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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Situating the Research

The 1st of January of 1994 was a breakthrough in the history of Mexico. The governmental elite led by the President of Mexico Carlos Salinas de Gortari celebrated the start of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which symbolically marked the entrance of Mexico to a new era of modernity and alignment to neoliberalism brought by the Washington Consensus. For Salinas de Gortari, NAFTA was the mechanism Mexico needed to consolidate its modernisation and set an example to most of the developing countries in the region (Volpi, 2004). However, the situation was different in southeast Mexico. In Chiapas, specifically, the situation was not of celebration. A rebel group of indigenous majority wearing balaclavas and proclaiming themselves as the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation or EZLN) occupied the head offices of the municipalities of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Altamirano, Las Margaritas and Ocosingo. That 1st of January, the EZLN shouted *enough!* –a call for attention from an indigenous population that lived oppressed by the corrupt practices of the Mexican government (Pazos, 1994).

It was not a coincidence that the EZLN emerged in Chiapas. Not only it was this state, one of the last to join Mexico (Volpi, 2004), Chiapas was home to a vast indigenous population and had a long history of indigenous exploitation, that had persisted since the Spanish colonial period (Millán, 1998). Added to these factors, Chiapas' distant geographic location from Mexico City, where the political powers were centralised, meant the benefits of development programmes rarely reached this region. Consequently, Chiapas was practically a forgotten state within Mexico. The case of this state is, according to Millán (1998), a 'social laboratory' in which many social elements including a wide variety of

indigenous ethnicities and a strong presence of progressive ecclesiastical ideologies such as the theology of liberation (that defends and promotes indigenous emancipation and the exploited communities) are combined. Merged together, these elements encouraged the organisation of indigenous communities to claim for recognition and demand democracy, liberty and justice. The creation of the EZLN crystallised these claims for indigenous recognition, making Chiapas visible on the map.

Not only the indigenous communities were condemned by the Mexican government to live in precarious conditions, due to the lack of development, but also these communities were also deprived of expression of their indigenous identity. Spanish replaced indigenous languages in education, occidental medicine was implemented through the construction of (a small number of) hospitals and clinics, which put aside indigenous traditional healing methods, and jeans and t-shirts, replaced indigenous traditional clothes. In this context, the EZLN gave voice to all those indigenous communities that were –and felt- ignored, but more importantly the tone of this voice was one that attempted to revalidate indigenousness as a valid form of identity (de la Garza, 2010). Hence, the Zapatistas started to assemble a discourse highlighting their ethnic essence, claiming their rights to autonomy and self-determination. This discourse also stressed that through their fight, the Zapatistas aimed to construct a horizontal community where power was equally shared among people. The EZLN believed in the construction of politics from below. In this regard, Pazos (1994) affirms that the uprising in Chiapas was not fundamentally a response to the underdevelopment of these communities, but was the search for political spaces and the empowerment of the indigenous communities that were forgotten by the state. If de la Garza and Pazos are right in arguing that the quest of the EZLN was the revalorisation and empowerment of the indigenous communities through the search for political spaces, then this forces us to look how the Zapatistas construct their political subjectivity through organising and constructing these political spaces.

The construction of these political spaces is also a response of the Zapatistas' main demands of liberty, democracy and justice. Although the Zapatista's struggle has evolved, it remains focussed on two main principles, namely: not to secede from Mexico, and a reluctance to assume official power. These principles may seem a contradiction in terms, as the Zapatistas consider themselves to be a revolutionary group. Nevertheless, it is through these principles that the Zapatistas guide their fight to fulfil their demands. Initially, the Zapatista fight aimed for state recognition of the indigenous cultures, as different from that promoted by the state, while attempting to construct a Mexican

political system that could be more democratic and open to recognition of those sectors in society, which were previously ignored or oppressed by the government. This inclusion of other groups explains the lack of claims for secession, as the struggles of these groups were considered equally important and derived from the same cause as the Zapatistas. Thus, the fight for recognition of the indigenous cultures as well as for a democratic and just political system was for years at the centre of the talks between the EZLN and the Mexican government regardless of the violent hostilities the EZLN faced from the Mexican government. Despite the violent situation of arbitrary arrests of Zapatistas, strong military presence in the Zapatista communities, which lead to several disputes, in 1996 the EZLN and governmental mediators signed the San Andrés Accords. These accords were taken to the Mexican Congress for discussion and they meant to be converted into law. Unfortunately, the Congress did not view the Accords as a viable solution for indigenous inclusion, and the indigenous law that was passed did not honour these Accords. The situation made the EZLN enter into a phase of silence, away from the public eye, which allowed them to concentrate on their autonomy project and, to construct political spaces from below in which their main demands for democracy, liberty and justice could be met.

The importance of the Zapatista case goes beyond the fight against the corrupt Mexican central government. The Zapatista fight attempts to construct political spaces from below, in which indigenous traditions, forms of government and identity could be exercised. It could be argued that with the construction of these spaces, the Zapatistas are also constructing their political subjectivity, as a group, that was previously denied by the government. Volpi (2004, p. 24) argues that the Zapatismo is "a breeding ground of ideas that took off into the 21st Century; a hotbed of proposals and disappointments; a cluster of stories that need to be analysed, regroup, read and reread."[1] For this reason, this thesis attempts to analyse, Zapatista stories to provide an understanding of the Zapatistas as political subjects. This analysis is made using Engin Isin's theory on 'acts of citizenship' (Isin, 2009).

Isin's 'acts of citizenship' provides a pertinent theoretical framework to analyse the alternative spaces constructed by the Zapatistas. He recognises that the concept of citizenship entails an arrangement on rights and obligations. Often, the concept of citizenship is approached and studied on the ways people through participation exercise

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[1] *My translation.*

[2] *Corporativismo* is a term that refers to a form of interest representation. All the organisations and unions that existed in Mexico had to be recognised by the state-party, and this recognition entailed the affiliation of its members to the party (Bartra & Otero, 2007). *Corporativismo* entails a relationship of

rights and obligations provided by states. However, more active forms of citizenship, in Isin's terms, occur when people claim not only their rights but also their rights to claims rights. This not only suggests a more dynamic conception of society but also it produces new ways which people claim these rights and hence becoming political subjects (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). It could be argued that Isin's conception of citizenship, in locating people's activities as a core part of citizenship, means that the performances of these activities are what constitute this concept. 'Acts of citizenship' are practices of any type –social, political, cultural and symbolic- performed by the people "that are ordinarily called politics" (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 2). An 'act of citizenship' then, is a way of becoming political that is constructed from below. This suggests that as act, which to become political are constituted from below, do not necessarily require the involvement of the state to delimit or restrict these activities.

As 'acts of citizenship' require the understanding of the dynamism of politics, distant from the passive way citizenship is exercised when delivered by the state, it is inevitably to ignore the potential tension that may exists in between these two layers of politics, the official one directed by the state and the one constructed by the people. For this reason, Isin suggests that the performance of acts of citizenship causes the emergence of new sites of struggle which may cause a distortion of the established state boundaries (Isin, 2009). Therefore, the analysis of these acts of citizenship would require the need to consider how "political thought is embedded in acts as claims for justice" (Isin, 2009, p. 370) to establish a legitimacy over these new sites of struggle.

Isin's work provides a pertinent line of research to explain the Zapatismo. If citizenship is considered in its active forms through the performance of acts that aim to construct political subjects through the creation of new rights and obligations, then the rejection of the state's conception of citizenship becomes evident. It cannot be denied that the Zapatistas gained a considerable amount of academic attention when they rejected state power, denounced the abuses the indigenous communities were suffering from the implementation of neoliberal policies, and announced that another world was possible without the influence of the government or neoliberalism. However, the process through which the Zapatistas are constructing this other world, and the ways they are becoming political subjects recognising themselves as Zapatistas have been underexplored.

1.2 Focus of the Research

As this thesis attempts to provide an understanding of the Zapatistas as political subjects using Isin's theory on 'acts of citizenship,' the main focus of this research is on the Zapatistas' doings. The understanding that this thesis provides, attempts to bridge a gap in the Zapatista literature as well as to contribute to the theoretical study of 'acts of citizenship.' Limited attention had been paid to the study of how the Zapatista performance of practices of citizenship has contributed to the construction of their political subjectivity. Instead academic attention has focussed on what the Zapatistas done (Holloway, 2005; Holloway & Peláez, 1998a; Lynd & Grabacic, 2008; Millán, 1998; L. M. Stephen & Collier, 1997), and not how these practices define them.

Academic work on the Zapatismo can be grouped in three main categories. The first is the anthropological perspective on the Zapatistas' communities (Gonzalez, 2004; Higgins, 2004; Mattiace, 1997; Rus, Hernández Casitllo, & Mattiace, 2003; Saldaña-Portillo, 2002). The second, is on gender studies which had focus on how the Zapatista fight had empowered the indigenous women, who were discriminated not only for their ethnic origin but for their genre (Eber & Kovic, 2003; Harvey, 1998; Millán, 1998; Ortiz, 2001; Rovira, 2000; Speed, Hernández Casitllo, & Stephen, 2006). The final category of study utilises the lenses of Marxism to explore the Zapatismo as an example of resistance of an oppressed groups in a capitalist system (Boron, 2005; Holloway, 2002; Holloway & Susen, 2013; Lynd & Grabacic, 2008; Mentinis, 2006). Although these categories contribute to the understanding of the Zapatismo, a gap can be identified between studying the Zapatistas' practices and how these practices enable to understand the Zapatistas as political subjects. It is precisely this gap that this thesis attempts to address. In addition to this gap, the thesis attempts to expand the debate on the theory of 'acts of citizenship'. The theory of 'acts of citizenship' focuses on the people or groups' doings as a valid way to construct citizenship, giving a certain flexibility to be applied to cases such as the Zapatistas, where there is a rejection of the state. However, the application of this theory has primarily been to cases in which basic rights such as the right of expression and assembly are guaranteed by the state or/and by a supranational organisation, and especially to contexts in the global north (Aradau, Huysmans, Macioti, & Squire, 2013; Caglar & Mehling, 2013; Isin, 2013). Taking into consideration these remarks, this thesis attempts to contribute to this theoretical debate on 'acts of citizenship' by examining the way the theory is applied to cases of oppressed or marginalised groups by the state and in which neither or the above mentioned rights are guaranteed.

In order to fulfil these aims, this this thesis answers the following research question:

How do claims of citizenship mobilise the Zapatistas communities?

To answer this question, the thesis also answers the following sub-research questions:

1. How are non-state based claims to citizenship framed in the Zapatistas' initial assertions?

2. What practices performed by the Zapatistas could be categorised as acts of citizenship?

3. What are the reasons and motivations that allow us to identify these practices as acts of citizenship?

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured in two parts. The first part discusses the historical background, theoretical background and methodology. The second part consists of the discussion of the empirical findings.

Part 1

Chapter 2 - Historical Background

This chapter provides a background on the Zapatista fight. It identifies the state building project that started after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) as the initial cause for the establishment of the Zapatista army. That state building project had two main characteristics that contributed to the formation of the EZLN. On the one hand, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI) developed as a state party and attempted to institutionalise all the different revolutionary demands. In this attempt, the PRI centralised state power by including under its sphere of influence unions and civil associations. In other words, there was no political action beyond the umbrella created by the PRI. On the other hand, and due to the centralisation of power the PRI, as the state party, included the indigenous population as a work force rather than bearers of an indigenous culture. From the end of the 1980s, the government promoted the implementation of neoliberal policies, which increasingly pushed the indigenous groups into a situation of precariety and oblivion. This chapter provides historical accounts to not only understand the origins of the Zapatista fight but also how this underpins the reasons behind the Zapatista's acts of citizenship.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Background: Acts of Citizenship

This chapter explores the theoretical debates of citizenship as a political struggle. It argues that regardless of understanding citizenship as a status or practice, it is always under continuous construction and reworking, and is influenced by the circumstances of its time. This chapter briefly discusses the work of Marshall (1950), Kymlicka and Norman (1995;

1994, 2000) and Osler and Starkey (2005) to expose the ways in which understanding of citizenship have evolved over time. It carries on to discuss the work of Hoffman (2004) on the importance of separating the concept of the state as container and provider of citizenship. Added to this discussion, and since citizenship is constructed in particular historical contexts, it briefly discusses the ways in which citizenship has been studied in the Latin American context in general and the Zapatista context in particular, focusing on the work of Yashar (1998, 2005) and Cerda García (2011). Finally, the chapter discusses Isin's (2009, 2012a, 2012b; 2008) theory of 'acts of citizenship' as a pertinent theoretical background to explain the Zapatista case.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research design carried out in this thesis in more detail. A justification of the use of qualitative methods is given as suitable for this research, followed by an explanation on the use of participant observations, informal conversations and archival research as methods of data gathering for this thesis. Finally, it reflects on issues of positionality in relation to researching the Zapatistas.

Part 2

Chapter 5 – From Invisibility to Visibility: Events that Caused Ruptures

This chapter discusses the events that gave the Zapatistas visibility and allowed them to perform 'acts of citizenship.' Isin (2012a) suggests that events are actions that cause a rupture in the giving order such actions allow groups or people to perform 'acts of citizenship.' This chapter discusses the way in which the Zapatista uprising in 1994, the creation and destruction of the Aguascalientes in 1995 and the creation of the Caracoles in 2003 gave indigenous communities the visibility that the government had deprived them of and allowed them to pave the way towards the construction of their own political subjectivity. But it explores how the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles allowed them to construct alternative political spaces for acting, beyond the state. As such, this chapter explores the resonance of these spaces for the Zapatista, as an oppressed or marginalised group, as an essential part of being political.

Chapter 6 –The Performativity of the Zapatista's Acts of Citizenship

This chapter discusses the Zapatista form of autonomous government as acts of citizenship. It begins with a description of the organisation of the Zapatista government to later discuss the way these practices can be interpreted as acts of citizenship. Finally, it

explores the way in which autonomy can be understood as a scale of these acts of citizenship.

Chapter 7 –The Construction of a Political Space

This chapter analyses the way in which the Zapatistas, through the acts performed, configure the relationship with the 'others.' Empirical evidence showed that within the category of the 'other' several layers could be identified and the same goes for the category of the 'we.' This chapter also discusses the way in which the Zapatistas transform the modes and forms of being political by bringing back their indigenous traditions. Finally it analyses the way in which the Zapatistas construct a political space as Isin (2002) terms 'difference machine.'

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

This concluding chapter explains the ways in which the research aims were addressed and how this thesis answered the main research question and sub-questions. It also exposes the contribution of this research to the theoretical study of citizenship and to the Zapatismo. Finally, it identifies possibilities for future research or analysis.

Chapter 2 Zapatista Overview

2.1 Introduction

By the 1990s Mexico, like many other countries in Latin America, had adopted neoliberal policies brought by the Washington Consensus to improve the economy and the living standards of its population (Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2009). The implementation of these policies had a questionable success in several countries in Latin America (Burbach, Fox, & Fuentes, 2013; Gwynne & Kay, 2010; Panniza, 2009; Silva, 2009; Weyland, 2004). Mexico's recovery from the 1882 economic recession and envisioned economic stability due to neoliberal polices were proven to benefit to the country, this situation came to be known as the 'Mexican Miracle' (Edwards, 1998; Ross, 1995), with Mexico becoming labelled the 'golden child of neoliberalism' (Holloway & Peláez, 1998a).

However, the 'miracle' only benefited privileged groups within elite circles close to the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Revolutionary Institutional Party or PRI) (Morton, 2003). The poor people who comprised more than half of the country's population were politically and economically disengaged from the 'miracle' (Holzner, 2007). Those excluded from the 'miracle' and disengaged from politics sought their own solutions to their problems by taking additional jobs (most commonly selling in the streets), migrating or joining grass roots organisations (Holzner, 2007). However, the Mexican state's adherence to the Washington Consensus, and its execution of neoliberal policies was not the only factor that caused the precarious conditions of indigenous people in Mexico. The stagnation of these groups was also a result of years of clientelistic practices and

corporativismo[2] combined with their geographical isolation from the urban centres, characteristics inherited from a failed state building project.

In the late 1980s, this social panorama motivated, a group of six mestizo[3] revolutionaries to move to Chiapas and to establish an indigenously-based guerrilla movement. These revolutionaries saw in the ideologies of Marx, Lenin and *Che* Guevara an emancipatory dogma to shape their guerrilla movement's actions. As they tried to spread the ideas of Marx, Lenin and *Che*, among the indigenous communities of the area, the six revolutionaries began to appreciate the importance of understanding the dynamics of the indigenous communities rather than spreading such ideas. These revolutionaries discovered that regardless of the usefulness of Marx and Lenin's theories of class struggle and of Guervara's ideas of guerrilla warfare, the agricultural cycle of the *milpa* (maize field) had to be learned and understood in order to fully understand the indigenous people's ideology, customs and cause (Higgins, 2004). For instance, Mayan Indians in Chiapas,[4] plan their lives as well as their economic, social and political activities according to *milpa.* A complete culture is constructed from these agricultural cycles. Therefore, the indigenous guerrilla movement built its ideological base on the *milpa,* considering the land as the main source of life. This process of knowledge acquisition for the formation of an indigenous movement took almost a decade engaged in clandestine activities before, on the 1st of January 1994, the EZLN came out to the public eye.

This chapter provides an overview of the Zapatista movement from 1994 to the present in order to understand the analysis, in the coming chapters, of the ways in which the Zapatistas could be considered as political subjects. A historical overview of Zapatismo will be provided taking as nodal points the six declarations of the Lacandona Jungle issued by the EZLN. Special attention will be paid to the evolution on the way the Zapatistas'

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[2] *Corporativismo* is a term that refers to a form of interest representation. All the organisations and unions that existed in Mexico had to be recognised by the state-party, and this recognition entailed the affiliation of its members to the party (Bartra & Otero, 2007). *Corporativismo* entails a relationship of domination, constructed by the state-party to bring together the different social and working fractions of the state. Needless to say, this relationship was formed from the top down, and since all the organisations and unions were part of the PRI the negotiations among them were made through the party. For the PRI, *coporativismo* was key in their quest for centralising power. In addition, this *corporativismo* was seen as a characteristic that honoured the PRI's revolutionary legacy: the aim of the PRI was to institutionalise the different revolutionary interest in Mexican society.
[3] Mestizo is a term in Spanish colonized countries in the American continent to refer to a person of combined Spanish and Native descent.
[4] Chiapas is located in South-East-Mexico and the majority of the population is composed by Mayan indigenous ethnic groups (Tzotziles, Tzeltales, Choles, Tojolabales, Zoques), most of whom live below the poverty line (Cleaver, 1994)

demands have developed over time, to understand how these demands went from claims for state recognition to the construction of alternative political projects. However, to understand the origins of these claims, a brief discussion of the Mexican state-building project is needed.

2.2 Mexico's State-building Project.

It is pertinent to explain how the Mexican state-building project neglected indigenous identities, as this issue comprises a core concern of the Zapatista political project. There were several state-building projects in Mexico, which started to emerge after independence in 1820. Two groups with opposing views, the Conservatives and Republicans, directed the post independence state-building project. The Conservatives aimed to keep all the political institutions brought by Spain during the colonial era, and wanted to establish a constitutional monarchy. The Republicans, influenced by the French Enlightenment and the United States, intended to establish a republic. These two clashing projects created instability and a political division within the population (Vazquez, 1997). Despite these political divisions, social divisions remained based on race, characterized by a hierarchical structure in which indigenous peoples were at the bottom of the social pyramid (Di Tella, 1996). Indigenous communities remained at the margins of the political project for more than a hundred years: it was not until after the Mexican Revolution in 1920, with a second project for state-building, that there was a first attempt to include these communities. The revolutionary state project praised an ideal of 'Mexicanness,' which included and valued elements such as the *mestizaje*[5] and indigenousness (Padilla, 2009).

The aim of the Mexican Revolution was to overthrow the dictator Porfirio Díaz, who had been in power for more than thirty years and to improve the living and working conditions of the Mexican population. The population across Mexican territory had social demands such as better working conditions in urban areas and against the feudal system that persisted since the country was as Spanish colony, as a form of territorial administration in rural areas. In general, Díaz's regime did not make use of the military to remain in power. It was a strong regime that concentrated on the construction of the state and development of the country without wanting to change the social structure that had been in place since the colonial period (Knight, 2010). Before and during the rule of Díaz, land in Mexico remained in the hands of an elite, called *caciques.* The *caciques* acted as

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[5] The term *mestizaje* builds on the concept of *mestizo,* and was used as a term that could encapsulate the diverse racial population of the territories in Latin America that were once colonised by Spain.

feudal lords who held possession over the land, making profit with the exploitation of workers, who often were indigenous people (Joseph & Nugent, 1994). Nevertheless, the resignation of Díaz did not solve the country's political and social situation: a revolution then started. Joseph and Nugent (1994) argue that the Mexican Revolution that lead to Díaz's resignation was a popular movement as diverse sectors of the population mobilised against Díaz and for the improvement of the social, political and economic conditions. For instance, the guerrilla movement formed in the north of the country led by Francisco I. Madero was composed of people from the middle classes, whereas miners and *campesinos* formed the guerrillas of the centre and south of the country. The divergent interests of each guerrilla movement exacerbated the challenges created by the power vacuum that Díaz left, and which remained unfilled by a consensual project for the consolidation of the nation-state. An agreement on the destiny of the country remained uncertain for several years. Knight (1986) suggests that despite this political ambiguity created by the different interests of the guerrilla movements, the main success of the Mexican Revolution was the configuration of a strong political base formed by sectors of society that previously were marginalized. If Knight is right in arguing that this social base was essential for the consolidation of a new political system, then the people would have had a guiding role in the construction of the emerging political system. Unfortunately, this social base was not effectively included in the state-building project as this project due to the volatility and tensions between different guerrilla movements.

One of the firsts efforts made to shape the state-building project was to change the ideology that Mexico was a country subject to arbitrary one-man rule to a nation of laws and institutions. In this regard, the 'one-man rule' should be replaced by a political party that could be able to coordinate and represent the various revolutionary groups and could guarantee the accomplishment of their demands (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989). With this in mind, the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party or PNR) was created in 1929 and its efforts were directed towards the inclusion of the different interest and revolutionary groups (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989). By trying to contain within its sphere of influence all the different revolutionary interest groups within Mexican society, by enshrining them with a set of state institutions, and by in effect marginalising all other political parties and monopolizing the Mexican state, the PNR was aiming to consolidate itself a state-party. This ideology however, worked only in paper as elites continued to enjoy special benefits, key industries remained in the hands of foreign owners, and landowners still possessed vast amounts of land. It was only after Lázaro Cárdenas assumed the presidency in 1934 that these practices were overturned and the state

building-project was formalized. Cárdenas' state-building project can be understood by studying its cultural and political aspects (Banister, 2007). As such, it is important to recognise that Cárdenas continued with revolutionary ideology of the PNR as he belonged to that party, and attempted to consolidate 'a nation of laws and institutions' by promoting a unified ideology. For Banister, Cárdenas' nationalism consisted of the construction of an identity based on Mexican values emanating from the indigenous people, *campesinos* (peasants)*,* workers and revolutionary *caudillos* that at the same time constituted an articulation of political demands (Banister, 2007).

Ernest Renan (1994) suggests that the nation should be considered in terms of a 'daily plebiscite,' that is composed of two elements. The first is a common past or a shared legacy of memories, and the second is a present or a latent feeling of being together (Renan, 1994). These intangible elements are the ones that members of the nation require to feel members of a single community. These elements give, according to Renan, a sentimental side and a soul and body to the nation (Renan, 1994). From this definition, it could be understood that the soul of the nation comprises intangible elements such as, memories of a shared past along with commitment to forge a common present. The body of the nation is thus constituted not by race, language or religion but on elements of shared objects of national pride which provide much of the iconography of nationalism movements, such as the meaning of battles, sorrows, war time sacrifices and heroic performances, among other things. It is precisely the embodiment of these elements that serve as a remembrance of a common past to reinforce the idea of commonality, transferring this sentiment to a tacit consent to live together. It could be argued that the nationalism that was promoted by Cárdenas, a revolutionary leader, was an example of Renan's 'daily plebiscite.' In an attempt to accommodate a diverse range of demands in a single nation-state ideology Cárdenas relied on the idea of the 'Revolutionary Family.' Establishing this 'Revolutionary Family' involved restructuring the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party or PNR) to create the *Partido Revolucionario Mexicano* (Mexican Revolutionary Party or PRM).[6] The president remained as the head of this family. It could be suggested that both the idea of a stable state and the revolutionary rhetoric comprised an important axis that underpinned Cárdenas state-building project. This project would not have been possible without the promotion of the rhetoric of the revolution. For the PRM and Cárdenas the Mexican Revolution was more than a war that

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[6] The PRM formally included through unions, four main sectors of the Mexican society: workers, *campesinos,* the militia and the people (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989).

overthrew a dictator: it was a 'daily plebiscite' as the government and the state-party were not the triumph of the revolution but its successors (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989).

As such, Cárdenas became a constant reminder of the iconography and the slogans of the Mexican Revolution. For example, he nationalized the cotton and oil industries and, promoted the creation of unions that were incorporated into the state-party (union officials were often militants of the party). Land redistribution was another example of the state-building project (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989). Cárdenas relied on the revolutionary slogan of *la tierra es de quien la trabaja* (the land belongs to those who work it). The *campesinos* were encouraged to form organizations that could help the development of their crops and agricultural production. Their organizations were affiliated to the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Confederation of Peasants), which had close ties with the PRM. Finally, Cárdenas saw in the education system the perfect way to reinforce this 'daily plebiscite,' and considered it as a base upon which the state ought to be constructed. He thus created teaching-training colleges in rural areas. The creation of these colleges, responded to two popular demands. One was the inclusion of a previously excluded rural population and the other, was access to land for the *campesinos*. These colleges were considered as the perfect instrument to link the rural and indigenous communities to the ideals of the revolution and therefore to the state-building project. Rural education had two main objectives: the inclusion of the vast majority of the population that lived in these areas, such as indigenous people into the state-building project and forging the rural spirit that at the end of the day was an essential part of the revolutionary ideals (Padilla, 2009). As inclusive as this project was, the reality was that it was led by an elite who created a strong central government that unified a population through the institutionalisation of various organizations such as unions and workers' associations.

During Cárdenas presidency (1934-1940) the Mexican state-building project was characterised by the unification of society and the institutionalization of the revolutionary demands. However, the state-building project took a slight shift in 1946 with the mark of two events; the disappearance of the military branch of the PRM by the election of the first civilian president and the emergence of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional (*Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI) The PRI kept the legacy of the PRM in ideology, structure and nature, but its aim was to create and distribute wealth (Aguilar Camín & Meyer, 1989).

The indigenous communities across Mexico were also considered in the state-building projects of the PNR, PRM and PRI. Rus (1994) argues that before the Revolution, these communities were considered 'closed corporate communities' as they kept a social and political organization based on the community and their everyday practices and traditions were closely linked with their religious beliefs (Rus, 1994). It was, the task of the Cárdenas administration to break this link and forge new ones with the central government. The way to break the religious links and include these communities in the state was through the *Sindicato de Trabajadores Indígenas* (Indigenous Workers Union). The Union became an instrument of the state to administrate the working life of the indigenous communities as it controlled related issues for their development, such as schools, health clinics and land allocation: in the process, they became what Rus (1994) refers to as 'institutionalised revolutionary communities.'

Established in 1936, the Union's popularity grew rapidly, boasting a membership of 25,000 indigenous workers in 1937. Added to this, the Union managed to control coffee production by declaring it illegal to buy coffee from coffee pickers who were not accredited by the Union (Rus, 1994). The immediate results of the Union's creation were favourable as the indigenous communities' situation improved: the union eliminated abuses of the indigenous workers, their debts were eradicated and their salary protected. However, while direct improvements in the indigenous communities' working conditions could not be denied, the terms under which they were included in the state-building project remained problematic. The state had a central role in the administration of the Union. For this reason, the union employed *escribanos* (translators) to liaise between the union officials and the indigenous population. With time, the *escribanos* began to acquire more power within the Union and their role changed as they prioritized the interests of the party over the interests of the indigenous population (Rus, 1994). This situation not only reflected the state's view of the indigenous people –primarily- a work force, but also reinforced their submissive status. The state's participation in the Union's affairs was obvious with high-level Union officials accountable to the state, leaving the indigenous communities without an independent voice to claim their needs. In 1946 with the emergence of the PRI, the Union received orders from the state-party to delegate most of its functions to the municipal authorities. Schools and health clinics faced a reduction in their budget and municipal authorities accountable to the state-party and not the people oversaw activities such as the regulation of salaries, monitoring of working conditions among others.

Indigenous communities were included in the post-revolutionary state-building project based not on their recognition as bearers of a different culture, but as a work force. It is true that under Cárdenas' presidency and his Mexican socialism[7] the indigenous communities briefly improved their living and working conditions. Despite this improvement, however, their relationship with the state reinforced the hierarchy in place since the Spanish colonial period. It was the government that decided the way in which the indigenous communities were going to be administered. The figure of the indigenous person was only a rhetorical trope and it was used superficially by the elites in the political system: indigenous people remained in a vulnerable position and susceptible to abuses.

2.3 Enough!

In the early hours of the 1st of January 1994, a group of people from the Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Chol and Tojolabal indigenous communities and six *mestizos* from the EZLN occupied the municipal head offices of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Altamirano, Las Margaritas and Ocosingo, and captured the governor of Chiapas Absalón Castellanos Domínguez. Along with these actions the EZLN released the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. In this declaration the EZLN said *¡Ya Basta!* (Enough!) to the abuses of a dictatorship of more than 70 years, embodied in President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The EZLN said enough to the living conditions of complete abandonment under which the PRI and its predecessors forced them to live. The EZLN made it clear that this party dictatorship had adversely affected both the indigenous communities and also the population in general as it limited the development of democracy in the country (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993). Their fight was therefore, against the government, which they saw as unaccountable to its population. The EZLN appealed to Article 39 of the Mexican Constitution to legitimize its fight and to give a legal base to their demands. This constitutional article recognizes that national sovereignty resides in the people and grants them the right to change, modify or alter the form of government. Under these circumstances, the EZLN demanded the president's resignation as a first step to restore the rule of law and national stability.

This First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle had a twofold function. On the one hand it was a declaration of war against the government. To deal with this war, the general command of the EZLN gave six orders to its people to serve as immediate guideline: to

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[7] *'Socialismo a la Mexicana'* (Mexican Socialism) was a term coined by Stephen Lewis, in an attempt to explain how Cárdenas wanted to socialise the means of production. (Padilla, 2009)

mobilise forces towards the country's capital; respect the live of prisoners and the people that resulted wounded; start summary trials of members of the army, police and politicians who had received foreign training as well as those that had misrepresented, mistreated and robbed the society; accept those Mexicans who are willing to adhere to the Zapatista fight; unconditional surrender of the enemy's (government) headquarters; and suspend the theft of natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993). This declaration also outlined the EZLN demands for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. In addition to this, the EZLN declared that their fight was not going to finish once these demands were met (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993). These orders and demands show how the EZLN's focus was not oriented solely to the indigenous cause or for indigenous emancipation but was also a fight for the Mexican population.

 It could be argued that the inclusion of the Mexican population in their fight was an implicit understanding of Mexico as a nation and as a state. This understanding of Mexico as a nation was reinforced by the EZLN's explicit assertion of respect for and appropriation of the Mexican flag and national anthem. The relationship between the EZLN and these national symbols, which are often associated with state –and nation-building, could be understood as a Zapatista appropriation to promote unity and identification between its members and the Mexican population. Although symbols such as national anthems are created by the state for identification matters, in Mexico the anthem is perceived as a 'lay prayer' with a wide and generic meaning (Corona Berkin, 2017). As such, these national symbols for the Mexicans are more than symbols of an official identity originated or promoted by the state, but are symbols that group and unify the nation. For example, indigenous communities across Mexico sing the national anthem in their own languages (Corona Berkin, 2017). If this is right, it could be argued that the national anthem, the flag and other national symbols could be understood as 'empty signifiers.' Lievesley and Ludlam (2009) argue that to understand 'populism' in Latin America, the point of departure should be the 'people' as an empty signifier. An empty signifier they argue, suggests that something have no fixed meaning, it can absorb meanings people incorporate in it (Lievesley & Ludlam, 2009). Following this explanation, national symbols for the Zapatistas are understood as belonging to the people or the nation, while the Mexican state appropriate them as a representative symbol of a consolidation of the state.

The EZLN uprising of 1st of January 1994 captured the attention of national and international media but also of the Mexican government. The image of stability that the government wanted to portray with NAFTA was challenged by the EZLN declaration of war. The federal government officially denied the existence of any possible uprising and even offered forgiveness to those groups holding arms. As the days passed, however, the official posture of the government changed to a punitive one. The occupation of the municipalities and the First Declaration lead to bloodshed in the region; the EZLN and the army were in constant confrontation. The situation escalated and due to the media attention dialogue seemed the only way to end the violent confrontation. However, dialogue was not an easy task. Both the government and the EZLN were immersed in a violent environment that consisted of not only physical attacks, but also a war of pronouncements from both sides. The EZLN saw in these pronouncements a means to explain, and up to a point justify their fight as some statements from the Declaration were ratified and clarified in further declarations.

Despite the efforts made by the federal government to discredit the organization, the EZLN released a set communiqués laying out the rights and obligations of the people in the fight.[8] These documents (though dated 1993, they did not reach the public eye until 1994) demonstrated that the EZLN was not an improvised guerrilla army in southeast Mexico. The communiqués outlined the rights and obligations encompassed by several aspects of the Zapatista fight. The declarations covered the people involved in the struggle, the revolutionary army, urban and rural land reform, women, workers, industry and commerce and social welfare. While these declarations set out the rights and obligations of members of the EZLN, they did not make reference to the protection of their ethnicity nor explicit claims for autonomy to protect the indigenous culture. These declarations were directed towards the construction of a more democratic and less authoritarian form of government. For this reason, the right for democracy and justice was emphasised through several aspects in these declarations. For instance, the people in struggle, according to the EZLN, have the right to elect freely and democratically their authorities and the

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[8] These communiqués include the following: *Ley de Impuestos de Guerra* (War Tax Law), *Ley de Derechos y Obligaciones de los Pueblos en Lucha* (Law of Rights and Obligations of the Fighting Towns)*, Ley de Derechos y Obligaciones de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (Law of Rights and Obligations of the Revolutionary Armed Forces), *Ley Agraria Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Agrarian Law)*, Ley Revolucionaria de Mujeres* (Women's Revolutionary Law)*, Ley de Reforma Urbana* (Urban Reform Law)*, Ley de Trabajo* (Labour Law)*, Ley de Industria y Comercio* (Industry and Commerce Law)*, Ley de Seguridad Social* (Social Security Law) and *Ley de Justicia* (Justice Law). All these can be accessed in the Zapatista electronic archive: http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/category/1993/

revolutionary army has the obligation to guard democracy by enabling people to freely elect their authorities (EZLN, 1993b, 1993c).

Furthermore, these declarations addressed the importance of access to rural land, which according to the Zapatistas was one of the demands of the Mexican Revolution which had not been accomplished as they were superficially considered by the PRI and it predecessors (EZLN, 1993a). No less important was the inclusion and recognition of women in the fight. The EZLN saw the rights, obligations and the role of women as equal to that of men, stating that they should be in full control of their live and bodies (EZLN, 1993d). This marked an important challenge to existing conditions. Women's social situation in rural areas like Chiapas can be described, as Millán argues, as "the poorest among the poor" (1998). It could be argued that indigenous women were doubly discriminated against by their ethnicity and also by their gender. Being an indigenous woman defined a role which was reduced to having children and taking care of the house while being totally dependent on their male partner (Millán, 1998). The EZLN communiqués aimed to cover the Mexican population as a whole making, reinforcing the condition of the Zapatista fight, in its early stages, which was an inclusive fight for ordinary Mexicans against the government, against gender inequality, among others. Therefore, at this stage, the EZLN's fight had a political character fuelled by a discourse based on the oppressed and the oppressor.

As the conflict between the government and the EZLN escalated, the latter proposed a truce dialogue after a guarantee of a cease-fire. After several declarations from both parties, the EZLN government peace commissioner Manuel Camacho Solis and Archbishop Samuel Ruiz began talks in February 1994. The dialogue concluded with the agreement of both sides to move on towards a resolution. According to the EZLN, Camacho Solis was willing to listen and respond to their demands, but they emphasised that the EZLN was going to take the time needed to translate and discuss amongst the Zapatistas the proposals brought by the government (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994e; Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994f). The talks ended with the promise of moving forward once the social base of the EZLN had discussed the proposals. Unfortunately, the talks were interrupted by several important political events including the assassination of the presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta. The dialogue was not resumed until May that year. According to the EZLN this dialogue was a mere exchange of reports. Neither of the parties reached an agreement but this

exercise opened the channels for discussion of future encounters in Chiapas (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994i).

2.4 Everything for Everyone, Nothing for Us

In June 1994 the EZLN released the Second Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. A unilateral cease fire was announced in this Declaration as the only possible path for a civic movement seeking to democratised the country (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b). Bearing in mind that this declaration was issued in a turbulent period of federal elections,[9] this gave the EZLN the opportunity to call attention to the state of the Mexican political system and to take democracy as an underpinning concept for the rest of their demands. The EZLN suggested that a democratic change was the only means to end the war they had started. Considering this, the EZLN made a call to reconsider the causes of the lack of democracy in the country: although Mexico held regular and lively elections, there was very little real alternation of parties in government, and the political system concentrated power in the hands of a small group of people. The EZLN argued for power to be exercised by the people, and if this were the case, then the ruling political elite would have to adapt and act according to these circumstances. In other words, the main essence of this declaration was to promote a substantive, participatory democracy.

Thus, where the First Declaration was a declaration of war against the government and the state-party, which was both, blamed for constructing a corrupt and oppressive political system, the Second Declaration proposed the creation of a new political system. So, if the First Declaration was a statement against the government, it would be logical to claim that this Second Declaration followed to propose a new form of governance. However, the Second Declaration argued that democracy should be constructed not by means of a new political class but through the creation of spaces in which people could gather and discuss relevant political matters (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b). The main idea behind the creation of spaces for political deliberation was to show the possibility that the majority could exercise power had been taken from them by the establishment of a political system directed by the state-party. The Zapatistas aimed, with the creation of these spaces to give "birth to a new political relation" (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b).

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[9] The assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the official candidate of the PRI, made the political system unstable. In a practice that had been carried out for more than 50 years, the current president usually appointed his successor. In this case Carlos Salinas saw in Colosio the candidate who could keep his legacy. After Colosio's death, Salinas found himself in a difficult position, as he had to appoint another candidate who could be strong enough to defeat the growing popularity of the opposition, especially the candidate from the left-wing political party Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. This caused political instability in the country.

Inspired by this, the EZLN made a call the people to participate in the meetings of the *Convención Nacional Democrática* (National Democratic Convention or CND) to envisage a new political space to consolidate the demands for free, just and democratic elections and respect for the popular will.

The first session of the CND took place in Chiapas from the 6th to the 9th of August 1994 and was attended by indigenous organizations, academics, workers' unions and members of the general public. The proposal the EZLN had for the CND was released in advance proposing the discussion to be based on three main topics: a transitional government – that could commit to the opening of spaces for political participation including projects directed at breaking with the state-party and the presidential system; a constituent congress –that would represent each and every sector of the population and would examine the actual constitution; and a new constitution –which revised the political and social rights to guarantee their implantation and recognize new tools such as plebiscites, popular referendums and indigenous autonomy (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994a). The turnout at the CND of approximately 6,000 delegates (L. Stephen, 1995) represented the interest in civil society in talking about alternative political possibilities. However, the significance of the CND was also more symbolic. For the first time, the indigenous support bases of the EZLN were presented as a core part of the Zapatismo which not only demonstrated that the EZLN was more than a military or guerrilla organization but also that the indigenous social base was active in the fight (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994c). The CND presided over by indigenous Zapatistas who were not part of the military branch of the Zapatismo. According to *Subcomandante* Marcos, the CND discussed matters related to the construction of democracy, a topic that does not fall under the scope of any Zapatista military organization (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994c). Nevertheless, the significance of the CND was also reflected in other aspects. The physical location where the convention was held was named Aguascalientes in honour of the place where the different revolutionary armies in 1917 drafted the new Constitution.[10] The Aguascalientes[11] was then a space free

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[10] During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the armies of Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregon met in the state of Aguascalientes after president Victoriano Huerta was overthrown to discuss the future of the country and draft a constitution in which all the interests and demands of the armies represented by the leaders could be represented.

[11] *Subcomandante* Marcos describes the Aguascalientes using the analogy of a ship. The marquee that protected people from the sun was the sail of the ship, the benches were the oars, the hilly terrain was the ship itself and the content of the discussion was the steam power that was transported people to a different place (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994h). Not only was the analogy of the ship useful to understand what the EZLN and the Zapatistas in general wanted to achieve with the CND but it

from hostilities that encouraged political dialogue, but most importantly it was a Zapatista territory.

For the Zapatismo, the CND provided a valuable opportunity to transmit and explain the Zapatista ideology and their conception of politics. *Comandante* Tacho, a member of the EZLN General Command, spoke on the opening days of the NDC saying,

> For us, the Zapatista army, being political is not to talk, it is what we do; that is the political solution. And precisely some say that we do, and they ask *Subcomandante* Marcos what is the political structure of the organization, which for this and that; but the political structure is on the committee. So we say that political work is carried out on the bases, and then that is what the CND has to do, work from and with the bases, that is the important thing. And that work now has to be done by the *compañero* that aims to be political, but he or she has to do it with the bases. As we see it, the CND has to start with this principle. This is very important, because now that the *compañero* –in this case the delegates of the CND- must develop political work. And how? They first have to see who they are going to talk to and explain the national situation. For this reason, we say that now he or she must be very political. And he or she has to be like those that heal an illness and not like those who give medicine, but like those who heal. We understand it the other way around that is by asking what hurts what are you suffering from? Because regularly they ask:
> -Does it hurt here?
> -Yes
> -Does it hurt here?
> -Yes
> So, who gave that consultation? The patient. So we believe that political work should be developed this way: he himself or she herself are the ones that gives the prescription, because he or she will say "Well, the national situation is so and so." It is well known for all of you that have all the means to know about the situation as you have access to either the newspaper or TV news, etc.
> So, that person, that *compañero*, is going to demonstrate that he or she needs to fight, and there is the need to fight [...] so he or she is political and strong, because he is not going to be betrayed...(Comandante Insurgente Tacho, 1994b)[12]

marked the location as a site for the construction of their autonomy project as this space later became a Zapatista Rebel Territories.

[12] Para nosotros, el ejército zapatista, el ser político no es el que hablemos, es lo que hacemos; ésa es la salida política. Y con razón algunos dicen que nosotros sí, que le preguntan al subcomandante *Marcos* que en dónde está el cuadro político, que por esto y por el otro; entonces el cuadro político está en el comité. Entonces nosotros decimos que el trabajo político es lo que realiza sobre las bases, y con razón la CND debe hacer trabajo de base, que eso es lo importante. Y ese trabajo ahora lo tiene que hacer ese compañero que ahora se dice que va a ser político, pero lo debe hacer con las bases. Nosotros lo vemos con esta fuerza que debe empezar el CND. Es muy importante esto, porque ahora sí ese compañero –en este caso los delegados, los compañeros de la CND- deben desarrollar un trabajo político. ¿Y cómo? Primero tienen que ver con quién es con el que van a hablar y tienen que explicarle de la situación nacional. Por eso decimos que ahora debe ser bien político. Y él sólo, ahora sí como los que curan y no

Thus not only did the EZLN made it clear that its political character was not based on the military branch, as had been assumed since it was this branch that was the bridge between the media, the government and the Zapatistas but it was clear that the Zapatistas understood politics horizontally, and aimed to build a political system that could reflect this.

