprising in Chiapas. The culture of terror of LIW plays less on physical violence than the usefulness of fear as a strategy to control populations (Taylor 1997). Of course, this culture of terror is complex and more than just an instrumental product of the "State." State and local populations capitalize on pre-existing social ruptures within the new context. As Aretxaga notes:

> In the street narratives of police terror that circulate freely in the dense public sphere of the Basque Country, the state figures as a 'ghostly' reality, a universe of surfaces held together by fear, apprehension and anger, by the kinds of excitement that make the bodies of young radical nationalists, like the body of the state, nervous bodies. (2000:52)

The mal gobierno is everywhere and all-powerful.

In the absence of active public discourse, rumors, strategic and not, abound. Rumors ran the gamut from the constant news of impending attack and invasion to the more fantastical. These narratives produce fears, which control action. While I was in communities, "random" power outages accompanied tense moments. In the La Garrucha area, it was said that the bridge over the river Jataté near the army base of San Quintín was being built on skulls, and they were always looking for a few more. In the 17 de Noviembre area, stories of the *cortacabezas* were common. There were other rumors of bags of live poisonous snakes being dropped in villages from army helicopters to chemicals being put in the water supply. Although most people in the Zapatista communities laughed off the rumors as government propaganda, nothing more than a

counterinsurgency effort by the mal gobierno who viewed them as credulous campesinos. These rumors still produced disabling effects. *What if?* Violence happens, but no one knows who is doing it.

Soldiers and security forces regularly used racial and sexual harassment and violence as weapons, and instilled terror by violently entering private spaces.[203] When soldiers distributed emergency supplies, women were required to bring their husbands with them as "a way of detecting Zapatistas, because if there's no man, he's surely in the jungle with the EZLN" (Rojas 1999). I traveled to Morelia on January 3, 1998, after soldiers tried to enter. The women had sent the men into the hills and beat the soldiers back with sticks. *Candelaria* told me that the sent the men away because the last time the army entered on January 7, 1994, the soldiers rounded the men up and with the help of an informant, selected the main organizers. One was her father-in-law. The men were tortured, murdered and their bodies dumped in a vulture pit. The community is still waiting for justice. The actions of these women in 1998, prompted government officials, including President Ernesto Zedillo, to call the Zapatistas cowards who would put their women and children forward into harm's way, while they hid. These discourses erased women's agency while simultaneously feminizing the men and the movement by extension.

Women in La Garrucha complained that before the base was dismantled in 2001, the soldiers would harass them by making sexual comments, as they passed by on their way to gather firewood or go to the milpa. Women consistently list prostitution as one of the negative effects of militarization.[204] There were rumors that prostitution led to

---

[203] Three Tzeltal women were raped in Altamirano by a group of soldiers at a military checkpoint in June 1994; 25 armed men raped three nurses in Larráinzar in October 1995. A women's organization documented 50 cases of rape in highland municipalities during one year of violence (Rojas 1999).

[204] This is one of the issues raised by the EZLN and feminist groups where I feel the most conflict. There is a strong anti-prostitution position because of Catholicism and the women are blamed as much as the

pressure in communities for men "sell" their wives or daughters to soldiers. A virgin was thought to command a higher price. This affected women's mobility and security. They did not want to be seen as a sexual commodity.

Warren notes the importance of appearance to the culture of terror. In Guatemala, "in effect, it was risky to be too modern or too traditional" (1993:35). This was the also the case in Chiapas, but it played out in different and gendered ways. Women in the communities were particularly vulnerable, especially if they were identified publicly. *Lucia* is a regional representative who usually wears pants and t-shirts. One day while she was in the town of Altamirano, a man recognized her and began to follow her. She ran and hid at a friend's house. The next morning she walked for three hours on trails to reach her home. That week she sewed a number of "traditional" dresses, and while wearing them, she became invisible.

WAR OF THE PROJECTS AND A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE

> November 2003
>
> The TV was on in the café in La Garrucha when an ad came on for the Christmas season. It's a campaign against poverty called "*un kilo de ayuda*" (one kilo of aid). The ad opened with a woman at a grocery store in Mexico City. She paid for her purchases with a credit card simultaneously paying for the kilo of aid. The ad cuts to the kilo being delivered to an "unfortunate child" in what looks like a nice middle-class house. Someone shouted, "keep your kilo, give me the house!"

The Mexican state attempted to dismantle the MAREZ through various strategies, including military repression and LIW. The strategies were a failure. After the 2000

---

military. At one point in 1998, a group of nuns in Altamirano discussed plans to attack a bordello. The structural position of the prostitutes was never considered in the formulations of harm. In 2001, I spoke with a woman who worked at San Quintín. The buses weren't running because of the muddy road, so I had to take one of the three-ton trucks. When I climbed in, I noticed that there were two prostitutes next to me. We exchange an ironic glance of recognition and pleasantries. One of the women was expansive and friendly when I asked her about her work. She had met and "dated" a soldier stationed in Ocosingo. He had promised to marry her after his commitment was over. One day, all contact ended and she never heard from him again. She said she felt stigmatized by the relationship, other men didn't want to date her, and that she saw prostitution as a reasonable, if onerous, way to make money.

elections, there was more emphasis on offering goods, a strategy that has come to be called the "War of the Projects." César from La Garrucha described the shift:

> Before '94, the government didn't listen. Now they give everything. Quickly. Before, no. We asked for our land documents and they wouldn't give them. Now, if you put in a request, it's fast. With ARIC before, they didn't give anything. Now, if you want PROCAMPO, goats, sheep, everything. Before we put in requests and the government didn't listen. Only after '94. To pull people to them, to use up our efforts. They haven't come here since '94 in the community, but there is always talk, that we can get anything now. But to participate. To participate. Now they want to listen and want us to participate.

These kinds of programs play a key part in forming subjects for the state. As mentioned earlier, state responses mimicked some of the language of the Zapatistas and other groups, and pushed inclusion into development projects and the electoral process, through ethnic citizenship and participation. Tolerance was the answer to resolving conflict. Not just through state judicial mechanisms and development discourses, but through individual acts of respect for difference and diversity.

This is part of a transnational strategy of governance, which includes global discourses of diversity and cultural respect working through a local configuration. A focus on cultural diversity is part of neoliberal multiculturalism, which functions to cloak the logics of rule in these programs. For example, Article 1 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)[205] characterizes this cultural diversity as just as necessary for humans as "the biological diversity is for living organisms. In this sense, it constitutes a common patrimony of humanity and should be recognized and consolidated to the benefit of present and future generations."

During a presentation at the University of Texas at Austin in 2002 titled "Development, Ethnic Identity and Racial Discrimination: Indigenous People and Afro-

---

[205] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=19742&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, accessed September 2007.

descendants in World Bank's Program," a World Bank functionary mentioned that they are implementing "An Indigenous Peoples' Development Agenda." Part of the project involved asking governments to collect racial data on census. A copy of their Regional Brief on Latin America and the Caribbean from September 2001 handed out during the talk, clarified the project of combating exclusion: "Investing in people also includes indigenous and African Latin-American communities, whose social exclusion undermines their development prospects and prevents countries from capitalizing on their potential."

The gap between rich and poor in Mexico increased as a result of neoliberal restructuring. Historically, one of the markers of indigeneity in Latin America has been poverty. On July 12, 2005, the United Nations Program for Development released their Second Report on Human Development. It stated that the populations in Chiapas and Oaxaca, the two Mexican states with the highest indigenous populations, had health, education and income indicators among the lowest in the world, even lower than Palestine. Chiapas Governor Pablo Salazar gave a press conference on July 14 admitting that while Chiapas was in last place in development in Mexico, similar to Palestine and below El Salvador, it has been so for at least the past 50 years and that his goal has been only to stop the fall.

As a clientalist state, Mexican government programs were aimed at giving handouts and thereby securing electoral support. Despite the shift to neoliberal economic policies and programs, handouts are still seen as an effective tactic.[206] In 2004, Luis Alvarez, the government's peace representative was in the 17 de Noviembre region giving out aid. *Jacobo* told me Alvarez was in Nueva Galicia down the canyon, but came

[206] During local elections in 2004, one of the rather clever slogans was, "Toma lo que te dan y vota por el PAN" (Take what they give you and vote for the PAN), referring to the PRI's history of buying elections.

and went quickly, as if he were afraid. *Jacobo* said, "The government wants to take advantage they think people will get tired and they can put their projects in. They're taking advantage of the fact that people are poor, that they don't have money, to divide us."

The most common assistance program in the Cañadas was *Progresa*, which gave enrolled community members money and some comestibles. Although I could not officially talk to them, I struck up a conversation with the government functionaries who were waiting near La Garrucha for people to come down from a community two hours walk up the mountain while I was waiting for nonexistent transport. One of them explained that they were only there to call people's names and have them sign papers. They had to certify the families were still needy enough to receive aid. Programs like *Progresa* were only for those in "extreme poverty."

One day *Dora* and I were walking down the road toward her mother's house and when we stopped to greet her sister-in-law *Lucia*. Her mother spotted us and came over with a plate of freshly boiled chayote. A blue school bus slowly rumbled by. *Lucia* made a joke about it being "that time of the month." *Dora's* mother laughed loudly and covered her mouth. The younger girls smiled, but cast their eyes downward, embarrassed. Yes, it was time for the women of the region to go into Ocosingo to get their *Progresa*, their "progress." The buses make special trips, and in a place marked so significantly by the lack of mobility, even I caught the joke, knowing what passes by and when. The buses are hired to pick the women up and take them into town and bring them back. They also charge each woman the regular fare for the trip. Men can also go, but *Lucia* says the government prefers the women because the men will just get the money spend it all on alcohol and then start fights. The Zapatistas and some sympathizers reject all government aid, so the act of riding the bus brought political divisions into sharp

focus. Although after the laughter dies away, *Dora* says sadly, “they’ve got mouths to feed and God knows how hard that is when your husband just takes your money and drinks it away.”

The link between poverty and immorality, or the degradation of the social body, continues in development schemes. While biological racism in Mexico is not acceptable, a deep cultural expression of racism exists in these programs, with the rural (indigenous) woman once again as a central figure. In the governmental program *Opportunidades* (Opportunities) creates these governable spaces. Neoliberal policies work through the denial of women’s control of their own bodies, sexuality and reproduction. For men, it is a control through work and the denial of work. Members of the family who are selected to participate in Oportunidades and receive compensation are generally the mothers, “in order to strengthen their position in the family and community.” There is a built-in oversight mechanism with a list of conditions for “recertification,” a prerequisite for women’s continuing participation. The overseers, or volunteer coordinators, are other poor women from the same communities or neighborhoods. This is one of the ways the program undermines women’s solidarity, since the coordinator must certify that the other women participating maintain certain hygiene standards in the home, that their children are clean and fed properly, and in some cases, women’s fertility is monitored.

On October 5, 2007, Javier Suarez, from the Geostatistics and Census Department of SEDESOL, gave a talk at the University of Texas at Austin titled, “Poverty in Mexico and the Government’s Response.” He opened his talk with a slide of an indigenous woman, recognizable from her dress as a resident of the Cañadas, probably from the region between Patihuitz and La Sultana. She was wearing an apron over the dress, one hand resting on the shoulders of a shirtless little boy, perhaps seven years old, and the

other on the shoulder of a little girl holding a baby, perhaps five years old. They were the iconic faces of poverty.

His talk centered on *Oportunidades*, which he characterized as an "heroic program," shifting the focus from food support to human and social development. *Oportunidades* operates in five million households in 95,000 localities. During his talk, there was an emphasis on creating populations and working through central spaces such as clinics and schools where visits can be monitored. The coordinator can then easily report visits and the program can decide "which families don't deserve it anymore because they don't go." Family planning became part of rural government programs during Echeverría's presidency and Suarez mentioned Oportunidades has a high coverage of these programs, promoting the "conditions to reduce fertility." He briefly mentioned transforming urban poverty through the transformation of neighborhoods into "ordered safe spaces." In 2006, SEDESOL introduced a new rural initiative focusing on working through local groups to foment local development. These projects have a territorial focus in order to attract local populations to a "strategic communication center."

Perhaps most disturbing, although the most interesting to the assembled crowd, was the compilation of information. The program collects basic personal and socio-demographic data compiled in a "Social Information System" (GIS). The system is available through the internet and keeps the information about what is in each family's house, along with personal data organized block by block. The need for the information is that "have to be sure what benefits according to poverty conditions" and the data is cross-listed with other programs to "know where program is working." Confidentiality is minimal. The names and locality of beneficiaries are published on the webpage of the ministry, although not their address.

Since Zapatistas are in "rebellion" and refuse government aid, I was unable to gather much firsthand data about this program in the Cañadas. However, there were women participating in the assemblies of the Movimiento Independiente de Mujeres in San Cristóbal that I attended who spoke at length about its negative influence in their communities. One woman reported that they don't really receive as much aid as they are supposed to, but they're afraid to complain because the woman coordinator will think that they're making an accusation of her corruption, even though she doesn't control the aid. Another woman said she was against the program because it "put us women against each other," and didn't foster collective work. As of this writing, I have no evidence of these claims beyond these personal experiences with the program, however, we can see from the way that the program is structured, the goal is not to foster collective action, but individual self-regulation.

