Creative Resistance and Utopian Subjectivities:

Zapatista Autonomy as Discourse, Power, and Practice

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May 2018

Abstract

The Zapatistas staged a militant uprising against the Mexican government on January 1st, 1994 but have since adopted a distinctly non-hegemonic approach of creative resistance based on the recognition that the state itself is subject to a greater hegemonic system. This thesis explores the Zapatistas' autonomous project based on an alternative discourse that acts as resistance to the hegemonic system of neoliberalism and the regimes of power that maintain it. Drawing from Escobar's (1995) post-structuralist discursive analysis, it traces the reinforcing relations of power in the hegemonic system through examining the development discourse, its connections to coloniality, and its privileging of Euro-centric forms knowledge which shape subjectivities to set the limits of possibility and, in that, assert violence towards non-dominant peoples and the environment. Thus, in order to change the dominant order and prevent this violence, there must be change at the level of discourse. The Zapatistas have created an alternative discourse (Zapatismo) that provides the basis for utopian creative resistance through opening the limits of possibility and capacitating people to create their ideal realities. The thesis explores the effects of this discourse on resistance through examining its new forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivities, and subsequent influence on the creation of Zapatista autonomous communities and the successes of the Zapatistas' autonomous education and health systems. It argues that the Zapatistas' emphasis on utopian creative resistance, autonomy, and pluralism can inform non-hegemonic, anti-systemic approaches in future resistance movements.

keywords: *Zapatistas, autonomy, creative resistance, neoliberalism, utopian subjectivity, discourse, development, hegemony, anti-systemic social movements*

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the Zapatistas–the ones in Chiapas, whose daily acts of resistance and commitment to autonomy in the face of oppression create transformative knowledge-practices that are worth studying, and to the ones globally, who have taken up the call to resist hegemony wherever and however they can. They have given me hope and a clearer call to action.

I offer the highest thanks to Dr. Brian Burke and Dr. Dana Powell, the faculty advisors of this thesis. It has been an honor to work with the two professors whose work I most admire and who have been the most inspiring educators I've had. Dr. Burke's horizontal advising was exemplary of the Zapatistas (*aconsejar-escuchando)*. I am sincerely thankful for his provocative questions, accompanied thinking, and enthusiastic reminders that this research matters. And also for the fantastic reading list on social movement theory that has made me all the more revolutionary. I hope this undergraduate thesis on Zapatista autonomy is a fair substitution for the one that wasn't written. Dr. Powell directed me through everything I know about indigenous studies. I am grateful for her excitement and insights into questions of sovereignty and political difference. Both of them have challenged my mind to expand in transformative ways.

I express my deepest gratitude to the Sustainable Development Department of Appalachian State for its remarkable faculty and radical curriculum. I feel incredibly fortunate to have learned with everyone in this department for the past four years. It has forever changed the way that I see and interact with the world.

I am thankful for my friends and family, who kindly listened to my rantings about hegemony and ravings about revolution, who offered me unending encouragement, and who remind me of the most important parts of it all.
I am also grateful for the support of Honors College and the opportunity to do undergraduate research.

I also want to acknowledge the Himno Zapatista, homemade tortillas, and a *pañuelo al cuello* for helping me remember Zapatista solidarity during particularly intense bouts of thesis-induced time imbalance.

¡Vivan los Zapatistas!

Avenues for Systemic Resistance: An Introduction

> *Vamos vamos vamos, vamos adelante, para que salgamos en la lucha avante,*
>
> *porque nuestra patria grita y necesita de todo el esfuerzo de los Zapatistas.*
>
> Let's go, let's go, let's get going forward, so that we come out in the fight ahead,
>
> because our homeland cries out and needs all of the effort of the Zapatistas.
>
> (Himno Zapatista)

Widespread poverty. Climate change. Extreme inequality. War over oil. Sweat shop and prison slavery. Ecological destruction. Corrupt and oppressive governments. These are all realities of the world we live in today. In sum, it's a mess: socially, ecologically, politically, and economically. What makes this even more daunting is that it's not quite clear who to blame or what the root cause is— it is an entire flawed system. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, there is resistance everywhere. However, in order to effectively resist, we must understand the basis of the system that continues to hide, permit, or justify world problems. That is the inspiration and purpose of this work: to contribute to the understanding of the dominant system and resistance against it in order to inform future movements that can lead to positive change. I will examine the underlying discourse of the dominant system and how it maintains hegemony to help elucidate the ways that resistance can be mobilized against it at the foundational level. Then, I will show how the Zapatistas from Chiapas, Mexico have taken on this discursive resistance by establishing an alternative discourse. I will then show how this informs their practice in autonomy through the examples of their governance structure and autonomous education and health systems.

Introduction to the Zapatistas

The Zapatistas entered the global scene on January 1st of 1994 in a militant uprising against the Mexican State because of its violence against the people and dictatorial power regime. In their First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, the Zapatista General Command wrote:

> We, the men and women, full and free, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators have been applying an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years . . . We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic. (EZLN 1993)

This civil war lasted for just twelve days before the Zapatistas, responding to the urging of civil society, put down their weapons to negotiate with the state. However, though this uprising is what made them known, it would be remiss to consider their resistance to and negotiation with the state their central objective. In their Second Declaration just half a year following the uprising, they redirected their attention, calling upon civil society "to organize itself in order to direct peaceful efforts towards democracy, freedom, and justice" and denouncing power on principle, stating that "th[eir] revolution will not end in a new class, faction of a class, or group in power. It will end in a free and democratic space for political struggle" (EZLN 1994).

By the Third Declaration, the Zapatistas provided their answer to how civil society could organize to achieve this democracy, freedom, and justice:

> The only means of incorporating, with justice and dignity, the indigenous of the Nation, is to recognize the characteristics of their own social, political and cultural organization. Autonomy is not separation; it is integration of the most humble and forgotten minorities of contemporary Mexico. (EZLN 1995)

After failed negotiations with the state in which the government refused to recognize their most elemental demands of acknowledging people's constitutional right to alter their government and indigenous rights to autonomy, and after a failed electoral process in which the Mexican government imposed, once again, its single-party power, the Zapatistas sought to emphasize autonomy. The state had made it clear that they would not accommodate the Zapatistas' demands and could not alter their dictatorial system, so autonomy was an answer to addressing the Zapatistas' needs outside of the state. They called upon civil society to form a National Liberation Movement and create "transitional governments to democracy," defined by the communities that create them.

They also looked beyond the state as the root of their problems to address the "brutal system"—the "economically, politically, and socially repressive program of neoliberalism [that] has demonstrated its inefficiency, its deceptions, and the cruel injustice at its essence" (ibid.). They recognized that though the state's dictatorial rule did restrict national sovereignty, "the true loss of national sovereignty was concretized in the secret pacts and public economic cabinet with the owners of money and foreign governments" (EZLN 1996). This, too, was reason for their call for autonomy. Since the state was entwined in a greater hegemonic economic system that was the basis for so many of the continued injustices, autonomy from both the state and system of neoliberalism was a path to creating society outside of these. Their Fourth and Fifth Declarations (1996; 1998) go on to highlight what this movement to autonomy looks like. They describe a "plural, tolerant, inclusive, democratic, just, free and new society" as well as their focus on the rights of the indigenous

peoples of Mexico to achieve this, continually emphasizing a peaceful transition to democracy and a refusal of political power.

These Declarations highlight the basis of the Zapatistas' resistance to the hegemony of the state and neoliberal system and their creative response to building community autonomy with true democracy and indigenous rights. In this approach to social change, the Zapatistas have gone beyond reform or revolution to radically re-create society based on an alternative discourse that resists the discourse maintained by the hegemonic system at the foundational level. I will argue that this creative resistance through an alternative discourse has contributed to social change both in Chiapas and in anti-systemic social movements world wide by informing utopian subjectivities and creating new knowledge-practices. To clarify my argument, I will now provide an overview of some of the key terms and theories that frame this research.

Theoretical Overview

Discourse

Foucault's understanding of discourse is rooted from an exploration of the history of human nature in which he identifies that there are no universal truths, only historical creations of assumptions, abstractions, and concepts that play a role in shaping and influencing human practices, behaviors, and perceptions (Foucault in Rabinow 1984).

> Discourses, in Foucault's work, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon 1997: 105)

Essentially, discourse sets the limits to possibility by framing ways of thinking and perceiving.