The CND was held in apparent peace, and talks were still a possibility during the following months of the convention. However, by December 1994, Ernesto Zedillo assumed the presidency of Mexico and the situation in Chiapas was an important part of his commencement speech. Chiapas was referred as a conflict zone and he offered a close and direct dialogue to solve the conflict, which entailed an end to the state's military activity. The EZLN, in the voice of *Subcomandante* Marcos, replied with a letter and welcomed Zedillo to what he named a 'nightmare.' Marcos emphasized that Chiapas and the indigenous cause was not the problem; the indigenous voice was the voice of many men, women, children, elders from the rural and urban areas, from different races and languages that were equally affected by the government's neoliberal policies. The EZLN denounced an increase in the military surveillance by helicopters along the border with Guatemala and due to this situation it felt it was impossible for the EZLN to accept the proposal for dialogue. Accepting dialogue under these circumstances was a risk to every member of the EZLN, as the talks were proposed to be behind closed doors. This proposition was not only risky, but was an insult to the civil society that supported the EZLN as it hindered their right to democracy. It was clear that the EZLN was not going to surrender to the official declarations, they declared themselves ready politically and military for any possible dispute (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994b). However, Marcos stated that the problem was no longer Ernesto Zedillo but what he represented: he was the personification of an unjust, antidemocratic and criminal political system.

como los que dan la medicina, sino como los que curan. Nosotros lo entendemos al revés, que es el que le duele lo que está padeciendo, porque le preguntan:
-¿Te duele aquí?
-Sí
-¿Te duele aquí?
-Sí
Entonces ¿quién dio esa consulta? El enfermo. Entonces nosotros creemos que un trabajo político debe desarrollarse así: que él mismo sea el que dé la receta, porque él mismo va a decir "Bueno, la situación nacional está así y asá y más allá." Es muy conocida por ustedes, mucho mejor conocida por ustedes que tienen todos los medios, ya sea por el periódico, la televisión las noticias, etc.
After a turbulent presidential transition, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León assumed presidency and with that came a letter from Marcos.
Entonces esa persona, ese compañero, él va a demostrar que tiene esa necesidad de luchar, hay esa necesidad de luchar […] ese sí es mero político y es bien fuerte, porque ahí no lo van a engañar…
(Comandante Insurgente Tacho, 1994b).

Given the lack of an effective proposal for dialogue and the continued military hostility towards the Zapatista communities the EZLN initiated a military campaign called 'Peace with Justice and Dignity for Indigenous People' on the 8 of December 1994 (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994b). As part of this campaign, on the 11th and 19th of December 1994 the EZLN positioned their troops in several territories in the state of Chiapas, which had previously been labelled by the government as 'zones of conflict.' The civilian population and the Zapatista social base prepared forts to resist possible governmental aggression and in some places they named local representatives.[13] The newly occupied rebel territories recognized Armando Avendaño Figueroa[14] as the constitutional governor of the rebel state of Chiapas (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994f, 1994g, 1994h, 1994i, 1994j; Muñoz Ramirez, 2003). The newly occupied land represented a formal rupture with the Mexican government as, both the EZLN and the Zapatista social base, rejected state authority over these territories. Nevertheless, it could be argued that these territories were also physical spaces from which the Zapatismo was constructed.

2.5 National Liberation Movement

On the 1st of January 1995, a year after the uprising, the EZLN launched the Third Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. Several issues were addressed in this declaration, including the repercussions of the presidential elections, claims for autonomy and finally the Movement of National Liberation.

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[13]The official municipalities that the EZLN took were:

11 of December: Altamirano-Ocosingo, Las Margaritas and La Independencia and were named Libertad de los pueblos Mayas, San Pedro Michoacán, Tierra y Libertad, Maya, Francisco Gómez, Flores Magón, San Manuel, San Salvador (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994f).

19 of December 00:30hrs: Chanal, Oxchuc, Huixtán, Comitán Domínguez, Altamirano, Ocosingo and were named 17 de Noviembre, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, Ernesto Che Guevara, 1o. de Enero and Cabañas (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994g).

19 of December 01:00hrs: El Bosque, San Andrés Larráinzar, Bochil, Chenalhó, Pentelhó, Mitontic, Sitalá, San Juan Chamula, Ixtapa, Cancuc and were named, San Andrés Sacamch'en de los Pobres, San Juan de la Libertad, San Pedro Chenalhó, Santa Catarina, Bochil, Magdalena de la Paz, Jitotol, Cancuc, Ixtapa (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994h).

19 of December 01:30hrs: Palenque, Huitiupan, Simojovel, Salto de Agua, Tila, Sabanilla, Yajalón, Tumbalá, Chilón and were named, Huitiupan, Simojovel, Sabanilla, Vicente Guerrero, Trabajo, Francisco Villa, Independencia, Benito Juárez, La Paz, José María Morelos y Pavón (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994i).

19 of December 2:00hrs: San Cristóbal de las Casas, Zinacantán, Teopisca, Villa de las Rosas, Totolapa, Amatenango del Valle, Venustiano Carranza(EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994j)

[14] Avendaño was a lawyer that closely worked with Sub Comandante Marcos prior to the 1994 uprising and advocated part of his career as lawyer to the defence of indigenous rights.

The 1994 presidential elections were carried out in an uncertain and turbulent environment. Due to the above-mentioned events, the EZLN decided to keep at the margins of the elections. Despite this, their lack of involvement did not mean they agreed with the electoral process or the results. This declaration reaffirmed that position, and identified the election process as corrupt, immoral, unfair and illegitimate (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1995). Although several reforms were introduced in the electoral system, this election contributed to the continuation of the PRI as a state-party. The 1988 presidential election results had been highly questionable due to weak electoral structures that served the interest of the PRI (García de León, 2005). Due to the questionable legitimacy of the election that brought Salinas as president, he introduced an electoral reform to guarantee fair and transparent elections (Scherlen, 1998). Despite these changes, the opinion polls showed that a vast majority of citizens doubted the integrity of the 1994 presidential elections (Klesner, 1995). Even though there was active participation of other political parties in this election, the PRI also won majority in Congress, which was also opened for elections (Klesner, 1995). Moreover, these elections were characterised by fraudulent practices, such as the sudden crash of the counting system (Scherlen, 1998).

This electoral process was for many, the first steps of Mexico's a transition to democracy as the reforms introduced since 1988 such as presidential debates, the creation of an autonomous institution in charge or elections, and the introduction of a photographic electoral card to deal with concerns over voter fraud were intended to construct a path towards democracy (García de León, 2005; Klesner, 1995; Schedler, 2000; Scherlen, 1998; Silva-Herzog Marquez, 1999). But in spite of the introduction of these elements to the electoral process the EZLN did not believe that either elections or the system that allowed and legitimated these practices was the way to a democratic transition. Furthermore, the indigenous situation, according to the EZLN, could not be solved until the political system was radically transformed. The EZLN suggested that the only way indigenous communities could be incorporated fairly and with dignity into the country was through the recognition of indigenous autonomy –which meant the formal recognition of their distinctive forms of social, cultural and political organization (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1995). Autonomy in the Zapatistas terms did not mean separation from Mexico but the rejection of a political system through the recognition of indigenous communities' differences.

In this statement, the Zapatistas for the first time made claims for the indigenous cause, which was a corollary of the CND as the convention reinforced the idea of constructing a political project from the base. In the previous declarations and statements, the EZLN

discourse spoke for that part of the population that was affected by the neoliberal policies implemented in the country and those people deprived and ignored by the political process. Although this was the first formal acknowledgment of the indigenous cause, this suggested the duality of the fight; the recognition of the indigenous character did not mean a rejection or denial of other sectors of the population, which were also included in the EZLN's initial demands. Actually, there was a call to all these other sectors of the population (urban and rural workers, *campesinos*, teachers, students, women, young people, artists, academics, members of the clergy and militants of the different political organizations) to join the Movement of National Liberation. It was then, the task of this Movement of National Liberation to commonly construct a transitional government, a new constitutional body, a new constitution and to destroy the state-party system (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1995). The EZLN considered the National Liberation Movement a first step to a democratic transition and a political exercise for the construction of a new government. In order to achieve that, the EZLN proposed: the recognition of the Constitution of 1917[15] as the valid body of law; the recognition of all political forces either national, regional or local; the introduction of a new economic plan that that could respond to the needs of all sectors of society, but especially to the dispossessed; the recognition of the indigenous groups and their right to autonomy and citizenship; and the removal of the custody of the *patria*[16] from the federal government[17] (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1995).

In 1995, there was a first meeting in which members of the federal government and the EZLN stated their conditions for dialogue. Both sides stated that the withdrawal of both armies was crucial for dialogue and to achieve a peaceful solution to the problem. The EZLN reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue and unilaterally announced a ceasefire for an indefinite time, avoiding the blocking of the possible channels of communication, removing restrictions on public access to motorways which ran through areas under Zapatista control and avoiding the threat to the official municipal offices or public spaces (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995a). With these

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[15] The Constitution of 1917 was drafted while the Mexican Revolution was being fought. During this time, the armies of Emiliano Zapata (composed mainly of peasants of the south of Mexico) and Francisco Villa (from the North) together had military superiority over the other armies and had as their main claim land reform. The interests of these two armies were reflected in Article 27 of the Constitution. This article covered the reallocation of land, but that was not fully achieved until Lázaro Cárdenas partially allocated land to the peasants in 1934 (Bartra & Otero, 2007). It was precisely Article 27 that Salinas amended as a condition made by the USA to sign NAFTA (Volpi, 2004).

[16] Motherland or nation.

[17] The EZLN guaranteed that all the national symbols such as the Mexican flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem were protected until sovereignty and legitimacy of the political system was restored (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1995).

measures the EZLN expected the federal government to withdraw from all the Zapatistas territories (which it partially did), and specifically demanded a dialogue with the federal government and not the municipal authorities (Henríquez, 1995).

Although Mexico was immersed in a new economic crisis at the end of 1994, caused by the devaluation of the Mexican currency. This devaluation of the currency came to be known as the Tequila Effect or the December mistake caught the full attention of the federal government, the Zedillo administration wanted to eradicate the so called guerrilla movement in Chiapas. Thus, the identity of Marcos was revealed and an arrest warrant was issued. Added to this the military presence and hostilities in the rebel territories intensified. The Mexican army forced Zapatista communities to leave their territories to the mountains; the displacement of several communities was the new Zapatista reality (Muñoz Ramirez, 2003). After these events the federal government justified these violent actions as measures of containment, arguing that the EZLN was about to launch a new violent campaign (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995c; Meyer, 2003). Members of the public and political organizations demonstrated against these violent actions outside Congress. Several journalists expressed their discontent, which lead to the federal government issuing the 'Law for Dialogue, Conciliation and Dignified Peace in Chiapas' on 11 March 1995. The significance of this law was twofold. It both showed the willingness of the government to talk with the EZLN to solve the situation in Chiapas but also to respond favourably to discontent in civil society. The tense situation in which the country was immersed pushed the government to opt for a peaceful solution regarding Chiapas. Social and political stability was imperative in Mexico as the government received foreign aid to face the economic crisis (Meyer, 2003). However, while this Laws formally recognised the EZLN as a political force, this was dependent upon the EZLN showing their willingness to talk, fully respecting and guaranteeing their rights as Mexican citizens (Congreso de la Union, 1995).

After an exchange of speeches and communiqués from both sides and a meeting in San Miguel to agree on a dialogue protocol, talks were possible. On 22nd of April 1995 both parties sent a delegation to San Andrés Sakamch'en/San Andrés Larrainzar. The EZLN the delegation was composed by the *comandantes* David, Tacho, Zebedeo, Guillermo, Domingo, Moisés and Trinidad and the federal government sent a commission (the *Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación* (Concord and Pacification Commission or COCOPA) formed by federal and local congressmen, the Secretary of the Interior Esteban Moctezuma and the *Comisión Nacional de Intermediación* (National Intermediation Commission or CONAI).

Along with the EZLN delegation, a number of indigenous people, all Zapatistas, gathered in San Andrés to witness the talks. As the EZLN was making claims for a political solution to the conflict, the government wanted them to surrender, prompting the EZLN *comandantes* to resign from the EZLN as the only option to achieve peace in the conflict. The EZLN interrupted the dialogue arguing that it needed to consult the Zapatistas social base on the future of the talks. However their willingness and commitment to dialogue was reiterated as they believed it was the only peaceful means to a solution (Comandante Insurgente Tacho & Comandante Insurgente David, 1995a).

When the dialogue resumed in May 1995, several important matters were discussed such as the proposal for reducing violence and achieving détente. Before accepting this, the EZLN put the proposal to further discussion and approval by the Zapatista social base. However there was minimal agreement on the détente measures, which consisted in the deploying the Mexican army along a specific route, agreed by both parties, while the EZLN would assume responsibility for the order and security in accordance with the law and would respect the commitments emerging from the negotiations (Comandante Insurgente Tacho & Comandante Insurgente David, 1995b). There was an agreement for a second round of talks, giving the EZLN time to consult its social base the agreements reached and for the federal government to make proposals on security measures and to examine the EZLN's initial demands. Days later, the government issued a report on these matters. The report concentrated on the détente measures and offered the progressive legal incorporation of the EZLN. However, the federal report revealed the government's intention to dissolve the guerrilla and dissident movements in Chiapas, reducing the situation to a military matter, and it did not address the Zapatista's initial demands (Secretaría de Gobernación, 1995). The EZLN reacted to this document by stating that their fight was not only for the indigenous communities but also for the population as a whole, and the economic, social, political and cultural causes of the uprising were not mentioned in the government's report (Comandante Tacho, Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, & Comandante Insurgente David, 1995).

The perception of the government's proposal concerned the EZLN, as their fight was never devoted solely to the indigenous cause but was also against the government. Thus, echoing the Third Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle the EZLN called on society to create a national liberation movement by appealing to the CND to monitor a National Consultation of Peace and Democracy (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia

General, 1995b).[18] The Consultation took place the 27th of August 1995, a few days before the EZLN defined the consultation as an example of the emergence of a new form of politics that came from the people, forming, a new political culture: the EZLN's role, it argued was purely to facilitate this process (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995d). The results of the consultation showed support for the proposals, as each of the proposals were supported by a majority of those who voted.[19] With the support of its civil society, the EZLN made a proposal to the federal government to resume the dialogue.

The EZLN stressed the need to make on the causes of the conflict the priority of the talks rather than have them focus on agreeing on possible measures for détente. For the EZLN and the Zapatistas in general, talks on the causes of the conflict could enable a viable solution only if these were discussed at length and in depth and were not restricted to the particular case of Chiapas (C. G. del EZLN, 1995). For this reason, the EZLN proposed the main issues be discussed in six working groups on: rights and indigenous culture; democracy and justice; development and wellbeing; conciliation in Chiapas; women's rights; and cessation of hostilities in Chiapas (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995e). The federal government accepted this layout for the talks and the working groups took several months to achieve a final document, The San Andrés Larrainzar Accords. The Accords were signed on 16th of February 1996 and were composed of several documents that reflected the working groups proposed by the EZLN. In general, these accords represented a minimal agreement on the causes of the conflict, in

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[18] The EZLN called on civil society to answer 5 questions which were:
1. Do you agree that the main demands of the Mexican people are: land, housing, work, food, health, education, culture, information, independence, democracy, liberty, justice and peace?
2. Should there be a union among the different democratising forces to form an opposition and fight for the 13 principal demands?
3. Should there be a deep political reform that could guarantee: equity, citizenship participation, including in independent and non-governmental organisations, respect for the vote, a reliable electoral roll and the acknowledgment of all national and local political forces?
4. Should the EZLN join other forces and organization and form a new and independent political organization?
5. Should the EZLN join other forces and organizations to form a new political organization?
6. Should women be present and equally represented in the civilian agencies of the government? (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995b)

[19] There were 10,398 voting stalls installed and 3,000 of them were in Mexico City, 1,746 in different indigenous communities and 5,652 in several cities and towns. The result were as follow:
Question 1: Yes 97.7%, No 1.18%, Don't know 0.95%
Question 2: Yes 94.4%, No 4.59%, Don't know 2.99%
Question 3: Yes 95.37%, No 2.18%, Don't know 2.45%
Question 4: Yes 57.3%, No 33.68%, Don't know 8.79%
Question 5: Yes 41.43%, No 50.56%, Don't know 8.01%
Question 6: Yes 93.53%, No 3.55%, Don't know 2.92% (Alianza Cívica, 1995).

which the federal government committed itself to respect and protect indigenous autonomy (EZLN & Gobierno, 1996; EZLN & Gobierno Federal, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d). The importance of these accords was twofold. First, though these were minimal accords, limited to what were agreed to be crucial subjects for both parties, they did break important ground: for the first time the indigenous communities were recognized as subjects with valid demands. Second, the Accords laid the route upon which the Zapatistas based their future actions.

2.6 A world where many worlds fit

On the 1st of January 1996 the EZLN released the Fourth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. The declaration was a reminder of what the EZLN was fighting for, and how they wanted to fight. As in the previous declarations the EZLN's thirteen demands were once again announced. This declaration was released in the final stages of the dialogue for the San Andrés Accords. It made two important claims. The first was the role of the indigenous communities as spokespersons in a fight against the 'bad government.' The EZLN strove to speak against oblivion and death, and for memory and life. The second claim was the announcement the EZLN made on the creation of the *Movimiento para la Liberación Nacional* (Movement for National Liberation) (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1996). The main underpinning for this declaration was the support of its civil society in the National Consultation as well as the pressure they created for opening the dialogue. Thus, the EZLN proposed three actions to reinforce their link with the rest of the Mexican population. First was the creation of the *Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista National Liberation Front FZLN). The Front was a political force that aimed not to achieve power but to increase political participation and fight for democracy, liberty and justice across Mexico. Second, they opened five Aguascalientes,[20] which were going to be places for encounters between the Zapatista and civil society; they were places that could promote the peaceful fight against the 'bad government' through the exchange of ideas, cultural events and other activities. Finally, the foundation of the Indigenous National Forum was announced, which aimed to gather the different indigenous communities across Mexico to talk and decide upon their destiny (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1996). This declaration, in contrast to the previous ones, had a defined political role. The announcement of these three actions demonstrated that the EZLN's scope was beyond the possible military force

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[20] The Aguascalientes were created in the communities of La Garrucha, Oventik, Morelia, La Realidad and Roberto Barrios. But most importantly, the Zapatistas wanted an Aguascalientes to be constructed in the hearts of all the honest men and women in the world.

they had: it was the construction of an alternative political route that was not otherwise present in Mexico.

Between the 3rd and 8th of January 1998, the EZLN participated in the Indigenous National Forum along with the representatives of some indigenous communities from across Mexico in the Zapatista Aguascalientes of Oventik, in Chiapas. It has to be borne in mind that the forum was organized before the last stage of the talks with the government. The idea of the forum was to discuss with other indigenous communities their situation and their needs. This helped to support the proposals put forward by the EZLN regarding the indigenous situation during the talks. The forum identified two main adversaries of indigenous communities across the country: the government and the implementation of neoliberal policies. However, the main task of the forum was to fight against the indifference of the government. In other words, the aim of this forum was to bring the indigenous communities back to the political and public space through the creation of an alternative *patria* in which all Mexicans, whether indigenous or not, could co-exist and where cultures could be respected (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1996). The importance of this forum was the forum in itself: not only it was a democratic forum for dialogue between sectors of the population which were often relegated from the political scene, but it was also a statement on the importance of the indigenous question formulated by indigenous people themselves. The forum paved the way for the construction of the FZLN, as a political force and it also allowed the creation of the *Congreso Nacional Indígena* (National Indigenous Congress or CNI). The CNI was an indigenous based organization that aimed to echo the work of the forum and to restructure the dominant relationship between these communities and the government. Therefore, it supported the EZLN in the talks and in the fulfilment of the San Andrés Accords. The EZLN sent *Comandanta* Ramona to an event organized by the CNI in Mexico City remembering the European 'discovery' of the Americas and the start of colonization. She gave a speech that described the Zapatista fight, the work of the Forum and the CNI, and stated the need to have a country in which everyone could have a dignified place: never again, she argued, should there be a Mexico which excluded the indigenous people (Comandanta Ramona, 1996).

By the end of 1996 the government and the EZLN agreed on the San Andrés Larrainzar Accords, and the EZLN issued an initiative for the creation of a Commission on Verification and Monitoring. This commission came into effect in November 1996, and its main function was monitoring the process of fulfilments of the San Andrés Accords at a federal

level (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1996c). As the Accords called for the recognition of the indigenous people's rights to culture and autonomy, and required the amendment the Constitutions of Chiapas and Mexico, their approval would not necessarily mean a mutually beneficial solution (Weinberg, 2000). For the federal government and the state-party system an approval of the accords would have meant a deterioration of the system as political power would no longer be centralised into a single institution. However, the federal government was forced to deliver a solution to the problem as it was in the national and international media spotlight. Due to this pressure, the federal government released a document with observations and changes to the San Andrés Accords on the first days of 1997. The federal government argued that the approval of the original version of the accords would have resulted in the 'Balkanization' of Mexico due to its separatist nature (Weinberg, 2000). The reaction of the EZLN was a categorical no to the amendment proposed by President Zedillo, affirming that it put at stake the peace process and emphasising their opposition to any possibility of dialogue with the government while the amendment remained in place (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1997a).

After several declarations during that year, the EZLN announced in August a march to Mexico City demanding the fulfilment of the San Andrés Accords and against the militarization of the indigenous zones composed of 1,111 Zapatista towns. This march toured the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Puebla and Morelos before arriving in Mexico City, where the indigenous delegation made a speech in the main square of the city, where the office of the federal government is located (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1997b). During the march, several groups that were oppressed by the federal government and victims of the state-party system showed sympathy for the EZLN delegation and some others joined their fight which allowed the EZLN to reinforce their idea of the plurality of their demands and the plurality of the population which lead them to declared that there were many 'Mexicos' within Mexico (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1997b). Once in the main square in Mexico City, Marcos delivered a speech demanding the fulfilment of the accords and reflecting on the diversity of the demands, stating that not only was a dignified peace needed in Chiapas, but also that the benefits of peace, democracy and justice in Chiapas would benefit the population in general. For that reason the EZLN demanded a Mexico where the people rule and the government obeys (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1997a).

Despite the willingness of the federal government to talk, through 1996 and 1997 the military presence in Chiapas and the army's hostilities towards members of the Zapatistas and their territories remained constant. In addition to that, the government conducted a campaign to discredit the EZLN. In May 1996 the federal government issued an arrest warrant for Javier Elorriaga and Sebastián Entzín. Both members of the Tzotzil indigenous group and Zapatistas, they were accused of performing terrorist activities in Chiapas. This event hindered the peace process between the Zapatistas and the federal government (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1996a). The Zapatistas though that because of the governmental recognition of the movement as a political force, arbitrary arrests were no longer a possibility. Added to this, the, the military mobilization in the jungle and the north of Chiapas increased the hostilities in the area (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1996b).

In December 1997 an event resulted in the mobilization of the federal army with the excuse of searching for arms in the Zapatista's territories to put an end on the killings left by the Zapatista fight (Richard Stahler-Sholk, 1998a) . On the morning of the 22nd December, 1997 there was a violent altercation in the Tzotzil community of Acteal, in the San Pedro Chenalhó Chiapas; forty-five indigenous Zapatistas were brutally killed and many more were tortured.[21] The massacre was executed by the army and members of the PRI, with the aim of finding out the exact location of the Zapatista's leaders (Richard Stahler-Sholk, 1998a). Later that day, Zedillo addressed the country condemning the massacre, announcing further investigations would be made (Weinberg, 2000). As a result of the investigation, local officials were arrested as well as the municipal governor who was involved in this massacre (Richard Stahler-Sholk, 1998b). At a federal level, Zedillo had to sack the Minister of the Interior Emilio Chauyffet, as there were documents leaked that accused Chauyffet of obstructing the peace talks between Zedillo and Marcos in 1996 (Richard Stahler-Sholk, 1998b). Days later Attorney General Jorge Madrazo, in charge of the investigations, declared the acts were the product of ethnic conflicts (Weinberg, 2000). However, several independent investigations by the National Human Rights Commission, confirmed that the municipal and federal government had participated in the Acteal massacre (Gutiérrez Chong, 2004; Moksnes, 2004; Weinberg, 2000). The EZLN also reacted to the massacre and denounced the existence of a dirty war to eliminate the dissident indigenous communities (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1997c). Several days later, the EZLN issued a detailed report on the massacre specifying the participation

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[21] Out of the forty-five killed, nine were men, twenty-one were women and fifteen children (Richard Stahler-Sholk, 1998a).

of both levels of government, announcing that they were not willing to give up their arms, and demanding President Zedillo's resignation.[22]

It was evident to the EZLN that the massacre in Acteal revealed that the government presented a façade: on the one hand the government was promoting peace and showing some interest in the talks but on the other hand and at the same time it was perpetrating violent acts assassinating innocents (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1998). The national and international attention that the EZLN had by this time was crucial in pursuing justice: foreign governments condemned the massacre and the international and national media gave full coverage to the situation, forcing the federal government to take action and imprison suspects. Still, the massacre in Acteal revealed the unwillingness of the federal government to provide a feasible solution to the situation in Chiapas, a situation that was exacerbated by the increased military presence in the Zapatista territory (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1998; Moksnes, 2004).

2.7 Here we are! We are Resisting!

The massacre in Acteal marked a rupture in the relationship between the government and the EZLN. The military activity remained constant in the Zapatistas communities. In the Highlands of Chiapas troops blocked roads, thereby increasing the violent hostilities towards the Zapatista population and contributing to a tense and unstable situation (Weinberg, 2000). These actions made the EZLN step back from the public eye and in July 1998 they issued the Fifth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. The EZLN affirmed that their fight was for democracy, liberty and justice and that through this fight the Zapatistas were also fighting for the place they deserved within Mexico. The EZLN absence from public life was also explained in this declaration. While after the uprising the Zapatista discourse was their most powerful weapon in the fight to fulfil their demands, silence was now both their weapon in the construction of a 'wall' to resist the government's attacks and an exercise of introspection to acknowledge and recognize the voices that came from below, from the social bases (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1998). The core of this declaration focussed on the recognition of the San Andrés Accords as the indigenous component of the fight was highlighted throughout. For the EZLN, the constitutional recognition of the Accords was the first step to achieve peace in the region as well as justice for the

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[22] For the reports see: Informe de los últimos resultados de nuestras investigaciones sobre la matanza de Acteal (Document released the 26 of December, 1997in http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/comunicados/1997/1997_12_26_b.htm) and Informe de los avances en la investigación sobre la masacre de indígenas de Acteal, Chenalhó, Chiapas (Document released on the 4th of January, 1998 in http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/comunicados/1998/1998_01_04.htm).

indigenous communities, whose demands at this point occupied a prominent place in the political agenda in the country's political agenda. Hence, the EZLN made calls to a variety of groups: to all the indigenous communities to fight for their own recognition; to civil society to remain in the fight for democratic transition; to the Congress[23] to work in favour of the people and not of the government; and to the COCOPA to stop the war and open the channels for peaceful coexistence in Mexico. It also proposed a National Consultation for the indigenous law initiative and for the end of the war (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1998).

In December 1998, the EZLN announced the purpose of and the logistics for the Consultation, which was to be held in March 1999. The Consultation was an invitation to all Mexicans over the age of 12 to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the San Andrés Accords (Subcomandante Insurgente, 1998). Several days before the Consultation the EZLN decided to invite all Mexicans living abroad to participate in the consultation. A special call was made to those indigenous immigrants residing in the United States as the causes of their status were highly linked to the demands put forward by the EZLN (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1999a). Several groups were organized by the EZLN in different states in Mexico. Some of them worked in indigenous languages with the support of 6,000 Zapatista delegates. Groups were also established overseas in Spain, Italy, the Basque Country, Argentina, Uruguay, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, France, Norway, Switzerland, Nicaragua, Israel, Greece, UK, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Chile and the United States and they joined the EZLN's efforts in carrying out this consultation (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1999b). The result of the Consultation was favourable for the EZLN, as many of the participants were indigenous people who explicitly expressed the urgency of recognizing the San Andrés Accords in the Constitution (Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, 1999).

The year 2000 brought Mexico and the EZLN new hopes for their political destiny as for the first time in more than 70 years the PRI lost the federal election. The new president Vicente Fox, from the *Partido de Acción Nacional* (National Action Party or PAN),[24] promised to break with the old PRI habits, and to bring a rapid solution to the problem in Chiapas. In a highly optimistic declaration during his electoral campaign, Fox offered to open talks with the EZLN and solve the indigenous issues in 15 minutes (Ross, 2006). *Subcomandante* Marcos delivered a declaration addressed to Fox, just a day after he

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[23] By 1998 and for the first time, the PRI lost the majority in the Congress and the Zapatistas saw in this alternation a possibility to works towards the indigenous recognition (Alberto & Magaloni, 2001).
[24] The PAN is a right wing political party.

assumed the presidency. The purpose of this document was to inform him of the situation in Chiapas and to describe the history of the conflict since its start. Marcos reminded Fox that he was inheriting a war in Chiapas but he was also inheriting the possibility of how to deal with it. Although he doubted Fox, Marcos, –in the name of the EZLN, put forward the possibility of resuming the talks as the only peaceful means to solve the conflict and reminded the president that the Zapatista fight was going to continue until the full recognition of the San Andrés Accords (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2000a). In the following years this declaration two features marked EZLN actions. First, the EZLN called for a mobilization of its members in the first months of 2001 to demand the recognition of the San Andrés Accords (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2000b). Second, the EZLN demanded the full withdrawal of the military from the region as a condition for dialogue (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2000c).

In the first months of 2001, the federal government announced the launch of the Plan Puebla-Panama (PPP) which aimed to promote the commercial links between Mexico and Central America (Pisani & Wayne, 2003). The PPP received funding from the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IBD) and although it was an initiative made by the Mexican president, it was meant to be the initial steps towards the Free Trade Agreement for the Americas (FTTA) which was meant to be launched in 2005 (Call, 2002). The EZLN rejected the implementation of the PPP, as Chiapas was one of the Mexican states included in the PPP. The EZLN fight was shaped with the PPP in mind as well as the two above-mentioned actions. The EZLN announced a Zapatista march to Mexico City asking for the recognition of the San Andrés Accords (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001b). This announcement made the federal government hesitant[25] but it ended up accepting the march and encouraging the EZLN to resume the dialogue. The EZLN announced their willingness to talk only if the following three conditions were met: the military withdrew from the Zapatistas territories, the freedom of all the Zapatistas political prisoners; and the recognition of the San Andrés Accords in the Constitution. The EZLN acknowledged the efforts of the government in fulfilling these conditions as there was a considerable military withdrawal from the region (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001f). Thus, the EZLN announced the march was going to take place in February

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[25] In 2001, the alternation of power at a federal level was identified as an important step in the country's transition to democracy. The population had high expectations of Fox's presidency. However, the EZLN march to Mexico City was a possible threat of the stability to the federal government. But to herald this transition to democracy, Fox saw a benefit in not blocking but in allowing the march as it demonstrated his openness and willingness to solve the situation in Chiapas.

and March of that year, starting in Chiapas and finishing in Mexico City after visiting eleven states (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001c).

The March of Indigenous Dignity or March of the Colour of the Earth as it was called, started as announced with both Mexican and international support as well as foreign and domestic media coverage. The *comandantes* Zapatistas spoke in every place they visited, and as the Zapatista delegation approached Mexico City expectations grew. Finally, the EZLN accepted the invitation made by Deputies and Senators to talk in Congress (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001a). The Congress held a historic session; local governments attended as well as the general public. But most important was the attendance of the *comandantes* Zapatistas who arrived wearing their traditional ethnic clothes and their balaclavas. All of them were there except for Marcos. Marcos' mestizo heritage was well known to the public; therefore, it seemed logical for him not to speak on behalf of the indigenous communities. *Comandanta* Ester's speech was emphatically delivered. She made it clear that Marcos was not the leader but that he was under the command of the other indigenous *comandantes*, and she argued for the approval into law of the San Andrés Accords. She stressed that the indigenous communities should and must be recognized as indigenous, as bearers of a rich culture; she asked for recognition of their way of dressing, of speaking, of government, of organization, of praying, of healing, their way of working collectively, their way of respecting the earth and understanding life (Comandanta Esther, 2001). Following *Comandanta* Esther, the rest of the *comandantes* Zapatistas spoke for the respect and recognition of indigenous autonomy. The march finished with one last speech by *Subcomandante* Marcos outside Congress, announcing the return of the EZLN delegation to Chiapas and expecting the approval of the San Andrés Accords into law.

The San Andrés Accords were left for discussion in the Congress. Both the PRI and PAN were resistant and their arguments were diverse, as neither political party saw any benefits in the accords. For the PAN, the accords were not a reflection of their project for the indigenous communities in Mexico, which was based on the idea of entrepreneurship. The PRI felt that a good number of the indigenous communities in the country were excluded from the accords (Ross, 2006). Finally, the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolution Party or PRD),[26] which openly supported the EZLN, insisted on passing the law without any alterations (Ross, 2006). The law was discussed behind

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[26] The PRD is the left wing political party, and several of its members had frequent contact with *Subcomandante* Marcos and the EZLN.

closed doors and key clauses were changed such as the proposal of autonomy made by the EZLN. The Congress saw in this conception of autonomy a threat to the unity of the country. As soon as the law was made public, the EZLN rejected the law as they considered it did not respond to any of their demands. Because of these reasons, the EZLN announced no further contact with the government and thus, dialogue was no longer a possibility: all the Zapatistas would maintain their resistance and stay away from public life (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001e).

2.8 The Autonomy Project

The EZLN's message was a definite rupture with the government and the statement marked the formalisation of their own political project. Since its origins, the EZLN had fought for the constitutional recognition of indigenous autonomy but as it no longer saw a way to realize this through constitutional channels, it defined its project of autonomy in a series of documents called *La treceava estela* (the Thirteenth Steele) in 2003. As first step towards autonomy, *Subcomandante* Marcos announced the death of the Aguascalientes. But most importantly it was the end of the paternalistic relation with the NGO's, as they often imposed their own projects.[27] This action gave the Zapatistas the ultimate decision-making power within their territory (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003d). The Aguascalientes were now changed into five Zapatistas autonomous *Caracoles*[28] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003g). To support their quest for autonomy, the Zapatistas created the *Municipios Autónomos Rebeldes Zapatistas* (Zapatistas Autonomous Revel Municipalities or MAREZ), which was an organization of the Zapatistas territories made by the Zapatista social base with almost no intervention from the EZLN as the military branch of the Zapatismo.[29] These MAREZ apply the Zapatista principle of 'rule by obeying,' in which the authorities, embodied in the Autonomous Councils, have to fulfil the accords of the communities and emphasize collective decision-making. The Autonomous Councils deal with issues such as education, health, land, work and commerce and operating the Zapatista radio broadcasting channels.[30] The most important role of these Autonomous Councils is the administration of justice (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos,

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[27] Often, the Zapatistas communities received external monetary aid to be used in specific projects designed by the NGO´s.

[28] The *Caracoles* were named: La Realidad: Madre de los Caracoles del mar de nuestros sueños, Morelia: Torbellino de Nuestras Palabras, La Garrucha; Resistencia hacia un Nuevo amanecer, Roberto Barrios: El caracol que habla para todos, Oventik: Resistencia y rebeldía por la humanidad.

[29] The EZLN did not interfere with the creation of the MAREZ and its participation was reduced to a minimum, only helping in conflict resolution.

[30] These radio stations often transmit in the indigenous languages and they broadcast music, news and messages to protect women from violence, to and promote women's organizations and the protection of their rights.

2003c). Another step towards their autonomy project was the creation of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Good Government Boards or JBG). The JBG provided another level of government that encapsulated several MAREZ.[31] Their functions mainly involved guarding the Zapatistas territories and supervising the effective functioning of 'rule by obeying,' through balancing the development of the MAREZ, mediating the conflicts between municipalities (Zapatistas or not), inspecting and promoting the communitarian work, and promoting gender equality in participation in all the activities of the MAREZ and JBG (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003f).

After several years of 'silence,' in 2005 the EZLN issued the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. Despite the fact that all the previous declarations shaped the activities of the EZLN, this one was more of a statement on their project for autonomy. Added to this, and different to the previous declarations, this one was clearly written by the indigenous *comandantes,* as the Spanish was not fluent. This declaration was divided into six parts. The first part summarized the EZLN´s actions since its formation in the 1980s and explained that the Zapatista fight was for the indigenous communities as well as for those people oppressed by the government (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 2005b). The second part described the current phase of Zapatismo up to 2005, which was the unilateral achievement of the San Andrés Accords by honouring the principle of 'rule by obeying' in the JBG and the MAREZ. For more than seven years the Zapatistas fought for the recognition of their autonomy and due to the responses of the federal government they announced the unilateral achievement of the San Andrés Accords through the implementation of the principle of 'rule by obeying' in the Zapatistas territories and at all levels of the Zapatista government (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 2005b). The third and fourth parts of this declaration detailed the Zapatistas' view of the world and Mexico. According to them, the capitalist system is the main oppressor of people around in the world, and the people of Mexico were and still are victims of this system, as the implementation of neoliberal politics remains a constant in the country. Because of this Mexican governments were deemed to be dependant on their economic policies rather than serving the population(C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 2005b). The final parts of the declaration detailed the plans of the Zapatistas' future plans. The Zapatistas aimed to consolidate a left wing force excluding the political parties and as such they envisioned a political plan: 'a world that

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[31] There were five JBG located in each of the Caracoles, these are called: Hacia la Esperanza, Corazón del Arcoiris de la esperanza, El camino del futuro, Nueva semilla que va a producir and Corazón centrico de los Zapatistas delante del mundo. 1 or 2 members of the MAREZ's Autonomous Councils composed these JBG.

could fit may worlds.' In order to achieve this, the EZLN announced an offensive cease fire (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 2005b).

To accomplish these aims, the Sixth Declaration was accompanied by the launch of *The Other Campaign*. The *Other Campaign* set up two commissions formed by members of the EZLN. One of them, the *Intergalactic Commission*, was in charge of international actions. The other, the *Sixth Commission,* comprised several EZLN *comandantes* including Marcos (who was now called *Delegado Zero*)*;* this commission was going to deal with actions within Mexico. The *Sixth Commission* was going to run at the same time as the Mexican electoral campaigns. The *Other Campaign* was composed of two stages: a preparatory phase and a tour within Mexico ending in Mexico City. It intended to build a network and a national campaign that could promote another way of doing politics, condensing the different left wing forces that could be the foundations of a new constitution (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 2005a). A wide variety of groups such as fisherman, *campesinos*, indigenous communities, LGBT groups, rural teachers, political prisoners, merchants and immigrants among others adhered to the *Other Campaign* (Ross, 2006). Nevertheless, this campaign faced several problems; the government was hostile throughout its transit through the country. One case is worth highlighting. An indigenous community*,* in San Salvador Atenco in the State of Mexico, which had joined the Other Campaign, was brutally attacked on the 3rd of May 2006. The state governor wanted to evict flower merchants from the streets of the city and relocate them in a peripheral market. The eviction used violent means that lead to a confrontation between the indigenous population and the government during which, mainly women and children were injured and two hundred and nine men, women and children were arrested (Ross, 2006). The news spread quickly, mainstream media and *Subcomandante* Marcos knew about the situation, as he was going to visit the community a few days later. Marcos decided to visit Atenco earlier than planned, where he announced the suspension of the campaign. Finally, the *Other Campaign* was resumed in the north of Mexico and finished with the promise of new initiatives for the construction of autonomy within the Zapatistas territories.

In March 2013, the EZLN announced the creation of the *Little School* (Escuelita Zapatista)*,* in which the Zapatista's social base invited adherents of the Sixth Declaration to learn about the Zapatistas, their actions for and in freedom, their successes, mistakes, problems, solutions, their developments, their obstacles. These topics were going to be addressed through different phases. In a first phase each *Caracol* contributed with declarations to released a textbook addressing four different topics: Autonomous Government I and II,

Women Participation in the Autonomous Government and Resistance. The students were expected to read each book and participate in the everyday practices of Zapatista life with the aim of passing to the next phase (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2013). The first level of the *Little School* finished without any inconveniences, but the JGB reported the military attacks started as soon as the first level of the school finished. In a public act, denouncing these attacks, *Subcomandante* Marcos appeared in the *Caracol La Realidad,* to give a speech. During the speech he gave an illustrative summary of the EZLN and Zapatista fight across twenty years; at some point Marcos mentioned replacement of the leadership as something inevitable for the Zapatismo. Marcos spoke of a takeover of the EZLN general command by a new generation, and marking a shift from the enlightened middle class and from *mestizo* groups to the indigenous people. The speech continued by explaining the creation of Marcos, the character; someone that was needed in the fight, a character that could attract the attention from the political ruling elite, a character that enabled the indigenous people to be considered in the political debate. However, Marcos recognized that this character was no longer needed; the indigenous cause had the attention needed and was an important part of the political debate. For these reasons Marcos, the character, was killed. From the 23rd of May 2014, Marcos no longer existed. Instead he became *Comandante* Galeano,[32] handing the leading role to *Comandante* Moisés and indigenous *Comandante* (Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano, 2014). Without a doubt, Marcos 'death,' shocked the adherents of the Zapatismo, but Marcos, the character, was no longer need as the EZLN took a secondary role in the construction of Zapatista autonomy.

On May 2015, the EZLN organized a seminar on Zapatista thought called 'Political Thought vs. the Capitalist Hydra.' The seminar took place in San Cristobal de las Casas a city in Chiapas and it had several interventions from the *comandantes* Zapatistas as well as from academics and parents of the disappeared students of Ayotzinapa.[33] Participants talked about forms of resistance against capitalism. The seminar lasted several days and the talks were compiled in a series of books with the same name, which were later published. The seminar and the books were another effort by the Zapatista to disseminate their project on construction of autonomy in the voice of the indigenous *comandantes.* In an additional event, the EZLN announced the second phase of the *Little School* on July 2015. However,

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[32] He took the name Galeano in honour of a Zapatista teacher who was killed by the army in Zapatista territory.
[33] On the 26 of September 2014 the students of the teaching college in Ayotzinapa Guerrero, Mexico were brutally attacked and 43 students disappeared. Investigations showed that the municipal police in conjunction performed these attacks with the federal army.

due to increasing attacks from the military after Enrique Peña Nieto assumed the presidency in December 2012, the second level of the *Little School* consisted of watching a video as well as reading the first chapter of the first volume of the 'Political Thought vs. the Capitalist Hydra' book. The video contained testimonies of the indigenous people who were recruited through the 1980s to form the EZLN. The students then, had to submit six questions regarding the material shown on the video, which were going to be answered later by the Zapatistas (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés & Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano, 2015).

The Zapatista movement had developed over 20 years since the uprising in 1994 and 30 years since the formation of the EZLN in 1983. The purpose of this chapter was to provide a general context of the development of the Zapatista fight for indigenous recognition. Added to this, this chapter showed the way in which the claims made towards this recognition changed according to the circumstances of the time. This general context also serves to understand the interpretation of the events, made by the Zapatistas that caused a rupture in the given order. Equally important, this general context will underpin the interpretation, in later chapters of the acts performed by the Zapatistas that could be categorised as 'acts of citizenship'

2.9 Conclusion

The implementation of a neoliberal project was the catalyst for the construction of the EZLN and later for the Zapatista uprising in 1994. However, the Zapatista movement was a reaction to a Mexican state-building project that aimed to unify the diverse Mexican population but failed to include and recognize the indigenous communities as bearers of a different culture. After Porfirio Díaz was overthrown, there was a power vacuum that represented an opportunity for the different armies that fought in the Mexican Revolution to consolidate, at a state level, their demands and rights that had not been acknowledged or respected by Díaz. Their solution was to create a system that promoted unity across a divided population and more importantly that guarantee the fulfilments of demands made by each of the revolutionary armies. The political system was embodied in the creation of a state-party (PNR, PRM and PRI), which promoted a nationalism that could be explained in Renan's terms as a 'daily plebiscite.' Nationalism in these terms evokes a memory of different sentiments and the resonance of each on the nation's everyday life. As such the state-party was the head of a Revolutionary Family that promoted an identity that rested on the revolutionary ideals. As such different workers' unions were formed and these were controlled by or under the influence of the state-party. The indigenous communities

were included in this state-building project through the creation of Unions that belonged to the state. The main problem with the indigenous worker's unions was not necessarily the fact that these had strong links with the state, but the fact that indigenous people were included in this state-building project as a work force in a way that gave no room for the recognition of their own culture and customs. The problem was exacerbated by the geographical location of these communities. The rural areas in which these communities were located lacked ready means of communication with and transportation to other areas, which made it difficult to sell or trade their agricultural goods, with a negative impact on their poor living conditions.