*   *   *

18 July 04

640 AM News

> The program *Una Semilla para Crecer* (A Seed to Grow) founded in 2001, plans to enroll 500 women in 20 groups for microfinance loans. The fourth stage of the project will involve going to a bank.

I listened to the radio news almost every morning while in the communities. Despite the increase in the number of TVs and the installation of internet in the caracol, radio remained the main method of public communication in the region. The official stations in Chiapas were also propaganda tools barely disguised as "objective" news sources. Before 2000, the news announcers would repeat any rumor or falsified story that the PRI politicians gave them. They even held fake news conferences for former Governor Albores Guillén to give tractors to "Zapatistas" who left the organization.

After Salazar became governor, there was a noticeable shift away from bellicose statements to constant news items about his projects.

My fieldnotes of these morning radio broadcasts are filled with references to Una Semilla para Crecer. This state program was founded in 2001 by Governor Salazar, and offers microcredit financing to the "most abandoned and most important sectors of society." The only requisites is that they are women, poor and "they are eager to work."[207] In October 2003, the program had enrolled 50,000 women. The budget for 2004 was planned at 40 million pesos. In addition to helping their families economically, the propaganda for this program promises to raise women's self-confidence and make them feel useful. Although indigenous women are not specifically mentioned, they make up the largest part of the demographic. Like Oportunidades, this program functions to regulate the poor to organize themselves for the state.

The undermining of solidarity is not just part of state organizations, but also NGOs. There has been a trend of transnational women's movements eclipsing and co-opting local organizations through linkages with the state (Basu 2000). Many are organizations such as PROMUJER in Mexico, which offer micro-financing programs. Due to the experience of the Gameen Bank in Bangladesh, which shifted its loans to women and experienced higher return rates, women are now the principal targets of these programs (Kabeer et. al. 1999). In the end, these programs reinforce, or even deepen, the socioeconomic inequalities they intend to improve.[208] Rather than focus on and change the underlying reasons for the marginalization and extreme poverty of certain communities in Mexico, the programs imagine individual solutions. This self-help ethic

---

[207] Chiapas state government press release, October 3, 2003, http://www.cri.chiapas.gob.mx/documento.php?id=20050826110719.

208A recent article about a microfinance program in Mexico, "*Compartamos*," describes how the directors charged women 25 to 45 percent interest on their loans and made enough money to start their own bank. Elizabeth Malkin, New York Times, April 5, 2008, "Microfinance's Success Sets Off a Debate in Mexico."

creates dependencies while undermining collective social relations and thereby "remaking" communities through women's bodies. Feminist critics point out that these forms of aid rely on a neoliberal economic agenda of development through individual women rather than structural changes in the economy (ibid.:1999).

Alvarez (1999) notes that the insertion of women's mobilization into NGO structures has debatably created a professionalization of change agents, and depoliticized this social and political arena.[209] Often NGO women's middle class agendas are mapped onto poor, indigenous working class women. In Mexico, there has been an increase in the informal economy since restructuring. This process has been gendered, with women's work now taking place almost exclusively in the sector where their work pays less (Beneria 2001). Martínez Novo's (2006) ethnographic study of indigenous migrants in Baja California shows how the NGO directors' efforts are aimed at transforming indigenous women migrants into a docile urban labor force, which fits with their already existing ideas about race/ethnicity, yet the directors believe themselves to be helping these women "get ahead" and away from the informal economy.

LOGICS OF INCLUSION: REPRESENTING DIVERSITY

Before moving on to discuss the relationships between Zapatista and feminist and women's organizations in Chiapas, I want to briefly return to the issue of visual representation and its role in the production of subjects that I raised in Chapter Two. In addition to the technologies of self in the programs I just described, discourses and scopic regimes produce state effects. In Mexico, during this moment of tolerance, there are interesting and conflicting uses of indigenous culture and bodies to represent diversity and inclusion in the nation. These also form part of the logics of neoliberal multicultural governance.

[209] See also Molyneuz (2001).

During a trip to Mexico City in August 2004, I visited the National Museum of Popular Cultures in Coyoacán, a well-to-do neighborhood that counts Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera among its famous residents. The Museum, founded in 1982 by Guillermo Bonfíl Batalla, is part of the National Council for Culture in the Arts, a government institution. Its mission is to study, preserve and promote popular and indigenous culture. The exhibition that month, "Indigenous Art: A Door to Mexico's Diversity," was mounted in celebration of International Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The exhibition was a fascinating door to the complex contradictions of Mexico's new multicultural vision, drawing deeply on its indigenist roots, and with the new understanding that this is also Mexico's present. Alongside the introductory text at the entrance to the exhibition hall was a series of black and white photographs of anonymous indigenous people, random image alternating with mirrors; no names, no places, only mute aestheticized and racialized bodies. The text at the entrance to the exhibition provides us with a view of the complex ways that indigenous peoples are now being rewritten into the nation and to a peculiar construction of equality, a not-quite successful attempt to transforming the indigenous objects from being presented according to the use value to being presented as a singular work of art.[210] Each piece exhibited was in a glass case, with the title (almost always a direct correlation to what the item was), author (almost all were author unknown), indigenous group and place, year and description of materials. A particular item that caught my attention was a bed covering made of feathers, author unknown, with this marking: Mestizos (Tonalá). In one easy move, the exhibition reclaimed mestizaje as producing an identity "indigenous" to Mexico, culturally-distinct and on a par with the others presented.

---

[210] See Appendix E for full text.

The comments left in the visitor log also illuminate this new vision of the nation:

—Ancient, but I liked it a lot.

—It gives one much pleasure that this culture still exists in our country, that people don't lose interest in our Mexico nor become ignorant of our roots.

—Many congratulations. It is a well-hung show with unique pieces, some that I have never seen, there is no doubt that in each piece they have left a part of their soul. Xochitl Gálvez, Director General, National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples

—It is too bad there are no names and people can only be seen in the photos.

—This protects part of our culture.

—Artisanal is art.

A few weeks later, I was back in San Cristóbal and walking down the Real de Guadalupe, a main thoroughfare in the central tourist zone of the city. The first two blocks near the square are filled with tourist shops selling everything from amber jewelry to local artisan work and since 2000, even stores selling items produced by collectives in EZLN communities. As I walked by one of the older tourist shops, walls lined with *huipiles*, the embroidered blouses worn by indigenous women, a sign caught my eye. Tacked onto one of the huipiles it reads, "looking for a servant."

I was struck by the choice of the coleta shop owner to place the sign on a huipil. There were many other possibilities facing the street where a passerby could have noticed the sign—on bags, t-shirts taped to a shelf or the door itself. Yet, she attached it to the huipil, probably not intentionally, but nonetheless reinforcing the linkage of indigenous culture to second-class status. This juxtaposition reveals the contradictory discourses of indigenous peoples in the nation in Mexico, but shows the underlying necessity for indigenous bodies, especially those of indigenous women, to be productive. Indigenous women's bodies stand for the poverty and the backwardness of the nation (as seen in the

SEDESOL slide show), and for its progress (the cabinet minister Xochitl Gálvez). These representations "work" for neoliberal capital. In the art exhibit above, the indigenous artists are not present, only images of nameless bodies. What these bodies are selling is the product of multicultural Mexico, shorn of its conflict, a shared patrimony. In Chiapas, the transition has been much less seamless.

FEMINIST FAULTLINES

I touched on some feminist critiques of the EZLN in the previous chapter. In this section, I will a closer look at some of the relationships between local feminist organizations and the EZLN to consider different conceptions of gender and difference and their political projects. What would it mean for Zapatista women to participate in these kinds of groups? What political identity would be lost? Would there be any other types of gains?

"They hate the men. The feminists."

Those were the first words *Flor* said to me when I saw her in March 2003 after a year's absence. I was taken aback because *Flor*, a young Tzeltal woman who had worked closely with feminists in a local NGO as a translator had never had problems in the past. I asked her to explain her extreme statement. She began talking about the current situation and told me that some things had changed.

> The feminists are now against us Zapatistas. They're giving public talks and making strong critiques. But, they don't understand. You can't hate the men. It has to be the woman together with the man. In our communities, we are men and women, together, working.

Flor was referring to recent public presentations by coordinators of the *Movimiento Independiente de Mujeres de Chiapas* (Independent Women's Movement of Chiapas or MIM).

In the past, I had worked in collaboration with some local NGOs on women's projects, but under the coordination of the autonomous municipalities. My own relationships with these groups were complicated. Although I was invited to the workshops and held interviews during my fieldwork period, I was a foreigner, and this made me somewhat suspicious. At times, even people supposedly in solidarity see foreigners, especially from the US, as intruders. Certainly, we often arrive in the global south without interrogating how our privilege intersects local power relations locally. One manifestation of this attitude is the belief that we have the "right" kind of feminism. Another expression of this is the claim of a "right" to help based on current imperialism, or even colonialism. I've heard Spaniards in communities claim an historic right to be working in Chiapas in solidarity to help undo the effects of Spain's colonization of the Americas. These tensions also emerge from Mexican nationalism and the belief that the problems in Chiapas are Mexico's problems and only Mexicans should work for change. However, the Zapatistas' clear linkage of global issues to local issues undermines this stance.

I was also a known Zapatista supporter and in the eyes of some, this undermined my feminist credibility. Years ago, a friend from Mexico City called a meeting in San Cristóbal of all feminists and women who were working in Zapatista communities. A Zapatista authority had sexually harassed a human rights observer in one of the Aguascalientes with impunity. When the woman complained, nothing had been done, so she was formulating a public e-mail to denounce this behavior. The meeting was an attempt to forestall this solution in favor of opening a dialogue with the EZLN. The idea put forth was that these are important topics and that a public denouncement was not going to change it, but women already working in solidarity with the movement might be able to intervene. We had a long and productive talk about rights, behavior and

relationships, and about our how much we could complain. However, there was tension between those who wanted to ask the woman to hold off, and those who saw waiting as defending the Zapatistas at all costs and as complicity with the abuser.

Chiapas has a long and diverse history of women's and feminist organizing. The work of many of the groups was important to the development of the EZLN's gender politics and has supported women's organizing in EZLN communities. Since the 1980s many groups have formed, including CODIMUJ in the Diocese of San Cristóbal, NGOs (Chiltak, Kinal Anzetik), Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal (COLEM), Centro Integral de Atencion a las Mujeres (CIAM), and more recently, Colectivo Feminista Mercedes Olivera AC (COFEMO), Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas, AC y el Seminario.[211] The MIM was formed in November 2002 by a group of mestiza feminists, who were academics, intellectuals, activists and organizers. It is now a network of grassroots feminist organizations.[212] The MIM has strong links to the feminist NGOs and civil society organizations in San Cristóbal, and the main goal is to support a wide variety of indigenous and rural women's organizing across the state including midwives organizations, artisans' cooperatives and neighborhood associations. It was founded out of previous efforts such as the *Convención Estatal de Mujeres* (State Convention of Women) and much of the work was focused on issues of violence against women. Their mission states, "MIM is independent—we don't follow any parties." I attended a number of MIM assemblies and workshops and spoke with advisors and participants.[213] Although indigenous women participated, the mestiza advisors largely managed the agenda.[214]

---

[211] See Masson 2001 for longer treatment of feminist organizing in the region.
[212] Personal communication, Lupe Cardenas (COFEMO), March 2004.
[213] Data drawn mainly from the MIM Assemblies of February 7-8, 2004, June 19, 2004.
[214] The organization has also received funding from Oxfam's International women and Rights Regional Program.

Rather than a lengthy description of the organization, I want to focus on two topics. The first is the relationship between the MIM, local feminist and women's organizations and the Zapatistas, and the second is the content of their work and why it may be incompatible with Zapatista autonomy. Tensions in this relationship emerge from a number of issues. One is the long trajectory of work on gender in the communities, which had an undeniable influence on the development of Zapatista gender politics. However, shortly after the uprising, there were conflicts that resulted in some women from the NGOs being unwelcome in Zapatista communities. In the communities of the La Garrucha region, I had heard this expressed in a variety of ways, from a man who said, "They wanted to make the women hate the men. They said we were as bad as the mal gobierno," to a group of women who told me that they generally liked the work being done, but thought that the feminists has been "too protagonista," that is, too interested in their pushing their own agenda in the communities. What emerged most strongly from the stories was an impression that "feminists" were only interested in individual women's rights and not the rights of the collective.

Although the MIM's mission states that "we recognize, value and respect the different cultures," there are also often tensions because some the organization's priorities are decided from above, from the coordination rather than the grassroots, and this included the notion of "women's space." As one woman explained, "We had a crisis with the Zapatistas. We had the intention to participate and organize in the Cañadas and felt that the conception of gender gave us this space. We made the fundamental question that if they don't give women space, we can't participate, we have to break with them."[215] As feminist theorists have pointed out, women cannot be homogenized, they are crosscut by their positionality, their distinct experiences, and understandings of gender (Alarcón

[215] Personal communication, *Irene*, July 2005.