For Foucault, the basis of the discourse matters less than how the discourse actually operates in shaping humans, and discourse provides a way of connecting this lived reality to the hidden forms of power that shape it (Rabinow 1984). Discourse and power are entwined because those that have the power over representation and whose ways of knowing are the basis of the discourse thus have power over the action, perception, and imagination of those that are shaped by the discourse. Foucault's understanding of discourse has opened the analysis of "the mechanisms by which a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible" (Escobar 1995: 5).

As such, this understanding of discourse is vital to analyzing transformative social movements like the Zapatistas. To truly resist the systems of power that they oppose, they resist that system's claims over representation and discourse-formation through their movement's theorizing and practice of an alternative discourse.

Hegemony

Gramsci defines hegemony as economic domination through controlling the means of production that extends "beyond economic class interest into the sphere of political direction through a system of class alliances" (Gramsci in Forgacs 1988: 423). Hegemony is created and maintained by the reinforcing network of relations between economic domination, political control, and elite class alliances that works as a system of control both through coercion and consent. The economic, class, and political power in the network of hegemony

enables coercion, and their "prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" causes the masses to consent to their domination (ibid.:307).

Furthermore, the narratives that become hegemonic are always from the point of view of the rulers. Hegemony comes to include "the formation of a new ideological 'terrain'" based upon the dominant "political, cultural and moral leadership" which has the ability to create consent from the masses (Gramsci in Forgacs 1988: 423). This 'ideological terrain' is what Gramsci describes as 'common sense,' or taken-for-granted knowledge.

> An ability to impose commonsense truths, which assume that existing power relations are the only ones possible, is a crucial dimension of any power regime. Hegemony, it should be noted, does not require that those who are ruled, the subalterns, see their subjugation as justified, only that they see it as a fixed and unchangeable reality it would be futile to oppose. (Crehan 2016: 51-52)

Thus the relations of power between economic domination and political networks create the necessary context to permit hegemony because their reinforcing alliances make change seem impossible. This allows their discourse to turn into common sense and to shape the knowledge, practice, and subjectivity of the people so that the power relations that created the discourse are assumed to be the natural way of things. A discourse becomes hegemonic, then, when it is based on the point of view of and is supported by the dominant economic, political, and social powers.

Establishing this system of hegemony with popular consent to create a "cultural-social unity based on a common conception of the world requires considerable political work" (Crehan 2016: 40). It depends on a network between dominant institutions that work within a similar framing of the world which creates the perspective that their

domination is inevitable and acquiescence, the only path. According to Gramsci, then, in order to create social transformation to counter hegemony, "there is a need 'for new popular beliefs, that is to say a new common sense and with it a new culture and a new philosophy which will be rooted in the popular consciousness with the same solidity and imperative quality as traditional beliefs" (Gramsci quoted in Crehan 2016: 77). Arguably, for these new perspectives to gain the same solidity as common sense beliefs, they must be put into practice. For Gramsci and other builders of counter-hegemony, the new common sense must be practiced within new dominant forms of power–economic, political, and social– as a reclamation of the state by the proletariat.

The Zapatistas provide an example of creating new common sense and systems to support its practice, but in an invariably distinct way from Gramscian counter-hegemonic approaches. Rather than endeavor for their discourse to become hegemonic, they resist hegemony on principle, seeking change from civil society without taking state power.

Utopia

Utopia is a contentious term: it simultaneously means a perfect, ideal society and also literally means 'no place' from its Greek roots. The word itself seems to say that a perfect society is impossible. However, that is not to say that utopian thinking and imagining do not have a function: "utopia as a method of thinking for transforming the world" is an emancipatory practice "about inspiring and inciting an imagination in a collective struggle" (Satgar 2014: 216). It is especially important in the context of historically subjugated societies that remain subject to a hegemonic system left over from colonial exploitation.

Envisioning an ideal society, though, requires an analysis of the present as a result of history and as subject to the hegemonic system that has been created. As utopian socialist Rick Turner understood, "utopian thought ha[s] to grow out of an understanding and critical analysis of how the past shapes the present, and how social structures [are] constructed" (ibid.: 216). A note of hope here is that these social structures that form part of a hegemonic system have been historically created by and from collective human agency, and thus can be changed by a new direction in that collective agency.

This understanding of historical context and mobilization of collective agency has been vital to the Zapatistas' project for autonomy. Mattiace explains the importance of utopian thinking in their context:

> *Utopia* was [a novel] . . . based on a perfect society [that Sir Thomas More, the English philosopher and writer] imagined to exist among that native people of the recently discovered Americas. For most of the almost five hundred years since then, however, America's indigenous people have not been permitted to imagine, much less implement, their own ideas about what a better society might be like. What has changed in the present generation, most strikingly in Chiapas, is that Indians have asserted the right to dream of utopias, not because their societies are utopian, but because they—like all peoples everywhere—have the right to reflect on and imagine alternative futures. (Mattiace 2003: 185-86)

Mattiace's final point about what utopian means is key to this framing of utopia. Utopia is not a state that will be achieved through progress or even a possible finished product, but rather is important to the process of social change. Utopian thinking can only arise out of liberation from the hegemonic discourse that frames the possibility of action within the dominant system. Once free from that constraint to imagination, utopian thinking can inspire radically transformative social change. I argue that the Zapatistas, by creating a liberatory

alternative discourse, create a utopian subjectivity that enables people not only to "reflect on and imagine alternative futures" like Mattiace describes, but also enables them to take steps to enacting and practicing these alternatives due to their infrastructure of social support.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity constitutes human thought and perception, including the "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual," their sense of identity, and their "ways of understanding [their] relation to the world" (Weedon 1997: 32). The poststructuralists understand subjectivity to be shaped by discourse and thus the product of history and the relations of power that create them. Because these discourses are based on certain assumptions about the nature of society and power, they determine the possibilities of subjectivity that an individual can experience; "individual access to subjectivity is governed by historically specific social factors and the forms of power at work in a particular society" (ibid.: 919). This subjectivity is shaped and formed by institutional practices in a process that extends throughout life. Subjectivities are instilled most efficiently when they reproduce a specific social hierarchy because that perpetuates the discourse that creates it by preferencing certain power structure over others (ibid.).

Because of the way that subjectivity is created through a lifelong, contextually embedded process and because it is a product of the dominant discourse at work in this context and because it is such an ingrained psychological positioning, it is wildly difficult to change. It requires far more than a conscious thought or realization to alter subjectivity. Arguably, the only way it can change is through changing practice based on an alternative discourse that is also embedded in institutions, society, and relations of power. I argue that

the Zapatistas have created a foundation for changing subjectivities by practicing an alternative discourse that is supported by autonomous institutions and societal structures. However, grounded research on this is lacking, though it may now be possible to examine since the Zapatistas have been practicing autonomy for nearly twenty-five years.

Neoliberalism

Harvey (2005) provides a thorough history and analysis of neoliberalism. He defines neoliberalism as a political economic theory that claims that human well-being can be maximized through protecting individual economic rights within an institutional framework that ensures the functioning of free market capitalism and protects private property rights (ibid.: 2). It is based upon the belief that government intervention in the economy prevents it from working at maximum efficiency to best meet the needs of society, and so limits government action to maintaining a stable currency and cutting taxes from the top earners to promote more reinvestment.

Through networks of relations, neoliberalism has gained influence over education, media, corporate leaders, and financial, international, and state institutions and has thus become a hegemonic discourse. It has gained common support both through coercion, like Margaret Thatcher's repetition that "there is no alternative" system and also through manipulating mass consent through co-opting desires for personal freedom and redirecting social discontent at economic conditions towards the state. Due to these alliances, networks of relations, and hegemonic social positioning that were solidified in the 1970s and 80s, it has left a legacy that has made it extremely difficult for successive political powers to change (ibid.).

Neoliberal policy has been a cause for continued state violence against the indigenous and poor of Mexico due to economic policies that have excluded the labor and products of the poor from new globalized markets that has led to increasing poverty (Harvey 2001), cuts to social welfare programs that permit preventable deaths (Cuevas 2007), and threats to food security and food sovereignty due to the rise of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) which are a result of the extension of capital control over even the most elemental aspects of life (Harvey 2001).

