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„Challenging Gendered Notions of the Nation-State: The Case of Zapatista Women and the Mexican National Project"

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Global Studies

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Abstract (Deutsch)

Der mexikanische Nationalstaat verfolgt ein spezielles Konzept der Zugehörigkeit. Die nationalistischen Ein- und Ausschlüsse sind durch Stereotype in Bezug auf Geschlecht und Ethnie gekennzeichnet, die in der kolonialen Zeit entstanden und nach der Unabhängigkeit sowie der mexikanischen Revolution weiterentwickelt wurden. „Mexikanisch" zu sein orientiert sich am Idealmodell des männlichen „Mestizo"-Staatsbürgers. Durch diese Ordnungsmechanismen wurden indigene Menschen marginalisiert. Besonders indigene Frauen finden in dieser nationalistischen Projektion keinen Platz, da sie mit einer Diskriminierung auf Grund von Geschlecht und Ethnie zu kämpfen haben. In den 1990er Jahren wurde dieses Ordnungssystem durch den zapatistischen Aufstand gestört, im Rahmen dessen tausende indigene Männer und Frauen auf diese Form der Marginalisierung aufmerksam machten. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht, wie zapatistische Frauen seit dem Aufstand versuchen die traditionellen, hegemonialen Geschlechterbilder des mexikanischen Nationalstaates zu durchbrechen, um ihren Platz in diesem nationalen Konstrukt neu zu verhandeln. Es werden unterschiedliche diskursive Praktiken dieser Frauen untersucht, um zu zeigen, wie diese Praktiken die vorherrschende Konstruktion der mexikanischen Nation herausfordern und verändern.

Dabei werden drei thematische Blöcke beschrieben. Zunächst wird die Störung des etablierten Bildes durch Sprache an Hand einer der symbolisch wichtigsten Ansprachen für die mexikanische Nation untersucht, der Ansprache von Comandanta Esther auf dem Gewerkschaftskongress am 28. März 2001. Der zweite wichtige Block untersucht die Herausforderungen, welche die zapatistischen Frauen für den mexikanischen Nationalstaat in Bezug auf seine Rekonzeptionalisierung und Militarisierung darstellten. Zuletzt werden die Herausforderungen des traditionellen Rollenbildes in Bezug auf die Rolle dieser Frauen als Mütter (der Nation) und Trägerinnen der Tradition untersucht, sobald der Diskurs über Frauenrechte begann ländliche Kommunen in Chiapas zu durchdringen. Schließlich ist diese Arbeit ein Versuch die Formen zu analysieren, welche die Frauen nützten um in einer exklusiven und repressiven männlichen Mestizo-Nationalstaatsideologie sichtbar zu werden. Dabei sollen auch alternative Ausdrücke zur gesellschaftlich erwarteten Geschlechts- und Ethnikdarstellung gezeigt werden, welche das Nationalstaatsprojekt auf deren Körper projizierte.

Keywords: Mexikanisches Nationalprojekt, Zapatista Frauen, EZLN, Geschlechts- und Rasse Performativity.

Abstract (English)

The Mexican nation-state is the promoter of a very particular regime of belongingness. The inclusions and exclusions to the national project are marked by stereotypical gendered and racial beliefs that were created in colonial times and further developed in the post-independence and post-revolutionary Mexican project. In particular, the access to 'Mexicanness' is marked by the ideal citizen model: the male Mestizo. Within this order, indigenous peoples have been marginalized to the (physical and conceptual) spaces historically delineated for their bodies. In particular, indigenous women have been neglected access to the idea of the nation, as they have had to confront double forms of discrimination around their gender and their race.

In the 1990s, the uprising of the Zapatista movement marked a disruption of the spaces of inclusiveness, as thousands of indigenous men and women called attention on the forms of marginalization that their peoples had been suffering throughout the centuries. This thesis aims at exploring how, since then; Zapatista women have been challenging hegemonic gendered notions of the Mexican nation-state in order to re-negotiate their inclusion and unique place in the nation. We analyzed some of the discursive practices of these women, in order to identify how discursive changes in their (expected) gender and racial performativity have contributed to destabilize these constructions, engaging in a simultaneous process of re-negotiation of the idea of nation.

We identified three thematic blocks. Firstly, we explored the public disruption made through language and place in one of the most symbolic spaces for the Mexican nation-state, as Comandanta Esther addressed the Union Congress on March 28 2001. Secondly, we explored the challenges that these women posed to the Mexican nation-state in a re-conceptualization of the expected gender roles on militarization. Thirdly, we explored the challenges posed on their role as mothers (of the nation) and bearers of tradition, as emerging discourses on women's rights became to permeate Zapatista rural communities in Chiapas. Ultimately, this work is an attempt to analyze the forms that these women have used to become visible to an exclusive and repressive male mestizo nation-state ideology, highlighting alternative expressions to the expected gender and racial performances that the national project marked on their bodies.

Keywords: Mexican national project, Zapatista women, EZLN, gender and racial performativity.

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List of Abbreviations

CCRI – Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena / Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee

COCOPA – Commission of Concordia and Pacification / Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación

CONAI – Comisión Nacional de Intermediación / National Commission of Intermediation

EZLN – Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional / Zapatista National Liberation Army

FLN – Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional / Forces of National Liberation

FZLN – Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional / Zapatista Front for National Liberation

JBG – Juntas de Buen Gobierno

MAREZ – Municipios Autónomos Rebeldes del Ejército Zapatista / Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement

PAN – Partido de Acción Nacional / National Action's Party

PRD – Partido Democrático Revolucionario / Democratic Revolutionary Party

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

On January 1st 1994 the world woke up to an unprecedented social uprising in the forgotten region of Chiapas, in Mexico. More than 3,000 members of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista National Liberation Army or EZLN) -composed mainly by indigenous peoples of Chol, Tzeltal, Mam and Tojolabals origin- took over six large towns and a handful of ranches. They irrupted the Mexican political scene protesting against 500 years of exploitation, decades of state repression, and the impacts of globalization and increasing neoliberal policies. They declared the war against the Mexican state as they voiced the First Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle from the balcony of the occupied governmental palace of San Cristóbal de las Casas. This open and militant defiance raised global expectations on new counter-hegemonic forms of resistance in a unipolar world. The so-called 'end of history' had posed questions to the global left as to which shape would the next social movements take. In this case, the indigenous group raised arms in the mid of a neoliberal context that had contributed to the increasing exploitation of their peoples. Yet, Zapatistas were also raising their voices against a national order that had marginalized their bodies since the origins of the Mexican project. Legally recognized as citizens in equality but *de facto* outsiders to the 'nation', indigenous peoples had been increasingly pushed into integrationist policies that aimed at destroying ethnic diversity within the Mexican territory.

As the Zapatistas took the Mexican (and international) political scene demanding greater respect for their rights and forms of livelihood, another revolution took place within the EZLN lines. The inclusion of women's demands at the core of the movement's claims marked a turning point for women's rights in the region. The *Ley Revolucionaria de las Mujeres Zapatistas* was issued expressing specific gender-related concerns for women. The right to freely choose a partner (or not choosing one at all), to hold a public position of political relevance or to make decisions regarding birth control methodologies are just some examples. Supported by this Revolutionary Law, indigenous women began to negotiate their access to spaces previously restricted for them. Soon many of them, from different communities and backgrounds, took over positions of (military) authority within the movement and challenging traditional gender roles of patriarchy –both at the community and state level. As we will see, they simultaneously began to defy gendered constructions and images originated in the Mexican national project. These constructions had contributed to locate their bodies as marginal subjects to the nation –both as indigenous and women. Enlisted as

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permanent combatants of the EZLN, as temporary militants, or simply supporting the movement from its social bases, Zapatista women began to offer alternative forms to understand their gender and their race –ultimately negotiating their access into the nation.

Mayora Ana María, a Tojolabal woman, surprised the world in her black ski mask and brown military uniform leading the occupation of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Comandanta Ramona stood with her traditional *huipil* (colorful wool woven blouses) next to Subcomandante Marcos and two other female *guerrilla* fighters during the first peace negotiations with the Mexican government on February 22nd 1994. Comandanta Ester addressed the Mexican Congress on March 28th 2001 to demand constitutional recognition of indigenous rights and culture in the name of the EZLN. Hundreds of women fought side by side with their *compañeros* on the front lines of the guerrilla. And many more resisted the state armed forces and organized themselves defying the traditions that locate them in the apolitical private space. These cases may be taken as isolated acts charged of momentary symbolism. Yet, as we will argue, they are illustrative examples of a revolutionary disruption of the spaces and gendered notions marked by patriarchy. The following pages are thus an attempt to analyze how these women contributed to destabilize these constructions and the regimes of belongingness defined by the Mexican national order. For this purpose, we will analyze their discursive practices using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis as the methodological pathway (1993) and Butler's theory on gender performativity as the guiding theoretical framework (1989).

1.2. Framing the Research

1.2.1. Research Question

The present work is an attempt to respond to the following research question:

How have indigenous women from the Zapatista movement challenged hegemonic gendered notions of the Mexican nation-state since the revolutionary uprising of January 1st 1994?

We are aware that there are many ways in which these women have engaged in the destabilization of the nation-state. Yet, the limited scope of this thesis and the methodology selected demands a reduction of the analytical cases. The process will be further explained in the methodological chapter. The response to the aforementioned question does not aim at generalizations. Rather, it

assumes its limited potential, solely attempting to provide an alternative interpretation of the discursive processes in its connection to the disruption of the Mexican nation-state paradigm.

1.2.2. Assumptions

These assumptions have been established to guide the research. They are substantiated in the theoretical framework.

1. Fist assumption (A1): The nation-state is a creator of specific regimes of belongingness since its origins in 17th and 18th Century Europe and throughout its historical and geographical expansion as the hegemonic spatial order.

2. Second assumption (A2): The Mexican 'nation-state' is the promoter of a very particular regime of belongingness since the decolonizing period. The inclusions and exclusions to the national project are marked by stereotypical gendered and racialized beliefs constructed in history.

3. Third assumption (A3): There is a possible negotiation of the spaces of inclusivity and exclusivity for indigenous women through changes in gender and racial performances that contribute to destabilize the historical constructions made upon their bodies.

1.2.3. Objective

The objective of this inquiry is to focus on the value of the discursive practices of these indigenous women in order to explore how changes in their gender and racial performativity are challenging the hegemonic gendered notions and spaces defined by the Mexican nation-state.

1.2.4. Overview

This thesis is organized as follows:

The current chapter (Chapter 1) has briefly introduced the reader into the topic, framing the research around the main question and the (three) assumptions that will help us guide the inquiry. Chapter 2 clarifies the conceptual framework necessary for the analysis, introducing the reader to

the most relevant literature.

The methodology used for the study is presented in Chapter 3. The section provides an interpretation of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis as implemented on the sources. Both the primary and secondary sources used for the analysis are presented at the beginning of the chapter. Chapter 4 introduces the needed historical framework for the contextualization of the events.

The results are finally presented and discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Each one of the chapters is developed around a thematic block identified during the analytical stage. Chapter 8 outlines the main conclusions in connection to the assumptions presented in Chapter 1. Finally, it presents the limitations identified in an exercise of self-reflection.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. The Public Sphere: A Gendered and Racialized Space

2.1.1. Introduction

If we are to analyze the public sphere in relation to indigenous women, we need to be aware of the power relations produced in the historical construction of the nation-state, which have contributed to the marginalization and exclusion of certain groups from the political realm. Feminist scholarship has examined the historical construction of public space as directly related to the nation-state project and the beginnings of liberalism, where the modern liberal conception of privacy and the private space pushed for the delineation of political rights as *individual* rights. This individualistic discourse was problematic from the beginning, as the 'individual' was defined around a very particular combination of race, gender and class: elite white men (Rose 1993, p. 35). Citizenship, the ultimate mechanism of the modern state for the configuration of regimes of belongingness (to the nation-state, to the public sphere, and to the political realm) was also defined in those terms. It was, as Mohanty argues, originated in an impersonal bureaucracy and hegemonic masculinity shaped by gendered and racialized discourses on "rationality, calculation and orderliness" (1991, p. 22). Although these are western constructions not suited to be applied to all corners of this world, the nation-state model -and its gender and racial regimes- is currently the hegemonic spatial order adopted in practice and under which specific areas of inclusion and exclusion are constructed and experienced by many. Mohanty explains how white capitalist

patriarchies, no matter where they are placed, institute "relations of rule based on a liberal citizenship model with its own forms of knowledge and impersonal bureaucracies" (1991, p. 21). Also, according to R.W. Connell (1990), the western state model operates through the setting up of a "gender regime" as the main organizer of gender relations. Spaces are thus differently negotiated depending on the varied gendered regimes historically originated through social struggle and socio-sexual arrangements in different arenas (p. 523). Through varying sets of rules and practices, the state "sets limit to the use of personal violence, protects property (and thus unequal economic resources), criminalizes stigmatized sexuality, embodies masculinized hierarchy, and organizes collective violence in policing, prisons, and war" (p. 520). However, as Mohanty points out, Connell provides only a partial analysis of citizenship. As she asserts, "to fully appreciate and mobilize against the oppressive rule of this state, the relations of rule of the state must be understood and analyzed in terms of gender, class and sexual as well as racial formation" (1991, p. 22).

This section is an attempt in this direction. We provide a conceptual framework in order to understand the gendered and racialized regimes that have emerged in the liberal modern state with a focus on the Mexican experience in its adoption of the western model. We will firstly frame the spaces of inclusion and exclusion that emerged in post-colonial Latin American national projects in relation to indigenous peoples and women, elaborating on the Mexican mestizophille project. We will also briefly introduce the disruptions of the so-called 'new' Latin American social movements in the public sphere. Secondly, we will conceptualize the gendered character of war and militaries -understanding militarization as another political exercise of 'full' citizenship in the public sphere- in order to understand the relation of the nation-state project to the construction of particular masculinities and femininities that also shape spaces of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, we will introduce our reader to Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity as a form to disrupt norms and spaces (1988), elaborating on a similar theory on racial terms (Inda 2000).

2.1.2. The Mexican Nation-State and Its Indigenous Peoples

The orders of racialized knowledge during colonial times contributed to the creation of projects of white domination over non-white subordinated subjects even in the postcolonial world. The exercise of naturalizing racial differences has its origins in the 15th and 16th Century, when the first wave of European colonization to the 'New World', pushed for the delineation of worldviews that distinguished between the 'civilized' white Europeans and dark-skinned 'savages' (Inda 2000, p.

76). The second wave of European colonization into the African continent in the 18th and 19th Century supported these 'othering' processes with the development of scientific systems of classification where certain physical traits, such as skin color or body physiognomies were connected to intellect capacities or morality (ibid). These systems of knowledge supported the naturalization of racial hierarchies, as they were claimed to be founded in biological and phenomenal differences of humankind. These 'naturalizing' processes aimed at establishing unquestionable racialized hierarchical relations that remained as Hall argues, "beyond history, permanent and fixed" (cited by Inda 2000, p. 77). Thus, secured from historical change.

These racial constructions are difficultly supported in genetics. However, these ideas were soon transformed into popular sets of believes. As a result, races did finally make their way "as social categories of great tenacity and power" (Wade 1997, p. 14). Its application became of historical importance as a tool for social differentiation and organization (Gall 2001, p. 90). For example, the relationships that emerged between the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Spaniards upon their arrival in the continent was shaped around the creation of different racial 'us' and 'the other'. Regarded as either equal, sub-humans or inferior creatures in need of protection[1], the attitudes assumed by the colonizers were always shaped on a basis of racial categorizations that implied a *de facto* difference with the white Spaniards. In this sense, Wade argues that "the concept of race is even more surely linked into a European history of thinking about difference rather than a concept describing an objective reality that is independent of a social context" (Wade 1997, p. 15). For him, race and racial signifiers cannot be conceived outside of history.

> "Races, racial categories and racial ideologies are not simply those that elaborate social constructions on the basis of phenotypical variation –or ideas about innate difference- but those that do so using the particular aspects of phenotypical variation that were worked into vital signifiers of difference during European colonial encounters with others" (Wade 1997, p. 15).

The 'naturalized' social hierarchies resulting out of racial orders became thus of great significance for European imperial projects. The Spaniards and the Portuguese in Latin America, the Belgians and French in Africa or the British in Asia, they all made use of these racial constructions to define

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[1] Gall distinguishes between three kinds of attitudes that the Spaniards adopted upon their arrival in the American continent: 1) The evangelization of the indigenous peoples implied that they could be considered as belonging to the same human nature as the Spaniards 2) The indigenous peoples were regarded as inferior –they needed thus to be subdued or even, enslaved 3) The Indian was regarded as an under age who needed protection through segregation. Read more in Gall, 2001, p. 91.

their relation to the colonized 'other' and to justify their violent territorial expansions as a matter of moral duty.

During the decolonizing period, these racial constructions persisted as shapers of hierarchical relationships within the new territorial orders. The newly founded states in Latin America adopted homogenous notions of the nation in line with the European model (De la Peña 1998, p. 34). Social differentiations within the new order became then reinforced in terms of ethnic[2] constructions (Wade 1997, p. 17). These referred to cultural differences derived from what Banks sees as "a collection of rather simplistic and obvious statements about boundaries, otherness, goals and achievements, being and identity, descent and classification" (1996, p. 190).

Simplistic or not, the meanings shaped in Latin America during colonial times around the category *indio* left indigenous peoples in a position of marked inferiority within the new order. They were increasingly identified as ugly, lazy, stupid and submissive (Gall 2001, p. 92). Either through segregation or through calculated attempts to absorb their linguistic and cultural variations into the hegemonic one, pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples were left outside the political, social, economic and cultural spheres in these newly independent states (ibid). Ethnicity for this matter served as a marker of differentiation and a form to categorize complex cultural variations into simple systems. In fact, these cultural variations were soon target of official policies that pushed indigenous peoples into coercive processes of homogenization. In this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Latin American context, the ideal 'imagined community' of the newly liberated territories was perceived as solely achievable through enforcing violent policies of cultural assimilation (De la Peña 1998, p. 34). Williams explains the usage of ethnical constructions for nation-state building processes:

> "In sum, ethnicity labels the visibility of that aspect of identity formation process
> that is produced by and subordinated to nationalist programs and plans [that] intend
> on creating putative homogeneity out of heterogeneity through the appropriate
> processes of a transformist hegemony" (cited in Banks 1996, p. 5).

De la Peña points out that while in Ecuador, Bolivia or Guatemala the 'citizen' reference continued being the 'white' colonizer, assimilation policies in Mexico were conducted based on refined ideologies around a *mestizo* nation. As he explains, alternative forms of cultural or ethnic

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[2] Wade appoints that the general consensus on ethnicity lies on its specificity to cultural differences, while race is based on phenotypical differences. Yet, as he explains, some scholars draw no real distinctions between the two. Read more in Wade 1997, p. 17.

communalization are hardly tolerated in the nation-state model, and if so, they need to accept a subordinated and secondary role (1998, p. 33). The reproduction of traditions and guarantees of a shared destiny is an essential part of the nation-state's legitimation and hegemony and only those communities in line with the nation -myths, origin, traditions, beliefs- can be accepted within (ibid). In this sense, post-revolutionary Mexico – the Mexican revolution took place in 1910- brought serious debates on *indigenismo*[3] to face the so-called 'Indian question'. The building processes of the modern nation needed of an ethnic-national community with a historical-cultural unity that could serve as the fundamental founding and structural element (Gall 2001, p. 94). Mestizophillia became that founding key as a set of cultural policies that underpinned "the formation, consolidation and reproduction of national identity and nationalism" in Mexico (Gall 2013, p. 281). An illustrative example of this line of thought can be found in the official statements of liberal politician and intellectual Vicente Riva Palacio (1832–1896). For him, ethnic and racial diversity was an impediment for the development of a successful independent nation: "To achieve the harmony and strength of patriotic cohesion it is essential […] that Mexicans belong to the same race" (cited in Gall 2013, p. 283).

> "[…] *mestizos* were the only ones who could 'feel the country as their homeland, for only they could be distinguished from the inhabitants of Spain and of the Anáhuac, two nations that are far from the Mexican nation in space and time'. The *mestizo* was the new hero, and *mestizaje* was seen by Riva Palacio as a new unstoppable phenomenon with a life of its own. The mestizo was not a means, but an end; an end for whose sake *Mexicanidad* or Mexican identity would be consolidated" (Gall 2013, p. 283)

In 1910 a political and social revolution took place in Mexico. The mestizophile project became then to be shaped around José Vasconcelos' conceptualization of the cosmic race. In his work, the influential philosopher and politician intended to refute the common believes that depicted Latin Americans as "some type of lesser new world", claiming the superiority of the mixed race (Coffey & Tejada 2012, p. 403). Vasconcelos' discourse went beyond race to add a dimension that had already been neglected by 19th Century liberal thinkers –that of the Mexican hybrid culture. For him this hybrid culture would be constructed upon both Mexico's ancient civilizations/indigenous cultures and the cultural heritage of Spain. This way, he foregrounded "the value of Indian ethnicity,

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[3] This is the official name given to the public policies that aimed at the assimilation of Indians into an imagined homogenous nation

its ancient ruins, its manual arts, the country's long history and [the] volcanic landscape with mythologies old and new" (p. 403). Yet, in this exaltation of the indigenous expression, the subjects were in fact presented as emptied of active historical participation and meaning. In this sense, Gall explains that Vasconcelos' constructed nation represents perfectly what Balibar & Wallerstein define as a "fictive ethnicity":

> "No nation naturally possesses an ethnic basis, but in the process of the nationalization of social formations, the populations that nations include, deal with and control are 'ethnicized'; in other words, they are represented in the past or in the future as if they would form a natural community, owning an original cultural identity made of common interests, transcending individuals and social conditions. […] By constituting the people as a fictively ethnic unity against the background of a universalistic representation which thus divides up the whole of humanity between different ethnic groups corresponding potentially to so many nations, national ideology does much more than justify the strategies employed by the state to control populations. It inscribes their demands in advance in a sense of belonging, in the double sense of the term – both what it is that makes one belong to oneself and also what makes one belong to other fellow human beings. […] The naturalization of belonging and the sublimation of the ideal nation are two aspects of the same process" (cited by Gall 2013, p. 285).

Vasconcelos suggested that in his attempt to create this 'fictive' national ethnicity, the Mexican state had to push for the submission of the diverse indigenous identities into *one* ethnic, racial and cultural unity. *Indigenismo* and the cosmic race became, in this way, the pathways for the construction of the Mexicanness. Anthropologist Manuel Gamio became one of the fathers of *indigenismo*. In his book *Forjando Patria[4]*, Gamio embodied the teachings of Franz Boas, from whom he had adopted cultural relativism (Gall 2013, p. 287). For Boas all cultural systems were equal in terms of value, the differences emerging between different societies were solely a result of peoples own historical, social and geographical conditions and their adaptation to them (ibid). In this form, he defied the developmentalist theories of the time that established conditions of 'backwardness' to non-white societies. By applying these theories to the Mexican context, Gamio attempted to develop 'cultural' non-racial policies that intended to benefit indigenous peoples by mixing their cultural 'purity' with the purity of Spanish origins, "so the result would be a single impurity that would henceforth be

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[4] Shaping Motherland

considered as the official synonym of 'being Mexican'" (p. 288). It is not surprising that he soon coincided with Vasconcelos on the forms to shape a common 'fictive ethnicity'. In this sense, Gall argues, the post-revolutionary Mexican state created an "enclosing, excluding principle": the community of race (p. 286). Through Vasconcelos' conceptualization of *mestizaje*, the state instituted the national race as the affiliation to the shared community. Its nucleus "was the belief that the filiations of individuals transmit from generation to generation a substance both biological and spiritual which inscribes them in a certain community" (ibid).

Although Gamio's intention was against evolutionary thesis that located the cause of national backwardness in Indians, the binary *indigenismo/mestizaje* provided arguments for a strategic logic of assimilation. Many intellectuals and politicians defended the validity of the homogenous mestizo ideal from an evolutionist point of view, assuming that the socio-cultural traits -customs, habits, ideas and modes of life- of indigenous peoples followed a traditionalist path opposed to progress and civilization (Sánchez 1999, p. 29). This approach, configured under the term of 'integrationist nationalism' (p. 28), increasingly shaped official policies and violent processes of acculturation that strongly limited the collective rights of indigenous peoples and the respect for their modes of life.