In 1994, the Zapatistas uprising was accompanied with a shout of *enough!* This was a reaction against two factors: the recent implementation of neoliberal policies in the country and the conditions that indigenous communities were forced to live as a consequence of the establishment of a state-building project that consisted of the creation of a state-party that included, under its sphere of influence, different sectors of society and that developed corrupt practices. As such, the First and Second Declarations of the Lacandona Jungle questioned the legitimacy of the government, especially the federal government, demanded it leave office, and created alternative mechanisms for the consolidation of democracy in the country such as CND and the Aguascalientes. A slight change came with the Third Declaration, in which the EZLN spoke in favour the recognition of indigenous differences at a state level and argued that autonomy for these groups does not mean separation from the state but the integration of minorities into the state. The Fourth Declaration was made in the context of a violent environment, attacks from the government and promises of peace talks: it was still in favour of the consolidation of a new democratic political system for Mexico. Working towards a more democratic political system, the EZLN created five Aguascalientes, which were declared Zapatista territory, to be used as alternative political spaces to work towards democracy, liberty and justice in the country. The Fifth Declaration had a strong message, the constitutional recognition of the San Andrés Accords, which could lead to the end of the war between the government and the indigenous communities. Echoing this declaration, the EZLN announced the March of the Colour of the Earth towards Mexico City to demand the legal recognition of the San Andrés Accords. The events that followed the march were crucial for the movement. As the Congress failed to include the San Andrés Accords in the indigenous law they passed, the EZLN decided to enter to a phase of 'silence' and work towards unilaterally accomplishing the San Andrés Accords. This meant the autonomous organization of government, health, education and justice. In this sense, the EZLN released

the final declaration, which was a confirmation of the decisions taken to fulfil the San Andrés Accords and a brief description on how this was being done. The final documents released by the Zapatistas are the *Little School* textbooks, which contain a more detailed description of the Zapatista autonomous organization, and the three volumes of the book *'Critical Thought against the Capitalist Hydra'* which describes the Zapatista fight against capitalism and neoliberal policies.

The Zapatistas protested and mobilised against governmental corrupt practices and for the political recognition of the indigenous cultures. The fight against the government was one that could easily be lost or exterminated by the government, as its force could not be compared to that of an indigenous rebel group. Regardless of the governmental attacks and continuous use of violence, the Zapatista succeeded in placing the indigenous question on the political agenda of a country that ignored it for a long time. The Zapatistas actions made the indigenous communities visible in Mexico and in the world. The impact of such actions could not be ignored: the Zapatista fight reshaped the meaning of revolution, at least within Mexico. The Zapatistas understood revolution was not achieving change through taking power or institutional means, as this the basis of the current Mexican political system which they were fighting against. Instead, for the Zapatistas, revolution meant resistance and the possibility of consolidating an autonomous political project that could perform beyond the state. This political project constitutes an alternative way of looking at politics not only because the Zapatista conception of autonomy was never envisioned in opposition to the Mexican nation, but also because it proposed a new way of becoming a political subject outside the confines of the state. Therefore, there is a need to look for a pertinent theoretical framework to provide a reading of the Zapatistas as political subject. It will then be the aim of the next chapter to examine and analyse the pertinent theories.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Background: Acts of Citizenship

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the genealogy of the Zapatismo explaining the different stages through which the EZLN and the Zapatistas have gone over more than twenty years. The Zapatista fight was not intended to assume state power and being a self-proclaimed revolutionary army this could be considered a contradiction in terms. However, in the Zapatista context, revolution entailed a fight for autonomy and dignity through the recognition of the indigenous culture. In addition to this rejection to state-power, the EZLN never had claims for secession as a precondition to consolidate their autonomy project and their fight for dignity. The rejection by the Mexican Congress of the San Andrés Accords in 2001 opened a possibility for the Zapatistas to fulfil their initial demands without state recognition. As such, the Zapatistas decided to enter into a phase of 'silence' which allowed them to concentrate on their own political project stepping away from the public eye and rejecting the Mexican state. During this phase of 'silence' the Zapatistas are constructing a political character that has been understudied. It will be the aim of this chapter to discuss Engin Isin's (2005, 2008, 2009, 2012a; 2008) theory of 'acts of citizenship' as a possible theoretical background that could be used to provide a reading of the Zapatistas as political subjects.

The structure of this chapter will be as follows. The first section will discuss the way in which citizenships has been understood as a site for political struggle despite being approached as a status or practice. The work of Marshall (1950) will be considered as it shows the development of the concept through time. Kymlicka and Norman's (1995; 1994, 2000) arguments are also taken into consideration as they attempt to introduce

multiculturalism into the concept of citizenship, by suggesting that culture is an essential element in the way citizenship is exercised. The arguments of Hoffman (2004) and Poggi (2003) are also considered as they attempt to push the boundaries of citizenship further beyond the confines of the state. The next section briefly discusses the work of Yashar (1998, 2005) and Cerda García (2011) which explains the development of citizenship in Latin America and the way citizenship, as a relationship with the state, is exercised in the Vicente Guerrero MAREZ respectively. The last section discusses Isin's (2005, 2008, 2009, 2012a; 2008) theory on 'acts of citizenship' and how it might be applied to an understanding of the Zapatismo.

3.2 Citizenship

Citizenship has been widely studied, often linked to the emergence of cities-states and, later the consolidation of nation-states. It could be claimed that citizenship is a concept that is in continuous construction as the characteristics that make it up are connected to continually evolving elements such as membership of a political or national community, territory and government. Citizenship, as the notion of enjoying privileges from membership developed to grant rights and obligations subject to people's membership (Brett, 2003). Citizenship however, remained European ideal which was spread throughout the world with the settlement of colonies (Harrington, 2014). As applied in the context of Spanish colonisation of the Americas, citizenship came to be linked not only to concepts of rights and obligations but also to concepts of race and ethnicity. For example, the rights and obligations of the *criollos*[34] were different from those of the *mestizos*, which at the same time were different from those of the indigenous people and African descent which rights were minimal.

With the consolidation of the modern nation-state, the concept of citizenship was affected by the shift in the balance of power from absolute monarchies to citizens. Before this time, most monarchical regimes legitimated their power by divine right and not by reference to the will of people. This had an effect in the way citizenship was performed as people who were recognised members of a national community increasingly claimed the rights to elect their government or constituent bodies, and accepted the obligations which went with citizenship. This extension included the right to vote for representative political institutions (Smith, 2002). Thus, citizenship in the modern era has been studied as a category, practice or feeling but despite this classification citizenship has always been a

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[34] A category brought established by the Spanish Crown to identity a person that was born in the colonies of New Spain of Spaniard parents.

political struggle for rights of recognition. An example of this is provided by the movements that aimed for recognition of rights for women, different races, gay, lesbian, people with disabilities, immigrants, and among others. The struggle for recognition was, up to recently, particular to minority rights such as the above mentioned ones. But struggles for citizenship were commonly represented by right to vote. As such, voting was a right given to a small section of the population (male, property owner) and was later expanded to include all males in a given state, then to women, then to younger adults and so forth. It could be argued that not only citizenship refers to granting and enjoying certain rights and obligations but the acquisition of these had gradually expanded the concept. As such, citizenship could be also defined as a process that entails an arrangement of rights and obligations and recognition of a given community or group. It is not a coincidence then, that Osler and Starkey (2005) define citizenship as a "site of political struggle" (2005, p. 9). Citizenship will always be the mechanism through which rights are reshaped and the boundaries of obligations and membership are redefined. The understanding of citizenship as a political struggle forces us to understand citizenship as a concept in continuous construction and influenced by elements that are determined by historical processes. Its dynamic nature should be considered as an essential part when studying the elements that forms it, such as the way in which rights and obligations are constituted and membership delimited.

Taking into consideration that the construction of citizenship is influenced by elements that are determined by historical processes, its dynamic nature should be considered as an essential part when studying it. The work of T.H. Marshall (1950) is a classic in the study of citizenship. He understands the dynamism of the concept as a historical process of the incorporation of civil, political and social rights. The civil component, according to Marshall, includes those rights that protect the individual's freedom. These comprise freedom of speech and faith, acquisition of property and justice, rights that in some European societies were acquired in the 17th and 18th Centuries. This was followed by the political component that was added in the 19th and 20th Centuries. This political component consisted in the right to have a say in the government of one's country, most often codified in the rights to vote and vote and stand for election. The final area of citizenship rights to be acquired, according to Marshall, was the social component, largely added to the concept of citizenship in the 20th Century. This component included guaranteeing the right to a good quality of life through the provision of economic and social welfare (Marshall, 1950).

Whilst Marshall's conception of citizenship provides a seminal explanation to the study of citizenship, there are some criticisms that cannot be ignored. Marshall's theory was based in the post-war British population that was socially divided. Citizenship ought to be the solution of such social inequalities, as he proposed to franchised the status of citizenship to all the British population (Turner, 1990). However, the reduction of these social inequalities could not be achieved when the concept of citizenship that Marshall put forward was underpinned in the idea of the acquisition of private property in a market economy. In other words, Marshall suggested that citizenship was going to provide an equalitarian access of rights and obligations that could minimise or reduced the divisions within societies.

The rights and obligations of people within diverse societies were later discussed by Kymlicka and Norman (1994). For them, people have the right to belong to a culture and have the right to demand justice from the state for the protection of their culture (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). For this reason, they understand citizenship not only as a status but as a practice in which members acquire rights and responsibilities that enable them to exercise their culture. So, it could be claimed that this multicultural notion of citizenship, is also a struggle in itself. In the quest for the protection of their culture, it will be on the interest of the groups to make claims to the state so that it could guarantee their existence. In the articulation of rights and responsibilities to protect cultures, issues arise. The main issue is the state's capacity to manage the potential clashes of the different identities. The state should act as a neutral institution or a referee that can mediate and guarantee the fulfilment of rights when potential clashes exist. Thus, the state, according to Kymlicka and Norman, should promote equality (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). This equality should be reflected in its policies and programmes, so that the population pledges allegiance to the state as the institution through which their culture will be preserved. So citizenship, according to Kymlicka and Norman, is not only a practice but the struggle is on the capacity each group to legitimise their culture. In other words, the preservation and assurance of people's culture depends on their participation in civic activities such as elections, and tax payments. This participation allows them to make valid claims to preserve their culture; so when this does not happen, rejections or contestation of citizenship may follow (Hammett, 2008).

Similarly to Kymlicka and Norman, Osler and Starkey (2005), argue that the population of states has been diversified by groups that have mobilised claims for inclusion. In contrast with Kymlicka and Norman, Osler and Starkey believed that while equality is a value that

can be granted to minorities groups legally, the exercise of this equality is harder to achieve in practice (Osler & Starkey, 2005). They stressed that is through an understanding of human rights and global awareness that the exercise of citizenship should be based (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Thus, people not only within communities exercise citizenship, but such exercise may trespass state boundaries. So, the claims for rights are always made in within the framework of human rights and the protection of the environment. For Osler and Starkey, the most important thing is not that rights are being recognised officially by the state but that people have the opportunity to exercise these rights on a daily basis. Hence, despite the possible difference among communities, people would create and reinforce bonds of solidarity when acting in accordance with human rights. Osler and Starkey have an active conception of citizenship in the sense that it is through actions that citizen's exercise and respect human rights. This cosmopolitan approach of citizenship has one objection that relies on the fact that human rights are subject to interpretation and its interpretation, exercise and respect may vary from community to community. As a result, the solidarity that Osler and Starkey argue forms from acting in such a way and may not rest on firm ground.

As mentioned above, membership is another element through which citizenship is defined. Being a citizen entails being a member of a certain political community or state. Cole (2010) constructs a categorisation on citizenship as membership, which takes into consideration the mobilisation of people and groups across state borders. He suggests that citizenship is acquired by birth and by immigration. From these two broad categories, emerge subcategories. Citizenship by birth can be acquired either by *jus soli* (being born in a specific country) or *jus sanguinis* (parent's bloodlines). Citizenship by immigration could be acquired by a relationship with someone who is citizen of a given state or by the duration of stay within a country (Cole, 2010). It could be claimed that citizenship as membership it always entails a legal acquisition. Hence membership to a state is what grants people the capacity to exercise rights and obligations. For instance, citizenship according to Marshall is a process shaped by the development of societies which shapes the way in which people claim and exercise their rights and obligation and thus, the way which membership is structured. So, Marshall understands citizenship as a status given through membership (Marshall, 1950). Approaching citizenship in terms of membership, is understanding it as a provision given and controlled by the state. In other words, citizenship will require the exercise of rights and obligations but also the recognition and promotion of certain values over others. For example, the conception of multicultural citizenship brought forward by Kymlicka recognises ethnicity and culture as core part of

people's identity, but its preservation is subject to the reinforcement individual equality and freedom (Kymlicka, 1995). So, taking into consideration that although differences among groups may arise, their resolution would depend on whether these groups have the same understanding of what the common good is (Kymlicka, 1995). In this sense, not only does being a citizen in a diverse society involve be living in conditions of equality and freedom protected and promoted by the state, but such membership is conditioned to the understanding of a common good.

However, membership could also be understood not as a condition provided by the state as it is the case of Marshall and Kymlicka but as a result of everyday relations among people. For Osler and Starkey, citizenship rights and obligations are constructed through practice. For them, membership of a political community comes from this everyday practice. From respecting the human rights of members of the same group and of other groups, a sense of solidarity will be produced. It is this sense of solidarity that enables groups to construct relationships with each other that enable participation in political, social or economic matters (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

Marshall, Kymlicka and Norman, and Osler and Starkey approach citizenship differently from each other. However, it could be claimed that each of these theories understand citizenship as a process of struggle in which people or groups aim to push the existing boundaries of the concept to improve the way in which citizenship is delivered and exercised. Citizenship, according to these authors, is the inherent link with the state. Although Marshall understands citizenship as a status given to members of a community, there is never an explicit reference to that community being a state. But this is implicit in his arguments as he suggests that for each of the elements that were adhered to the concept through time, there should be a state institution safeguarding it. Thus, the civil elements should be guarded by the courts of justices; the political element by the parliament and local governments councils; and finally the social element by the welfare system and social services (Marshall, 1950). Following this logic, it could be argued that the state is the institution setting the parameters, values, rights and obligations which people have to respect in order to be granted full citizenship status. For Kymlicka and Norman the role of the state is also essential in the way in which citizenship is delivered. As mentioned above, the role of the state is not only a referee that guides and prevents the possible tension that may exist between different groups but also it is the institution that defines the means in which equality and liberty are understood and promoted and it also sets a definition of a common good.

The attachment to the state brings more problems than it actually attempts to solve. A multicultural citizenship requires a fully neutral state that could be able to promote equality and liberty regardless of the diversity of the population. Neutrality, is only possible in principle: in practice, the state tends to favour and promote the cultural traits of the majority group (Joppke, 2001). Bearing in mind that Kymlicka considers that diverse cultural groups have legitimate claims to protect their culture and enjoy rights that protect and promote their culture and considering that the state is essential in this process, it could be argued that the real aim is not to promote a multicultural version of the state. So, if neutrality is not achievable in practice, then the idea of multiculturalism is an illusion. As it was argued above, the different historical process through time, something that Kymlicka fails to fully recognise shapes the concept of citizenship. The historical process of minorities should also be acknowledged when arguing in favour of a multicultural citizenship. Often, the historical process of these minorities, especially ethnic minorities, is characterised by oppression or dispossession, which play a crucial role in the way rights are claimed, and their culture is protected. For example, the Afro-communities in Latin America are often ignored in the forms through which citizenship is constructed and instead states have focused on indigenous claims. Even though indigenous groups and Afro-descendent have legitimate claims for inclusion and recognition as citizens the historical process through which both groups claim their rights is different (Hooker, 2005) and as such the process for claiming rights should also be different.

Citizenship could be understood as a status, in the case of Marshall or as a practice, as for Kymlicka, and Norman or as a feeling that is practiced on an everyday basis through relations with others as Osler and Starkey suggests. Regardless of these approaches, all these authors understand citizenship as intrinsic to the state, as a mechanism people have to exercise their political subjectivity. This relation suggests that the state is a container of the concept of citizenship. Following this logic, ideas of global or cosmopolitan citizenship are arguably meaningless as a world state would be essential for this conception of citizenship to exist (Hoffman, 2004). Hoffman argues that the main criticism of a cosmopolitan understanding of citizenships does not reside on the characteristics that compose it but on the fact that it attempts to go beyond the confines of the state and in practice, the power and scope of the state is not questioned (Hoffman, 2004). So, if there is an essential relation between citizenship and state and the latter is a result of a historical process, hence in continuous construction, there is a need to think of the state and citizenship separately which the latter is not contained by the former. Hoffman (2004)

proposes that the study of citizenship should examined relationships made horizontally between individuals rather than reinforcing the relationship individuals have as subjects of the state. He argued that the concept of citizenship needs to be "deepened and qualitatively transformed so that it is underpinned by new concepts of freedom, autonomy and community"(Hoffman, 2004, p. 18). For Hoffman, we need to include, in the concept of citizenship, the membership to 'micro-societies' such as local, ethnic, national communities which regulate people's behaviour on a daily basis more than the state does (Hoffman, 2004).

The examples of micro-societies mentioned by Hoffman may be successful in promoting an idea of citizenship as a way to govern oneself in a political community. But it goes beyond the state only if two prerequisites are met. The first, is that the nature of these associations should not depend on the principle of the legitimate use of force. Second, the members of each association or micro-society should have empathy for the members of other micro-societies, and understand the processes that had lead the other micro-societies to become a group or a community (Hoffman, 2004). As for the acquisition of rights, Hoffman argues that these are enjoyed by social association, and taking into consideration the level of empathy required, the acquisition, respect and enjoyment of these rights relies on the respect the 'other' has towards 'us' (Hoffman, 2004). While Hoffman is right in suggesting that the concept of citizenship should be detached from the concept of the state and analysed through the loop of the community rather than an individual, the political association or political community formed by citizens beyond the state is underexplored in Hoffman's arguments. However, he focuses much attention on representation. For him, representation should work in accordance with the notion of emancipation and not accountability (Hoffman, 2004). As such, representation should be based on a conception of emancipation that considers a "relational notion of autonomy" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 151), so that representatives act in accordance with the will of their fellow members and that members fully trust these representatives in the decision making process. A relationship based on empathy is then constructed between representatives and members of the same group. This contrasts with the notion of accountability, which suggests a hierarchical relationship between the representatives and the represented. If Hoffman is right in suggesting that the relationship between representatives and represented should be based on a horizontal conception of group membership, through which democracy will be exercised, the need to talk about to what body members of these 'micro-societies' are being represented in becomes essential. In other words, the political body where these 'micro-societies' converge is not fully explored and as such the

potentiality of one micro-society being more powerful than the other is still not addressed and as such the risks of domination is still possible.

Gianfranco Poggi (2003) discusses similar tensions regarding citizenship and the state. He bases his arguments on the idea that state is a political entity that enjoys sovereignty over a demarcated territory and a population. He then argues that citizenship involves an asymmetrical relationship between the people and the state, as the former are subjected to the latter (Poggi, 2003). In an attempt to move forward from this relationship, Poggi suggests looking at a political community as an alternative in which to construct a more symmetrical relationship. It is then the task of these communities to create and sustain institutions that could grant citizenship rights as the population needs them (Poggi, 2003). Although Poggi's attempts to study citizenship beyond the state are valuable, his arguments fall short on explaining either how this political community is formed or its function. For instance, if we consider citizenship as a way to be political then the construction of this community should be formed from the bottom up or top down in form or devolution of power. The implications of these go beyond approaching citizenship a status, practice or form of identity but the construction of this community is key in understanding the way in which rights and obligations are claimed, followed and secured.

Regardless of the way citizenship is approached, whether as a status, feeling or practice, it is a concept that is malleable to the historical circumstances of its time. This struggle for recognition has pushed the boundaries on the way citizenship is understood and constructed. The theories discussed above illustrate the range of ways in which citizenship has been studied and conceptualised. Although Marshall's conception of citizenship is based on the historical circumstances of the United Kingdom, it is important to understand that this concept goes beyond providing political rights to the people. Kymlicka and Norman suggest that culture is an important part of a person's identity and as such the state should protect and promote the diversity of culture within its confines. Also focusing on the interaction between citizenship and diversity, Osler and Starkey suggest that citizenship entails the respect of human rights and members of such micro-societies should act in accordance to it to form bonds of solidarity in diverse societies. Despite the differences between these theories, the link between citizenship and the state is essential. The work of Hoffman and Poggi attempts to remove this attachment of citizenship to the state, by suggesting that a relationship between government and people should be understood in less hierarchical ways by adopting horizontal forms of representation. The

aim of the next section will look at how the historical circumstances in Latin America have shaped the understanding of citizenship there.

3.3 Citizenship in Latin America

Citizenship, as mentioned above, is a continual struggle defined by historical circumstances. Thus, when studying citizenship in Latin America the historical context cannot be ignored. In this region, concepts of citizenship were brought by European powers through colonisation. The social administration of the colonies divided people into different categories based on race. This was a racial estate system which was hierarchical in nature: the rights and obligations of people depended on their position in this system (Andrews, 1985). The independence movements in Latin America were started by the *criollos*, who were positioned higher in the hierarchy of the estate system than were *mestizo* and indigenous groups, with demands for the expansion of their rights. Approximately a century later, these claims developed into struggles for the inclusion as full citizens of people from all the different groups in a diverse population in the Latin American states. Fights for the inclusion of indigenous groups, Afro communities, women, and peasants were later included in the concept of citizenship. It is the inclusion of the indigenous claims to the concept of citizenship that Yashar (2005) concentrates. In a longitudinal study, of the indigenous struggles in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, she explains the general characteristics of the process through which indigenous people were granted citizenship(Yashar, 2005). According to Yashar, with the arrival of third wave democratisation[35] to the region in the 1980s, indigenous movements started to make claims for recognition by challenging the idea of the nation-state. Indigenous movements across the region started to challenge the division of races (native and European) upon which the nation-state was founded (Yashar, 2005).

There are some similarities that can be drawn between the work of Marshall and Yashar. Both studied citizenship as a process that was influenced by circumstances of their own time. Yashar suggests that concepts of citizenship for indigenous communities went

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[35] A term coined by Samuel P. Huntington to explain the democratic transition of several countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa (Huntington, 1993). In Latin America this wave of democratization arrived in the 1980s, putting an end to a period of right-wing dictatorial administrations, which were characterised by the flouting of basic human and political rights. Although, third wave democratisation in the region was elite biased, in the sense that the political implementation of policies –especially economic ones were not subject to popular discussion civil society strengthened later on with the emergence of new social movements formed by the formally marginalised parts of the society like workers, indigenous communities and the political left (Grugel, 2009)

through two phases. The first phase, or corporatist regimes,[36] covers the mid-twentieth century, and is characterised by an inclusion of indigenous groups as citizens controlled by the state. The state controlled the indigenous communities by the subsidies it gave them, this being the only form of representation of these communities at the state level (Yashar, 2005). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the corporatist regimes were replaced by what Yashar identifies as neoliberal citizenship. During this phase all the land reforms, subsidies and services delivered to the indigenous communities were privatised and all the links these communities had with the state were dissolved (Yashar, 2005).

Yashar's understanding of indigenous citizenship is state-centric. She states that across time, the efforts to include indigenous communities into the concept of citizenship have been a result of a process of democratisation delivered by the state. It is in the state's interest to guarantee to marginal groups, such as the indigenous communities, the same civil and political rights as for the rest of the population. This guarantee often entailed the state looking at these groups as instrumental for democracy without acknowledging difference in cultures and traditions (Yashar, 2005). Although Yashar is aware on the consequences of ignoring the politics of ethnicities while studying citizenship, she considers the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador as successful cases were ethnic politics influenced or reach the state and dismisses those other possibilities of exercising ethnic politics outside the institution of the state.

The contribution of the indigenous movements of Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico, cases explored by Yashar, go beyond the degree each of them influenced state policies. If citizenship is understood as a struggle, to fully understand this struggle it is important to take into consideration the years these groups were under political and social domination, excluded and discriminated. The years the indigenous groups in these countries have been under this situation of domination, exclusion and oppression is of more than 500 years. During this years, the indigenous groups in these countries created or opened a space in which their claims for recognition could be expressed giving them political capacity to exist. Therefore, if we consider that claims for citizenship should be studied through the lens of ethnic politics the struggle these communities faced to open spaces or made cracks in the system should be considered as significant steps for the construction of political communities.

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[36] Corporatists regimes existed across Latin America in the early and, mid twentieth century. They were regimes in which the state controlled many of the organisation of the civil society (O'Donell, 1977).

The work of Alejandro Cerda García (2011) on ethnic citizenship in general and on the Zapatismo in particular stands out as he explains the construction of what he terms 'new forms of citizenship.' This 'new forms of citizenship' approach attempts to analyse citizenship by studying the new contexts in which the relationship between the state and ethnic communities is built. These contexts include the claims made questioning the legitimacy of the common good especially by arguing that this serves the interests of a ruling or privileged elite (Cerda García, 2011). His research was conducted in the MAREZ Vicente Guerrero and explored how the Zapatistas' claims for recognition expose a challenge to the liberal tradition of citizenship. According to Cerda García, the ethnic struggles for recognition or autonomy questions the values of equality and freedom that the state promotes (Cerda García, 2011). Cerda García suggests that, as it is an autonomous local body, the MAREZ has a greater influence on people, as the interests of the people are better represented in the agenda than the official municipal government that has to serve central demands of the federal government. This influence of the official municipality, he argues, is limited due to the fact that the Zapatistas refuse to accept any governmental aid. This rejection causes a tension between the MAREZ and the official authorities as there is a clash between these two forms of governments for the control of the natural resources and the land (Cerda García, 2011). Although Cerda García stresses that the autonomous form of citizenship constructed by the Zapatistas opposes the one delivered by the state, he argues that there is a tense relationship between the state and the Zapatistas communities, and while tensions exist between them the autonomous government, Cerda García affirms, would not be able legitimize and consolidate itself (Cerda García, 2011). For him, the Zapatista autonomous project and the creation an autonomous government are still claims for an effective recognition of the indigenous cultures at a state level. But the main issue with his arguments is its reluctance to study citizenship within the confines of the state for a group that has clearly expressed their detachment from it.

This inherent relationship between citizenship and state is justified by Cerda García by suggesting that as the Zapatistas consider themselves 'Mexican indigenous' they do not attempt to end their relationship with the Mexican state, but to reshape it so that the state recognises their autonomy project (Cerda García, 2011). There are several criticisms that could be drawn from this claim, but two are worth highlighting. First, it is true that the Zapatistas do conceive themselves as Mexicans, but this identification is not related to the state in any way. The problem resides in the fact that Cerda García fails to differentiate the

concept of state from that of the nation. The Zapatista discourse had been persuasive in the separation of both concepts. For example, in the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle they argue that they belong to the Mexican nation as this is composed by the people and not by the state. There is a relationship between the state and the Zapatistas though not constructed, on the basis suggested by Cerda García, but it has changed with time. It is true that between the uprising in 1994 and 2001, when the congress failed to include the San Andrés Accords in the indigenous law, the relationship between the Zapatistas and the state became distant. After 2003, when the Zapatistas entered their phase of 'silence' they made no claims of recognition of the state: the Zapatistas were focused on working towards the consolidation of their autonomous project and honouring the San Andrés Accords without state intervention. This suggests that taking into consideration how the Zapatistas develop across time is essential to understanding that their project for citizenship does not depend on recognition at the state level.

The work of Cerda García is a good example that shows the need to find a theoretical framework that can look at forms of citizenship beyond the state's confines. There is a need, at least when studying the Zapatista case, to consider theories of citizenship that look beyond the state. There is a tendency, as the work discussed above suggests, to think of the nation-state as a single entity and not as composed of two concepts and because of this there is a reluctance to separate the study of citizenship from the confines of the state or the state. However, the need to look beyond the state also urges the need to dissociate citizenship from the Eurocentric theories of belonging which not only reinforce the link to the state but refers to citizens as individuals or singular units (Ní Mhurchú, 2016). As explained above, if citizenship is shaped by the circumstances of the time, it is not helpful to keep studying this concept while ignoring these constraints. On the contrary, the concept needs to be expanded so that concepts of autonomy and community underpin citizenship as a concept.

Citizenship could be studied from many approaches, as suggested above, among other things, it can be a status, feeling or practice, and it connote varying expectations regarding the rights and obligations of citizens. The concept of citizenship entails a mutually inclusive relationship between membership, rights and obligations. This relationship runs both ways, as only those who are considered to be citizens enjoy certain rights and obligations but also rights and obligations shape citizens' membership. Citizenship should not be understood as a fixed concept. The rights and obligations, the status, feelings and practices which are linked to citizenship change over time. Changing contexts serve as a

decisive factor for people and groups to push the limits of membership and claim recognition of further rights. Another of the theories discussed above studied is that they intrinsically link citizenship to the state, which could be seen as problematic. However, as explained from the arguments of Hoffman and Poggi, claims for citizenship groups have gone beyond the scope of the state. This is evident in Latin America, where the power of the central state and the diversity of groups are still challenges present in most of the states. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Zapatistas entered a phase of 'silence' in 2003, constructing an autonomy project that entails the acquisition of rights that were previously denied. This forces us not only to look at citizenship theories that have the potentiality to go beyond the state, and which can help us understand the ways in which citizenship is constructed through the claim of such rights. The, the work of Engin Isin emerges as pertinent set of ideas to explore in relation to the Zapatismo.

3.4 Acts of Citizenship

Isin's conception of citizenship differs from the arguments that explain citizenship solely as membership of the civic community of a given state. Citizenship, for Isin, is a set of practices (which can be cultural, social, political and even symbolic) that regulate people's behaviour (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). Isin recognises that the concept of citizenship entails an arrangement of rights and obligations that shape people's relationships. This arrangement of rights and obligations could be both within and beyond the state. As such Isin proposes an explanation of such process of becoming political as 'acts of citizenship' (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). To study citizenship as 'acts of citizenship,' as Isin argues, consist in analysing people's activities, which entails positioning these activities as core part of the study and the concept of citizenship. Thus, as Isin's understanding of the concept of citizenship entails concentrating on the actions performed rather than on the people, it could be argued that 'acts of citizenship' can be constructed from below in the sense that these actions may be within but also beyond the state. 'Acts of citizenship' entails an active understanding of the practice and concept of citizenship.

To understand the conception of 'acts of citizenship' and considering that people's activities are a core part of this concept, it is pertinent to explain what Isin refers by an act. An act is performed to achieve or directed towards something specific, as having a precise aim. Acts have effects and can produce a reaction (Isin, 2008). An act, then, incorporates the following six characteristics.

> (1)...acts have a virtual existence. (2) Acts rupture or break the given orders, practices and habitus...(3) Acts produce actors and actors do not produce acts; actors actualize acts and themselves through action. (4)

> Actualization of acts provokes both responsibility and answerability. Acts
> always concern others and the Other. (5) Answerability and responsibility
> are distinct and separate (but related) classes of phenomena. While
> responsibility invokes the given, immediate and calculable, answerability
> orients acts towards the Other. (6) Ethics and the ethical, politics and the
> political are distinct and irreducible (but related) aspects of acts that one
> must investigate separately while keeping them together (Isin, 2008, pp.
> 36–37).

It could be assumed that an act does not imply an action but a deed, performed by people with a shared interest, desire or will (Isin, 2008). For this reason, an act should not be taken as actions; acts, as Isin states, always create rupture in a given order through the enactment of actions. As this rupture aims to change the status or habitus of the people it also enables them to understand themselves as actors, thus, creating a relationship with others. In other words, an act gives the actor agency making it responsible for the enhancement of their actions.

If an act is a rupture that creates actors and forges relationships with others, an act of citizenship needs to be understood by the dynamics it entails. In this conceptualisation, citizenship entails the study not of a status but of practices of any type –social, political, cultural or symbolic- that make people political subjects (Isin, 2009; Isin & Nielsen, 2008). Isin challenges the understanding of citizenship as the link between the people and the state. He argues that states should not be considered as "containers of citizens as its members [as] new actors articulate claims for justice through new sites that involve multiple and overlapping scales of rights and obligations" (Isin, 2009, p. 370). So, if the state is not an essential prerequisite for the conception of citizenship it could be claimed that there is a possibility for an 'act of citizenship' to be approached as a way of being political from below. This suggests that acts are performed by the people in a way that does not necessarily require the involvement of the state to delimit, encourage or restrict their practices.

Acts of citizenship consist in looking at the deed instead of the doer. As emphasised by Isin, this has a twofold implication. First, people or groups become political subjects through the acts they perform which make us explore the dynamism of citizenship by understanding it not as a habit but as a practice. Second, since an act entails a performance that is directed towards something, acting entails making a claim (Isin, 2009). Citizenship for Isin is an active form of becoming political that involves the construction of relations with others (Isin, 2012a). Osler and Starkey's arguments also suggests that citizenship, in its active form, produces relationships among members of a micro-society and other micro-societies (Osler & Starkey, 2005). However, the difference is that while Osler and

Starkey suggests that this relationship is based on the agreement to respect human rights, for Isin it is claiming rights which will orient people or groups in the construction of relationships with others. These constructed relationships have an important effect on recognising political subjects. The identity that is being created by these relationships should not be ignored for two reasons. First, it allows citizens to position themselves as a collectivity when they perform acts; and second the resulting identity and interaction enables actors to be political.

Isin (2009, 2012a) suggests that citizenship is a relationship between, on the one hand the insiders or other citizens and, on the other, subjects who are strangers, outsiders and aliens. Taking into consideration Isin's argument that citizenship is not contained by the state, then questions arises when defining the construction of relationships between 'we' and the 'other.' The first obvious question is how is the 'we' constituted? Often the 'we' that Isin refers to is considered to be a group that is identifiable as a whole but is often unrecognised. Although there is no explicit reference in Isin's theoretical explanation of the 'we' being 'illegal' migrants making claims for justice; his ideas are often used to explain the claims of migrant groups (Aradau et al., 2013; Caglar & Mehling, 2013; Isin, 2013; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). In this sense, the relations that are made with 'others' helps to identify them as strangers, outsiders or aliens.

The application of citizenship studies, and specifically the concept of 'acts of citizenship' to current topics such as migration, help to understand and draw a differentiation between the 'we' and 'others.' Nevertheless, as 'acts of citizenship' entail acting in accordance with claims for justice, while studying migration these claims are often directed at the state or a supranational organisation such as the European Union (EU) that have influence over the migratory regulations of their member states. Issues then arise when these claims come from groups whose status as citizen is recognised by the state but are oppressed or marginalised. In this situation, the differentiation between 'we' and 'others' should not be taken for granted, as these are important forms of identity. Identity among insiders is constructed by common traits or common practices that create a common bond. Those things and people which 'we' are not also shape the conception of 'we'. However, this 'we' could not exist only by the shared feeling of identification. The relationship with the 'other' or 'others' that are different from the 'we' should also be considered as these help understand the way in which citizens define sites and scales –which are addressed later.

This identification also contributes to the construction of citizenship as political subjects. Becoming political is a relationship that is formed through the recognition of one self and the other in a shared space, or the public sphere (Arendt, 1998). The political is constructed through engaging in antagonist relationships between 'us' and 'them' (Schmitt, 1996). For Schmitt, this relationship between the 'we' and 'other' is based in a 'friend'/'enemy' distinction, which should not be understood as a rivalry, but as an opposite (Schmitt, 1996). Schmitt, as Arendt, suggests that this relationship is only political when it is constructed in public. Mouffe (2005) takes Schmitt's arguments further, and argues that the relationship between 'us' and 'them' is indeed needed to become political but that this should be based not on antagonist, but on agonistic relations. This agonistic relationship, according to Mouffe, is one in which the 'other' is not considered as an enemy but an adversary, who can coexist in a shared space (Mouffe, 2005). The arguments of Arendt, Schmitt and Mouffe help to understand the construction of the political as relationships with the other. While Arendt suggests that the political is constructed through a relationship with others in public, Schmitt and Mouffe specify the terms in which this relationship is constructed. So if the performance of 'act of citizenship' orient relationships between the 'we' and 'others,' then the relations between them should be examined not as a fixed list of characteristics that could define a group's membership, but as ways of becoming political subjects. In other words, what is needed is to understand the configuration within and between the 'we' and the 'others' and the resonance of these relations.

Equally important is the public sphere where these relationships are constructed. Arendt, Schmitt and Mouffe indicate that the relationship between the 'we' and 'others' is pulled together in the confines of a public space or a public sphere. Therefore, it could be claimed that a physical space is essential for the configuration of such relationships in becoming political. However, the role of the public sphere or a public space is taken for granted by Isin, which could suggest that people or groups will always have access to it. The access to the public sphere is conditioned, as Habermas argues, when citizenships have the right to assembly and freedom of expression (Habermas, Lennox, & Lennox, 1974). Added to this, although Habermas suggests that the public sphere should not be equated with the state, he recognises that the states plays an essential role in the conformation of such a sphere. The state is then the facilitator of the public sphere as it is the institution in charge of the conformation and preservation of the 'common good' as well as guaranteeing its citizen freedom of expression and association (Habermas et al., 1974). So, while referring to oppressed or marginalised groups, the access to the public sphere where the relationships

between the 'we' and the 'others' is constructed for becoming political subjects is an important element to be considered while studying 'acts of citizenship.'

An important dimension of the concept of citizenship is that of in which groups materialised their identity. Citizens, originally, were people that lived in a 'city' and enjoyed certain rights and obligations that came from their relationship to that territory (Isin & Turner, 2002). The 'city,' or a space is, according to Isin (2002), a condition of being political. For Isin, space is more than a physical arrangement of objects or buildings that allows citizens to differentiate themselves from the others (Isin, 2002). Looking at cities or spaces like this is to understand them as containers of membership in which citizens are defined from that which they are not. The 'city' or the equivalent space, should be addressed as a 'difference machine,' constructed by the "dialogical encounter of groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking up positions, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling strategies and technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital, and making claims to that space that is objectified as "the city" (Isin, 2002, p. 49). In other words, this space is not a container of identities, in the sense that the territory defines who citizens are. It is a space where groups raise their claims for rights and obligations through their relationships with others. Just like the public sphere, the 'city' is a precondition for becoming political subjects and as such access to this physical spaces should be considered when analysing the claims of oppressed or marginalised groups. Access to these spaces and to the public sphere forces us to look at citizenship beyond debates of citizenship as membership or as a practice, but to look at the way these spaces are constructed beyond the influence or without the involvement of the state and at how marginalised or oppressed groups articulate their rights and obligations through the relationships with others.

Isin's theory of 'acts of citizenship' provides procedural propositions on how this theory should be applied when studying citizenship. Isin (2012a) puts forward what he terms methodological propositions for investigating acts of citizenship which entail the examination and interpretation of events, the sites, the scales over which they operate, and their duration. The starting points in studying acts of citizenship, according to Isin, are events. When studying acts of citizenship, it is important to identify the event or events that could herald an act. An event is an action, either visible or verbalized, that can influence the way in which the act makes a rupture in the given order (Isin, 2012a). In other words, an event will be a happening that will pave the way to changing the condition or circumstances of a group. Thus, the initial approach when studying acts of citizenship

will be to focus on those actions that can be interpreted as events that break with the given state of affairs. If we are right in asserting that events are ruptures an event should not be confused with simple violent actions. The appearance of an event or events should always be followed by an act.

The second and third methodological propositions for studying acts of citizenship involve sites and scales. To examine sites and scales does not necessarily imply paying attention to the physical places where acts happen. Sites are spaces of contestation or struggle where interests, issues, ideas, and objects assemble (Isin, 2012a). Hence attention should be paid to the spaces where acts occur and the way these provide images, or symbolic values that could influence acts. As such, sites and scales are not fixed categories defined by territorial claims, but should be thought of as outside the fixed boundaries of territory (Isin, 2012a). To think of sites beyond their physical location implies understanding them as both temporal and temporary but also as to orient groups in the performance of their acts (Isin, 2012a). So, if the value of sites is not grounded in their physical location, scales should be approached with the same dynamism: the boundaries of spaces are question of empirical determination (Isin, 2012a).

Looking at political subjects through their acts is a process. As acts cannot be interpreted in isolation the duration of these acts of citizenship is the last methodological proposition. The interpretation of the duration of acts of citizenship is not about quantifying in years, days or even hours how long an act lasts. Analysing the duration of an act of citizenship is about interpreting the resonance of such acts (Isin, 2012a). The interpretation of the duration of an act, Isin suggests involves looking at its performative force (Isin, 2012a). As acts of citizenship entails a process, the duration of these acts, Isin argues, cannot be assumed to end right after the act happened: a deeper analysis considers the ways in which these acts transform or change the given order (Isin, 2012a).

3.5 Conclusion

The development of societies has an important role in shaping the way in which people claim and exercise their rights and obligations and how membership derived from citizenship is structured. However, citizenship is approached whether as a status or as practice, it has always been subject to the historical circumstances at the time. As such, groups that were previously not included within the category of citizenship, made claim for recognition. These claims for recognition had occurred through both violent and non-violent scenarios that have concluded in the inclusion of groups that were formerly not

considered as citizens such as women, workers, peasants, and cultural groups among others. In other words, these claims have pushed the boundaries of citizenship further to guarantee rights and obligations and membership. Citizenship is not only in continuous construction but also a site of political struggle.

Citizenship has been studied by looking at the way in which membership and belonging translates into a habit or a practice. Such studies examine the way in which people in order for them to be granted the status of citizenship must follow rules and norms. Marshall's (1950) approach to citizenship is that it is a status and from their membership people enjoy certain rights and obligations. Marshall's understanding of citizenship is a consensual agreement offered by the state to its population which the citizens ought to respect. Thus, this liberal approach to citizenship places the state at the centre, as it is the task to provide, promote and guarantee the equal protection of such rights and membership.

The work of Kymlicka and Norman (2000) introduce culture to the concept of citizenship. Groups, specially minority groups, have the right to be recognised as bearers of a culture which allows them to have equal access to rights and obligations derived from the state. As mentioned earlier, each cultural group in a state has to be treated and granted the same opportunities to exercise their rights. The issues with this 'multicultural citizenship' are that although difference is recognised, differentiation is not a practice. In an attempt to regulate the differences among the population, the state will attempt to make the population uniform by promoting certain values that would not put at stake unity, and expressions such as self-determination in it simple form of cultural expressions could be reduced or banned for the sake of the state's unity.

Osler and Starkey (2005), provide an understanding of citizenship as a practice that is derived from membership. Although similarities could be drawn with the work of Kymlicka and Norman, Osler and Starkey are keen also to incorporate diversity within the concept of citizenship. They position rights as essential for the exercise of citizenship. As a way to counteract the role of the state, Osler and Starkey suggest that as citizenship is a practice that is exercised among different groups, human rights should be the base of such an exercise. While Osler and Starkey's approach to citizenship is valuable, as they value practice over membership, the problem is that they rely on the concept of human rights to guarantee such practice.

As discussed above, citizenship is a concept that has been influenced not only by historical circumstances, but also through different geographies. Yashar (1998, 2005) explains the process through which citizenships has been understood in Latin America. Even though there is no explicit reference to citizenship being a site of political struggle in Yashar's arguments, it could be inferred that Latin America provides a good example of it. Since citizenship was brought by the European powers, there has always been a struggle for recognition of the diverse groups that occupied and lived in the region. In a more specific context Cerda García (2011) explains citizenship in the Zapatista MAREZ and the way in which this project clashes with how the state promotes citizenship and the rights and obligations derived from them.

Yashar and Cerda García still aim to apply a western conception of citizenship to the Latin American and the Zapatista cases. However, though Latin American states were created with a western heritage, the process of their creation were different from those of the Western state. For this reason, this dimension should not be ignored when studying citizenship in Latin America and in the Zapatistas in particular. Taylor (2013) proposes that to study citizenship in Latin America, the foundations of the concept should be questioned as these are deeply grounded in 'colonialist/modernity' and evoke European ideals. So there is a need to consider citizenship outside this logic and taking into account the region's particularities is an essential prerequisite of comprehensive understanding of citizenship in the region. Hoffman (2004) argues that not only should the concept of citizenship be expanded to include diversity, but there is also a "need [for citizenship] to be 'deepened' and qualitatively transformed so that it is underpinned by new concepts of freedom, autonomy, community" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 18).

Isin's understanding of citizenship is pertinent to explaining the Zapatista case. His understanding of citizenship as the right to claim rights (Isin, 2012a) gives the flexibility to incorporate the different dimensions that are particular to the Zapatismo. Isin argues that through the performance of acts of citizenship, citizens become activist citizens. Acts of citizenship are deeds that create a rupture in the given order. Not only does the performances of acts aim to create a different situation, but the performances also creates relationship with others. As such, acts of citizenship produce actors who are activist citizens. Activist citizens are differentiated from active citizens in the sense that the former create and the latter follow. Active citizens will behave according to rules according to Isin, and using a theatre analogy, they follow scripts which are "the most prominent businesses of government" (Isin, 2012a). Activist citizens, on the other hand,

are political subjects who create by "writing new scripts with creativity, inventiveness and autonomy" (Isin, 2012a, p. 148). Thus, enacting an act of citizenship is the exercise of people's or groups autonomy: it is when the people who react from injustices become activists in the creation of their own rights. Citizenship as 'acts of citizenship' then is the process through which people have the right to claim rights. The concept can be applied to groups, such as the Zapatistas that, have not only been fully recognised by the state but whose claims go beyond its scope.