State Violence

Gupta's (2012) analysis of poverty in India addresses state structural violence. He clarifies that the state is a complex collection of parts rather than an essentialized and unified force. Due to the everyday practices of state bureaucracy and programs shaped by the discourse of neoliberalism, the state permits structural violence (ibid.:21). Structural violence is "the difference between the optimal life expectancy and the actual life expectancy" (Galtung 1971: 74). It can be caused by extreme poverty, lack of access to social services, environmental degradation, and more. Through structural violence, physical harm is done, but not by an individual or through an act, rather through the victim's location in society (Gupta 2012). However, this is not to say that there are not culprits of this violence. As Gupta understands it, "all those who benefit from the status quo and do not wish to see it changed then become complicit in this violence against the poor" (ibid.:21). In Mexico, indigenous people and the rural poor in general have been subject to structural violence from the state, and the Zapatistas' uprising, as they state in their declarations, has aimed to address this

violence. Their call to all of civil society to take up the fight is reminiscent of Gupta's accusation of the status quo's compliance with violence.

Knowledge-Practices

Casas-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell (2008) address social movements as "important sites of knowledge creation, reformulation, and diffusion" which they call "knowledge-practices" to recognize the "concrete, embodied, lived, and situated character" of knowledge (20). Their intervention on addressing knowledge-practices is significant because social movements are often judged solely on their achievement of political and social change and not on their contributions to social and political theory, movement strategy, or new ways of knowing and being. Additionally, recognizing knowledge-practices from social movements challenges the hegemony on truth-making of scientists and policy makers by acknowledging collective knowledge production as equally valuable (ibid.)

The Zapatistas are a shining example of a social movement's creation of knowledge-practices. They have demonstrated collaborative knowledge production between socialist guerrillas and indigenous communities through a process of re-evaluating historically imposed knowledge authorities (ibid.: 40). Additionally, some of their practices such as *mandar-obedeciendo* have informed the practices of social movements transnationally, which I will explore in the conclusion.

Creative Resistance

I understand creative resistance as any approach to socio-political change that balances destruction with re-creation. It seeks to provide alternatives to the institutions or systems that are resisted both to diminish their power and seeming inevitability and to

prepare for a future in which those institutions are finally eliminated. Creative resistance is similar to building counter-power, which is an important part of anarchist and counter-hegemonic social movements (Graeber 2004; Dixon 2014). Counter-power involves creating new popular institutions to take legitimacy from the dominant institutions. It seeks to develop new social relations and forms of social organization, enacting a 'prefigurative politics' in that the methods of resistance are representative of the type of reality that the resistance seeks to achieve (Dixon 2014). Building counter-power is an imaginative process because it works against forms of domination to create and radically transform social forms (Graeber 2004).

However, I use the term 'creative resistance' because I see it as a more expansive definition than counter-power because it opens the possibilities of resistance beyond the realm of institutions and power structures. It encompasses any positive or generative practice that acts as resistance. Furthermore, rather than emphasizing the antagonistic aspect of resistance, it emphasizes the positive, solution side of it by highlighting its creativity. The Zapatistas demonstrate creative resistance because they have built autonomy through new social infrastructure including health clinics, schools, and judicial courts.

History of the Zapatistas

> We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental education so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our

heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. (EZLN 1993)

In Chiapas, in Southern Mexico, the contemporary indigenous people are Mayan, having existed there through the Aztec Empire and Spanish conquest. The Spanish conquest in the 16th century began the dispossession of land from indigenous people, which concentrated both land and power in the hands of a small elite class and created a legacy of inequality for centuries to come. In the thirty years leading up to the Mexican Revolution of 1910, one third of Chiapas' most fertile surface area for tropical agriculture was sold to foreign purchasers by the Mexican government (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003: 3), further exacerbating land and wealth inequality.

In 1910, poor peasants staged a revolution against this inequality which had culminated in an oligarchical dictatorship under Porfirio Diaz. In the South, the revolution was led by Emiliano Zapata, from whom the Zapatistas get their name. The revolution brought about a massive land reform to redistribute the land that had been highly concentrated in the hands of the Spanish and mestizo elites since colonization, establishing forms of reclamation that included private smallholdings, indigenous community land, and *ejidos* which provided land to communities. However, due to corruption in the elite political class, the effects of this did not always spread widely, as was the case in Chiapas (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

Furthermore, the revolutionary energy was institutionalized in the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which entered the political scene in 1929. This party sought to

institutionalize the 'revolutionary classes' by establishing a patron-client relationship with popular class organizations such as the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) as well as with civil society. People came to rely on the PRI for their development needs, only receiving state assistance if it was assured that they would continue to vote PRI. PRI maintained single-party power from 1929 to 1982, essentially functioning as a 'democratic' dictatorship. This bastardization of democracy is what the Zapatistas mean in the First Declaration about lacking the freedom to elect their representatives.

In addition to political dependence, this social inequality also contributed to economic dependence. The land poverty created by the prior accumulation and subsequent concentration in the hands of local elites affected each indigenous community differently, but generally, they were forced to seek work outside of their own territories as wage laborers. Indigenous peoples became the labor supply base to an expanding agricultural industry. Though many communities still maintained control of some of their homelands, the lack of sufficient resources on the diminished land base forced people to enter the migratory labor stream to sustain themselves (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003).

In the 1970s, Mexico experienced an economic crisis and the PRI began neoliberal restructuring, in part with structural adjustment programs from the World Bank, to open Mexico for global development. They reformed the government for fiscal conservatism to support a free market, which cut spending on social services by privatizing schooling, healthcare, and housing, cutting wage regulations, and eliminating government subsidies for domestic agricultural production to allow everything to fall under the control of the

'efficient' market (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003). This neoliberal reform had widespread effects, politically, economically, and socially.

Politically, the PRI had to alter their system of corporatism and clientelism, which was not compatible with the new neoliberal state structure because it requires heavy state spending to intervene economically and maintain patron-client relationships. In the past, the PRI "had consolidated its rule through a corporatists relation with its populace . . . circumscribing [potentially oppositional segments of the population's] ability to challenge state authority by establishing the state as the source of their legitimacy and livelihood" (Speed 2008: 21). However, neoliberal limits on state power led to a change in the exercise of governance. Rather than control people directly through their corporatist patron-client relationship, the state became limited to maintaining the stability of the market, which is assisted by a system of law and order that seeks to shape and control its subjects. This new structure is consistent with the logics of late capitalism such as self-regulation, self-help, and managerialism. The state essentially divests responsibility of social welfare to NGOs who also tend to reproduce the logics of capitalism through workshops and training for self help (ibid.).

Economically, the neoliberal-inspired reduction of government subsidies on national agricultural production and the influx of foreign food commodities caused Mexican agriculture to plummet. Due to the economic crisis in the late 70s, production costs increased, but the government did not provide any additional support, opting instead to allow the prices of domestic corn to match prices on the global corn market. This and the adoption of chemical inputs such as pesticides and herbicides to replace indigenous laborers, reduced

agricultural wage positions. "Essentially, Chiapas's indigenous peoples, who for almost a century had been maneuvered into relying on seasonal, often migratory agricultural labor to maintain themselves, suddenly found that the agricultural economy did not need them" (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003: 7). As a response to a lack of wage labor, impoverishment increased, but small-scale and *ejido* agricultural production also expanded as indigenous people sought to meet their needs in other ways.

Socially, neoliberalism also created a new approach to addressing indigenous peoples, moving from *indigenismo* to neoliberal multiculturalism. *Indigenismo* had been the state policy towards indigenous people since the Revolution. It defined indigenous peoples as an 'Other' to be integrated into the national identity (Leyva Solano 2005). Neoliberal multiculturalism sought to keep indigenous rights within an economically productive regime and political limitation. It recognized community autonomy and indigenous rights only insofar as they did not interfere with market participation and recognized political rights only insofar as it did not challenge the state (Hale 2007). It constituted a "mode of governance based on a unitary package of citizenship rights and a tendentious premise that people could enjoy these rights only by conforming to a homogeneous mestizo cultural ideal" (ibid.). Though limiting true indigenous sovereignty and economic integration, this approach gained hegemonic appeal under the progressive promise of equality.