In the process of acculturation into one Mexican mestizo culture, indigenous peoples were pushed to learn Spanish, to learn how to read and write, to participate in the capitalist market with their labor and to become owners of private property. They were ultimately pushed to change their concept of community –the indigenous local- for the emerging Mexican nation. De la Peña defines this as a marked road to become 'civilized mestizos' (1998, p. 35) while Bonfil describes it as a form of ethnocide (1983, p. 144). In his strong criticism of *indigenismo*[5], Bonfil sees a clear dominant culture that subordinates and exploits indigenous cultures in an asymmetrical form as a result of the expansion of capitalist economic models. For him, the exploitation of indigenous peoples, directly conducted in colonial times, was increasingly transformed into a vicarious form where the national society –the dominant *mestizo* culture- is benefitting from the modes of exploitation of the capitalist system. This system oppresses indigenous peoples through the destruction of their lands and their forms of economic survival, ultimately pushing them into alternative 'dominant' modes of life (p. 152). The 'mexicanización' is depicted thus, as the only way for their liberation as 'slaves' (p. 155).[6]

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[5] Bonfil criticises the intellectuals of the revolution and the immediate post-revolution ones, stating that "they abandoned the strict exercise of the critique" to all that occurred in name of the revolution (p. 144).
[6] Yet, Bonfil wonders if this is possible: "Does it make sense to talk about the integration of the Indian as the only way for his redemption? Can the *amo* (owner of a slave or an animal) assimilate the slave? And does this last one become also an *amo* without previously breaking the laces of slavery? Can we all get to be *amos*, if the figure of the *amo*

More than a hundred years of these approaches towards indigenous peoples have not brought about the results expected by its promoters: neither the socio-economical inequalities of indigenous peoples nor their culture and/or ethnic identity have been 'dissolved'. Rather, the last years of the 20th Century and the first years of the 21st Century have seen an increase in the political action of indigenous peoples for the recognition of their rights and the ethnic and cultural diversity within the territory of the Mexican state (Sánchez 1999, p. 50). Yet, as Gall argues, the state has not found any ideology to replace the *indigenismo/mestizaje* philosophy, and although the indigenist discourse has been slowly transformed since the 1970s, the state has kept feeding "the policies of sameness and otherness" inherited from the past (2013, p. 281).

However, as Vargas appoints, citizenship is a terrain of dispute. Constant dialect negotiations take place between the restricted, partial and exclusive character of its definition and the attempts of the marginalized to push for their inclusion (2000, p. 4). The process takes place through ruptures, setbacks and recoveries in the conceptions and content of the regimes of belongingness historically created. In this struggle, tensions emerge between the theoretical 'universality' of rights and the differences and inequalities that prevent some groups from accessing those 'universal' rights. Vargas talks about real and imaginary barriers to citizenship (p. 6). These barriers are based on systems of beliefs, stereotypes or historical constructions which have developed "non-legal discriminations"[7] of the everyday social reality from which "traumas, fears and complexes of superiority or inferiority" originate, preventing people from treating each other in equality (p. 7). As we have seen, the racial constructions designed in colonial times and the hierarchical relations that emerged have persisted in time. De la Peña argues that to fight this, it is necessary to deny and defy the current definitions of society and the unity of a national culture, as varying ethnicities cannot comfortably rest in the imagined national community due to the popular negative categorization of the 'Indio' (p.60).

> "The negative category is still that of the *'indio*[8]; its meaning is still stratified and it
> still implies the construction of the national history as overcoming that category.
> That's why it is important for the new movements to tackle the root of the

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only exist, precisely, due to the existence of the figure of the slave?" For Bonfil, before any integration, it is necessary the destruction of all asymmetrical relations between the national society and the indigenous communities -to destroy all forms of exploitation (p. 155).

[7] 'Non-legal' states for 'not contained in the law' and has nothing to do with 'illegality'.

[8] As the reader might have already recognised, the term 'indio' in the Latin American context portrays a highly negative connotation in comparison to 'indigenous' or 'native'. This is due to its employment in colonial times, making direct reference to a history of exploitation and racist discrimination by white colonizers.

hegemonic *habitus*: to rebuild the '*indio*', to write another (hi)story, to create other traditions, to fight for the possibility of other identities. In this dynamism, new indigenous intellectuals reject to be categorized as 'civilized mestizos' and assume the responsibility to create positive discourses against the forces of marginalization"[9] (De la Peña 1998, p. 60)

In this regard, 'new' movements in Latin America have come to challenge the public sphere and the narrow conception of citizenship and individual rights that has been historically used as political instruments to oppress, ignore and silence indigenous peoples and their customs, perspectives and ethos of association and organization. Since the 1970s newly articulated groups emerged in different organizations to question the idealized 'homogenous', exclusive and repressive model of the nation-state imposed in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic reality of barely shared origins. Although they presented varied and particular contextual struggles, they all shared a common claim: respect for their cultural identity and their forms of organization within an 'heterogeneous' state. From Chile to Colombia to Guatemala, these 'new' social movements took to the political scene through violent and non-violent forms. The Zapatista movement in Chiapas, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, the Pan-Andean indigenous organizations in Ecuador, the Mapuche peoples in Chile, the organized Aymara and Quechua peoples in Bolivia and the indigenous habitants of the Amazons are just some examples. These groups emerged in the political arena with clear and common demands (De la Peña 1998, p. 61):

1. A communal and inalienable territory for their own, free of modifications or interventions and respect for their modes of production and reproduction.
2. Respect for their own governmental forms based on common law.
3. The establishment of multi-communal territories and institutions, which normally coincide with the ethnic pre-Hispanic regions in an attempt to reach political recognition as a unit.
4. Promotion of their languages and cultural expressions through effective bilingual education, the recognition of their languages in official documents and other public forms of communication, protection of their art and respect for their faiths. It is also of special importance the particular demand of these groups to avoid a public discourse on modernity that excludes indigenous peoples.
5. Support of their communal systems of production and environmental protection.

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[9] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

6. Participation in the formal political institutions of the state -in the executive, legislative and judicial powers. The state must thus assume the conceptual definition of the state as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-national entity. In addition, that acceptance of plurality must come hand in hand with the subsequent institutional expression.

2.1.3. Gender and Ethnicity

As we have seen, exclusive ideas on the 'imagined' nation have pushed for the historical construction of control mechanisms in order to restrict access to the civil, political and social rights and responsibilities that come with that membership. The historical construction of the public sphere –the political locus- as the 'masculine' space (mainly shaped by the theoretical division of labor between the sexes) located women as 'naturally' belonging to the private sphere. Gender as an ordering principle has historically served, and is still used, as a way of categorizing and symbolizing power, establishing hierarchical relations between groups of people and between their activities and behaviors, which are regarded as 'masculine' or 'feminine' (Cohn & Jacobson 2013, p. 3). In this fundamental dichotomy, "men are assumed to be chiefly preoccupied with and responsible for the occupations of the sphere of economic and political life" while women are so with the private sphere of domesticity and reproduction (Okin 2009, p. 118). Women are thus regarded as naturally unsuited for the public realm and the exercise of their political rights. In this sense, many feminist theorists have removed the "veil of gender-neutrality" in relation to citizenship, to finally reveal its essential male character (Lister 2012, p. 372). As Lister puts it, "on the public side stands the disembodied citizen *qua* man who displays the necessary qualities of impartiality, rationality, independence and political agency" (2012, p. 373. For Pateman, this idea is supported in the construction of the private side, a space shaped for those (women) who are unable to develop the necessary (male) qualities of citizenship (cited in Lister 2012, p. 373).

Feminist scholars have detected historical variations in the exclusion of women from the public sphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the development of western national projects pushed for ideologies of nationalism and individualism "which allowed only certain people the ability to be active individuals in the national polity" (Rose 1993, p. 35). First- and second-wave feminists saw the exclusion of 'certain people' solely through gender lenses –unaware of the white, middle-class positions from which they were making their critiques. Women of color and lesbian activists (third-wave feminists) began to question the public/private dichotomization and the limited conceptualizations on citizenship, arguing for the difficult application of experiences of

non-white women into those conceptual frameworks. In this sense, several black feminist historians have appointed that any attempt to universalize the geography of the public/private divide is wrong, as it erases the class and racial specificities of its origins (Blunt & Rose 1994, p. 4). In this sense, philosopher C. W. Mills talks about the establishment of a white supremacy of racial patriarchy where the family and the private sphere is no longer the primary mode of oppression for non-white women. Rather it is "their subordination through conquest, land expropriation, slavery, regimes of colonial forced labor, segregation, racialized occupational positions in the job marketplace, the sex industry, the modern sweatshop, and so forth that becomes far more salient" (Mills 2007, p. 181). In *Contract and Domination* feminist and political theorist Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills attempt to combine their experience re-thinking the original social contract in gender and racial terms[10] to provide an intersectional model, *the racia-sexual contract*, in which "pre-existing patriarchal structures are modified by the emergent new structure of racial domination" (Mills 2007, p. 172). Although gender subordination is historically prior to racial subordination, the latter remains as the key organizer of the social hierarchy, even over gender: "whites as a group dominate non-whites as a group, while within these racial groups men generally dominate women" (p. 172). It is for this reason that the critical observations of white feminists concerning the public and private sphere become too reductionist for non-white women.

Many feminists of color have attempted to develop new cartographies that respond to specific modes of oppression and the spaces resulting from resistance. Mohanty for example states,

> "white liberal capitalist patriarchies have always been the focus of feminist resistance [.] But to fully appreciate and mobilize against the oppressive rule of the nation-state, the relations of rule of the state must be understood and analyzed in terms of gender, class and sexual as well as racial formation" (1991, p. 22).

The highly contested meaning of the public sphere and citizenship has thus to be analyzed in its context. As Birte Siim argues, "there is no universal story about gender and citizenship. The story about the constraints and possibilities for the inclusion of women in full citizenship needs to be told from different national contexts" (cited in Lister 2012, p. 373).

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[10] Caroline Pateman introduced *The Sexual Contract* in 1988 in an attempt to rethink one of the foremost debated concepts of Western political thought in sexual terms. In her work, she argues that the sexual contract between men and women is normally ignored, thus patriarchal power over women results in an exclusion of women from the original contract. Charles W. Mills does the proper in racial terms in *The Racial Contract*, a work published in 1997 where he focuses on the role that race plays in the same process.

2.1.4. Gendered Wars, Gendered Warriors

In *Women and War*, Jean Bethke Elshtain explains how gender roles and gender ideology fosters the acceptance of a social order of culturally transmitted myths and memories where men are perceived as violent 'just warriors' while women are peaceful 'beautiful souls' offering succor and compassion (1995, p. 4). These tropes have contributed to the maintenance of stereotypical gender-divisions within conflict, adding further meanings to manhood and womanhood in war. Thus, these discourses on the social identities of men and women do not respond to what men and women *really* are or do in times of war, it is however effective to re-create and secure the normativity around their roles, spaces and supposedly 'natural' behaviors in regard to armed conflict (p. 92). These images are so hegemonic that they are difficultly overshadowed by dissonant stories: "it seems not to require confirmation in the form of actual men's and women's behaviors –indeed, it almost seems immune to counter-evidence" (Cohn & Jacobson 2013, p. 105).

For Cohn and Jacobson, two relevant tropes have historically pushed forward these gendered identities, helping to mobilize societies to support both war and militarization (2013, p. 121). These identities have also contributed to define "the political space within which women act and the ways in which their actions are perceived" (2013, p. 121). Firstly, the hegemonic normativity and set of beliefs that associates men with war and women with peace supports the creation of a space of exclusion for women. Peacefulness is often linked to motherhood -the capacity to give birth and develop a social life of nurture (p. 107). Thus, women are located in the 'natural' realm of domesticity that comes with motherhood, unable to 'do' politics. Cohn and Jacobson explain that "in the (masculinized) world of realpolitik, mothers are seen as not legitimately belonging in the public, political sphere at all" (p. 106). Consequently, they warn us, women are not taken seriously as political contenders (p. 105). This disempowering effect on women's political action is also illustrated in the perceived inability of women to lead.

> "No matter how problematic the symbolic association of men and manliness with war and women with peace may be when we look at real men's and women's actions, it nonetheless has significant political effects. How does it affect the perceptions of women as political actors in the face of war? For one thing, at the level of state politics, perceptions of the (lack of) desirability of having women as state leaders have been shaped by the presumption that a head of state must be willing and able

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to lead (his) country into war, a quality which is equated with manliness" (p. 105)

Secondly, the discourse of 'the protector and the protected' not only locates women as vulnerable victims, but it also contains a hidden articulation of particular constructions of femininity and masculinity to justify and produce war. The embedded counterpart to the idea that men are violent and aggressive warriors is the notion that women need protection from some men, by other men (p. 113). For centuries, military and political leaders have made use of these discourses, constituting an additional meaning to military masculinity -to protect. In this sense, they have effectively asked for public support for wars and men's loyalty to the armed forces by appealing to the need to protect women, children and the nation (p. 114). Recent feminist scholarship has focused on the gendering of nationalism itself and the constructions on masculinity and femininity at play in state-building processes and international relations as a means to study how those processes affect women and their political agency. Cohn and Jacobson assert that

> "nationalist discourses which portray women as the biological and social reproducers of the nation, the embodiment of national identity and the communal honor have proved toxic for women, serving to legitimize control of women's lives and bodies, to make rape and forced impregnation into weapons of ethno-nationalist conflicts, and to construct woman and nation as passive victims rather than political agents in a masculinized state" (p. 120)

The state, as the organizer of gender relations and ultimate shaper of the gender regime, becomes, as Connell argues, "involved in the historical process generating and transforming the basic components of the gender order" (1990, p. 529). War and the military also fall under this umbrella, perpetuating what Connell appoints as "a dominance-oriented masculinity" through the rigors of basic training, officer corps and ultimately, gendered militaries (p. 529). In this military environment, presumptions about gender (roles) are built into them but not necessarily bound to the institution. For example, many scholars have highlighted the fact that women's presence into the military is often hindered. Granting access to women to the military would automatically grant them full citizenship rights previously restricted. This is, because many see how "sacrificing one's life for one's country is the ultimate citizenship duty" (Yuval-Davis 1997, p. 93). The state, on Connell's terms, might be thus an ally of patriarchy, maintaining a 'conscription', which is, for Kronsell and Svedberg, a silenced exercise of hegemonic masculinity.

"Conscription normalized the role of soldiering and protecting the nation-state as men's role. Through conscription, the male citizen becomes the 'a priori' citizen while the female citizen has different duties toward the state. Though more diffusely defined, her duties derive both from her presumed prior location in the private realm as caretaker of the domestic sphere and on her presumed 'natural' difference from men" (cited in Kronsell 2005, p. 284)

Thus, as Mathers argues, a notion of citizenship and political agency established men as the norm inevitably withstands a sharper division of the public and private spheres. It also fosters further constraints that make it difficult for women to be regarded as full citizens in the project of the nation-state (2013). In this sense, two interrelated mechanisms support the gender system: the practices shaped around the male-as-norm and the (conceptual but also physical) separation of men and women into two different spheres (Kronsell 2005, p. 284). In institutions of hegemonic masculinity like the militaries and armed forces, monopolization by men shapes norms based on male bodies and masculine attitudes, further reproducing male-as-norm mechanisms (p. 284). These are also supported, as we have seen, on discourses that need of a counterweighted femininity, which defines the practices for women as outsiders to these institutions. For Kronsell, this historically constructed division into differentiated spaces in fact "helps secure the continuity of the institutions of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 285). It is thus interesting to study how the spaces of gendered institutions become blurry when women cross boundaries re-shaping these 'male zones', fulfilling certain often vital roles within them. However, as Yuval-Davis argues, the entry of women into the military labor market has increasingly changed the context of the sexual divisions of labor and power but, it has not ultimately erased them (1997, p. 93).

2.2. Changing Gendered and Racial Performativity, Disrupting Spaces

As we have seen, the social construction of gender has been employed in history to configure certain relations of power. As a discursive construct, gender continues (re)structuring those power relations and the spaces provided for the 'accepted' expression of the (binary) genders. Also, in the case of the nation-state project, gender becomes a source to define the spaces of belongingness. Judith Butler's poststructuralist account of gender perceives social agents as continuously constituting the social reality through a "stylized repetition of acts", where "bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (1988, p. 519). Thus, her formulation of gender performativity moves "the conception of gender

off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of a constituted *social temporality*" (p. 520). Following Simone de Beauvoir's distinction between sex as a biological facticity and gender as a cultural interpretation of that facticity, Butler asserts the performance of the body as a self-materialization "in obedience to a historically delimited possibility" (p. 522). Gender is thus founded through discontinuous acts that reflect and appropriate historically and culturally shaped sets of meanings (p. 520). For Butler, the gendered body becomes then qualified for life "within the domain of cultural intelligibility" (1993, p. 2). In this cultural intelligibility, gender categories such as man, woman, heterosexual or homosexual are produced as "a performative accomplishment" which is absorbed by the audiences, intrinsically accepted by the performing actors (p. 520).

However, because gender is constituted through the reiterative power of discourse, Butler sees possibility for disruption through subversive discursive modes that counter-perform hegemonic norms (p. 520). Gendered bodies are not a material reality but rather the vehicles that represent the categories previously constructed by discourses. The historical characterization of bodies as appointed by Merleau-Ponty[11] also presents a possibility for a transformative disruption of gender.

> "If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and
> not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are
> to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different
> sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (p. 520)

This instability of gender norms, as accounted by Butler in the possibility of "a different sort of repeating" suggests a possible disruption of the social constructions. The stage is however open, as she appoints, to arbitrary relations. The performative act of gender is not a personal choice but it is also not imposed on the individual, as other poststructuralist critiques would imply (p. 526). In this sense, this lacking of a clear source for the transformation of gender performance is one of the critiques posed against Butler's theorization. For Barvosa-Carter, the multiple discourses that shape subjects' identity are the factor that enables that transformative agency. For her, subjects are constructed in reiterating varying discourses and structural practices that "involve not only gender identities, but also a full range of complex social relations and subject positions including ethnic, cultural, subcultural, sexual, regional, national and other identities" (2005, p. 127). This multiplicity

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[11] Butler bases part of his theory in Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization of the body as both a historical idea and "a set of possibilities to be continually realized" in history. Its meaning is thus a concretely expression of the historical moment (1988, p. 521).

of constructions is for her the main source of agency for the possible variation in performativity. Elaborating on what she perceives as an 'unexplored' consistent throughout Butler's work, she argues that the multiple construction of the subject allows spaces for self-reflexivity on different forms of performing acts. It is, she explains, "through the overlap, intersection, mutual conditioning and mutual critique of these different sets of socially constituted perspectives and identities that the resources for the variation on repetition –and agency itself- springs" (p. 128).

The application of the intersectionality paradigm as a theoretical and methodological approach to Butler's performativity is essential to highlight power relations and oppressive systems that not only establish what counts as normal in gender terms, but also in class and racial terms. In the interplay of multiple forms of oppression, subjects experience varying responses to norms that go beyond solely gender ones. In this sense, could norms on race be performed as Butler accounts for gender? Are the categories 'black' or 'white' pre-constituted to the body?

Inda proposes an adaptation of Butler's theory as to understand performativity of the racial body. He argues that race, just as gender, is produced as an effect of discourse and does not exist in a pre-given body. Thus, what might be called racial performativity is for Inda "not a singular act of racial body constitution, but a reiterative practice through which discourse brings about the effect that it names" (2000, p. 88). Thus, the act of expressing certain racial terms brings the racial body into a system of meanings and signifiers historically constructed. As Inda appoints, the racialized body only becomes meaningful within a historically specific discourse. In this case, the post-revolutionary Mexican *indio* was linked to traits such as laziness, ugliness or backwardness. These signifiers were shaped in colonial times and permeated throughout the 19th and 20th Century. But for this signifiers to maintain its meaning in relation to a racialized body, they must be 'naturalized' through repetition of discourses. For Inda this 'naturalization' of norms was achieved through the reiteration of discourses by authorities, in various times and places (p. 77).

However, the historical constitution of these bodies as an effect of discourse leaves a window open for the possibility of re-signification, where the processes of normalization and naturalization can be subverted. As he explains, "the necessity of reiteration does succeed in producing normative bodies, it also produces the site where the norm is called into question and where it can potentially be rearticulated" (p. 93). In this sense, we noted earlier that the term *indio* has been performatively used in history to shame the racialized bodies of those subjects belonging to the social category. For the re-articulation of its meaning to take place, a new discourse must be performed through

the re-appropriation of the power to name oneself and those belonging to the group, to set the conditions under which the name is employed.

3. Selected Sources and Research Design

3.1. Sources

A) Primary sources

As already stated, our main objective is to study the body, discourse and actions of Zapatista women so as to determine how the changing performativity on their roles and gender expressions challenges gendered notions of the nation-state. For this reason, we find essential to focus on their agency and the products they have created so as to analyze their direct voices and movements.

- Enlace Zapatista (http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/): digital log book from the EZLN. All the official communications from the EZLN have been recorded in this log book since 1993, together with reports about their activities. The data selected from this source for our analysis are the speeches and public communications issued by some (female) leaders of the movement. In particular[12]:

  o 'We (women) can do the same work as men, we can also take up arms', speech given by Compañera Hortensia on March 8th 1994.
  o 'We (women) are three times exploited', a speech by Comandanta Esther on February 25th 2001.
  o Speech given by Comandanta Esther in the Mexican Congress on March 28th 2001.
  o 'We, women, are the most exploited', speech given by Captain Irma, March 8th 1994

- Audiovisual material: we are aware of the possible hidden discourses and framing strategies behind these documentaries as a final product. For this reason, we will not analyze the proper films (which would be considered secondary sources after the process of the images and the incorporation of an audiovisual narrative) but rather those photographies and testimonies relevant to our study. The impossibility to access historical moments makes necessary the analysis of this material as a primary source. The parts selected for the analysis

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[12] The titles have been translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

will be noted in the Annex.

    o 'Las compañeras tienen grado', a film by María Inés Roqué and Guadalupe Miranda.

    o 'Tierra de mujeres', a film by Adriana Estrada and Ana Laura Hernández.

B) Secondary sources

The difficult access to the autonomous zones and to Zapatista women calls for the secondary analysis of other author's case studies who have had the chance to engage hand in hand with them. Also, the historical character of our inquiry demands an approximation to the archives and to studies developed by other authors. The case studies selected are the following:

Name	Type	Author	Year	Brief description
¡Zapata vive! La rebelión indígena de Chiapas contada por sus protagonistas	Chronicle, book	Guiomar Rovira	1994	Journalist and social scientist Guiomar Rovira explains the Zapatista uprising through the voices and testimonies of the members of the EZLN.
Seeking Justice, Valuing Community: Two Women's Paths in the Wake of the Zapatista Rebellion	Academic article, later transformed into a book	Christine Eber	1998	In this long essay, anthropologist Christine Eber explores the different relations and strategies that Zapatista women have developed to gain greater social justice in their lives. For the purpose she studies in depth the lives of two women from the town of San Pedro Chenalhó, Mónica and Antonia.
The Construction of Indigenous Suspects: Militarization and the Gendered and Ethnic Dynamics of Human Rights Abuses in Southern Mexico	Academic article in the journal *American Anthropologist*	Lynn Stephen	1999	In this article, anthropologist Lynn Stephen explores the rationales behind the creation of the suspect indigenous body within the national scheme – object of political violence and victim of human rights abuses. She collects testimonies from indigenous peoples both in Oaxaca and Chiapas.
Ahora es nuestra hora, la hora de las mujeres indígenas	Academic article in the journal *Debate Feminista*	Guiomar Rovira	2001	In this article, journalist and social scientist Guiomar Rovira analyses the intervention of Comandanta Esther in the Congress of the Union on March 28th. She also provides the reader with exclusive material from some interviews with Comandanta Yolanda and Comandanta Susana.

Also a Women's Rebellion: The Rise of the Zapatista Army	Chapter in the book 'Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba'	Karen Kampwirth	2002	In this chapter, political scientists Karen Kampwirth analyses de participation of indigenous women in the EZLN guerrilla. She draws comparisons to other cases in the region.
Women of Chiapas: Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope	Academic edited book	Christine Eber & Chistine Kovic	2003	In this edited volume, anthropologists Christine Eber and Christine Kovic collect the work of different multidisciplinary authors in order to highlight struggles of women in Chiapas. They explore the hard-living conditions that gave place to the Zapatista uprising: poverty, racism, discrimination, violence, etc. and the forms these women have organized to bring change to the region and their lives.
Women of Maize: Indigenous Women and the Zapatista Rebellion	Chronicle, book	Guiomar Rovira	2015	In this book, journalist and social scientist Guiomar Rovira explores in depth the participation of women in the Zapatista movement.
Compañeras	Chronicle, book	Hilary Klein	2015	Activist Hilary Klein collects in this book 6 years of testimonies of Zapatista women, touching different aspects of the indigenous rebellion as lived by its women.