1990; Anzaldúa 1991; Delgado Pop 2000; Hill Collins 1991; Jaimes Guerrero 1997; Lorde 1984; Lugones 2003; Sudbury 1998; Trask 1993). *Flor's* words speak to this particular point of contention, again between individual and collective conceptions of the work. She explained, "There are things that correspond to us women and it is good that women are together. But [there are] others that are for both, men and women. If only we women gather to talk about things that correspond to both, then the men will be jealous and problems will start because it is not parejo." During the MIM assemblies, several indigenous women participants requested that certain of the workshops in the communities, such as those on land tenure, include both women *and* men.

In August 2004, I attended a public talk by one of the founders and principal coordinators of the MIM, anthropologist Mercedes Olivera, whose long trajectory and work I respect a great deal. Her talk was part of a conference, "Chiapas 10 Years Later," and was ostensibly about the situation of indigenous women since the uprising. However, she used the space to attack the Zapatistas. Although it is clearly her choice to deviate from the expected analysis of changes and difficulties, she focused on the case of a Zapatista community leader from the northern zone who had raped a young woman. The leader was not punished and the young woman did not receive justice. What was surprising is that she used this one example several times while speaking simultaneously of gendered military violence. At the end, what she had emphasized most strongly during this talk was that "nothing had changed," "there is a lot of talk and nothing more," and "they say that the feminists don't respect the culture, we do, but nothing has changed in practice in the lives of the women." I am also angered by these cases of violence against women and impunity, as I discussed in the previous chapter, but I also know cases where Zapatista justice was applied in a manner even stricter than Mexican law for similar aggressions.

For people who have spent time in communities in Chiapas, it is undeniable that there have been massive changes in the lives of women (and men) in the last 10 years, and not only due to the Zapatista influence, but also due to increased immigration that creates female heads of household.[216] In fact, Olivera's years of work against violence against women has been an important influence. However, these kinds of critiques that tend to focus on interpersonal violence in the communities elide other levels of violence or, as in this case, place Zapatista practice on par with the Mexican Federal Army, wiping out the vast difference in structural relations of power. They also anger many of the Zapatista women I have worked with who then question whether feminists are to be trusted. *Alicia*, a health promoter and strong defender of women's rights, shook her head when I read the notes to her and said, "*A poco*, this doesn't exist in their culture as well? Their husbands aren't *machistas*? Why don't they talk about that? Why do they always talk about us? Maybe we [women] should write to denounce the violence there [in the city] too."

The second topic I will discuss is the content of the MIM's workshops and their political project for indigenous women as an example of how despite similar critiques of the state, liberatory projects can also conflict in meaningful ways. During the first assembly I attended, in the afternoon discussion on the history of the struggle of women, one of the advisors announced, "*They* [the Zapatistas] don't let their women come to meetings" [emphasis added]. I was surprised. Not at the complaint that Zapatista women don't attend these meetings, but at the form she expressed her displeasure. I would have discounted this, if it were not expressed many other occasions over the next months. The implication of the statement is interesting. The Zapatistas are men who have the power to

[216] While migration has been ongoing in the highlands for decades, it is still a relatively new phenomenon in the Cañadas, but began to increase rapidly during my fieldwork period.

decide women's mobility. Zapatista women's agency within the movement is erased and their participation in decision-making is denied. We can draw a parallel with the government's charge that the EZLN manipulates its women. Neither of these claims is accurate.

I argue that while the aims of the MIM are laudable, there are serious divergences from the practice and goals of Zapatista autonomy. The MIM is one of the only groups to take up the issue of land rights and co-property for women in their critique of neoliberalism and the state. Their argument that is should be a priority for women's organizing is part of a larger discussion in Latin America for women's land rights (Deere and de Leon 2001). Without rights to property, men can leave women with nothing. In Mexico, men are able to pass their land through the PROCEDE process without consulting their families, and men who emigrate retain the land and women have no access to their assets. Their process is collaborative at the level of research. Women survey their communities and compile the results.[217] In the workshop, they discuss the impact of the issue on their own lives. The second part of the session was to discuss why women have a right to the land. Most of the community women's answers fell into a few categories: we also work the land; for equality and to recognize our rights; to defend the community against PROCEDE; and (for those living in ejidos) to have a voice and vote in the assembly. It was then curious that the advisor added a few reasons that the women hadn't mentioned: we have a right to property and we give life and produce those who work. Explaining this latter reason, she said, "Lift your hands women who have or can have children. This gives rights because mothers are those who work."

[217] An interesting comment by one of the advisors was that people who try to impede their work are "violating their right to information or research."

A the critique of the EZLN's gendered land distribution policies is a fair one, which has been discussed in a communiqués as an area needing further attention. However, land tenure was one of the questions I asked women in the communities during my fieldwork and the general response was that as an issue it was not a priority for women. In this workshop, land was only conceived of as private property within a liberal rights framework. Land was as an asset or commodity, something with a use and exchange value to be owned by individuals. This type of reasoning does not fit into the conception of land within Zapatista autonomy, which holds lands in common for their use by the organization members. Ejidal status of some communities complicates this, but generally, there is another conception of land, one that is collective and also spiritual. While there was concurrence between the MIM and the EZLN in their analyses of the problems caused by transnational neoliberal capitalism, it seemed that there was a critical inability to understand the political project of Zapatista autonomy as a distinct and valid political process.

One possible interesting divergence from this was the Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas, A.C. in San Cristóbal de las Casas, founded by Mercedes Olivera in 2003 because the majority of human rights centers don't consider the rights of woman separately from a general conception of human rights. Although their mission at this time stated they worked "for the citizenship of women," in my interview with two young women staff members, they had an ample vision of what women's rights meant and were open to recognize collective rights. As explained to me, this vision resulted in multiple ideas of justice in their work: Positive Law, Indigenous Law (*consuetudinario*) and Autonomous Law (EZLN). At that time, they had begun to form women's rights promoters in communities and were only just taking on cases. Thus, it was unclear how

they would conceive of this realm of autonomous law, but this seemed like a possible site of convergence.

CONVERGENCES, COLLABORATIONS, AND POSSIBILITY

Due to the similar focus on demands for individual and collective rights, relationships have been more constructive between the EZLN and other indigenous groups, such as the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and the National Coordination of Indigenous Women (CONAMI). CONAMI was founded in August 1997 after a national Encuentro in Oaxaca, creating a distinct space for indigenous women's analysis and reflection. The Declaration of the First National Encounter of Indigenous Women states, "Our rights as women continue to be violated inside the government and its institutions, as well as in our communities due to the existence of usos y costumbres that are an attack on our dignity" (Lara and Montes 2002:5). Like the EZLN, the focus of the organization is both local and national in scope. One part of their mission is to support autonomy and women's participation in communities and organizations on priority areas such as the training and formation of promoters of indigenous women's rights, reproductive health, and domestic violence. This training included the study of national and international legal instruments for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women. The second goal was to "sensitize" indigenous peoples and national society in Mexico about respecting the rights of indigenous women. Indigenous women were able to intervene in political, social, and cultural processes through CONAMI and retained a relation of solidarity with Zapatista women.[218]

In 2004, I discussed the MIM workshops and my research project with a doctor who worked with the *Casa de la Mujer* in Palenque. She had been a part of several of feminist groups in the past, but said she felt rejected in those spaces. She worked for

[218] See Blackwell 2006 for an in-depth discussion.

decades on health promotion with indigenous women. She had been subject to critique over conflicting views of feminist and women's issues. She said she passed through a long process of self-reflection about that work, and her role in attempting to map external agendas onto local processes, but there were lingering tensions from previous encounters. She said she was angry with the EZLN. "They don't let us grow. They're in processes of change, but for us women, they don't let us grow." The contentious relationship between EZLN and feminist movements and organizations is predicated on some of the mistakes that this doctor brought up, but also from the poor treatment in the past by threatened Zapatista men and a certain kind of disdain expressed by Marcos ("we don't do empowerment").

After issuing the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle issued in June 2005 and the launching of the Other Campaign, the EZLN held meetings with other indigenous, campesino and civil society organizations. Within this context, there was a public exchange of letters in the pages of daily newspaper *La Jornada*. The first letter from COLEM, COFEMO, the Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas, AC y the Feminario was printed as part of a news item penned by Rosa Rojas about the past expulsions of feminist groups from EZLN communities.[219] The letter explained, "We've never understood why, without any explanation, some of our NGOs were asked to leave the Zapatista regions and communities where we worked, even though the projects we were carrying out were designed together with the authorities, discussed with the communities and administrated with transparency." A response and apology to this letter came in the form of a postscript in a communiqué by Marcos addressing the reasons why

219 "El EZLN expulsó de sus zonas de influencia a grupos feministas," Rosa Rojas, *La Jornada*, September 7, 2005.

the EZLN rejects dialogue with political parties.[220] He discusses these and other errors as ones committed by the politico-military structure in the past and the shift to the JBG, as a way to avoid these actions in the future. "We sincerely hope that the error we committed, and that we publicly recognize, won't detain you in your work in the defense and promotion of the rights of indigenous and non-indigenous women, and that you find in your hearts the goodness to pardon our past idiocies (clearly in the understanding that we promise not to fall back into them)."

However, there are deeper political cleavages that preclude women's participation with these groups outside of the framework of regional projects. First, while it is true that some Zapatista women would like to participate, as members of the EZLN they know that their presence would be viewed as representing for the whole movement, and this is too much of a risk. By inviting participation and solidarity on their terrain, the Zapatistas can evaluate the proposed projects within their autonomy process. The charge that "they don't let their women come" denies Zapatista women agency within their movement and recalls the government's charges in 1998 that "they send the women out to fight the military." There is a hidden presumption that men are the real leaders of the movement.

In 2005, I attended and translated during a meeting between feminist theorist Chandra Mohanty and a group of feminist women in San Cristóbal. Many of the women present had been in Chiapas since the 1980s, and had founded some of the NGOs mentioned above to address issues of violence against women in general. After listening to the women's discussion on their trajectories, work and difficulties, she asked astutely, "Without indigenous women, what is your political project?" What is the political

---

[220] "Preferimos ser sectarios a que nos llamen bribones," Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, *La Jornada*, September 8, 2005

project or vision of feminist organizations, NGOs, and international feminist solidarity activists without indigenous women as its object in Chiapas?

The second issue is not one of representation, but of distinct political projects. Certainly, feminists are correct in questioning the commitment to change in gendered power relations based on experiences of guerrilla in other parts of Latin America. Despite the critical contributions of women, traditional nationalist and Marxist movements were unable to incorporate difference and the elision of gender questions caused many women to drop out and organize women's social movements (Kampwirth 2002, Shayne 2004), including Chiapas.[221] However, if feminist organizations are championing the rights of women without a concomitant demand for collective rights, then their vision will not only be at odds with Zapatista women, but would undercut the force of the autonomy project.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the state presence in Chiapas and some of the particular ways that indigenous women continue to be constructed as a project. I also briefly examined the way the NGOs now serve as para-state organizations and also direct their programs to women. Finally, I briefly discussed some of the tensions between the EZLN and feminist organizations in Chiapas. Although the later are in solidarity with the aims of the EZLN, the ways that they conceive of indigenous women subjects creates divergent agendas. While the power relations between these groups and the EZLN are obviously distinct, each project carries within the seeds of containment of the Zapatista autonomy project.

[221] Personal communication, *Irene*, July 2, 2005.

Chapter Seven: The Seductions of Multicultural Citizenship and the Challenges of/to Zapatista Autonomy

> It is too constricting to say that you must always think outside the box; whether you are thinking inside or outside the box, you are still letting the box dictate your thoughts, are you not? What you are not acknowledging is the honest fact that "the box" itself is figmentary, illusory. And as long as one continues to act in reaction to this perceived set of dictates, one cannot be truly original in thought.
>
> —Erica Amelia Smith
> An Address as to the Nature of the "Proper" Uses of Technology[222]

In the preceding chapters, I have attempted to present the complicated terrain and zone of contact that is the EZLN struggle in Chiapas. In this conclusion, I outline what I see as the main interventions of this dissertation. On May 15, 2005, Mexican President Vicente Fox, created a controversy and drew charges of racism while defending the rights of Mexican immigrants in the US, stating that they do jobs "not even blacks would take." About a month later, the Zapatistas called a red alert and issued the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle and at the same time, the Mexican postal service issued commemorative stamps of Memín Pinguín, a popular comic character, whose exaggerated features and dark skin are remarkable similar to "Sambo" characters in the US. This prompted more responses from the US, including the odd couple of Jesse Jackson and George Bush. The Mexican reaction was an almost across the board defense of Memín, spurred in no small part by George Bush accusing Mexico of racism. Most Mexicans, including intellectuals like Enrique Krauze, used culture and cultural difference as the defense. Memín was simply part of Mexican culture, and was something historic at any rate.