The indigenous people who had been dispossessed of their land and had then turned to wage labor were left, due to the neoliberal reform, with no land, no work, and no social services to meet their most elemental needs. So having been basically abandoned by the state after a legacy of coerced state dependence from the patron-client system, many indigenous

people in Chiapas retreated into the Lacandon jungle to form (or join) self-reliant colonies. In the thirty years between the 60s and 90s, more than 200 thousand people came to live in more than one thousand new communities (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003). The colonies in the jungle had no contact with or assistance from government or peasant organizations (ibid.), which meant a lack of access to resources, but freedom from the patron-client system that used power over resources to control the people and maintain hegemony (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

The Zapatistas arose out of an encounter between these indigenous peasant communities, Liberation Theology catechists from the Catholic Church, and non-indigenous urban Maoist revolutionaries (Stahler-Sholk 2010). Indigenous communities had been exposed to Liberation Theology through the Roman Catholic Church starting in the mid 50s when indigenous peoples (both men and women) were first trained as catechists under the Liberation Theologist Bishop Samuel Ruíz García. They situated the Gospel within their cultural and socioeconomic reality, which encouraged a process of reflection on indigenous marginalization, the politicization of spiritual beliefs, and an emphasis on liberation and autonomy (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

In the late 70s, an urban guerrilla organization was formed from survivors of past guerrilla groups to create the Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, FLN). In the early 80s, they sent some representatives to the Chiapan highlands "to initiate a new front of armed struggle in preparation for the anticipated protracted politico-military national struggle necessary to install a socialist system" (Khasnabish 2010: 56). The EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, Zapatista National Liberation Army) was born in

1983 out of the encounter of each of these actors: the indigenous communities, actors of

Liberation Theology, and the FLN. The Zapatista struggle emerged from the combination of

these different worldviews, approaches to social change, and discourses in a process of

negotiation that required the subordination of guerrilla preconceptions and the recognition of

value in other ways of knowing (ibid.). Arguably, it was this integration of ideologies and

collaboration that has allowed the Zapatistas' discourse (Zapatismo) to gain such strength.

> Tellingly, it was only once the ideological dogmatism of the urban revolutionaries
> had been defeated and replaced by an organic radical analysis born of the encounter
> of different worlds, the hierarchical links to the FLN severed, and the base
> communities established as the highest authority . . .that the EZLN and Zapatismo
> expanded exponentially. This novel approach to radical struggle and its promise of
> building a different world animated the national and transnational resonance of
> Zapatismo in the years following the uprising. (Khasnabish 2010: 74)

Furthermore, this foundational collaboration is aligned with the Zapatistas' approach to

social change:

> The leaders of the politico-military organization behind the village 'support bases'
> of the EZLN dreamed, and have continued to dream, of the possibility of uniting the
> socially diverse expressions of discontent with neoliberal capitalism into a pluralistic
> and inclusive 'rainbow coalition' that would revive the Mexican Left and transcend
> the social boundaries between indigenous people and mestizos that the state had so
> assiduously cultivated for many decades after the 1910 Revolution through
> assimilationist policies designed to turn 'Indians into Mexicans.' (Gledhill 2014: 512)

The foundation of Zapatismo in the negotiation between diverse ways of knowing has given

it strength as an alternative discourse that is open to a wide variety of perspectives and

practices, making it more easily adopted by disparate groups and organizations both within

Mexico and beyond. The discourse's openness and plurality is key to the Zapatistas' goal to

encourage diverse, locally situated practices of anti-systemic resistance beyond Chiapas.

I would like to note here that though the Zapatistas were founded from a militant guerrilla uprising with defined leaders such as Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, and though they remained a militantly-directed movement through 2003 when their governance was restructured to explicitly turn over the power to the people, this is not the focus of this thesis. This thesis does not address the movement's anti-vanguardist vanguard or militant foundation because, though they are significant, I see the Zapatistas' knowledge-practices as their most important contribution, including their approaches to social movement change that have been built from an alternative discourse that has formed the basis for autonomous social structures and forms of governance. It is this alternative discourse and its subsequent enactment through new practices that this thesis will address.

The Zapatistas' formation of an alternative discourse provides an avenue for anti-systemic resistance through its basis upon alternative forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivity that resist these foundational elements in the dominant discourse. The creation of an alternative discourse opens the possibilities for creating solutions outside of the dominant discourse. Like the oft-quoted wisdom from Einstein, problems cannot be solved from the same thinking that created them. Similarly, systemic problems that are rooted in a certain discourse cannot be truly changed without a new discursive foundation. Zapatismo, the Zapatistas' alternative discourse, informs the creation of pluralistic, people-powered, autonomous communities with supportive infrastructures that act as resistance by rejecting state institutions and the basic assumptions of neoliberal logic. This is creative resistance in that it establishes alternatives that resist the power of the dominant system. I will argue that their approach to resistance is utopian because Zapatismo enables people to step outside of

the framing of the dominant system to imagine their ideal realities and then capacitates them to pursue these. In the way that the Zapatistas' project both creates alternative discourse and establishes social structures to reinforce and enable it, it is able to resist domination on both the material and discursive levels. Because of the inclusive dynamism of their discourse and creative, radical mode of societal change, the Zapatistas stand as inspiration to anti-systemic social movements everywhere. The successes of their autonomous project are a glimmer of hope in an exploitative and oppressive global system. They are a reminder that another world is possible.

In what follows, I will examine how development–a component of the dominant discourse that is particularly important for generating consent–informs subjectivities and practices. This involves tracing how the development discourse has functioned in history, is connected to longer-lasting forms of hegemony, and has permitted the continuation of many of the problems that face our world. Then I will explore how the Zapatistas' creation of an alternative discourse acts as creative resistance to the hegemonic discourse by analyzing it through the same three axes of knowledge, power, and subjectivity. This reveals how it provides a basis for utopia, or the self-definition and pursuit of alternative subjectivities and practices. Then I will examine what effects the Zapatista autonomous alternatives have had on lived realities and subjectivities of Zapatista communities through their system of governance, autonomous education, and autonomous health system. I will conclude by analyzing the strategies and effects of the discourse through the lens of non-hegemonic, anarchist, and anti-systemic social movement theories to explore what knowledge-practices from the Zapatistas can be informative to other social movements.

Intervention in Research

In analyzing the effects of the Zapatista discourse on lived reality, I am entering into a discussion with Melenotte (2015) and Mentinis (2006), who both argue that while Zapatismo is clearly a strong and compelling discourse that has been referenced in many non-hegemonic social movements, it is not enough to make real anti-systemic change and has not affected reality to the degree that one would hope given that it is highly commended by social movement scholars. Melenotte argues that while the autonomous design and resistance to power hierarchies is indeed progressive, the discourse does not achieve in reality what it claims, remains a far cry from creating world change, and that any utopian framing of the Zapatistas is questionable (2015: 62). Mentinis has similar qualms, stating that the "rebellion managed temporarily to destabilize the dominant hegemonic discourse of capitalism, but it has failed to articulate a discourse that could become hegemonic or counter-hegemonic on a national or international level" because it has been unable to establish new fixed meanings and a unified discourse (2006: 100).

For one, I think this misses the point that the Zapatistas do not intend for their discourse specifically to become hegemonic or even counter-hegemonic–though they convoke others to take on anti-systemic resistance, they explicitly state that it is not their intention to unite movements under a single discourse or leadership (EZLN 2013). They are intentionally non-hegemonic because they emphasize plurality and non-unification and eschew state-taking revolution. Non-hegemonic approaches to social change reject the logic of hegemony as a whole, creating radical change without taking power (Day 2005). This is a

contrast to counter-hegemony, which seeks liberation from hegemony by creating a new hegemony through unification and organized leadership, allowing the oppressed to take power. Proponents of counter-hegemony have critiqued non-hegemonic approaches for their inability to truly transform hegemonic systems because of the lack of strategy and unity (Carroll 2006; McKay 2005). Indeed, this appears to be Mentinis' critique of the Zapatistas.

However, I would argue against Mentinis' claim that the Zapatistas lack an articulate, unified discourse and that this prevents them from being able to make global social change. The Zapatistas have articulated a discourse–it is pluralistic, dynamic, flexible, and non-hegemonic. Because it calls for change in a context-specific way, the discourse is open ended, and this is one of its greatest assets because of how it can inspire diverse, widespread action to resist hegemony. The Zapatistas' call for a "globalization of rebellion" (EZLN 2005) might seem like a shift to counter-hegemonic organizing, but I think this would be inaccurate, both because their approach to rebellion defies taking power on principle and because they explicitly state that they "do not intend to unite under a single leadership, be it Zapatista or any other" (EZLN 2013). Their unification is not a positive unification under a common leadership or a discourse, but rather a negative unification under a common denial of an exploitative hegemony (EZLN 2013; Holloway 2010). This negative unification is arguably even more valuable than a positive unification of counter-hegemony because it keeps open the possibility of heterogeneous approaches to change, and thus has even more potential to be widely accepted, a point that I think Mentinis and Melenotte miss.