3.2. Criteria for Sources Selection

The difficulty to access the MAREZ and the historical character of this work demanded an indirect approach to our object of study. However, we find essential analyzing the materials and declarations produced by Zapatista women so as to analyze their gender performances and discursive practices. For this reason, we mainly approached the main EZLN communication platform to identify those materials relevant to our study, where the voices and demands of Zapatista women were clearly heard and isolated from the movement's general claims. What we found were mainly speeches made by some of these women –those in the higher ranks like Mayora Ana María or Comandanta Esther- and interviews. Yet, it was not enough to conduct a proper research and to apply our methodology. Many of the issues that we wanted to explore were missing. The audiovisual material was thus selected to visually support the other primary sources but also to add testimonies and declarations from many other women that were not given a space in the official communications from the movement.

Yet, we realized that these primary sources were not enough. Luckily, many authors have had access to the autonomous zones to document what is happening/has happened inside. A few also had access to first-hand declarations and observations of the guerrilla during the first years of the low-intensity conflict. We identified then the most relevant materials in this regard to support and complement the information collected in the primary sources. The relevancy has been defined based on different criteria:

1. Authorship (time treating the topic, well-known researcher in the topic)
2. Discipline and research methodology (studies that have been mainly shaped out of interviews and/or participant observations)
3. Date of the study (including both old and recent studies, and studies that were produced analyzing relevant events for our work)
4. Inclusion of direct interviews/testimonies/declarations of Zapatista women

3.3. Pattern-matching and Triangulation

The limited scope of this thesis and the limitations that the selected methodology pose demanded a selection of the cases of analyses. We are aware of the many forms that Zapatista women's discursive practices have come to challenge the nation-state. Yet, after a first contact with the material of the primary and secondary sources, we were forced to select only those cases that we found more interesting and relevant for our discussion. We engaged then in a pattern-matching process to build on thematic blocks that could be discussed within out theoretical framework.

3.4. Methodology: Re-thinking Van Dijk's Critical Analysis Discourse Model

Critical discourse analysts take particular interest in the relation between language and power. While some authors are more focused on lexico-syntactic features of texts, Van Dijk's focuses on cultural and social contexts where those acts of communication take place. Van Dijk's approach to this methodology presupposes a study of the relation between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality (1993, p. 249). He understands power relations as developed and reproduced through 'modes' of discourse that exert expressions of dominance or power and contribute to produce or challenge hegemonic constructions. Critical discourse analysis is thus for him an analytical strategy to unveil which "structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in these modes of reproduction", relating the macro-level and

social cognitive understandings –ideologies- to micro-level text and talk (p. 250). His approach focuses on the elite and the discursive strategies to maintain social inequalities, as he is specially interested in top-down relations of dominance rather than bottom-up ones. Yet, as he appoints, there's a need to include analysis of resistance in power. This work is an attempt in that direction using Van Dijk's methodological framework. An outline of the following sources of inequality is important to understand the relation that he proposes between discourse and power/resistance:

- Social power is understood by Van Dijk as "the privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge" (p. 254). In this sense, the access to public discourse becomes already a form of social power.

- Power talks about control "namely by (members of) one group over (those) of other groups" through action and cognition (p. 254).

- Dominance is defined in this work "as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups", resulting in social inequality –which takes form in political, cultural, racial, class, ethnic or gender inequality (p. 250). Dominance acts through certain discourses, which may be consciously or unconsciously enacted contributing to the legitimation of determined social order(s) and special relations of inequality which are regarded as natural. Many forms of dominance have been historically persistent until they have become to be challenged by modes of counter-power which disrupt the hegemony of those forms. This reminds us of the racial hierarchies or gender inequalities that have been historically built in relation to national projects. Dominance relates also to Butler's performativity theory in the form of convention, as certain norms -and the daily performance of those norms in the gendered and racialized body- are accepted as natural.

- Hegemony is understood by Van Dijk on Gramscian terms, as the process that takes place when the dominated' minds are influenced in such a way that they come to accept dominance, acting in the interest of the powerful elites or in accordance to the norm, and out of their own free will (p. 255). Critical discourse analysis is in this regard essential to un-build the ways in which consensus, acceptance and the legitimacy of dominance is manufactured but also to observe in detail the counter-

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forms of resistance through discursive processes.

- Social cognition is conceptualized around "socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning" (p. 258). For Van Dijk, social cognition allows us to link dominance and discourse, explaining the production, understanding and influence of dominant text and talk. It relates to the specific categories, contents, norms, values and believes that are afterwards transformed into complex, abstract or basic ideologies.

3.5. Framing Discourse

In the present thesis, the units of analysis to be identified as discourse were framed in the Foucaultian sense, as not simple acts of communication but as a system of representation, "a group of statements which provide language for talking about –a way of representing the knowledge about– a particular topic at a historical moment" (Hall 1997). Since all social practices entail a meaning –from bodily gestures to the movements to actual speeches or acts- we will perceive all practices as discursive processes. Thus, the analysis will focus but both on language and practices. From the words used, to the bodily gestures to the movements or dresses, all the *discursive* products of Zapatista women will be potentially taken for analysis in the sources selected.

3.6. Justification

Our aim is to focus on the role of discourses and disruptive gender and racial performativity as a way to challenge dominance and the hegemonic spaces of action for marginalized groups. The empirical case of Zapatista indigenous women serves us to see how their discursive processes in relation to their gender and racial performativity challenges expressions of power and dominance backed by hegemonic orders of knowledge sourced in the nation-state model. We believe Van Dijk's approach is the most suitable for the purpose, as the theorization of the methodology is founded in a relevant conceptual framework for the study.

4. Historical Context

4.1. Introduction

The Zapatista uprising of 1994 in San Cristóbal de las Casas (Chiapas) emerged as a response to the long-lasting conditions of marginalization and exploitation suffered by indigenous peoples since colonial times. The complex context in which this event took place requires a review of the historical and circumstantial processes that fostered it. However, the focus of this work limits the scope of the historical development of the legal, social and political events, offering uniquely a brief overview of the processes relevant for the establishment of the needed framework.

4.2. The Zapatista Uprising

The intense discrimination against indigenous peoples since colonial times was at the heart of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas. The poverty, marginalization and exclusion lived in the highlands of Chiapas (Los Altos), where landless indigenous peoples were often forced to work in terrible conditions in the *fincas,* was accentuated by the post Cárdenas agrarian reforms and the acculturative 'goods' implemented by the INI (Instituto Nacional Indígena) since the 1940s. Through the 1950s and 1960s, these policies transformed villages in the highlands from "closed, internally bonded communities into broken, bourgeoisie-ridden, mistrustful bossdoms" (Womack 1999, p. 13). The last years of the 1980s also brought a severe depression to the region, as the world price coffee collapsed in 1989, falling over the next few years by nearly 60 percent (p. 21). In the midst of this pauperized context, news broke that the government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (from the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI) was planning to reform the Constitutional article on agrarian land. For young indigenous peoples this initiative would put an end to their hopes to own an *ejido*. This legal form of communal land, protected under Article 27, was designed to avoid the private exploitation of the land by only a few and to push for its collective usufruct. Although application of Article 27 in this regard had been often proven ineffective for poor farmers due to local governments' corruption and *caciques*' interests, the article still defended the legality of the collective form of the *ejido* (Medina 2006, p. 12). However, Salinas' underlying intention was to increasingly get rid of that collective form of property (ibid). His plan to cancel national land distribution became thus a direct attack against indigenous peoples and their modes of life. He assured that the new reform, passed in January 1992 by the Mexican Congress, would help modernize the Mexican rural areas and attract capital into them (p. 11).

Later that year, the inclusion of Mexico in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) opened for debate. If the treaty passed, that would not only mean the adoption of structural

adjustment programs that would cut off social spending, but also the incorporation of free market initiatives and privatization arrangements that would directly affect the poorest farmers in Chiapas. The NAFTA-sponsored lowering of trade barriers for goods such as corn or beans would also mean that (indigenous) peasants of Chiapas would have to compete with highly industrialized Canadian and American farms (Rich 1997, 73). This threat, to both indigenous peoples' modes of life but also to the poorest *ladino*[13] peasants, contributed to the intensification of the crisis in Chiapas. On October 12th 1992 the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' 'discovery' of America by the *caxlanes*[14] of San Cristóbal de las Casas was disrupted by a group of 9,000 indigenous from the highlands who marched into the city and demonstrated against "500 years of robbery, death and destruction of the Indian people" (Womack 1999, p. 22). NAFTA was also at the heart of their claims. Yet their demands were not heard. On December 17th 1992 the agreement was signed by the federal President, Carlos Salinas.

The armed uprising in Chiapas on January 1st 1994 by the EZLN began on the same date that the NAFTA was coming into force. Six large towns, including San Cristóbal de las Casas, and a handful of ranches, were occupied by 3,000 members of the EZLN wearing ski masks and red bandanas. The declaration of war read by some EZLN officers on the first morning of 1994 became an exercise of liberation, a clear statement of radical national popular sovereignty (Womack 1999, p. 245). The guerrilla had been preparing and organizing itself in the highlands of Chiapas since its foundation in November 1983. However, its origins can be traced back to the *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (Forces of National Liberation or FLN), an armed organization that dates back to the 1960s (Hernández Castillo 2007). When the FLN established its station in the Lacandón Jungle, they slowly increased their contact to the indigenous peoples settled in the region, joining experiences and diverse claims for social justice. Some indigenous communities had already begun to organize themselves for the auto-defense against the authoritarian power of *caciques* some decades before. In addition, the influence of the Liberation Theology -a Marxist-cut reconceptualization of Christianity developed from the claims for social justice by the poorest and most marginalized ones in Latin America- made its way as the moral justification of fair (military) resistance. In this sense, poor indigenous peasants became to *tomar conciencia,* "to cognizance, to question received faith, wisdom and conventions, to become conscious in a new frame of mind that people, things, qualities, conditions may not be as they had seemed or been supposed to be" (Womack 1999, p. 23).

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[13] *Ladino* is the term used in Central America to define the category of Mestizo. Chiapas borders in its southern frontier to Guatemala, where the term is often used instead of *mestizo*.
[14] The so-called Whites of San Cristóbal de las Casas.

The armed confrontations only lasted 12 days. After a first day of success on January 1, the Mexican army and air force regained control of the occupied areas and pushed the insurgency back into the mountains (p. 43). It soon became obvious that the EZLN would not follow the path of other Latin American armed movements. Soon the insurgents embarked in a different strategy in which the role of weapons became "increasingly symbolic", transforming the terrain of struggle "from the battlefield to the level of words and ideas" (Olsen 2005, p. 1). The Zapatista project challenged the international neoliberal order but also the authoritarian Mexican political system, rejecting the existing particracy[15] and bringing back a reformulation of traditional forms of government. In this sense, *el buen gobierno* (the good government) and *mandar obedeciendo* (command obeying) became discursive alternatives to the hegemonic rule.

The movement called the attention of both the national and international public opinion. Among other factors, the historical moment was a critical one, as many wondered what shape the new social movements would take in the so-called 'end of history'. The socialist block had collapsed only some years before and the global left needed new referential schemes to challenge a unipolar neoliberal system. Thus, the open and militant defiance of the Zapatistas raised global expectations around new counter-hegemonic forms of resistance. In fact, the EZLN's slogan of "There is no guerrilla" on some facades of the municipality of Ocosingo was a clear statement against Margaret Thatcher's famous motto: "there is no alternative".[16] In addition, the enigmatic leader of the Zapatistas, *Subcomandante* Marcos, soon became a global symbol of the struggle, attracting varying sectors of the international scene who became fascinated by his combination of knowledge on indigenous forms of life and the critical analysis of the geopolitical context (Womack 1999, p. 27).

After a short period of repression against the insurgents, the government of Salinas ordered a ceasefire that had been increasingly demanded by the national and international public opinion. In fact, the civil society had engaged with the Zapatista project from the beginning through varying forms: protesting against the government so they would stop the war, organizing human rights security lines to ensure peace during the dialogue sessions, bringing supplies to communities which were isolated due to federal blockade, etc. (Gilbreth & Otero 2001, p. 11). After this massive social

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[15]In this system small moderate parties are effectively eliminated and silenced based on their irrelevant political weight. Thus, the options followed by the masses ultimately impose a monopoly of their ideas over the political activity.

[16] The guerrilla left these slogans after the takeover of January 1 1994. The criticism of the neoliberal system is implied in the message, as the British Prime minister often used this phrase to present the free market and neoliberal model as the only possible socio-economic and political system. See the photography in the Annex under the title 'San Cristóbal Takeover'.

support, Salinas did not have any other option but to engage in peace talks. The first round of peace dialogues between the rebels and the federal government took place on February 20 in the cathedral of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Nonetheless, the negotiations did not come through and a new phase of repression against the EZLN started.

It was not until 1995 that the two parties –with the federal government directed by the new elected president Ernesto Zedillo- resumed a new round of negotiations after the 'Law for the Dialogue, The Conciliation and the Peace Worthy in Chiapas' (Ley para el Diálogo y la Reconciliación en Chiapas) was promulgated. The Commission of Concordia and Pacification (Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación or COCOPA) was created, promoting also the Commission of Intermediation (Comisión Nacional de Intermediación or CONAI), presided by Samuel Ruiz, bishop of San Cristóbal. The first debate around indigenous rights and culture took place in October 1995 in the little village of San Andrés Larráinzar, a municipality that had expressed a broad support for the Zapatistas since the beginning. After a long process of negotiation, the two parties reached an agreement, by which the federal government committed to undertake some constitutional modifications based on the fundamental plurality of Mexican society making "acknowledgment of their rights, and in particular, to their right to self-determination and autonomy" (Presidencia de la República, n.d). This event is, for many, of historical transcendence, as it was the first time that some official agreements collected the rights of indigenous peoples in Mexico. For López y Rivas, it also meant a triumph in the Mexican political tradition. For the first time, the Mexican government had acknowledged a social and political movement of indigenous majority as a legitimate interlocutor in a democratic and open process (cited in Durand et al. 2000, p. 109).

However, between March 1996 and December 1997, the peace process collapsed. The COCOPA transformed the accords into a law proposal but Zedillo's government soon refused to submit it to Congress (Arnson et al. 2006 p. 143). Feeling betrayed, the EZLN broke off negotiations. The emergence of more than a dozen anti-Zapatista paramilitary groups 'tolerated' by the army and the federal government became another reason for their withdrawal, especially after the Acteal Massacre on December 22, 1997, when forty-five persons from the organization of 'Las abejas' were assassinated (Arnson et al. 2006, p. 143). Although it has not been clearly investigated, some leaks appoint to a paramilitary group with close connections to the state police and local PRI leaders. Since then, the conflict has become an unstable *détente* that Arnson et al. define as "armed peace" p. 133). Under this condition, open hostilities between the EZLN and the federal government are

not likely to happen. However, the causes that gave origin to the conflict persist, causing tensions that have maintained a low intensity grade of conflict during years (p. 133).

Upon his election as president, Vicente Fox[17] promised to send COCOPA's proposed law on indigenous rights to Congress. He pulled back the Mexican army from the occupied communities and ordered the release of political prisoners from the EZLN (Arnson et al. 2006, p. 144). The Zapatistas saw his signs as an opportunity to pressure the Congress to approve the law. They initiated *La marcha del color de la tierra*, a popular march to the heart of Mexico City -to the main square, *Zócalo*- and the Mexican Congress. The march travelled 6,000 kilometers from February 25 2001 to April 1 2001, reaching its climax on March 28 when four EZLN *comandantes* addressed Mexican deputies at a plenary session, demanding the acceptance of the law (p. 145). The Mexican Congress approved a revised version of the proposal –what became after known as the 'Indigenous Law'. However, this version eliminated the legal right of indigenous peoples to make use of collective lands and other natural resources, implying a rejection "as a tier in the federal structure" (Mora 2007, p. 71). Although the law was itself a big step in Mexican history in the recognition of indigenous rights, the Zapatistas perceived it as a betrayal of the spirit of the San Andrés Accords and a lack of commitment to engage in alternative conversations with Mexico's indigenous peoples (p. 71). In this sense, recent scholarship has defined Fox's administration as *neo-indigenist* in that its policies continued being shaped on paternalistic developmentalist ideologies. As Mora explains, the 'indigenous problem' was still conceptualized around notions of economic backwardness and isolation (cited by Mora 2007, p. 71).

The approval of the Indigenous Law also broke ties between the EZLN and the institutional left, the Democratic Revolutionary Party (Partido Democrático Revolucionario or PRD), as many of its deputies supported Fox's initiative. The Zapatistas ceased all communications with the federal government and a time of silence began, as the Zapatistas focused on the construction of their own alternative political project.

4.3. The Political Project: The Autonomous Zones

The EZLN declared 38 autonomous municipalities (Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities or MAREZ) structured into five *caracoles*[18], politico-cultural spaces where encounters between the

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[17] He was the first president elected from the National Action Party (Partido de Acción Nacional or PAN) after 71 years of power of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional or PRI).
[18] Previously known as *Aguascalientes*.

civil society and the indigenous communities take place. Although these *de facto* autonomous zones had been progressively organized since 1994, it was the cease in the communications with Fox's government what pushed the reorganization of the politico-territorial strategy of Zapatismo (Martínez 2006, p. 223). This originated a different level of political organization superior to the municipality but inferior to the state, where the autonomous political processes could take place. For Burguete, these MAREZ have been the EZLN's most lasting and efficient strategy to defy the state (2011, p. 104). The three levels of organization, developed around the indigenous community, the municipality and the region, leave space to "alternative forms of power" and "bottom-up approaches" to self-governance (ibid). These 'liberated' territories propose re-conceptualizations of the political exercise, where new forms of direct democracy like *mandar obedeciendo* are put into practice. In this sense, they are forms of resistance that question the legitimacy and legality of the state's official institutions. For example, the services for health, education and organized cooperatives are shared in exclusivity by members of the municipality. These exist in clear opposition to the relief and integrationist policies of the state that have looked to erase the differential characteristics of indigenous peoples (ibid).

Name of *caracol*	Ethnic groups	Name of *Junta de Buen Gobierno*	Municipalities
Caracol madre de los caracoles del mar de nuestros sueños (La Realidad)	Tojolabal, Tzeltal and Mam	"Hacia la esperanza" (JBG Selva fronteriza)	1. General Emiliano Zapata 2. San Pedro de Michoacán 3. Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas 4. Tierra y Libertad
Caracol torbellino de nuestras palabras (Morelia)	Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Tojolabal	"Corazón del arcoiris de la esperanza" (JBG Tzotz Choj)	1. 17 de Noviembre 2. Primero de Enero 3. Ernesto Ché Guevara 4. Olga Isabel 5. Lucio Cabañas 6. Miguel Hidalgo 7. Vicente Guerrero
Caracol resistencia hacia un nuevo amanecer (La Garrucha)	Tzeltal	"El camino del futuro" (JBG Selva Tzeltal)	1. Francisco Gómez 2. San Manuel 3. Francisco Villa 4. Ricardo Flores Magón
Caracol que habla para todos (Roberto Barrios)	Chol, Zoque, and Tzeltal	"Nueva semilla que va a producir" (JBG Zona norte de Chiapas)	1. Vicente Guerrero 2. Del Trabajo La Montaña 3. San José en Rebeldía 4. La paz 5. Benito Juárez 6. Francisco Villa

Caracol resistencia y rebeldía por la humanidad (Oventic)	Tzotzil and Tzeltal	"Corazón céntrico de los zapatistas delante del mundo" (JBG Altos de Chiapas)	1. San Andrés Sakamchén de los Pobres 2. San Juan de la Libertad 3. San Pedro Polhó 4. Santa Catarina 5. Magdalena de la Paz 6. 16 de Febrero 7. San Juan Apóstol Cancuc

Table 1. *Caracoles*: Name, JBG, Ethnic Composition and Municipalities. Data collected from Martínez 2006, p. 219 and Castro 2003.

In 2003, the EZLN introduced the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (JBG) in order to reinforce the regional organization of the MAREZ. They emerged as a response to the official strategy of municipal restructuration conducted by the governor of Chiapas, Roberto Albores in 1999. For the Zapatistas, this project was perceived as just another element in the counter-insurgency strategy designed by the federal government to divide and debilitate the MAREZ. These JBG became the institutionalized political management of the indigenous communities at the regional level, working as a balancing complement to the autonomous government of the MAREZ. In this sense, Mora argues that the practice of autonomy developed in the *caracoles* and JBG helped to reposition indigenous actors in Mexican society as potential destabilizers of neoliberal conditions and integrationist approaches (2007, p. 71).

Mora accounts for the changing political road maps that Zapatista men and women from the support base communities developed in three distinct phases in which the movement went through, up to the launch of *La Otra Campaña*. Firstly, in 1996 they searched for a "reinterpretation of the movement" which had been originally designed to link resource distribution to self-determination (Mora 2007, p. 70). Secondly, from 1996 to 2005 they worked on the political project and the cultural politics of autonomous governance (p. 70). Thirdly, after 2005, they began to put all their efforts into building bridges to other similar struggles, both at the national and international level. In fact, during the preparations of the 2006 presidential campaign, the EZLN declared the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle and launched *La Otra Campaña*. This was an attempt to connect to other anti-capitalists struggles around Mexico and converge them into a "national campaign for building another way of doing politics, for a program of national struggle of the left, and for a new Constitution" (p. 65). This new phase became a key space for connecting to other forms of radical politics "to draw from the multiple forms of cultural knowledge and experiences of historically marginalized political actors in constructing anti-capitalist alternatives that transform the hierarchical positioning of ethnic-racialized groups in society" (p. 65). In this alternative campaign, the EZLN did not look to support a candidate, defining the event as a non-electoral one. Critical

with the accepted forms of professional politics, they specially condemned the leftist PRD and its candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Since then and until the abrupt announcement of an independent candidacy to general elections on January 2017–a move that rests quite opposite to their strategy 12 years ago- the movement has kept a low profile in the national political scene. It has become a *quasi*-regional struggle lacking of the national attention of the early 2000s. Although other regions in the country have tried to replicate their resistance model, the contextual conditions of the Zapatista uprising are difficult to imitate. In this sense, Burguete explains that the international support that the Zapatista movement has received was a key enabler of the creation and maintenance of the alternative institutions of the autonomous territories. Furthermore, the Law COCOPA obliges both parties (the Mexican federal government and the EZLN) to maintain a truce until the final peace agreements are signed (2011, p. 106). Thus, the *détente* that Arnson et al. talk about is in fact a guarantee for the preservation of the Zapatista political project, as the EZLN is allowed to legally maintain its armed resistance in Chiapas.

4.5.   Women in the Movement

Life for indigenous women in Chiapas was especially difficult before the Zapatista uprising.[19] Adding to the structural economic inequalities or discrimination processes that both men *and* women experience, gender relations are many times another source of oppression. Domestic violence, forced marriage, the denial of family inheritance or the lack of proper access to education are just a few of the claims voiced by these women in their public denounce of the forms of abuse suffered at the community level (Eber & Kovic 2003, p. 32). In the words of *comandanta* Esther,

> "we are oppressed three times over. Firstly, because we are indigenous women. And
> because we are indigenous we don't know how to talk and we are looked down on.
> Secondly, due to the fact that we are women they say we do not know how to talk,
> they say that we are dumb, they say that we don't know how to think. We don't
> have the same opportunities than men. And thirdly, because we are poor. We are
> all poor because we don't have enough food, decent housing, education, we don't

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[19] With this statement, we are not implying that life for women in the region is not difficult now. However, the uprising marked a clear distinction in the activism for women's rights in Chiapas and all Mexico. Many testimonies from Zapatista women account for this changes. Read more in Klein, H 2015.

have good health (care). Many children die in their mothers' arms suffering from curable diseases"[20]

As indigenous people began to organize themselves in the Lacandón jungle, women took the opportunity to actively express their gender-specific demands within a broader indigenous scheme of demands. 'The Revolutionary Women's Law' (Ley Revolucionaria de las Mujeres Zapatistas) was issued with the resting demands of the Zapatistas, expressing specific gender-related concerns: the right to freely choose to marry, to pursue education, to be free from physical or emotional abuse, to hold public positions or to make decisions on birth control. The law was pushed by *comandanta* Ramona and *comandanta* Susana, two members of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee (Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena or CCRI). Years before the war declaration, these two women travelled the poorest communities of northern Chiapas to listen to Tojobal, Chol, Tzotzil and Tzeltal women in order to include their demands in the Zapatista agenda (Belausteguigoitia 2006, p. 121). The uniqueness of the charter resided in the fact that their demands were not collected to support the claims of their fellow *compañeros*. Rather, the law included gender-specific demands stemming from the particular forms of oppression that they suffered as woman *and* indigenous (Belausteguigoitia 2003, p. 123).