[222] Quoted in *Steampunk*, Issue #2, 2007.

A local urban Zapatista friend came by my house one day and discussed various things, including the red alert, but then the topic turned to Memín. He was very upset that the US government had made a statement. I assured him that I too thought it was a hypocritical position for George Bush since he rarely, if ever, condemned racism in the US. However, I tried to make an argument that these should be two separate issues and the fact that Bush had weighed in on the issue should not divert from the racism in the images. My friend was also unconvinced and used the culture argument. When I asked then why he would complain about the film character "La India Maria," he answered, "because that is racist."

However, a telling moment for me that undermined the cultural defense was an episode of *Vida TV* on June 24, shortly after the controversy emerged. That day while flipping through channels, images flashed on the screen that gave me pause. The program is a variety show with a large studio audience and aired at 1:30 pm right before the news on *Canal de las Estrellas*, a Televisa channel. There were five women dancing on stage, dressed in elegant dresses. Suddenly, a man came on stage dressed in a black suit with black face, black gloves, a nappy hair wig and white eyes, red lips. He tries to seduce the women and at first, they act repulsed and reject him as obviously too "ugly." He then began yelling, "I've just become a millionaire," repeatedly reaching into his pockets for money, and suddenly the women were interested in him. It was a moment that crystallized dominant discourses of race/class/gender, including the idea that black bodies exist and are now perfectible through class.

The discussion around Memín and the black-face example expose the ways that culture and race are bound up together. Mestizaje removes responsibility for racism. In many conversations with solidarity activists from Mexico City, I was told, racism "it's what you have in your country." However, white supremacy does not have to be white;

mestizaje functions in a similar fashion. Interestingly, when I spoke to Zapatista friends in the communities in the Cañadas a few weeks later about Memín, which they had never seen before, they interpreted the *character* as a victim of racism. As one woman said, "Poor boy. He is poor and dark and the others make fun of him for this. It is racism."

I have made several interrelated arguments throughout this dissertation that colonial gendered racial hierarchies still haunt Mexico despite the seeming rupture of mestizaje. Race and gender play a central role in the articulation of difference through culture. Throughout this dissertation, I have shown the centrality of racialized gendered bodies to the process of the production of the nation and logics of governance. Although indigenous women's bodies have been central throughout, the ways that they have been (re)productive have shifted as modes of governance have changed. As Grosz notes, however:

> [her body] is the strategic target of systems of codification, supervision and constraint, it is also because the body and its energies and capacities exert an uncontrollable, unpredictable threat to a regular, systematic mode of social organization. As well as being the site of knowledge/power, the body is thus also a site of resistance, for it exerts a recalcitrance, and always entails the possibility of a counterstrategic reinscription, for it is capable of being self-marked, self-represented in alternative ways (1990: 64).

Zapatista women are not simply bodies, territories to be conquered or made to produce, but they are political subjects and active participants in the reinvention of space itself. They challenge both neoliberal attempts to bring them into the fold of the nation-state and in communities where their participation is also necessary. This type of sentiment emerges in certain discourses of rights in the communities that place the burden on the individual woman for change. "She is free to participate now and, and if she doesn't want to then it's her own fault." I contend that Zapatista women are using their own movement's tactics of refusal in situations where the promise of gender equity

is being undermined, thus challenging normative Zapatista subjectivities while strengthening autonomy.

There are charges that the Zapatista movement is reformist and that their type of autonomy and refusal of relations with the state could fit well with neoliberal practice by taking pressure off the state to provide. However, throughout the dissertation I have shown that the Zapatista movement and its autonomy project present a particular challenge to the neoliberal project and its attendant multicultural policies, particularly due to the movement's multivalent nationalism and anti-representational politics. Zapatista autonomy is no longer about negotiating autonomy within a state frame—it is about "diverse ways of governing" rather than "governing diversity."

Mexican historian Juan Pedro Viqueira (2006) recently wrote that there is no "Indian problem" in Mexico; the problem is essentially one of discrimination and inequality deriving from holding on to colonial structures. Social change is simply a problem of building a "shared citizenship" based on diversity; autonomy is the wrong path because it seeks homogeneity within communities and regions. His (and others') proposal of how to reformulate the nation, leaves the matter of decolonization to the side and elides the hierarchies structured within the citizenship he champions. It has become fashionable in some academic and intellectual circles to decry the perceived excess of the Zapatista's desire for autonomy.[223] However, I concur that there is no "Indian problem"; it is much more than that, as the Zapatistas and many other movements around the world

[223] Wendy Brown speaks to this type of limited analysis: "…as the powers constituting late modern configurations of capitalism and the state have grown more complex, more pervasive, and simultaneously more diffuse and difficult to track, both critical analyses of their power and a politics rooted in such critique have tended to recede. Indeed, Western leftists have largely forsaken analyses of the liberal state and capitalism as sites of *domination* and have focused instead on their implication in political and economic *inequalities*. At the same time, progressives have implicitly assumed the relatively unproblematic instrumental value of the state and capitalism in redressing such inequalities" (1995:10).

show through their demands, which are often inconceivable in terms of liberal institutions, where the subject of law is the individual.

The movement also presents a challenge to other liberatory projects, such as feminist organizations whose focus may elide the collective subject of Zapatista identity. However, the collectivity present within Zapatista identity does not turn on essentialized notions of indigeneity. Jackson characterizes recourse to the language of authenticity as dangerous, “It explains what is most constraining and potentially self-destructive about identity politics” (2005:12). I contend that Zapatista political identity, by not having recourse to discourses of authenticity as grounds for autonomy and demands presents a stronger challenge to neoliberal multiculturalism.

What can this example of a more open-ended identity represent and can the Zapatista autonomy project offer any insight into processes of creating a national community, not based on hierarchies of race? Within the liberal structures lives the past conditional, the “what could have been,” the promise of liberation deferred. Within the Zapatista autonomy project is the seed of a future conditional, “the what could be,” which is not premised on reforming liberal institutions or discourses, and of creating alternative temporalities and spatialities to neo-liberalism. The Zapatista struggle not aimed at reconciling difference in Mexico, but creating other types of social relations within Mexico and beyond borders to form a different type of community, a new Mexico and transnational community. Thus, the novelty is Mexico, but a different Mexico.

At the heart of this autonomy project are indigenous women who are forging new political subjectivities that grow out of the practice and theorization of the movement, of which they are a part. I argue that this is a nonliberal understanding of the self, as individual but always already inscribed within a collectivity; these are in tension, but not separate (Speed 2008b). The concept of parejo, which I have argued is related to, but not

the same as complementarity, is predicated on a sense of equivalence, but not liberal equality. It is a concept that already exist in other rural and indigenous communities, however, I argue that linked to a Zapatista political subjectivity, this concept has become a central part of autonomous governance logics. What women offer in this autonomy can indeed be work that helps the struggle materially, but we also know that participation and visibility is important to the struggle and counter many of the arguments for denying indigenous peoples autonomy (that they suppress women through traditional governance, etc.). The difference is that women are not just participating in already existing structures, but are also creating those spaces of participation.

As I have discussed, the major gains for women in the movement have been at the level of insurgents and political leaders. However, it is at the community level, where the messy and contradictory politics and conflicts of everyday life play out that the changes are more profound. Change cannot be simply decreed, social relations are changed through practice. One of the battlegrounds of the conflict that I have described in the dissertation has been gender contestations in physical *and* discursive space, in the affective as well as material relations. In a special section of *La Jornada's Ojarasca* supplement from January 2008 (#129), entitled, "The indigenous struggles are the women's," the editors state that:

> The indigenous women are providing a face and a name for the struggle of their people throughout the Americas. From the social, even civilizational point of view, it is one of the most revolutionary and transformative aspects of the present in the progress of the peoples.

The visibility and participation of indigenous women is important in both the neoliberal and autonomy projects. In the former, they are to be mobilized, forming themselves for governance. The multiculturalism of the neoliberal state is exemplified by the visibility of indigenous women, such as Xochitl Gálvez, mentioned earlier. During

his presidency, Vicente Fox frequently made appearances on television surrounded by indigenous women, especially campesinas. As I discussed in Chapter Five, Zapatista women's participation and refusal are critical for developing the terms of the autonomy project itself.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

I plan to continue this research around the differences between gender equity in Zapatista regions and plan to explore more fully the issue of women's refusal as another strategy to make gains toward women's rights. I will also expand my research on state and NGO development projects, hoping to assess the actual effects of those projects on women and men in communities.[224]

One issue that emerged during my research that I was not able to investigate at the time was the increasing emigration from the Cañadas. Previously, community members had left to work as season labor in other southern states of Mexico, but the new trends was of people, mostly men, traveling to northern Mexico and the US. *Remesas*, remittances from the US increased 40% from 2003 to 2004. Anecdotal evidence also increased, from stories of where the *coyotes* lived, to women I knew whose husbands had left and didn't return. There were also stories of women who left husbands and children behind, although I did not personally know of any. The number of people I spoke with

---

[224] For example, the program "Opportunity NYC" began in 2007 with the goal of breaking the cycle of poverty in New York. This was modeled on Mexico's program, which I discussed in Chapter Six. How can critiques from Mexico be made visible in the US? The press release reads: "The Mexican *Oportunidades* program has helped to revolutionize poverty reduction work by creating a model that allows recipients to make investments for the future," said Dr. Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, which provided the initial research and development capital for the pilot program. "The results of *Oportunidades* have been so remarkable that the conditional cash transfer model has been replicated in twenty countries, including Argentina, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jamaica and Turkey. And now, Mayor Bloomberg and his Administration have the foresight and ingenuity to create a pilot program in New York City that is Created by R Lawson modeled on this program. The Rockefeller Foundation is proud to support this very important learning exchange and the *Opportunity NYC* pilot." Press Release New York City Office of the Mayor, April 24, 2007, "Mayor Bloomberg, Delegation Visit Mexico's *Oportunidades* Program."

who began asking me how to cross the border and how to get a job in the US was sizable. This is another sign that some bodies are "expendable"; migration is almost never voluntary. This trend was beginning to have effect on in communities, creating more female headed households and has the potential to shift gendered relations of power locally as women are forced to do different types of labor.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SOLIDARITY, ACTIVISM AND METHOD

Lesbian antiracist feminist Minnie Bruce Pratt began her speech at the 1996 OutWrite Conference by stating, "Our imaginations are in thrall to the institutions of oppression." One of the main interventions of the concept of the militant research is the call to work in immanence, to trust in the "not knowing." However, this can be a tricky proposition. Maria Lugones speaks to this:

> There is a fear of critiques of orthodoxy. When tradition seems a haven from cultural and psychological devastation, it is hard to honor critical stances as it is hard to see the dangers of orthodoxy and conservatism from within and under siege. Yet those of color who are culturally homeless understand that orthodoxy is itself dangerous, a form of self-destruction, an ossification of culture that aids the ethnocentric racist push towards culture as ornament (2003:61).

In reflecting on my research process, the area I believe was not as fully developed as I would have liked was collaboration. This was partly due to the sweeping changes underway in the communities. Although there was collaboration with community members in the development of the questions, shared concerns and the coproduction of knowledge through discussions and evaluation of material, in the future, I would push more strongly to make the process even more transparent. My particular position in the communities, as a researcher militant, meant that I had a privileged position of insight and access, at the same time as being enveloped more in certain kinds of gendered relations of power over time. My incorporation into these structures of power also afforded me the experience of how women's actions are restricted in some areas and not

others. I believe that this type of research helped me come to different conclusions about local processes—I do not think that I would have understood women's actions as refusal, if I had not also been present as a militant, as an active political subject during my research.

I also became more aware of the dangers of research militancy, in making transparent our allegiances. The campaign to discredit Zapatista autonomy continues and a common critique is that the JBG is essentially an arm of the military side of the EZLN. I gave a talk at a seminar "Analyzing the Caracoles," organized by CIESAS-Mexico City in November, 2004. There seemed to be several currents of thought within the room, one of which emerged from a group of professors and students tied to el Colegio de México who seemed intent on finding ways to undermine anything positive being said about the Zapatistas. One of the researchers had not ever actually done research with the Zapatistas and one of their students did not have express authorization (he conducted research as a human rights observer). After my talk, I was challenged by one of those students who said that I was a foreign academic who had just turned up, and was obviously having a romance with the EZLN.[225] I was later surprised and upset when I inadvertently saw myself quoted in an article by Marcos Estrada Saavedra from that institution on the hegemony and supposed military involvement of the EZLN in the juntas. He noted that I mentioned the existence of a Comité de Vigilancia during my talk, which proved that the military wing of the EZLN was running the JBG.

However, this committee, which takes its name from an ejidal structure, was mentioned in a 2004 communiqué by Subcomandante Marcos "Como leer un video part

[225] The woman tried to publicly undermine me by bringing up an incident of conflict with the community down the road from La Garrucha to discount my contention that the JBG was working more or less well in the region. When I pointed out that I had known the people involved since 1996, and that the conflict was about something else, her professor stepped in to attack me on another point.