I do agree with Mentinis (2006), though, that there is a lack of analysis of subjectivity change in relation to the radical politics of the Zapatistas, and I think this is in part due to

Melenotte's (2015) observation that there is a lack of analysis of lived practices. Social transformation and subjectivity change come through the construction and implementation of social alternatives, but most scholarly literature on the Zapatistas examines just the theory and narrative elements of the discourse without thoroughly analyzing the practice (Mentinis 2006; Melenotte 2015). This is not to say, however, that Zapatista narratives have not made significant changes in reality, just that the bulk of research has tended to focus on theory over practice. My contribution, then, is to examine how Zapatista discourse (as both narrative theory and radical practice) supports subjectivity changes. In countering Melenotte and Mentinis, I argue that though Zapatismo has not created a sweeping world shift to utopia, it has indeed begun to lay the groundwork for creating utopian subjectivities by opening the possibilities of imagination and enabling the capacitation and the enactment of community-directed alternatives that build autonomy and pursue these imagined ideal societies.

Furthermore, I believe there is a practical reasoning for studying the Zapatistas in 2018. For one, change from the dominant system is more urgent than ever. Climate change is already beyond the point of no return due to the level of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere and will only increase risks and instability to the poor (World Bank 2014) in a world that already has alarming inequality, poverty, and exploitation. The hegemonic forces at play have done little to bring about positive change, and are perhaps, by design of bureaucracy, unable to (Gupta 2012). As such, there is a practical need to bring examples of effective resistance into contemporary conversation in order to be reminded that change is possible and that there are informative avenues for doing so to encourage immediate action.

Additionally, the Zapatistas have now maintained autonomous control of a large portion of Chiapas for around 25 years and so are a long-standing resistance movement. The age of the movement is valuable in exploring the types of changes that take time and require patient persistence.

The Hegemony of the Development Discourse: a post-structuralist analysis

To understand why the Zapatistas' form of resistance is both necessary and radically effective, we have to step back to explore the system of oppression that they are resisting. I examine this system through the development discourse drawing primarily from Escobar's (1995) poststructuralist analysis of the development discourse, Galeano's (1973) history of the plunder of Latin America, and Sachs and Esteva's (2010) definitions of key concepts within the development discourse. Examining the development discourse is insightful to understand the ways that existing dominant powers and the system of global capitalism work within certain narratives of modernization that value specific forms of knowledge and create subjectivities which essentially set the framework for what is even considered possible.

> The system of relations [between institutions, socioeconomic processes, forms of knowledge, and others] establishes a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise; it sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory, or object to emerge and be named, analyzed, and eventually transformed into a policy or a plan. (Escobar 1995: 41)

Alone, institutions and state powers can express domination, but it is through their mutually reinforcing relations between each of these elements and the existing networks of power at play that a hegemonic discourse is maintained. It subsequently shapes practices, policies, and

perspectives to work within the framing of the discourse and thus perpetuates the domination of the actors and elements involved in its creation.

Coloniality

In order to establish hegemony at all, there must be a historic creation of economic domination, political control, and elite class alliances. Imperialism and colonialism provided that historical foundation. Core countries from the global North extracted wealth from the periphery countries of the global South in the form of resources and labor, leaving infrastructure designed for extraction. It is through this wealth extraction that the core countries were able to industrialize and develop the military power to become dominant global powers. Colonial and imperial powers also influenced the political regimes in these periphery countries to support their economic imposition whether overtly through direct colonial rule or more covertly through negotiating with an elite class or imposing economic dependence on manufactured goods. Essentially, colonialism and imperialism allowed wealth and power to concentrate within an elite class of the global North which has left a legacy on global relations and continues to remain dominant world powers today.

The legacy of control and hegemony that arose out of colonialism can be termed 'coloniality'. It opens up an understanding of the network of impacts of colonialism that enable its perpetuation.

> Coloniality refers to a pattern of power which has emerged as a result of colonialism, but is not limited to a formal set of policies (Quijano, 2000). Rather, coloniality exerts a specific strategy of control and domination defined by several operations: (a) the classification and ranking of peoples of the world based on the ideas of race and culture; (b) the creation of institutions whose function is to define and maintain such classifications (governments, universities, churches); (c) the definition of spaces appropriate to such goals; (d) the promotion of an epistemological perspective to articulate the meaning and profile of this power matrix. (Misoczky 2011: 347)

Coloniality has created a context that justifies and permits 'Development,' the project of the global North to improve global prosperity through promoting a unidirectional path of progress and modernization in the global South through capitalist development.

Rostow's (1968) model of social progress describes this path; it posits development as a unidirectionally progressive, ordered, and scientific process. Rostow presents five stages of growth that understand traditional societies as being limited by their inefficiency and that will eventually mature to a stage of high mass-consumption, typically due to "some external intrusion by more advanced societies" who incorporate the idea that economic progress is a necessary good (ibid.: 6). These beliefs in both the inherent good of economic progress and the necessity of an outsider push to achieve societal maturity have been vital to rationalize foreign aid and development projects. Additionally, the creation of a hierarchy of peoples, knowledges, and ways of being like in Rostow's model has positioned the global North as an authority on the natural, inevitable progression of society to legitimize their continued intervention in the global South.

Working within the context of coloniality, development has acted as a restructuring of the old systems of colonialism and imperialism. It arguably originated from an intention of welfare–the global North, positioning themselves as the most advanced societies on Rostow's hierarchy, sought to bring prosperity to the global South to increase overall global prosperity. Truman's inaugural speech in 1949 described this new vision:

> The old imperialism–exploitation for foreign profit–has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing. All countries, including our own, will greatly benefit from a constructive program for the better use of the world's human and natural resources. Experience shows that our commerce with other countries expands as they progress industrially

and economically. Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge. (Truman 1949)

Key to this vision is the assumption that the tools of capitalist development, science, and technology are neutrally beneficial, the universal standard for development, and vital to the maturity of a modern state. It is these basic assumptions of development that I will explore next.

Capitalism and the Creation of Power

Capitalism, as theorized by Adam Smith in 1776, is based on the belief that humans are inherently self-interested and that opening markets to allow for natural competition through the pursuit of self-interest maximizes efficiency for the greater prosperity of all. This competitive advantage depends on constant growth to ensure corporate reinvestment (Magdoff and Bellamy Foster 2011). Additionally, everything can be abstracted to a monetary value in order to maximize efficiency in trade and exchange (Smith 1776). In a critical analysis of capitalism, Marx (1887) identifies its inherent view that labor is a unique type of commodity that, when used, creates new value rather than declining in value (i.e., getting used up). The commodities produced by labor typically have exchange-values higher than their costs of production, which creates surplus value that becomes the profit of the owners of the means of production. Capitalism thus relies on the exploitation of wage labor to create surplus value and also on private ownership over the means of production and resulting profits.

As an economic model, capitalism gained power through wide adoption in the imperial countries of the global North, who then brought it to the countries that they

dominated. Its logic has shaped the path of global development. In these colonies that

provided slave labor to the colonizers, slavery could effectively transition to wage labor and

even benefit the owner of the means of production in doing so by reducing their need to

provide life-giving resources to the 'freed' slave and incorporating them into the consumer

market (Marx 1887; Sheppard et. al. 2009). In a similar move, colonialism and imperialism

transitioned into international control over development and its project of international

capitalist expansion. In this transition, colonial powers saved energy by forfeiting direct

control over their colonies while still benefiting from their extractive relationships (Galeano

1973). As was becoming evident in the mid-twentieth century, the growth imperative of

capitalism was challenged by the limitations of a nation's natural resources and even of its

ever-more-consuming market-base (Escobar 1995). The end of the Second World War had

brought these challenges into sharp relief, and the hegemony of the free enterprise system

was at stake; during the war, U.S. surplus capital had accumulated and industrial productive

capacity had doubled, so they were bound for catastrophic inflation if unable reinvest. As

such, the United States sought to invest abroad, open new markets for U.S. goods, and

establish their global military domination to protect their economic interests in resources,

markets, and consumers (ibid.: 71)

At this same time, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created

at the Bretton Woods conference with goals to help reconstruct post-war Europe. Their focus

also expanded to aid the less-developed countries of the world in developing infrastructure

and to assist their incorporation into the global market so as to reap the benefits of capitalist

growth and prevent their conversion to communism (Escobar 1995). In the first UN

proceedings of the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, the purpose of the International

Monetary Fund was stated "to facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international

trade and to contribute in this way to the maintenance of a high level of employment and real

income, which must be a primary objective of economic policy" (Bretton Woods Conference

1944). Economic growth through international trade was thus positioned as a pathway to

improving the prosperity of all actors involved.