Alternating between direct enlistment in the EZLN as permanent members of the insurgency -one third of the combatants are women- or indirect participation in the movement through political organization of the support civil bases, Zapatista women found different strategies to fight the Mexican state but also patriarchal forms within their communities. Soon they became protagonists of a movement that had not been conceptualized in its origin from a feminist perspective. Leading armed revolutions, sitting at the peace negotiations with the Mexican state, occupying land, promoting and organizing peace marches or actively participating and engaging in political arenas from where they were previously excluded, these women shaped new forms of resistance and negotiated spaces for their own specific claims and identities. In doing so, they called into questions dichotomies often employed to limit their behaviors, identities, movements and roles (Eber 1998, p. 9).

In this sense, women's struggle within the EZLN became a revolution in itself. The case of *Mayora* Ana María -the Tajolabal woman who surprised the world in her black ski-mask and brown military

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[20] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandanta Esther, February 25th 2001, Juchitán, Oaxaca, lines 7-13. The quote in the text is translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

uniform leading the occupation of San Cristóbal de las Casas- is one of the most popular and recurring images among the literature. Like her, many young women stepped out of the traditional domestic confinements to find military training and education in the purpose of armed conflict. Others like *comandanta* Ramona or *comandanta* Esther found their resistance forms in the political organization and activism within the social support bases, engaging in public denounces against the Mexican state. Although these stories and names may sound as isolated acts charged of momentary symbolism, they are illustrative examples of a revolutionary disruption of the spaces of inclusion within the nation-state. The discussion contained in the following chapters will serve us to identify how these women's discourses became to disrupt notions from the beginning and in very varied forms.

5. Language, Place and Betrayal: *Comandanta* Esther in The Union Congress

5.1. Conquering a Space Not Suitable for Her Body

On March 28 2001, insurgent *comandanta* Esther addressed the Mexican Congress from its tribune. This event marked the ending point to *La Marcha por el Color de la Tierra,* a popular caravan to the heart of Mexico City where the EZLN looked to push for the acceptance of the COCOPA Law. It was the first time that a Tzeltal woman occupied that place. With this act, she transgressed the limits of a space not suitable for her body. She moved from the edges of the nation to its most symbolic place. In this exercise, the 'othered' non-modern and traditional subject, outsider of an exclusive Mexican nation-state, was granted access to an inside marked by the language of modernity (Belausteguigoitia 2001, p. 233). Yet, despite the seven years of Zapatista resistance, this granted access was defined by the political elites. Only five days before, the chamber had finally agreed to grant the Zapatistas access to the tribune in San Lázaro. Yet, the results showed a strong polarization: 220 positive votes, 210 votes against and 7 abstentions (Aponte & Pérez 2001). The latent opposition was also made evident the previous week at the National Action Party's (Partido de Acción Nacional or PAN) annual conference, when the party leader, Diego Fernandez de Cevallos, depicted President Vicente Fox as "Marco's PR agent", accusing him of giving in to every demand of the revolutionary group (ibid).

The contrasting polarization in the votes makes evident the weak democratic spirit of the chamber at the time, as it contained a large group of deputies that still maintained discriminatory, racist and elitist attitudes in granting popular access to the 'house of the people'. It was, as Marco appointed

after the session, the first time that indigenous peoples were not coming in through the back door to the Congress. In fact, the access of the full indigenous identity and their bodies to such representative place has been highly restricted since its creation. Carbó appoints that the Mexican parliamentary practice has many times included debates on Mexican ethnic groups (2003, p. 124). Yet, there are only a few cases when members of these groups took part in the debate as subjects of law. She only recalls two events –in 1940 and 1942- when the indigenous Mexican identity was celebrated in San Lázaro with indigenous representatives. Yet, her narration appoints to an exotification and targeted use of their identities for political purposes –rather than their genuine incorporation to the chamber as recognized citizens.[21] During her speech, *comandanta* Esther explicitly pointed out to this systematic discrimination. She stated that their (ethnic) "difference" was effectively translated in exclusion from the chamber, as their demands –and bodies- were not respected or recognized as belonging to that sphere.[22] In Van Dijk's terms, this situation would talk of an informal but institutionalized restriction to social power, as the dominant groups hold on to maintain a privileged access to discourse, restricting deviant voices from accessing it (1993, p. 255). As he explains, "the more discourse genres, contexts, participants, audience, scope and text characteristics [that] they (may) actively control or influence, the more powerful social groups, institution or elites are" (p. 256).

Similar to her indigeneity, her female condition is also a threat to the (male) dominant group. As we have seen, the nation-state citizen model was conceived from a male normativity. Citizenship and the political function is difficulty imagined as natural for a woman's body. As Lister puts it, "on the public side stands the disembodied citizen *qua* man who displays the necessary qualities of impartiality, rationality, independence and political agency" (2012, p. 373). Although not explicitly excluded, women's presence in the public realm of politics is disadvantaged. Women are hardly seen as citizens who are capable of acting politically "with their full being-female" (Jones 1990, p. 782).

The case of the Mexican nationalist project is not dissonant to this patriarchal model. The adoption of the European nation-state model brought the dualistic gender ideology to the postcolonial order.

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[21] On October 12th 1940, during the commemoration of 'the discovery of America' by Christopher Columbus, the Congress paid tribute to 'Mexican indigenous peoples' (in general, without any recognition to the diversity of ethnic groups). An indigenous man talked in náhuatl to thank the president at the time, Lázaro Cárdenas, for having 'saved' the indigenous peoples from 400 years of oblivion. Again, on December 24th 1942, the congress paid tribute to the 'Mexican Indian' (male, singular, one), a strategic move against the European racist dicourses and policies of the time. During the tribute, none of the indigenous men talked, they remained in silence, objectified by political interests. Reed more in Carbó 2003, p. 125.

[22] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, line 64.

Although constructions on femininity and masculinity were reshaped, acquiring new contextual meanings[23], the patriarchal spaces for citizenry were clearly marked. In her collection of essays, *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women*, Ardener argued that the social map of patriarchy created "ground rules" for the differentiated behaviors of men and women, assigning certain spaces as masculine and others as feminine (1981). Unspoken norms, she argued, defined the movements, behaviors and activities accepted within these spaces. For her, gender as an ordering principle divides the social into spheres, levels and territories which are after spatially defined by "making boundaries on the ground" (p. 16).

In the case of Esther, the boundaries on the ground that limit a space for modernity, citizenship and nation are marked by an abstract and concrete institution –the Mexican congress. Esther explicitly states it,[24] acknowledging the symbolism and relevance of her full gendered and racialized body being present, with a visible face and an audible tongue/language. She challenges the public sphere of *mestizo* men by embodying the double invisible citizen. In this exercise, we argue, she is re-defining the most representative space for the state but also her own spatial margins as a woman –challenging the global racial patriarchy, the national patriarchy and local indigenous patriarchies.

This event illustrates the difficult task of positioning a multiple oppressed subject to analysis. The spaces of the public-private divide conceptualized by the first wave of white feminist scholarship become too reductionist in this case. While the spaces defined in this conceptual dichotomization have been indeed a real form of oppression for many women in history, the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women of color have made evident its false universality. This is especially true in regards to citizenship and the national spaces of inclusion. These are, as Vargas explain, a terrain of dispute. Constant dialectic negotiations take place between the restricted, partial and exclusive character of its definition and the attempts of the marginalized to push for their inclusion (2000, p. 4). Thus, the feminine and masculine spaces that Ardener talks about are difficultly universalized into a clear-cut and historically permanent public-private divide.

In this regard, the cartography that we observe in the Congress is defined by a multi-layered form of oppression stemming from what Mills understands as 'the racia-sexual contract' (2007, p. 172). For them, pre-existing patriarchal structures come into conflict with new structures of global racial domination originated in colonial times (ibid). Thus, "whites as a group dominate non-whites as a

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[23] To explore the historical construction of femininity and masculinity in the Mexican nayional project, read Zuckerhut 2015 and Macías-González & Rubenstein 2012.
[24] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, line 51.

group, while within these racial groups men generally dominate women" (ibid). Global racial patriarchy, national patriarchy and local patriarchies make thus difficult the delineation of public-private geographies.

In this case, Esther defies multiple forms of oppression from her place in the Congress. We identify three. Firstly, she is in the 'public space' of a national *mestizo* dominant group. As mentioned, this group has historically constructed an exclusive regime of belongingness to the national sense and citizenship, ultimately represented in the physical space of the Congress. By standing on the tribune she defies thus the male *mestizo* that rejects her female body and the female *mestiza* that rejects her indigenous body. For this, she uses alternative lexical forms to mark her inclusion and belongingness to the idea of Mexicanness. Although she emphasizes on existing differences, throughout the speech, she often refers to herself –and her people- as part of the social category 'Mexican'. She makes use of a vocabulary of belongingness that attempts to create reconciliation within the category of 'Mexican'.[25] Using the politically crucial noun 'our' in "our nation" and "our being Mexican", she is positioning herself and the EZLN at the equal stage of the *mestizo* -the imagined citizen.

We believe that this strategy and the syntactic style of the speech -the constant citations of these formulas- contributes to re-norm the social category of 'indigenous', as they struggle for a re-definition of its meaning. Thus, the repetition of the construction 'Mexican indigenous' might come to what Inda identifies as a re-articulatory process of the meanings of the racial body (2000, p. 94). As earlier noted, the term 'Indio' has operated to shame the bodies of indigenous peoples. Their bodies become a space for the containment of racial signifiers inherited from colonial times. The term 'Indio' invokes convention on a set of beliefs, while the construction offered by *comandanta* Esther counter-acts this categorization and incorporates a possibility of re-signification to the racialized body. This process takes place though the appropriation of control to name herself and to associate her body and identity with other conditions –spatial regimes, localities and/or varying identities.

Secondly, she leaves the community and her marginalized place at the edges of the nation -Chiapas. She is defying the indigenous forms of patriarchy when leaving the tradition that locates her in the rural community. As Falquet explains, indigenous women are quasi-immobilized in their communities in their role of mothers and culture-transmitters (2001, p. 167). Men are socially

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[25] In the Annex: Speech given by comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, lines 73, 75, 77, 83.

authorized to a partial acculturation into the nation –access to basic education, learning Spanish, being able "to get out to the outside world" and taking part in political struggles. Yet, women are not supposed to adventure themselves outside the traditional spaces, "the cultural sanctuary constituted by community, home and family" (p. 170).[26] Falquet emphasizes how these women normally do not have any alternative, as their access to education is effectively denied by both the state – in its inefficiency to provide proper infrastructure and quality education in rural areas- and by indigenous male control (p. 168). For Doran, this sexual construction of space was increasingly marked when capitalism and western forms began to conquer indigenous lifestyles. As she argues, the indigenous systems were transformed from the Mayan sense of gender complementarity to a system in which women were increasingly treated as subordinate, creating a hierarchical gender ideology that established male authority over women (2004). Doran explains how this patriarchal pattern of social complexity was developed, as rising elites focused on controlling the symbolic power and rituals directly associated with female reproductive functions in order to legitimize their own power and social inequality (p. 464). Soon other discourses accentuated this inequality. M*achismo* attitudes permeated hyper-masculinist attitudes that also encountered images of expected feminine subordination in *marianismo* ideology (Craske 1999). As a result of these, indigenous women were often discouraged of their participation in public and social arenas, subsumed by 'their' men (Eber 1998, p. 5).

"The situation is very hard, we have suffered pain, forgetting, contempt, marginalization and oppression for a long time […] [Because we are] girls, they think we are worth nothing, that we do not know how to think, or work, how to live our lives. That is why many of us are illiterate, because we did not have the opportunity to go to school. When we are older, our fathers force us to get marry. It does not matter if we do not want to, they do not ask for our consent. They beat us, our own husbands and relatives mistreat us. We cannot say anything, because they say that we do not have the right to defend ourselves"[27]

Finally, Esther defies a global racial patriarchy, where the international white family –i.e. Westerners, descendants of colonizers, shapers of racial hierarchies and the almighty rationalism- dictates the

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[26] Yet, as Falquet recalls, many risk doing it, pushed by especially precarious economic conditions. They look for jobs as maids, temporary workers in the harvest or selling their craftworks in the city. Falquet also talks about the increase in the numbers of indigenous women who took up jobs as prostitutes for the federal soldiers in the mid of the conflict. Read more in Falquet 2001.

[27] In the Annex: Speech given by comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, lines 101 -119. Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

ultimate order. As Mills explains, the global racial patriarchy is a white male creation: with its particular modelling of the nation-state, the international legal system, the free market and civil society (p. 175). Esther defies this global condition from a concrete locality with her demands for collective rights, the visual destabilization of the ideal homogenous community of the nation-state model, and her full-being female body occupying the public political function.

5.2.   A Voice Without Mediation

In the Congress, Esther's physical presence is restricted as a member of a marginalized group to the national project. Her voice –her native language- is also restricted. The language used by the members of the chamber -and by *comandanta* Esther- refers to ideologies of dominance. This Tzeltal woman is obliged to make use of the Spanish language as the communicative vehicle. In this exercise, the nation-state ideology is embodied in her speech, reinforcing the idea that the national language is the one in which citizens are expected to become literate, the language exclusively prescribed by law for specific institutional domains (Phillips 2015, p. 564). As Phillips appoints, there is an intrinsic hierarchy determined by the use of the national language or the use of alternative forms -dialects, slang or other national languages. In relation to a racialized or gendered body, language can thus become a powerful instrument for defining regimes of inclusion and exclusion "that further develop how good a citizen or a politician should speak" (ibid). *Comandanta* Esther masters the Spanish language but as perceived in an audiovisual recording of the event (Tierra de mujeres 2003), her diction and pronunciation is that of a non-native speaker, a representative of a minority. This betraying fact becomes thus a problematic issue for her inclusion in the ideal citizen model. It is a reinforcing aspect that legitimizes her exclusion. Yet, we argue, the simple fact that the language is stemming out of her body becomes a symbolic transgression of the national habitus. Belausteguigoitia explains it:

"*Descarados y deslenguadas*: [28] the indigenous are present in body and tongue/language[29]. Before, they couldn't be heard and seen at the same time and in the same stage. Attending and listening to indigenous demands implies a separation of the body and the tongue/language. Their Indian bodies need to be separated from their Indian tongues that speak broken Spanish. It becomes impossible to see the Indian –becoming aware of his/her abysmal difference- and to hear him/her at the same time. This event exceeds the modern possibilities of understanding, expression and reception of the message" [30] (2001, p. 234)

Esther in the podium strikes an audience that is not used to *both* see and hear the face and voice of indigeneity -and even less in a position of agency at the symbolic and judicial heart of the nation. Esther symbolizes the indigenous subject without a need for mediation -without the need for a translation personified in the mestizo body of *subcomandante* Marcos. In this sense, Belausteguigoitia appoints that the mediation of Marcos between indigenous peoples and the Mexican public was essential for the successful representation and circulation of the indigenous demands (ibid). After all, he is a mestizo male and belongs to an educated middle-class. His unmarked body allowed him to become the accepted translator by the dominant group, a figure that did not transgress the hegemonic norms in excess and a tongue that re-articulated othered identities and demands in an accessible coding, understood by both a national and international audience. For Belausteguigoitia, this function that Marcos embodies represents the racism of the Mexican citizenry (p. 235). His mediation is an essential purifying filter for all that is wrong with the origin of the Zapatista demands: the indigenous body and language. The slogan "*todos somos Marcos*" (we are all Marcos), chanted in the massive demonstration of Mexico City's *Zócalo* in February 1995 against the state repression, makes evident this position: they all wanted to be Marcos, but no one wanted to be Indian (ibid). Esther is not unaware of this, and she explicitly states so, providing an explanation

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[28] The author includes this wordplay to call attention to the two subtle meanings which can be difficultly perceived by a non-native Spanish reader. The juxtaposition of both the literal meaning of the word and the meanings created out of the individual analysis of the lexical particles is what makes it relevant:

1. 'Descarado' stands for an insolent person that defies the authority without shame while 'deslenguado' stands for 1) foul-mouthed, a rude person in his use of language or 2) a person who is brave enough to call a spade a spade. Furthermore, the feminine use of the term, 'deslenguada', brings about even more subtle meanings, referring to a woman who does not know when to shut up, a woman who transgresses the limits marked by an apolitical and non-polemic ideal femininity.
2. Des-carado can be read as 'without a face' while 'des-lenguada' can be read as 'without a tongue, without a language'. This makes a direct reference to an othered subject who does not have a face or a language of his/her own.

[29] 'Lengua' in Spanish makes reference to both the tongue and the language. The author of the quote makes an implicit reference to both, the tongue as being part of a racialized body while being an essential organ in the expression of the language.
[30] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

as to why Marcos is not present in the chamber –it is the time of the indigenous peoples, the time for their seeable and hearable visibility.[31]

5.3.   Uncategorizable Esther: Defying Nationalist Stereotypes and Images

During her speech, Esther calls the audience's attention to the representations of indigenous women as dirty[32] and stupid.[33] As Bosker (2007) appoints, stereotypes express their efficiency in the exclusion and the stigma. These are supported in dichotomized beliefs that tend to erase the actual bodies upon which those images are projected. Discrimination, as he explains, develops from a stereotype that has been constructed through cultural and social practices.

For Sámano, these stereotypical images of indigenous women were originated in ethnographic works developed by foreign and national intellectuals during the last decades of the 19ᵗʰ Century (2010). In her work, she collects how anthropologists like Frederick Starr or Carl Lumholtz developed theories where indigenous women were depicted as inferior within an already negative scheme of the indigenous body. For example, in *The Physical Characters of the Indians of Southern Mexico*, Starr describes indigenous women from Mexico State, Michoacán, Tlaxcala, Puebla or Oaxaca as stupid, obstinate and coward.[34] Meanwhile, Carl Lumholtz made distinctions between ugly dirty Aztec women and beautiful Tarahumara ones (Sámano 2010, p. 110).

Nonetheless, in post-revolutionary Mexico, the image and conceptualization of the indigenous woman suffered a transformation at the hands of intellectuals. They imagined the ideal indigenous woman for the new nationalist project. As Sámano explains, Gamio picked up on these constructed qualities of indigenous women to delineate the ideal concept of the indigenous femininity: *la india bonita* (2010, p. 122).

In 1921, a beauty contest was celebrated in Mexico City. María Bibiana Uribe, a 16-years-old Mexican girl was selected as *La India Bonita*. Both her physical and moral traits were carefully judged by so-called experts –Gamio was one among them. Their beauty was evaluated in regards to a

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[31] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandanta Esther, March 28ᵗʰ 2001, Mexican Congress, line 40.
[32] In the Annex: Speech given by comandanta Esther, March 28ᵗʰ 2001, Mexican Congress, line 122.
[33] In the Annex: Speech given by comandanta Esther, March 28ᵗʰ 2001, Mexican Congress, line 116.
[34] "Characters of race are better marked in men than in women; women of all tribes are, therefore, more alike than the men; it is more difficult to secure women for measurement than men; when secured, they are less easily measured, on account of stubbornness, stupidity, or fear. These are the reasons why a less number of female than of male subjects was demanded". Cited by Sámano 2010 from Frederick Starr, *The Physical Characters of the Indians of Southern Mexico*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1902, p. 3.

perfect oval face shape, dark skin, perfect teeth and a serene attitude (López 2002, p. 303). They were also expected to have small feet and a medium complexity, perfect for reproductive purposes (Sámano 2010, p. 122). On the moral ground, the indigenous woman was compelled to embody a romantic and virginal expression (p. 123).

These moral and physical traits were constructed in direct opposition to the occidental white beauty in a moment were the mestizophille project was at its highest expression. In this sense, studies on the contest bring interesting interpretations on the real intentions behind it. For example, Zavala appoints that the event aimed at promoting sexual desirability for the indigenous feminine population among nominal whites, fostering miscegenation between dominant whites and *indias bonitas* (2006, p. 160). Furthermore, the contest also promoted the mestizaje among the indigenous populations, depicting the *india bonita* as a subject (almost) capable of achieving the *mestizo* status through a process of acculturation.

> "The Mexican *mestiza* was perceived as an ideal type, a prototype. The *India Bonita* could be moved to the city, she could learn Spanish and a profession and she could be visually, sensually and intellectually accepted. Nonetheless, the beautiful *india* would never become a modern woman"[35] (Ruiz 2001a, p. 92)

María Bibiana Uribe was elected the *Indian bonita*. With "her modesty, her shyness, her intense dark hair and her small and fined feet" she became the imagined perfect indigenous woman (Ruiz 2001b, p. 159). This image was further use to promote the indigenous uniqueness contained in the Mexican mestiza. This strategy was designed, according to Ruiz and Sámano, to create an appealing image intrinsically attached to the Mexican identity that would defy the foreign beauty and moral canons of the white woman (Ruiz 2001b; Sámano 2010, p. 123). These were regarded as masculinist (Gamio 2010, p. 123) and morally questionable (Ruiz 2001b, pp. 148-154). In this regard, Gamio established a clear classification:

> "In any country, there are three types of women: servile, feminist, and feminine. The servile woman is she who is born and lives only for material labor, pleasure, and maternity –an almost zoological sphere of action imposed on her by the environment. For the feminist woman, pleasure is more sporting that passionate, a peripheral activity and non-fundamental. Her characteristics and tendencies are

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[35] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

masculine, the home a place of rest and subsistence and a cabinet of work […] The feminine woman –a denomination that is somewhat redundant but that is opportune because of its expressive power- is the intermediate woman, equally distanced from the two previous types. This is the ideal woman, generally preferred because she constitutes the primordial factor in the material and intellectual well-being of the individual and the species" (Gamio 2010, p. 115)

Although Gamio does not explicitly identify who belongs to each category, we can assume that the indigenous woman falls into the first one, the white woman belongs to the second one and the mestiza is finally, the feminine ideal type. For Gamio, the indigenous part of the mestiza is extremely valuable because she is the tradition-bearer, the original mother of the nation (p. 115-125). After all, "they preserve the great heritage of pre-Columbian habits, tendencies, and education more faithfully than their men do" (p. 121). She provides the mestiza with the right level of servitude, enough to be a passionate, exclusivist and chaste wife, malleable to her husband's marital sensibilities (p. 123).

But let us back to Esther. Unlike María Bibiana, she has a voice (Ruiz 2001b, p. 143). While the body of the young Mexican woman was used for the historical construction of a nation in the 1920s, Esther's body is ambivalent, undefinable by the state. She is not Gemio's feminine type; her dark skinned color betrays her. She is difficultly "a faithful and pious observer of the functions natural to her sex" (Gamio 2010, p. 120). She is partially the feminist type; 'masculinized' in the political habits and forms of a mestizo male, yet visually she does not comply with the immoral constructions that Gamio imagines –a London suffragist (p. 124). Then, what is she? Norms marked on her body would appoint to the servile type. We would argue, however, that more than anything else, Esther defies that servile attitude depicted by Gamio as the natural one for her skin. As we see it, she resists all models counter-acting the passivity and servitude expected, occupying the subject position in the face of centuries of misrepresentation. She is aware of the "good" and the "bad" [36] uses of tradition –the so-called *chopol* traditions-, explicitly expressing a non-servant disposition to the suffering role of the nation's tradition-bearer. In this sense, she discursively rejects the traditions that perpetuate gender-based violence and the restriction of women from local political spheres or education.

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[36] In the Annex: Speech given by comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, line 139.