2," and was not a secret structure. Anyone visiting could gather as much information. I have known many of the people who served as comité in La Garrucha for 12 years and they are not military leaders. While there is certainly still some military involvement, to anyone who has spent time working with the Zapatista movement, the effort to shift governance to civilian communities and authorities is being done in good faith and the results of this process are apparent. These types of critiques would be easy to overlook, were they not also part of counterinsurgency strategies.[226] Countering these kinds of attacks with ethnographic evidence is another way that our engaged research can benefit both the communities we work with and our own propositions.

These experiences politicize notions of our shifting locations, of home/field and call up Visweswaran's (1998) notion of "homework." This brings me back to my earlier discussion of why I believe that conceptions of militant research must also involve transformation at home and the critical reflection on our own positionality. What does our analysis, our work offer others? Also important is the question of what is offered to us in return? This brings up questions of mutuality and common interests, which is central to my work and commitments.

[226] Part of my own "ethnographobia" involved anxieties over what I should and should not be writing.

Postscript: Repositioning and Other Geographies

I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires.

—Anonymous graffiti, Paris 1968

In June 2005, at the end of my field research period, the Zapatista red alert forced me to spend time than usual in San Cristóbal. I passed my days combing through various archives and walking around town when not embroiled in intense conversations with longtime friends, activists, and the occasional Zapatista about the meaning of the recently-issued Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, and the impending changes of *La Otra Campaña* (The Other Campaign). The summer is the rainy season, and it meant that mornings were full, but afternoons not quite so, when the clouds circled in bringing the feel of rain in the air, streets soon becoming small rivers.

One day, I went to lunch at Las Estrellas after a morning at the archives of the Diocese of San Cristóbal. I first ate at the restaurant in 1995 with friends who had relocated to Chiapas after the uprising. Cheap, filling and usually a place where solidarios went, it could be counted on to have hidden beer hidden for sale, and at least one table of hippie artisans, some in the pay of the police, exchanging information to support their drug habits.

I walked in that damp day and it was dark and slightly chilly, almost empty. Only one other table was occupied and in good local fashion, I sat down nearby. They were an odd group, even for this place—an older US couple talking to a young Dutch tourist. Also seated at the table was another man, maybe 35, who looked like he was probably from the area. The older gringo was talking, loudly, as if there were no one around to hear, or care, about his conversation. He said he was from the US, but had been coming

to San Cristóbal for years. "We've still been coming. But, since the State Department warning, no Americans come here because they're afraid of the violence." He pointed to the young man to his left, silent during the monologue, and says, "Now, does he look like a ferocious Indian to you?" The gringo chuckled to himself, and answered, "No, of course not."

In that moment that I felt the anxiety about the current red alert swell again, an anxiety so different from the past when the fear was of state violence. What would it mean to take this struggle, uproot it from this place, and take it traveling, on the road to meet the illusive "civil society"? What might be lost? What could be gained in its place? Was the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle and the initiation of La Otra Campaña the end or another beginning? Although the new initiative responded to the critiques that the EZLN had always accepted support from other groups and struggles, but never offered theirs in return, that summer of 2005, many of us who had walked with the struggle for over a decade were not so sure this was the right path. It was hard to sift out the reflex fears about the supposed fragility of liberatory projects and the possible contradictions with our own political positions, from what might be legitimate risks.

To carry out this kind of tour during an election year was another risk. A generative part of the Zapatista movement's political process has been its imagination, and the ability to invent a terrain of struggle outside of the terms of the state. After the alert was lifted, I visited communities to drop off transcripts and discuss my research. I was unable to meet with many people, but there was a strange moment of openness. I traveled to the caracol in Morelia with a few friends from Estación Libre, a solidarity project of people of color from the US. We met with the JBG and members asked us if we had any questions for *them*, about their struggle or anything else. They said, "Please ask us, we want to talk."

*   *   *

Slightly more than a year later, I was standing in a colonia, *Blanca Navidad*, White Christmas, on that side of the border, a handful of miles from the Río Bravo and the militarized border zone. It snowed that December in 2004 when these landless and poor men and women squatted this patch of hard dirt on the outskirts of Nuevo Laredo. I was standing in the colonia, listening to a mestizo man from Mexico's North, La Otra's Delegate Zero, who claimed he was born 22 years ago in the jungle of Chiapas, whose first words to the crowd gathered to hear him and share their stories are "we are the indigenous people." My automatic cynical intellectual response was to ask who is this "we"—who can come and who can go?

Yet, as I stood in the colonia with our motley Austin group of Chicanos, gringos and Salvadoreños, along with compañeros and compañeras, some from Chiapas and some we had just met from that border zone, I realize that it is the engagement with the Zapatista struggle that brought me here as well. In Nuevo Laredo, we drove to the Finsa plant and then to the river that drinks up its chemical waste and now smells of death. We listened to the Blanca Navideños narrate their struggle, the government attempts to burn them out and how the women sabotaged the bulldozers sent to flatten their homes. We talked to journalists from La Mañana, who only a few weeks before had their one of their own gunned down in their newspaper office, but they were not deterred from writing about the corruption, the impunity, and here in the colonia, the hope.

Six months later, in May 2007, we went back to Blanca Navidad, a larger group including Mexicanos working in the US. During this visit to that border space between worlds—not so separate really—three comandantes who were present, including a woman who had been my first contact for women's work in Chiapas. They had been there for a week, talking to community members, learning from these other struggles, and

helping set up a clinic. Those of us from el Norte—Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and the Valley—made our presentations about who we were and what political work we were doing. The maquiladora workers took over and discussed their struggles with the working conditions and the owners, the pollution and the violence. Then the community talked about their needs and what they could offer, about how we could collaborate. The community women mentioned wanting to form a soccer team and asked for collaboration. Knowing my soccer obsession, I felt the eyes of the comandanta *and* of my comrades from Austin on me, laughing. At that moment, it felt right to be there, it felt like home. It is another geography, an alternative cartography; an imagined map, but one that exists nonetheless, one of open possibilities. The most significant piece of Zapatista autonomy is there in Chiapas, where new social relations are being forged through practice. Perhaps as some predict, that autonomy will one day no longer exist. That cannot alter what has already changed and what new possibilities have been called forth.

In February 2007, I attended a lecture by British journalist Gary Younge in which he outlined five ways that he sees the United States as particular. One of those was that we have a dream, the "American" dream, a dream that functions as a marker of hope for a better life. It is this dream, perhaps not so particular to the US, which the Zapatistas also inspire. A dream not just for a life with enough food to put on the table, not just for a dream deferred, for the children or for someone else, but a dream for a better life with dignity for all in the present. A dream not born of the paternalism of "helping" those who are more needy, but in the visceral understanding that social change and social justice must be for us as well. As graffiti on a wall in Colombia in the 1980s welcoming the Pope on his visit noted, "*El pueblo no vive del papa solo*." These dreams are nothing exceptional; we find them all over the globe. What was perhaps exceptional at this

particular moment in time was the resonance of this dream; it became a globalized dream in a world of globalizing nightmare. A dream made flesh.

* * *

> No me has dicho tu nombre—susurró él, sin esperar realmente una respuesta.
>
> Tú tampoco—le llegó, no obstante, la voz de ella un aleteo de colibríes—pero eso no importa.
>
> —Michel Encinosa Fu, *Niños de neón*.

There is a seductive beauty in the blank page. If you listen closely, you can hear all the words, ideas rising up, some *sotto voce*, others demanding their place. It gives me pause this threshold of naming, fixing. By what operation of power do I select some and not others? What criteria am I using? Whose criteria will win? What is lost in this act? What is gained? Behind this, the quiet power of the imagined correct answer, or the perfect response.

Utopias are not just dreamt. It is in voicing and writing these dreams that we can begin to dialogue, to fight, to concur, to move just that little bit further in whatever direction we might be moving, or to pull back for a moment and choose another route. These words are a gesture and an opening toward a dream, and an invitation to a discussion. Now forty years later, it is also a reminder that though the paving stones may have been replaced, the beach remains.

Appendix A

A Brief Trip Through the Archives

I conducted the bulk of my archival research in the summer of 2005 during the EZLN Red Alert. I was wary of visiting government offices and decided to wait until my fieldwork period was finished. Although there were extensive resources on the fincas in many regions of Chiapas, there was little published on the Cañadas in comparison. I went to the Diocese of San Cristóbal with the intent of looking for traces of early gender relations in the fincas in the Cañadas region, and other general statistical data since the Church had been a central institution since Conquest. I asked for the region of Ocosingo (formerly Chilón). I was awed at the massive stack of folders they handed me. Each folder was nominally marked, stuffed with mixed papers, including some letters from the seventeenth century in Old Spanish script almost impossible to decipher. What drew me in most were the descriptions, written by the priests and the elites exposing the relations of power of an ostensibly long-ago Chiapas, one that seems not so different than just "before '94."

The other historical data I planned to consult were the land tenure records at the National Agrarian Registry (RAN) Office in the capital Tuxtla Gutiérrez, to gather a picture of the ejidal process in the region. However, this key gain for the poor and landless of the rural sector arrived decades late in Chiapas, and when it did, the process was incomplete. This was an underlying cause of many social movements in the state in the later part of the century. The process of reviewing records at the RAN was more formal than the Diocese. I had to copy my documents, fill out long forms about what I wanted to see and why I wanted to see it. After two trips, I was finally allowed entry to the building and office that housed the documents, only to find that the boxes, described by a historian friend as "treasure chests," had been damaged by the floods of 2004. That office was located next to the canal, and many boxes were kept on the floor. I was able to access a few of the records I needed,

but was informed that I might have better luck in Mexico City, "if people remembered to send the copies to that office." A few weeks later, I went to the RAN in Mexico City, accreditation was fast, and I was able to review the petitions and decisions and some extra correspondence. The notes, letters, and other ephemera of the boxes in Tuxtla were gone forever.

As I reviewed the documents, studiously copying the minutiae of notes and maps, I felt the absences and traces of stories pushing me to follow trajectories into other folders. I had been struck in my interviews by the phrase *solicitando parcela* (soliciting the government for a parcel of land) that rose out of the rapid Tzeltal, words oft repeated in conversations of "before '94." I imagined the community members making the trip down to Tuxtla, *Doña Ale*, holding on to her mother's hand as they moved from bureaucrat to bureaucrat looking for an answer, for their papers, for their rights. The records themselves, a jumble of forms and dates, resisted a linear reading, but I felt a connection as I read the names on the papers and recalled the stories of struggle that inscribed them into this place.

Appendix B

19 mayo 1975

Los CC Francisco Gómez
Representante ejido San José Patihuitz
Municipio Chilón
Solicitaron el plan definitivo Carmelo Benilla

Ponencia Reciente gira de trabajo realizado por el C. Secretaria de esta dependencia SRA le fue entregada

Ponencia
Ejido San José Patihuitz, Municipio Chilón, Chiapas

Presidente de la Republica Mexicana
Lic. Luis Echeverría Álvarez

A travez de esta reunión que logramos tener aquí, en la ciudad de México para desarroyar un plan de trabajo en la Selva Lacandona al mismo tiempo plantearle los problemas de nuestro ejido y de la selva Lacandona.

1. Primeramente carecemos de nuestro plan definitivo, que hasta la fecha no hemos adquirido.

2. De acuerdo a la resolución presidencial nuestro ejido fue dotado de 3050 has; y únicamente hemos recibido 2573 h haciendo falta 477 h. las cuales hemos estado gestionando pero hasta la fecha no nos han resuelto nada.

3. Desde hace tiempo hemos solicitado una escuela pre-fabricada de tres aulas ante el CAPCE; ya que contamos con un fondo común que alcanza la suma de 16000.00 (pesos); a la vez se ha hecho el plan de diversión para dicha escuela en el año 1974; pero de esto tampoco nos han resuelto nada.

4. Hemos solicitado un Centro de Salud, que urgentemente necesita esta zona, pero hasta la fecha no nos han concedido.

5. Nuestro ejido carece de agua potable, razón por la cual los habitantes padecen enfermedades ya que se toma el agua en los arroyos; le hacemos notar que hay un nacedero de agua propicia para dotar agua potable a la comunidad.

6. A travez de esta ponencia solicitamos ante Usted la electrificación de esta zona.

7. Tomando en cuenta que en la superficie de nuestro ejido existe un banco con suficiente graba y agua para la fabricación de bloks; le pedimos que nos instale una fabrica para hacer estos materiales.

8. Contamos con una tienda rural Conasupo, pero esta no esta suficientemente dotada de la mercancía necesaria, ya que hasta los artículos de primera necesidad han dejado de enviarlos.