As discussed earlier, the application of Isin's 'acts of citizenship' has generally been to cases in the global north and often in contexts where in people/communities have access to a public sphere and the right of association and speech, values considered by Arendt as prerequisites to be political (Arendt, 1998). Thus, attention should be paid when applying this theory to groups that have been oppressed or marginalised by the state in the way they had managed to have access or constructed alternative conditions that allows them to construct their political subjectivity: the Zapatistas provide just such a case. Such cases have particular dimensions and complexities that cannot be ignored or taken for granted. To do so would be to reject the causes that lead these groups to be marginalised or oppressed and to continue to apply Western theories to situations where they are not appropriate. In the reminder of the thesis, therefore, Isin's ideas are extended to analyse just such a situation, where Western notions of state-centred citizenship are being challenged via 'acts of citizenship' and where previously marginalised groups are taken the initiative to act against the state and to claim their own rights: the Mexican Zapatista Movement.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters provided contextual and theoretical material to aid a reading of the Zapatistas as political subjects. Chapter 2 provided a genealogy of the Zapatistas and the EZLN since their uprising and concluded with the need to find an appropriate theoretical framework that could be used to explain the Zapatistas as political subjects. Chapter 3 discussed relevant theoretical analyses of the construction of citizenship. Although several approaches to the study of citizenship were considered, Isin's 'acts of citizenship' resulted particularly pertinent to provide an understanding on the way in which the Zapatistas construct citizenship from below. It is now the task of this chapter to set out the research design and methodology that underpins the following empirical chapters of this thesis.

This chapter consists of several sections. The first section outlines the general aims and objectives of the thesis followed by the research questions that guided this work. The second section provides a justification and description of the methods used. The third section recognises the limitations of the chosen methods and the possible repercussion for the thesis. Finally, the chapter expands on the research experience and positionality of the researcher.

4.2 Research Aims and Questions

This research pursues two general aims. The first aim is to provide an analysis of the Zapatistas as political subjects. The uprising of the EZLN and the development of the Zapatismo have caught academic attention, and as a result the topic has been approached through a number of different perspectives. For instance, some of the academic literature focuses on the EZLN uprising, charting the chronological development of the fight (Higgins, 2004; Holloway & Peláez, 1998b; Khasnabish, 2010; Pazos, 1994; Romero

Jacobo, 1994; Ross, 1995, 2006; Rus et al., 2003). Another approach to the Zapatismo has been the analysis of the EZLN as a social movement (Bohm, Dinerstein, & Spicer, 2010; Castells, 2010; Couch, 2001; Garrido & Halavais, 2003; Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, & Fuller, 1998; Russell, 2005; R. Stahler-Sholk, 2007). According to this perspective, the Zapatismo fits within the social movement framework as it emerged as a consequence of the adoption of neoliberal policies by the Mexican government. Therefore, this approach concentrates on the actions taken by the EZLN such as the networks they have formed with the national and international civil society, their forms of resistance, the technology used to support their actions, and the identity created by these actions, among other things. In other words, this approach has focussed on analysing the actions taken by the EZLN and the Zapatistas to resist the measures taken by the state. Additionally, there is a body of literature that concentrates on the Zapatista's indigenous character (de la Garza, 2010; Jung, 2003; Mattiace, 1997; Saldaña-Portillo, 2002; L. M. Stephen & Collier, 1997; Weinberg, 2000). Overall this body of literature centres its arguments on the ethnic character of the Zapatismo fight, placing emphasis on the communal practices and the way the fight has enabled the Zapatistas to rescue an indigenousness that was ostracized by practices introduced by the colonial powers and continued by national governments and elites in Mexico from independence to the present day.

Related to the literature on the ethnic dimensions are studies focusing on gender (Eber & Kovic, 2003; Ortiz, 2001; Rovira, 2000; Speed et al., 2006) and, more specifically, on the role of women within the Zapatista movement. The main arguments of this work explain how the Zapatismo have empowered indigenous women, who were discriminated against on the basis of not only their ethnic origin but also for their gender. Finally, Marxist theories have been used to study the Zapatistas and the EZLN (Bahn, 2009; Holloway, 2002, 2005; Holloway & Susen, 2013; Lynd & Grabacic, 2008; Morton, 2000). The Marxist approach to the Zapatistas concentrates on analysing the anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal discourse of the Zapatistas through the years and considers the movement as an alternative to a capitalist system. Supported by all these approaches and analyses, the reading of the Zapatistas attempted in this research is to explore, through their acts, what the Zapatistas are. While the literature summarised above is relevant in understanding the Zapatismo and the EZLN uprising, these works have taken for granted the nature as political subjects.

Thus, against this background of detailed scholarship, this thesis sets out to study those acts performed by the Zapatistas that enable us to understanding how the Zapatistas

construct themselves as political subjects. This understanding attempts to bridge a gap in the existing Zapatista literature caused by previous attention on the actions rather than on the processes performed by these actors. In other words, this thesis addresses the ways in which Zapatista political subjectivity is constructed –namely through acts of citizenship which leads into the second aim of the thesis.

The second general aim of this research is to make a contribution to the theoretical study of 'acts of citizenship.' As stated in the previous chapter, the work of Engin Isin provides a pertinent theoretical background to explain the ways in which the Zapatistas constitute themselves as political subjects. So far, the academic work inspired by the theory of 'acts of citizenship' has concentrated on theoretically identifying these acts and their resonance. Empirical applications of the theory, however, have largely been limited to examples in the global north. A key example of this is in Isin's (2012a) book *Citizens Without Frontiers*. In this text, Isin further developed the understanding of acts of citizenship through six chapters, each supported (with an appendix and empirical evidence) by evidence from cases in or of the United States and Great Britain. The theory has not, been substantively applied to cases in the global south, in general, and the Zapatistas, in particular, where there are differing historical circumstances and political conditions regarding the protection of rights.

Drawing on the theoretical work put forward by Isin and this research will address the following research question:

>   *How do claims of citizenship mobilise the Zapatistas communities?*

Added to this general question, the following sub-questions further guides for this research.

1. *How are non-state based claims to citizenship formed in the Zapatistas' initial assertions?*

Ever since the EZLN uprising, the Zapatistas have made it clear that their fight is against the government. Hence, during the early years the Zapatista discourse emphasised the rejection of state-lead practices and laws. Due to changing circumstances, over time their discourse and demands have developed in to claims for the construction of autonomy as a project that has consisted of, among other things, alternative political spaces assembled from below.

The primary objective of this sub-question is to identify how these demands are framed as claims for justice that could be categorised as acts of citizenship. This question exposes the

ways in which the Zapatistas' demands have been translated into non-state claims. This sub-question contributes to answering the main research question by identifying the way in which the manifestation of the Zapatistas' claims have led them to break with the given order and have led to the performance of acts of citizenship.

2. *What practices performed by the Zapatistas could be categorized as acts of citizenship?*

The purpose of this sub-question is twofold. On the one hand this question allows us to explore the way in which these non-state claims are translated into social practices. On the other hand, it recognises the ways in which these practices are performed on a daily basis. This sub-question will contribute to the main research question by identifying the practices that are considered acts of citizenship.

3. *What are the reasons and motivations that allow us to identify these practices as acts of citizenship?*

The data gathered in the previous sub-questions become essential to answer this last sub-question. This sub-question identifies the circumstances that allow these practices to be categorized as acts of citizenship. This sub-question allows us to discuss and analyse the findings from the data gathered in the previous sub-questions and explore the ways in which the Zapatistas become political subjects.

4.3 Research Design and Data Collection

To answer these research questions, the research design consisted on the collection of qualitative data through the use of archival research and ethnographic inspired methods. The use of qualitative methods allowed to explore the way meanings are given, definitions derived, symbols understood and descriptions made (Berg, 2001) and is hence appropriate for the study of the Zapatistas' 'acts of citizenship.' To study 'acts of citizenship,' as Isin (2012a) suggests, requires a process that consists in the identification of the act, analysing its significance by contextualising its existence.

The initial research design involved plans for a six-month fieldwork period in two Zapatistas communities, to conduct interviews and participant observation. Access to Zapatistas communities was initiated through contacts with several Mexican academics that had previously worked with these communities. However, despite initial optimism, this plan was affected by the Zapatistas' decision to step away from the public eye and concentrate on their project of autonomy. This decision meant that access to these

communities was closed to public. In addition, this access restriction was exacerbated by the then-existing security situation in Mexico, as the state tried to deal with drug trafficking issues, which involved an increased presence of the military in both urban and rural areas.

Due to this obstacle, an alternative route was employed to gain access to Zapatista territory and the Zapatistas. This was facilitated by my enrolment in the *Centro de Español y Lenguas Mayas Rebelde Autónomo Zapatista* (Autonomous Rebel Zapatista Centre of Spanish and Mayan Languages or CELMRAZ). The CELMRAZ is part of the *Sistema de Educación Rebelde Autónomo Zapatista* (Autonomous Rebel Zapatista Education System or SERAZ) in the Caracol of Oventik. The CELMARZ offers languages courses of Spanish and Tzotzil and an important part of the school's curriculum relies on learning the Zapatista culture and politics. The programme was run in weeklong segments and functions like a boarding school where students spend the nights and eat within the confines of the *Caracol* in the classrooms, dining room and dormitories that belong to the language school. Usually students who attend the school are separated depending on their Spanish and Tzotzil proficiency level and later allocated into a study group.

The content of the language lessons, when I attended, was organised by an agreement between the students and the facilitators. Lessons were held once a day for one and half hours approximately. However, several collective activities were held throughout the days that were guide and a complemented each day's language lessons. Each morning started with a collective activity organised by the school's facilitators with the participation of all the students of the school. These morning activities included: showing Zapatistas videos, talking about their resistance and singing and playing songs. These morning activities set the topic of the following activities and language lessons of the day. After this initial activity, students attended language lessons with their study groups. Finally, in the afternoon there was another collective activity with all the students in the school. These activities varied depending of the day, but they included activities such as weaving, visiting the Zapatista's primary schools in the surrounding areas and collective discussions, among other things. The school fees, which the Zapatistas called a contribution, were made directly to the Oventik Good Government Board (JBG). These donations were set as an agreement between the school and the JBG and were the equivalent of five working days. So for each week of classes, and for three meals a day (lodging was free of charge), a student paid fifteen working days at the rate of their country of residence.

Enrolment in the language school presented potential problems that affected the research design and thus, the data collection process. The first problem was related to the language school's opening times. At the time, the language school was running only at certain times of year, which required adaptation of the research timeline. When fieldwork was originally planned, I was accepted for one week to the school, with the possibility of extending it if more students enrolled to it. Unfortunately, there were no more people enrolled, except me, at that time so the Zapatistas did not open the school for further lessons. This situation meant that I had to go back the following year. Thus, I returned, in 2016, to the school for a longer period which resulted convenient as all the people that worked in the school were still there and remembered me. The fact that I was not a 'new student' helped me to build friendlier and more trusting relationships with the facilitators as well as with the people that collaborated there. This relationship made it easier to have longer conversations with the people that often went beyond a simple greeting as the rest of the students did. The second problem I faced in the data gathering process was that as a language student within the school I was expected to fulfil the activities particular to the programme. This sometimes limited the opportunities to interact with to other people in the Caracol on a sustained basis. Finally, I was notified that no formal structured interviews were allowed, as the Zapatistas wanted to remain in 'silence' or at least away from the public eye. Despite the fact that these types of interviews were not possible I was permitted to talk to everyone within the Caracol. For this reason, I conducted informal, unstructured conversations as the facilitators in the school told me that I was free to talk everyone in the community. Hence, I took advantage of this opportunity specially the second time I was in the field as I knew the people and the people knew me.

The fact that no structured interviews were allowed, affected the research design and data collection process. To overcome this problem, I decided to make use of the Zapatista archive as a source of data gathering. Therefore, the research design for data gathering of this thesis consists on archival analysis and ethnographic inspired methods such as observation and informal conversations within the Zapatistas' communities, which are explained above.

4.3.1 Archival Analysis

The Zapatista archive is an on line electronic archive, that consist in four parts. The first part contains all the Zapatistas' declarations, communiqués, interviews, essays, stories, and so on, from 1993 to 2005. This part of the archive can be accessed at

http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/ and the information is categorised by years and topics (declarations, stories, essays and other topics). The second part of the archive contains the same kind of information as the first but for the 2005-2008 period. This part can be accessed at http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/camino-andado/ ; the information from this period is only chronologically categorised. The third part of the archive can be accessed at http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/ and contains information from 2008 to the present, and equal to the previous part is categorised chronologically. The last part of the archive consists on the teaching materials of the two levels of the Escuelita Zapatista (Zapatista *Little School*) held in 2013 in Zapatista territory. This teaching material consists of a series of four textbooks for the first level of the school and a video for the second level.

As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, the *Little School* was a Zapatista initiative directed to the adherents of the Sixth Declaration and people in general to learn about the Zapatista history, form of government, successes, mistakes, problems, among others. The *Little School* was launched in 2013 during the phase of silence that started in 2001. Since 2001 the appearances of the Zapatistas in the media decreased and so the academic attention the movement received dropped also. This was due to their 'close door' efforts for strengthening their autonomy project without external aid. The *Little School* project responded to an effort from the Zapatistas to invite external people to share the Zapatista construction of autonomy. As such, the Zapatistas opened their communities to people who were adherents or/and supporters from around the world to learn about the Zapatista way of living, form of resistance and construction of their autonomy. The learning process was structured through a weeklong period and involved living with a Zapatista family in one of the Zapatista communities and attending to lessons in the Caracol from which the four textbooks were used as supporting material (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2013).
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The *Little School's* textbooks issued by the Zapatistas are the following: *Autonomous Government I, Autonomous Government II, Women's Participation in the Autonomous Government* and *Autonomous Resistance.* These books are a compilation of narrations of the Zapatistas support bases. These included members and former members of the different JBGs, current and former authorities of the different Zapatistas MAREZ, health and education facilitators across the different Zapatista territories and people who consider being Zapatistas. The declarations were compiled by the JBG and later arranged by topics that compose the different textbooks. Once the textbooks were finished the different JBGs electronically delivered them to all the people that enrolled in the school.

Later on, these books were uploaded in the Zapatista archive for public access and the Zapatistas asked international supporters, via the Zapatista webpage, to translate these books into their own language for dissemination (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2013). *Radio Zapatista Sudcalifroniana*, a Mexican collective that is adherent to the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle was one of many collectives to help with the dissemination of the textbook and they also provided an accurate description of the textbooks. These textbooks, according to *Radio Zapatista*, express not only the words of the Zapatistas but the practices performed by the Zapatistas on a daily basis in their effort to resist against the neoliberal policies implemented in the country (Radio Zapatista Sucaliforniana, n.d.). It has to be borne in mind that since 2001 and to approximately 2013 there was no substantial report or information, released by the Zapatistas, regarding their forms and modes of resistance nor for the construction of their autonomy. For this reason, the textbooks are relevant for the sake of this research, as these were not necessarily a description of the organisation through charts or diagrams but a compilation of their doings. As such, the textbooks became part of the Zapatista discourse.

According to Phillips and Hardy (2002) discourse is an important part of people's, groups' and communities' social reality. They go further and claim that discourse is an important part of the construction of the expression of social reality through texts and words. It could then be claimed that texts are the embodiment of the discourse a social group or people attempt to portray. However, as Phillips and Hardy(2002) argue in order to analyse discourse through texts and grasp the meaning of it, attention should be paid not only to the text itself but the circumstances under which these were made, its purpose or purposes, its distribution and if possible the reception from audience. The textbooks from the *Little School* became an important part of the Zapatista discourse for several reasons. The first is that the textbooks were released during the Zapatista phase of 'silence' making it the only material that explained the Zapatista reality since this phase started. The second, these textbooks are a compilation of the Zapatista reality across all the five Caracoles as they gathered the narration of the members in each of the Zapatista community. The third reason was the purpose of the textbooks themselves. As these were directed to those people that enrolled to the *Little School*, the textbooks were used by the students as supporting material as they were also going to 'experiment' the Zapatista autonomy through living one week within the Zapatista communities. Considering the fact that all the Zapatista's communities are still closed to public, these textbooks represent a good insight to what up to 2013 was unknown or vaguely known.

As not much was being said about the construction and understanding of autonomy by the Zapatistas, the textbooks resulted valuable source information to understand not only how the Zapatistas were politically organised, but also the way they perceive, conceived and exercised politics. Although the textbooks were a good source of data gathering, they still have one main limitation that need to be exposed. As the Zapatistas wrote these textbooks, the narrative that could be found in them shows the Zapatistas' own perspective on the selected topics. As these textbooks were written and then delivered to the students and then to the general public, a limited amount of questions could be asked to the Zapatistas about certain issues. For this reason, while employing texts as part of the construction of a discourse they should not be used in isolation but in conjunction with texts or other data gathering methods. It is then for this reason that these textbooks in specific were used along with material found in the Zapatista archives as well as the observations and informal conversations collected during fieldwork.

In general, an archive encompasses a collection of all available records related to a particular subject. Archives can hold criminal, hospital records, newspapers, registers, revenue records, speeches and letters, but they can also take an atypical form such as graveyards (Berg, 2001). Regardless of the information they contain, archives constitute a systematic way of organizing past information and its arrangement depends on their function, which can mainly be chronological or thematic (Mbembe, 2002). For this reason, archival analysis represents an organised form of accessing information as it will, generally, be catalogued and presented in standardised formats making the analysis easier (Berg, 2001). Traditionally archival analysis was approached as a form of historical inquiry, and as such results were relevant to historical research conducted in, but not limited to, the fields of history, politics, historical geography and law among others (Lorimer, 2010). Fundamentally, archival material is useful to draw a context for the research (Hammett, Twyman, & Graham, 2015).

There are two general characteristics that need to be taken into consideration while using archives for data gathering. The first characteristic relates to the constitution of the archive itself. Archives entail power (T. Cook & Schwartz, 2002; Fairclough, 2003; Jacobsen, Punzalan, & Hedstrom, 2013). They constitute a means of validation of their possessors, as the archive will tell stories of authentication that legitimate the owner's existence. As such, the information contained in archives establishes a set of power relations between the people that control and organise the information and the people accessing it, as it can be used as a means of reinforcing hegemony or resistance. Archives

then, have the power to benefit or relegate individuals, communities, situations or events, nourishing the history of the owner (T. Cook & Schwartz, 2002). The ownership of an archive is essential to consider while using it. Often the best-kept and most used archives are those owned by the state or its institutions and most of the recorded history in such archives serves the function of providing official information.

The second characteristic relates to the information contained. Regardless of its use as source of data for historical research or to give context of the present situation, archival information could contribute to the construction of knowledge. The information contained in an archive can help a researcher to find meanings for the construction or development of concepts (Carlolyn Hamilton, Harris, & Reid, 2002). In other words, archives contain information that not only serves to contextualise the present but taking the information together also helps to construct and understand a specific ideology that enables us to deeply understand certain notions and concepts.

The emergence of dissident or social movements brought, among other things, the creation of marginal archives (Carlolyn Hamilton et al., 2002), archives of the dispossessed or advocacy/activist archiving (Lorimer, 2010). The function of these archives is no different from mainstream archives owned by the state: they will keep records on the formation of the group, will validate its existence, tell stories about its origins, identity, practices and actions taken. Also the information contained in this type of archives may also be discriminatory and exclusionary in nature, as it may be in the movement or group's interest to portray their own story in as positive light as possible. However, there are also differences between both types of archives. The information held in the marginal archives, archives of the dispossessed or activist archives is an alternative to the material that could be found in an official archive, and considering these movements act on the margins of the state's laws or in clandestinely, they provide an other view of certain events. Though, the main obstacle for this type of archive is that the archive itself is not necessarily maintained rigorously (Carlolyn Hamilton et al., 2002). As a result, these archives may be not necessarily catalogued and certain or few people may control the access to these archives.

Mbembe (2002) argues that as archives hold an account of history these could be considered as evidence of the status of the owner or the archive because for two reasons. First, they contain a record of actions, giving an account of the existence of a group, certifying its presence. Second, the status given by the archive is imaginary as the material that it holds only portrays a specific view of a given time and place. But these fragments

create the impression of portraying a situation in its totality (Mbembe, 2002). This view is based on Foucault's conception of an archive as a 'system of discursivity' (Foucault, 1972). According to this conception, the archive's function is to set the boundaries of what can be said. In part, this function is guided through, the way in which events or statements are catalogued in the archives (Foucault, 1972). To the researcher, the information contained in the archives would set the tone, and form a meaning on how groups or social movements validate themselves. Therefore, the archive as a status is "a general system of the formation and transformation of statements" (Foucault, 1972, p. 130). Although the information collected in the archive would be subject to interpretation, it can help the researcher to understand the boundaries of the movement, measure the duration of their events, and find the meanings and formation of their concepts and perceptions.

So how can the analysis of a marginal archive as the Zapatista archive contribute to the data gathering for this research? Initially it is important to look at the nature of the archive, not only what it contains but what it entails. The Zapatista archive, as a marginal archive, represents a form of resistance not only because of the type of information it holds but also because it validates the Zapatista's existence without provision from the state. If we understand that archives form and transform events, then it is pertinent to question the way in which we approach those producing the archive. When studying social movements often these movements are considered as object of knowledge. Chesters (2012) argues that instead they should be considered as knowledge-producers. Social movements exist as a reaction against something or someone. They denounce injustices and forms of oppression, they bring to the public eye problems that seemed to be forgotten or ignored, they warn about possible harms in the application of certain economic, environmental and energy policies by producing information that clearly challenges the elites in power or those they react against (Chesters, 2012). So, "social movements must [be] recognize[d] by their capacity to develop alternative political imaginaries –a politics of possibilities-and theories of knowledge about how to actualise these imagined possibilities" (Chesters, 2012, p. 146). Social movements contextualize a reality that is often ignored; they legitimise the creation of this alternative political imaginary through their actions and the record they keep of them. So, if social movements are considered knowledge-producers instead of just objects of knowledge then the archival material compiled by these groups, in this case the Zapatistas, is an elucidation of their own reality. The Zapatista archive in particular contains, records of their practices, forms of government, ideology and actions that are pieces in a jigsaw of their reality which help us to investigate their actions, identify them as acts and analyse their duration. It is

then the role of the researcher to interpret this information beyond its information and validation purposes.

4.3.2 Participant Observation and Informal Conversations

As access to the Zapatista territory was through the language school and interviews were not permitted, participant observation and informal conversations were carried out both times I was in the field. Although I cannot argue that the data gathered in the field was ethnography, the methods used were ethnographically inspired to gain pertinent data in the time this research allocated for fieldwork. Ethnographic methods are suitable to understand how theory links to practice and after reflection on or analysis of the data how practice can benefit theories (Watson & Till, 2010). These methods are used within the field of Geography to comprehend the ways in which people create their own worlds through divergent practices of space recognition, delimitation and interaction with and among others (Watson & Till, 2010). Ethnographic methods allow researchers to explore the meaning of practices, actions and inactions, in the daily life of the 'social world studied' (Hammett et al., 2015). The aim of these methods is to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultures, which requires a wide variety of approaches or techniques to fully immerse the researcher in the community or communities that one wishes to study. Accordingly, these methods certainly involve forging relationships with people who may or not be similar to the researcher. Crang and Cook (2007, p. 9) suggests that "research on social sciences is *made out of social relations*." It is therefore important to take into consideration how these relationships are constructed and the way in which these contribute to generating understandings in the research (Crang & Cook, 2007).

The study of daily life practices through immersion in given culture or community can incorporate a vast variety of methods, and the use of one or a combination of all is a function of the specifications of the research and the accessibility the researcher has. As it was mentioned above, it was the intention of this research to make use of observation and formal structured interviews, as principal research methods. However due to the circumstances that were explained above, I conducted participant observation and informal conversations which worked for the data gather process as there was no pressure being put on participants with the formalities of a structured interview. On the contrary, the people I had conversations with felt confident to be talking to someone who they previously knew.

As it was clear from the early stage of the fieldwork that interviews could not be conducted, I talked with a variety of people while in the field. These were informal conversations, as mentioned above, in the sense that I did not have a rigorous set of questions prepared in advanced to be asked. Instead I asked general questions and went along with the flow of the conversations. None of these talks were recorded, but instead notes were taken immediately after the conversations, on issues, topics and statements that were relevant to the research. The informants were all Zapatistas that lived in San Andrés Larrainzar and those who work in the Language School situated in the Oventik Caracol, they were 11 men and women from ages of 19 to 45. Among this group there were people that were and were not born as Zapatistas, but had mainly Tzotzil and Tzeltal ethnicity. The gender distribution among the informants was fairly equal; they were 6 men and 5 women.

The conversations I had with the people started with icebreaking questions such as their names and where were they from and, if their communities where far away from our location or not. Starting with these questions was important as respondents hold a close attachment to the place they belong. These questions, gave them the opportunity to ask me where was I from and what I was doing in Chiapas. After this exchange of questions, I often asked questions such as how did they got to the Caracol or San Andrés. This allowed me to talk about the needs in infrastructure and in their communities, which led to how the government was not paying attention to remote locations of Chiapas. Subsequent questions were asked on topics such as being a Zapatista, the collective work they performed within their communities and the importance of such work in their lives. I often avoided using words such as autonomy or resistance, or the Zapatista fight when I was holding conversations with them as I did not wanted to impose and answer to them, but often when I asked about their living conditions words such as 'fight' and 'collective work' and '*partidistas*'[37] came to the conversations.

The main challenges of not being able to conduct formal interviews was the fact that, as there was a dependency on the flow of the conversations not the same questions could be asked to everyone. This meant that there was the need to think of possible ways to get to talk about the topics relevant to this research. To overcome this challenge it was crucial to have clear how can 'acts of citizenship' be found in the field or how can 'acts of citizenship' could be understood as empirical object. This was then a reflective process that involved merging 'theory' and 'practice' at all times. Although this sounds obvious while doing any

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[37] *Partidistas* are the name the Zapatistas give the people that are aligned with a political party,

type of research, it was crucial when informal conversations were held without a formal set of questions that could serve as 'script' or guide. So it was important to have a clear idea on how can 'acts of citizenship' be found on a daily basis. Taking into consideration the data gathered during the first time in the field a reading of Isin was done with that in mind. Isin then defines 'acts of citizenship' as social, cultural, political and/or symbolic practices with the purpose of making a rupture to claim rights and regulate the group's behaviour and the behaviour towards others (Isin, 2012b; Isin & Nielsen, 2008). So, while I was in the field and talking to people, I was concerned to explore what were these practices that were making a rupture, their repercussion in their daily life as well as the people's relationship with others within their community and outside it. However, it was through this exploration that I realised that most of the practices consisted in bringing back their traditional indigenous customs and way of living as valid practices among them, so I explore more in that regard.

Observation is considered to be the core part of ethnographic methods. Participant observation goes beyond the simple actions of observing and recording what is observed. It requires engagement with and immersion in the community (I. Cook, 2005). Taking into consideration that ethnographic methods consists also in forging social relations to enable the researcher to immerse him or herself into the culture or community, then these interactions that are not visible should also be recorded. The recording of everyday reflections, thoughts, experiences, interactions, behaviours, actions, sounds, smells, tastes, etcetera (Hammett et al., 2015; Watson & Till, 2010) or the unseen allow the researcher to grasp as much as possible, the community's ideas, costumes and social practices.

Impressions of daily life must be gathered in a field diary in order to record evidence that will enable the researcher to reconstruct, as much as possible, the community's or culture's environments. The diary is an essential part of participant observation and crucial for informal conversations as research method. The field diary aims to translate the observable into valuable data, as the note-taking process becomes a sense-making process (Clocke et al., 2004). Clocke *et al* (2004)*,* propose different layers of description comprising the note-taking process which starts from selecting the site itself. However, since this research concentrated on the Zapatistas and it was based on the CELMRAZ-language school and San Andrés, I considered the subsequent layers of the description process. The first layer is the description of the physical space of the setting. Clocke et al (2004), suggest that if possible, seasonal and other changes should also be recorded by the researcher. The second layer of description aims to explain the interaction others have

with the setting. The third layer of description suggests documenting the researcher's personal interaction, with the setting. I recorded a description and explanation of what I saw, heard, and learned from my everyday experiences in the site. The final layer shifts the emphasis from description to a reflective process. The aim of this last layer is to record the first impressions and how they changed, the reaction of people towards the research, the way the initial findings coincide with expectations, the possible problems or unexpected events faced, etcetera (Clocke et al., 2004).

These layers of descriptions were taken into consideration while taking notes on the diary. So, the note taking was made through different stages. Since I went to the field twice and this happened to be two different locations, as such a description of the physical space was done almost right after the first two days, and while I was exploring the sites more information and descriptions was added. As such, I recorded a description of the physical characteristics of the site including its size, vegetation, and houses among others. As I was looking for the practices that caused rupture that enable the Zapatistas to claim and exercise their rights and the relationship with others; I was recording in my notes the interactions, activities and relations with the others. I also recorded the way in which I participated in different activities and the way I approached people. Finally the process of reflection was done every Saturday morning after I left the *Caracol* or San Andrés. Usually it was a reflective exercise on the data I had gathered during the week, my expectations and the key aspects I needed to emphasise.

In a more practical sense, I recorded my notes in a systematic way, which involved a categorisation of the information in different sections. The first section contained information and data about my observations; this was done mainly after my lessons and the collective activities or when I was specifically observing the site. This part was recorded in chronological order and as well as the date I wrote what type of observation it was. The second section consisted on the reflections I had after every language lesson with my teachers. This gave me the opportunity to reflect on what I was taught and ask further questions on the subsequent lesson. This part was also organised chronologically. The final section was composed of the notes of the conversations I held with the different people. Although I decided not take my fieldwork diary out to make notes while I was talking to people, as this could often interrupted the flow of the conversations, the notes were taken right after I had any conversation. The organisation of this part was more systematic than the previous parts, as this included the date, place and name of the person I talked to. The recording of these conversations varied, sometimes I started with a

description of the general to the particular, some others were the other way around or the notes started with something that was said that caught my attention. Regardless on how the notes on the conversations started, there was always a brief description of who the person was, what was his or her role in the Caracol or in San Andrés. This description followed with an explanation of the characteristics of the location where the conversation took place.

Participant observation was conducted during two phases of fieldwork. Despite the restricted access to the Zapatistas communities the decision was made to attend the CELMRAZ. Due to the reasons explained above I attended for one week in 2015 (5 to 9 October) to learn Tzotzil, a Mayan language, and then a month in November 2016.

When I arrived in October 2015 the school had already been in operation since early September with students from the United States learning Spanish and Tzotzil, and since the former were ahead in the Tzotzil programme, I was allocated to a different teacher. During the first phase of fieldwork, which took place in October 2015, I asked if there was a possibility to come back in November 2015. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances the school was not open in that month. However, I managed to stay in contact with the CELMARAZ to organise another stay. I was then able to return to the school in November 2016 for a month with the possibility of extending it one or two weeks more depending on the circumstances. The night before going to Chiapas, in November 2016, I was notified of a change of location. The school was going to be situated in the Zapatista municipality of San Andrés Sacamch'en de los Pobres,[38] until further notice. This change was in response to the announcement of the *Congreso Nacional Indígena* (National Indigenous Congress or CNI) and the EZLN of the potential nomination of an independent indigenous candidate to the Mexican presidential elections of 2018. All the CNI meetings took place in Oventik, which was the original location of the school. After several weeks in San Andrés, the school was relocated in Oventik where we spent the last week. While we stayed in San Andrés most of the school activities were oriented towards getting to know the community and the surrounding area.

The change of location and the return to the field after a year benefited the data collection process. Staying in San Andrés resulted in a different perspective and new findings as we stayed in a municipality with a majority indigenous population and where Zapatistas and

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[38] The official name of the municipality is San Andrés Larrainzar. The municipality of San Andrés is particular as its population is indigenous in its majority.

no-Zapatistas coexisted. These elements made the dynamics of San Andrés different from Oventik, which was, a restricted territory accessible only for Zapatistas and accredited students of the CALMERAZ unless otherwise specified by the JBG. Nevertheless, both places were valuable for the sake of this research as they provided a good contrast which reflected the everyday reality of Zapatista life in a way that is rarely encountered in published accounts of the Zapatista areas: sometimes operating in 'closed' communities, sometimes living and working in mixed areas where relations between Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas have to be negotiated daily. In addition, the fact that I returned to the school after my initial visit benefited the data collection process. Although I was once again told that formal structured interviews were not allowed, people remembered me from my previous stay. This not only made me feel comfortable but it also made it easier to approach everyone, to have informal conversations with them and to ask questions and for people to answer with more confidence.

The schedule of the school comprised different activities other than the language lessons. Everyday, we started with breakfast from 8 to 9am and after breakfast we had the first activity of the day called *s'likehm.* This was a collectively run activity that lasted no more than fifteen minutes. During the *s'likehm* the school's teachers –often called facilitators, raised certain topics related to the Zapatismo, and these were often the topics for the remaining activities of the day. The language lessons followed the *s'likehm* and these were mainly one and half-hour to two hours length depending on the material that was going to be covered. These lessons were often taken with a group of students that was previously allocated depending on their language proficiency. In my case, both times I attended the language school, I was the only one taking Tzotzil lessons. This situation facilitated my data gathering process, as I was able to ask the facilitators about specific things that were related to this research and are addressed below. After the language lessons we had free time until lunch. This time allowed me to carry on with the observations, talk to people and/or to record notes. In the afternoon, after lunch, there were collective activities such as music, weaving, watching movies followed by discussions, and so on. After these activities we had also free time, which was used to do the assigned homework, but in my case I did the same activities as early on the day. If people were around or I had the possibility to talk to them I would do; if not I wrote notes on my observations and conversations. I also had the opportunity to explore around the Caracol and the Zapatista area in San Andrés were it was permitted. In Oventik, unless otherwise specified, I had the possibility to visit the different cooperative shops and talk to people. We also had the opportunity to visit two rebel primary schools run by the Zapatistas, one school was

located in San Andrés and the other was in near the motorway between San Andrés and Oventik. Because these were morning schools, our morning schedule was shifted to the afternoon.

It is worth highlighting the nature of teaching in the CELMARAZ. As it was mentioned above, the students are allocated to a facilitator according to their proficiency in the language. Both times when I was in the school I was allocated to lessons without a group meaning that I had the opportunity to ask and have conversations with my teachers of topics of my own interests on a one-to-one basis. My teachers, Roberto and María, both hold a Tzotzil ethnicity but from different Zapatista communities. Each of them studied primary school in their own communities; Roberto continued studying at a secondary level in the 'official educational system' while María attended to the Rebel Secondary School in Oventik. Both, María and Roberto follow the 'untraditional' style of teaching of the school; there was not a classroom nor textbooks as it was not their intention to reinforce the hierarchical relations between teachers and students that often are promoted in official schools. As such, the lessons were often in outdoors sites were teachers and students both sat at the same level. Regarding the content of the lessons, María and Roberto had in mind specific topics through which Tzotzil language was taught to me as these topics always related to the *s'likehm.*

However I was always asked during the language lessons if there was something else I wanted to learn of the language. This nature of teaching facilitated my process of data gathering. As the lesson of the day went on, I started to asked questions regarding their practices and I realised that there was an importance of knowing the Mayan-derived languages to understand the Zapatista ideology and some of the reasons behind their demands. For example I asked question about how certain things such as the 'Zapatista fight' was translated in Tzotzil, and often words like this did not had a literal translation so a complex explanation was given to me on how these words were composed by a number of concepts, ideas, an actions and which meaning was deeper than their meaning in Spanish. Fortunately I could take notes while my teachers were providing me with these explanations and I could clarify or ask any subsequent questions that rose while these explanations were given. This interaction differed from the modes and forms I approached the other Zapatistas who were not my teachers. While the approach to the Zapatistas in general was always on a equal and friendly basis, with my teachers was much more direct as the contact with them was on a daily basis and conversations often rose after our lessons which allowed me to emphasise on certain topics, or ask more in-depth questions

that could not be asked to other Zapatistas due to nature of our conversations. In other words, there was a closer relation with my teachers that allowed me to ask different set of questions compared to the people that I saw once and starting building up a conversation with them.

4.3.3 Limitations of the data

The limitations of the data correspond the methods for collection and the circumstances of the data gathering. The information and access to the archival data depends on the owners. As such the information is subject to editing and censoring and sometimes it may be hidden. Access to the information depends how the archive is run. For instance, when going to the physical location of the archives, access to the files may be through a person who may acts as a gatekeeper, allowing access to some records but not to others. The same goes for electronic archives, such as the one consulted for this research. Although the archive is open to the public and there is no apparent access restriction, there is still a possibility that the information contained in the archive may be controlled. In addition to this, electronic archives are vulnerable to electronic hacking. This creates several problems. For instance, access to the archive could be blocked for a certain time or the information could be destroyed or damaged. The Zapatista archive is not exempt from this. Bearing in mind that the Zapatistas function clandestinely and are seen as subversive in the eyes of the Mexican state, the archive is always at risk. While I worked on the Zapatista archive, there was one threat of electronic hacking (there was no proof of who attempted to hack the Zapatista archive). Though the attempted hack did not succeed the online archive, was temporarily down for several hours, which did not affect this research.

The participant observation and informal conversations used in this research also had limitations. As discussed, the Zapatistas communities were closed and the only access I was able to gain to the Zapatista territory and to the Zapatistas themselves was through the CELMRAZ in the Caracol of Oventik and in San Andrés. This access to the Zapatistmo restricted the data collection process, as I was only able to investigate that particular part of the Zapatista reality. However, the main obstacles are issues concerning the subjectivity of the data gathered. As stated above, my research methods (although, they cannot be categorized as ethnography) it involved immersing myself in Zapatista culture at a personal and emotional level, which also raises issues of subjectivity and validity of the data. One risk of such approach is that sometimes the level of immersion is such, that a closer relationship is constructed with the people in the community one sees on a daily basis; taking one from a position of understanding their issues to taking those issues on as

one's own and becoming too closely associated with the group(s) being research to be able to maintain any critical distance. So there is always the need to 'step back,' remember one's role as a researcher and although one may have sympathy with the issues, problems or fights of the community being researched, one should try to be as objective as possible when reflecting on these issues. In my case, since I was in the language school from Monday to Friday each week, I had each weekend to 'step back', to put some distance between me and the community I was researching, and to reflect both on my position as a researcher and sympathiser with the Zapatistas, and also on the data gathered during the week.

In order to reduce any problems related to subjectivity in both the archive and ethnographic methods, the data gathered through both methods are used together in this research, allowing for triangulation of data and findings. This triangulation of data was not only done in the writing process but also in the data gathering process. It proved beneficial that fieldwork was conducted at two different times. This allowed me to reflect upon the data gathered, access the archive to look for pertinent information and then go back to the field to test the initial findings and gather more data. Watson and Till (2010) suggest that ethnographic methods are reiterative, not linear, methods of producing knowledge. Participant observation and the informal conversations, as inspired ethnographic methods, depended on a note-taking process, during or after activities were performed. Thus, not only was I observing or having conversations but I was also participating in knowledge production. So, observations and conversations were wrapped up with participating within the community, and not just ways of collecting facts. So, after both stages of fieldwork finished, I contrasted and compared the data and the findings with the archive. At the beginning this was just to test the validity of the data, but later it became a process of putting a narrative together. However, as the writing process advanced this exercise was done continuously to try to have crossed points in data in both the archive and the notes of the field.

4.4 Ethics
This research was given ethical approval by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee. Approval was given twice. Initial approval was given in 2015 and covered the months of October to December 2015 and the second approval in 2016, covered November 2016. The ethics approval forms were submitted along with consent forms for possible interviews in Spanish and English translation. Although formal structured interviews were not conducted while I was in the field, the main ethical consideration I

had while in the field was how to deal with the information I gathered form the informal talks. To make it as transparent as possible, everyone in the language school knew the reasons I was there and had a general description of my research. I always told the people I talked the reasons behind the questions I was asking. I did the same with both of my Tzotzil teachers, whom I spent a lot of my time talking with about the Zapatismo. Ensuring anonymity for those I talked to, was an important consideration for my research. The Zapatistas did not want to be interviewed not only because they all remain in a phase of 'silence' but also to protect their identity. So in order to protect and respect their integrity, I did not used their full names and have their consent about this. The data gathered during the fieldwork was recorded in a field diary that was kept with me at all times. The data collected in the archive was downloaded and stored on my university account and the notes that were taken physically were stored in my working space in the Department of Geography at the University of Sheffield.

4.5 Experience of the research

This research project had its difficulties. The experience of being a researcher in rebel indigenous territories in Mexico, where the political and social situation is unstable, was challenging. As a Mexican myself I had no problems with the language and therefore the communication with CELMRAZ and the people in Oventik, San Andrés and Chiapas was fairly easy. But two main factors contributed to challenge the fieldwork represented. The first, was the political and social situation in Mexico and the second was my positionality as a female, Mexican, non-indigenous person, studying in a foreign university.

Unfortunately, ever since the Mexican government announced its war on drugs in 2012, violence has increasingly permeated the everyday life of the urban population. As such, beheading, shootings and curfews began to be issues that people living in certain cities in the north and south east of the country had to deal on a daily basis. Although Chiapas is not as badly affected as these regions, the feeling of insecurity was spread throughout the country. The situation was exacerbated in late 2014 with the disappearance of 43 students of a rural teacher training college in Ayotzinapa in the state of Guerrero. The federal government's attempt to solve the case was inconsistent and a huge part of the Mexican population was dissatisfied with its actions. The dissatisfaction was expressed through protests, demonstrations and acts of solidarity that were soon echoed at an international level. Thus, some Mexican students and residents in Sheffield decided to form a collective in solidarity with the protests in Mexico: I was an active member of the group. The situation, we thought, was unbearable and we decided to form a network with

counterparts in different cities in the United Kingdom and Europe, which organised several events that were disseminated through social media.

The situation in Mexico was tense. At several demonstrations, the authorities arbitrarily detained civilians. Independent journalist, activists and students from Ayotzinapa began to be the targets of harassment by the state. The Zapatistas did not remain indifferent to these events. Through a communiqué they condemned the acts and expressed their solidarity with the victims of Ayotzinapa and their families. In September 2015 the families of the victims and survivors of the attacks visited the Zapatistas in the Caracol of Oventik and met the general commanders of the EZLN. The environment in Chiapas was not visibly tense as there was no evident presence of the Mexican army on the roads to and from Oventik. But there was a visible military presence in the city of San Cristóbal,[39] where I spent the weekends while attending the language school in Oventik and San Andrés. As an active member of a protest group based abroad, arriving and staying in Oventik was at the beginning tense. However, this tension faded as time passed and I realised that Oventik was a 'closed' territory and the Zapatistas repeatedly told me that I was safer there than in other parts of Mexico. So conducting my research in the Caracol of Oventik and later in San Andrés did not represent a major risk.

The second factor that made this research challenging was my positionality as a researcher. While utilizing methods for data gathering entails immersion in a community to get to know their social practices and their way of living, there is an engagement at a personal level. A researcher's positionality towards his or her research has always been a topic of discussion; from the degree of involvement within the culture or community to the ways that this affects the objectivity of his/her work. However, the positionality of the research does not start in the field or with the degree of immersion in it. Issues of positionality arise right from the starting point of the research itself. Selecting a research topic is always a decision driven by some personal motivation (Berg, 2001). So, doing research can be an emotional process (Creek, 2012). If the positionality of the researcher is a starting point for the research itself and the process, is an emotional one as well, then it could be argued that doing participant observation and note taking cannot be done from a neutral stance. This lack of neutrality could be a potential problem for the objectivity of the research. Crang and Cook (2007) suggests that while dealing with methods that involve an immersion or engagement with communities the subjective and objective components should not be separated but instead an 'intersubjective understanding'

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[39] San Cristóbal is the nearest city from which transport departs to San Andrés and Oventik.

between the researcher and the researched should be developed. This implies, that the researcher should reflect on the way in which she became immersed in the community or culture, including how she or he draws the boundaries between her or himself and the 'other' and the way this affects the research process (Crang & Cook, 2007). In other words, the researcher's personal experiences and identities cannot be detached from the 'researcher' role and one has to be aware of that while conducting research; zooming in and out from what is being researched should be a constant activity of the researcher.