During her speech, Esther wears her revolutionary outfit -with a ski mask that identifies her as member of a resisting EZLN. Some would argue that she is probably hiding her face, still aware of the incapability of a racist Mexico to deal with a simultaneous *des-carado* and *des-lenguado* act. Yet, as we see it, her hidden face may tell us more about her intentions in deconstructing the image of the indigenous woman. By hiding her face, she is staging a body that can be difficultly marked as 'ugly' or 'beautiful'. She is not the ugly Indian defined by the anthropologists of the latest 19th Century but she also rejects the *India bonita* inside her. With this symbolic act, she rejects the nationalist icon of post-revolutionary Mexico –its morality, its physical traits, its servitude. Esther is engaged in an ambivalent performance of her body –difficultly categorized into nationalist stereotypes. She becomes everything what the audience most hate and fear:[37] an undefinable indigenous and female body; at the same time tradition- and non-tradition-bearer; *india* but not *bonita;* feminist but not suffragette, indigenous citizen. With this act, she becomes the enemy of the nation, a body upon which the state has no conceptual control.

5.4.   Esther: Malinche, Betrayer and Enemy of the Nation

Embodying the enemy of the nation into a female subject is not something new for the Mexican social imaginary. Betrayal has a woman's name in the Mexican tradition. *La Malinche* or *la chingada*[38] became the national symbol of treachery despite historical veracity.[39] Malinche -also known as Doña Marina or Malintzin- was an Aztec noblewoman who was sold into slavery to the Spaniards upon their arrival. Soon after, she became the mistress, secretary and skilful interpreter of the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés. She was praised by the Spaniards as a 'big *cacique*' for her open mind and ability to mediate among diverse peoples and cultures (Zuckerhut 2015, p. 14). Early historical accounts of this figure depict her as a respectable subject rather than a submissive one.

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[37] We see Esther's performance engaging in something similar to what feminist activist and artist Adrian Piper produced in her performance of the Mythic Being, a persona whose figure blurs identifications of race and gender through alteration of norms sets. In doing so, she frames identity as a constant self-reflection, unstable and subject to performance and external recognition. The statement "I embody everything you most hate and fear" in one of Piper's 1975 posters is a direct attack to the viewer's attitudes and believes towards accepted norms race, gender and sexuality. The uncertainty of the Mythic Being's body, who straddles between femininity, masculinity, blackness and whiteness produces anxiety and insecurity to an external audience. The body is not classifiable to existing normative believes, creating tension and awakening hateful sentiments in the viewer. More in Bowles, J 2011.

[38] *La chingada* is translated as 'the fucked one'. The term *chingar* can be use in uncountable contexts but as Paz reminds us, in this plurality the idea of agression is always present, the verb denotes a violent penetration of the other, inflicting pain through the violation of bodies, souls and spaces –destroying them (1981, p. 84). The person who is *chingada* is the passive victim, the female, while the *chingón*, "el que chinga", is the active and agressive perpetrator, the male (p. 85).

[39] The chronicles written during the Spanish conquest by Historians like Bernal del Castillo or Fray Cristóbal de las Casas show that Malintzin was in fact a skilled mediator between the two cultures and never considered a betrayer to her own people. For more information on the historical figure see Glantz 2001a, Glantz 2001b, Echevarría 2001, Franco 1999 and Zuckerhut 2015.

Yet, as Leitner appoints, Mexican history would later re-write her name in different terms (cited in in Zuckerhut 2015, p. 14).

Malinche became the myth of a woman "whose uncontrollable sexual passion destroyed the Indian nations" (Zuckerhut 2015, p. 15), whose tongue betrayed her original language and that of her peoples. Yet, the Mexican nationalism transformed her into the mother of the nation: the indigenous woman raped and subjugated by the conquerors. Soon the Virgin of Guadalupe –a myth that elevated the purity and virginity qualities of the mother of the nation- found its counter-part in la *chingada*, the raped and passive mother of the Mexicans. Thus, Mexican nationalism intrinsically incorporated the racial question into the Malinche-Guadalupe dualism, elevating the virginal traits of the *mestiza*, while rejecting the prostituted Indian woman (Bartra 2001, p. 199).

> "If the *Chingada* is a representation of the violated Mother, it is appropriate to associate her with the Conquest, which was also a violation, not only in the historical sense but also in the very flesh of Indian women. The symbol of this is the violation is Doña Marina, the mistress of Cortés. It is true that she gave herself voluntarily to the conqueror, but he forgot her once she was not useful anymore. Doña Marina becomes a figure representing the Indian women who were fascinated, violated or seduced by the Spaniards. And as a small boy will not forgive his mother if she abandons him to search for his father, the Mexican people have not forgiven *la Malinche* for her betrayal. She embodies the open, the *chingado* to our closed, stoic, impassive Indians"[40] (Paz 1981, p. 94)

In the *Laberynth of Solitude*, Octavio Paz emphasizes the passivity of *la Malinche*, transforming her, as interpreted by Leitner, in a pathological figure, "a symptom of the collective suffering" of the Mexican nation (cited in Zuckerhut 2015, p. 16). Although this collective imaginary had already started to be shaped in the sixteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century that *la chingada* became "morally condemned as a traitor" (p. 15). In fact, Leitner mentions how the anonymous novel 'Xicoténcatl', published in 1826, collects the image of Malinche "as a dangerous, weak and corrupt figure, a prostitute who helped subjugate her Indian fellows" (cited in Zuckerhut 2015, p. 15).

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[40] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

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"[…] on the one side we have […] a Malinche with an active, prostitute-like sexuality […]; on the other side we have the raped and passive Malinche […]. Both are betrayers of their people and at the same time the 'mother' of the Mexican nation. Both resemble an inferior femininity, different form bourgeois womanhood" (Zuckerhut 2015, p. 16)

But, what concerns us here is this construction of betrayal around her gendered (female) body. She is an indigenous woman, appropriated by a foreign enemy, with her 'raped' body as an extension of an occupied land. Because she is the mediation and channel that the Spaniards used for the appropriation of the geographic and symbolic space –her raped body, of all Indian women but also her helping tongue- she embodies treachery to all Mexicans, to her future sons and the future nation (Paz 1981, p. 94). Esther, just as Malinche, is an indigenous woman. She is occupying a symbolic space that is not hers. She expropriates the Spanish -the language of the conquerors of the past and the language of the dominant *mestizos* of the present –without a need for a mediator. In doing so, she embodies Malinche in her capacity to use her own tongue and she betrays the Mexican nation as she disrupts the spaces, attitudes and movements dictated for her body. According to Franco, the historical Malinche negotiated her space and authority through her skilful gifts. She shaped a social contract defining her inclusion through the ritual of baptism; with the child-bearing of Martín Cortés (the bastard son of the conqueror and one of the first mestizos to the future nation) and finally, with the recognition of her legal status as full subject after her marriage to Juan Jaramillo, a Spanish *hidalgo* (Franco 2001, p. 206). She is, according to Franco, the historical example of Pateman's sexual contract (1999, p. 76). Centuries after, we see Esther –and all the indigenous women in Mexico- embodying a pre-given racia-sexual contract where her racial and gendered position marks her (lack of) privileges in society. Yet, through the re-articulation of the discourse, Esther attempts to break off with the contract. She appropriates herself with the notion of citizenship by executing the political function from the tribune in the public sphere, by having a position in the organization and by letting her voice be heard. She appropriates herself with the notion of rights-holder by recognizing herself as a subject of law, demanding both individual and collective rights. Ultimately, she appropriates herself with the idea of the nation as she explicitly denounces the problematics of a homogenous imagined community:

"That's the country that we, the Zapatistas, want; *a country where the difference is recognized and respected*, where being and thinking differently is a not a reason to go to jail, to be persecuted or killed"[41]

On the morning of March 28, Esther is the first intervener of the EZLN in the Congress. Just as Malinche -who became the solely *lengua* capable of mediating between the Spaniards and the Indians beyond the Mayan territory[42]- Esther initiates the official communications between two parallel racial and cultural 'worlds'. In this sense, the Spanish chronicler Bernal del Castillo narrates some of the interactions that brought the two clashing worlds together in the 15th Century. As he explains, Malinche was always the initiator of the interlocution in the Mexica[43] language (cited in Echevarría 2001, p. 174). In the visual representation that he describes, Malinche's (female) body stands before Hernán Cortés' (male) body, her indigenous *lengua* stands before his Spanish language. She is the *faraute*, the one who interprets the languages of two different discursive universes, constructed in the development of two parallel and disconnected histories. Two contrasting semiotics that are, for Echevarría, condemned to violent persuasion (2001, p. 175). Malintzin brings messages from one group to another, trying to bring understanding between these two worlds – trusted by both cultures (Glantz 2001a, p. 98). However, Glantz warns us, her body is object to historical mutilations, she is regarded as a *quasi* ventriloquist –only her tongue is valuable (p. 106). Her slaved body is solely recognized after the ritual of baptism, when she loses her indigenous name Malinalli, to her new Christian name, Marina. She is then a full subject to history (ibid).

In this sense, we see certain parallelism to Esther's intervention: her *lengua* performs in the Congress before all her fellow insurgents' male bodies,[44] attempting to bring understanding again to two contrasting realities in 21st Century Mexico. But unlike Malinche, she is not a ventriloquist at the service of another body. In fact, her female voice does not need a back-up or masculine legitimization, both her indigenous *lengua* and body stand without a Marcos or without a Cortés. She doesn't only embody the subject Marina, but she takes revenge for the Indian and forgotten body of Malinalli as she proudly expresses her indigenous condition.

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[41] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress, lines 61-62.

[42] Glantz reminds us that although there were some other *lenguas* (interpreters) to the Mayan language, Malinche was the only one speaking both Mayan and Náuhatl. She was thus the only person capable of translating (2001, p. 96).

[43] Mexica, Aztec and Nahuatl are used indistinctly for the same language in many of the historical and academic sources consulted.

[44] According to official documents of the EZLN, there were 110 guests from the EZLN in the galleries of the Congress that day, although only 7 of them were invited to speak at the podium. Among those 7 speakers, there were two women: Comandanta Esther and María de Jesús Patricio, belonging to the Congreso Nacional Indígena (EZLN 2003, p. 290).

5.1. Conclusion

We have seen some forms in which *comandanta* Zapatista Esther challenged the gendered and racialized notions of the Mexican nation-state on the morning of March 28th 2001. We have argued how this event accounts as a highly symbolic moment, when her indigenous female body stood before a dominant male mestizo audience, defying historical nationalist constructions that had maintained her position as a marginalized persona to the nation and the state. From the lexical and semantic constructions used during her speech to her outfit or voice, we have reviewed how her body and tongue/language were engaged in a destabilizing process of gender and racialized norms. Negotiating roles, embodying forbidden practices in the public sphere and re-appropriating herself with the images constructed upon her body for the post-revolutionist nationalist project -*la India bonita*, Malinche, Gamio's indigenous women. In this exercise, we argue, she grasps the set of possibilities that the changes in her gender and racial performances allow her to do. Perceiving her body as a historical idea, constructed prior to the body itself, helps to see how her performativity is contributing to the disruption of norms.

Yet, we conclude, she does so from a position of pride, aware of her identity and the limitations marked upon it. She is present in a forbidden space, she uses a language that does not belong to her, and she abandons the conceptual and physical edges of the nation to locate herself as another model of citizenry. Yet her gender and racial performance continues using visual codes culturally legible for her audience. She is present with her *huipil* and her *guaraches*, she is performing with recognizable and coherent codes for an indigenous native. She is not disguised in occidental clothes, avoiding thus to create uncertainty. She also inhabits the visual norms for her gender –identifying herself as such. Yet –and there is where the changes in her performativity lay- she is creating new signifiers. These ones defy the constructed meanings for her body in an attempt to communicate herself beyond racialized and gendered assumptions about who she is and where she supposedly belongs. This communication becomes strange, denaturalized. Moreover, that denaturalization of her expected role creates a historical tension, from which, we argue, she negotiates her access to full citizenship.

6. Protectors of 'The People'

6.1. EZLN Female Insurgents: Not Such Beautiful Souls

The use of gender hierarchies in societies aims at securing a normativity around the 'natural' behaviors of men and women. The practice of war exacerbates these hierarchies due to the fact that the military is a hyper-masculinist environment, gendered and patriarchally constructed. The state, as the organizer of gender relations and ultimate shaper of the gender regime, becomes, as Connell argues, "involved in the historical process generating and transforming the basic components of the gender order" (1990, p. 529). As we have already mentioned, the armed forces and the military also fall under this umbrella, perpetuating what Connell appoints as "a dominance-oriented masculinity" through the rigors of basic training, officer corps and ultimately, gendered militaries (p. 529). In this military environment, presumptions about gender (roles) are built into them.

The notion of citizenship is also bounded to this (male) military sphere. As Kronsell explains, through a supposedly 'universal' (masculine) conscription the male citizen has historically become regarded as the "a priori' citizen while the female citizen has different duties toward the state" (2005, p. 284). In this position men are expected to occupy their legitimate role as protectors of the nation -and its women. Historical tropes like the one identified by Elshtain as the 'Just Warrior/Beautiful Soul' have supported this division (1995, p. 4). It has also reinforced the believes on the accepted attitudes of the binary genders in conflict, pushing for the normalization of constructed gender roles. The figure of the woman is normally portrayed, if portrayed at all, as victim or peaceful mourner of war. This hegemonic image of women in conflict makes difficult to imagine them in active roles as fighters, violent warriors or protectors. In fact, as Cohn and Jacobson argue, these images are so hegemonic that counter-evidences difficultly have an effect on them (2013, p. 105). And thus, even when women join armed forces or engage in the military, they are perceived as extraordinary cases of women who are masculine enough for the job. For Sjoberg, militarized masculinity remains a standardized measure which only a few women can reach (2013, p. 235). The duties that women are thus able to perform towards the state and the nation are depicted as belonging to the private sphere (re-producing the nation, care activities, mourning those who gave their lives in conflict, etc.). This idea is also substantiated in the same gender belief system that define women as incapable of holding public positions in politics:

> "[…] women are seen to be governed by their bodies, hormones, emotions, and
> particularistic attachments to others in a way that men are not. In contrast, men are
> seen to be abler to be dispassionate and rational and to make decisions based in
> abstract universal principles (such as honor or patriotism) rather than the bonds of

personal relationships…" (Cohn & Jacobson 2013, p. 113)

Thus, as Mathers argues, the highly masculinized environment of the military and armed forces inevitably sustains a sharper division of the public and private spheres (2013, p. 128). Also, it perpetuates the significant constraints that make it difficult for women to be regarded as full citizens in the project of the nation-state (ibid). This is because only men are regarded as capable of fulfilling the ultimate patriotic act –give their life for the nation. Women may be eventually given the chance to participate in war, but this will be rather regarded as a matter of tolerance rather than her right or duty.

The case of the EZLN is a valuable one in this regard. As oppositional armed forces, their main goal is the destabilization of the Mexican nation-state. We believe that their attempt to rethink the masculinist and femininist values surrounding armies also accounts as such. The destabilization of gender believes and notions of the nation-state becomes an indirect challenge towards this model. In this regards, Lisa, an activist in the Zapatista Front for National Liberation, explains how gender roles and believes are being re-conceptualized within the movement: "[In FZLN meetings] we have begun to talk about the fact that one cannot be a Zapatista and an oppressor. And it is incongruent to be a revolutionary and to block women's liberation" (cited in Kampwirth 2002, p. 107).

Although it is still unclear if the EZLN can be regarded as a feminist project[45], it is certain, as Kampwirth appoints, that their attempt to produce different gender relations and advocate for gender equality has been present since the beginning. The Revolutionary Women's Law was incorporated into the core demands of the movement, listing, among others, the right of women to take part in the armed struggle in equal terms to their fellow *compañeros*. This law represented thus a firm and systematic elaboration of the movement's support for women's demands on equality, a source of re-conceptualization for gender-relations and the re-negotiation of their spaces for participation (p. 105).

In this regard, Zapatista female insurgents are an important case for analysis of women who challenge naturalized gender constructions within conflict, defying the patriarchal state's hyper-masculinization of armed forces. As we will see, they created a sense of citizen duty or duty towards

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[45] Many scholars have argued that the EZLN cannot not a feminist project and that it both retains patriarchal forms of organization and social interaction both discursively and in practice. Others like Speed see discourses and forms of resistance which could be regarded as feminist, blurring thus the feminine/feminist dichotomy established around many Latin American social movements where women were protagonists. Read more in Speed, 2003.

their peoples that resembles to state soldier's discourse on the protection of the nation. By taking on more militarized roles -30% of the EZLN is composed by women- they contributed to the destabilization of notions like Just Warriors/Beautiful souls or 'the protector and the protected', re-negotiating their space within the guerrilla. In doing so, these indigenous women are challenging both the national socio-political order that does not allow them to take arms in conflict but also the patriarchal one within their communities (nation-state and local level). Through their own agency and sense of freedom, they provided a source for gender blurriness within the guerrilla.

During the short and intense conflict of the first days of January 1994, women took part in the violent uprising commanding troops, planning military strategies and killing *federales*. Such is the case of *comandanta* Isidora, who unravels images of womanhood in conflict with her determinant attitude 'to do' war. As she explains in an interview, she is not willing to lay down arms, she is prepared to kill. She even giggles when she's asked about her participation in the takeover of Ocosingo, where she shot dead many of his enemies: "[When I killed some of the enemy soldiers] I felt calmer because my comrades were not dying, unlike the *federales*" (Las compañeras tienen grado 1995). In fact, her story depicts a fighter committed to her fellow militants in a mission to serve and protect, a contrasting image to the weeping and weak 'Beautiful Souls' described in war myths. She was in charge of a troop of 80 during the Ocosingo occupations. Twenty of her men were wounded. In the mid of the battle, she broke through the enemy lines, and having been wounded herself, she put all his comrades to safety. As factual described, she is the protector rather than the protected in an act that becomes a re-articulation of the constructions of femininity and masculinity: a strong and brave woman saving weak and vulnerable men (Las compañeras tienen grado 1995). In this sense, she is defying the discourses prevailed in history, constituting additional meanings to her femininity –to protect, ready to do war, to lead. She defies the peaceful place granted to her sex. Isidora's performance in Ocosingo displaces thus the position of her gender as a limiting factor to do war, recognized afterwards as a rightful leader and fierce fighter within the guerrilla.

Yet, we wonder if her gender still serves as the source of surprise to such a heroic display[46] –as a dissonant element in a well-established order. Is this case so memorable because she stone-faced the enemy and saved dozens of lives or because *she is a woman* who bravely faced the enemy, saving dozens of lives? This case suggests how breaking off with 'the Beautiful Soul' trope is a difficult

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[46] In the documentary film consulted, Marcos talks about Isidora. His words are supported by testimonies of Isidora. As Marcos explains it, she became popular among the troops for the event, as implying that the troops were not expecting something like that. Now, as she asserts, she is respected even more.

endeavor that requires an intense, reiterative change of gender performativity. Following Butler's theory, we see how the body can be newly discoursed to re-signify the participation of women in conflict through their 'do' rather than their 'being'.[47] *Mayora* Ana María accounts for improvements in this regard, observing how the possibilities for the transformation of gender roles are indeed, as Butler appoints, found in a different sort of repeating of performative acts:

> "Yes, it still exists *that* [men having a bad time accepting orders from female leaders]. And that's what we are trying to eradicate. It is difficult for the newly arrived (male) militants to obey a woman's commands. They consider it wrong. But they get used to it. Those *compañeros* who have been with us for a long time perceive it *now* as normal. They see that the participation of women is necessary. They say that if me and another *compañera* [the first female combatants of the EZLN] hadn't joint the forces from the beginning, there wouldn't be any woman in the EZLN by now. It is thanks to our participation that they saw that we [women] are capable of doing it. After that, many more *compañeras* joint"[48] (Mayora Ana María, cited in Rovira 1994, p. 222)

Ana María accounts to what we see as a subversive repetition of acts foreign to the hegemonic and contextual understandings of her gender. As she describes, women performing as leaders is a challenging practice for her fellow male combatants. Yet, as she asserts, the new gender performance comes to be accepted after the repetition of the practice in time. The conception of gender is thus moved from a substantial model of identity "to one that requires a conception of a constituted social temporality" (Butler 1988, p. 520). Thus, this new "performative accomplishment" is negotiated in history, bringing the audience –anyone aware of these changes- and the actors to believe those performances, creating new norms. However, other testimonies of female militants continue posing the obstacles and difficulties to change gender norms:

> "You know, all this work to change people's minds is not finished, because there is still resistance from men. When I returned to my community […] I realized […] that men still don't understand. Maybe there's resistance and men don't want to change. I won't say that men don't take women into account –they do. But it's as if

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[47] Butler explains that "there is not gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results". Thus gender can only be negotiated through 'doing' rather than 'being'. In this case they are 'doing' a different discourse to the expected one dictated by the nation-state ideology in war. Read more in Butler 1990.

[48] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

men have set a limit 'up to here' […] it happens in all different spaces, in the life of combatants as well. Most men are not willing to see a woman surpass him. He is afraid of a woman giving him orders, afraid of a woman who is smarter than him. And even at the highest levels, they are not willing to…" (*Comandanta* Isabel, cited in Klein 2015).

Yet both stories talk about their ability to perform as protector (subjects) rather than protected (objects). Rumors state that Ana María ran away from her home when she was a young girl, "carrying marks of a whole story of indigenous humiliation on her body" (Marcos, cited in Kampwirth 2003, p. 83). Eager to join the Zapatista army, this young girl became the maximum military authority in the highland region. She led the occupation of San Cristóbal de las Casas on January 1st 1994. As we see it, the takeover of the city in the first days of the year was one of the most offensive attacks against the 'protective' function of the Mexican state. Sjoberg explains that the overrepresentation of women in states' protection narratives serves to solidify women's place in the nation-state paradigm (2013, p. 142). Depicting women in need of protection creates thus the perfect justification for "a masculinized (apparent) protector" in the image of the state. Yet, in this case, Ana María rejects through her agency the symbolic use of her body as a field in need of protection. She becomes both the perpetrator of the uprising and the protector of her peoples and her own body. She stands against a state which has actually done very little to protect indigenous women's rights. In fact, while the Mexican Constitution establishes equality -including women's equality- in practice and everyday life, the state protection towards these women's rights is practically nonexistent (Speed 2006, p. 206).

Comandanta Amalia explains the abandonment that the state has inflicted into her peoples, going so far as to state that "it is preferable to die in the battle from a straight bullet in your head than dying from cholera, a curable disease" (Las compañeras tienen grado 1995). In stating so, she is implying the willingness of the state to maintain a situation of marginalization and oblivion to peoples like her. And in doing so, she is re-signifying the image of the protector in her female body. Embracing her shotgun, with a khaki military uniform and a hidden face –symbol of the revolution- she is difficultly located as the vulnerable victim in need of men's (or state) protection. This, we argue, becomes a threat. As Sjoberg explains, the hegemonic and masculine discourse of state (war) policy-making demands the creation of a feminized and weak 'other', on whom masculinized discourses rely (2013, p. 141). This 'other' is constituted in the image of "womenandchildren", a figure which ultimately justifies the masculinized nature of the state as a protector (p. 141). Amalia, Ana María,

Isidora or Isabel are just some of the women who cannot be categorized as this weak and feminized 'other' in need of protection. They organize themselves and negotiate their authority and space in an insurgency that has its own agenda.