Com. Ejidal
Secretario Francisco Gómez Hernández

(Registro Agrario Nacional, México Distrito Federal)

May 19, 1975

The CC Francisco Gómez
Representative of the Ejido of San José Patihuitz
Municipality of Chilón
Requesting the definitive plan Carmelo Benilla

During a recent working tour realized by the Secretary of the SRA the following document was delivered:

Official document from:
Ejido of San José Patihuitz, Municipality of Chilón, Chiapas

President of the Mexican Republic
Lic. Luis Echeverría Álvarez

Through the meeting that we were able to have here in the Mexico City to develop a working map in the Lacandon Jungle while simultaneously present to you the problems of our Ejido and of the Lacandon Jungle.

1. First we lack a definitive map, which as of now we have yet to acquire.

2. In agreement with the presidential resolution, our ejido was comprised of as 3,050 hectares; and we have only received 2573 has. leaving 477 has. that we are owed and which we have been attempting to process, but as of right now we have had no results.

3. For a long time we have been requesting a pre-fabricated three-classroom school from CAPCE; we have accumulated a common fund that has reached 16,000 (pesos); at the same time we have made the plan of investment for said school in 1974, but this has also not been successful.

4. We have requested a health center that this zone urgently needs, but as of right now this has not been conceded.

5. Our ejido is lacking potable water, this causes the inhabitants to suffer diseases since one must drink from the creeks; we bring to your attention that there is a spring sufficient to provide potable water to the community.

6. Through this document we request from you the electrification of this zone.

7. Taking into account that within the area of our ejido there is a gravel quarry with enough gravel and water to make concrete blocks; we ask that you install a factory for making these materials

8. We have a rural CONASUPO store, but it does not have enough of the necessary merchandise since they no longer send even the basic items.

Comisariado Ejidal
Secretary Francisco Gómez Hernández

(National Agrarian Registry, Mexico City)

Appendix C

Ley Revolucionaria de Mujeres

En su justa lucha por la liberación de nuestro pueblo, el EZLN incorpora a las mujeres en la lucha revolucionaria sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, con el único requisito de hacer suyas las demandas del pueblo explotado y su compromiso a cumplir y hacer cumplir las leyes y reglamentos de la revolución. Además, tomando en cuenta la situación de la mujer trabajadora en México, se incorporan sus justas demandas de igualdad y justicia en la siguiente Ley Revolucionaria de Mujeres.

Primera.- Las mujeres, sin importar su raza, credo o filiación política tienen derecho a participar en la lucha revolucionaria en el lugar y grado que su voluntad y capacidad determinen.

Segunda.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a trabajar y recibir un salario justo.

Tercera.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a decidir el número de hijos que pueden tener y cuidar.

Cuarta.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a participar en asuntos de la comunidad y tener cargo si son elegidas libre y democráticamente.

Quinta.- Las mujeres y sus hijos tienen derecho a atención primaria en su salud y alimentación.

Sexta.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a la educación.

Séptima.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a elegir su pareja y a no ser obligadas por la fuerza a contraer matrimonio.

Octava.- Ninguna mujer podrá ser golpeada o maltratada físicamente ni por familiares ni por extraños. Los delitos de intento de violación serán castigados severamente.

Novena.- Las mujeres podrán ocupar cargos de dirección en la organización y tener grados militares en las fuerzas armadas revolucionarias.

Décima.- Las mujeres tendrán todos los derechos y obligaciones que señalan las leyes y los reglamentos revolucionarios.

[Published in El Despertador Mexicano by the EZLN and distributed in San Cristóbal de las Casas on January 1, 1994]

Women's Revolutionary Law

In the just fight for the liberation of our people, the EZLN incorporates women into the revolutionary struggle, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, requiring only that they share the demands of the exploited people and that they commit to the laws and regulations of the revolution. In addition, taking into acount the situation of the woman worker in Mexico, the revolution supports their just demands for equality and justice in the following Women's Revolutionary Law.

First: Women, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, have the right to participate in the revolutionary struggle in a way determined by their desire and capacity.

Second: Women have the right to work and receive a just salary.

Third: Women have the right to decide the number of children they will have and care for.

Fourth: Women have the right to participate in the affairs of the community and hold positions of authority if they are freely and democratically elected.

Fifth: Women and their children have the right to primary attention in matters of health and nutrition.

Sixth: Women have the right to an education.

Seventh: Women have the right to choose their partner, and are not to be forced into marriage.

Eighth: Women shall not be beaten or physically mistreated by their family members or by strangers. Rape and attempted rape will be severely punished.

Ninth: Women will be able to occupy positions of leadership in the organization and hold military ranks in the revolutionary armed forces.

Tenth: Women will have all the rights and obligations elaborated in the Revolutionary Laws and regulations.

(Translation from Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution, Brooklyn, Autonomedia, 1994)

Appendix D

Himno Zapatista

Estrofa 1
Ya se mira el horizonte
Combatiente zapatista
El cambio marcará
A los que vienen atrás

Coro

Vamos, vamos, vamos, vamos adelante
Para que salgamos en la lucha avante
Porque nuestra Patria grita y necesita
De todo el esfuerzo de los zapatistas

Estrofa 2
Hombres, niños y mujeres
El esfuerzo siempre haremos
Campesinos y obreros
siempre unidos con el pueblo

Coro

Estrofa 3
Nuestro pueblo exige ya
acabar la explotación
nuestra historia dice ya
lucha de liberación

Coro

Estrofa 4
Ejemplares hay que ser
Y seguir nuestra consigna
Que vivamos por la patria
O morir por la libertad

Coro

Zapatista Anthem

First Stanza

Now we can see the horizon
Zapatista combatant
The change will mark
Those that come after us

Chorus

Let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go forward!
To take part in the struggle ahead
Because our Fatherland cries out for and needs
All of the effort of the Zapatistas

Second Stanza

Men, children and women
We will always make the effort
Peasants and workers
All together with the people.

Chorus

Third Stanza

Our people demand now
For exploitation to end
Our history says now
struggle for liberation

Chorus

Fourth Stanza

A model we must be
And keep our slogan
That we shall live for the Fatherland
Or die for freedom

Chorus

Appendix E

National Museum of Popular Cultures, Mexico City, August 2004

From the exhibition "Indigenous Art: A Door to Mexico's Diversity":

Mystical Form, Festive Texture, Ritual Color

The indigenous art of Mexico is diverse. It has a profound significance that is expressed in the particularities of each culture…

The artistic ingenuity of each one of the indigenous peoples satisfies the religious and ceremonial needs. It is abundant and visible. In this way, the originality of the work of art results in the mystical function that it represents; the sphere of art is only the domain for the reinterpretation of the communal symbols.

The pieces that are exhibited in this room have designs with millenary content, with the ancestors and fountain of life.

Their expression synthesizes the soul of a people; the tastes, the ideals, the realities and the imagination to placidly share them with the gods, celebrating life and death.

Mexico is a diverse country; it is a river of cultures in constant movement whose currents are always mixing. Here, the tongue of the indigenous peoples sings. Here, their identity, their ways of thinking and also their territories distinguish one culture from another, one people from another. Here they exhibit their knowledge and creativity through the artistic expression, the technology and with this they strengthen their organization their religious and social practices.

The Mexican nation recognizes its indigenous peoples. We know of the existence of more than 60 indigenous peoples distributed across the breadth and width of the territory of the country. They are more than 12 million Mexicans that you find in almost all the municipalities of the Republic taking care of the forests, jungles, deserts, mountains and plains.

Throughout its history, the indigenous people have contributed their wisdom to Mexico and an invaluable collection of knowledges about their natural surroundings, incorporated within this repository are countless techniques and technologies for the use of their resources and that are embodied in cultural expressions and material objects.

The act of representing everyday life, the life of work and the life of ritual in objects and concrete images converts them in strictly aesthetic pieces in which expressive equivalencies intervene that can be deciphered by means of valuing them as artistic production.

Indigenous Art: A Door to the Diversity in Mexico shows us a diversity of master works that have emerged from the most routine acts of the everyday life of the indigenous peoples. We invite the public to recognize the indigenous peoples in them via a possible universe of visual sensations, forms, textures and colors that harmonically coexist with complex techniques of elaboration and with this personal artistic contribution that transforms each object into a unique and unrepeatable piece. Could it be this, then, a door to the vast world of indigenous art?

Bibliography

Abrams, Philip.
1988 Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State. Journal of Historical Sociology 1(1):58-89.

Agamben, Giorgio
1998 Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

—
2005 State of Exception. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alarcón, Norma
1990 The Theoretical Subjects of 'This Bridge Called My Back' and Anglo-American Feminism. *In* Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color. G. Anzaldúa, ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books.

Alcoff, Linda, Michael Hames-García, Satya P. Mohanty, and Paula M.L. Moya
2006 Identity Politics Reconsidered. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Alexander, M. Jacqui
2005 Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Alonso, Ana María
2004 Conforming Disconformity: "Mestizaje," Hybridity, and the Aesthetics of Mexican Nationalism. Cultural Anthropology 19(4):459-490.

Alvarez, Sonia
1999 Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist Ngo 'Boom'. International Feminist Journal of Politics 1(2):181-209.

Amin, Shahid
1996 Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura 1922-1992. Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.

Anaya Gallardo, Federico
2000 Siempre cerca, siempre lejos: Las fuerzas armadas en México. San Francisco; San Cristóbal, Chiapas; Mexico City: Global Exchange; CIEPAC; Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G
1991 Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London; New York: Verso.

Angel-Ajani, Asale
2004 Expert Witness: Notes toward Revisiting the Politics of Listening. Anthropology and Humanism 29(2):133-144.

Anzaldúa, Gloria
1991 Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Aretxaga, Begoña
1997 Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

—
2000 Playing Terrorist: Ghastly Plots and the Ghostly State. Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies 1(1):43-58.

Ballí, Cecilia
2003 Ciudad De La Muerte. Texas Monthly, June Pp 14-18.

Ballinas, Juan
1951 El Desierto de los Lacandones: Memorias, 1876-1877. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico: Publicaciones del Ateneo de Chiapas.

Basauri, Carlos
1931 Tojolabales, Tzeltales y Mayas: Breves apuntes sobre antropología, etnografía y lingüistica. Mexico City: Taller Gráfico de la Nación.

Basch, Linda G., Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc
1994 Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States. Langhorne, Pa.: Gordon and Breach.

Basu, Amrita
2000 Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women's Movements. Meridians 1(1):68-84.

Beneria, Lourdes

2001 Shifting the Risk, New Employment Patterns, Informalization, and Women's Work. International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society 15(1):27-53.

Benjamin, Thomas

1989 A Rich Land, a Poor People: Politics and Society in Modern Chiapas. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

—

2000 La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Benjamin, Walter, and Peter Demetz

1978 Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Beverley, John

2006 Preface. *In* No pudieron con nosotras: El Desafío del feminismo autónomo de Mujeres Creando. E. Monasterios Pérez, ed. La Paz, Bolivia; Pittsburgh, Pa.: Plural Editores; Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, University of Pittsburgh.

Blackwell, Maylei

2006 Weaving in the Spaces: Indigenous Women's Organizing and the Politics of Scale in Mexico. *In* Dissident Women : Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas. S. Speed, R.A.d. Hernández Castillo, and L. Stephen, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Blom, Gertrude Duby

1961 Chiapas indígena; Texto y fotografías. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Blunt, Alison, and Gillian Rose

1994 Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies. New York: Guilford Press.

Bobrow-Strain, Aaron

2007 Intimate Enemies: Landowners, Power and Violence in Chiapas. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Brading, D. A.
1980 Caudillo and Peasant in the Mexican Revolution. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Wendy
1995 States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

—
2006 Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Burguete Cal y Mayor, Aracely
1999 Mexico: Experiencias de autonomía indígena. Copenhagen: IWGIA.

Butler, Judith
2004 Undoing Gender. New York: Routledge.

Carrera, Magali Marie
2003 Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Carroll, Patrick J.
2005 Black-Native Relations and the Historical Record in Colonial Mexico. *In* Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America. M. Restall, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Casas, Bartolomé de las
2003 An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies, with Related Texts. Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishers.

Castellanos Guerrero, Alicia
2003 Imágenes del racismo en México. Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana; Plaza y Valdés.

Castellanos, Rosario
2003 Balún-Canán. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Castillo, Ana
1996 Goddess of the Americas = La Diosa De Las Américas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe. New York: Riverhead Books.

Castillo Palma, Norma Angélica , and Susan Kellogg
2005 Conflict and Cohabitation between Afro-Mexicans and Nahuas in Central Mexico. *In* Beyond Black and Red : African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America. M. Restall, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Certeau, Michel de
1984 The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chatterjee, Partha
1993 The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

—
1998 Community in the East. Economic and Political Weekly February 7:277-282.

Checker, Melissa
2005 Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town. New York: New York University Press.

Chirix García, Emma Delfina, and Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla
2003 Alas y raíces: Afectividad de las mujeres Mayas = Rik'in ruxik' y ruxe'il: Ronojel Kajoqab'al ri Mayab' taq ixoqi'. Guatemala City: Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla.