Fortuitously, this belief that welfare could be enhanced through international

economic expansion also addressed the U.S. need to expand access to resources, markets,

and consumers. These goals were also abetted by the fact that development aid projects

always gives loans in U.S. dollars and often require contracts with U.S.-based firms, which

systematically incorporates recipients into the U.S. market economy (Escobar 1995).

Capitalist expansion driven by goals of international development have thus acted as forms

of neo-imperialism because the institution and state powers of the global North have been

able to continue exercising control over non-dominant states.

In this process, the global North has gained access to exploitable labor and resources

throughout the world, and, because they exclusively held the means of production of

industrialization until fairly recently, have disproportionately profited from these economic

relations. It is unsurprising, then, that these projects have increased the inequality in and

exploitation of developing countries. As Galeano writes:

> The strength of the imperialist [development] system as a whole rests on the
> necessary inequality of its parts, and this inequality assumes ever more dramatic
> dimensions. The oppressor countries get steadily richer in absolute terms— and much
> more so in relative terms— through the dynamic of growing disparity. (1973: 3)

This is the nature of the relationship: for dominant classes to get richer, the non-dominant masses must be subject to the extraction of their wealth–both labor and resources. Regardless of any true intent of welfare, the profitability of development created by this extraction has maintained the economic domination of the institutions, governments, and non-state actors involved and has undoubtedly encouraged further investment.

The collaboration between the World Bank and other international development agencies, the states of the global North, and corporate and financial leaders has been vital to maintaining the hegemony that includes the capitalist logic and guiding development action to suit these goals. Peet (2009) traces how the World Bank gained the confidence of Wall Street by shaping their development policies around "fiscal and monetary discipline" and ensuring activities that were guaranteed to create a return on investment.

> The idea of early development economics was to remove blockages to, or set the preconditions for, economic growth by making capital investments (project lending) that would raise productivity. Money spent on program lending (that is, broader social programs dealing with education and health as well as more directly economic projects) was regarded as a waste of scarce resources. So the World Bank essentially loaned money for infrastructure projects that could be shown to be viable in terms of prospective interest and principal repayments. (Peet 2009: 130)

While this makes sense within the logic of capitalism, the view of which is limited to the abstraction of money, it fails to consider the self-determined needs of the recipients of development aid, which has political, social, and environmental repercussions in addition to the privileged economic effects.

Projects for the development of extractive industries typically guarantee a return on investment, but there is strong statistical evidence that high extractive wealth is associated with government corruption, civil war, and poverty. This is called the 'resource curse' (Ross

2001). An example of this is the Mexican state of Chiapas, which has great wealth of natural

resources, but due to the colonial legacy and continued economic development, has not

benefited from the extraction of these resources. Though it holds 21% of the nation's

petroleum, 47% of the natural gas, and produces 55% of the electricity, it has the highest

rates of poverty and marginalization in Mexico, especially within indigenous populations

(Cuevas 2007: 2) and in 1995, 22% of people in Chiapas still lacked access to electricity

(Hausmann, Espinoza, and Santos 2015). Chiapas also has a corrupt government and an

ongoing low-intensity civil war (Earle and Simonelli 2005; Esteva 1999).

Another example from Chiapas of capitalist-oriented development is the exploitation

of its tropical agricultural wealth, which neatly summarizes many of the key impacts of the

hegemony of a capitalist discourse. To support the capitalist logic that hails the efficiency of

exploiting a country's comparative advantage on the global market, in the late 1800s, the

Chiapan government sold a third of the best land for agricultural production in Chiapas to

foreign investors for large scale plantations, dispossessing indigenous peoples from their

lands with self-sufficient food systems and imposing taxes in order to force them into the

market economy (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003: 3). The land used for

subsistence practices of the indigenous peoples would have been seen by the state to have no

economic value, and so their sale and development would allow both the land, and the people

dispossessed from them, to be incorporated into the market economy to extract value. This is

what Marx termed primitive accumulation, which "entail[s] taking land, enclosing it, and

expelling a resident population to create a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land

into the privatised mainstream of capital accumulation" (Harvey 2005).

The effects of this legacy were threefold: indigenous communities have continued to provide cheap labor for plantation agriculture since their dispossession, large scale mono-crop market agriculture has remained vulnerable to the change of market values (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003), and rainforest land has been degraded due to the intensive practices of large scale agriculture and the displacement of indigenous swidden agroforestry that maintains forest ecology and biodiversity (Diemont et. al. 2006). Because capitalism requires cheap labor to create surplus value, it promotes dispossession, prior accumulation, and the disruption of subsistence practices. Large scale monocrop agriculture is based on the idea of economies of scale, which is that profits increase through the cost advantages and efficiency of large scale production. However, these economies are highly vulnerable because their profitability is dependent on one value set by the global market. Because there is no diversity in production, if the value of the crop that is produced plummets, the producer has no backup and thus is typically put out of businesses. Also, the capitalist framework only provides the means to value what can be commodified, so it establishes a view of the environment as a compilation of extractable resources and works within an assumption that humans are separate from nature, masters over it, and able to exploit it for their own gain. Without economic valuation for a healthy environment, then, ecological degradation naturally follows.

Capitalism has been key to establishing the hegemony of the development discourse through enabling the economic domination of certain actors in the global North and through its positioning in the discourse as a neutrally beneficial tool for development. The logics implicit in capitalism have thus gained hegemony through their assumption, preference, and

practice by the institutions, governments, and non-state actors that form the network of power. Science and technology have also been used as tools of modernity to improve market efficiency in support of capitalist logics, acting as another key point in web of hegemony.

Knowledge: Science and Technology

In the same way that economic theory has been understood as a neutral tool of global development, science and technology have been deemed to be self-evident markers of the progress of civilization. Economics, science, and technology had been integral to the development of Western nations, and as such, were assumed to be the obvious approaches to assist the 'underdeveloped' world on their way to development. In the mid-twentieth century, there was a rise in faith in science and technology as both "markers of civilization" and as "neutral and inevitably beneficial" tools that could provide solutions for the world's problems (Escobar 1995: 36). Knowledge became inextricably tied to science, and beyond that, 'rational' thought became based in an ideology of science and technology that hailed their ability to simplify nature, production, and society to maximize efficiency for capitalist development.

Scott traces the way that a 'scientific,' rationalizing approach was employed to ensure economic gain through the example of scientific forestry in Germany that reduced the complexity of a natural forest into a manageable system to suit market production. He explains how "forest science and geometry, backed by state power, had the capacity to transform the real, diverse, and chaotic old-growth forest into a new, more uniform forest that closely resembled the administrative grid of its techniques" (1998: 15). Rather than

demonstrating a real scientific understanding of forest ecology (and causing ecological disaster as a result), forest science was used as a tool for efficient management, and nature was thus converted into 'natural resources' ready to be exploited for financial gain. This example is far from a solitary case: it seems that wherever economic logic has triumphed, science has been used as a tool to achieve its goals.

The marriage of science and capitalism is exacerbated by the 'neoliberalization of science' which is understood as the "move to produce knowledge useful for market-based endeavors" (Burke and Heynen 2014: 13). It has been created through networks of relations between corporations, universities, and scientists. Access to practical, place based science and platforms for scientific discussion is highly exclusionary due to this neoliberalization that gears the production of science towards private, policy, or economic endeavors. "It is now axiomatic that science is not the neutral, knowledge-seeking work of individuals, but rather is a sociocultural process produced through particular relations of power" (Burke and Heynen 2014: 8). Certain forms of knowledge have gained dominance because the people who use them have political and economic influence. This echoes Gramsci's understanding of the hegemonic creation of common sense that stresses the importance of the "ensemble of the system of relations" that is needed to produce knowledge (Crehan 2016). Within development's network of relations, science has been used to further promote and rationalize development projects and support increased economization.

These systems of influence that maintain hegemony over scientific knowledge also systematically devalue other ways of knowing. Drawing from their research on marginalized environmental knowledges, Burke and Heynen (2014) state that the "producers of embodied

knowledge about neoliberal capitalism's ramifications are often ignored as politicians use formal science, economics, and ideology to implement their vision" (13). Because neoliberalism has established hegemonic control over the production of knowledge, it can exclude forms of knowledge that threaten its continuation. It is through the engagement of certain ideologies (neoliberalism, capitalism, science) within networks of relations of powerful actors that the hegemonic discourse is maintained, restricting the frame of possibilities within the ideological assumptions that it promotes.