> "They told us that this is not just a political struggle, that it's an armed struggle as well. We had to learn to defend ourselves both politically and militarily to prepare ourselves for a war against those who exploit us. We know there are oppressive forces and that's why we had to learn to defend ourselves […] That's how we began to see that women could do the work of the organization too. We learned these new ways to protect our security […] and we also began to learn to use weapons. The women insurgents trained us alongside the men and we saw that we were capable of resisting. It was a lot of sacrifice, but we did all the work" (*Comandanta* Araceli & Captain Maribel, cited in Klein 2015)

Finally, it is interesting to see how these women's discourses emphasize on their quasi-citizenship 'duty' as protectors of their peoples, creating a new sense of belongingness parallel to the nationalistic one –defined, this time, by the boundaries of class and ethnic identity. Captain Irma explicitly stated it in a speech given on March 8th 1994:

> "There is no other way. They gave us no choice but to take arms […] Our struggle is necessary for *our peoples and country* to be free, not only for our women but for the people that live humiliated"[49]

In this case Irma creates a symbolic union of "our peoples" based on a common suffering stemming from their pauperized conditions: "We will go on with our fight until they [the state] give us what we ask for: bread [food], independency, freedom, household and justice. Because it does not exist for us, *the poor ones*".[50] Captain Irma locates herself as a legitimate protector of the demands of her kind –the oppressed poor indigenous in Mexico- emphasizing on her ability to do so as a woman: "*Compañeras* of the whole country: for this not to continue like this, we need to take up arms with the *compañeros,* for them to understand that women can also fight with weapons in

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their hands".[51]

Like her, *comandanta* Hortensia emphasizes on the capabilities of women to perform the 'protector of the people' in conflict, explicitly stating the possibility to leave behind the 'private' space of domesticity and engage in a 'higher' moral duty:

> "We, as women, can do the work just as men. We can bear arms not only to be housewives. We have the right to participate in the armed conflict like proletarian women. That's why we are here both men and women: to do the war of our country, Mexico. For it [Mexico], we raise arms: to achieve the eleven points for our peoples in the future [...] [We do] the war, to have a just and honorable peace"[52]

It is interesting to see how they both create a sense of belongingness and duty towards 'their people' but also towards 'their country'. This may come as an attempt to be incorporated in the nation, as 'their peoples' are solely located within the Mexican territory. This idea, we argue, implies their desires for a 'pluri-national' Mexico where 'our people' exists as a differentiated entity to the whole, yet part of a common 'Mexicanness'. They also positon themselves as 'Just Warriors' for a better Mexico where women can engage in 'patriotic' duties that extend beyond the private sphere. In this sense, they are challenging the hegemonic masculine norms that position women as not fitting to soldiering and warfare matters (Mathers 2013, p. 124) or "the ultimate citizenship's duty" (Yuval-Davis 1997, p. 93).

6.2.   Women in the Social Support Bases: Resistance and Protection

Zapatista women have not only engaged in the movement from the guerrilla lines. As Klein explains, the movement's real strength and cohesion lays in the Zapatista support bases (2015). That's why, in the beginning of 1994, the Mexican government's violent responses were primarily directed towards Zapatista civilians (ibid). This violence aimed at undermining the EZLN. During the two years of peace negotiations that led to the San Andrés Peace Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture in 1996, Chiapas suffered a low-intensity grade of conflict. This stage is characterized for including a "calculated combination of military and paramilitary violence, a constant military

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[51] In the Annex: Speech given by Captain Irma, March 8th 1994, lines 9-11. Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.
[52] In the Annex: Speech given by Comandante Hortensia, March 8th 1994, lines 9-15. Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

presence, ongoing harassment and intimidation of the civilian population and other psychological tactics intended to undermine popular support" (Klein 2015).

After the first fail of the San Andrés Accords in 1996 and despite President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's promise that the army would only attack in response to offensives, the Mexican state forces launched a campaign of unprecedented violence in the region. Many fled to the mountains. Thousands of men, women and children looked for refuge while the Mexican army tried to eliminate the Zapatista guerrilla leadership. The military was present in the jungle and the canyons –the Zapatista regions of Morelia, La Garrucha and La Realidad. They also established army bases in Guadalupe Tepeyac and San Quintin, two central municipalities to the Zapatista territory. It was estimated, as of 1998, that a full third of the Mexican military – between 65,000 and 70,000 soldiers- were stationed in Chiapas (Speed 2003, p. 48; Klein, 2015).

Mexico's government reaction was however in the international spotlight. And now that it had made its way as a 'modern', democratic country –at least discursively- it was not in the position to show its wildest image with a total oppression campaign against its peoples. When the negotiations failed, the Mexican government increasingly began to organize and finance paramilitary groups that started to exert high levels of violence in the northern zones and highlands of Chiapas. These levels of violence culminated in the Acteal Massacre. On December 22nd 1997 45 civilians were killed while praying for peace in a small church. Four of them were pregnant women. They were members of the religious group 'Las Abejas'. This group was not enlisted as a Zapatista support-base group, yet they were sympathizers of the movement's demands. Many were shot dead while others were hacked to death by machetes (Klein 2015). The acts perpetrated in the Acteal Massacre stand out for the intense violence perpetrated towards women:

> "Testimonies of survivors tell of the paramilitaries macheteing the bodies of the dead women, cutting off their breasts and hacking the fetuses out of their bellies. Other testimonies tell of the paramilitaries tossing the fetuses from machete to machete, laughing and saying 'Let's do away with the seed'" (Speed 2003, p. 52).

As this event illustrates, repression against civilian women took a savage form. Sexual assaults reached unprecedented levels in the region. According to *Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal de las Casas*, the numbers of reported rapes in Chiapas doubled after 1994 (cited in González-Pérez 2008, p. 48). The EZLN reports over 300 rapes and almost 700 other assaults against women and girls

between 1994 and 1998.

One of the most well-known cases, publicly denounced by international human right activists, was the gang rape of three Tzeltal sisters of 20, 18 and 16 years old. The armed forces detained them near the town of Altamirano and accused them of being connected to the EZLN. They were tortured and raped by ten soldiers. Local human rights monitors followed the case and filed complaints against the soldiers. Yet, sometime later, these monitors received death threats And finally, the complaints were after left to oblivion. Like them, many women reportedly suffered sexual abuse by "unidentified, armed and masked men" belonging to state armed forces or paramilitary groups. Other cases, Klein explains, have never been reported (2015).

Rape as a weapon of war has been highly discussed in feminist scholarship. The gender constructions that surround armed conflict have served to make use of rape as a war tactic to 'feminize' repressed groups and communities. Gender analyses of varied militarized contexts have highlighted the fact that feminine sexuality in conflict becomes a symbolic space of political struggle –and rape, the tool to exert domination. As we have already mentioned, the dominant discourse of state war policy-making is highly masculinized. It demands the creation of a feminized and weak 'other' on whom masculinized state discourses rely (Sjoberg 2013, p. 141). But in the case of sexual violence, the female body serves as the field for the ultimate masculinity and dominant expression of the state. The fact that women are the biological reproducers of people/nations can be regarded also as contributing to the use of rape as a systematic war weapon. The rape of the female body can be thus seen as an allegory of the rape of the nation –or any other community, race or ethnic group that the woman in question represents.

> "The gendered nationalism that incentivize the strategic victimization of women (as war's feminized 'others') as a proxy for civilians also incentivize war rape as a tactic. As a result, 'rape in war, ethnic-national war in particular, becomes a powerful symbolic weapon against the enemy'. Because 'women are seen as precious property of the enemy, women and their bodies become territories to be seized and conquered. Women's raped bodies in these interactions are not violated humans or injured people but tablets for sending messages to the men who witness and cannot prevent the violation and injury. War rape as a tactic then subordinates the material existence of women and/or the feminine to the symbolic communication of men and/or the masculine" (Sjoberg 2015, p. 222)

In this sense, the sexual violation of women from the social support bases of the EZLN by state forces –or state funded paramilitary ones- can be understood as a message to the indigenous Zapatista organization –and its men. Hernández Castillo collects cases of rape by armed forces in Oaxaca, Chiapas and Veracruz (three regions with high levels of political organization at the local level). She identifies this practice as a counter-insurgency strategy and weapon of political demobilization (2010, p. 94). This strategy becomes thus a way of re-conquering the ideal nation, exerting masculine (mestizo) forms of re-territorialization through indigenous women's bodies. Yet, as Hernández Castillo appoints, it is also a message to all women:

> "The 'punishment' to the Zapatistas sympathizers […] for breaking off with their
> traditional gender roles and questioning the prevalent power structures is a message
> to all women that have ever dared to raise their voices in the public spaces" (2010,
> p. 95)

As she explains, the patriarchal ideology of the Mexican nation-state continues considering women as sexual objects, holders of family honor (ibid). Many scholars have tracked back the historical constructions of masculinity and male sexuality in Mexico. As Zuckerhut recalls, the construction of the hegemonic Mexican masculinity in which the body is capable of violation was created and reinforced in multiple nation building processes (2015, p. 21). Since independence from Spain, the image of the worthy Mexican male citizen was delineated around an exaggerated manliness. This *macho* image was transferred from Porfirian times into the post-revolutionary period, when the revolutionary factions –including Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa- "tacitly accepted the Porfirian conflation of nation, state, family honor and male power" (Macías-González & Rubenstein 2012, p. 11). As Zuckerhut explains, the Mexican *macho* is not only sexually active, but its maleness is measured by an active penetration (2015, pp. 24-25). The "conquering" of the female body through consented penetration or even rape "appears as some kind of 'normal' expression of a man's active sexuality of his masculinity" (p. 25). It could thus be argued that during war –where the meanings of gendered bodies are exacerbated- masculinity is even more strongly expressed at the expenses of a raped (female) body.

It is however paradoxical how this ideology was executed and actively promoted by the Mexican military in post 1994, while the government was trying to whitewash its image towards the international community. While hundreds of cases of rape and torture at the hands of state forces

were being reported, the government was negotiating and ultimately signing up the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2002; the Convention against Torture in 2005 and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1998 (Hernández Castillo 2010).

In the face of this violence, many women began to organize to expel the armed forces from their communities: "forming a barrier with their bodies, lines of women blocked soldiers from entering their communities, sometimes physically pushing them back, and sometimes armed with sticks or rocks" (Klein 2015). Some cases were successful, while other stories talk about greater repression and brutality. However, these women's forms of resistance talk about an attempt to destabilize the state gendered notions constructed upon their bodies.

In *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, Butler asserts that survival in conflict does not depend on the policies exerted onto a boundary or a territory, but "on recognizing how we are bound up to others" through social processes that depend on accepted bodily norms (2009, p. 52). This brings her to rethink the body in the field of politics, hand in hand with gender normativity, disability and race perceptions, only to conclude that the human body does not have a unique form, and therefore, it cannot be identified as such. The body is for her "in the world of others, in a space and time it does not control" (p. 53). In this world of others, categorizations are made to define who is worth living, whose live is worth preserving and whose life is worth mourning.

> "So the norms of gender through which I come to understand myself or my survivability are not made by me alone. I am already in the hands of the other when I try to take stock of who I am. I am already up against a world I never chose when I exercise my agency. It follows, then, that certain kinds of bodies will appear more precariously than others, depending on which versions of the body, or of morphology in general, support or underwrite the idea of the human life that is worth protecting, sheltering, living, mourning […] Such views of lives pervade and implicitly justify contemporary war" (Butler 2009, p. 53).

In this sense, gender becomes a powerful process to sort out the bodies. The nation-state gender ideology defines which kinds of bodies are "worth protecting, sheltering, living, mourning", categorizable as victims (women, children) and which ones are the protectors (men). But, as Butler also appoints, the body is open for historical re-signification (1989, p. 520). In this sense, not only female combatants from the EZLN provide a reflection for gender roles in the front lines, but also

social support base women contributed to the destabilization of 'the protected' image in need of a man, while actively protecting their bodies as symbolic battlegrounds. They actively defended their communities, their homes and their own bodies from state control and sexual brutality. Gabriela from the community of Nicolás Ruiz is one of these women:

> "You know, they massacred women and little children [referring to Acteal]. They say that all you could hear were the cries and screams of women and little children as they died. We won't let that happen here. Now we are angry" (cited in Speed 2003, p. 52)

Lucía is a Tojolobal woman from La Realidad, another Zapatista municipality:

> "The army arrived on the ninth of February in 1995. We withdrew to our *ejido* lands behind the town. Then the army came again. They said, 'We have come for peace'. But that isn't true. We drove them out of town. We got together a group of women and shouted at them, 'Get out. Get out of here! We are in charge here, not you. Go back to your barracks. Don't come here to frighten the women' We kept on screaming this" (cited in Stephen 1999, p. 835)

Both testimonies inform us about the determinant agency of these women to protect the geographical space of their communities, where they not only have their households and life resources, but also where they're allowed to perform their indigenous forms of life: "We won't let that happen *here*", "Get out. Get out of *here*!". It is interesting how the supposedly 'conquering' of their geographical space ("here") is linked to the suffering of women ("[there] they massacred women", "we won't let *that* [the massacre of women] happen here", "don't come [here] to frighten women"). As we see it, this link implies the fact that that the state's presence in *their* space is a direct offense against the female body. As the state (armed forces) simultaneously penetrates the land, women's bodies and their indigenous space is threatened.

> "We saw the soldiers approaching and that's when the women started shouting, 'We don't want the army here!' We didn't want the soldiers to go into our houses, to rape the women. All the women got together and we chased them out" (Margarita, cited in Klein 2015)

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In her account of women's resistance in the attempted takeover of the little town of Morelia by the armed forces, Margarita is also making a parallelism between the geographic space defined by "our houses" and the community ("we didn't want soldiers to go into *our houses*", "we don't want the army *here*!") and the symbolic space of a female body ("[we didn't want the soldier] to rape the women"). As we see it, they are both fields for struggle in this war, where an exclusive nation-state ideology attempts to appropriate itself with both spaces to maintain the 'ideal' national order.

Like the testimonies, the images of these encounters also show the determination of Zapatista women.[53] One of them shows a Tzotzil woman in the refugee camp of X'oyep, in the township of Chenalhó, pushing a soldier from the Mexican government. The photography captures his expression of surprise as the small indigenous woman resists his (masculine) authority and the state power that he represents. He seems like he is about to fall backwards –presumably avoided by a second masculine arm that holds his body. The photo was taken as the Mexican army tried to enter the community, facing the eager of two hundred women from the organization 'Las Abejas' who impeded their entrance as they shouted chants: "Army, get out, you are of no use *here*!" or "*Rapists* of women, get out!" (Speed 2003, p. 53). These chants, once again, make evident the rejection and resistance of these women to the pragmatic conquering of the geographical space of X'oyep –their safety zone, as they had already been displaced from their communities- and the usage of rape as a war tactic to re-conquer the national order. Through their agency, they reject the idea of wars being both "fought 'for' women but also through them" (Sjoberg 2013, p. 222).

As we see it, these events talk about a re-signification of their bodies by altering their expected gender performance that situates them as weak, feminized victims –the needed 'other' for the state and the ideological battlefield of war. They even embody 'the protector' of their men, as a woman from Morelia explains:

> "We held a meeting and decided that we were going to chase the army out if they
> came… We thought, well, if they want to shoot us, then they'll shoot us. We're
> ready to defend our community and *to protect the men…*" (Speed 2003, p. 59)

As Speed explains, this testimony echoes other testimonies of women who stood face-to-face with soldiers, while men were hiding in the mountains (p. 60). Some of them talk about the serious consequences that men would have faced if the state forces had arrested them. In this logic, the

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[53] The photography can be found in the Annex under the title 'Resistance in X'oyep'.

testimonies implied that the consequences that women faced were of lesser importance i.e. they were not facing death. Elida, one of the women from Morelia who organized against the army, explains: "We are willing […] to protect the men, because if they arrest the men, they will be killed or tortured like what happened on January 7 [1994] when they killed three of our *compañeros*" (cited in Klein 2015). Margarita adds: "that's why the women began to organize, because we have seen that when the army comes, they take the men away" (cited in Klein 2015). The general interpretation for this change of traditional roles is the fact that women's blockade would be regarded as "less threatening" and "less of a challenge" (Speed 2003, p. 60). Yet, as Speed argues, the opposite may be true:

> "Within [a] patriarchal logic that places emphasis on men's ability to protect 'their' women, and subjects women to physical attacks and symbols in male struggles against male enemies, the mobilization of women greatly challenged culturally inscribed norms about male and female roles of dominance and subordination" (2003, p. 60)

As we see it, this change of roles falls into what Butler would define as cultural unintelligible codes. As Butler explains, the gendered body is qualified for life "within the domain of cultural intelligibility" (1993, p. 2), an agreed understanding which creates categories such as man or woman. It is thus not a surprise the perceived incapability of the soldiers to react to these women's change of performativity and the re-signification of their bodies with alternative discourses to their victim role. As they are not considered the legitimate 'protector' (a role held for men), they face fewer chances than men of being arrested, killed and tortured. If anything, they should suffer of sexual violence as a message to their men.

6.3. Conclusion

As we have seen, both EZLN female militants and women from the social support bases have engaged in changes in their gender performance, contributing to the destabilization of hegemonic norms on women in conflict, mainly shaped by the idea of 'the protector/ the protected' and 'Just Warrior/Beautiful Soul" tropes. From the front lines of war to unexpected forms of resistance, Zapatista women have defied the gender roles that position their female bodies as worth "protecting, sheltering, living [and] mourning" by men -or a male state. In both these acts, we argued, they defied gendered notions of the (Mexican) nation-state and the spaces and attitudes

defined by historical constructions around a weak/feminized body in need of strong/masculine protection.

Those women like Ana María, Amalia or Isidora defied these notions from the front lines of the guerrilla, re-negotiating their participation in a space that is delineated by hyper-masculinized forms. By taking military ranks and positions of authority within the non-state armed forces of the EZLN, we argued, they are not only challenging the attitudes marked by (military) traditions but also the patriarchal nation-state in need of a feminized body upon which it can exert its 'protection' duty. As we saw, these women perform as protector (subjects) rather than protected (objects), ultimately taking the civil duty to protect "their people". This collectivity is delineated around ethnic, racial and class constructions that define them as marginalized subjects to the nation. By doing so, we argue, they engaged in the ultimate expression of citizenship, as they created a sense of citizen duty that resembles to state soldier's discourse on the protection of the nation.

Women from the support bases also engaged in a transformation of the (expected) traditional roles in conflict. As we have seen, they resisted the entrance of state armed forces into their communities, holding soldiers with sticks or their own bare hands and engaging in the role of 'the protector' of their peoples and men. But, in doing so, we argued, they also protected their own bodies from rape and the symbolism that it acquires in times of conflict as a tactic to re-conquer lost territories. Thus, not only they protect their female body from male penetration, but also their indigenous body/space from mestizo nation-state ideology which aims at re-conquering the national order. Ultimately, they reject the idea of wars being both "fought 'for' women but also through them" (Sjoberg 2013, p. 222).

7. Motherhood and Sexuality: Deconstructing National Dualities on Womanhood

7.1. Not a Mother of the Nation

As permanent members of the EZLN, both male and female insurgents were pushed to make a decision: they could not pursue a family life. Yet they could engage in romantic and sexual relationships with their *compañeros* (Rovira 1994, p. 222). For women, the acceptance of this rule came at higher costs than that of men's, as traditionally their value was placed in their function as nurturing mothers and loving wives (Rovira 2015, p. 54).

"When a young woman gets married, she knows she has to 'give children'. If for any physical reason she is incapable of having children, she becomes a frustrated woman and is viewed as such by all. Marriage, often loveless, is in reality a socio-economic contract based upon procreation. It is believed that fertility is a divine blessing, granted by the ultimate deity, the moon. Women who can't have children are punished by the gods, they are excluded and are frequently the object of contempt" (p. 52)

Consequently, in the previous years of the uprising, when EZLN insurgents were being trained in the mountains, the fact that a woman could leave its 'natural' domestic place as mother to join the guerrilla, was often received with rejection. Subcomandante Marcos explains the risks faced:

"A woman could only leave the community as a wife. Otherwise, she was rapidly considered a whore. It was quite risky for an indigenous woman to leave [the community]. If she backed out because she could not bear the conditions in the mountains, she could not come back [to the community]. Unlike men. She would be suspected of having slept with one –or all. For this reason, the first ones [female militants] struggled quite a lot with their families and the fact that they risked being marked for life if things didn't work out as planned" (Marcos in Las Compañeras tienen grado 1995)

While leaving behind that role as mother and wife, EZLN female insurgents shook up the traditional gender roles and the images that prevented them from becoming 'Just Warriors'. Devoting to struggle without renouncing to sex, they were increasingly leaving behind the regarded peacefulness that is constructed as 'naturally' linked to motherhood. In this regard, Cohn and Jacobson explain that the "the attribution of greater peacefulness to women is often linked to motherhood –both the capacity to give birth and a social life of nurture" (2013, p. 107).

"Peace […] is associated with with passivity, domesticity, family, tranquility, softness, negotiation, compromise, interdependence, nonviolence, a "being" rather than a "doing", a lack of action, excitement, challenge and risk an absence rather than a presence –all in short, coded 'feminine' in most cultures" (Cohn 2013, p. 12)

If so then, these women's peacefulness fades away as they entered the mountains, gradually

incorporating the masculine attributes that make them suitable for a life in the guerrilla. Giving up a family life, they re-imagine different duties for their gender.

> "…it was because there were women who were dedicated to the work and *gave it out all.* There were many of us who gave everything, who sacrificed… Who spent our youth within that space, doing that work. We don't have children. Many of us never married *because we gave everything to the struggle.* And that's how we were able to do what we did. For some women it was not easy. For others it was very hard to choose not to be married, not to have children, not to have our own home, you know? But it was for *the love of our people* and so that we could move the work forward. What we have achieved has involved many people. But behind that there are women, women who gave everything" (*Comandanta* Isabel in Klein 2015)

> "[We] the insurgents, we cannot have children because we are constantly on duty, moving from one place to another and because our *job is to fight for the people.* We cannot have children; it would be very difficult to raise a baby in the mountains. That's why we have family planification" (Mayora Ana María in Rovira 1994, p. 222)

While connecting the impossibility to have kids in the guerrilla with their call of duty ("our *job* is to fight for the people", "many of us never married because we gave *everything* to the struggle", "it was *for the love* of our people"), they are giving a new sense to their value as women. Thus, their worth does not merely lay on being a 'good wife' and a 'good mother', but rather in their personal service to the community as active part of the armed struggle.

As we see it, these discourses defy the imaginary as mothers of the nation –or mothers of the racial-ethnic group they belong to. For Falquet, indigenous women in Mexico are pragmatically in charge of the transmission-reproduction of indigenous cultures (2001, p. 164). As already explained, men are socially authorized to a partial acculturation into the nation -through basic education, learning Spanish and being able "to get out to the outside world". Meanwhile, women remain immobilized in the community.

> "In every generation, the continuity is guaranteed thanks to the calming immobility of women, or better said 'The Indigenous Woman'. [This immobilization is] associated with continuity, linked to the soil and the ancestral nourishing territory,

to the cultural identity […] The indigenous man does not wear the traditional outfit anymore, he speaks Spanish [.] But his wife materializes his monolingual culture [represented in her] excessively typical self-woven *huipil* [54], her daily habits, her know-how and her believes" (Falquet 2001, p. 169-170)

Yuval-Davis explains how women's reproduction roles are central for the construction of nations and national discourses (1997, p. 26). As the biological producers of children/people, women become bearers of the collective within the national boundaries (p. 27), transmitters of the national culture and producers of the symbolic signification of national distinction and difference (Sjoberg 2013, p. 144). As we see it, Ana María and the rest of the female EZLN rebels who voluntarily chose to serve their people *without* procreation, defy the essential roles given to their gendered bodies and sexuality as "territory markers and reproducers of narratives of nations and other collectives" (p. 144). In this case, they reject being mothers-reproducers-transmitters of the constructed racial-ethnic collectivities that compose the EZLN (Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Chol and so on) and the traditions that limit their body to immobilization in the community. They do so rejecting the traditions that they find wrong while defending those modes of life that they want to preserve. For example, they start using contraceptive methods to gain control over their bodies and decide upon their reproductive functions, even questioning the moral bans to the practice of abortion that is made from 'tradition'.

> "[A combatant woman from the EZLN chooses] The pill or injections, whichever she wants. At the beginning we had troubles getting them, but recently –January 1995- some *compañeras* gave us some more" (Captain Maribel, cited in Rovira 2015, p. 56)

> "Abortion is an issue we don't discuss or mention at all [in the communities]. There is a belief that abortion is wrong. It would be like *perverting* tradition" (Mayora Ana María, cited in Rovira 2015, p. 56)

> "The fact that a tradition or a belief exists *doesn´t mean* it can't change" (Mayora Ana María, cited in Rovira 2015, p. 56)

It is interesting to see how this rejection to their motherhood role –and traditional believes on birth

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[54] Translated from Spanish by the author of this thesis.

control, family planning and the nature of women's value- comes hand in hand with a well-learnt discourse on (individual) women's rights where they over-emphasize the difficulties of domestic labor and childcare, stressing the freedoms acquired in their time in the guerrilla. Furthermore, they rarely have positive comments on the lives of indigenous women in the communities, a discourse that Eber identifies as "the total oppression stereotype" (1998, p. 4).