Churchill, Ward, and Mike Ryan
1998 Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Clifford, James
1988 The Predicament of Culture Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus
1986 Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clohesy, Anthony M.
2000 Provisionalism and the (Im)Possibility of Justice in Northern Ireland. *In* Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change. D.R. Howarth, A.J. Norval, and Y. Stavrakakis, eds. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Colectivo Situaciones
2007 On the Researcher-Militant. *In* Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization. R.J.F. Day, G. De Peuter, and M. Coté, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Collier, George Allen, and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello
1994 Basta!: Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas. Oakland, Calif.: Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff
2001 Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Corrigan, Philip Richard D., and Derek Sayer
1985 The Great Arch: State Formation, Cultural Revolution, and the Rise of Capitalism. Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell.

Cowan, Jane K., Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, and Richard Wilson
2001 Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Danaher, Geoff, Tony Schirato, and Jen Webb
2000 Understanding Foucault. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.

Deere, Carmen Diana, and Magdalena León de Leal
2001 Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Deleuze, Gilles
1995 Negotiations, 1972-1990. New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari
1987 A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Delgado Pop, Adela, Morna Macleod, and María Luisa Cabrera Pérez-Armiñán
2000 Identidad: Rostros sin máscara: Reflexiones sobre cosmovisión, género y etnicidad. Guatemala City: Oxfam-Australia.

Díaz Polanco, Hector
1991 Autonomía regional. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

—
1997 La rebelión Zapatista y la autonomía. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

Du Bois, W. E. B.
1989 The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Penguin Books.

Dyer-Witheford, Nick
2007 *Ne Travillez Jamais*: Parecon or Exodus? *In* Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization. R.J.F. Day, G. De Peuter, and M. Coté, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Earle, Duncan, and Jeanne M. Simonelli
2005 Uprising of Hope: Sharing the Zapatista Journey to Alternative Development. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press.

Eber, Christine Engla
1995 Women & Alcohol in a Highland Maya Town: Water of Hope, Water of Sorrow. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Eber, Christine Engla, and Christine Marie Kovic
2003 Women of Chiapas: Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope. New York; London: Routledge.

Enloe, Cynthia H.
2000 Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Escobar, Arturo, and Sonia E. Alvarez
1992 The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Fanon, Frantz
1991 Black Skin, White Masks. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

Favre, Henri
1973 Cambio y continuidad entre los Mayas de México: Contribución al estudio de la situación colonialista en América Latina. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.

Forbis, Melissa M.
2003 Hacia La Autonomia: Zapatista Women Developing a New World. *In* Women in Chiapas: Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope. C.E. Eber and C.M. Kovic, eds. New York; London: Routledge.

—
2006 Autonomy and a Handful of Herbs: Contesting Gender and Ethnic Identities through Healing. *In* Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas. S. Speed, R.A. Hernández Castillo, and L. Stephen, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Foucault, Michel
1978 The History of Sexuality. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, Michel, et al.
1991 The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Foweraker, Joe, and Ann L. Craig
1990 Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner Publishers.

Galindo, María
2006 Indias, putas y lesbianas juntas revueltas y hermanadas ¡Un libro sobre Mujeres Creando! *In* No pudieron con nosotras: El Desafío del feminismo autónomo de Mujeres Creando. E. Monasterios Pérez, ed. La Paz, Bolivia; Pittsburgh, Pa.: Plural Editores; Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, University of Pittsburgh.

Gamio, Manuel
1982[1916] Forjando Patria. Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa.

García de León, Antonio
1985 Resistencia y utopía: Memorial de agravios y crónicas de revueltas y profecías acaecidas en la provincia de Chiapas durante los últimos quinientos años de su historia. Mexico City: Ediciones Era.

García Soto, J. Mario
1969 Geografía general de Chiapas. Mexico City: Imprenta Mexicana.

Garza Caligaris, Anna María, María Fernanda Paz Salinas, Juana María Ruiz Ortiz and Angelino Calvo Sánchez
1993 Sk'op Antzetik: Una historia de mujeres en la selva de Chiapas. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico: UNACH.

Garza Caligaris, Anna María
2002 Género, interlegalidad y conflicto sn San Pedro Chenalhó. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico: UNACH.

Gaspar de Alba, Alicia
2005 Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders. Houston: Arte Público Press.

Gill, Lesley
2000 Teetering on the Rim: Global Restructuring, Daily Life, and the Armed Retreat of the Bolivian State. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gilly, Adolfo
2005 The Mexican Revolution. New York: New Press.

Giroux, Henry
2007 Utopian Thinking in Dangerous Times: Critical Pedagogy and the Project of Educated Hope *In* Utopian Pedagogy : Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization. R.J.F. Day, G. De Peuter, and M. Coté, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Goldstein, Donna M.
2003 Laughter out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gómez Hernández, Antonio, and Mario Humberto Ruz.
1992 Memoria baldía: Los tojolabales y las fincas: Testimonios. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas.

Gómez, Maria Luisa Curruchich
2000 La Cosmovisión Maya y la perspectiva de género. *In* Identidad: Rostros sin máscara: Reflexiones sobre cosmovisión, género y etnicidad. A. Delgado Pop, M. Macleod, and M.L. Cabrera Pérez-Armiñán, eds. Guatemala City: Oxfam-Australia.

González de la Rocha, Mercedes, and Agustín Escobar Latapí
1991 Social Responses to Mexico's Economic Crisis of the 1980s. San Diego: Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego.

Gordon, Avery
1997 Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gordon, Lewis R.
2005 Black Latin@S and Blacks in Latin America: Some Philosophical Considerations. *In* Latin@S in the World-System: Decolonization Struggles in the Twenty-First Century US Empire. R. Grosfoguel, N. Maldonado Torres, and J.D. Saldívar. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers.

Gould, Jeffrey L.
1998 To Die in This Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Graeber, David
2004 Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Grandin, Greg
2000 The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Grosfoguel, Ramón
2004 Race and Ethnicity or Racialized Ethnicities?: Identities within Global Coloniality. Ethnicities 4(3):315–336.

Grosz, E. A.
1990 Inscriptions and Body-Maps: Representations and the Corporeal. *In* Feminine/Masculine and Representation. T. Threadgold and A. Cranny-Francis, eds. Sydney; Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla
2004 La palabra y el sentir de las mujeres Mayas de Kaqla. Guatemala City: Grupo de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla.

Gullestad, Marianne
1999 The Politics of Knowledge, Vol. 2007. Stockholm: Advancing Cultural Studies International Workshop. http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/Cmach/Backissues/j001/ADVCS/acs_gull.htm, accessed September 25, 2007.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson
1997 Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Gutiérrez Chong, Natividad
2004 Tendencias de estudio de nacionalismo y mujeres. *In* Mujeres y nacionalismo en América Latina: De la independencia a la nación milenio. N. Gutiérrez Chong, ed. Mexico City: UNAM.

Gutiérrez, Ramón A.
1991 When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Hale, Charles R.
2002 Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala. Journal of Latin American Studies 34(3):485-524.

—
2006 Activist Research V. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology. Cultural Anthropology 21(1):96-120.

Hall, Stuart
2000 Conclusion: the Multi-cultural Question. *In* Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'. B. Hesse, ed. London; New York: Zed Books.

Hannerz, Ulf
1996 Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places. New York; London: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne
1991 Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York; London: Routledge.

Harvey, Neil
1998 The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Helbig, Karl
1976 Chiapas, geografía de un estado mexicano. 3 vols. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas.

Henck, Nick
2007 Subcommander Marcos: The Man and the Mask. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Hernández Castillo, Rosalva Aída
1998 La otra palabra: Mujeres y violencia en Chiapas, antes y después de Acteal. Mexico City: CIESAS; Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal; Centro de Investigación y Acción para la Mujer.

—
2001 Histories and Stories from Chiapas: Border Identities in Southern Mexico. Austin: University of Texas Press.

—
2006 Between Feminist Ethnocentricity and Ethnic Essentialism: The Zapatistas' Demands and the National Indigenous Women's Movement. *In* Dissident Women : Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas. S. Speed, R.A. Hernández Castillo, and L. Stephen, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Hewitt de Alcántara, Cynthia
1984 Anthropological Perspectives on Rural Mexico. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hill Collins, Patricia
1991 Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. London: Harper Collins.

Holloway, John
2003 In the Beginning Was the Scream. *In* Revolutionary Writing: Common Sense Essays in Post-Political Politics. W. Bonefeld, ed. New York: Autonomedia.

Hooks, Bell, and Cornel West
1991 Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life. Boston: South End Press.

Howells, Robert Earle
2008 Deep South of the Border: In the Heartland of Mexico's Lost Empire a Wild World Rises Again. National Geographic Adventure, February, Pp. 15-20.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)
2005 Mujeres y hombres en Chiapas. Aguascalientes, Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI).

Jackson, John L.
2005 Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jaimes Guerrero, Marie Anna
1997 Civil Rights versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Land Struggles. *In* Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures. M. J. Alexander and C.T. Mohanty, eds. New York; London: Routledge.

Jane, Lionel Cecil
1930 Select Documents Illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus, Including Those Contained in R. H. Major's Select Letters of Christopher Columbus. London: The Hakluyt Society.

Jay, Martin
1988 Scopic Regimes of Modernity. *In* Vision and Visuality. H. Foster and D.A. Foundation, eds. Seattle: Bay Press.

Jelin, Elizabeth
2003 State Repression and the Labors of Memory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Joseph, Miranda
2002 Against the Romance of Community. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kabeer, Naila, Ramya Subrahmanian, and Kali for Women
1999 Institutions, Relations, and Outcomes: A Framework and Case Studies for Gender-Aware Planning. New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Kampwirth, Karen
2002 Women & Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Katzew, Ilona
2004 Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink
1998 Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Kelley, Robin D. G.
1997 Yo' Mama's Disfunktional! : Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America. Boston: Beacon Press.

—
2002 Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination. Boston: Beacon Press.

Knight, Alan
1990 Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940. *In* The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940. R. Graham, T.E. Skidmore, A. Helg, and A. Knight, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Kovic, Christine Marie
2005 Mayan Voices for Human Rights: Displaced Catholics in Highland Chiapas. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Kristeva, Julia
1991 Strangers to Ourselves. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kymlicka, Will
1995 Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press.

Laclau, Ernesto
1996 Emancipation(s). London; New York: Verso.

Lara, Luz Irene del Carmen Montes
2002 La participación de la mujer dentro del proceso del movimiento nacional indígena. J.L.C. González, ed. Mexico City: Debora Publicaciones.

Larsen, Nella, Charles R. Larson, and Marita Golden
2001 The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen. New York: Anchor Books.

Lavrín, Asunción
1989 Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: A Church Dilemma. *In* Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America. A. Lavrin, ed. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press.

Lebot, Yvon
1997 El Sueño Zapatista : Entrevistas con el Subcomandante Marcos, el Mayor Moisés y el Comandante Tacho, del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional. Barcelona, Spain: Plaza y Janés.

Legorreta Díaz, Ma. del Carmen
1998 Religión, política y guerrilla en las cañadas de la Selva Lacandona. Mexico City: Cal y Arena.

Leyva Solano, Xochitl
1995 Catequistas, misioneros y tradiciones en las Cañadas. *In* Chiapas: Los rumbos de otra historia. J.P. Viqueira and M.H. Ruz, eds. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Mayas del Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas y Coordinación de Humanidades, UNAM; Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos; Universidad de Guadalajara.

—
2003 Regional, Comunal and Organizational Transformations in Las Cañadas. *In* Mayan Lives, Mayan Utopias: The Indigenous Peoples of Chiapas and the Zapatista Rebellion. J. Rus, R.A. Hernández Castillo, and S.L. Mattiace, eds. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Leyva Solano, Xochitl, and Gabriel Ascencio Franco
1996 Lacandonia al filo del agua. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio
2000 Ritual, rumor y corrupción en la conformación de los 'sentimientos de la nacion'. *In* Vicios públicos, virtudes privadas: La corrupción en México. C. Lomnitz-Adler, ed. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Miguel Ángel Porrúa.

—
2001 Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lorde, Audre
1984 Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press.

Lugones, Maria
2003 Pilgrimages = Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lutz, Christopher, and Matthew Restall
2005 Wolves and Sheep? Black-Maya Relations in Colonial Guatemala and Yucatan. *In* Beyond Black and Red : African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America. M. Restall, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Mallon, Florencia E.
1994 Reflections on the Ruins: Everyday Forms of State Formation in Nineteenth Century Mexico. *In* Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico. G.M. Joseph and D. Nugent, eds. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

—
1995 Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mamdani, Mahmood
2001 Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism. Comparative Studies in Society and History 43(4):651-664.

Mani, Lata
1989 Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India. *In* Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History. K.Sangari and S. Vaid, eds. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Marcus, George E., and Michael M. J. Fischer
1986 Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martínez, Elizabeth Sutherland
1998 De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.

Martínez, Oscar
2001 Mexican Origin People in the United States: ATopical History. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Martínez Novo, Carmen
2006 Who Defines Indigenous?: Identities, Development, Intellectuals, and the State in Northern Mexico. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Massey, Doreen B.
1994 Space, Place, and Gender. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Masson, Sabine
2001 La lucha de las mujeres indígenas en Chiapas y sus implicaciones personales, políticas y teóricas para una feminista occidental blanca. San Cristóbal, Chiapas: CIESAS Sureste.