As science and technology have held dominance over what counts as 'knowledge' within the development discourse, they have become emblematic of modernization and development through being "theorized as a sort of moral force that would operate by creating an ethics of innovation, yield, and result" and thus contribute "to the planetary extension of modernist ideals" (Escobar 1995: 36). So in this sense, they also include an assimilatory cultural project, one that furthers a concept of 'modernization' that the development discourse relies on.

Cultural Project and Subjectivity

The development discourse establishes a cultural project that shapes the subjectivities of all those whose lives are influenced by its hegemony. These include the homogenization of identity and representation that arises out of the narratives of modernization and progress, the creation of lack and devaluation that comes from capitalism, and the dependence that is created by development interventions. These subjectivities are created by key narratives of

the discourse, and their subsequent influence on people's perceptions and actions further reinforces the hegemony of the narratives.

Homogenization of Identity and Representation

Progress, and the assumption of modernization's role in furthering progress, acts as a homogenizing force because it is conceived as a singular path. Based on Rostow's (1968) theory of progress, for example, all societies would eventually exist in states of high-mass capitalist consumption. Sachs (2010) confronts this question of homogenization:

> What would a completely developed world look like? We don't know, but most certainly it would be both boring and fraught with danger, for development cannot be separated from the idea that all peoples of the planet are moving along one single track towards some state of maturity, exemplified by the nations 'running in front'. In this view, Tuaregs, Zapotecos or Rajasthanis are not seen as living diverse and non-comparable ways of human existence, but as somehow lacking in terms of what has been achieved by the advanced countries. Consequently, catching up was declared to be their historical task. From the start, development's hidden agenda was nothing else than the Westernization of the world. (xvii)

In this way, the narrative of 'progress' is homogenizing both in its perspective and its goal–the unique qualities of diverse societies are flattened by characterizing them solely by their lack of modernity and the objective is to assimilate into a unitary model of modernized society.

Progress, in this way, delegitimizes and devalues ways of knowing and being that are not distinctly 'modern' and rejects their continued existence in the name of societal progress. Accordingly, due to the emphasis on formal science in modernity, non-expert forms of knowledge are devalued. For example, in the context of engaging with environmental science for the production of policy, the domination of formal science, due in part to its entanglement

in a system of hegemony, meant that "certified experts' research [could] serve as a legitimate foundation for policy, while the experiential and embodied (but nonstatistical) knowledge and concerns of the uncertified populace [were] devalued as unsystematic and nonscientific" (Burke and Heynen 2014). A lack of modernity (in this case due to the classification of knowledge as 'nonscientific'), thus, becomes a valid excuse for excluding alternative ways of knowing when modernity is held as the pinnacle of advancement. Furthermore, the repeated invalidation of non-dominant ways of knowing by experts or other powerful actors in the network of hegemony eventually causes people to consider themselves as non-knowers. As such, they come to accept and internalize the hierarchy of knowledge and submit to the expert authority (ibid.).

As a defining feature of late capitalism, managerialism becomes the standard of management up against which alternative forms are devalued. Managerialism is an "ideology operating in complicity with corporations and governments in order to disseminate their political agendas" (Misoczyky 2011: 348). It is based on a specific idea of control, progress, and order that assumes that hierarchies are the natural power structure. Through the way that knowledge often have to engage with the bureaucratic structure of this ideology, alternative approaches to management such as empowerment and bottom-up participatory democracy become co-opted or diluted (Misoczyky 2011). As the devaluation of alternate ways of knowing is a common area of resistance in the case of the Zapatistas, I will explore more of this later on, specifically through examples of agriculture, temporalities, and indigenous representation.

Capitalist Devaluation

Every economy is a moral realm because of the way that it creates a system of laws and assumptions about the behaviors of humans. Capitalism, as a moral realm, establishes value based on its limited structure for evaluating it: the abstraction of money (Marglin 2008). Anything that cannot be quantifiably valued monetarily is thus systematically devalued. As Escobar explains:

> Establishing economic value requires the disvaluing of all other forms of social existence. Disvalue transmogrifies skills into lacks, commons into resources, men and women into commodified labour, tradition into burden, wisdom into ignorance, autonomy into dependency. It transmogrifies people's autonomous activities embodying wants, skills, hopes and interactions with one another, and with the environment, into needs whose satisfaction requires the mediation of the market. (2010: 15)

Like Sachs describes, the common outcome of this systematic devaluation is the imposition of lack: lack of relational understandings of nature, lack of community values, or lack of means for survival, for example. Ross (2002) provides a comparison of the ecological knowledge and perspectives on the environment of two generations of Mayan people living in the Lacandon jungle to examine the effect of exposure to the development discourse by means of NGOs. He found that the older generation had a rich ecological knowledge that was tied to a relational perspective of nature embedded in a religious framework, whereas the younger generation had less ecological knowledge, and the framework for their perspective of the environment was based on an instrumental view of nature. Though they still noted the importance of preserving the forest, they did so from an entirely different framework (ibid.). This example shows how the imposition of the development discourse, even for the

benevolent purpose of preserving the environment, can shape subjectivities in a way that devalues traditional ways of knowing and relating.

Marglin (2008) writes about the moral realm of the capitalist economy to explain how this creates a subjectivity change that disrupts community values and reciprocity but that encourages further integration into the market. The capitalist economy emphasizes the value of market efficiency as the highest good, promotes individualism and material prosperity, and deems rational thought to be superior. Accordingly, "undermining community is the logical and practical consequence of promoting the market system" (Marglin 2008: 3). This is because strong communities sustain cultures of trust and reciprocity that create community reliance which cannot be quantified, monetized, or measurably predicted, and thus cannot exist within the market system and maximized for efficiency. As such, community support mechanisms such as barn raisings are abandoned in favor of individualized, measurable fire insurance. This devaluation of non-commodities and consequent destruction of community reliance encourages the purchase of market solutions. And so, the subjectivities that the economy creates serve to reproduce the economy (ibid.)

The capitalist economy is founded on the 'law of scarcity' which "was construed by economists to denote the technical assumption that man's wants are great, not to say infinite, whereas his means are limited though improvable" (Sachs and Esteva 2010: 16). This fuels ever-increasing consumption to permit the constant growth required for capitalism to exist (which is inherently unsustainable on a finite planet). It also represents a hijacking of human valuation–capitalism's exchange-value and profit-focused ideology becomes so entrenched that use-value and other forms of social value are forgotten. The documentary *Darwin's*

Nightmare captured a stunning example of this: in tracing the story of the fishing industry of Nile Perch in Lake Victoria, the owner of a fish factory revealed in an interview that he was exporting five tons of fish a day. During the time of the interview, there was a famine in the area surrounding the lake. When the interviewer asked the owner how he thought the famine could be addressed, the owner of the lucrative, arguably abundant fish factory assumed that they would receive foreign food aid (Sauper 2004). It seems that the logic of capitalism had become so ingrained in him that he no longer saw the fish he was exporting transcontinentally as having any use-value, and thus, having the potential to help to alleviate the famine by selling domestically.

Though the economic creation of lack does not seem at all desirable, capitalism has managed to become hegemonic through alluring people with its promises of "opulence for all" (Smith quoted in Crehan 2016: 82). A capitalist perspective on reality complete with the assumption of economic logics has vitally explained "as must any potentially hegemonic narrative, why such a system would be in the interests of society as a whole" (Crehan 2016: 82). It is arguably through this appeal of working towards the common good that capitalism has gained such prominence within the hegemonic development discourse.

Dependency in Development

Another key subjectivity created by the development discourse is the formation of dependency. It stems from the way that the network of relations that maintain the hegemony of the discourse position the dominant states, institutions, and non-state actors as the top of an imposed hierarchy. They are the most advanced by way of modernization, the most knowledgeable by way of the control of science, the most authoritative by means of

managerialism, and the most wealthy by means of coloniality and neo-imperialism. However, the dominant narrative within aid organizations is one of global welfare. In their hegemony over knowledge and representation, "development institutions [are able to] describe problems in a way that justifies their interventions" (Pigg 1993 quoted in West 2006). Also, since global welfare is assumed in the discourse to be achieved through international capitalist expansion, development aid continues to open doors to further expansion. As explained by Roberto Campos as a Brazilian ambassador in Washington, foreign aid serves to expand "foreign markets to absorb U.S. surpluses and alleviate super-production in the U.S. exporting industries" (Galeano 1973). In the definition of the problem and the proposal of the solution in this way, foreign aid will often, by design or fortuity, serve the interests of the powerful. For example, countries with a 'hunger problem' might get flooded with excess U.S. corn and wheat and Monsanto seeds, intended to modernize agriculture and alleviate hunger, but also further destabilizing local food production and forcing economic dependence on global powers (Hartmann and Boyce 1982).