> "They won't stop during the day. The peasant woman wakes up at 3 AM to make
> *pozol* and breakfast for the men. If she needs firewood, she has to go and carry it
> back home. If she needs maize, she has to go pick it up alone. The same with
> vegetables. She goes and returns with her child on her back or holding onto her
> chest, she prepares the food. And like that all day long from Monday to Sunday. At
> least men have the chance to have fun on Sundays, playing basket or cards. But
> women do not have [the chance]. She works in everything, every day, she does not
> have a rest" (Mayora Ana María, cited in Rovira 1994, p. 220)

> "At a young age we already start to take care of our little siblings, we help to grind
> the maize and make *tortillas*, to sweep the house and clean. There is no chance to
> go to the school, even if there's someone in town, we need to help our mothers"
> (Mayora Ana María, cited in Rovira 1994, p. 221)

> "[Women] get married when they are fifteen, and after they have children their life
> is worth nothing. Their role is reduced to taking care of their husbands and children
> and working" (Captain Maribel, cited in Eber 1998, p. 3)

These testimonies illustrate their rejection to the practices and traditions that locate their bodies in a space of domesticity and motherhood, as reproducers of the racial-ethnic collectivity. But are they defying their role as mothers of the Mexican nation? Their body type is already marginalized in a national project that defines the citizen and the national subject around a marked *mestizo* skin. How could they be transmitters of national meanings that neglect their color and reject their language? The historical construction of the Mexican national project defines the ideal mother as the one complying with certain racial and ethnic requirements. Gamio's feminine (*mestiza*) type of woman is the legitimate mother of the nation:

> "The well-being, strength, physical beauty, and fullness of the life of her children

are her chief desire and the primordial object of her concerns. What does this mean
in sociological terms? Nothing less than the formation of the individual members
of the species, the promotion of a vigorous development that guarantees their
future potency. When Mexico is a great nation, it will be for many reasons. But
foremost is the creation of a strong, virile, and resistant race [*mestizo race*], which is
now being modeled by the Mexican feminine woman" (Gamio 2010, p. 123)

Then, how could Zapatista women reject a role that is not even theirs? In this case, we argue, they
renounce to the place given as original bearers of Vasconcelos' cosmic race, as holders of "the great
heritage of pre-Columbian habits, tendencies and education" for a hybrid Mexico (Gamio 2010, p.
121). They renounce to the *indigenist* policies that consistently placed indigenous peoples as objects
of (anthropological) study rather than agents of their own history (Stephen 1999, p. 825). As the
Mexican nation-state turns its back on them -effectively marginalizing them as political subjects-
they turn their back to their role in the reproduction of the national project that romanticized their
culture but forgot their bodies. Taking up the arms and denouncing this double moral, we argue,
they reject their role as bearers of the markers of differentiation that distinguish Mexico's hybrid
culture with the colonial past and the culture of the colonizers (Coffey & Tejada 2012, p. 403).

7.2.   Re-shaping Femininity: Questioning Tradition and Sexual Rights

The sexual freedom –at least discursively- that they enjoy while being in the guerrilla can also be
regarded as a defiance of the national project (and community traditions). Ruiz argues that the
Mexican nation-state ideology is a colonial and patriarchal one in its regard of women's bodies, as
it tends to control them –their morality, their sexuality, their fidelity and their femininity (Ruiz
2001b, p. 151). In the late 1910s Manuel Gamio defined the ideal attitudes for the perfect *mestiza*
woman. But some some years before, someone had gone so far as to define the perfect sexuality
and sexual organs for that feminine woman. In 1885 the Mexican scientist Francisco Flores
published *The Hymen in Mexico*, a study where he collected the physiognomy of 181 women's
hymens in order to determine the common traits of the Mexican woman. This study, Flores
affirmed with a paternalistic tone, would help modern medicine to protect the feminine virginity,
"one of the most researched treasures among men" (p. 148). This event shows the obsession of
the time, not only to define the biological, anatomical and cultural nature of the Mexican population,
but also to construct an ideal sexual femininity that could counterpart the hyper-masculinization
of the Mexican *macho*: a chaste and untouched body. Both for Flores and Gamio, the woman's

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body became a space from where (patriarchal) nationalism was articulated.

> "In the case of Francisco Flores the hymn is transformed in the object of *masculine desire* to control female fidelity and the fertility of the nation. For Gamio, the feminine woman is the type of woman desired *by men*" (p. 150)

Soon cultural myths were incorporated into this attempt to define the ideal sexual femininity for the nation. The Virgin of Guadalupe was the perfect combination of female chastity and motherhood. This catholic image of Jesuchrist's mother gained importance in the Viceroyalty of New Spain and in the immediate independent Mexican project as a significant marker of difference between the Creoles –Spaniards born in the colonial territory- and the *gachupines* –emigrated Spaniards from the Iberian Peninsula to the colonial territory (Zuckerhut 2015, p. 13). She became the mother of the nation, a virgin who conformed to "Creole/European elite standards of femininity" (p. 12). As Zuckerhut recalls, the image of The Virgin of Guadalupe shaped the figure of the mother in Mexico as a selfless, suffering one (p. 19). Just like the Virgin Mary lost her son Jesus in the maximal expression of sacrifice, Mexican mothers are expected to live up to the same levels of suffering. As the Holy Mother, Guadalupe embodies chastity and self-sacrifice. She represents the ideal of womanhood. For Octavio Paz, the Virgin of Guadalupe "is pure receptivity, and the benefits she bestows are of the same order: she consoles, quiets, dries tears, calms passions" (1981, p. 96).

This representation of the selfless mother has its duality in another 'mother of the nation': *la Chingada*. As previously mentioned, this mythical figure projects images of betrayal. She is a prostitute, the whore that sold her people to the Spaniards. In contrast to the Holiness of Guadalupe's nurturing and virginal body, *la Chingada* is a raped body. She lost all worth to her femininity the moment she was penetrated by the conquerors.

These cultural archetypes define a clear duality for Mexican women. They are often labeled within clear-cut dichotomies: a 'good woman' or a 'bad woman', 'clean' or 'dirty', 'virgins' or 'malinches'. Women are expected to define their womanhood in terms of sexuality and mothering capabilities. Thus, in this regard, the case of female insurgents of the EZLN provides a resource for blurriness in this duality, as they struggle to be recognized as citizens and worthy women within their communities and the national framework, regardless of their marital status or whether they have children or not.

Like them, women from the social support bases of the Zapatista movement also got increasingly aware of their rights to decide over their bodies (Klein 2015). The incorporation of these rights in the third point of 'The Revolutionary Women's Law'[55] became a source of guarantee within the communities, we argue, for the recognition of varying forms of womanhood that do not comply to the motherhood value. In this sense, human rights become a form of acknowledging the body within a 'personhood' scheme, incorporating 'outsiders' to a commonly agreed regime. As Butler notes,

> "when we struggle for rights, we are not simply struggling for rights that attach to my person, but we are struggling to be conceived as persons... If we are struggling for rights that attach, or should attach, to my personhood, then we assume that personhood as already constituted. But if we are struggling not only to be conceived as persons, but to create a social transformation of the very meaning of personhood, then the assertion of rights becomes a way of intervening into the social and political process by which the human is articulated" (2004, p. 33)

Adapting Butler's conceptualization, we see the recognition of reproductive and sexual rights collected in the revolutionary law as a recognition, thus, of alternative forms of womanhood that do not comply with the dualities constructed in history, nor with local traditions. Yet, they become inscribed in a personhood scheme that recognize them as subjects of law. As Agustina, a Tzeltal woman from La Garrucha explains, 'The Revolutionary Women's Law' and the Zapatista uprising marked a difference for reproductive and sexual rights in the region –and, we argue, for the recognition of other forms of femininity.

> "We didn't have any kind of health care before. For example, God sent me twelve children. Now women know little more about family planning, and they have two or three or four children. Many women plan their families. Others have operations not to have any more children" (cited by Klein 2015)

Yet, local resistance in the form of *machismo* is still present.

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[55] The third point states: 'Women have the right to decide the number of children they will have and care for'. See all the points included in the revolutionary law in the attached Annex.

"In one of the workshops with women, we were talking about the right to decide how many children to have, and there were some men present as well. The women were all very clear: 'However many children she wants to have, whether it's more or less, but the woman should decide how many children to have'. And the men said no. 'A roman should have however many children God sends her. When a woman wants to use birth control it's because she's trying to cheat on her husband'. That started a heated debate. And these are Zapatista men I'm talking about! It makes you wonder, what about men who are not Zapatistas?" (Esmeralda, cited in Klein 2015)

As the testimony from Esmeralda shows, the body of the indigenous woman is still considered a space for men's appropriation. *Machismo* is present in the communities, we argue, as a national mechanism to maintain control over women's bodies. These women's decision to reject their role as mothers becomes thus a threat against the national construction of manliness. Yet, the changes in the discourses of these women, who at least voice out their right to control their sexual and reproductive life –mainly within the guerrilla lines but also at the social support level- show patterns of gender roles' changes. In this regard, the discourse of Zapatista women –specially of EZLN combatants- comes to defy this construction of a woman's worth located on motherhood, rather emphasizing the newly acquired roles that the Zapatista movement allows them to perform. They provide thus for features of differentiation and uniqueness within the Mexican ideal of womanhood, challenging the duality of the holy mother/good woman vs. the raped mother/bad woman. With this, they are also negotiating their local spaces and national meanings as they decide which traditions they want to keep and which ones they reject –like women and indigenous subjects. They negotiate, thus, through their discourses and changes in their gender performativity the form they want to be incorporated into the nation and into modernity.

"It is true that there are traditions that are not good –for example getting drunk, being forced to marry…. What we [women] do is fight to change, to improve. But we also have a culture that cannot be lost, the way of working, of making craftworks, our languages… We do not want to be a country apart, *we want to be included* in the Mexican law" (*Comandanta* Yolanda, cited in Rovira 2001, p. 201)

7.3. Conclusion

As we have seen, Zapatista women defied gendered notions of the Mexican nation-state through the rejection and re-conceptualization of their role as mothers and transmitters of culture and tradition. In doing so, they created additional meanings to the concept of womanhood, defying the polarized duality of postcolonial accounts of femininity. As we argued, they destabilize the historically constructed duality of the holy mother/good woman vs. raped mother/bad woman shaped out of the myths of Malinche and The Virgin of Guadalupe –supported in the construction of an exaggerated masculinity in nation-building processes.

As we explained, Ana María and the rest of the female EZLN rebels who voluntarily chose to serve their people *without* procreation defy the essential roles given to their gendered bodies and sexuality: motherhood. Furthermore, they reject to be the mothers-reproducers-transmitters of the (bad) traditions that immobilize women within their communities, in a space of domesticity and nurture, as "reproducers of narratives of nations and other collectives" ((Sjoberg 2013, p. 144). In doing so, we argued, they are also defying their symbolic role as original mothers of the nation, holders of "pre-Columbian habits, tendencies, and education" (Gamio 2010, p. 121) through their agency to decide upon their bodies –supported on discourses on (individual) human and women's rights.

Similar to them, (some) women from the social-support bases began to re-think their roles as mothers and their rights to have family planification and methods for birth control. This, we argued, comes as a challenge to the narrow constructions on femininity developed in postcolonial Mexican history via the myths of Malinche/Virgin of Guadalupe. By acknowledging new roles and forms of contribution to the community than that of the role of the mother through changes in their discourses and gender performance, they re-negotiate alternative forms of inclusion into the nation. These forms of inclusion, as we argued, provide thus for features of differentiation and uniqueness within the Mexican ideal of womanhood.

8. Final Remarks

8.1. Final Conclusions

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this work was to explore how Zapatista women have been challenging hegemonic gendered notions of the Mexican nation-state since the uprising of the indigenous movement in 1994. As mentioned in Chapter 2 and throughout the discussion, the Mexican 'nation-state' is the promoter of a very particular regime of belongingness since its post-

colonial origins. The inclusions –and exclusions- to the national project and therefore, to citizenship, are marked by stereotypical gendered and racialized beliefs constructed in history.

In order to respond to our research question, we analyzed some of the discursive practices of these women, so as to identify how discursive changes in their (expected) gender and racial performativity have contributed to destabilize gendered and racialized constructions of the Mexican nation-state. As we argued, supported on Judith Butler's theorization, gender is a discursive construct that constitutes social reality through a "stylized repetition of acts" delimited in history (1988, p. 519) and culture (1993). As a discursive construct, gender continues (re)structuring power relations and the spaces provided for the 'accepted' expression of the genders. In the case of the nation-state project, gender also becomes a source to define the spaces of belongingness that define the roles, movements and proper expressions. However, the possibility of discursive discontinuity leaves room for changes in those constructions. We also argued how this dialectic negotiation can take place too, around discourses that give meaning to racial constructions in history.

The analysis of discursive practices under this theoretical umbrella has reveal different results. As we see it, they have defied gendered and racialized notions of the Mexican nation-state in a simultaneous process of re-negotiation and re-conceptualization of the idea of nation. Hence, re-defining their access to it. As we see it, many of the changes in their gender and racial performances have contributed to delineate new spaces of inclusivity and exclusivity that accept alternative expressions to the conventional gendered and racialized believes constructed upon their bodies. In doing so, we have seen, they have defied patriarchy both at the community and national level.

They have done so in varying forms. We identified three thematic blocks:

Throughout Chapter 5 we focused on *comandanta* Esther's intervention in the Union Congress and how she challenged the gendered and racialized notions of the Mexican nation-state with her body (location) and her language. From the lexical and semantic constructions used during her speech, to her outfit or voice, we reviewed how her body and tongue/language were engaged in a destabilizing process of hegemonic gender and racialized norms -negotiating roles, embodying forbidden practices in the public sphere and re-appropriating herself with the images constructed upon her body for the post-revolutionist nationalist project i.e. *la India bonita*, Malinche, Gamio's indigenous women. With her participation in the parliamentary exercise, we argued, she offered

alternative performances to de-construct the stereotypical images and gendered notions developed in history. By doing so, we argued, she re-negotiated the access of indigenous women to the public sphere, as she abandoned the conceptual and physical edges of the nation and located herself as an alternative model of citizen. As we see it, she created new signifiers to her body in an attempt to communicate herself beyond racialized and gendered assumptions about who she is and where she supposedly belongs to.

In Chapter 6 we focused on the destabilization of hegemonic norms on women in conflict, mainly shaped by the tropes of 'the protector/the protected' and 'Just Warrior/Beautiful Souls'. We saw how EZLN female insurgents and women from the social support bases engaged in changes in their (expected) gender performance, protecting and resisting their own bodies and their communities –ultimately defying the gendered notions of the (Mexican) nation-state and the spaces and attitudes defined by historical constructions around a weak/feminized body in need of strong/masculine protection. By doing so, we argued, they re-negotiated their place in the Mexican nation. Female insurgents took the civil duty to protect "their people" as the ultimate expression of citizenship. Women from the social support bases also protected their communities and own bodies. Both from physical male penetration (rape) and from the the symbolic penetration of the mestizo nation-state ideology into their indigenous spaces -resisting thus the state's attempt to re-establish the national order in times of ethnic conflict.

In Chapter 7 we focused on the changing role of motherhood and sexuality among Zapatista women. We argued that these women defied certain constructions of the Mexican nation-state through the rejection and re-conceptualization of their role as mothers and transmitters of culture and tradition. As we saw, they created additional meanings to the concept of womanhood, defying the polarized duality of postcolonial accounts of femininity around the holy mother/good woman vs. raped mother/bad woman shaped out of the myths of Malinche and The Virgin of Guadalupe. By doing so, we argue, they re-negotiated their value as indigenous women within the national order, recognizing that their roles extend that of motherhood.

These are just some of the ways in which Zapatista women have defied their environment – both at the community and the national level. We are aware of the limited scope of these analyses and the possibility for further research into different and varying challenging forms –i.e. through their political organization at the local level. Also, the limited scope of the analyzed material pushes us to assert that any of the conclusions or arguments expressed in this work does not aim at

establishing generalizations. Zapatista women defy stereotypes everyday from their very unique places, resisting historically constructed believes on their gender, their ethnicity, their race, their class or their sexual orientation.

In conclusion, this work has been attempt to analyze and recognize some of the forms they have used to become visible to an exclusive and repressive male and mestizo nation-state ideology. Becoming visible and providing alternative expressions to their expected gender and racial performances, we argue, is a first step for their full inclusion into the nation. By offering new and varying conceptualizations of their indigenous and woman body, they are defying historical constructions that have contributed to marginalize them for centuries. Occupying forbidden spaces and restricted attitudes, they are indeed posing questions to a (male) mestizo audience that is inevitably confronted with a diverse ethnical and gendered reality.

8.2.   Self-Reflection

The present thesis was an attempt to analyze how Zapatista women's discourses have contributed to destabilize gendered notions of the Mexican nation-state. Yet, as we developed the work, we confronted certain limitations and obstacles, upon which we would like to comment here in an exercise of self-reflection:

- Subjectivity: the analysis of these women's discursive practices has been analyzed following Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis guidelines that connect the power of language with the maintenance/disruption of hegemonic norms. Also, Butler's account of gender performativity (adapted also in racial terms) was used to frame those disruptive discourses and connect them with gendered and racialized constructions of the Mexican national project. Yet, as we see it, there was still space for a subjective analysis of the events and the interpretations that connect them to the Mexican national project. This subjectivity posed certain obstacles, as we wanted to conduct the analysis of the discourses as scientific as possible. For this matter, we tried to correctly argue each one of our conclusions and interpretations. Yet, we are still aware of the subjective weight of certain forms. We hope the reader trusts our interpretations, as they are made after an extensive work of investigation.

- As we see it, the forms that language take in the literature consulted in Spanish differ greatly

from those expression forms in the English literature. Although it can still be considered in its academic style, the Spanish language tends to create more metaphorical meanings and symbolism through the usage of subordinate sentences. The usage of language in the English literature, on the other hand, serves more to point at the exact argument. It is not loaded with high amounts of symbolism. At least, the difference was clear in the literature consulted. As a non-native English speaker, the adaptation of certain expressions or ideas clearly stated in Spanish posed an obstacle for its adaptation into English. We tried to remain as clear and direct as possible, yet we are aware of the limitations posed by our mother-tongue.

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Annex I

Public Communications and Speeches

Ley Revolucionaria de las Mujeres / Revolucionary Women's Law

En su justa lucha por la liberación de nuestro pueblo, el EZLN incorpora a las mujeres en la lucha revolucionaria sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, con el único requisito de hacer suyas las demandas del pueblo explotado y su compromiso a cumplir y hacer cumplir las leyes y reglamentos de la revolución. Además, tomando en cuenta la situación de la mujer trabajadora en México, se incorporan sus justas demandas de igualdad y justicia en la siguiente LEY REVOLUCIONARIA DE MUJERES:

Primero.- Las mujeres, sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, tienen derecho a participar en la lucha revolucionaria en el lugar y grado que su voluntad y capacidad determinen.

Segundo.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a trabajar y recibir un salario justo.

Tercero.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a decidir el número de hijos que pueden tener y cuidar.

Cuarto.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a participar en los asuntos de la comunidad y tener cargo si son elegidas libre y democráticamente.

Quinto.- Las mujeres y sus hijos tienen derecho a ATENCION PRIMARIA en su salud y alimentación.

Sexto.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a la educación.

Séptimo.- Las mujeres tienen derecho a elegir su pareja y a no ser obligadas por la fuerza a contraer matrimonio.

Octavo.- Ninguna mujer podrá ser golpeada o maltratada físicamente ni por familiares ni por extraños. Los delitos de intento de violación o violación serán castigados severamente.

Noveno.- Las mujeres podrán ocupar cargos de dirección en la organización y tener grados militares en las fuerzas armadas revolucionarias.

Décimo.- Las mujeres tendrán todos los derechos y obligaciones que señala las leyes y reglamentos revolucionarios.

Speech given by Comandanta Esther, March 28th 2001, Mexican Congress

1. honorable congreso de la unión:
2. legisladoras y legisladores de la junta de coordinación política de la cámara de diputados:
3. legisladores y legisladoras de las comisiones unidas de puntos constitucionales y de asuntos indígenas de la cámara de diputados:
4. legisladores y legisladoras de las comisiones de puntos constitucionales, de asuntos indígenas y de estudios legislativos de
5. la cámara de senadores:
6. legisladores y legisladoras de la comisión de concordia y pacificación:
7. diputados y diputadas:
8. senadores y senadoras:
9. hermanos y hermanas del congreso nacional indígena:
10. hermanos y hermanas de los todos los pueblos indios de méxico:
11. hermanos y hermanas de otros países:
12. pueblo de méxico:
13. por mi voz habla la voz del ejército zapatista de liberación nacional.
14. la palabra que trae ésta nuestra voz es un clamor.
15. pero nuestra palabra es de respeto para esta tribuna y para todas y todos los que nos escuchan.
16. no recibirán de nosotros ni insultos ni groserías.
17. no haremos lo mismo que aquel que el día primero de diciembre del año 2000 rompió el respeto a este recinto legislativo.
18. la palabra que traemos es verdadera.
19. no venimos a humillar a nadie.
20. no venimos a vencer a nadie.
21. no venimos a suplantar a nadie.
22. no venimos a legislar.
23. venimos a que nos escuchen y a escucharlos.
24. venimos a dialogar.
25. sabemos que nuestra presencia en esta tribuna provocó agrias discusiones y enfrentamientos.
26. hubo quienes apostaron a que usaríamos esta oportunidad para insultar o cobrar cuentas pendientes y que todo era parte de una estrategia para ganar popularidad pública.
27. quienes así pensaron no están presentes.
28. pero hubo quienes apostaron y confiaron en nuestra palabra. esos nos abrieron esta puerta de diálogo y son los que están presentes.
29. nosotros somos zapatistas.
30. no traicionaremos la confianza y fe que muchos en este parlamento y en el pueblo de México pusieron en nuestra palabra.
31. quienes apostaron a prestar oído atento a nuestra palabra respetuosa, ganaron.
32. quienes apostaron a cerrar las puertas al diálogo porque temían una confrontación, perdieron.
33. porque los zapatistas traemos palabra de verdad y respeto.
34. algunos habrán pensado que esta tribuna sería ocupada por el sup marcos y que sería él quien daría el mensaje central de los zapatistas.
35. ya ven que no es así.
36. el subcomandante insurgente marcos es eso, un subcomandante.
37. nosotros somos los comandantes, los que mandamos en común, los que mandamos obedeciendo a nuestros pueblos.
38. al sup y a quien comparte con él esperanzas y anhelos les dimos la misión de traernos a esta tribuna.

39. ellos, nuestros guerreros y guerreras, han cumplido gracias al apoyo de la movilización popular en méxico y en el mundo.
40. ahora es nuestra hora.
41. el respeto que ofrecemos al congreso de la unión es de fondo pero también de forma.
42. no está en esta tribuna el jefe militar de un ejército rebelde.
43. está quien representa a la parte civil del ezln, la dirección política y organizativa de un movimiento legítimo, honesto y consecuente, y, además, legal por gracia de la ley para el diálogo, la conciliación y la paz digna en chiapas.
44. así demostramos que no tenemos ningún interés en provocar resentimientos ni resquemores en nadie.
45. así que aquí estoy yo, una mujer indígena.
46. nadie tendrá por qué sentirse agredido, humillado o rebajado porque yo ocupe hoy esta tribuna y hable.
47. quienes no están ahora ya saben que se negaron a escuchar lo que una mujer indígena venía a decirles y se negaron a hablar para que yo los escuchara.
48. mi nombre es esther, pero eso no importa ahora.
49. soy zapatista, pero eso tampoco importa en este momento.
50. soy indígena y soy mujer, y eso es lo único que importa ahora.
51. esta tribuna es un símbolo.
52. por eso convocó tanta polémica.
53. por eso queríamos hablar en ella y por eso algunos no querían que aquí estuviéramos.
54. y es un símbolo también que sea yo, una mujer pobre, indígena y zapatista, quien tome primero la palabra y sea el mío el mensaje central de nuestra palabra como zapatistas.
55. hace unos días, en este recinto legislativo, se dio una discusión muy fuerte y, en una votación muy cerrada, ganó la posición mayoritaria.
56. quienes pensaron diferente y obraron en consecuencia no fueron a dar a la cárcel, ni se les persigue, ni mucho menos fueron muertos.
57. aquí, en este congreso, hay diferencias marcadas, algunas de ellas hasta contradictorias, y hay respeto a esas diferencias.
58. pero, aún con estas diferencias, el congreso no se parte, no se balcaniza, no se fragmenta en muchos congresitos, sino que, precisamente por esas diferencias y por el respeto entre ellas, se construye sus normas.
59. y, sin perder lo que hace distinto a cada quien, se mantiene la unidad y, con ella, la posibilidad de avanzar de común acuerdo.
60. ése es el país que queremos los zapatistas.
61. un país donde se reconozca la diferencia y se respete.
62. donde el ser y pensar diferente no sea motivo para ir a la cárcel, para ser perseguido o para morir.
63. aquí, en este palacio legislativo, hay 7 lugares vacíos que corresponden a 7 indígenas que no pueden estar presentes.
64. y no pueden estar aquí con nosotros porque la diferencia que nos hace indígenas a los indígenas, no es reconocida ni respetada.
65. de los sietes ausentes, el uno murió en los primeros días de enero de 1994, dos más están presos por oponerse a la tala de árboles, otros dos están en la cárcel por defender la pesca como medio de vida y oponerse a los pescadores piratas, y los dos restantes tienen orden de aprehensión por la misma causa.
66. como indígenas los siete pelearon por sus derechos y como indígenas encontraron la respuesta de la muerte, la cárcel y la persecución.
67. en este congreso hay varias fuerzas política y cada una de ellas se agrupa y trabaja con plena autonomía.