McClintock, Anne
1995 Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest. New York; London: Routledge.

Méndez, Jennifer Bickham
2005 From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor, and Globalization in Nicaragua. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mentinis, Mihalis
2006 Zapatistas: The Chiapas Revolt and What It Means for Radical Politics. London; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pluto Press.

Meyer, Jean A., Federico Anaya Gallardo, and Julio Ríos
2000 Samuel Ruíz en San Cristóbal, 1960-2000. Mexico City: TusQuets.

Miranda, Guadalupe, and María Inés Roqué
1995 Las Compañeras Tienen Grado. VHS. Mexico City: Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC).

Mohanram, Radhika
1999 Black Body: Women, Colonialism, and Space. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade
2003 Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Molyneux, Maxine
2001 Women's Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and Beyond. New York: Palgrave.

Montagu, Roberta
1990 Autoridad, control y sanción social en las fincas tzeltales. *In* Ensayos de antropología en la zona central de Chiapas. N.A. McQuown and J.A. Pitt-Rivers, eds. Mexico City: Dirección General de Publicaciones del Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

Montemayor, Carlos
1997 Chiapas: La rebelión indígena de México. Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz.

Moore, Donald S., Jake Kosek, and Anand Pandian
2003 Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa
1981 This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color. Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press.

Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Las Dignas)
1996 Montañas con recuerdos de mujer: Una mirada feminista a la participación de las mujeres en los conflictos armados en Centroamérica y Chiapas. San Salvador, ES: Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Las Dignas).

Muñoz Ramírez, Gloria
2003 EZLN: 20 Y 10, el fuego y la palabra. Mexico City: La Jornada Ediciones.

Muratorio, Blanca
1994 Imágenes e imagineros: Representaciones de los indígenas ecuatorianos, siglos XIX y XX. Quito, Ecuador: FLACSO-Sede Ecuador.

Naples, Nancy A.
2003 Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research. New York; London: Routledge.

Nash, Catherine
1994 Remapping the Body and Land: New Cartographies of Identity, Gender and Landscape in Ireland. *In* Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies. A. Blunt and G. Rose, eds. New York: Guilford Press.

Nash, June C.
2001 Mayan Visions: The Quest for Autonomy in an Age of Globalization. New York; London: Routledge.

Negri, Antonio
1999 Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nordstrom, Carolyn, and Antonius C. G. M. Robben
1995 Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Oboler, Suzanne
2006 Latinos and Citizenship: The Dilemma of Belonging. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.

Ochoa, Maria and Barbara K. Ige
2007 Shout out: Women of Color Respond to Violence. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press.

Olcott, Jocelyn
2005 Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

Olivera Bustamante, Mercedes
2004 De Sumisiones, cambios y rebeldías: Mujeres indígenas de Chiapas. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico: Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología; Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas.

Olson, Joel
2004 The Abolition of White Democracy. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant
1986 Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s. New York; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ong, Aihwa
1999 Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Painemal Morales, Millaray
2004 Una experiencia de organización de mujeres Mapuche en Chile y su vinculación a una organización nacional de mujeres campesinas. Paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association Congress, Las Vegas, Nev.

Palacios, Enrique Juan
1928 En los confines de la Selva Lacandona. Exploraciones en el entado de Chiapas. Mayo-Agosto 1926. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos del la Nación.

París Pombo, María Dolores
2001 Oligarquía, tradición y ruptura en el centro de Chiapas. Mexico City: La Jornada.

Pierre, Jemima
2008 Activist Groundings or Groundings for Activism? The Study of Racialization as a Site of Political Engagement. *In* Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship C.R. Hale, ed. Pp. 115-135. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portillo, Lourdes, et al.
2001 Señorita Extraviada. DVD. New York, NY: Women Make Movies,.

Postero, Nancy Grey
2007 Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Postero, Nancy Grey, and León Zamosc
2004 The Struggle for Indigenous Rights in Latin America. Brighton, England; Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A.
2002 The Cunning of Recognition : Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Price, David H.
2004 Threatening Anthropology: McCarthyism and the FBI's Surveillance of Activist Anthropologists. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Pulido, Laura
2006 Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Quijano, Aníbal
2000 Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America. Nepantla: Views from South 1(3):533-580.

Restall, Matthew
2005 Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Ricciutelli, Luciana, et al.
2004 Feminist Politics, Activism and Vision : Local and Global Challenges. Toronto; London; New York: Inanna Publications and Education; Zed.

Rojas, Rosa
1999 ¿Chiapas, y las mujeres qué?, Tomo I Y Tomo II. Mexico City: Ediciones la Correa Feminista.

Rose, Nikolas S.
1999 Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenbaum, Brenda
1993 With Our Heads Bowed: The Dynamics of Gender in a Maya Community. Austin: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies University at Albany State University of New York; University of Texas Press.

Ross, John
1995 Rebellion from the Roots: Indian Uprising in Chiapas. Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press.

Rovira, Guiomar
1994 ¡Zapata Vive!: La rebelión indígena de Chiapas contada por sus protagonistas. Barcelona: Virus.

—
1996 Mujeres de maíz. Mexico City: Ediciones Era.

Ruiz, Apen
2002 "La India Bonita": National Beauty in Revolutionary Mexico. Cultural Dynamics 14(3):283–301.

Rus, Jan
1994 The "Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional": The Subversion of Native Government in Highland Chiapas, 1936-1968. *In* Everyday Forms of State Formation : Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico. G.M. Joseph and D. Nugent, eds. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

—
1995 ¿Guerra de castas según quien?: Indios y ladinos en los sucesos de 1869. *In* Chiapas: Los rumbos de otra historia. J.P. Viqueira and M.H. Ruz, eds. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Mayas del Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas y Coordinación de Humanidades, UNAM; Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos; Universidad de Guadalajara.

Ruz, Mario Humberto
1989 Chiapas colonial: Dos esbozos documentales. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas.

—
1992 Salvia india, floración ladina: Apuntes para una historia de las fincas comitecas (siglos XVIII y XIX). Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

Saldaña-Portillo, Josefina
2001 Who's the Indian in Atzlan? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandon. *In* The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader. I. Rodríguez, ed. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Sandoval, Chela
2000 Methodology of the Oppressed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa
2005 Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon. London; New York: Verso.

Sayer, Derek.
1994 Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks On "Hegemony". *In* Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico. Joseph, G. M., and D. Nugent, eds. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy.
1993 Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Schmidt Camacho, Alicia R.
2005 Ciudadana X: Gender Violence and the Denationalization of Women's Rights in Ciudad Júarez, Mexico. CR: The New Centennial Review 5(1):255-292.

Schultz, Donald E., and Stephen J. Wager
1994 The Awakening: The Zapatista Revolt and Its Implications for Civil-Military Relations and the Future of Mexico. Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College.

Shayne, Julie D.
2004 The Revolution Question: Feminisms in El Salvador, Chile, and Cuba. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Shukaitis, Stevphen, et al.
2007 Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations//Collective Theorization. Oakland, Calif.: AK Press.

Silva, Denise Ferreira da
2007 Toward a Global Idea of Race. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, Andrea
2005 Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.

Smith, Carol A.
1995 Race/Class/Gender Ideology in Guatemala: Modern and Anti-Modern Forms. Comparative Studies in Society and History 37(4):723-49.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai
1999 Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London; New York: Zed Books; University of Otago Press

Sommer, Doris
1991 Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Speed, Shannon
2008a Forged in Dialogue: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist Research. *In* Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship. C.R. Hale, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

—
2008b Rights in Rebellion: Indigenous Struggle and Human Rights in Chiapas. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Speed, Shannon, and Melissa M. Forbis
2005 Embodying Alternative Knowledges: Everyday Leaders and the Diffusion of Power in Zapatista Autonomous Regions. LASA Forum (Latin American Studies Association) XXXVI(1):17-18.

Speed, Shannon, Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo, and Lynn Stephen
2006 Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Stolcke, Verena
2002 Race and Sex. Current Anthropology 43(4).

Stoler, Ann Laura
1995 Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Sudbury, Julia
1998 "Other Kinds of Dreams" : Black Women's Organisations and the Politics of Transformation. New York and London: Routledge.

Taussig, Michael T.
1999 Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Taylor, Diana
1997 Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War." Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Tello Díaz, Carlos
2000 La Rebelión de las Cañadas: Origen y ascenso del Ezln. Edition expanded and corrected, definitive version. Mexico City: Cal y Arena.

Tenorio-Trillo, Mauricio
1996 Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Till, Karen E.
2005 The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tilley, Virginia
2005 Seeing Indians: A Study of Race, Nation, and Power in El Salvador. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Toledo Tello, Sonia
2004 Las fincas de Simojovel, Chiapas: Relaciones de género en un mundo jerárquico, 1900-1975. Mesoamérica 46:86-109.

Trask, Haunani-Kay
1993 From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i. Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press.

Traven, B.
1984 The Rebellion of the Hanged. London: Allision and Busby.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph
2001 The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind. Current Anthropology 42(1):125-138.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt
2005 Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Tyson, Timothy B.
2004 Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story. New York: Crown Publishers.

Van Cott, Donna Lee
2000 The Friendly Liquidation of the Past: The Politics of Diversity in Latin America. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Van Young, Eric
2001 The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Vaneigem, Raoul
1983 The Revolution of Everyday Life. London: Left Bank Books; Rebel Press.

Vasconcelos, José
1966 La Raza Cosmica. 3rd ed. Mexico City: Espasa-Calpe Mexicana s.a.

Vaughan, Mary K.
1997 Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Vaughn, Bobby
2005 Afro-Mexico: Blacks, Indigenas, Politics and the Greater Diaspora. *In* Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos. A. Dzidzienyo and S. Oboler, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vázquez, Norma, Cristina Ibáñez, Clara Murguialday
1996 Mujeres, montaña: Viviencias de guerrilleras y colaboradoras del FMLN. Madrid: horas y HORAS.

Viqueira, Juan Pedro
1997 Indios rebeldes e idólatras: Dos ensayos históricos sobre la rebelión india de Cancuc, Chiapas, acaecida en el año ee 1712. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social.

—
2006 La falacia indígena. Nexos: Sociedad, Ciencia, Literatura (May):49-53.

Viqueira, Juan Pedro, and Mario Humberto Ruz
1995 Chiapas: Los rumbos de otra historia. J.P. Viqueira and M.H. Ruz, eds. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Mayas del Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas y Coordinación de Humanidades, UNAM; Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos; Universidad de Guadalajara.

Virilio, Paul
1986 Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology. New York: Columbia University.

Virilio, Paul, and Steve Redhead
2004 The Paul Virilio Reader. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Virno, Paolo
2003 A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Semiotext(e).

Visweswaran, Kamala
1994 Fictions of Feminist Ethnography. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Vogt, Evon Zartman
1994 Fieldwork among the Maya: The Harvard Chiapas Project. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Vos, Jan de
1988 Oro verde : La conquista de la Selva Lacandona por los madereros tabasqueños, 1822-1949. Mexico City: Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco.

—
2002 Una tierra para sembrar sueños: Historia reciente de la Selva Lacandona: 1950-2000. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social : Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Wade, Peter
1997 Race and Ethnicity in Latin America. London; Chicago, Ill.: Pluto Press.

—
2003 Afterword. *In* Race & Nation in Modern Latin America. N.P. Appelbaum and K.A. Rosemblatt, eds. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Warren, Kay B.
1993 The Violence Within: Cultural and Political Opposition in Divided Nations. Boulder: Westview Press.

Wasserstrom, Robert
1983 Class and Society in Central Chiapas. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weinberg, Bill
2000 Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico. London; New York: Verso.

Widdifield, Stacie G.
1996 The Embodiment of the National in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexican Painting. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Williams, Brackette F.
1996 Women out of Place : The Gender of Agency and the Race of Nationality. New York: Routledge.

Wilson, Angela Cavender, and Michael Yellow Bird
2005 For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Womack, John
1970 Zapata and the Mexican Revolution. New York: Vintage Books.

Wynter, Silvia
1995 1492: A New World View. *In* Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View. V.L. Hyatt, R.M. Nettleford, and Smithsonian Institution, eds. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Yuval-Davis, Nira, Floya Anthias, and Jo Campling
1989 Woman-Nation-State. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Zylberberg Panebianco, Violeta
2006 "We Can No Longer Be Like Hens with Our Heads Bowed, We Must Raise Our Heads and Look Ahead": A Consideration of the Daily Life of Zapatista Women. *In* Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas. S. Speed, R.A. Hernández Castillo, and L. Stephen, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press

Vita

Melissa Marie Forbis was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the daughter of Joanne Emma Ferraro and Keith Lowell Forbis. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors from The Pennsylvania State University in Political Science, with minors in German and Women's Studies, and the degree of Master of Arts from Temple University in Anthropology, with a specialization in Visual Anthropology. She entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas in September 2000.

Permanent address: 904 Willard Street, Houston, TX 77006

This dissertation was typed by the author.