The moment I arrived in Oventik and the Zapatistas asked for my personal information, I saw puzzled faces when I showed my Mexican identification card and told them I was studying in a university in England. I knew that despite being in my home country there was something different between us. I was a Mexican but studying abroad: I could only understand Zapatistas when they spoke in Spanish and not in their mother tongue. When arriving for the first time, I saw a big banner at the gate of Oventik that expressed solidarity with the people of Ayotzinapa[40] but although we shared the same dissatisfaction, with the Mexican state's handling of the case, I was not an indigenous woman but a mestizo one.

While I was in the school I was the only Mexican enrolled, along with people from the United States, Turkey and Belgium, meaning I did share something in common with the Zapatistas compared with the other foreign students but we still were not the same. Even though the Zapatistas in Oventik and I were supporting the fight for justice of the Ayotzinapa case I was worried that our differences outweighed our similarities to the point they could be an obstacle to my ability to immerse myself successfully in their environment and hence to my research as well. So, drawing my own boundary to identify the 'other' or the Zapatistas was not simple. The boundary got pushed and pulled several times as I discovered the things the Zapatistas and I shared and those we did not. While talking to the Zapatistas I could better understand the origin of a lot of their discourses and concepts. As a result, every Tzotzil lesson was an enjoyable journey to rediscover the reality I was only in touch through books. As mentioned before, I had the weekends off and outside the Zapatista territory, which benefited my research. The fact that I stayed by myself in San Cristóbal made me critically reflect on my stay and interactions in Zapatista territory. As I stated earlier, the level of immersion was easier the second time I was there

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[40]The banner said: *Sigue y seguirá la lucha por los 43 desaparecidos de Ayotzainpa Padres y familiares de los desaparecidos su dolor y su rabia es nuestra*. (The fight for the 43 missing students of Ayotzinapa continues and will continue. Parents and families of the missing students your grief and rage is also ours.)

and this allowed me to have friendlier relationships with people in the Zapatista community. People in the Zapatista's communities were curious to know the way I lived in Puebla, my home city in Mexico, which worked to my advantage, as each question was an opportunity to ask them similar or related questions. I was only once asked a question about my life in England, which always puzzled me. This exchange of information helped not only to gain more confidence but also helped build trustworthy relations with the people. What is more, the types of things they were interested to know more about turned out to be valuable information for me as well.

When talking about positionality and reflexivity in the research, often questions emerge on how the researched is portrayed when writing or presenting the findings, and if the way they are presented gives an adequate sense of the image or voice of the community or culture researched. A process of self-reflection is necessary at all stages of the research. Each stage of the research process (planning for the fieldwork, conducting the fieldwork itself and writing process) requires different levels of reflexivity. Myers argues that "[w]e cannot pretend to 'see ourselves *among* others'… [w]e are *with* others, in others and vice versa, and sometimes *against* other, with others against *us* too. Being *among* implies a smug boundary and pre-, post- and during self-awareness that just doesn't ever seem possible" (Myers, 2010, p. 385). Thus being aware of the 'intersubjective understanding' in this research meant not separating what the Zapatistas are from what I am, or the researched from the researcher. It is being fully aware that those elements exist in the research and writing about the Zapatistas is writing about Mexico and writing a reality that I simultaneously belong and do not belong to.

Chapter 5 From Invisibility to Visibility:

Events that Caused Ruptures

*"We are here! And look how things are because, to be seen, we cover our faces; to be named
we deny our name; we put at stake the present to have a future; and to live...we die"*[41]
(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1995b)

5.1 Introduction

Many social groups had covered their faces while participating in riots, protests,
demonstrations and other forms of activism. By doing this, members of these groups
protect their identity and try to remain anonyms to avoid state retaliation. Cases such as
the Sandinistas of Nicaragua, the IRA in Ireland, ETA in Spain and Pussy Riot in Russia are
among many examples of groups whose members have covered their faces in public
demonstrations. Although the categorisation of these groups varies from terrorist
organisations to social movements and artists, covering their faces helped members of
these organisations and groups to protect their identity and raise their demands.

As well protecting their identity, the use of balaclavas or scarfs could also become a
symbolic or iconic characteristic of the movement. Such practices often become symbolic
of the organisation or the struggle they are associated with. The repetition of this practice
help the public to connect the group with the iconic attire and the claims the groups is
making (Hariman & Lucaites, 2001). Bruce (2015) suggest that the use of balaclavas in the
Free Pussy Riots could be studied as 'affect generator.' Balaclavas are used by the
sympathisers of the riots not only to show solidarity and make claims with the group's

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[41] "¡Aquí estamos! Y miren lo que son las cosas porque, para que nos vieran nos tapamos el rostro;
para que nos nombraran, nos negamos el nombre; apostamos el presente para tener futuro; y para
vivir...morimos" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1995b).

causes but these are also icons that give sympathisers and the movement the possibility for "negotiating complex political investments" (Bruce, 2015, p. 48). The use of balaclavas by the Free Pussy Riots contributed in giving the movement visibility, as these balaclavas became a symbol of confrontation with the Russian authorities. Although, the case of the Zapatistas is different in the sense that balaclavas ware not used by sympathisers in events or demonstrations of solidarity, they also became an iconic symbol for the Zapatismo. Balaclavas gave the Zapatistas the visibility they did not have as indigenous people from Chiapas –in other words, the invisibility of the individual provided by the balaclava created a visibility of the collective claims being made.

The Zapatistas started to use balaclavas days before the uprising in 1994. As the EZLN was formed clandestinely, the idea of covering their faces served as a protection of their identity not only from the military presence in their communities but also from those members of their communities –who did not sympathise with their fight (see for instance, Howes & Hammett, 2016; Polzer & Hammond, 2008). Balaclavas also had a practical benefit as they provided a comfortable form of protection from the cold and humid weather that characterises the mountain areas where the Zapatistas are located (Campodónico & Blasina, 2001). As, the balaclavas began to catch the attention of the media, people and the government, it became impossible to picture the EZLN without them: thus the balaclava became an important symbol of the Zapatismo.

The reluctance of the Zapatistas to take their balaclavas off raised questions in both the media and the government. They both asked who were the people who covered their faces, while the government directed efforts to reveal the Zapatistas' true identities, as a way to delegitimise and undermine the Zapatista fight, as Chapter 2 mentioned. The balaclavas gave the Zapatismo more than just protection and symbolism; paradoxically they helped give the indigenous communities from Chiapas the visibility they have been denied for years. As described in the above quote from Marcos which opened the chapter, the Zapatistas not only covered their faces to be seen, they took on a complete Zapatista identity, changing even their names to do so. Nevertheless, it was not a coincidence that the balaclava was a symbol of the Zapatistas that represented a denial or rejection of their identity as individuals to become members of an organisation. The balaclava supported the denial or rejection of the situation that indigenous people were living in as a consequence of a state-building project that marginalised their culture.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, acts of citizenship are preceded by events that cause ruptures in the given order or the status quo and which allow groups or people to perform acts. The use of balaclavas by the Zapatistas, created a symbolism that allowed them to be seen and be heard. Enacting citizenship, according to Isin, consists of performing acts that enable people to claim rights that they did not previously have or had been denied. As outlined in Chapter 3, there are four elements (which according to Isin) are used to study acts of citizenship. These elements are: events, sites, scales and duration (Isin, 2012a). Events, the first element, are the main focus of this chapter. It will explore key events within the development of the Zapatismo to understand how these enable them to perform acts of citizenship.

According to Isin, political subjects are produced or constructed through their acts. Events are demonstrations, appeals, claims or other articulable actions that open a window of opportunity for the people to act in different or unexpected ways, allowing them to make a rupture in the given order (Isin, 2012a, 2013). In this sense, events are moments that could take different forms or employ different means (including the possibility of violence) for their effect.

In social movement theory, for instance, actions such as protests, demonstrations, and declarations, are considered part of a repertoire of collective actions. Tilly (2006) considers these collective actions as practices that allow groups to make claims on different individuals and institutions in favour of a cause. At first glance, the interpretation that could be given to events, when referring to 'acts of citizenship' and to collective actions in social movement theory may have more things in common than practical differences. However, the difference between collective actions and 'acts of citizenship' depend on their performativity. While collective actions could become routinized actions that enable social movements to raise or make their claims to be heard and recognized, events –when referring to 'acts of citizenship,' aim to break with habits. Nevertheless, the real distinction between these approaches relies on the interpretation of the performativity involved in each of these activities. If we consider that events aim to create ruptures that disrupt habits, they are the first moment people or, groups proclaim themselves as subjects and claimants of rights, that is when they become political subjects (Isin, 2012a). It could then be argue that an event is the crack that enables people to do two things; proclaim their political subjectivity, which was previously oppressed or denied, and reaffirm that subjectivity by enacting acts of citizenship.

The main objective of this chapter is to interpret the actions taken by the Zapatistas that could be considered as events marking a rupture in the given order. For this reason, this Chapter relies on the historical context discussed in Chapter 2. The first section of this chapter provides a further explanation of the Zapatistas' demands. In order to understand how the events caused a rupture, it is important to understand the Zapatistas' demands as these provide a rationale for the understanding of the events. The second section provides an interpretation of the actions that are considered events disrupting habit or habits. This section also discusses how the Zapatistas put forwards their claims. So, if events allow people to be considered political subjects by changing their habits and their status this construction will entail a reconfiguration of their relationships with others. Thus, the final section analyses the way in which the Zapatistas, through performing these events construct an alternative public sphere.

5.2 The Zapatistas' Demands

In the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle released during the uprising on the 1st of January, 1994, the EZLN listed the following demands: work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. The EZLN saw the demands as not limited to the Zapatista fight, but as demands for the entire Mexican population (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993). Often, in later declarations, interviews and communiqués these demands are grouped into three headings: land, freedom and justice.

To understand what these demands entail for the Zapatistas it is important to bear in mind the two main characteristics of the Zapatista fight. First, the EZLN did not see their fight as a means to take state power: they rejected this path right from the beginning. Second, as the indigenous communities are inherent to the fight, there was not explicit mention in the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle; the stress on the inclusion of the Mexican population as a whole in a fair political system was what geared the Zapatistas' demands. For the Zapatistas then revolution as a fight

> "...[there] will be a revolution that results from the struggle on various social fronts, with many methods under different social forms, with varying degrees of commitment and participation. And its result will be, not that of a triumphant party, organisation or alliance or organizations with a specific social proposal, but a sort of democratic space for resolving the confrontations between various political proposals[42] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994d).

[42] "Será, primordialmente, una revolución que resulte de la lucha en variados frentes sociales, con muchos métodos, bajo diferentes formas sociales, con grados diversos de compromiso y participación. Y su resultado será, no el de un partido, organización o alianza de organizaciones triunfante con una propuesta social específica, sino una suerte de espacio democrático de

Taken together, these characteristics are important to understand what the Zapatistas imply with their demands.

The Zapatista claim for land implies access to it. Ethnic claims for land are often interpreted as the legal possession of a delimited piece of territory. This interpretation often responds to a state-centric view. As the state has legitimate control of its territory, claims of this nature will appeal to it as a way to have recognition of or formal acknowledgment for the use of the land. However ethnic groups approach land not as a private possession owned by particular individuals, but as an entity to which indigenous communities belong (Panopio & Santico Rolda, 2006). Land for these groups is more than the surface; it is what defines who they are providing and defining their ways of living, culture and traditions. So, for indigenous groups the importance of the land is not restricted to only the material or physical aspect to it, or to the administration of the resources, important though these are for indigenous communities to construct and exercise their identity. In addition, land is considered sacred by indigenous ethnic groups, in Chiapas who see it as a provider or even a mother (Aylwin, 2002). As a provider, the land shapes the people that inhabit it (and they shape the land in return). So, claims for land in Mexico are often understood as claims for the protection of the indigenous identity.

For the Zapatismo, access to land is not an end but a means to life. This involves thinking of land differently from seeing it as merely a private possession. Instead, for the Zapatismo, it entails ideas, of working and socially organising but more importantly of understanding the way in which people belong to their land (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994d). This approach to land can be also reflected in the Mayan derived languages spoken by the Zapatistas. During the language classes which I attended in Oventik, it was stressed that in Tzotzil language, the notion of having, possessing or owning something is non-existent. Roberto, my teacher in Oventik said that as indigenous people do not have any possessions, everything is understood in terms of the construction of relationships between people and things. So, the land is not an individual's ownership, but the relationship they have with the land that matters as it defines and leads most, if not all aspects of their lives. It is the land that defines and provides their food and their type of food (as not all land is suitable for all crops), allows them to have and construct a shelter to live in, gives them a space where animals live, and where they co-exist among each other. It is where the indigenous people have their roots.

resolución de la confrontación entre diversas propuestas políticas" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994d).

The symbolic importance of the land is reflected in the names given to different body parts in the Tzotzil language, many of which share the same name as parts of a tree. For example, in Tzotzil, feet are called *okil*, the same as the roots of a tree: roots and feet ground trees and individuals and define their connection to and through the land. It is not a coincidence that the language assumes people have similarities with trees as both live off and through land and both share their roots with it. This example helps us to illustrate the kind of attachment ethnic groups have to the land.

Just as land is a central demand for the Zapatistas, justice and freedom are also important demands for them. The Zapatistas do not aim to take state power and their demands for justice and freedom should be understood accordance with that. For the Zapatistas, revolution is a change, not to a political system led by them, but to a just society. In this sense, freedom according to the Zapatistas aims to achieve respect for and the inclusion of the indigenous communities as conscious people capable of governing their own communities, because it is the people who belong to the community who know best what their community need (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994d). Lastly, the Zapatista claim for democracy goes beyond applying any definition of the word to the Mexican context. Democracy in the Zapatismo entails recognition. Before 1994, the situation that the indigenous communities, the *campesinos* and the workers had suffered during more than 70 years of rule by the state party made the application of any theory of democracy look romantic. The Zapatistas called for immediate free and democratic elections where the population as a whole could have the freedom to choose between different political platforms. For this to take place, the EZLN demanded the resignation of the Mexican president and the establishment of a transitional government (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1994a).

It was not a coincidence that the Zapatistas demanded recognition for indigenous communities in Chiapas in particular and in Mexico in general, as these communities had been abandoned by the politics and policies of the country. At the beginning of the fight for indigenous rights, this recognition was intended to achieve dignity for the indigenous communities by acknowledging their culture and traditions. However, the construction of indigenous autonomy meant the rejection and negation of the existing political environment, and thus this denial and saying no to power represented a step towards constructing their political subjectivity. These initial claim put forward by the Zapatistas allow us to understand why and how the events described below promoted a change in habit and enabled the Zapatistas to act to fulfil these demands.

5.3 The Events

5.3.1 The 1994 Uprising

Much has been said about the importance and symbolism of the Zapatista uprising in 1994. While these explanations are useful to understand the development of the Zapatismo, as detailed in Chapter 2, the moment when the Zapatistas took the municipalities of Las Margaritas, Ocosingo, Altamirano, Chanal, Oxchuc, Huixtan and San Cristóbal de las Casas the 1st of January 1994 can be considered as an event that caused a rupture.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the aim of the *mestizos* who arrived to Chiapas in 1983 was to form a liberation army, with communist ideas. In this sense, this group of mestizos wanted to teach the indigenous communities about revolutionary ideas and guerrilla strategies (Lebot, 1997). Nevertheless, when the group of *mestizos* arrived they recognised that the indigenous communities had their own appreciation of politics, which was translated in to their own conception of their fight, the origins of which stretched back to Spanish colonialism. From 1983 to 1994 the newly arrived *mestizos* not only started to organise a guerrilla army, but this was also a period in which they went through a learning process. The relationship that was created between the group of *mestizos* and the indigenous communities was not a simple teacher-student one. Rather, the *mestizos* realised that the indigenous communities did not need to be rescued, but them as outsiders needed to understand the way in which these communities resisted for years. The *mestizos* served as military support (Lebot, 1997). This process entailed learning the indigenous communities' native languages and cosmological visions. From this learning process the mestizos and the indigenous people formed an insurgent guerrilla army: in a matter of months the latter outnumbered the former.

The Zapatista insurgent army was then formed and to maintain its clandestine character, the army had three levels that run simultaneously. The clandestine militia formed by indigenous people composed one level. Another level was a support base, which was set up by the militia who explained the situation of exploitation under which local communities lived and the way in which governmental development programmes failed to achieve their aims. The final level was the creation of a façade organization in San Cristobal de las Casas named the *Alianza Nacional Campesina Insurgente Emiliano Zapata* (Emiliano Zapata National Insurgent Campesino Alliance), which was founded to hide the formation of the insurgent army (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia

General, 2015). In the video released for the second level of the *Escuelita Zapatista,*[43] early founder members of the EZLN and the support bases both said that as part of the recruitment process to expand the support bases, indigenous communities had been informed about how they were exploited. At the same time, the video demonstrated how, networks of comradeship were being constructed among the people. These networks were the basis for the movement as a whole and provided support for its autonomy project. In addition, this comradeship facilitated communication among and across communities that often did not had phones or satellite radios. Galindo from the Oventik Caracol suggests in the video of the Second level of the *Little School* that, "there was a lot of comradeship among the support bases, there was also a lot of unity that was an important method of the fight."[44] The networks built trust among members, which was essential to making the guerrilla formation effective. Comradeship promoted a sense of unity and proximity that transcended community boundaries. Added to this, it could be argued that these were the first steps in which collective work worked in constructing the EZLN. Equally, at an early stage of the formation of the guerrilla army, women were taken away from their houses and encouraged to participate in collective works or just to support the guerrilla army with the cooking (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 2015). As these activities could be considered to be reinforcing male domination over women, during this initial participation women were encouraged to leave their houses and participate actively within the organisation. As such women roles were more active than taking care of the house, children and partner. Soon after women began to perform more actively in roles within the movement.

The Zapatista occupation of several municipalities in 1994 and the subsequent events that followed the uprising caused a rupture that had an impact at different levels, making it clear that indigenous communities in Chiapas were prepared to claim what for years had been denied to them. The attention of the media and later the use of internet facilities enabled the EZLN to position themselves as an insurgent force against neoliberal policies and to propose a radical change without taking power (Castells, 2010). At a local level, the voice of the indigenous people of Chiapas was heard, and they demonstrated that they

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[43] The *Escuelita Zapatista* (Zapatista Little School) as mentioned in Chapter 2, was a project initiated by the Zapatistas in 2013 and the aim was to show the people outside the Zapatistas communities, indigenous or not, about the Zapatista's forms of living in resistance. The *Escuelita* was planned as a project of several levels. The first level consisted in learning from experience in the Zapatista's communities. For those that completed and successfully passed the first level they could move forward with the second level. In this level, students had to watch a video about the formation of the EZLN that was uploaded in the Internet.

[44] "Hay mucho compañerismo entre las bases de apoyo, también había mucha unidad que era un método importante para la lucha"

were politically and militarily organised. This organisation marked a rupture in the Mexican political system. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the PRI created a political system based on *corporativismo* in which the interests of different sectors of society were represented at a national level by institutions formed by the state itself. Often any revolts against the state party or the government were promptly supressed. However, the EZLN managed to put at stake the *corporativismo* that characterised the Mexican political system. As those indigenous communities in Chiapas who formed the EZLN rebelled against the state, and thanks to the international and national support that put the Zapatistas in the spotlight, the EZLN managed to place the indigenous question and their quest for recognition on Mexican political agenda.

On the 1st of January 1994 the Zapatistas shouted *enough!* and refused to live in the conditions in which the government had place them. Manuel Castells calls the Zapatistas the "first informational guerrilla movement" (Castells, 2010, p. 82). He argues that to disseminate their ideology and message, the Zapatistas created an image, which appealed to the media. This consisted in using arms more as a statement than as belligerent weapons. The weapons were an instrument the Zapatistas could exchange for the possibility of a negotiation with the government (Castells, 2010). The indigenous Zapatista communities knew that their armed forces were less powerful than that of the state so they found in their discourse an alternative 'weapon' to counter act the state force. The Zapatista discourse was then their most powerful weapon. They found it in the words and narratives of *Subcomandante* Marcos, the voice of the EZLN. So, with discourse as their more powerful 'fighting' resource, the EZLN was going to have a verbal and symbolic war against the Mexican government (Volpi, 2004). In addition, the EZLN and Marcos used technological means such as videos and websites to disseminate their word.

Combined together, the attention given to the EZLN in the international and national media, the use of the Internet and a discourse that was more powerful than belligerent weapons, allowed the EZLN to put the indigenous question on the Mexican political agenda. A crack then, was made by the EZLN in the Mexican political system, which wanted to portray Mexico as a solid, and unified country especially at the wake of the ratification of NAFTA. It was precisely that crack that allowed several, causes to emerge, for example in the March of the Colour of the Earth and the Other Campaign. As the EZLN fight was against neoliberal policies, and thanks to the wide dissemination of the Zapatista discourse, the fight was not limited to Chiapas or even Mexico, but gained world attention.

The uprising marked the initial point for the construction of the Zapatistas' political subjectivity. A parallel could be made with the emerging political subjectivity of groups that emerged from the Arab Spring in 2010. According to Hanafi (2012), the Arab Spring allowed the emergence of a new political subjectivity that relied on the idea of the collective identity of a nation or a family –distant from the neoliberal concept of individuality, which was formed in the "shadowy edge of political institutions and [shaped by] their production of legitimacy and knowledge" (2012, p. 204). While the circumstances of the Arab Spring are very different from that of the Zapatistas, the Zapatista political subjectivity emerged from a collectivity that identified themselves not only as indigenous people but also as a group that had suffered from oppression since Mexico was a Spanish colony and whose oppression was perpetuated by the construction of a political system after the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century.

5.3.2 The Creation of the Aguascalientes

The first Aguascalientes was created within the framework of the *Convención Nacional Democrática* (National Democratic Convention or CND) organised by the EZLN in 1994 to discuss, with members of civil society topics such as a transitional government, a constituent congress, a new constitution and indigenous autonomy. As it was explained in Chapter 2, the Aguascalientes was constructed to host the CND and was located in Zapatista rebel territory. In its physical aspect, the Aguascalientes was just a piece of land laid out as an improvised auditorium. The importance of the creation of the Aguascalientes in rebel territory was not only its physical location. It aimed to be a political meeting place that could enable dialogue among the people (Comandante Insurgente Tacho, 1994a). *Comandante* Tacho and *Subcomandante* Marcos gave speeches at the inaugural ceremony of the CND in the Aguascalientes, where the purpose of these were explained to the participants of the convention. Marcos suggested that all the resolutions taken would not only reflect the participation of all those who attended in representation of their communities or to be agreed and approved by the majority, but these resolutions should be exercised by people outside the CND on a daily basis. "....We hope this Democratic National Convention…[to be] a collective call to fight for what belong to us, for what is right and right for the good people, only for our place in history"[45] (Subcomandante

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[45] Por eso construimos este lugar para una reunión que, si tiene éxito, será el primer paso para negarnos como alternativa. Por eso levantamos Aguascalientes, como sede de una reunión que si fracasa nos obligará de nuevo a llevar adelante con fuego el derecho de todos a un lugar en la historia...Esperamos de esta Convención Nacional Democrática, finalmente, un llamado colectivo a luchar por lo que nos pertenece, por lo que es razón y derecho de las gentes buenas, únicamente por nuestro lugar en la historia. (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994c).

Insurgente Marcos, 1994c).In other words, the CND and the purpose for the creation of the Aguascalientes was to reach a collective agreement of the people on the democratic transition of the country. The Aguascalientes was the first attempt to consolidate a forum for political participation that was not reduced to voting or paying taxes, but actively discussing matters related to the political destiny of the country. After the CND meetings finished, the EZLN decided to preserve the Aguascalientes with the same objectives it was created to serve. However, its location was full of meaning, which was then reflected in its objectives. In the 1980s the territory was used as a training camp for the EZLN militia. It provided a refuge for them and later it became a place for the Zapatistas to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of the organisation. In addition the Aguascalientes was a place where people gathered to talk and arrange the security of their communities and the movement. (Comandante Insurgente Tacho, 1994a). "We built this place for meetings that, successful, will be the first step to deny us an alternative, That is why we constructed the Aguascalientes as see of a meeting place that if it fails, will force us to carry on with the demands of having the right to have a place in history"[46] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994c). The Aguascalientes reflected the development of the organization, going from serving military purposes during the 1980s, to become a site for the construction of dialogue. Marcos even called the Aguascalientes a 'pirate ship' that sailed with transgressing individuals, the indigenous people, allowing them to collectively visualise another world (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994h).

As explained in Chapter 2, the presidency of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) marked one of the most violent periods for the Zapatismo. The violent attacks reached the Aguascalientes and in March 1995 it was destroyed (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1995a). A few months after, the EZLN decided to build another Aguascalientes in Oventik, Chiapas. Taking the essence of the first Aguascalientes, the second one had as an objective to promote meetings among people, and to call for the construction of peace and a new democratic, free and just nation. But by every means this Aguascalientes was going to speak out against war and destruction, authoritarianism and bad government (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995f).

Several Aguascalientes were established across the Zapatista territories of –La Realidad, Oventik, La Garrucha, Morelia and Roberto Barrios. All of them were built with the same

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[46] Por eso construimos este lugar para una reunión que, si tiene éxito, será el primer paso para negarnos como alternativa. Por eso levantamos Aguascalientes, como sede de una reunión que si fracasa nos obligará de nuevo a llevar adelante con fuego el derecho de todos a un lugar en la historia (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994c).

purpose as the first one. However, in 2003 the EZLN announced the end of the Aguascalientes and the birth of the Caracoles. This was not a response to government hostility, but to a learning process. The EZLN realised that the purpose of exposing the conditions in which all the communities lived was not to cause compassion but to show that the Zapatistas could govern and be governed without the official government or any other external aid. Thus, the end of the Aguascalientes marked a break with the aid, economic or otherwise, that many NGOs were giving them. The end of the Aguascalientes reinforced the autonomy project (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003d), as marked a view that it was time for the Zapatistas to own their own resources and allocate money where they felt it was needed.

The development of the Aguascalientes and the symbolism around them was an event that caused a rupture for the Zapatismo at different levels. First, the Aguascalientes were spaces created to facilitate talks and encounters with members of the Mexican civil society willing to work towards a new democratic system.

> [o]ur Aguascalientes are not places to call for war or destruction, but neither are they to say that injustice and slavery, authoritarianism must continue. Our Aguascalientes are places to call for peace and construction but for a new, just and dignified peace, and to build a new democratic, free and just homeland[47] (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995f).

Although the Aguascalientes were built between 1994 and 1995 when talks between the EZLN and the government was expected and the Zapatistas aimed for constitutional recognition, these spaces were created without the intervention of the government, which was a first step towards autonomy as no official means were needed or used to promote these dialogues. This space and the dialogue that the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles intended to promote was one where differences among groups and people could be encountered. According to Marcos, "the Aguascalientes were what they must be: spaces for meeting and talks with national and international civil society. In addition to being venues for major initiatives and meetings on memorable dates, they were the place where 'civil societies' and Zapatistas met"[48](Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003d). The Caracoles "represents an organisational effort of the communities, not only to face the

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[47] "[n]uestros Aguascalientes no son lugares para llamar a la guerra o a la destrucción pero tampoco son para decir que la injustica y la esclavitud, el autoritarismo, deben seguir. Nuestros Aguascalientes son lugares para llamar a la paz y a la construcción pero a una paz nueva, justa y digna, y a construir una nueva patria democrática, libre y justa" (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1995f)

[48] "…fueron lo que debían ser: espacios para el encuentro y el diálogo con la sociedad civil nacional e internacional. Además de ser sedes de grandes iniciativas y encuentros en fechas memorables, cotidianamente eran el lugar donde 'sociedad civiles' y zapatistas se encontraban" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003d)

problems that the creation of autonomy building may arise, but also to build a more direct bridge between them and the world"[49] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003f). Bearing in mind that the Mexican political system was constructed favouring the idea of equality, the *mestizo* myth and that political encounter could only be within this political system, the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles were alternative spaces where people whose voice was previously oppressed or silenced could speak and be heard.

The second dimension in which the Aguascalientes caused a rupture was that these were the first spaces in which the indigenous culture could be celebrated, without the intervention of the government. Pedro Marín an indigenous Zapatista who gave his testimony for the textbooks of the *Escuelita Zapatista,[50]* argued that the Aguascalientes were everything, culture, politics, society, economy and ideology. The Aguascalientes, which lasted 8 years were part of the rejection of the government. They were a constant reminder that 'no' entailed not only denial but also hope. The construction and destruction of all the Aguascalientes represented hope in the sense that they were the initial steps of a project of autonomy constructed by the Zapatistas and that despite the constant intimidations from the government they were capable of constructing a space for and to the Zapatistas.

5.3.3 The Silence and the Creation of the Caracoles

The year 2003 was a decisive one for the Zapatista movement. Two years earlier the Zapatistas had organised the March of the Colour of the Earth visiting several states across Mexico and ended in talks with the Mexican Congress before it discussed the San Andrés Accords. The legislative body passed an indigenous law that did not take the Accords into consideration. According to Marcos, the law

> betrays the San Andrés Agreements […] in substantial points: autonomy, self-determination, the indigenous groups as subject of public law, land and territory, use and enjoyment of natural resources, election of municipal authorities and right of regional association, among others… [the law] sabotages the incipient process approach between the Federal Government and the EZLN, betrays the hops of a negotiated solution to the war in Chiapas, and reveals the total divorce

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[49] "…representan un esfuerzo organizativo de las comunidades, no sólo para enfrentar los problemas de la autonomía, también para construir un puente más directo entre ellas y el mundo" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003f).

[50] This testimony could be found in the first section of the textbook: Gobierno Autónomo – Caracol III Resistencia hacia un Nuevo Amanecer, La Garrucha – Formación de las primeras autoridades autónomas.

of the political class with respect to popular demands [51]
(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001e)

This situation led the EZLN to withdraw from most public activity for a year. In 2003 they reappeared to make two announcements, first the suspension of the contact with the government or silence and, second, the creation of the Caracoles.

According to the Zapatistas, the political elite (including the government, the Congress, the Court of Justice and the political parties) betrayed them when the indigenous law was passed in congress with substantial changes that did not honour the San Andrés Accords. The application of the law was perceived by the Zapatistas as an incident that destroyed the hope of millions of Mexicans, both *mestizos* and indigenous people, who had expected to have a constitutional recognition of indigenous rights (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003h). From this moment on, the EZLN suspended contact with the government and political parties. Therefore, talks to achieve peace in the region or to discuss the possibilities for recognition were reduced considerably. The EZLN then, announced that their fight was going to concentrate on resistance (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003i).

The second event was the creation of the Caracoles, which were announced with the destruction of the Aguascalientes. In a series of communiqués called *La Treceava Estela* (The Thirteenth Stele) where the EZLN announced the future of the movement as Zapatistas entered the phase of 'silence,' Marcos provided useful analogies to understand the function of the Caracoles. These were like doors to enter the Zapatistas communities. The Caracoles also functioned like of a set of speakers that helped to spread the Zapatista discourse and enabled the Zapatistas to hear the discourses of those who were not Zapatistas (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003g). In this context, five new Caracoles emerged: The Reality, the mother of all the seashells and of our dreams; Morelia, swirl of our words; The Garrucha, resistance towards a new dawn; Roberto Barrios, the seashell that speaks for everyone and Oventik, resistance and rebellion for humanity[52]

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[51] "Traiciona los Acuerdos de San Andrés [...] en puntos substanciales: autonomía y libre determinación, los pueblos indios como sujetos de derecho público, tierras y territorios, uso y disfrute de los recursos naturales, elección de autoridades municipales y derechos de asociación regional, entre otros [la ley] sabotea el incipiente proceso de acercamiento entre el gobierno federal y el EZLN, traiciona las esperanzas de una solución negociada de la guerra en Chiapas, y revela el divorcio total de la clase política respecto de las demandas populares" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001e).

[52] El Caracol de la Realidad, Madre de todos los caracoles del mar y de nuestros sueños. El Caracol de Morelia, Torbellino de nuestras palabras. El Caracol de la Garrucha, Resistencia hacia un nuevo amanecer. El Caracol de Roberto Barrios, el Caracol que habla para todos. El Caracol de Oventik, Resistencia y Rebeldía por la humanidad.

(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003g). But more than being just spaces recovered by the Zapatistas, these Caracoles represented indigenous values. This is to some extent reflected in the names given to the Caracoles and especially to the recurrent image of the seashell in those names. Early indigenous communities used the seashells for communication purposes. These were used as a whistle to call members of the community when important matters arose and needed to be collectively discussed. Historically a seashell was also used in meetings as a megaphone so that people could speak through it and make their voice heard by everyone (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003b). The names given to the Caracoles also evoke the recurrent images of the indigenous culture. For example, Roberto Barrios was the head of the Department of Agrarian Affairs and Colonization at the time of President López Mateos (1958-1964), but most importantly he was a defender of Article 27 of the Mexican constitution that covers land distribution. According to him, land distribution was not completed and there was still land to be distributed among people. Roberto Barrios, understood that the intrinsic value indigenous communities give to the land that go beyond its commercial purpose (Muñoz Ramirez, 2012). It is for this reason, that the Roberto Barrios Caracol is the one that speaks for everyone. Furthermore, the shape of the Caracoles provides a symbolism that could not be ignored. While in Oventik, all the murals that can be found around the walls of the buildings, as figure 1 and 2 shows, when there was a reference made to the Caracol, these

were done by using a snail highlighting the spiral of the shell, emphasising, according to my teachers, a place where there was no hierarchical social or political order among its members.

Figure 2 - Mural at the entrance of the Oventik Caracol, where it can be seen another iconic representation of the Mayan Caracol in yellow, and the name of the Caracol written at the top.
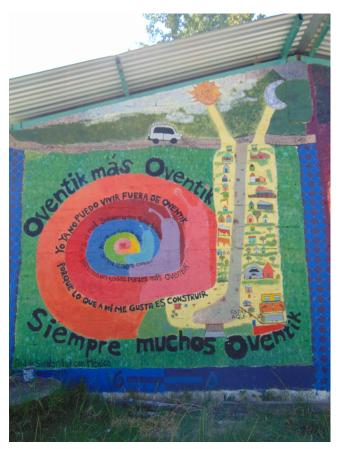

Figure 1 Iconic representation of Oventik Caracol. Picture taken October 2015 in Oventik Chiapas.

The Zapatistas' abandonment of peace talks with the government and the birth of the Caracoles are events that caused a rupture in the Zapatista movement. The suspension of talks or contact with the different branches of the government reinforced the rejection of everything that came from the state. Having initially decided to cover their faces to be heard, by 2003 the Zapatistas opted for silence. A clear message was sent: the Zapatista communities did not need constitutional recognition to consolidate their autonomy project. The distance the Zapatistas, including the EZLN, put between themselves and the public eye allowed them to concentrate on their autonomy project. The silence and the consolidation of the Caracoles shifted the Zapatista discourse from demanding recognition and the fulfilment of their demands from the state, to collectively working to achieve those demands for themselves. It could be argued that the distance that the Zapatistas took from the government and the public eye became clear with the construction of the Caracoles. The Caracoles were a meeting point not only for Zapatistas but also for everyone who wanted to debate and talk with national and international civil society.

> Thus the Caracoles will be like doors to enter the [Zapatista] communities and for [other communities] to leave; like the windows to see us inside and so that we see outside; like speakers to spread our word away and listen to the one from far away[53] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003g).

The Caracoles constructed an alternative public sphere in which the indigenous people could speak up and collectively decide upon their own destiny, different from the 'official' public sphere from which they had been excluded for many years.

The events listed above gave the Zapatistas a level of visibility indigenous groups had not had since the Spanish conquests. There had been an ambivalent inclusion of the indigenous communities in the state-building project. As this project rested on the idea of a *mestizo* heritage, which the indigenous people supposedly were part of, these communities were to assume this identity. There was no reference to the indigenous communities or the indigenous culture in the constitution but also there were not pertinent instruments to include them in the political system (Singer Sochet, 2014). As such the Zapatista uprising in 1994 was a reaction against the failure of different governmental administrations, and a rejection of the political system that kept the indigenous communities forgotten for years. Taking these together, the crack that was made by the Zapatista uprising gave the indigenous communities in Chiapas the visibility they were denied for years. When the Zapatistas shouted *enough!* on the 1st of January

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[53] "Así los Caracoles serán como puertas para entrarse a las comunidades [Zapatistas] y para que las [otras] comunidades salgan; como ventanas para vernos dentro y para que veamos fuera; como bocinas para sacar lejos nuestra palabra y para escuchar la del que lejos está"(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003g).

1994, they were rejecting the monoculture and homogenous social model that the Mexican state rested on by portraying themselves as holders of a different culture.

The creation of the Aguascalientes and later of the Caracoles, marked a rupture not only because these were claimed to be rebel territories, but because they represented a process of construction of the Zapatista autonomy. The Aguascalientes and later the Caracoles were both physical spaces and the public sphere which had been denied the indigenous communities by the Mexican state. If we consider that the Mexican government did not include the indigenous communities as bearers of a different culture to the political project (since such inclusion attempted to produce unity of the country as Singer Sochet (2014) argues), the Aguascalientes and Caracoles represented that space where of the Zapatista indigenous communities could exercise their own identity and act in accordance to it.

5.4 From Rejection to Creation of an Alternative Public Sphere

The Zapatista uprising, the creation and destruction of the Aguascalientes and the creation of the Caracoles are important parts of the Zapatista rejection of the Mexican state or, as Esteva (1999) suggests, the politics of 'no.' The adaptation of the politics of 'no' suggests that a group will unify "their own local spaces, while widening their social and political force to promote their localized views and interests" (Esteva, 1999, p. 161). Consequently, the resonance of 'no' entails more than a simple opposition but a series of affirmations. A categorical 'no', implies an affirmation of a what a group are and want and it also recognises plurality as groups tends to organise among what they do not want rather than strengthening on the diversity of what they want (Esteva, 1999). This politics of 'no' is opposed to the traditional politics of political parties or politicians that in their attempt to gain votes or supporters tend to base their campaigns on affirmations or homogenous ideals (Esteva, 1999). Such proposals aim to gain people's attention by generalising and homogenising their needs towards a common good. However, the politics of 'no' confront people with what they do not want, reject this generalisation or homogenisation of their needs and recognise their plurality (Esteva, 1999). So the Zapatistas by shouting *Enough!,* were saying 'no' to a political system, and by creating the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles they were saying 'no' to the political spaces controlled by the state. But the rupture that the 'no' entailed meant the creation and widening of alternative spaces strengthening what the Zapatistas do not want in an attempt to create something they do.

In this sense, the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles served a double function. On the one hand they were the materialisation of the rejection of an official political system; and on the other, these were public spaces constructed by the Zapatistas in which to articulate their interests and meet their demands. It could be argued that it is through these public spaces that the Zapatistas exercise their own power. Johnston (2000) argues that democracy should be understood as a practice performed by people, as opposed to reducing it to simple actions such as voting and being voted for. For him, democracy "refers to a way of life where individuals and communities have relative autonomy, and are able to set the conditions for their own social, moral, ecological, and economic development" (Johnston, 2000, p. 480). So, if the Aguascalientes were and the Caracoles are the spaces where the Zapatistas exercise their own power, these also become spaces were democracy is practiced as members of the Zapatistas indigenous communities deliberate on essential matters related to their communities. As such these spaces become places of assembly, discussion and negotiation: the Zapatista public sphere.

A potential tension then exists between the Zapatista construction of the public sphere, embodied in the Aguascalientes, and later in the Caracoles and the 'official' or state-led' public sphere. Fraser (1992), argues that Habermas' definition of the public sphere is as a space for deliberation among citizens in which discourses can be created and disseminated. Thus, the public sphere should, in principle, be understood as detached from the state. However, the liberal conception of the public sphere rests on the principle of equality. Not only citizens are entitled to have equal access to the public sphere but they should have equal voice for participation to ensure that no voice overrules others (Fraser, 1995); and the body and institution guarding and guaranteeing this equality is the state. But this principle of equality is based on finding a common minimum agreeable set of values or ideas, to guide people's participation in the public sphere, differences among citizens are only 'bracketed' or suspended and hence not incorporated in this deliberation (Fraser, 1995). In cases such as the Mexican political system, where power is centralised, the public space is neither detached from the state nor is equality a condition for participation. The Zapatista construction of the public sphere not only clashes with this conception, but opposes to it. Fraser suggests that often oppressed groups will tend to construct 'subaltern counter-publics' as alternative spheres in which aspects which otherwise would have been left in the private sphere, such as ethnicity, race or gender are brought to the public sphere, in the process expanding the deliberation process (Fraser, 1992, 1995). Two questions arise. First, how if possible, does the alternative public sphere constructed by the Zapatistas expand the deliberation process in the state-led public

sphere? Second, and considering the hostilities the Zapatistas face from the Mexican government and the rejection of the state the Zapatista discourse rest on, is it possible to think of these two spheres separately?

The alternative public sphere of the Zapatistas and the 'state-led' public sphere are without a doubt opposing spaces, but this opposition should not be taken as separation. When the Aguascalientes were formed, the Zapatistas intended to promote deliberation among different groups of people across Mexico, based on the interaction and recognition of their differences, to change the Mexican political system. So it could be claimed that the Aguascalientes were not intended to expand the deliberation process in the state-led public sphere but to create one which rejected the equality and favour the recognition of differences. As it was not the intention of the Zapatistas to assume power, the Aguascalientes did not aim to replace the state-led public sphere but rather were used to construct a space in which people could actively articulate their demands, and decide upon their social and political future by is exercising democracy. Even though the Zapatistas did not succeed in consolidating the Aguascalientes' aims, these not only served to shape the Zapatistas' claims through a process of deliberation among themselves, but gave the indigenous communities a voice that had been silenced for years by the Mexican state. In other words, the Aguascalientes was a public sphere used by the Zapatistas which later enabled indigenous people to raise their voice in the public sphere led by the state.

The situation with the Caracoles is slightly different, as these were formed in the Zapatista phase of 'silence.' These are indeed a rejection of the 'state-lead' public sphere, but cannot necessarily be considered 'subaltern counter-publics.' As stated above, 'subaltern counter-publics' are formed from a discourse of opposition, as there was opposition to and rejection of the Mexican government. The Caracoles do not attempt to influence or interfere with the state as the deliberations held in the Caracoles are directed to the construction of the Zapatista autonomy project and not towards achieving state recognition. Still, the Caracoles and the 'state-led' public sphere have a connection. As there is no interference with the other, the Zapatista discourse is still based on rejecting the state led practices, including the state's public sphere.

The access to the 'public sphere' is, as stated in Chapter 3, essential as it is where the relationships between the 'we' and the 'others' is constructed so that people could become political subjects. The Zapatista uprising, the creation of the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles were events, that according to Isin (2012a) are meant to cause a rupture in the

status quo. These events made a crack in the Mexican political system and helped the indigenous communities to acquire the visibility and voice they had been deprived of for years. Johnston (2000), argues that the "Zapatistas have helped loosen the PRI's hold on Mexico and helped Indigenous people to gain visibility"(2000, p. 493). Through this crack, the Zapatistas shifted the way in which indigenous people were acknowledged by the state; they were no longer a cheap labour force but they portrayed themselves as bearers of a different culture and capable of organising towards the construction of a project of autonomy.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter identified moments in Zapatista history that can be interpreted as events that cause a rupture in a given order. According to Isin (2012a), an event aims to break the current status of a given group allowing them to construct and reinforce their political subjectivity. In other words, as events break with the group's current situation they open a window of opportunity on how the group could perform acts that could be considered 'acts of citizenship.' In order to interpret the Zapatistas' actions as events, this chapter relied on the historical context provided in Chapter 2 to understand when a rupture was taking place throughout the Zapatista history and what makes these events to be considered ruptures. In addition to this, the first section of this chapter gave a brief description of the Zapatistas' demands. The second section gives an interpretation of how the 1994 uprising, the creation of the Aguascalientes, the 'silence' and the creation of the Caracoles are considered events.

The Zapatista uprising in 1994 gave visibility to the indigenous Zapatistas communities in Chiapas as they were able to publicly expose the "widely shared open secret" (Johnston, 2000, p. 482) of their marginalised situation in Mexico, following the visibility that the Zapatistas gained with the uprising. The Aguascalientes caused a rupture in the Mexican political system as they were spaces for dialogue without the intervention of the government as well as being the first space across the country where the indigenous culture was not only celebrated but exercised. Finally, when the Aguascalientes were destroyed due to the military hostilities, these were replaced by the Caracoles and these emerged during the phase of 'silence.' As such, not only the Caracoles attempted to carry out the legacy left by the Aguascalientes regarding the promotion of dialogue and deliberation, but also it is the core part of the Zapatista construction of autonomy. The Caracoles then, are places for encounter and discussion for the construction of the Zapatista autonomy. The last section expands on the way the Aguascalientes and the

Caracoles contribute to the creation of an alternative public sphere. Such space, was created in conjunction of these events discussed in the previous section and contributed to change the status quo that the indigenous communities in Chiapas were living under thanks to the implementation of governmental policies.