68. sus modos de tomar acuerdos y las reglas de su convivencia interna pueden ser vistos con aprobación o reprobación, pero son respetados y a nadie se persigue por ser de una u otra fracción parlamentaria, por ser de derecha, de centro o de izquierda.
69. en el momento en que es preciso, todos se ponen de acuerdo y se unen para conseguir algo que consideran que es bueno para el país.
70. si no se ponen de acuerdo todos, entonces la mayoría toma el acuerdo y la minoría acepta y trabaja según el acuerdo de la mayoría.
71. los legisladores son de un partido político, de una cierta orientación ideológica, y son al mismo tiempo legisladores de todos los mexicanos y mexicanas, sin importar a qué partido político pertenezca alguien o qué idea tenga.
72. así es el méxico que queremos los zapatistas.
73. uno donde los indígenas seamos indígenas y mexicanos, uno donde el respeto a la diferencia se balancee con el respeto a lo que nos hace iguales.
74. uno donde la diferencia no sea motivo de muerte, cárcel, persecución, burla, humillación, racismo.
75. uno donde siempre se tenga presente que, formada por diferencias, la nuestra es una nación soberana e independiente.
76. y no una colonia donde abunden los saqueos, las arbitrariedades y las vergüenzas.
77. uno donde, en los momentos definitorios de nuestra historia, todas y todos pongamos por encima de nuestras diferencias lo que tenemos en común, es decir, el ser mexicanos.
78. el actual es uno de esos momentos históricos.
79. en este congreso no mandan ni el ejecutivo federal ni los zapatistas.
80. tampoco manda en él ningún partido político.
81. el congreso de la unión está formado por diferentes, pero todos tienen en común el ser legisladores y la preocupación por el bienestar nacional.
82. esa diferencia y esa igualdad enfrentan ahora un tiempo que les da la oportunidad de ver muy adelante y en la hora actual vislumbrar la hora venidera.
83. llegó la hora de nosotras y nosotros, los indígenas mexicanos.
84. estamos pidiendo que se nos reconozcan nuestras diferencias y nuestro ser mexicanos.
85. afortunadamente para los pueblos indios y para el país, un grupo de legisladores como ustedes, elaboró una iniciativa de reformas constitucionales que cuida tanto el reconocimiento de los indígenas, como el mantener y reforzar, con ese reconocimiento, la soberanía nacional.
86. ésa es la "iniciativa de ley de la cocopa", llamada así porque fueron los miembros de la comisión de concordia y pacificación del congreso de la unión, diputados y senadores, los que la hicieron.
87. no ignoramos que esta iniciativa de ley cocopa ha recibido algunas críticas.
88. durante 4 años se dio un debate que ninguna iniciativa de ley ha tenido a lo largo de la historia de la legislatura federal en méxico.
89. y en este debate, todas las críticas fueron puntualmente refutadas por la teoría y la práctica.
90. se acusa a esta propuesta de balcanizar el país, y se olvida que el país ya está dividido.
91. un méxico que produce las riquezas, otro que se apropia de ellas, y otro que es el que debe tender la mano para recibir la limosna.
92. en este país fragmentado vivimos los indígenas condenados a la vergüenza de ser el color que somos, la lengua que hablamos, el vestido que nos cubre, la música y la danza que hablan nuestras tristezas y alegrías, nuestra historia.
93. se acusa a esta propuesta de crear reservaciones indias, y se olvida que de por sí los indígenas estamos viviendo apartados, separados de los demás mexicanos y, además en peligro de extinción.

94. se acusa a esta propuesta de promover un sistema legal atrasado, y se olvida que el actual sólo promueve la confrontación, castiga al pobre y le da impunidad al rico, condena nuestro color y convierte en delito nuestra lengua.

95. se acusa a esta propuesta de crear excepciones en el quehacer político, y se olvida que en el actual el que gobierna no gobierna, sino que convierte su puesto público en fuente de riqueza propia y se sabe impune e intocable mientras no acabe su tiempo en el cargo.

96. de todo esto y de más cosas hablarán más detalladamente los hermanos y hermanas indígenas que me seguirán en el uso de la palabra.

97. yo quiero hablar un poco de eso que critican a la ley cocopa porque legaliza la discriminación y la marginación de la mujer indígena.

98. señores y señoras diputados y diputadas.

99. senadores y senadoras.

100. quiero explicarles la situación de la mujer indígena que vivimos en nuestras comunidades, hoy que según esto está garantizado en la constitución el respeto a la mujer.

101. la situación es muy dura.

102. desde hace muchos años hemos venido sufriendo el dolor, el olvido, el desprecio, la marginación y la opresión.

103. sufrimos el olvido porque nadie se acuerda de nosotras.

104. nos mandaron a vivir hasta en el rincón de las montañas del país para que ya no lleguen nadie a visitarnos o a ver como vivimos.

105. mientras no contamos con los servicios de agua potable, luz eléctrica, escuela, vivienda digna, carreteras, clínicas, menos hospitales, mientras muchas de nuestras hermanas, mujeres, niños y ancianos mueren de enfermedades curables, desnutrición y de parto, porque no hay clínicas ni hospitales. donde se atiendan.

106. solo en la ciudad, donde viven los ricos sí tienen hospitales con buena atención y tienen todos los servicios.

107. para nosotras aunque haya en la ciudad no nos beneficia para nada, porque no tenemos dinero, no hay manera como trasladar, si lo hay ya no llegamos a la ciudad, en el camino regresamos ya muerto.

108. principalmente las mujeres, son ellas las que sienten el dolor del parto, ellas ven morir sus hijos en sus brazos por desnutrición, por falta de atención, también ven sus hijos descalzos, sin ropa porque no alcanza el dinero para comprarle porque son ellas que cuidan sus hogares, ven qué le hace falta para su alimentación.

109. también cargan su agua de 2 a 3 horas de camino con cántaro y cargando su hijo y lo hace todo lo que hace dentro de la cocina.

110. desde muy pequeña empezamos a trabajar cosas sencillas.

111. ya grande sale a trabajar en el campo, a sembrar, limpiar y cargar su niño.

112. mientras los hombres se van a trabajar en las fincas cafetaleras y cañeras para conseguir un poco de dinero para poder sobrevivir con su familia, a veces ya no regresan porque se mueren de enfermedad.

113. no da tiempo para regresar en su casa o si regresan, regresan enfermos, sin dinero, a veces ya muerto.

114. así queda con más dolor la mujer porque queda sola cuidando sus hijos.

115. también sufrimos el desprecio y la marginación desde que nacimos por que no nos cuidan bien.

116. como somos niñas piensan que nosotros no valemos, no sabemos pensar, ni trabajar, como vivir nuestra vida.

117. por eso muchas de las mujeres somos analfabetas porque no tuvimos la oportunidad de ir a la escuela.

118. ya cuando estamos un poco grande nuestros padres nos obligan a casar a la fuerza, no importa si no queremos, no nos toman consentimiento.

119.   abusan de nuestra decisión, nosotras como mujer nos golpea, nos maltrata por nuestros propios esposos o familiares, no podemos decir nada porque nos dicen que no tenemos derecho de defendernos.

120.   a nosotras las mujeres indígenas, nos burlan los ladinos y los ricos por nuestra forma de vestir, de hablar, nuestra lengua, nuestra forma de rezar y de curar y por nuestro color, que somos el color de la tierra que trabajamos.

121.   siempre en la tierra porque en ella vivimos, también no nos permite nuestra participación en otros trabajos.

122.   nos dicen que somos cochinas, que no nos bañamos por ser indígena.

123.   nosotras las mujeres indígenas no tenemos las mismas oportunidades que los hombres, los que tienen todo el derecho de decidir de todo.

124.   solo ellos tienen el derecho a la tierra y la mujer no tiene derecho como que no podemos trabajar también la tierra y como que no somos seres humanos, sufrimos la desigualdad.

125.   toda esta situación los malos gobiernos los enseñaron.

126.   las mujeres indígenas no tenemos buena alimentación, no tenemos vivienda digna, no tenemos ni un servicio de salud, ni estudios.

127.   no tenemos proyecto para trabajar, así sobrevivimos la miseria, esta pobreza es por el abandono del gobierno que nunca nos ha hecho caso como indígena y no nos han tomado en cuenta, nos ha tratado como cualquier cosa.

128.   dice que nos manda apoyo como progresa pero ellos lo hacen con intención para destruirnos y dividirnos.

129.   así es de por sí la vida y la muerte de nosotras las mujeres indígenas.

130.   y nos dicen que la ley cocopa va a hacer que nos marginen.

131.   es la ley de ahora la que permite que nos marginen y que nos humillen.

132.   por eso nosotras nos decidimos a organizar para luchar como mujer zapatista.

133.   para cambiar la situación porque ya estamos cansadas de tanto sufrimiento sin tener nuestros derechos.

134.   no les cuento todo esto para que nos tengan lástima o nos vengan a salvar de esos abusos.

135.   nosotras hemos luchado por cambiar eso y lo seguiremos haciendo.

136.   pero necesitamos que se reconozca nuestra lucha en las leyes porque hasta ahora no está reconocida.

137.   sí está pero sólo como mujeres y ni siquiera ahí está cabal.

138.   nosotras además de mujeres somos indígenas y así no estamos reconocidas.

139.   nosotras sabemos cuales son buenos y cuales son malos los usos y costumbres.

140.   malas son de pagar y golpear a la mujer, de venta y compra, de casar a la fuerza sin que ella quiere, de que no puede participar en asamblea, de que no puede salir en su casa.

141.   por eso queremos que se apruebe la ley de derechos y cultura indígena, es muy importante para nosotros las mujeres indígenas de todo méxico.

142.   va a servir para que seamos reconocidas y respetadas como mujer e indígena que somos.

143.   eso quiere decir que queremos que sea reconocida nuestra forma de vestir, de hablar, de gobernar, de organizar, de rezar, de curar, nuestra forma de trabajar en colectivos, de respetar la tierra y de entender la vida, que es la naturaleza que somos parte de ella.

144.   en esta ley están incluidos nuestros derechos como mujer que ya nadie puede impedir nuestra participación, nuestra dignidad e integridad de cualquier trabajo, igual que los hombres.

145.   por eso queremos decirle para todos los diputados y senadores para que cumplan con su deber, sean verdaderos representantes del pueblo.

146.   ustedes dijeron que iban a servir al pueblo que van a hacer leyes para el pueblo.

147. cumplan sus palabra, lo que se comprometieron al pueblo.
148. es el momento de aprobar la iniciativa de ley de la cocopa.
149. los que votaron a favor de ustedes y los que no pero que también son pueblos siguen sediento de paz, de justicia, de hambre.
150. ya no permitan que nadie ponga en vergüenza nuestra dignidad.
151. se los pedimos como mujeres, como pobres, como indígenas y como zapatistas.
152. señoras y señores legisladoras y legisladores:
153. ustedes han sido sensibles a un clamor que no es sólo de los zapatistas, ni sólo de los pueblos indios, sino de todo el pueblo de méxico.
154. no sólo de los que son pobres como nosotros, también de gente que vive con acomodo.
155. su sensibilidad como legisladores permitió que una luz alumbrara la oscura noche en que los indígenas nacemos, crecemos, vivimos y morimos.
156. esa luz es el diálogo.
157. estamos seguros de que ustedes no confunden la justicia con la limosna.
158. y que han sabido reconocer en nuestra diferencia la igualdad que como seres humanos y como mexicanos compartimos con ustedes y con todo el pueblo de méxico.
159. saludamos que nos escuchen y por eso queremos aprovechar su oído atento para decir algo importante:
160. el anuncio de la desocupación militar de guadalupe tepeyac, la garrucha y río euseba, y las medidas que se están tomando para cumplir con esto, no pueden pasar desapercibidas para el ezln.
161. el señor vicente fox está respondiendo ya a una de las preguntas que nuestros pueblos le hacían a través de nosotros:
162. él es el comandante supremo del ejército federal y éste responde a sus órdenes, sea para bien o sea para mal.
163. en este caso, sus órdenes han sido señal de paz y por eso nosotros, los comandantes y las comandantas del ezln, también daremos órdenes de paz a nuestras fuerzas:
164. primero.- ordenamos al compañero subcomandante insurgente marcos que, como mando militar que es de las fuerzas regulares e irregulares del ezln, disponga lo necesario para que no se realice ningún avance militar de nuestras fuerzas sobre las posiciones que ha desocupado el ejército federal, y que ordene que nuestras fuerzas se mantengan en sus posiciones actuales de montaña.
165. a una señal de paz no responderemos con una señal de guerra.
166. las armas zapatistas no suplirán a las armas gubernamentales.
167. la población civil que habita en los lugares desocupados por el ejército federal tiene nuestra palabra de que nuestra fuerza militar no será empleada para dirimir conflictos o desacuerdos.
168. invitamos a la sociedad civil nacional e internacional para que instale en esos lugares campamentos de paz y puestos de observación civil y certifique así que no habrá presencia armada de los zapatistas.
169. segundo.- le estamos dando instrucciones al arquitecto fernando yáñez muñoz para que, a la brevedad posible, se ponga en contacto con la comisión de concordia y pacificación y con el comisionado gubernamental de paz, señor luis héctor álvarez, y les proponga que, juntos, viajen al suroriental estado de chiapas y certifiquen personalmente que las siete posiciones están libres de toda presencia militar y que se ha cumplido así una de las tres señales demandadas por el ezln para el reinicio del diálogo.
170. tercero.- asimismo estamos instruyendo al arquitecto fernando yáñez muñoz para que se acredite ante el gobierno federal que encabeza vicente fox, en calidad de correo oficial del ezln con el comisionado gubernamental de paz, y trabaje coordinadamente para conseguir lo más pronto posible el cumplimiento de las dos señales restantes y se pueda así

reiniciar formalmente el diálogo: la liberación de todos los zapatistas presos y el reconocimiento constitucional de los derechos y la cultura indígenas de acuerdo a la iniciativa de ley de la cocopa.

171.   el ejecutivo federal tiene ya, a partir de ahora, un medio seguro, confiable y discreto para avanzar en las condiciones que permitan un diálogo directo del comisionado de paz con el ezln. esperamos que haga buen uso de él.

172.   cuarto.- solicitamos respetuosamente al congreso de la unión que, en la medida en que es aquí donde la puerta del diálogo y la paz se ha abierto, facilite un lugar dentro de su espacio para que se dé, si así lo acepta el comisionado gubernamental de paz, este primer encuentro entre el gobierno federal y el enlace del ezln.

173.   en caso de negativa del congreso de la unión, misma que sabremos entender, se instruye al arquitecto yáñez para que dicho encuentro se realice donde se considere pertinente, siempre y cuando sea un lugar neutral, y que se informe a la opinión pública de lo que ahí se acuerde.

174.   señoras y señores legisladoras y legisladores:

175.   de esta forma dejamos clara nuestra disposición al diálogo, a la construcción de acuerdos y al logro de la paz.

176.   si ahora se puede ver con optimismo el camino de la paz en chiapas es gracias a la movilización de mucha gente en méxico y en el mundo.

177.   a ella le agradecemos especialmente.

178.   también ha sido posible por un grupo de legisladores y legisladoras, que ahora están frente mío, que han sabido abrir el espacio, el oído y el corazón a una palabra que es legítima y justa.

179.   a una palabra que tiene de su lado a la razón, la historia, la verdad y la justicia y que, sin embargo, no tiene aún de su lado a la ley.

180.   cuando se reconozcan constitucionalmente los derechos y la cultura indígenas de acuerdo a la iniciativa de ley de la cocopa, la ley empezará a unir su hora a la hora de los pueblos indios.

181.   los legisladores que hoy nos abren puerta y corazón tendrán entonces la satisfacción del deber cumplido.

182.   y eso no se mide en cantidad de dinero, pero sí en dignidad.

183.   entonces, ese día, los millones de mexicanos y mexicanas y de otros países sabrán que todos los sufrimientos que han tenido en estos días y en los que vienen no fueron en vano.

184.   y si hoy somos indígenas, después seremos todos los otros y otras que son muertos, perseguidos y encarcelados por razón de su diferencia.

185.   señoras y señores legisladoras y legisladores:

186.   soy una mujer indígena y zapatista.

187.   por mi voz hablaron no sólo los cientos de miles de zapatistas del sureste mexicano.

188.   también hablaron millones de indígenas de todo el país y la mayoría del pueblo mexicano.

189.   mi voz no faltó al respeto a nadie, pero tampoco vino a pedir limosnas.

190.   mi voz vino a pedir justicia, libertad y democracia para los pueblos indios.

191.   mi voz demandó y demanda reconocimiento constitucional de nuestros derechos y nuestra cultura.

192.   y voy a terminar mi palabra con un grito con el que todas y todos ustedes, los que están y los que no están, van a estar de acuerdo:

193.   ¡con los pueblos indios!

194.   ¡viva méxico!

195.   ¡viva méxico!

196.   ¡viva méxico!

197.   ¡democracia!
198.   ¡libertad!
199.   ¡justicia!
200.   desde el palacio legislativo de san lázaro, congreso de la unión.
201.   comité clandestino revolucionario indígena-comandancia general del
202.   ejército zapatista de liberación nacional.
203.   méxico, marzo 28 del 2001.
204.   MUCHAS GRACIAS.

Speech given by Comandanta Esther, February 25th 2001, Juchitán, Oaxaca

1. Hermanos y hermanas:
2. Buenas tardes a todos a nombre de mis compañeros insurgentes, milicianos bases de
3. apoyo hombres y mujeres, niños y niñas. Por mi voz habla el EZLN. Hace más de
4. 500 años sufrimos la explotación y el olvido, no nos tomó en cuenta por hablar
5. nuestra lengua materna y por usar nuestra ropa tradicional. Nos quisieron
6. desaparecer los grandes poderes; pero no pudieron lograr. Aquí estamos.

7. Principalmente nosotras las mujeres somos triplemente explotadas. Uno, por ser
8. mujeres indígenas, y porque somos indígenas no sabemos hablar y somos
9. despreciadas. Dos, por ser mujeres dicen que no sabemos hablar, nos dicen que
10. somos tontas, que no sabemos pensar. No tenemos las mismas oportunidades que
11. los hombres. Tres, por ser mujeres pobres. Todos somos pobres porque no tenemos
12. buena alimentación, vivienda digna, educación, no tenemos buena salud. Muchas
13. mujeres mueren en sus brazos sus hijos por las enfermedades curables.
14. Por esta triple explotación es necesario que todas las mujeres indígenas levantemos
15. nuestra voz, unamos nuestras manos para que seamos escuchadas y tomadas en
16. cuenta y que nuestros derechos se garanticen. Les hago un llamado a todos ustedes,
17. luchemos sin descansar hasta que logremos un lugar digno como mujer y como
18. indígena.
19. Hermanos y hermanas, no aflojemos nuestra conciencia, somos muy importantes
20. porque sin las mujeres no hubiera un país ni se multiplicaría la humanidad. Nosotras
21. como mujeres sentimos el dolor, parimos y somos un pie de los hombres, sólo los
22. hombres luchando no se logra el cambio.
23. Así que también somos un pie para que la humanidad marche bien con esperanza.
24. Yo sé que es difícil pero si no lo hacemos nadie lo hará, si no somos que hacemos,
25. que lo practiquemos y lo desarrollemos nos vamos a quedar todo el tiempo triste
26. viviendo nuestro mando de la mujer.
27. Hermanos y hermanas, no se dejen engañar por el mal gobierno dizque nos resuelve
28. la pobreza miseria con la Progresa que da. Eso no es lo queremos. Lo que queremos
29. es que se cumpla nuestra demanda. Democracia, Justicia y Libertad.

Speech given by Captain Irma, March 8th 1994

1. Queridos compañeros y compañeras.
2. Aquí nos encontramos reunidos para celebrar el día 8 de marzo, Día Internacional
3. de la Mujer. Bueno, compañeros. Así como esas mujeres que han dado sus vidas por
4. defender sus derechos, como esas mujeres que hicieron que sus derechos y trabajos
5. en las fábricas valieran. Y que por eso decidieron levantarse en lucha, no como la

6. nuestra de ahora, pero sí reconocida mundialmente. Por eso ahora invito a todos los
7. compañeros del campo y la ciudad a unirse a nuestra lucha, nuestras demandas. Las
8. mujeres somos las más explotadas. La mayoría ni siquiera sabe leer ni escribir, porque
9. nos quieren para humillarnos. Compañeras de todos el país: para que esto no siga así
10. tenemos que usar junto con los compañeros las armas, para hacer que nos entiendan
11. que la mujer también puede luchar y pelear con el arma en mano. Les invito a que
12. nos apoyen en todo lo que pedimos como zapatistas. Tenemos que lograrlo luchando
13. hasta vencer o morir. No hay otro camino, no nos han dejado más camino que
14. agarrar las armas. Porque sólo así nos van a contestar. Es necesaria nuestra lucha para
15. que nuestros pueblos y nuestro país sean libres, no sólo para las mujeres sino para
16. todo el pueblo que siempre vive humillado. Nosotros seguiremos adelante con
17. nuestra lucha hasta que cumplan lo que pedimos: pan, democracia, paz,
18. independencia, libertad, vivienda y justicia, porque esto no existe para nosotros, los
19. pobres. Por eso vivimos engañados. Por lo mismo de no saber leer, muchas veces ni
20. siquiera sabemos qué dicen los patrones, aunque nos están regañando nosotros
21. pensamos que nos están hablando bien. Por eso les conviene que no sepamos leer ni
22. escribir, porque así nos chingan más fácil. Nosotros ya nos cansamos, no queremos
23. vivir como animales, ni que siempre alguien nos diga qué hacer o qué no hacer. Hoy
24. más que nunca debemos luchar juntos para que algún día seamos libres. Esto lo
25. ganaremos tarde o temprano, pero vamos a ganar.
26. Adelante, hasta conseguir lo que pedimos.
27. Es toda mi palabra.

Speech given by Comandanta Hortensia, Marcn 8th 1994

1. Buenas noches, compañeros.
2. Hoy, martes 8 de marzo de 1994. Queridos compañeros y compañeras,

3. subcomandante, capitanes y tenientes e insurgentes de tropa del Ejército Zapatista
4. de Liberación Nacional: hoy es un día especial de las mujeres de México y el mundo.
5. Un día 8 de marzo como éste se levantaron las mujeres que estaban trabajando en la
6. fábrica de Chicago. Ellas eran costureras. Un día 8 de marzo hicieron huelga para
7. aumentar sus salarios porque vieron que estaban mal pagados y permanecían en la
8. esclavitud. Por eso la mujer es muy importante en la lucha revolucionaria.
9. Nosotras, como mujeres, podemos hacer trabajo igual que los hombres. Podemos
10. empuñar las armas no sólo para ser amas de casa. Tenemos derecho a participar en
11. la lucha armada como mujeres proletarias.
12. Por eso aquí estamos hombres y mujeres: para hacer la guerra de nuestro país, México.
13. Por él levantamos un arma para lograr los once puntos para tener a nuestros pueblos
14. en el futuro. Por eso no regresamos sino que seguimos adelante hasta que queramos.
15. La guerra para tener una paz justa y digna.
16. Hombres y mujeres en el campo, en la ciudad: adelante compañeros.
17. Vivir por la patria o morir por la libertad.

Annex II
Photographic Material

Resistance in X'oyep'