The Zapatista use of scarfs or balaclavas to cover their faces became, as mentioned above, a symbol for the movement. However, it was more than just an aesthetic symbol; it was also a symbol of negation, as illustrated in the opening quote. For more than 500 years Mexico's indigenous communities were relegated from national politics and the policies that were implemented for their development, as the implementation of such policies did not help the indigenous communities. As Marcos mentioned, it was not until indigenous people's faces were covered, when they negated their identity, that they began to be identified, seen and heard. Although nowadays the Zapatistas cover their faces when they are in public, in the early years it helped them to be visible when they were not. The Zapatistas' claims mobilised them towards achieving two things: first, at an initial stage requesting government recognition of their culture, tradition and languages; and second constructing of autonomy project. The 1994 uprising falls into the first category. As the Zapatistas consider themselves Mexicans at this stage they attempted to gain recognition for indigenous communities; rights at a national level, a break that was made by positioning the indigenous question in the political and social agenda of the country. The creation of the Aguascalientes and the Caracoles and the phase of 'silence,' in which the Zapatistas still remain, reinforced this positioning of indigenous community issues in the social and political agenda of the country by the construction of an alternative public sphere that encouraged deliberation and discussion promoting difference and diversity. In other words, these events provided the platform upon which the Zapatistas construct their autonomy project. Thus, the Zapatista uprising and the use of balaclavas and scarfs allowed indigenous communities to emerge as political beings; and the Aguascalientes, the Caracoles and the 'silence' were spaces were this formation continued.

Isin (2012a) argues that events aim to produce a rupture in the given order or the in status of the people or groups that execute them. It is then through this rupture or crack that people or groups perform acts of citizenship. The three events listed above allowed the Zapatistas to perform acts that could be called acts of citizenship in the sense that they had allow them to appeal for the rights to have rights. These acts strengthen the Zapatista political subjectivity. The task for next chapter is to analyse the performativity of those acts of citizenship performed by the Zapatistas.

Chapter 6 The Performativity of the Zapatista's Acts of Citizenship

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained and interpreted the events performed by the Zapatistas that caused a rupture in the given order and the status that the indigenous Zapatistas communities were living. Although the EZLN and the Zapatistas had existed for more than 20 and 10 years respectively prior to the 1994 uprising, these events enabled them to break with the status quo under which they had been forced to live for many years. The rupture created by these events allowed the Zapatistas to perform acts that could be labelled as 'acts of citizenship.' As mentioned in Chapter 2, 'acts of citizenship' are those "acts that transforms the modes and forms of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens through creating new sites and scales of struggle" (Isin, 2008, p. 39).

The Zapatistas decision to enter a phase of 'silence,' which meant the rejection of the possibility of a dialogue with the government and the end of public appearances in the mainstream media, allowed them to focus on the self-fulfilment of their demands. In other words, the phase of 'silence' taken by the Zapatistas was not a reaction motivated by rage against the Mexican government and Congress, but an opportunity to implement the San Andrés Accords in their communities. The aim of this chapter is to examine and analyse the Zapatista practices during this phase of 'silence' as acts of citizenship to analyse the ways in which autonomy defines these acts. Analysing the practices undertaken during the period of 'silence' as acts of citizenship builds upon the discussion in Chapter 5, to explore how the changing contexts of the Zapatistas intersects with changing practices of citizenship and claims-making.

The creation of the Caracoles brought changes to the Zapatista organisation. As these were spaces for the organisation and discussion of ideas it seemed plausible that the Caracoles hosted the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Good Government Boards or JBG) as another level of the Zapatista government. As such, in 2003 the JBGs were created, as explained in Chapter 2, to coordinate the *Municipos Autónomos Rebeldes Zapatistas* (Zapatistas Autonomous Revel Municipalities or MAREZ) located in each of the Zapatista regions. The JBG were a result of a learning process: what the Zapatistas call *caminando preguntamos* (we ask questions as we walk). The JBGs were then an effort of the Zapatista support base to act in accordance to the Zapatistas' ideals to fulfil their thirteen demands. As these JBGs were the result of a process of reflection between the Zapatistas, they are not fixed entities whose performances have to follow a set of rules. On the contrary the JBGs are formed by an on going process, and as such these are still under construction. As the Zapatistas advance and as issues arise the JBGs, supported by the indigenous members, take decisions and solve issues. This process is what the Zapatistas call *mandar obedeciendo* (rule by obeying). It consists of a form of government that is based on collectivist practices which is reflected both in the decision making process and also in its configuration. In simple words, 'rule by obeying' is a form of government where the people rule and the government obey. Although the basis of 'rule by obeying' favours and is centred in a collectivist idea, it rests on seven principles which are: to serve and not self-serve, to represent and not supplant, to build and not to destroy, to obey and not to command, to propose and not to impose, to convince and not to subjugate, and to go down and not to rise. All levels of the Zapatista government are meant to follow these principles.

The Zapatista government is constituted, as explained in Chapter 2, by different levels. Each of these levels is managed by the Zapatista's support base or by the elected members of the Zapatistas communities. All levels of government are accountable to the people of the Zapatista region or zone, and it is all the members of the community who are in charge of taking all the decisions through the formation of an assembly. 'Rule by obeying' is a regime that is democratic as it is answerable to the Zapatista's demands for democracy. However, the democracy that the Zapatistas are exercising is based on the idea of the collectivity. Thus, the emphasis is placed on how collective work and the word of the people or *pueblo* is required and valued to perform any governmental duty. The value of the collective principles is reflected on the way the JBG of the Caracol of *La Realidad* was

constructed. According to Lorena, a member of the MAREZ of San Pedro Michoacán,[54] when the announcement was made of the creation of the JBG and the Caracoles, the people of each MAREZ used the materials they had to construct the offices of the JBG as well as the offices of each of the MAREZ in the Caracol. This was a collective effort of people who probably had never met previosuly, due to the lack of proximity of the MAREZ, but were in fact united to construct the offices of the JBG. The offices built were simple, and were poorly furnished, but the people handed the offices of the JBG to a committee of eight representatives of each of the municipalities in the zone. In a symbolic act, accompanied by a big celebration, the people the Zapatista *pueblo* officially handed over the government to the eight representatives.

As mentioned before, it will be the aim to this chapter to analyse the way in which the practices performed by the Zapatistas could be considered 'acts of citizenship.' Isin suggests that 'acts of citizenship' are actions that break habits, including activities such as "voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, resisting and organizing"(Isin, 2009, p. 372). This chapter's main focus is on the ways the Zapatistas resist what they call the 'bad government' referring to the Mexican government, which enables them to work on the accomplishment of their initial demands. However, it is the task of this chapter to demonstrate the way in which the Zapatista form of government that had been implemented throughout the Zapatistas' territories has broken with the practices imposed by the Mexican government by bringing back their own traditions, understandings and organisation. As these acts are situated in a time and place, the scales of the acts of citizenship performed to the Zapatistas allow us to define the way in which they construct the political subjectivity. Thus, just as events could not be understood without considering the historical context of the social groups or social movements, acts cannot be understood without analysing the scales at which they are undertaken. For this reason, this chapter will also analyse how acts of citizenship produce scales.

6.2 Autonomous Government as an Act of Citizenship

6.2.1 Organization of the Zapatista Government

In 2003, the EZLN formally announced their plan for a 'good government' in a written statement of seven parts called the Thirteenth Stele,[55] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2003e, 2003f, 2003g). Prior to 2003, there were

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[54] This testimony can be found in the *Escuelita* textbook.

[55] 'Good government' is a phrase used by the Zapatistas to differentiate their government from the official or the 'bad government.' The name of the Good Government Boards or *Juntas del Buen Gobierno* derives from this good/bad distinction.

glimpses of governmental organization and autonomous exercises in education and health within the Zapatista's territories. For example, Lorena from San Pedro MAREZ of La Realidad Caracol explained in the *Little School* textbooks, that since 1994 the EZLN uprising, people in their community had begun organizing collective works and had built a clinic in which the health facilitators practiced and worked. As these works were progressing, Lorena adds, there was the need set up authorities who could coordinate these collective works. For these reason, in late 1994 the Zapatistas set up the La Realidad Caracol, 38 autonomous municipalities that could coordinate the collective works such as health. A similar narrative is found in the declarations of the people that formed the other Zapatista Caracoles. For instance, in La Garrucha Caracol, Gabriel explained that in 1994, after the uprising, his community felt that being ruled by the Mexican state that, according to him dominated different indigenous communities, marginalised and humiliated them was no longer acceptable. For this reason, the people adherent to the Zapatista fight began to organise in collective works and formed their own authorities that could help in the guiding process. Pedro Marín also from La Garrucha Caracol suggested that this collective organisation among the Zapatista sympathisers was the first step for Zapatista organisation and to enforce their rights.

So, if there were glimpses of autonomy that resulted as a rejection to the Mexican government, after the rejection of the San Andrés Accords, the consolidation of a Zapatista form of government resulted logical, and these were fully and formally implemented by 2003. The birth of the Caracoles and the construction of the offices of the JBGs was what formally gave birth to the Zapatista government and the implementation of the Zapatista autonomy project.

> And in each 'Caracol' a new construction is perfectly identified, the so-called 'House of the Good Government Boards.' As you can see there will be a 'Good Government Board' in each zone that will represent the organizational effort of the communities, not only to face the problems of autonomy, but also to build a more direct bridge between them and the world…In short, to take care that in the Zapatista rebel territory he or she that commands, commands by obeying, on August 9, 2003 the so-called 'Good Government Boards' will be constituted(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003f).[56]

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[56] "Y en cada 'Caracol' se distingue perfectamente una nueva construcción, la llamada 'Casa de la Junta de Buen Gobierno.' Según se alcanza a ver, habrá una 'Junta de Buen Gobierno' en cada zona y representa un esfuerzo organizativo de las comunidades, no sólo para enfrentar los problemas de la autonomía, también para construir un puente más directo entre ellas y el mundo…En suma, para cuidar que en territorio rebelde zapatista el que mande, mande obedeciendo, se constituirán el 9 de agosto del 2003, las llamadas 'Juntas de Buen Gobierno.'" (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003f).

The formal implementation of the 'good government' since 2003 responded to two factors. The first was that from 1994 to 2001 the Zapatista fight was directed to drafting the San Andrés Accords, which were supposed to be passed into law giving the indigenous communities recognition at a state level. Thus, the Zapatista's efforts were directed towards achieving such recognition. Second, from 2001 to 2003, while in the phase of 'silence' the Zapatistas evaluated these glimpses of governmental organisation and the administration of autonomous education and health. As this was a process of introspection, and as they were in 'silence;' the Zapatistas issued declarations and statements but few were on the way these practices were conducted. As it was explained in Chapter 4, it was not until the Zapatistas issued a set of textbooks for students attending the *Escuelita Zapatista* held across the Zapatistas territories in 2013 that these practices were publicly exposed. As explained in Chapter 4, these textbooks gathered testimonies of former members of the different areas of government, education and health and examined how each region constructed and performed the practices of 'rule by obeying.' Thus it is the construction of the 'good government' that this chapters concentrates on.

The Zapatista government is composed of two or three levels of government, depending on the region. The first level of government, which only exists in the region of *Los Altos de Chiapas,*[57] where the Caracol of Oventik is situated, consists of a Zapatista autonomous agent and Zapatistas autonomous *comisariados* (deputies), which are the authorities in the Zapatistas communities. According to the content of the *Little School* textbooks, Víctor a former member of the Oventik JBG explained that the *comisariados* are the direct authority of the Zapatista communities. Their main task according to Víctor is to solve issues that may rise between members of the communities but also to solve any agrarian issues that may arise. The second level of government, which exist in all the Zapatistas territories are the Autonomous Municipalities (MAREZ). In the case of *Los Altos de Chiapas,* the MAREZ are in charge of solving problems that the agents and *comisariados* cannot solve, and for the rest of the Zapatistas regions these are the first port of call for solving community problems. In other areas, for example in the Roberto Barrios Caracol, Salomón, a member of the autonomous government, suggests that the main tasks of this level of government is to accompany the different working areas such as health, education and the women's commission among others, when they have their collective meetings so that the work they performed are truly collective so that these could accomplish their aims.

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[57] *Los Altos de Chiapas,* Chiapas' Highlands are the mountain rage of Chiapas.

Finally, the last level of Zapatista government is the five JBGs. Among their functions are to solve any problems brought by the MAREZ. They have the duty to keep records of any aggressions from the Mexican government or others towards any Zapatista community. They also have responsibility to coordinate the MAREZ or community-led programmes in areas such as health, education, agro-ecology, and community radio stations, among others. Fermín from the Morelia Caracol, suggested in the *Little School* textbook, that one of the main duties of the JBG is to guarantee an equal development among the MAREZs and the Zapatista communities that form the Caracol. For him, development does not necessarily entail achieving equal productivity among the MAREZs, but to "equilibrate the development in all working areas such as work, education, health, production and communication."[58] In addition, the JBGs are the only instances of government that have direct contact with the Revolutionary Indigenous Clandestine Committee (Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena or CCRI). As the highest level of government, the JBG main task is to coordinate the work of the MAREZ and the communities, while the role of the CCRI is to protect the Zapatista's territories, especially the Caracoles where the JBGs are physically located.

A distinction is therefore drawn between the levels of Zapatista government outlined above as representing and governing the support bases (and thus recognised as the civil branch of the Zapatismo) and the members of the CCRI, who comprise the military branch of the Zapatistas. This distinction between the civil and the military branches is well understood among the Zapatista communities. The CCRI's organisation is based on hierarchical ranks in which orders taken by a few an executed by all, while the Zapatista government is constructed under a collectivist idea; a horizontal relationship in which the government and the governed actively participate in the decision-making process. For this reason, after 2003 the task of the CCRI was reduced to be the spokesman of the Zapatista movement. Though, the military branch is allowed to give any advice to the JBGs, upon their request, in solving bigger issues that may arise between Zapatista members and non-members. The EZLN believe that, as the military branch of the Zapatismo, the CCRI is by nature hierarchical which results a contradiction with the principles of horizontality and collectiveness which the communities, MAREZs and JBGs work with (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003c). To deal with this contradiction, there was an agreement among the Zapatistas to keep a separation of both branches but to have effective communication among them. Marcos argued that as of 2003

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[58] "equilibrar el desarrollo en todas las áreas de trabajo, como la educación, la salud, producción y comunicación"

> ...the exercise of indigenous autonomy is a reality in Zapatista territory, and we are proud to say that it has been led by the communities themselves. In this process, the EZLN has decided itself to accompanying and intervening when there are conflicts or deviances...they [the JBGs] directly denounces, requests, clarifications, agreements...if now the autonomous communities have asked for the EZLN to fulfil functions of a spokesperson, it is because they have entered into a higher stage of organization and the announcement of this form of organisation does not correspond to one or several municipalities. This is why the agreement was, with all the municipalities that the EZLN should announce that this changes now. (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003c)[59]

Also, to fulfil the principles of horizontality and collectiveness the members of the military branch cannot aspire to any governmental posts and people who had previously participated in the Zapatista government cannot form part of the CCRI.

The work of the Zapatista government has several functions. The first and the most common task is, according to the *Little School* textbooks, problem resolution. The most common problems all the levels of government had to deal were those related to alcoholism and family and agrarian disputes. According Rosy, a member of JBG of La Garrucha Caracol, there are several problems that the JGB have to deal with. The JBG is responsible for carefully examining the kind of fertilizers and pesticides that reach the MAREZ because not only do some of them damage their crops but they also affect the people's health. There is also a rigorous control, as Rosy stated, on the control of drugs and alcohol. She explained, "as autonomous authorities they see that in the municipalities or communities where there is no control these [drugs and alcohol] many problems arise but mainly these affect the family and the health."[60] To expand on the problem solving issues, I asked Roberto, my teacher, during my Tzotzil lessons about the prohibition of substances such as alcohol and drugs. He explained the role of the women in the Zapatista movement was very important and it was something that was and still promoted in the Caracol of Oventik, where he resides, and they were the most affected by the consumption of such substances. He explained that one of the main problems they were facing were abuses related to their partner's consumption of alcohol. So women took this problem to the authorities of the MAREZ. Roberto told me that women explained to the authorities how

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[59] "...el ejercicio de la autonomía indígena es una realidad en tierras zapatistas, y tenemos el orgullo de decir que ha sido conducido por las propias comunidades. En este proceso el EZLN se ha dedicado únicamente a acompañar, y a intervenir cuando hay conflictos o desviaciones...estos [las JBG] expresaban directamente denuncias, solicitudes, aclaraciones acuerdos...si ahora los autónomos han pedido que el EZLN cumpla funciones de portavoz es porque han entrado en una etapa superior de organización y, esta no corresponde a un solo municipio, o a varios, el darlo a conocer. Por eso el acuerdo fue que el EZLN diera a conocer esto que ahora cambia."(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003c)

[60] "...como autoridades autónomas vemos que en los municipios o pueblos donde entran [drogas y alcohol] hay muchos problemas pero estos afectan más a la familia y a la salud."

alcoholism was a common problem among men and the repercussions of that within their families and communities as well. Some men often spent all or most of their salary on alcohol, which unleashed major issues: money did not reach the household; women were sexually abused and drinkers were often unable to work for several days after a drinking bout. For these reasons, the authorities decided to prohibit the consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs[61] in all of the Zapatistas' territories.

Another important function of the Zapatista government is to administer, depending on the level of government, collective work[62] within the communities. Each MAREZ has the capacity to decide on their own economic activities and on the profit they make out of these activities. For instance, Marisol who lives in a MAREZ that belongs to La Garrucha JBG explained –in the *Little School* textbook, that in her MAREZ the collective works includes the raising of livestock, grocery shops and transportation. The profit they made from these, Marisol described, is to create an economic fund to pay for any trips and any expenses when members have to travel outside the MAREZ, pay for contributions the MAREZ have to make to either other MAREZ in the region or to the JBG, or to finance parties. However, Marisol recognised in other areas of La Garrucha, there are collective coffee and maize planation and livestock farming. In contrast with the experiences related from La Garrucha, the collective works in the Oventik Caracol are few. This responds not to the disengagement people may have or to a lack of interesting in farming but as Víctor a former member of the JBG explained in the *Little School* textbooks. It was not due to the but to the terrain that is highly mountainous bringing difficulties to the harvest of crops. So, the collective works as I could observe while I was in Oventik Caracol, are of different kinds. Two are the most relevant examples. The first is the language school itself. A percentage of the money that is raised, every time it is opened, a percentage goes to the JBG and the rest goes to the people that run the school. It is then their decision to allocate money on what they feel is the best for the collective. The last time I was in Oventik people of the school were drying coffee in the basketball court and I asked María, my teacher, what was the coffee for, she replied that it was a collective work of all the facilitators in the Language School. The coffee, she explained, after having a roasting and grinding processes was going to be divided into two (the first half was for the consumption of the people in

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[61] The reasons for banning drugs from the Zapatista territory were different from the reasons for the alcohol ban. The issue with drugs was a pre-emptive one to avoid the entrance of drug cartels into the Zapatista territory.
[62] The collective work varies from zone to zone and is highly dependent on the geographical characteristics of the communities. For instance, some communities raise livestock (where most of the terrain is flat), some others cultivate coffee (although, most of the coffee is planted in cliffs) and maize: most have bakeries, craft workshops etc.

the school and the other to sell in one of the shops of the Caracol). The second example is the cooperative shop run by women of Oventik, called *Mujeres por la Dignidad* (Women for Dignity). In this shop, women sell all handmade crafts (mainly embroidery). Each item has a label with the price, the names of the women that made it and the MAREZ they belong to. I asked what was the reason behind this, and they told me it was to ensure that women across the MAREZ that belong to Oventik provide an equal number of items as well as receiving equal amount of the profit, which the allocation of that money was mainly the concern of the women that form this collective in each MAREZ.

All the three or two levels of government, depending on the region, are in charge and supervise the collective works that are performed. The MAREZs are in charge of supervising areas such as education (running the Rebel Autonomous Primary Schools by gibing the facilitators the necessary training, maintaining the buildings) and health (promoting sexual and health education by running visits to people's home, run sanitary inspections, among others).

The JBGs have also specific tasks and obligations. Some similarities exist between them and the MAREZs but these tasks and obligations are also subject to their location. The JBGs' main obligation is to supervise the tasks of the MAREZs and to ensure that the collective work of the communities is being carried out as agreed. The JBGs are also in charge of nine different activities, which are: education, health, commerce and collective work, agro-ecology, transit, women, communication, justice and civil registry. Everything and everyone located in the Caracoles falls under the jurisdiction of the JBG. For example, in the Oventik Caracol the JBG is in charge of running and administrating the Rebel Secondary School. The health clinics, which are also located in the Caracoles, are responsibility of the JBGs. They are in charge of providing the medicines or equipment to the clinic and administering the money that enters to the clinic as the service is free of charge to the Zapatistas while the non-Zapatistas pay a fee and the medicines. The JBGs are the contact point where crops are sold outside the Zapatistas' territories (for instance, coffee is sold internationally through the JBG). The JBG is responsible for keeping a registry of all the Zapatistas within its confines as well as those that enter and leave the Caracol. As such the JBG is the body in charge of granting visitors access to the Caracoles. Vehicle access to the Caracoles is also controlled by the JBG; fees are charged to cars and trucks entering these territories.[63] Finally, the most important task of the JBG is to

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[63] This is a common practice in the rural areas of Chiapas that consist of people blocking the motorways and demand a transit fee from those travelling in vehicles.

administer all the money that is produced by the MAREZs or that comes from transport fees, visitors, or donations. For this reason, they have to issue monthly and annual reports that are disseminated among all the levels of Zapatista government.

As suggested in the previous Chapter, the creation of the Aguascalientes and later of the Caracoles allowed the formation of a public sphere or a political rebel space that enabled the Zapatistas to construct their political subjectivity as they had an alternative sphere in which they act as bearers of their own culture, interact with others and resist the policies of the Mexican government. It could be argued that the actions performed by the Zapatistas could be catalogued as civil disobedience. Civil disobedience covers illicit actions carried out to achieve a reform at a state level while remaining within a system that is considered, by the group in question, as fairly just (Lyons, 2013). However, just because the Zapatista had rejected secession and did not aim to assume state power, does not imply that they consider the state as just. The key difference in considering the Zapatistas' activities as acts of citizenship and not as actions of civil disobedience is the way in which power is understood. It could be argued that there is a tacit or implicit agreement by people or groups conducting acts of civil disobedience in the way power is exercised by the state. Acts of civil disobedience aim to change a specific aspect on the way certain policies are delivered by the state to the people. As such, these actions are deliberately done at the margins of state law accepting the possibility of state coercion. Thus the intention of these actions is not to take over state power but expand its provisions. The case of the Zapatistas, after 2003 when they entered the phase of 'silence' does not fit in this category. Because of this, a deeper understanding of the Zapatistas claims is needed to dismiss these arguments. The Zapatista rejection of state power and the intentions to remain within Mexico, suggests that they are performing acts of citizenship that involves resistance within the state.

Resisting actions could be of any sort or kind of action, violent or not, which enables groups to change things (Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000). The traditional notion of resistance suggests that these activities are directed against an oppressive power, and if these activities are effectively performed, this oppressive power may be overturned (Cresswell, 2000). Following this traditional notion of resistance, Cresswell (2000) suggests that in their attempt to shift the balance of power groups tend to institute "new kinds of power with different, but equally oppressive characteristics" (Cresswell, 2000, p. 263). So, if power and resistance are mutually inclusive concepts, and that power is not meant to be abolished or eradicated but used and reshaped (Creswell, 2003) then,

the question follows as to how the Zapatistas' acts of citizenship, which do not attempt to assume power, use resistance to transform power? As Creswell argues resistance and power should not be understood as opposing but resistance should be a subset of power. This understanding then allow us to consider the effectiveness of resistance not as the implementation of the same oppressive characteristics, but as an arrangement of power that could allow groups to improve or modify the conditions or circumstances suffered from the oppression (Cresswell, 2000). Hence, if acts of citizenship are those acts that enable groups or people to be political though claiming and exercising rights, to take the initiative to set something new into motion (Isin, 2012a) then, in the Zapatista case these acts of resistance are much more than just setting something into motion, these are meant to improve and modify the circumstances they were forced to live in. This then involves a process of deconstruction and construction to facilitate those involved to become political agents and fulfil their demands.

There are several reasons to suggest that the Zapatistas perform acts of citizenship through constructing and deconstructing practices to form their own government. This construction and reconstruction entails a process that rests mainly on the Zapatista ideal of rejecting state power. The government that the Zapatistas are putting forward entails the deconstruction of practices carried out by the state while still constructing alternative ways of governing. This point could be better illustrated with an analogy. Suppose that the Mexican government was building a brick pathway along the territory. Some of these bricks are charged with the myths, legends and history of the country; others represent the government's interests, practises and policies. Taken together, these bricks construct a narrative, which as a whole is difficult for the indigenous communities to identify with. This lack of identification then causes a disconnection between these communities, which are part of the country, and the government. Then a decision was taken by the Zapatistas to break this pathway and build one, which the indigenous communities could identify with. But this process of breaking and constructing meant using those pieces of the bricks that had some meaning to the indigenous communities and finding the materials and their own ways to build up pathway to which they could identify and allowed them to walk as indigenous people. The Zapatista government is then this pathway. While there are some similarities that could be drawn with the way in which the official government is run, the practices performed and enacted by the Zapatistas are driven by their own modes and forms for ruling and being ruled. It is precisely these forms and modes that are analysed here as acts of citizenship.

6.2.2 From Governmental Practices to Acts of Citizenship

According to Isin, an act of citizenship seeks to realise or objectify a rupture that was previously made (Isin, 2009). Following this logic, then it could be argued that an act is the actualisation of events or moments of rupture. So, through acts of citizenship, groups can creatively define or create their own practices as, Isin suggests that acts of citizenship are always required to "enact the unexpected and unpredictable" (Isin, 2009, p. 380). However, if acts of citizenship aim to create a rupture and are answerable to the group or people's conception of justice these do not necessarily have to be unexpected or unpredictable, something that Isin fails to recognise. The case of the Zapatistas suggests that acts of citizenship do not necessarily entail performing in unexpected or unpredictable manners. As indigenous groups were oppressed and marginalised by the Mexican state, the acts of citizenship they performed do not fall into these manners. On the contrary the acts of citizenship they performed are based on their indigenous traditions and understanding of their situation which mainly responds to bringing back their ancient practices. Nevertheless, not only do the Zapatistas resist by bringing back their traditional practices, but there is another challenge they face as a consequence of the state marginalisation and that is the lack of participation of women. Although in 1993 the EZLN issued the *Ley Revolucionaria de Mujeres* (Revolutionary Law of Women) in which women's essential rights[64] are recognized, women's participation has not been equal in number to that of men. For that reason as it was mentioned by a member of La Garrucha region, "…it was also said that women have their rights, but if they only know about the rights but do not put them into practice, where are their rights?"[65] It is then, the main task of this section to analyse the way in which the Zapatista government' is enacted.

As stated below, all levels of Zapatista government follow the principle of 'rule by obeying', which has several implications for how power is allocated. The Zapatista 'good government,' according to them, relies on collectivist practices. Not only are the MAREZs and the JBGs formed by a group of people representing each of the communities and the municipalities, but also they do not have sole authority over decision-making process. According to the testimonies gathered in the *Little School* textbooks, assemblies are held regularly to inform people of relevant issues such as budget proposals, advances in different areas and problems. However, these assemblies provide a space in which

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[64] The Revolutionary Law of Women is composed of ten articles that protect women's right to participate in the fight, to work and receive a salary, to decide over their bodies, to participate in community issues by electing and be elected, to education, to health and to be nourished, among others.

[65] "…también se dijo que las mujeres tienen sus derechos, pero si sólo saben del derecho pero no lo llevan en práctica ¿dónde están sus derechos?

Zapatistas can raise concerns or questions regarding any of the matters that concern their daily interaction and the organisation. In addition, these meetings have decision-making functions. The authorities of the MAREZs or the JBG bring problems or issues to the assembly and in concert, the authorities and the people reach an agreement on budget allocation, punishments for people who violate the Zapatista law, and so on. As governing is exercised by the Zapatistas as a collective activity, in which the people rule and the government obeys, the possibility of playing a part in government is opened to everyone claiming to be Zapatista but not a member of the CCRI. In the *Little School* textbook, Roberto, a member of the JBG of La Garrucha argues that the Zapatistas resist the authority of the Mexican government by appointing their own autonomous authorities in the different areas. Roberto stresses the importance of resisting through working collectively. When I first arrived in Oventik in October 2015, a day before the Language School started, a balaclava-wearing Zapatista member of the security area of the Caracol accompanied me to the school building. I asked how long he had been in the Caracol: he answered that he had been there for two weeks and had just one more to go. When I asked if he missed his family, he replied that he always did, but he knew that another *compa*[66] was taking care of his maize and that he was performing his duties without any monetary payment but with good conscience. Just like this guard, none of those working as Zapatista authorities, at the different levels, are paid for their job; this is labour comes from the heart, as Roberto and María my teachers told me. While this practice of not receiving a monetary pay for the job the Zapatistas are performing could be taken to be a reaction to the imposed practices of placing a monetary value to an activity which benefit is mutual (practices that can be dated since the Spanish colony); according to my teachers in the language school, adding a monetary value to jobs are practices were not familiar to the indigenous communities in Chiapas, for two reason. The first one and simplest one is the fact that indigenous communities were not accustomed to performing activities in exchange of a monetary gain. The second is that the gain someone could have by performing such activities was of collective benefit rather than individual benefit.

During my stay in the Language School I had to give my weekly monetary contribution to the JBG offices. Many buildings in the Caracol have murals outside, often related to the functions of the building. The JBG building is no exception and has a mural with snails, making reference to the Caracol[67] with a spiral emphasising that the Zapatista government

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[66] The Zapatistas use the terms *compa* or *compas* to describe fellow members of the community and other Zapatistas. It is short for *compañero* or comrade.
[67] As stated in Chapter 2, snail in Spanish is Caracol.

is constructed in a way to reject the hierarchy that is characteristic of the Mexican political system, as it was explained and illustrated in the previous Chapter. Inside the office of the JBG, the arrangement is similar to any of the governmental offices in Mexico, but also there is a reflection of the Zapatista principles. There is a desk shared by four people who are the governmental authorities. On the side are a number of people, who are representatives of all the MAREZs that compose the JBG, and who take notes on what is happening within the offices of the JBG. When I first visited the office, a portrait of *Subcomandante* Marcos was hung on the wall behind the main desk. As was explained in Chapter 2, Marcos was the original spokesman of the Zapatistas and although he was never the leader of the movement, as important decisions were not taken directly by him, his image is significant to the movement. This practice is very common in official governmental offices across Mexico. Each of the governmental offices has a portrait of the Mexican government and/or president. However, this changed on my last visit to the JBG instead of Marco's portrait, there were seven *bastones de mando* (wooden staffs) symbolising the seven MAREZs that compose the Oventik JBG. Such staffs were used in Mayan culture as a traditional symbols of authority (Preston & Dillon, 2004). The symbolic importance of the *bastones de mando* is described in a short story about one of the most iconic characters of the Zapatismo, *El Viejo Antonio* (The Old Antonio).[68] In the story, Old Antonio explains that the first three words of all languages are democracy, liberty and justice. Democracy, Old Antonio suggests, requires that all the thoughts come to an agreement and as no one thinks the same, the voice that governs should obey the voice of the majority. So, the *bastones de mando* must represent the collective word and not the will of the individual (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994g). By replacing the portraits of Zapatista figures such as *Subcomandante* Marcos or *Comandante* Moisés (the new EZLN spokesperson) by the *bastones de mando* in prominent positions in the JBG offices, the Zapatistas are appropriating and deconstructing practices used by the Mexican government in its own buildings, and are using them to present their own traditions and symbols.

The way in which the Zapatistas comprehend both government (as an entity and practice) and resultant governmental duties is worth considering in understanding how the Zapatista autonomous government can be considered an act of citizenship. In Tzotzil, and the other Mayan –derived languages spoken by the Zapatistas communities, the words for

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[68] Old Antonio was friend of Marcos and the other mestizos who came to Chiapas in the early 1980s. He was one of the people who introduced them to the indigenous culture through various narratives. Over time, Marcos immortalised Old Antonio by making him, along with Durito, the main characters of many tales and short stories.

government and the act of governing carry a different meaning to their equivalents in the languages of colonial powers. In Colonial languages, government entails a hierarchy deciding upon the destiny of the people and of a demarcated territory. As such, it gives the government the capacity and the authority to act in the name of the people. Such a notion does not exist in Tzotzil language. The power or capacity to govern does not entail a hierarchy and instead is constructed in reciprocity by those people performing *amtel patan* and the people. *Amtel patan*, a word in Tzotzil the meaning of which could be comparable to governing, is a way of serving or contributing to the community. This work, according to Roberto and María (my teachers in the language school) was understood before the Zapatismo as a responsibility of watching or looking after the people, to serve them and solve the problems that may rise by living together. Usually the elders performed this activity as they had ample knowledge and experience of life. In addition, the people performing *amtel patan* need also to be humble and sensible to the indigenous traditions, in short, to others.

As mentioned before, the Zapatista construction of 'good government' as acts of citizenship relies on creating a rupture in the status or the given order but also bringing back and adapting the indigenous traditions. So, for the Zapatistas, *amtel patan* is something that is not confined only to the elders but to the people within the community that have the capacity to perform this work. In an interview with Subcomandante Marcos, Castellanos (2008) asks him about the way in which authorities are composed. Marcos described the case of a 15-year-old girl who was appointed to be authority of a MAREZ (Castellanos, 2008).

Nevertheless, there was a change in between the age for exercising *amtel patan* the essence remains the same. An important part of this essence rest on the recognition of the community as the person appointed to be in authority. As *amtel patan* is based on recognition rather than accountability, neither the governed nor the governors are more important than the other. The people have the responsibility to decide if the members of the JBGs or the MAREZ have the qualities to perform *amtel patan* as well as possible. Following this construction of power through reciprocity, it is important to highlight that in order to form the JBGs or the MAREZs, as my teacher explained, the people nominate the person or persons who they think are most suitable to this position; so a number of people get nominated and they are appointed to be the government, to perform the duties enlisted as *amtel patan,* through a vote of the people in an assembly. Even though similarities could be traced with the election of democratic processes and as formally

recognised citizens under the Mexican constitution, indigenous people had the right and obligation to vote and be voted. So the election of authorities may seem to be a replication of this process implemented by the state. However, often the people who were candidates for official offices had almost no connection with their indigenous constituency, as they would often be part of the state-party system in which the party's interests are over people's interests. Thus, the Zapatista process of appointing their authorities is not only one that is based on their traditions but is a process of recognition that empower these communities as they are not only electing their authorities, but also actively participate of them in this process. Activist citizenship, according to Isin, is a dynamic institution of empowerment by which people create their own scripts (Isin, 2009). So, the Zapatistas are invoking traditions for appointing authorities through the creation of scripts to which they relate and feel appropriate. In addition, the reciprocity from which *amtel patan* is constructed is based in another Tzotzil word *aiel*. The *amtel patan* should have *aiel,* which does not have an exact translation but entails listening, feeling, understanding, comprehending what the community needs and says. Both Roberto and María stated, in our lessons, that *aiel* is deeper than this list of words. For them, *aiel* is a feeling and listening from the inside of one's heart. It could then be argued that the process of *amtel patan* is not only the action of governing, but is a script that the Zapatistas are constructing in which the people and the authorities are mutually inclusive. *Amtel patan* is a construction of the Zapatistas communities not only because the people share the power with the authorities in a horizontal manner, but also because it entails a protection of the traditions, as a valid element for becoming political and a mutual recognition of the community and people's needs.

As such, *Aiel* is important part of the *amtel patan* process which is not something that one has or something that is thought by others. An *aiel* is developed with the *ch'ulel* of the people. Just like *aiel*, *ch'ulel* does not have a literal translation. It is composed of several actions. The *ch'ulel*, according to Roberto and María, is one's conscience that is enhanced throughout life.[69] So those people that are going to be part of the authorities have a *ch'ulel* that allows them to recognise how problems affect the communities internalised them in the heart so that guidance could come from the heart but directed towards the community. *Ch'ulel* is then demonstrated with people's actions and it is something that is recognised

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[69] *Ch'ulel* is the most important part of a person. It is valued and treasured in the indigenous communities of Chiapas. In a way it is the conscience, something that a person develops through their actions and experiences. For some, it can be stolen or damaged and animal sacrifices are needed in order to regain it. In this thesis, attention is paid to those parts of the *ch'ulel* related to the act of governing.

by members of the community. Hence, dignity, a fortified spirit and understanding are important components of the *ch'ulel* of the people performing *amtel patan.* They try to respect other communities' space and what is important for them. An *amtel patan* should reflect with conscience about the problems and needs of the community and have consideration for others. An understanding of the others is needed to reinforce the *ch'ulel,* which is not only to recognise the needs of the community but also to act along with the community.

The way in which the government is constructed and the process for electing an authority is not as could be argued that the 'good government' constructed by the Zapatistas emphasises values such as collectivism and horizontality as a reaction against the bad government's domination but more than that, it attempts to rescue the indigenous communities' traditions and culture through their own performances. The Zapatista 'good government' involves actions simple as choosing a person because of the pledges he or she makes to the community. It is a process that takes into consideration traditions, such the preservation of a good *ch'ulel* that the indigenous in Chiapas had preserved for centuries. These are not simply performed in reaction against the Mexican government, but become acts of citizenship that aim to construct relations that direct and guide the people that performed them. So, if a Zapatista autonomous government is formed by and through the collective and these acts of citizenship construct relations that guide and direct others the role of the people towards the government and as part of the government should also be studied.

The community also has roles within the performance of the government that go beyond nominating people in the process of *amtel patan* for the JBGs and MAREZs and attending the assemblies. As it was explained to me during my lessons, in the Zapatista communities, the people are *chi'ilil*, which is a form of comradeship or brotherhood. It is a relation among equals. If *chi'ilil* is a relation among equals, then this requires recognizing the other members of the community having the same importance as oneself. For this reason, the Zapatismo tries to reinforce this view among the Zapatistas communities. According to María, anyone who speaks Tzotzil or any other Mayan derived language will understand what *chi'ilil* is, but the attitude towards it is different. She claims that often political parties in their attempt to reach indigenous people in electoral times, speak of *chi'ilil* to make promises to the people, but as soon as the elections finished *chi'ilil* is no longer reflected in their policies and programmes. This is, as María mentioned, a good way to distinguish between a Zapatista and a non-Zapatista. While the attitude of a Zapatista to fellow

members of their Zapatista community will be one of equals the non-Zapatistas, indigenous or not, will adopt individualistic practices to increase their gains via the political parties or the 'bad government.' In the Zapatismo, as María explained, every person is an important element in the fight regardless of their gender or age and as such each person can correct another person if he or she feels they are performing wrongly and this is what they do with the government.

If the community feels that the authorities of the MAREZs and the JBGs are not performing as they should, they have the right and obligation to warn or correct them: this is then called *chi'iltik. Chi'iltik* is the plural of *chi'ilil.* We had a discussion of what *chi'iltik* meant for the Zapatistas in a collective discussion during the first time I was in the Language School. So, *chi'iltik* is the plural form that implies inclusiveness, as in Tzotzil there are two forms that 'us' is named. One that is inclusive in a given space and the other that includes the 'us' that is dispersed or not sharing the same physical space. *Chi'iltik* then is a form of governing among equals in which a sense of comradeship. It could be argued that the responsibility to govern the Zapatistas communities or to construct a 'good government' is shared between the people and the authorities. It is then a practice that is equally performed by both sides, by mutual teaching among equals. This process of governing in which the people and authorities are equally involved allow the Zapatistas to become activist citizens. As Isin suggests, becoming activist citizen entails a practice of not only writing new scripts, but these should be creative, inventive and autonomous (Isin, 2009, 2012a). Although this act of governing is indeed the construction of an alternative script that is put in to practice regularly it evokes, as stated above, the indigenous understanding of a form of government that is familiar to them and in which the people's participation is essential in the construction of it. Therefore, the script that the Zapatistas are constructing and practicing is not necessarily creative nor inventive but traditional and autonomous in the sense that ancient understandings of governmental organisation are being exercised as valid form of organisations.

The forms of 'good government' were created to fulfil the Zapatistas' demands and to claim the rights that they were long deprived of by the 'bad government.' Nevertheless, a basis for the fulfilment of these demands and claiming rights could also be found in the indigenous communities' languages. During my first stay in Oventik, I asked Roberto, my teacher, how the Zapatistas understand the idea of having rights. After giving it much thought, he replied that in their language the verb 'to have' does not exit. For them, everything is understood as forging relations with their fellow community members. For

example, they do not have a government but they have a relation to a number of persons that are being authorities who are there to direct and guide people. This idea also affects the relationship with the land: as they do not have the word 'own,' they do not possess the land. Instead they have a special relation with it; the land is the provider of the things they use to live, therefore the indigenous communities live through and with it. Land then plays an essential role in their lives and because these communities received much from it, the relationship is not of possession but of belonging and dependence. Roberto told me that for members of indigenous communities, rights are not something they own or that someone grants them. Rights are practices that require, and are based on, respect. In my second visit to Oventik I asked María the same question and the answer I got was more elaborated. She told me that the practice of having rights is understood in Tzotzil as *ichbail ta mu'k*. This is as Roberto told me, a practice that requires respect but it also entails acknowledging others. It is the mutual respect for freedom of being, talking just because you exist in that space. The literal translation of *ichbail ta mu'k* is acknowledging the greatness of people and things. Only through the recognition of the greatness of the things around them can, people respect others. This practice as well as the others described above is not individualistic by nature. They require the active presence of either another individual or the collectivity. However, the practice is deeper than this. It entails recognition from one's heart of the heart of the other. A simple example of this is the way in which people say hello in Tzotzil. This type of greeting involves acknowledging the existence of the person you are greeting. To say hello, one asks 'Does your heart exists?' The answer is always 'My heart exists here.' The conception of rights for the Zapatistas requires recognition and acceptance of indigenous communities' presence and their thought.

For this reason, from 1994 through 2001, the period during which the Zapatistas were at war and in talks with the government, their main claim was the recognition of indigenous communities' presence and their thought and thus, their culture. In the autonomous government, people practice *ichbail ta mu'k* as the basis for exercising their right to exist and live within their community. Acts of citizenship entail the production of activist citizens who claim their right to claim rights (Isin, 2012a). So, not only are the Zapatistas acting in accordance to their traditions and evoking practices that are familiar to their traditions, but the rights that are being claimed are echoing the events of visibility described in the previous chapter. Therefore, the Zapatistas are acting in accordance to the events of this visibility as the conception of rights they have and put in practice while governing promote the recognition and visibility of each of the members.

The Zapatista construction of autonomous government is composed of two main elements that are mutually inclusive: the collective (in terms of reinforcing the role of the community as opposed to the individual); and horizontal power sharing. For this reason, not only was the Zapatista government as an institution examined in this section but also the attitudes and roles of the community towards it. According to Isin, 'acts of citizenship' are those that "create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones, pose their claims in enduring and creative expressions and most of all, are actual moments that shift established practices, status and order" (Isin, 2008, p. 39). The autonomous government that the Zapatistas are building emerged as a reaction to the existing political system. Although this form of government created new possibilities for the Zapatistas that enabled indigenous communities to claim rights that they had been deprived of for years, it also uses features that are by nature associated with the state, such as the Mexican flag, the national anthem or simple things as the arrangements of a governmental office. It is for this reason that the autonomous government is indeed a process of deconstruction and construction, in which there is a rejection of state power by bringing back their own practices reflected in their languages to form a government. It could be claim then that for the Zapatistas forming a government is not a matter of the community granting power to an indigenous institution but an act that equally shares their own understanding of power between 'authorities' and the people.

6.3 Autonomy as Scale

'Acts of citizenship' Isin argues, are ways people have to become political and emerge as activist citizens who create sites and scales of struggle (Isin, 2008).When referring to 'acts of citizenship' sites are understood as the spaces through which people act. Whether physical or not, they provide a symbolic meaning through which activist citizens may orient themselves to perform acts (Isin, 2012a). Scales, according to Isin, are not meant to be approached as containers, but as dynamic and evolving, formed by sites of struggle and contestation (Isin, 2012a). Scales then are important to study as they help to define the parameters to understand the effects of such acts, as these show the reach and scope the (Isin, 2012a). It could be claimed that autonomy is the scale that determines the reach of the acts performed by the Zapatistas. As seen in the last section, the acts of citizenship performed by the Zapatistas consist of a process of deconstruction and construction to shape their particular way or political organisation based on bringing back their indigenous traditions. The enactment and re-enactment of this acts are always performed autonomously and to construct their autonomy. Seeing autonomy like this, it becomes a

social construct that symbolises and gives significance to the Zapatistas activities rather than an end that needs to be achieved.

Guyer (2003) provides an explanation of Kant's definition of autonomy, suggesting that for Kant autonomy is the capacity to decide for oneself the laws upon which one is to perform an action (Guyer, 2003). Regardless of the debates around Kant's theory of autonomy and its implication for the construction of morality, it is worth highlighting the essence of this definition, which is one's ability to execute actions according to one's beliefs. Holloway's Marxist understanding of autonomy is as a "negation and an alternative doing" (Holloway, 2010, p. 909). He argues that autonomy is a rejection of being part of a system of domination that imposes a series of activities that could or may be incompatible to ones' own believes. His argument is based on the work of Marx and Engels, which make reference to two activities; one is labour which is an unpleasant activity imposed by a system of domination that people reject; and the second is doing, which is an activity that leads to self-determination. For Holloway, autonomy is the rejection of labour through the performance of doings (Holloway, 2010). What is relevant from this conception of autonomy is that autonomy entails a negation of an unwanted or oppressed system, which in the Zapatista context could be the Mexican state that opens a possibility of doings or acting to produce activist citizenship.

Another conception of autonomy as '(im)possibility' is explored by Böhm, Dinerstein and Spicer (2010). Following Holloway, they argue that autonomy is an (im)possibility for two reasons. First, autonomy, although it cannot be achieved in its totality, is possible because it becomes an idea of hope that people or groups seek to one day achieve. Understood in this sense, autonomy becomes what Holloway suggests, a negation against a dominant form of power and as such the idea of conflicts is *per se* included in this perception. Then, it is argued that autonomy becomes a site of political struggle over what it could possibly mean in practice. The second reason is that autonomy is understood as (im)possible because the ideology and dynamics of social movements are intrinsically linked with political, historical, social and economic arrangements from which they cannot escape (Bohm et al., 2010). Dinerstein takes this first reason further and argues that "autonomous organising is a tool for prefiguring alternatives with political imagination" (Dinerstein, 2015, p. 2). Prefiguration is understood as "a process of learning hope" (Dinerstein, 2015, p. 2). Autonomy understood as organising hope, as suggested by Dinerstein, combines three modes such as negation, creation and the production of excess (Dinerstein, 2015). Drawing on this perspective, we can understand that the Zapatistas use the idea of

autonomy and hope to arrange the possibility of another world. The mode in which the Zapatistas make use of the idea of autonomy is as negation, against capitalism and the implementation of neoliberal policies in Mexico. It is through negating the implementation of such policies that the Zapatistas are able to construct their own project and bring back their traditions as valid forms of organisation.

Although Holloway and Dinerstein are right in suggesting that autonomy *per se* is not a fixed concept and that there are several processes of construction, both base their arguments and conclusions on a Marxist perspective. As useful these arguments are to understand this perception of autonomy, they do not completely fit in perceiving autonomy as a scale from which activist citizens define their acts. If we consider that autonomy could be understood as the negation of power that gives groups a possibility of action and if the Zapatistas' acts of citizenship are (as shown above) acts of resistance, then it could be claimed that autonomy is the scope of the Zapatistas to perform acts of citizenship and orient for further enactment not only in the name of autonomy but in its practice.

Autonomy, then, represents for the Zapatistas the mode used to perform their acts. It can be argued that the Zapatistas perform their acts against capitalism and the implementation of neoliberal policies. However, these acts also aim to consolidate the Zapatistas' original practices on diverse areas such as education, government and territorial organisation among others. For this reason, as my teacher Roberto argues, constructing a *lekil kuxlejal,* which translates in to living a dignified and full life is what autonomy, for the Zapatistas, is based on. As with many phrases or words in Tzotzil providing an exact translation is difficult. *Lekil kuxlejal* is made of a set of principles that are present in every single indigenous activity. *Lekil kuxlejal* encompasses the idea that education is a mutual process that is conducted on a daily basis. This process is enriched by feelings of love towards the community, freedom, and equality, trust in being together and feeling closer so that one could not be a stranger to the other. *Lekil kuxlejal* is not an individual practice, it is conducted against individuality and reinforcing the idea of the collective.

It is by having these principles that are in the indigenous practices and by the Zapatistas bringing them into to practice while performing daily collective activities, that they are bringing back indigenous communities' histories, ancient practices and languages, and hence their autonomy as valid forms of political, social and economic organisation. For

example, Roberto thinks that speaking Spanish is a good means for communication with people outside his community. However, according to him, this is an imposed language, as he does not feel it in the heart. He explained to me that having a government and schools that work in Mayan derived languages makes him feel he can act with more freedom. When we talked about the idea of *lekil kuxlejal* in one of the collective sessions, Roberto, María and the other members of the school explained that it is not something that is fully developed or it can be translated into Spanish in a word. The Mexican government still to some extent constrains their freedom, education, and ways of organisation, as it still frequently attack the Zapatista community using various means not only by means of violence but using the radio, magazines, soap operas and even sports. However, with the principles that compose the *lekil kuxlejal* in mind, the Zapatista fight aims to to rescue and bring back their own ways of organisation to live what they think is a dignified life.

It could be claimed that the idea of autonomy, or this possibility of constructing a *lekil kuxlejal,* is an image that guide the Zapatistas communities in the performance of their acts as well as in the construction of their political subjectivity. Three examples are worth mentioning, all gathered from the *Little School* textbooks. First is the Zapatistas' own celebrations of special dates. The most important ones are the 17th of November, which marks the beginning of the Zapatista guerrilla movement, the 10th of April (the death of Emiliano Zapata), the 8th of March (the day of the revolutionary women) and the 1st of January (the day of the Zapatista uprising). Regardless of their location, each of the Zapatistas communities celebrates these dates. Often parties and/or talks are organised by the representatives in the MAREZ and in the JBG. Nevertheless, more than the actual celebration, these dates are images, as Anderson (1991) argues, that allow each and every single Zapatista to feel connected as the resonance to each date is shared by everyone. The second example is reflected in food and clothing. The protection of their own clothing is part of the construction of the *lekil kuxlejal.* This is emphasised by the Zapatistas through talks to young people on the importance of traditional clothing. Based on my observations, women are the ones preserving the traditional clothes while men had adopted a more 'westernised' style. Despite this, the Zapatistas try to point out to the younger generations in the indigenous communities the richness of their own clothes and (for example) the significance of the embroidery on the women's blouses or the colours in men's hats. 'Westernised' clothing is rejected not only because it could be considered an image of capitalism but also because wearing traditional clothing means they are carrying their own history and culture. To similar reasons, the Zapatistas try in each of their events, to play traditional indigenous music. While I was in San Andrés Larrainzar, we had a musical

demonstration from the local Zapatista band that plays in special events. In this session, they explained us that this music is played not only for the enjoyment of the audience but also to honour the sun, the rain, or the saints and to pledge for a good harvest or to look after the community. These are expressions of autonomy that allow the indigenous people and communities to focus on not only being a member of the Tzotzil, Tojolabal, Chol and Tzeltal indigenous communities but also on being a Zapatista Tzotzil, Tojolabal, Chol or Tzeltal.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explain the how the construction of the Zapatista government is performed and how these actions could be labelled as acts of citizenship. Government, in the Zapatista case, is an act that is composed of several dimensions. The first dimension is the construction of a 'good government' that favours a horizontal shared power and the collectivity. The second dimension is how the different principles that make this 'rule by obeying' are understood in the original language spoken by most of the indigenous Zapatistas. For the Zapatistas, governing is an act of resistance that encompasses a process of deconstruction and construction of practices: some similarities could be drawn between some Zapatista and Mexican government practices. But for the Zapatistas, the indigenous influence remains the main ingredient of these practices. It could then be argued that these practices are performed in resistance to a political system which denied the political subjectivity of Mexico's indigenous peoples, and aim to bring back their own cultural identity, modes and forms making them activist citizens existing against but beyond the state. As Isin suggests, scales define the reach and scope of the acts of citizenship performed that allow groups to position themselves as citizens (Isin, 2012a). Autonomy becomes the scale from which the Zapatistas attempt to reach when they enact and re-enact acts of citizenship. The Zapatista uprising mobilised indigenous communities to make their own demands. From the beginning this mobilisation entailed recognition of the state. However, after the Mexican Congress failed to honour the San Andrés Accords, the Zapatistas mobilised by the ideal of an autonomous project that allowed them to fulfil their demands. After the Zapatistas entered their phase of 'silence,' autonomy defined their acts through the preservation and protection of indigenous culture. To conclude this chapter, Roberto, a member of La Garrucha JBG, illustrates this point in the *Little School* textbook. He affirms that the 'bad government' could not destroy the Zapatistas' autonomy, because it lives in their hearts and as long as they have a strong *ch'ulel* and their conscience is also strong, will allow them to walk forward and walking collectively (men, women, children and elders), everyone together.

Chapter 7 The Construction of a Political Space

7.1 Introduction

Acts of citizens, as Isin (2008, 2012a) argues, are, about claiming the rights to have rights. The emergence of new actors that had to think outside the sphere of the state, such as the Zapatistas, forces us to think of citizenship not as membership of the state but as an institution that is continuously shaped by social and political struggles (Isin, 2009). The study of acts of citizenship then requires us to analyse groups' or people's doings to become citizens, that is to explore the how and the who involved in claiming rights of citizenship rather than to focus on what constitutes citizenship. It is for these reasons that Isin draws a distinction between active and activist citizenship. Activist citizens will claim rights by undertaking acts that break habits and routines, which, in the case of the Zapatistas condemned them to a situation of oppression and marginalisation. Active citizens, on the other hand will exercise their rights through actions of citizenship (using the same theatre analogy used in Chapter 2), in the same in the same way as scripts are followed. If citizenship is approached with such dynamism and moves beyond solely conceptualising citizenship as being membership of the state then citizenship is a condition that governs and shapes people's or groups' conduct towards others in a body politic (Isin, 2009). The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, this chapter analyses the way in which the acts of citizenship, detailed in the previous chapter, shaped the Zapatista's conduct and relations towards the others. Second it analyses the way in which the

Zapatistas are constructing an alternative space by transforming modes and forms of being political and through which the relationship with the others are exercised.

The structure of this Chapter will be as follow. The first section will analyse academic debates on the definition and differentiation of the concepts of 'us' and 'others.' The second section will analyse the way in which the performativity of the Zapatistas' acts of citizenship allowed them to reconfigure and/or transform the modes and forms of being political. This section will then draw on the arguments in the previous chapters. The final section will analyse the way in which the Zapatistas, through their acts, constructed an alternative space, which is analogous to what Isin terms 'difference machine.' This space is the space in which relationships with 'others' are configured to position them and orient in the articulation of being political.

7.2 Other, Others and We

The public sphere is essential for being political. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Arendt identifies two human activities, action and speech, as important in the construction of the political (Arendt, 1998). As both of these activities could be performed individually and in solitude, it is not until these are performed in the presence of others that they acquire political meaning. Following this logic, it could be claimed that these two mutually inclusive conditions are essential to being political: action and speech within the presence of others. The place where these two conditions coincide is what Arendt terms the public sphere (Arendt, 1998). The public realm in which people become political is constructed through the recognition and interaction of different individuals. Carl Schmitt (1996) argues that the political is defined by the actions with specific characteristics. The distinction upon which such actions rests is on a distinction between 'friend-enemy' (Schmitt, 1996). This distinction allows groups to identify the level of union and separation of being associated. The tension that exists between these two opposing 'others' is what enables us to be political. The 'other' is considered an enemy in the sense of opposition; they are then strangers to which whose existence poses the potentiality of conflict (Schmitt, 1996). However, tensions or conflicts between the distinction of the friend-enemy may arise just by how the other is perceived. For this reason, costumes, traditions, and ideals that people identify with and which unite them as a group may be challenged by the existence of an 'enemy.' Despite the potential threat the presence of the 'other' may entail, its presence or the link a group has towards 'them' is what is significant in the construction of the political.

Edward Said (2003) provides a seminal explanation about the way in which the 'other' is perceived. He argues that Europeans' sense of their shared 'Europeanness' was constructed by highlighting the differences between them and the exotic 'other' of the Orient. As Said recognised the notion of the 'the Orient' in opposition to which the idea of 'Europe' or the 'West' was defined, was largely imaginary, but not in the sense of fallacy but in the sense of an image that opposes but reaffirms the idea of 'the West'(Said, 2003). The construction of 'Orientalism' is based on cultural facts, a particular ideology and an imagery that is interpreted by the 'Europeans' as a sense of difference. It could be argued that although the presence of Europe in the history of the Orient is that of colonisation, the idea of Orientalism reinforces the colonialists' feelings of Western powers and the superiority of Europe. Despite this, the idea of Orientalism helps to understand the importance of the 'other' when referring to group identity. The 'other,' has an important presence when constructing a group's identity as this idea affects on how the 'us' is perceived and the differences helps in the construction as something, which the 'us' is not. For instance, the 'we' conceive the relationship towards the 'other' in Schmittian terms in antagonist terms and vice versa, whereas in Said's understanding the difference between 'us' and the 'others' does not necessarily rely on an antagonism, but on the way the 'us' interpret the differences of the 'others.' It is not my intention to argue in favour of either Schmitt or Said, but just to provide a justification that the presence of the 'other,' as an enemy or not, has a powerful position in conceiving what the 'us' is and is not. Thus, what is important for the study of acts of citizenship, is not who the other is, but the terms through which the relationship among the 'us' and 'other' is constructed and the resonance these relationships have to the 'us.'

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 5 Isin (2009, 2012b) argues that when a group performs an event, which is answerable to justice, it causes a rupture in the given order to claim the rights that group was previously denied. As such, event becomes the first step towards the construction of the group's political subjectivity but it also allows group members to identify who the 'other' is, and the relationship between 'us' and 'them' is later reinforced through the enactment of acts of citizenship (Isin, 2009, 2012b). If Isin is right in asserting that acts of citizenship produce actors, then these acts also shape the way in which these 'newly' formed actors interact and associate with others (Isin, 2008, 2012a; Isin & Nielsen, 2008). Thus, becoming political is "that moment when one constitutes oneself as being capable of judgement about just and unjust, takes responsibility for that judgment, and associates oneself with or against others in fulfilling that responsibility" (Isin, 2002, p.

276). It could be claimed, that the construction of citizenship entails building relationships with the 'others.'

Often this relationship with the 'others' is tightly dependent to the nation-building process crated by the states. Dorman *et al* (2007) suggest, while studying citizenship in post-colonial Africa that nation-building projects directed by the state have the tendency to create or impose certain loyalties to promote unity among a diverse population in which often minority groups get excluded from this process. The consequence of this exclusion is not only the marginalisation of such groups or their potential oppression but the creation of nationalisms that differentiate between the 'us' and 'other' within and beyond the state (Dorman et al., 2007). This suggests that the layers of differentiation between the 'us' and 'them' are not necessarily of an opposing dichotomy, but that in which several differentiations are intertwined. In the case of the Zapatistas, in which political subjectivity is formed as a consequence of a failed nation-building project evidence suggests that the categories between the 'us' and 'them' go beyond a simple dichotomy. According to Isin (2013) the enactment of acts of citizenship which create activist citizens will also produce a differentiation among others who are not members of the group. This differentiation is categorised by Isin as strangers, outsiders, aliens (Isin, 2013). Although there may be levels of differentiation and association the confines of each of the categories are matter of empirical determination (Isin, 2012a). In the Zapatista case, three categories were identified and are explained below. The first one is the opposing 'other' which in this case is the Mexican state, the neoliberal policies implemented in the country and the *partidistas* that are people that live alongside the Zapatistas communities and had an adherence to the ruling political party. The nature of this relation is antagonistic, as tension is identified between them as well as these groups could be considered enemies in the sense that there is an opposition to the Zapatista project. The second category is 'other' as outsiders who are not Zapatistas but have some level of amity with them. The nature of this relationship could cover a range, according to Isin (2002) from solidaristic to agonistic relationships. Finally, this section explores the differentiation within members of the 'we,' or the Zapatistas. While It should be noted that the possibility of difference between groups may weaken or threating a group's identity (Isin, 2002), the empirical data showed that this differentiation exists within in the Zapatismo as well.

7.2.1 The Opposing 'Other'

The first distinction that is mentioned above is the 'other' as a group opposing to the Zapatistas. When I first arrived to Oventik, the initial impression was that a line could be

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drawn between those who were Zapatistas and those who were not. The Caracoles, such as Oventik, are closed spaces guarded by balaclava-wearing members of the Zapatista militia. Using this differentiating feature, it seemed that those who were not using balaclavas or were not in the Caracol were not Zapatistas. While there could be a categorisation of the 'other' composed by those people who do not wear a balaclava, the differentiation of the opposing 'other' is more complex than that. From the Zapatistas declaration, speeches, and so on a distinction of the 'other' as an opposite could be drawn between the Mexican government and the implementation of neoliberal policies and the Zapatistas. Although the embodiment of this opposing other is not as obvious as the persons who are not Zapatistas and are not wearing a balaclava, the resonance of the role of the Mexican government and the implementation of neoliberal politics is still identifiable across the Zapatistas communities.

A thorough reading of the archival material, in particular the Declarations of the Lacandona Jungle suggests a diversity of categories of the 'other.' For instance, in the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, the EZLN states, "

> …today we say 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 group of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups"[70] (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993).

Even though this is a brief extract from the declaration, it represents the essence of this declaration. Two things are worth highlighting. First, with this declaration the EZLN left opened the definition of the 'us' or 'we' which although it was identified it was not delimited. In other words, the EZLN did not explicitly identified who the Zapatistas were. The second is that with this declaration, the EZLN clearly identified the opposing other, which was the Mexican governmental elite. The government is considered an opposing 'other' not because of supposed ethnic differences but because, considering Schmitt, there is a level of disassociation between the Mexican government and the Zapatistas. The nature of such a disassociation is a consequence of a failed state-building project, which in an attempt to unify a diverse population, promoted certain values that were unfamiliar to the indigenous communities excluding them from the state-formation. Regardless of the 'friend-enemy' distinction, the level of association and disassociation is what is relevant in

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[70] "…nosotros hoy decimos ¡Basta!, somos los herederos de los verdaderos forjadores de nuestra nacionalidad, los desposeídos somos millones y llamamos a todos nuestros hermanos a que se sumen a este llamado como el único camino para no morir de hambre ante la ambición insaciable de una dictadura de más de 70 años encabezada por una camarilla de traidores que representan a los grupos más conservadores y vendepatrias" (EZLN Comité Clandestino Revolucionario - Comandancia General, 1993)

this case. The Zapatistas dissociated themselves from the state and all levels of the Mexican government. The EZLN, in its early years, declared its rejection of state power and blamed the Mexican political system, as embodied in the government and the PRI as the state-party, for the indigenous situation. A good example of this can be found in the statements made by the EZLN in early 1994.

In January 1994, the Mexican government announced it would grant an amnesty to all the members of the EZLN who participated in the uprising on the condition that they reintegrate to their communities peacefully. The EZLN issued a press release entitled *'¿De qué nos van a perdonar?'* (What are they going to forgive us?) that states the following:

> ...what do we have to ask forgiveness for? What are they going to forgives us? Of, not starving to death? Of not remaining silent in our misery?...Who ask for forgiveness and who can grant it? Those who, for years and years, sat at a full table were satisfied while we sat with the death that was something we have to deal with on an everyday basis, that at the end it was like one of ours and we managed to loose all fear? Those who filled out bags and souls with declarations and promises? The dead, our dead, so deadly dead of 'natural' causes, that is of measles, whooping cough, dengue, cholera, typhoid, mononucleosis, tetanus, pneumonia, malaria and other gastrointestinal and pulmonary delicacies? Our dead, so mostly dead, so democratically dead of grief because nobody did anything, because all the dead, our dead, went just like that without anyone taking count of them, without anyone saying ENOUGH!...? Those who denied us the right and the gift of our people to govern and govern us? Those who denied respect for our customs, our colour, our language? Those who treat us as foreigners in our own land and ask us for papers and obedience to law whose existence and fairness we ignore? Those who tortured us, imprisoned, murdered and disappeared for the serious 'crime' of wanting a piece of land, not a big piece, not a small piece, just a piece which something could be taken out to complete the stomach? Who has to ask for forgiveness and who can grant it?[71] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994a)

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[71] ¿De qué tenemos que pedir perdón? ¿De qué nos van a perdonar? ¿De no morirnos de hambre? ¿De no callarnos en nuestra miseria?...¿Quién tiene que pedir perdón y quién puede otorgarlo? ¿Los que, durante años y años se sentaron ante una mesa llena y se saciaron mientras con nosotros se sentaba la muerte, tan cotidiana, tan nuestra que acabamos de dejar de tener miedo? ¿los que nos llenaron las bolsas y el alma de declaraciones y promesas? ¿Los muertos, nuestros muertos, tan mortalmente muertos de muerte 'natural', es decir, de sarampión, tosferina, dengue, cólera, tifoidea, mononucleosis, tétanos, pulmonía, paludismo y otras lindezas gastrointestinales y pulmonares? ¿Nuestros muertos, tan mayoritariamente muertos, tan democráticamente muertos de pena porque nadie hacía nada, porque todos los muertos, nuestros muertos, se iban así nomás, sin que nadie llevara la cuenta, sin que nadie dijera, por fin, el '¡YA BASTA!'...? Los que nos negaron el derecho y don de nuestras gentes de gobernar y gobernarnos? ¿Los que negaron el respeto a nuestra lengua? ¿Los que nos tratan como extranjeros en nuestra propia tierra y nos piden papeles y obediencia a una ley cuya existencia y justeza ignoramos? ¿Los que nos torturaron, apresaron, asesinaron y desaparecieron pro el grave 'delito' de querer un pedazo de tierra, no un pedazo grande, no un pedazo chico, sólo un pedazo al que se le pudiera sacar algo para completar el estómago? ¿Quién tiene que pedir perdón y quién puede otorgarlo? (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994a)

This press release not only pointed out the government's responsibility for the poor living conditions the indigenous communities were forced to live in but also, among all these questions the EZLN rose two important questions that are worth considering: who had to ask for forgiveness and who had to grant it? The delimitation of these two questions allows us to identify two opposing groups. As such, there is a dissociation from the government by identifying it as the oppressor, and by declaring since the early days the Zapatistas reluctance to assume state power; as Said (2003) mentions, the 'other' is still present and a relationship can be identified in between the 'us' and 'them.' The question raised by Marcos in this press release challenged the balance of power between them. The EZLN not only considered the state as the oppressor and the indigenous communities as victims but also claimed the power to act against and beyond the state. Thus, the presence of the 'other' becomes crucial in the identity formation of the 'us.' Constructing identity through what the group is not or by the presence of an opposing other, is creating an identity according to Stephen (2001) in the Zapatistas context through a discursive counter process that consist of "essentialisation and homogenization" (L. Stephen, 2001, p. 66). The opposing relation with the 'other' makes the 'us,' in this case the Zapatistas, to adopt a strategic position from which a homogenous identity is developed through discourse. As Stephen argues it is through the other, identified as the Mexican state, that the Zapatistas discursively construct their identity in opposition to who they are not. In addition, although the homogenisation within the groups could be perceived through discursive practices, the empirical evidence shows that heterogeneity exists among members of the 'others' as well as members of 'us' as it will be explained below.

Neoliberal policies and the capitalist system could also be located within this layer or the 'other' as the opposing, alongside the government with which they are associated. It was not a coincidence that the EZLN uprising occurred on the same day as NAFTA came into effect. While capitalism and neoliberal policies could be embodied in the government as it adopted and applied them, they are not mutually inclusive in the sense that the government did not always follow this ideology and policies as guiding principles. Capitalism and neoliberal policies constitute, a significant part of what the Zapatistas are not, and fight against.

During the early years of the decade of the 1990s, neoliberalism came in to vogue among Latin American governments, including the Mexican government. As explained in Chapter 2, Mexico was recovering from a financial crisis that hit the country in 1982. This recovery involved in the implementation of austerity and market oriented policies that lead to the

privatisation of key industries. The immediate success of these policies meant the country was considered an emerging and growing economy (Holloway & Peláez, 1998a). But the policies did not bring the same successful results to the indigenous communities, whose living standards at best stagnated as a result of these policies. As these communities were included in the nation-building project as a peasants or *campesinos* that is as a working force rather than bearers of a culture, the combination of austerity and market-oriented policies and the disadvantaged position these communities were living contributed to their stagnation. The entrepreneurs who emerged in Chiapas with the support of the government introduced new agricultural techniques that were not suited to the communal indigenous life. These neoliberal policies corroded the indigenous communities' living conditions and promoted the disintegration of these communities as there were cases of immigration of the people to cities and the United States as cheap labour (Cerceña & Barreda, 1998).

The neoliberal administration of the economy and work opposes directly the modes of production employed in indigenous Zapatistas communities. This can be illustrated with the way in which these communities understand work. Roberto and María, my Tzotzil teachers, explained the meaning of work in this language. In Tzotzil, work is understood in different forms. Each one has a different word and is performed in a different way. The first word is called *amtel,* which refers to work done communally. This work has its own time, which comes from the heart, and it is not forced or imposed*.* The second way of performing a job is what they understand as *koltabail*, a work done in reciprocity. For instance, *pak k'ak'al* refers to an exchange of one's working day. For instance, when a person or a family is unable to work on their fields due to issues such as illness, the neighbours or other members of the community could always be asked to do the work and in exchange the person or family being helped would work for them in return when agreed. It should be noted that the main difference among these understandings of work does not reside in the importance of the common good, but in the lack of monetary reward each entails. The last form of work is then the opposite of this, which is that when people get paid with money. This opposing form is known as *kanal* that for the Zapatista communities, according to Roberto and María is not a dignified form work. The reason behind this relates to the categorisation of indigenous communities as peasants or *campesinos.* The indigenous people worked in the fields of mayor landowners, growing and harvesting crops that were not for their consumption, for which they were forced to work long hours and were paid a small salary. This word is an adaptation of the Spanish word *ganar* (to earn) and according to Roberto and María this type of work is what most

indigenous communities were forced to do when neoliberal policies were implemented in the country.

After the end of the Revolution in 1920, there was an intention to institutionalise land reform as Cárdenas allocated rural land for communal agricultural uses and the *ejidos* (as the plot of land were called), were meant to be worked by the indigenous people collectively with the intention of supporting and promoting agriculture key for the development of the Mexican economy (Knight, 2010). Despite this intention, the allocation of *ejidos* after the presidency of Cárdenas was sporadic and eventually these were gradually privatised over the time (Knight, 2010). During Carlos Salinas' period as president (1988-1994), there was a reform to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which related to the possession of land and protected the *ejidos that* formalised the privatisation of these lands. Along with this reform, governmental support for the maintenance of agricultural activities came to an end. The end of subsidies and the possibility that owners could sell their land, which was created by the reform of Article 27, affected the indigenous communities' development, as most had no option but to sell their land in exchange for money to survive (Foley, 1995).

There are two examples in the Zapatista written material that shows that the draconian implementation of neoliberalism and capitalism could be perceived as the opposing others. The first example is the First and Second Declaration Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity. The First Declaration was released as an international invitation for people oppressed by the implementation of these policies to discuss and share forms and way of resistance, fight as well as how people from getting to know the Zapatistas' proposals to oppose neoliberalism (Marcos, 1996a). The first meeting, the Intergalactic Meeting Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity was held in the Aguascalientes of La Realidad from July to August 1996. At the end of this meeting, the Second Declaration was released. It proposed taking the discussions further in different geographical locations around the world (Marcos, 1996b). The second example is the series of seminars organised by the Zapatistas called *Critical Thought Against the Capitalist Hydra*. These series of seminars were held on May 2015 in Zapatista territory in San Cristóbal in Chiapas. Several *comandantes* and *comandantas* Zapatistas spoke along with several academics and representatives of other oppressed or marginalised groups. The Zapatista delegation wanted to show how their communities were resisting the capitalist order in a country plagued with neoliberal policies. From these seminars, a series of three volume books were released with a compilation of the speeches of every participant. Even though

neoliberalism and capitalism are not verbally recognised in the everyday lives of the members of the Zapatista communities, as it was grasp from my observations and talks, they are fully aware that the benefits of these governmental policies are non-existent.[72]

At another level, especially that of the Zapatista army the policies are identified and the *comandantes* and *comandantas* have constructed a discourse against them. A clear example of these are the speeches delivered by the members of the EZLN in the seminar series and later published as the first volume of the *Critical Thought Against the Capitalist Hydra*, in which they talk how capitalism and the implementation of neoliberal polices had created a storm that could vanish the communities of the word. As such, this volume is organised in three parts. First, the Zapatista interpretation of the storm, second the way in which the communities had faced that storm and how communal work had been the important mean to resist this storm, and the third are the possibilities the Zapatistas give to the world to face this storm. At the end, both layers contribute to the anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal discourse of the Zapatismo. As this discourse constructed by the EZLN *comandantes* and *comandantas* and which can be found in the archive, have clear that Capitalism and the implementation of neoliberal policies is the main reason for the indigenous communities' stagnation, in the Zapatista every day, without naming or knowing in deep the consequences of capitalism and neoliberal policies or what these entail, members of these communities face the destruction caused by these policies. A clear example of this is the statements delivered by the members of the CCRI in the

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[72] Although Roberto and María, my teachers, knew about capitalism as it was part of the school training and read several books about it and the different speeches of Marcos with the time as they told me when I asked in the lessons, all the other Zapatistas I spoke with, did not use the term neoliberalism or capitalism to explain their situation but they are fully aware of the negative effects in their communities. For example, I spoke to a Zapatista guard in the Caracol of Oventick, and I was asking about their type of work he was doing. He told me that he decided to be a Zapatista for the fact that he never saw any beneficial change in the programmes that came from the government. He mentioned to me that before the Zapatismo, the land was in the hand of few *finqueros* (or small landowners) and they received a small salary for working land that was not owned by him. Due to this salary, he was most of the time indebted with his *patron* (employer or master) as he often borrowed money to buy food, crops to plant for self-consuming purposes, as he said 'to live.' However, he told me that people in his community shared this same condition, and with the Zapatismo the members of his community that joined the movement decided to work together to recover land that is now used for collective purposes and with benefits that, according to him, are much more visible than before. A similar example could be found in the *Little School,* specifically in the narration of Ana, an education facilitator of the Roberto Barrios Caracol. She states that the people that work in the field do not set the prices for their crops, it is the intermediaries that do so because they have a great influence among the markets. In addition to this, the money the people receive from governmental programmes, Ana adds, is a small quantity, which force people to live indebted. A clear example of this Anna says is that in the MAREZ where she lives there is a Zapatista grocery shop and every time *partidistas* received their money from the government they go to the shop to buy their things, however they often buy more what they can pay for so the shop allows them to pay later.

'Critical Thought vs. The Capitalist Hydra' seminars. *Comandanta* Rosalinda argued that it is through the understanding of exploitation that people adhere and perform as Zapatistas "if the fathers and mothers understood, they sent their daughters to be part of the militia, to be insurgents. And these *compañeras* did the work with incredible desire because they already understood what exploitation in the bad system was. This is how the *compañeras*' participation began"[73] (Comandanta Rosalinda, 2015). Another example comes with the statements of Sub*comandante* Moisés while explaining the meaning of resistance as a weapon for the Zapatista fight. Moisés argues that

> …because it was understood that resistance is also a weapon in the struggle, and organizing resistance was important, we are able to be here today and you can see this in our actions; that's how we are battling capitalism. For us, resistance and rebellion has no end. That's how we understand it in practice, because through our resistance and rebellion we can meet our needs[74] (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015b).

As can be grasped from the examples above, there is indeed a discourse around members of the military branch of the Zapatismo but although this is not the same for the support bases, they recognise a failure in the governmental policies to reach to their communities.

Finally, indigenous people or the mestizos who are aligned with the government constitute the last layer of the opposing 'other'. They are identified by the Zapatistas as the *partidistas*. This category includes people who live in adjacent or nearby communities but who do not identify as Zapatistas and/or discredit and destroy the Zapatistas' efforts to construct their project for autonomy. There are two clear examples of this. The first is the Zapatista market and the Rebel Primary School in San Andrés Larrainzar. While I was visiting the Zapatista market, María (my teacher) told us how difficult it was to gain control over the land as often the *partidistas* destroyed overnight the buildings the Zapatistas were constructing. Unlike the city market, which opens daily, this Zapatista market opens only during the weekend. This gives the Zapatistas living in the surrounding communities an opportunity to travel to San Andrés[75] to buy and sell their products. The Rebel Primary School also suffered from *partidistas* attacks. When we visited one of the

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[73] "Si entendieron los padres y madres, sus hijas mandaron de ser milicianas, de ser insurgentes. Y esas compañeras hicieron ese trabajo con mucha gana porque ya entendieron cómo está la explotación del mal sistema. Así empezamos la participación delas compañeras." (Comandanta Rosalinda, 2015)

[74] "…se vio que sí es una arma de lucha de por sí también el resistir, y el organizar lo que es la resistencia, entonces estamos acá y se ve en los hechos, y lo estamos toreando pues así al capitalismo. Nuestra resistencia y rebeldía para nosotros, nosotras no tiene fin la resistencia. Así lo entendemos por nuestras prácticas que estamos haciendo porque con nuestra resistencia y nuestra rebeldía resolvemos una necesidad. (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015b).

[75] Sometimes the roads from the adjacent communities to San Andrés, which is the municipality, are not accessible by public transport on a daily basis during the weekdays. As public transport is available during the weekends it is easy for the Zapatistas to travel to San Andrés.

Zapatista's rebel schools, I was told that the Zapatistas had recovered a school building and started to install electricity and running water. After this was done collectively, a group of *partidistas* came and took the building back. The market and the school are two of the most visible examples of the *partidistas*. However, hostilities from this group occur on a daily basis. The behaviour of this group clearly contrasts with the Zapatista's beliefs of collective and 'good' government. The relationship that the Zapatistas and the *partidistas* have could be the only one that could be explained in Schmittian terms of 'friend-enemy,' as tensions and the possibility of conflict is latent among these groups. This opposing relationship runs both ways. For the *partidistas,* the Zapatistas are a challenge to their existence. For the Zapatistas the level of tension with the *partidistas* is the essence of becoming political. It is not the intention here to provide a justification for the violent activities each of the groups has performed, but to explain that, although there are ethnic similarities between these groups, the way in which each of them perform their daily activities in opposition is what enables the Zapatistas to sketch their political subjectivity.

7.2.2 The 'Other' as Strangers and Outsiders

As stated above, Schmitt suggests that the 'friend-enemy' distinction is composed in terms of association and disassociation among its members. However, this association and dissociation should not be understood in absolute terms. The group itself defines the degree of association, as it was stated above. Chantal Mouffe (1999) argues that the construction of the 'us' is made by recognition of the other. To understand the construction of political subjectivity among groups, Mouffe differentiates in between the political and politics. For her, the political are the social relations that emerge between societies and such relations are inherently antagonistic. Politics, are the means such as institutions, practices, discourses that organise groups to transform antagonist relations into agonistic relations (Mouffe, 1999). In other words, Mouffe is aware that while the category of the adversary cannot be abolished, the 'other' should not be merely understood as the enemy. She argues that the construction of identification with certain groups is a continual process that is never finished (Mouffe, 2005). If Mouffe is right in arguing that the process of identification is not fixed, but that this process could be influenced by factors that depend on the 'other' as much as the 'us.' For Mouffe, the political is constructed through agonistic relations within adversaries (Mouffe, 2005). Understanding the 'other' in agonistic terms entails "belonging to the same political association [as others], as sharing a common symbolic space within the conflict takes place" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20). So, if according to Mouffe, the 'other' as an adversary or enemy exists and suggests that the conception of the 'other' is possible in agonistic terms

through politics then it is worth examining how this layer otherness is constructed in the Zapatista context.

The Zapatismo have been categorised as an important part of the re-emergence of the radical left in Mexico (Petras, 1997). They challenged governmental institutions and opened up debates on issues such as democracy, land reform and social justice that had been forgotten or taken for granted in the country (Petras, 1997). Since the emergence of the movement, the Zapatista have built relations with the established left, as were numerous leftist parties, most prominently the PRD (Revolutionary Democratic Party), operated within a system dominated by the PRI as the state-party. In the early years of the Zapatismo, various members of the PRD sympathised with the EZLN and the CCRI (Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee) had contact with the PRD, which allowed them to have an affable relationship. Although their rules were different, with the main discrepancy over whether to assume state power, both wanted to change the political system the PRI had established. For this reason, and before 2001, the EZLN and the PRD had an agonistic relationship, in the sense that although both had conceived the PRI as the opposing 'other' there were some tension between the Zapatistas and the PRD on the way each of them visualised the transition to democracy. While the former aimed for autonomous recognition at the Constitutional level, the later aimed to consolidate democracy through official institutions.

An example of this relationship is the relationship with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Cárdenas was a founding member of the PRD and a presidential candidate for the same party for the presidential period of 1994-2000 as such, he was invited by the EZLN to visit Zapatistas territories. During Cárdenas' visit in May 1994, Marcos gave a speech, in which he acknowledged that the presidential candidates understood the Zapatista's demands. He argued, that

> the PRD is itself democratic, it can deceive us and deceive them, but it is certain that the democratic tomorrow in Mexico will not arise from these political methods. There are people willing to give their lives for a party project, but what democracy, freedom and justice the PRD offers us. The one that practices in the international selection of its candidates and takes it to disqualify by decree to all the political forces that are not the PRD, or that do not accept to be subject to it, or take it to imitate this party politically and in nothing to be differentiated to the project of the party in power, what makes the PRD to jump between the political spectrum and appear yesterday on the left, today in the centre and tomorrow where? This changes makes the PRD to integrate with the powerful, carrying the flag of an economic project that will cost so much and did cost to the country. What is the difference between the PRD, the PAN and the PRI?

> Are not these parties offering the same economic project? Are not these parties practicing the same internal democracy?...The only force capable of carrying out the triptych freedom, democracy and justice, and changing the whole world, is the strength of the people, the strength of those without party or organisation, of the voiceless and faceless. Whoever truly gains this strength will be invincible.[76] (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994e)

Marcos then, emphasised the fact that although the PRD was fighting for democracy, the EZLN firmly believed that a democratic Mexico was not going to be accomplished using party platforms. While there was an agreement on the need to move forward from what the PRI had built, how this was to be done was always the main cause of discrepancies in this relationship. In other words, though both had common grounds on key topics such as democracy and social justice, the way in which these were going to be accomplished was always a matter of tension. This agonistic relationship was enough to agree upon a common ground and for the Zapatistas to find in the PRD an ally in Congress at the time when the San Andrés Peace Accords were discussed. Nevertheless, tension still existed in this agonistic relationship between the PRD and the Zapatistas, and this situation deteriorated when Congress failed to include the Accords into the indigenous law. The Zapatista phase of 'silence,' since 2003, and the rejection to governmental elite, changed this agonistic relationship to an antagonism.

The Zapatistas relate to the civil society as 'other' as strangers or outsiders. Although civil society is a broad concept that can encompass the population of a country, the civil society for the Zapatistas[77] is comprised of workers, *campesinos,* teachers, students, house workers, some academics, members of LGBT and other social movements also falls within in this category of the 'other' as strangers or outsiders with whom the Zapatistas have a relationship. Thus, civil society here is understood as comprising non-antagonistic others but containing 'associated others' with whom there are shared ideals and goals.

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[76] "el PRD es en sí mismo democrático, se puede engañarnos, y engañarse, pero es seguro que el mañana democrático en México no nacerá de estos métodos políticos. Hay gente dispuesta a dar la vida por un proyecto partidario, pero qué democracia, libertad y justica nos ofrece el PRD. ¿La que practica en la selección interna de sus candidatos y lo que lleva a descalificar por decreto a todas las fuerzas políticas que no sean el PRD, o que no acepten sujetarse a él, o que lo llevan a practicar el mimetismo político y en nada diferenciarse al proyecto del partido en el poder, lo que lo hace practicar malabarismo político y aparecer ayer en la izquierda, hoy en el centro y mañana en dónde? Lo que lleva a congraciarse con los poderosos, llevando la bandera de un proyecto económico que tanto costara y costará al país. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre el PRD, el PAN y el PRI? ¿No ofrecen el mismo proyecto económico? ¿No practican la misma democracia interna?...La única fuerza capaz de llevar a cabo el tríptico libertad, democracia y justicia, y de cambiar el mundo entero, es la fuerza del pueblo, la de los sin partido ni organización, la de los sin voz y sin rostro. Quien gana con la verdad esta fuerza, será invencible." (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 1994e)

[77] Although the Zapatistas often make appeals to the international civil society, for the purpose of this work the focus is going to be made only in the national level.

In Tzotzil, as was explained to me in my lessons, there are two ways in which the pronouns 'us' is named. The first way refers to 'us' as everything, i.e. all of us. The second way refers to 'us' that is different, an 'us' that recognises difference and diversity but still belonging to the same body. It is precisely this second way of referring 'us' that Zapatistas frame their relationship with the civil society. While this relationship with the civil society encompasses a level of association, they are still considering the 'other' in the sense of what the Zapatistas relate with this group but do not belong to it. Two examples illustrate this relationship. The first is the Second Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, in which the EZLN emphasised that the fight was not exclusive to the indigenous communities by stating "everything for everyone, nothing for us" (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b).[78] The 'us' in this quote makes reference to those sectors of the population who were also adversely affected by the Mexican government and/or the neoliberal policies applied in Mexico. A level of association can be identified here as both groups share the same causes for their problem; the means and modes for resistance are different. Evidence of this could be found in this same declaration. The EZLN stated that "Chiapas will not have a real solution if Mexico is not solved" (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b).[79] As a differentiation could be drawn between the characteristics of the civil society and the Zapatistas, the most obvious being the rural vs. urban background, this does not undermine the level of association between them. In other words, the civil society, identified by the Zapatistas, is not perceived by them as members or militants of the EZLN but as a group that shares the same causes of the problems brought by the government (which remains understood as the opposing 'other').

The second example is found in the speeches delivered by members of the civil society and the Zapatistas during the March of the Colour or the Earth in 2001 and the Other Campaign in 2005-2006. In the speech delivered by Marcos in the city of Puebla, during the March of the Colour of the Earth he spoke about dignity, one of the Zapatistas demands. He made an analogy between dignity and a drawbridge, suggesting that before this drawbridge is lifted there are two distinct sides: one is 'us,' referring to the Zapatistas and the 'other' are those who are not Zapatistas. But when the drawbridge closes, the two sides meet: the 'us' interact with the 'other' and vice-versa. Marcos suggested that as both sides of the drawbridge are needed, neither the 'us' or the 'other' is better or more important. Dignity requires both sides to be themselves and to recognize the other side's

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[78] "Para todos todo, nada para nosotros" (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b)
[79] "Chiapas no tendrá solución real sino se soluciona México" (C. C. R.-C. G. del EZLN, 1994b).

rights to be themselves too. For dignity to exists, the 'other' is essential, so the 'us' and the 'other' are always forging a relationship (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2001d). The Other Campaign, which took place across Mexico, had as an objective to understand and learn about the different fights against the government and capitalism across Mexico. While this campaign was barely covered by mainstream media, as the Zapatistas were in their period of 'silence,' the Zapatistas assured that their support towards all these fights around Mexico would not ceased (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003d).

7.2.3 'We'

There is a tendency to perceive the Zapatista movement as a unified group. But just as it was possible to identity different sorts of 'others' perceived by the Zapatistas depending on their level of association or disassociation with them, it is also possible to identify different levels of involvement within the 'we' of the Zapatistas themselves. It is not the intention of this section to lay out a list of characteristics that could allow one to identify the individual's degree of allegiance to the Zapatismo. While the material contained in the Zapatista archive refers to the movement and its members as whole, empirical evidence gathered during my visits to San Andrés Larrainzar, an indigenous town where Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas coexist does reveal some complexities. It is also worth clarifying that variation within the 'we' or 'us' do not rely on ethnic difference. In San Andrés Larrainzar there are two main indigenous ethnic groups, the Tzotzil and the Tzeltal. Their languages, traditions and costumes slightly vary. However, their involvement with the Zapatistas is not subject to these ethnic characteristics.

During my stay in the Oventik Caracol, many individuals within the Zapatista community discussed these various levels and layers within the 'we' of the movement. To take one example, Miguel, the cook at the language school, talked to me about the social conditions of his community and the different jobs he had. His comments help illustrate that the 'we' is not as homogenous as it is understood to be. Miguel (an ethnic Tzotzil) and his partner Maribel (an indigenous Tzeltal woman), met in the Caracol of Oventik, where they performed different activities as their share of the collective work for the organisation. Miguel's contribution to the Zapatista fight is in education. He told me how he became a facilitator in the secondary school. Zapatista education functions autonomously from the government educational system. The Caracol of Oventik, for example, hosts the Language School, which is opened to the general public, and the Rebel Secondary School. Miguel told me that to be a facilitator he had to finish a training course and while he was doing that, he

contributed working in the kitchen for the Language and Secondary Schools as both are run as boarding schools.

Before he started these activities, Miguel had different jobs at constructions outside Chiapas, but within Mexico. These jobs had nothing to with the Zapatistas, but he also told me that he had taken several jobs like this while he was on a break from his training. Although he considers himself a Zapatista and in favour of the Zapatista autonomy project, going 'out' of his Zapatista community was not seen as a bad practice. He recognised that the payments received from these non-Zapatismo jobs were not fair and he felt as he exploited. This exploitation, according to Miguel, was mainly reflected in the salary. The salary he received for the work he was doing was in his point of view unfair. Not only he did have to pay, with his salary, for food and accommodation but ha had to save some money to take back home. As the priority was saving money, the quality of the food he bought was poor compared to what he gets in his hometown. As for his accommodation during the length of his job, he shared a room in the house with three other men and the price he was paying for that was still high. He then told me that the money he earned for his hard work was not worth the sacrifices he made being outside his Zapatista community. Miguel also told me that he was offered help to cross the Mexican border to get to the United States illegally, as his brother lives there. He decided not to go because he thought he was also going to be exploited in any of the jobs he could possibly have there. Currently, Miguel is a facilitator of Education in the Rebel Secondary School where he teaches history and for that he and Maribel spend at least three months a year in Oventik. During this time Maribel, who also works in the education branch, teaches traditional indigenous weaving methods to the students of the language school. According to Miguel, every time there is an opportunity to work outside the Zapatistas' communities he considers taking that opportunity although he has recognised that he has been doing it with less frequency now that the communal tasks within his community and in the Caracol consumes much of his time. For instance, all the education facilitators in Oventik formed a coffee collective, in which they grow and cultivate coffee that is later sold in the Caracol shops.

Miguel's case illustrates the differentiation or diversity within the Zapatismo and the way this differences result to be secondary to their membership as Zapatistas. On the one side, his case shows that there is a possibility of, figuratively speaking, leaving and entering the Zapatismo. By having a job outside the confines of the Zapatismo, this does not represent a threat or sets a bad example to the other members of the Zapatista community. Rather,

this experience –and the sharing of it- can be seen as strengthening the Zapatismo ideology and collective commitment due to feelings of exploitation when working outside the Zapatistas communities. On the other side, we see how through Miguel and Maribel's relationship across ethnic lines, the being and belonging as Zapatista exits concurrently with other forms and expressions of identity. Thus, instead of finding ways to homogenise Miguel and Maribel's relationship they recognise each other as Tzotzil and Tzeltal indigenous with different traditions and languages. The recognition of differences and diversity of the Zapatistas is a common practice that is not particular to inter-ethnic couples in the Zapatistas territories. This recognition of the ethnic differences and ethnic diversity within the Zapatismo is logical. The Zapatistas need to be recognised as a group composed by ethnic diversity, a failure to do so will result a failure to understand the main underpinning of the Zapatismo: the recognition and promotion of the different ethnic cultures within the Zapatistas communities is an essential part of building what becoming a Zapatista is.

The shoemaker in San Andrés Larrainzar is in a similar situation, as his adherence to Zapatismo ideology and expected behaviours could be understood with the same fluidity as the case of Miguel. The shoemaker is married and has three children and they are all Zapatistas as he told me. Two of his children go to the Zapatista Autonomous Primary School in San Andrés where they live and the other is under medical treatment in the Zapatista clinic. He has a shoe shop in San Andrés were he makes boots that are later sold in the cooperative shops in the Oventik Caracol. Along this shoe shop, he also works in the Zapatista Autonomous Primary School in San Andrés in the board of school deputies. He showed me the school they were building with collective efforts. In the school, he added, his main tasks were to supervise, along with other members of the board, the school curricula, the matriculation of the children and keeping the school safe. This task specially, he told me, was time consuming he was in charge of the rota of people who voluntarily guarded the school day and night to prevent an attack from the *partidistas* as had happened with the previous school.

The shoemaker considers himself to be a Zapatista as he performs his task as Zapatista with a lot of effort, as he told me. Although, these two activities consume most of his time, he has other jobs outside the Zapatismo. His shoe shop is opened to the general public as well and the work he performs for these people has nothing to do with the Zapatistas. Thus, although the Zapatistas are conceived in absolute terms in the written material found in the archive, the reality shows that individual members of the community have

more complex relationship with the Zapatismo. In some of their activities they fight for the Zapatistas' ideals and participate in collective activities. But they also engage in other activities and have other responsibilities that have little or nothing to do with the Zapatista community. The performance of these outside activities allow them not only to earn money but also to establish and maintain connections and relations with the non-Zapatista others. For example, Miguel is a Tzotzil, a member of a Zapatista community, has a non-Zapatista brother and is able to perform other activities outside those related to the Zapatismo. Similarly, the shoemaker is not only a Zapatista but also ethnically Tzotzil. He is also the only shoemaker in San Andrés Larrainzar and he has a wide variety of clients, both Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas. But on the banner outside his shop the only illustration is the Zapatista red star.[80]

The performance of activities that are not considered to be 'Zapatista', such as having a paid job outside the Zapatista confines or selling and offering the services to others who are not Zapatistas does not mean that individuals are more or less Zapatistas than others. Different factors that go beyond a simple distinction between the person's behaviour in the private and the public realm shape the formation of the self. Judith Butler (2005) argues that the self is constructed through narration. This narration allows the 'I' to demarcate different positionalities in different spaces and to differentiate people (Butler, 2005). If Butler is right, it can be claimed that it is through narration that the 'I' is defined. She argues that this narration involves the presence of the 'other' as essential. Nevertheless this presence does not necessarily require a face to face encounter the voice or the lack of it are also indicators of the 'other's' presence (Butler, 2005). Equally important as the presence of the 'other' is the content of this narration. If the content of such narration is essential then this forces us to return to Isin's arguments that acts make actors and not the other way around (Isin, 2008). Taking both Butler's and Isin's arguments, it could be claimed that the 'self' or the 'us' is constructed through a process of relations with 'others' through the performativity of certain acts that help the 'us' construct or reinforce bonds of solidarity to those who are considered to be sharing the same common ground.

While in San Andrés, the students of the language school frequently asked the question of how a Zapatista could identify another Zapatista especially while living in a town in which the majority of the population belongs to two ethnic groups: Tzotzil and Tzeltal. The

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[80] The Zapatista star is a five-pointed red star, which is considered another symbol of the Zapatismo, especially of the EZLN.

answer that was repeatedly given was quite simple: the only way to recognise another Zapatista, they said, was by looking in their eyes. As romantic as this answer may sound, there is more to being (or appearing to be) a Zapatista than using communal symbols such as balaclavas or the Zapatista star or, or knowing the Zapatista's principles and anthem well. More than that, being a Zapatistas involves acts, performing collective activities for the movement consciously and enthusiastically, and taking into consideration that these acts may go beyond the share characteristics across the Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas ethnic groups.

7.3 Transforming modes and forms of being political

Having examined the differentiations between notions of 'us' and 'them' in Zapatista context and in the fluidity of these boundaries in practice, this section will explore the ways of operating; living and behaving that give shape or construct the Zapatista political subjectivity. Being political, according to Isin, entails that citizenship is perceived and studied as an identity that is shaped by the group's own conception of what is good and just and which allows them to differentiate themselves from others who disagree on their conception (Isin, 2002). Nevertheless, citizenship "exists through its alterity and strategies, and technologies of citizenship are about the dialogical constitution of these identities via games of conduct" (Isin, 2002, p. 36).

Approaching citizenship in terms of membership of a state is often equated with the understanding of how this institution provides membership and promotes allegiance to a territory (Hoffman, 2004). Since 2003 the Zapatistas had focused on the construction of their autonomy project which entails the formalisation of their own forms of government through fulfilling their initial demands (see Chapter 3 and 6 for more details). As the construction of a such project by the EZLN was and still is in opposition to the government, this has a key implication to the study of acts of citizenship. The decision to operate autonomously from the Mexican state has allowed the Zapatistas to shape their own modes and forms of becoming political that have been beyond the state's provisions. Although this characteristic may seem particular to the Zapatistas, it produces a change in the way in which these modes and forms are transformed. Conventionally, acts of citizenship involve interactions with a formal state or similar formal political institution, aimed at winning rights from that body. For instance, in Europe, Roma acts of citizenship are aimed not only at the states whining which they live but also at the supra-national level that is with the European Union (EU), which can and has the faculty of protecting their rights (Isin & Saward, 2013). But because the Zapatistas operate autonomously from

the Mexican state, their acts of citizenship are not directed towards a formal state-like institution, but these are inward-looking. Despite the fact that these acts of citizenship are inward-looking and in opposition to the state, there is always the latent risk of hostilities and attacks from it to the Zapatistas.

As the Zapatista have declared their intention to operate autonomously from the Mexican state and from both its restrictions and its institutional protection and control, they have been free to transform the modes of being political, unconstrained by the laws and constitution of an existing state. But at the same time, because they remain in what it is conceived to be the Mexican territory, which is subject to the Mexican state jurisdiction, the Zapatistas had suffered from continuous state harassment (see Chapter 2). As explained above, the relationship between the Zapatistas and the Mexican government has been confrontational. The Zapatistas' establishment of their own autonomous government challenges the idea of the centralisation of state power. The Weberian understanding of state which is a delimited territory having the monopoly on the legitimate use of force (Weber, 2004); have potential implications such as the centralisation of power that could be dangerous when referring to a diverse population. The Mexican political system rests on a strong presidential figure that controls and exercises "an extraordinary range of powers" (Weldon, 1997, p. 225), that goes from passing Constitutional reform, designating his own successor, approving the nomination of most candidates at a state, municipal level and members of the congress, designating all the members of his cabinet as well as naming the federal judicial branch (Weldon, 1997). It could then be argued that the Mexican state has control or influence over the federal institutions that compose the federal system through such influence, the state exercises central control over its population. But the Zapatistas have managed to perform beyond the state but also against it. The function of the Zapatista autonomous government is to provide an organisation that allows them to resist and fulfil their demands. However, there are two guiding principles upon which the autonomous government operate, the ideas of rebellion and resistance.

In his speech at the May 2015 seminar on *Critical Though Against the Capitalist Hydra* (discussed above), *Subcomandante* Moisés explained that thanks to resistance and rebellion the Zapatistas, as an organisation, decided that arms were not necessary. This may sound contradictory, how could a movement that started as a guerrilla force decided to resist and rebel without using arms? For Moisés, using arms would be categorising the movement's activities only as activities of disobedience, which could have led to performing actions within the state, as explained in the previous Chapter. Moisés states

"...we have our arms, as another tool of the struggle, that's how we explain it now. Our weapons are a tool of struggle, just like the machete, axe, hammer, pick, spade, hoes, and those things. Each of these tools has its function, but the weapon, its functions are that when used, you kill"[81] (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015a). However, acts of citizenship, in the case of the Zapatistas, entails acting beyond the state to fulfil their demands. This is precisely what Isin argues the difference is between an active and an activist forms of citizenship (Isin, 2012a). According to Moisés, resistance and rebellion shaped the way in which the Zapatistas constructed their government and through this, to draft their own laws and rules. For him, resistance is not only to receiving external aid but "...knowing how to organise it, and having organisation first, of course, there can not only be resistance and rebellion if there is no organisation, then organising these two weapons of struggle helped us a lot to in, let's say, opening our minds and ways of seeing things"[82] (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015a). From this statement, it is clear that organisation is at the core of resistance, is the organisation through collective manners that the Zapatistas become activist citizens. As such, the implementation of their own guidelines is necessary for the preservation of such organisation. Moisés like other Zapatistas in Oventik and San Andrés Larrainzar, think that these guidelines are not permanent, but are always in continuous construction nevertheless. More importantly to create these guidelines they follow the Zapatista principle of government: to propose and not impose. Even though it could be claimed that it is the nature of law to change along with the development of societies and it is precisely the later who change and shape the laws, in a country where the government has central power to change the law, construction of the Zapatistas' laws transforms the modes in which the laws are conveyed. In addition to this principle, and as was stated in Chapter 6, the Zapatista government is based on other principles that favour horizontality and collectivity, and hence these laws and rules are always subject to approval of the people, through popular assemblies held in each of the Caracoles.

Although the Zapatistas' demands are understood in the same way throughout the Zapatistas' territories, the modes of construction of these guidelines may vary from JGB to

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[81] "Ahí tenemos nuestras armas, como una herramienta más en la lucha, así lo decimos ahora. Nuestras armas es una herramienta de lucha, es como machete, hacha, martillo, pico, pala, azadones, esas cosas; porque cada herramienta tiene su función, pero el arma, su función es, si la usas, es que matas" (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015a)

[82] "...sabiéndola organizarla y teniendo organización primero, por su puesto, no puede haber así nada más resistencia y rebeldía si no hay organización, entonces organizar esas dos armas de lucha nos ayudó mucho para tener, digamos que se abre la mente, la forma de ver" (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015a)

JBG. Clear examples on how the Zapatista autonomous government as acts of citizenship had allowed them to reconfigure and transform modes and forms of being political are reflected in community participation over governmental matters. It is not a coincidence that one of the Zapatistas' principles is that of rule by obeying. The decision making, as stated in Chapter 6, is not vested in a single individual, as the Mexican government is, but in a group of people within their communities. The assemblies that are formed on a regular basis at all levels of government are essential for the decision making process. The participation of the people in these assemblies is not conceived as mandatory but as a duty to resist the Mexican government. Nevertheless, participation in these assemblies highlights the importance of the collective rather than the individual. Equally important is that through their participation, not only in the assemblies but also in the collective work, education, health and other areas of the Zapatistas the role of the women is encouraged. For example, in the *Little School* textbooks, Jessica from the 17 de Noviembre MAREZ, states that the JBG is formed, when possible, from an equal number of men and women. Thanks to this, the JBG had promoted several women encounters in the Caracol, which consists of several cultural events and sport competitions and this is done so that the women see that there is nothing wrong or to be afraid when leaving their houses. Amelia from the Lucio Cabañas MAREZ describes that women's participation could be by performing different activities within the JBG and these vary, from being members of the government to being facilitators in education or health promoters among others. However, she recognises that this participation has made been possible with the support of other *compañeros* and *compañeras,* who teach them how to read and write, or simply answer their questions. Amelia stressed the fact that the activities within the JBG for example health and education requires men and women working together. Ana Yolanda from the San Manuel MAREZ, recognised that the participation of women, at least in La Garrucha Caracol is not at its maximum but is as a gradual process. However, she explains that thanks to the Zapatista fight "we have a space as women where we can participate."[83]

As discussed here and in Chapter 6, the Zapatistas performed various acts of citizenship beyond the state. However, they have also acted against and beyond capitalism and the neoliberal policies imposed by the state. Moisés argued in the *Critical Thought vs. The Capitalist Hydra* seminar,

> …it is …thanks to rebellion and resistance that we have been able to build for ourselves, the Zapatistas, a small, a little one, like this. Are the people in the back seeing it? No? That is what it is all about, because that is the way we started, building something small, but if that resistance and

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[83] "ya tenemos un espacio como mujeres, ahí podemos participar'

rebellion is organised, this is going to multiply[84] (Subcomandante
Insurgente Moisés, 2015b).

It could be argued that the resistance and rebellion gave the Zapatistas the freedom to create, invent and imagine ways to improve their ways of organizing politically, socially and economically. However, bringing back and shaping the ethnic traditions, which are particular to the Zapatistas, communities have helped them to achieve this freedom. It could then be claimed that resistance and rebellion, as understood by the Zapatistas, have allowed them not to ask for devolution of power from the state, but to challenge state power by constructing the power to fulfil their demands autonomously.

7.4 The 'Difference Machine'

Holston and Appadurai (1999) argue that there is a tendency to study and understand citizenship through two closely associated concepts, citizenship and nationality. This tendency, according to them, explains citizenship as membership of a nation-state. The link between the two concepts suggests, according to Holston and Appadurai, the subordination of other identities such as religion, ethnicity, region or families to that confines of the state (Holston & Appadurai, 1999). The main consequence of such subordination is that it undermines the importance of the regions or other spaces in which these identities are constructed and from which rights emanate (Holston & Appadurai, 1999). So, if the state acts as a container of such different identities and the spaces where these are developed and considering that the acts of citizenship performed by the Zapatistas are beyond and traversing the state it is important to study the way in which these spaces could be considered what Isin understands as a 'difference machine.'

Isin identifies the functionality of space to the configuration of being political in two ways. The first suggests that space involves an arrangement of objects such as buildings, monuments, memorials that have a certain significance for the people inhabiting that space (Isin, 2002). While the reference is not made, this arrangement of buildings, monument or memorials could be explained as what Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism.' For Billig, national identity is represented in everyday situations of the lives of people that reminds them of their national identity (Billig, 1995). The arrangement of such buildings, monuments or memorials is then a constant reminder of people's national identity and enables members of a nation to orient themselves despite their physical proximity. Among

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[84] ...es gracias a la rebeldía y a la resistencia que hemos podido construir para nosotros, las zapatistas y los zapatistas, un pequeño, chiquito, como esto ¿los que están hasta allá lo ven? ¿no? De eso se trata, porque así empezamos, pequeño, no se ve, pero si esa resistencia y rebeldía se organiza, se va a multiplicar" (Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, 2015b).

other elements such as discourse, imagery and the arrangements of these buildings, objects of memories help people identify with and relate to as members of the same nation and differentiate themselves from the ones that are not. The second function of space, according to Isin, is as the location where encounters between 'us' and the 'others' are generated and modulated. So space is not merely a tool for the formation of the 'us' but a space in which the 'others' exists through patterns of absence and representation (Isin, 2002). As much that the images are important in the continuous enhancement of a group, it represents a potential risk to consider the space as a fixed concept. The images that this first conception of space relies on depend highly on the state and thus they become a part of the script through which citizens behave. On the contrary, conceiving space as an arrangement formed between 'us' and the 'others' means thinking of it as not passive or fixed, but as not having a "definite shape of form independent from the groups that are constituted by it and the strategies and technologies that are embodied in its constitution" (Isin, 2002, p. 49). Isin terms this particular space as a 'city as a difference machine.' The city as a difference machine is formed by dialogical encounters of groups and as such is the battleground that "provokes, differentiates, positions, mobilizes, immobilizes, oppresses, and liberates. Being political arises qua the city"(Isin, 2002, p. 50).

So, if being political is being in the city, as a space or locality and as Isin suggests, is constructed through patters of absence and representation, it should be taken in consideration that either absent or not, the 'difference machine' the Zapatistas are constructing is also shaped in contestation and the acts they perform are enacted beyond the state.

The Zapatista space as 'difference machine' can be explained by marking a differentiation in between two spaces. The first spaces are the Caracoles: which are closed spaces and provides the only reference of a defined Zapatista territory. The arrangement of each of these Caracoles is unique, and differs from each other. But they all share similar characteristics. For instance, the Caracoles are where the Good Government Boards (JBG) are located, and also it serve as a location for the health clinics and the representative offices that represent each of the MAREZ. So, taking into consideration that, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the Caracoles were perceived as spaces for Zapatista encounters as well as encounters with the people who are not Zapatistas, these could be understood as transitory spaces in the sense that Zapatistas do not live or hold permanent residence there. However, the Caracoles are still considered important buildings for the Zapatista autonomy, as one of the levels of the Zapatista government is located there and where the

interaction between members of different MAREZ within in the Caracoles, come together. It could then be argued that the Caracoles are the formal space where the Zapatistas become together as Zapatistas.

The symbolism that emanates from the offices located in the Caracoles goes beyond the aesthetics of the buildings, and includes what they represent. First, they represent the embodiment of the Zapatista government and autonomy project. Second, the Caracoles, as stated above, are places built to enable dialogue between the Zapatistas and the local civil society. But they are also a space that represents rebellion and resistance. The process of entering a Caracol illustrates the way in which these 'others' are present and not present and how the dialogical relationship between the Zapatistas and the civil society emerges. At the entrance of the Oventik Caracol, as figure 3 illustrates, there is a big sign that says 'you are in Zapatista Territory in Rebellion. Here, the people rule and the government obeys.' Opposite to this sign there is another sign of the Mexican federal government on the education programmes called 'Dignified Schools,'[85]which seeks to improve the physical conditions of public schools located in marginalised or indigenous areas as it can be appreciated in figure 4. As simple as this phrase may be, the implicit message illustrates the complexity of the Zapatista space as a 'difference machine.' By stating that the Caracol is a rebel territory there is an implicit rejection of the Mexican state. Nevertheless, with this rejection comes the ability to act, which is translated in the Zapatista ideal of 'rule by obeying.' But, at the same time there is a constant presence of the Mexican government and its opposition to the Zapatista project with the sign at the entrance of Oventik. So if Isin is right in stating that this space is constructed as a dialogical relationship, the opposing 'other' does not have a regular physical presence in the Zapatista territory, as the presence of the army or members of the government are not in the surrounding area of the Caracol, but there is indeed a constant reminder of the figure or image of this opposing 'other.' This is also why the territory is conceived as rebellious.

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[85] Escuela Digna.

Figure 3- The entrance of the Oventik Caracol. "You are in Zapatista territory in rebellion. Here, the people and the government obeys"

Figure 4- Federal government sign at the entrance of Oventik Caracol, promoting the programme "Dignified Schools"

The Zapatista space as a 'difference machine' could be perceived fluidly in the MAREZ and in the Zapatista's communities. Bearing in mind that the MAREZ do not have a formal physical delimitation, encounters between Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas are a regular occurrence. Often within these spaces similarities among these groups could be traced, for example belonging to the same ethnic group. For these reasons, the space here can be conceived not only in terms of its physical appearance but also as a symbolic space that is shared by members of the group who coexist with those who are not. It would not be fair to argue that one space underpins the other, as both of them are mutually inclusive. In San Andrés Larrainzar, for example, the Zapatistas have primary schools, shops, a market and restaurants and the non-Zapatistas have the exact same things. As explained in the first section of this chapter, tension may rise between groups; both groups share the same main square and, celebrate the same festivities. The main square in San Andrés Larrainzar helps to illustrate this point. The main square has two kiosks, one representing the Zapatistas and the other the non-Zapatistas. Each of these kiosks, are next to each other, as figure 5 shows, and both have speakers (to reproduce announcements for the Zapatistas and the non-Zapatistas respectively) and a clock (that marks the official and the Zapatista time) But the daily interaction between strangers, opposite 'others' and the Zapatistas is what enables the Zapatistas to create a space where they exist and perform.

Figure 5- San Andrés main square with two kiosks.

The Zapatista 'difference machine' does not have a start or an end; it is not negotiated or devolved from the government and, except for the Caracoles, is not delimited. But there is still an interaction by the presence and the absence of the 'others' and the 'us.' The Zapatista space as a 'difference machine' is under constant threat from the Mexican government. It is for this reason that it is a space of rebellion and resistance. As we have seen in the last section, more than forms of actions rebellion and resistance help to reconfigure the logics of power that has been introduced by the state-party. Andrea Cornwall defines spaces using Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space as public participation to argue that spaces are full "of metaphor as well as literal description of arenas where people gather, which are bounded in time and dimension. A space can be emptied or filled, permeable or scaled; it can be an opening, an invitation to speak and act" (Cornwall, 2004, p. 1). This captures an important aspect of the Zapatista 'difference machine.' Its complexity gives the Zapatistas the agency to speak and act. As such, the Zapatista space as 'difference machine' shifts the balance of power imposed by the government, by constituting a space that empowers the Zapatistas but as a space formed by a physical and symbolic realm, through which the Zapatistas act.

7.5 Conclusion

This Chapter aimed to analyse the ways in which the Zapatistas as activist citizens constructed a political space that gave them agency to act to construct their autonomy project. The first section analysed the different layers of 'otherness' for the Zapatistas. The first is the opposing 'other' is composed by: The Mexican government, the implementation of neoliberal policies and the *partidistas*. The second layer of 'otherness' is composed by those bodies of people who are considered strangers but whom the Zapatistas share some level of association or solidarity. These are the Mexican civil society. Finally, empirical evidence showed that there is a difference as well as within the Zapatismo. Contrary on what can be said of difference as a threat to unity, the acknowledgment of this difference and the reinforcement of it result congruent with the Zapatista autonomy project of a 'word that could fit other words.' The second section analysed the way in which the Zapatistas transformed modes and forms of being political based on their ethnic traditions and understandings. Finally, the last section analysed how the Zapatistas constructed an alternative space and how these levels of 'otherness' interact within such space which enable the Zapatistas to become political subjects through this interaction and the performance of acts of citizenship

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have explored the construction of Zapatista political subjectivity. In order to provide such an understanding, the work of Engin Isin on 'acts of citizenship' was used as the main theoretical framework. Isin suggests that acts of citizenship consist of the 'right to have rights' which requires us to study citizenship in its active form by locating people's acts as a core part of the study (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). Acts are then humanised actions aiming to create new forms of being political and claiming rights. In the process, acts produce actors as political subjects. Acts are also understood as doings which are performed with a clear objective in mind; so, if acts produce actors and these acts have an objective, then acts of citizenship are those acts that produce citizens in relation with others (Isin, 2008). This definition of 'acts of citizenship' allowed me to provide an understanding of the construction of citizenship from below in a way that, it does not necessarily require the involvement of the state in delimiting and/or restricting these activities.

Chapter 2 provided an historical overview on the Zapatismo, which explained the development of the movement and to understand and provided the foundations through which understand the reason and motives that lead to the creation of the Zapatista's acts of citizenship. As such, Chapter 2 underpinned the empirical work delivered in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, which explored the Zapatistas' process of constructing their political subjectivity. Chapter 3 discusses the theories that study citizenship to understand that regardless of the lenses through which this concept has been studied (membership, status, feeling), citizenship is a site for political struggle. This Chapter addressed the way citizenship has been studied in Latin America in general, and in Chiapas in particular. Finally, it discusses the work of Isin (2008, 2009, 2012b; 2008) on 'acts of citizenship' as the theoretical framework to understand the Zapatista construction of citizenship from below. Chapter 4 set out the research design and outlined the methodology for this thesis. Chapter 5

explored the events that allowed the Zapatistas to break with the political invisibility that the Mexican government kept the indigenous communities under for many years. Chapter 6 then, analysed the construction and enactment of the Zapatista government as acts of citizenship. Finally, Chapter 7 analysed how the acts of citizenship performed by the Zapatistas allowed them to structure relations with the different layers of otherness as well as within themselves. Building from this, Chapter 7 explored the way in which these acts transformed modes and forms of being political and the construction of a space that encounters the relationship with the 'others.'

The structure of this concluding Chapter is as follows. The first section provides an explanation of how the research questions were answered across this research. Following this, the second section outlines the theoretical contributions of this research. Finally, the last section will explore the potentiality for further research.

8.2 Aims and Research Questions

This section recaps how the way in which the empirical chapters (Chapter 5, 6 and 7) met the research aims by answering the research question. This thesis had two main objectives. The first was to provide an understanding of the Zapatistas as political subjects and the second was to make a contribution to the theoretical study of 'acts of citizenship.' To fulfil these aims this research was guided by one main research question and three sub-questions, which are the following:

Main Research Question: How do claims of citizenship mobilise the Zapatistas communities?

Sub-question 1 (SQ1): How are non-state based claims to citizenship framed in the Zapatistas' initial assertions?

Sub-question 2 (SQ2): What practices performed by the Zapatistas could be categorised as acts of citizenship?

Sub-question 3 (SQ3): What are the reasons and motivations that allow us to identify these practices as acts of citizenship?

These sub-questions could be understood within three broad themes, which were developed in each of the empirical chapters. The first set out to understand the ways in which the Zapatistas' demands had been translated into non-state claims. The second was to investigate the Zapatistas performance of acts of citizenship. Finally, the third was to explore in the ways in which acts of citizenship had led to identify the Zapatistas emerging as political subjects.

Understanding the ways in which the Zapatista's demands had been translated into non-state claims.

Chapter 5 of this thesis addresses this theme by exposing the ways in which the Zapatistas demands have been translated to non-state claims. In addition, this Chapter contributed to the main research question by identifying how the Zapatistas broke with their status quo. To do this, Chapter 5 draws on Isin's understanding of events as ruptures. According to Isin (2012a), an event aims to break the giving order and it is also the first step for the construction of a group's political subjectivity (Isin, 2012a). Also, this Chapter relies on the overview of the Zapatista provided in Chapter 2. This allowed for an understanding of the ways in which the Zapatistas demands are reflected in the given ruptures by framing them as claims for justice.

Three events were identified within the Zapatista development as they marked a rupture in the indigenous communities' living order. These events were Zapatista uprising in 1994, the creation of the Aguascalientes in 1995 and, finally, the phase of 'silence' and creation of the Caracoles in 2001 and 2003 respectively. The Zapatista uprising demonstrated that after a time of invisibility within the Mexican political system, the indigenous communities in Chiapas were politically and militarily organised. This organisation broke with the Mexican political system based on *corporativismo*, which supported the PRI as a state-party. For the first time, in 1994, an indigenous revolt in Mexico demonstrating against a corrupt state and despite the hostilities from the state and with the coverage of national and international media, the Zapatista movement was not appeased by the state. In the long term, the Zapatista uprising managed to position the indigenous communities, as bearers of a different culture, on the Mexican political agenda, something that was not done since the Mexican independence of (1810-1821). The second event was the creation of the Aguascalientes grew from the Zapatistas' general demands for democracy, liberty and justice. The creation of the Aguascalientes aimed to work towards meeting these demands by providing spaces for encounter between the Zapatista indigenous communities and the civil society. The objective of the Aguascalientes was to collectively agree on how democracy, liberty and justice would be implemented at a state level. The final event was the phase of 'silence' and the creation of the Caracoles. The phase of 'silence' allowed the Zapatistas to draft their autonomy project, and claim their rights without the involvement or seeking recognition of the state. The Caracoles were a continuation of the Aguascalientes, and aimed to provide encounter spaces between the Zapatistas and the civil society to fulfil the Zapatistas' initial demands but not at the state

level. The creation of the Caracoles gave the Zapatista indigenous communities the recognition and encouraged the participation they had been deprived of for many years.

As discussed in Chapter 5, these events could not be understood in isolation: one event contributes to the emergence of the others. As such the demands for democracy, liberty and justice that the Zapatistas fought to achieve at a state level shifted to become the main axis of their autonomy project. As these events gave them visibility or gave them visibility (or gave th Zapatista recognition as a politically organised group), so these events also marked the beginning of the Zapatista construction of political subjectivity. However, for the Mexican government the Zapatistas remained a dissident group were thus refused access to the invited public sphere, as they were not recognised as bearers of a different culture. Thus, the Zapatistas constructed an alternative public sphere. According to Ardent (1998), the political is constructed by association and speech, actions that should be performed in public and in interaction with others. The construction of the Zapatista public sphere was based on the recognition of diversity within members of the Zapatista indigenous communities and in civil society, but also encouraged tis members' active participation in affairs on which they previously did not had an active voice. It was because of this alternative public sphere that the Zapatistas, through the performance of these events, were able to perform 'acts of citizenship.'

The Zapatistas performance of acts of citizenship.

According to Isin, when studying 'acts of citizenship' attention should be paid to the ways in which acts enable actors to create new forms and modes of being political rather than replicating routinized practices (Isin, 2009). Building on the events explained in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 investigated the Zapatista autonomous government as act of citizenship to explain not only the acts of citizenship undertaken but also how these acts created new scenes in accordance to the Zapatistas' ideals.

As the Zapatistas emerged in opposition to the state; their acts of citizenship can be understood no only as an attempt to counteract –symbolically and practically- the corrupt and centralised practices of the Mexican government, but also drawing from indigenous traditions as valuable forms of political organisation and association. Thus, the government that the Zapatistas are constructing is based on the Zapatista principle 'rule by obeying,' in which the people rule and the government obeys. It could be claimed that democracy rests upon this exact principle, and as the Mexican government claims to be a democratic system, that nothing new is being created in the way the Zapatistas are

exercising and constructing their government. However, the Zapatista government, in contrast to the way government is executed in Mexico, is based on horizontality and its functionality is due to the collective effort of the Zapatistas. As observed during fieldwork, there were some characteristics of the Zapatista government that had similarities with the Mexican government. For instance, the layout of the office of the JBG is similar to that of the official government offices. On my first visit, a picture of *Subcomandante* Marcos was hanging in the wall behind the desk share between the members of the JBG. On my second visit, the *bastones de mando* (wooden staffs) replaced the pictures symbolising the power given to the members of the JBG by the different MAREZ of Oventik. As simple as an office lay out may be, it helps to illustrate several important features of the Zapatista government. It suggests, that although characteristics of the official government are carried out in the Zapatistas' JBG, these are gradually replaced with traditional symbols that have meaning for the indigenous Zapatistas and with which members can relate. This example also shows how the Zapatista government is in continuous construction, not only because the members of the JBG chance on a regular basis, but also because along the way the Zapatistas found the modes and forms which better suit carrying out their own form of government. In addition to this, the way the Zapatistas elect their government, but most importantly the way government is performed (or, as they name it, *ser gobierno* (be government)), is particular to their understanding or *Cosmovision* which can be reflected in the way refer to the government of own traditional languages.

It could be argued that as the events or ruptures made by the Zapatistas gave them the visibility, the acts of citizenship that they are autonomously performing are aimed to reinforce that visibility. As Isin (2012a) suggests, the scales by which acts of citizenship are performed, define the reach and scope of such acts, and allow groups to position themselves as activist citizens. Thus, this Chapter identified the way in which autonomy becomes the scale from which the Zapatistas reach while enacting their governmental practices.

The Zapatistas as political subjects
The analysis of Chapter 7 allows us to understand the ways in which the Zapatistas could be understood as political subjects. Isin (2009) argues that states should not be considered as sole containers of the status or practices of citizenship, as the right to have rights often goes beyond the frontiers of the states' boundaries or borders . Citizenship should be approached as the performance of acts that allow groups of people to claim their rights by defining and determining their relationships with others. As such,

citizenship "is about conduct across social groups all of which constitute a body politic" (Isin, 2009, p. 371). This Chapter set out to analyse how, through acts of citizenship, the Zapatistas differentiate between the 'others' and the 'we,' and how through these negotiations they had transformed the modes and forms to construct a body politic as a 'difference machine.'

The empirical evidence gathered in the fieldwork showed that several layers of otherness can be identified, as well as layers within the 'we.' The first layer of otherness is constituted by the opposing other which is embodied by the government, the neoliberal policies implanted in Mexico and the *partidistas* or the indigenous people that adhere to the PRI as official political party. Though the relationship between these groups and the Zapatistas is one of complete disassociation, their presence is still important to differentiate what the Zapatistas are not. The 'other' as a stranger or outsider forms the following layer of otherness. This layer is composed of other groups in civil society which been oppressed either by the Mexican government or the implementation of neoliberal policies. There is a certain level of association between these groups and the Zapatistas, and although this layer of otherness includes people who often do not share the same ethnic heritage as the Zapatistas, there is still a level of identification with them. Finally empirical data showed that within the construction of the 'we' there are certain differences. As different ethnic groups form the Zapatistas, a homogenous 'we' cannot be identified. However, the level of association does not rest on the share of common ethnic characteristics but on the level of agreement with and support for the Zapatista's ideals, demands and principles. Thus, loyalty and identification with each other emerge from the recognition and respect of differences among the ethnic groups that compose the Zapatistas. This recognition and respect of differences could also be understood as a consequence of the Zapatista fight against the ideology created in the process of building the modern Mexican State, which assumed homogeneity among the population. As stated above, bringing back their ethnic traditions as a valid form of political organisation allowed the Zapatistas to challenge and transform the modes and forms of government and governance associated with the Mexican government. Finally, Chapter 7 analysed the way in which the Zapatistas constructed an alternative space as a 'difference machine' in which the 'others' and the 'we' interact. In other words, the Zapatista 'difference machine' is where the relationships between and among the 'we' and the 'other' are developed. However, empirical evidence showed that the construction of such space, in the Zapatista case, is not necessarily defined or delimited by physical boundaries but ideologically and through the resonance of the acts performed.

8.3 Thesis Contribution

This thesis had analysed the Zapatista construction of political subjectivity. In order to do this, the thesis drew upon Isin's arguments on 'acts of citizenship.' Hence, this thesis had contributed to the theoretical study of 'acts of citizenship', which at the same time, has allowed it to provide an understanding of the construction of the Zapatista political subjectivity.

As Chapter 3 of this thesis suggested, despite the approaches to studying citizenship in terms of membership or status, citizenship has always been a site of political struggle, which consisted in making claims of belonging to a political community granting people rights and obligations. As Isin and Turner (2002) identified the conception of modern citizenship emerged in the nation-state and as such this was the political community to which most of the claims for rights and recognition was directed. However, the current political and social situation demonstrates that immigration waves and environmental claims had made these claims to go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. In addition to this, Hoffman (2004) argues that the concept of the nation-state is often approached as static when studying citizenship, ignoring that not only the state but also local, ethnic or national communities have a major impact on regulating people's citizenship. Therefore, there is a need to think about and study citizenship beyond the confines of the nation-state. It is precisely this urge to detach the concept of citizenship from the concept of nation-state that this thesis draws on, to explain the Zapatista case. This thesis, then, makes two intrinsically related contributions. The application of Isin's theory on 'acts of citizenship' to the Zapatista case has repercussions for the theory as it had previously been applied mainly to cases in the Global North (see: Caglar & Mehling 2013; Aradau et al. 2013; see Isin 2013; Darling 2010; Larkins 2013). Such an application, has allowed for the development of an understanding of the Zapatistas through the analysis of their acts.

As mentioned above, Isin's theory on 'acts of citizenship' has primarily been applied to cases of the global north, where circumstances and characteristics are different from the ones of the Global South. Isin suggests that citizenship is "about addressing injustices suffered by many people around the world, making injustices appear in the public sphere, enabling these groups to articulate these injustices as claims for recognition and enacting them in national as well as transnational laws and practices" (Isin & Turner, 2002, pp. 2–3). There are important aspects of this argument that have implications when applying 'acts of citizenship' to the Zapatista case. However, it should be remembered that the

Zapatistas never attempted to assume power and although their claims were directed to the construction of an autonomy project, it was never their intention to pursue secession from the country. Taking these things into consideration, when applying the theory to cases such as the Zapatistas, there are two main repercussions that need to be addressed. The first, is on the way in which injustices are recognised and how these are translated into claims for rights in the public sphere and the second on the way in which these claims are enacted.

When the state has a strong influence over the public sphere, as the case of Mexico, the sole intention of the creation of alternative spaces, by the Zapatistas, is rather problematic for the enactment of such claims as acts of citizenship. The oppression and rejection of the indigenous groups in Mexico by the state obstructed their capacity to associate and speak in public, constraining the construction of their political subjectivity. So, if Isin suggests that acts of citizenship entail addressing injustices, he fails to recognise that there could be cases in which the access to the public sphere and the respect for essential rights such as association and speech are not guaranteed or respected by the state or other international institutions. For instance, when analysing the case of immigrant groups within European countries, such rights are protected or at least appeals can be made to supranational organisations such as the European Union. Conversely, institutions with this same influence over the state do not exist in the Global South. This gap in Isin's theory was identified and addressed in Chapter 5, as the construction of an alternative public sphere. Such construction was a process that started with the Aguascalientes as deliberative spaces to influence state policy and developed into an autonomous space for deliberation and enactment of the Zapatista autonomous project.

The Zapatistas' have certain characteristics, which have allowed me to contribute to the study of 'acts of citizenships.' Not only their rejection of state power or the lack of secession claims made the Zapatista case different from the application of Isin's theory to migration flows (see for instance *Enacting European Citizenship* edited by Isin and Saward (2013)), but the enactment of such acts by the Zapatistas and the construction of their political subjectivity is beyond and traversing the confines of the state. Hence, the way in which the Zapatistas are constructing a 'body politic' has also implications for the way in which their political subjectivity is constructed. Isin suggests that citizenship governs people's behaviour with others (Isin, 2009). However, there is the assumption that there are several layers of otherness while perceiving the 'we' as a unified group. Nevertheless, as was mentioned above, empirical evidence showed that within the Zapatismo there are

several layers of 'we', which it is important to recognise, as they are essential in the configuration and unification. Added to this, the way in which the Zapatistas are constructing a 'body politic' or the political space from which these relations emanate and where acts of citizenship are performed is not territorially defined. As suggested in Chapter 7, the 'body of politic' should be perceived not necessarily in terms of territory, but delimited by its symbolism and its permeability. While analysing indigenous groups the symbolism of their attachment to land and its traditions should be taken into consideration while studying the way in which this political space is constructed. Equally important, when referring to oppressed groups it has to be considered that these spaces are constantly exposed to governmental or external threats.

The final contribution of this thesis is on the study of the Zapatismo. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, after the 1994 uprising the Zapatista received academic attention attempting to explain the movement from divergent perspectives. Within these perspectives the study of citizenship was not excluded. The work around this had attempted to explain the Zapatista movement, using different terminology such as 'multi-ethnic citizenship,' 'radical citizenship,' 'communitarian citizenship' among others (Auger, 2013; Cerda García, 2011; Cortez Ruiz, 2010; Harvey, 1998, 2013; Richard Stahler-Sholk, 2001; Tamayo, 2006; Tamborini, 2002). Although, all these studies had contributed to the study of the Zapatismo, the authors had used a predetermined or defined concept of citizenship. In other words, these studies attempted to explain how the Zapatistas can be considered citizens, or the way the Zapatista fight had attempted to broaden the concept of citizenship in Mexico. The potential problem that is found in the above cited studies is the risk of attaching Western ideas of state and power to the concept of citizenship while studying cases of the Global South, as Taylor (2013) identifies. The need to approach the concept of citizenship form the origin that is constructed is essential in understanding the way in which groups can be considered political subjects. Taking this into consideration, this thesis explained the process by which the Zapatistas construct this political subjectivity by enacting their claims for justice. This approach of the Zapatismo gives us an understanding of this movement that goes beyond the attachment of citizenship to state lead institutions, of the consolidation of equality among the population, but considers how these groups become political subjects beyond the stat's influence.

8.4 Future Research

The research developed in this thesis has contributed to the study of 'acts of citizenship' in cases of the Global South, more specifically in Mexico. As such it has provided an

understanding of the Zapatismo as political subjects. However, this research opens a possibility for further investigation and analysis. Future research can be conducted to study other cases within the Global South, both within Latin America and in other continents. For instance, a comparative study of the Arab Spring could be undertaken with a focus on the answerability and resonance of the claims for justice, as acts of citizenship. Added to this, in Latin America the case of the indigenous groups of Ecuador and Bolivia could be studied as they will provide a different insight on the theory as these groups intended to assume state power and succeeded in doing so. Within Mexico, 'acts of citizenship' could be used to study other efforts of indigenous communities for autonomy in the states of Oaxaca and Michoacán. These studies could identify similarities and differences to the Zapatista case and possibilities for improvement in the understanding of the Zapatista construction of citizenship. As much as these studies are in rural areas, studies could be conducted also in urban areas in the region. Cases such as the slums in Brazil can be used to analyse the claims people have for a dignified city.

Finally, drawing from the empirical findings, future research could be carried out within the Zapatismo using different methodological approaches. For example, linguistic related methods could be used to analyse the Mayan languages spoken by the Zapatistas and their relationship with the construction of social and political practices. This would build on some of the arguments given in this thesis, especially on the importance of bringing back or rescuing the indigenous traditional forms and costumes as valuable ways of becoming political subjects.

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