The development discourse also imposes dependency through professionalization, which privileges science and expert knowledge in a way that establishes and formalizes power relations that set institutional professionals as the only capable actors. Professionalization translates scientific data into capitalist paradigms under a guise of scientific neutrality that actually depoliticizes the issues and promotes the development discourse (Escobar 1995: 45-46, 105). The process of professionalization creates a precedent in which regular people are portrayed as incapable of addressing their problems because they require help from 'professionals,' and become dependent on external actors.

Development in its current form through the existing hegemony is inextricably bound to coloniality, both because it is based on the wealth and ideologies of dominant colonial powers, and also because it is still organized to promote the interests of the institutions of the global elite. Development projects still serve these dominant powers: the World Bank and IMF will only make loans if third world countries carry out structural adjustment programs to open markets, remove import barriers, cut spending on social programs, devalue currencies, eliminate subsidies and price supports, and encourage exports (Greenberg 1997). Because at best, these programs are based on a Western idea of progress, and at worst are tools to further the exploitation of the third world, the programs are still inseparably entwined with coloniality, and they create dependency on the dominant development actors because of it. For example, through the 1970s, communication and transport between countries in Latin America still largely had to go through European or U.S. intermediaries because the creation of this infrastructure was carried out by and for the global North (Galeano 1973).

Dependency theorists in particular have critiqued the development project by asserting that development in core countries has only ever resulted from the simultaneous creation of underdevelopment in periphery countries; the U.S. and U.K. would not be the rich global powers that they are today had they not extracted wealth from other people, lands, and nations (Galeano 1973). Underdevelopment has been vital to the growth of global capitalism, the strength of which is necessarily based on inequality. This is evidenced through the fact that historically colonized countries largely remain primary producers and that three-quarters of third world countries' sales are made to imperialist countries (ibid.). The global North has

continued to extract wealth out of the global South, which has enabled them to hold

economic domination, which is a vital aspect of maintaining hegemony.

Maintaining Hegemony

Through the mutually reinforcing relations between global powers, their narratives of

modernization and progress, economic structure of capitalism, and the logics and

subjectivities that are formed by engaging with these parts, the development discourse is able

to maintain hegemony. As an example of how this process looks for a specific institution,

Escobar (1995) traces the hegemony of the World Bank:

> This is how the World Bank maintains intellectual and and financial hegemony in
> development: it channels the largest amount of funds; it opens new regions to
> investment through transportation, electrification, and telecommunications projects; it
> contributes to the spread of MNCs [multinational corporations] through contracts; it
> deepens dependence on international markets by insisting on production for exports;
> it refuses to lend to 'unfriendly governments' (such as Chile under Allende); it
> opposes protectionist measures of local industries; it fosters the loss of control of
> resources by local people by insisting on large projects that benefit national elites and
> MNCs; it responds closely to the interests of international capitalism in general and
> U.S. foreign policy in particular; and it collaborates with and helps maintain in power
> corrupt and undemocratic regimes throughout the Third World. (165)

In sum, due to its plentiful wealth from past exploitation, the World Bank has the power to

control the world economy, and also global politics, by preferencing free market

neoliberalism that requires states to exercise power only insofar as it supports their

engagement with the global market through export-oriented infrastructure and privatization.

As soon as states seek to protect their national economies through protectionist policies or

land redistribution, the World Bank revokes access to development funding (and historically,

the CIA stages a coup). And yet, considering the capitalist logic under which the World Bank

operates, these actions are not only excusable, but necessary to maintain financial solvency (Escobar 1995; Ross 2001). Through their wealth of resources and ability to orchestrate multinational corporations and state governments, they maintain hegemony, and in the practice and imposition of particular ways of knowing, these structures of dominant power effectively create certain subjectivities which serve the development project.

Because of its hegemony that shapes the framework for what is even imaginable, even critiques of development that have led to reforms like sustainable development or the green economy have largely remained inside the discourse. The reformation towards 'sustainable' development does not stray from either the inevitability of development or the capitalist logic that assumes that economic growth is necessary for the reduction of poverty. While *Our Common Future*, a foundational international report on sustainable development, does make mention of equity and wealth redistribution, it still maintains that "growth must be revived in developing countries because that is where the links between economic growth, the alleviation of poverty, and environmental conditions operate most directly" (1987). Sustainable development, as this report shows, still holds the assumptions of the economic logic by claiming that growth is necessary in order to solve problems such as poverty and environmental degradation.

The subjectivities instilled by the development discourse show how control is extended to the site of the individual so that people essentially come to dominate themselves, a highly efficient practice of discipline. The discourse's effects upon subjectivity can be compared to Foucault's (1978) analysis of power over life which explains how the institutionalization of the economic system "required a transformation at the level of the

individual–the production of . . . docile bodies" (Escobar 1995: 60). This is essentially how the development discourse's control over subjectivities and knowledge functions: it acts as a form of discipline to efficiently incorporate the subject into the dominant system at the individual level. This approach to discipline effectively discourages autonomous bodies and populations through forcing submission to structures that suit the dominant powers. The transformation of the individual to be compatible with the discourse creates the consent needed to establish hegemony (Gramsci 1988). The development discourse's disciplinary effects are achieved through practices like conditional World Bank funding, the imposition of a specific economic valuation (and devaluation), and the promotion of particular forms of managerialism and technification. Together, these and other aspects of the development discourse build hegemony by subtly shaping possibilities for action and perception.

Once subsumed into the dominant discourse, all action becomes limited by the knowledges and logics that are assumed by the discourse, which discourages the creation of autonomous solutions. Thus, to change development in practice and resist domination, the discourse must be dismantled so that alternatives can be imagined and enacted.

Zapatismo: an alternative discourse for utopian resistance

A discursive approach to resistance stems from the understanding that, as explored through Gramsci and Foucault, dominant power is no longer embodied solely in the state but rather is spread widely and reinforced even by those who do not hold power due to their consent to its dominant discourse. State governments are themselves subject to larger structures of power which are supported and informed by the development discourse,

primarily the hegemony of neoliberalism that relies on globalization and free market capitalism. The problems that arise from these structures, then, be they inequality, poverty, or ecological disaster, become more challenging to address because an entire system of power and understanding of the world is to blame. Since the dominant discourse becomes instilled in the subconscious through engaging with institutions (schools, corporations, state services, legal systems), other people, and the environment, stepping outside of the enforced subjectivity is necessary to open up alternatives. Gramsci, as related by Crehan, has suggested that this is done through recognizing the relations and history that have formed the subjectivity:

> We should think of human beings as ensembles of relations, ensembles that come into being in specific historical contexts . . . Once we move from thinking of individuals as autonomous entities and begin to see them instead as the sum of their relationships with the human and natural world, the very notion of subjectivity shifts. Subjectivity now becomes the product of our life experiences as social individuals. (Crehan 2016: 60)

In Chiapas, this history and set of relations has been altered since the time of conquest, but there is and always has been resistance. Conquest is a dialectic between the conquerors and those resisting to be conquered (Earle and Simonelli 2005). Though conquest has evolved into an entire hegemonic system, the discursive battle continues. As Stahler-Sholk suggests, "the old paradigms of taking state power by armed assault should be waning in the face of new realities in which the state is not the sole locus of power, forcing a rethinking of what we even mean by the concept of 'revolution'" (2010: 272). Anti-systemic movements take on a new approach to social change in that they "seek to transform society from below, while challenging capitalism as a global paradigm" (ibid.). Alternative structures to the state are

necessary to transform political and civil society and to enable people to rebel against the dominant discourse to revoke consent to its hegemony.

For this reason, after nearly a decade of clandestine organizing that, on January 1st, 1994, erupted into twelve days of armed rebellion, the Zapatista Uprising transferred most of its focus to political autonomy, community development, and the formation of an alternative discourse. The Zapatistas' alternative discourse opens up the possibility to imagine a different reality and different set of subjectivities. It inherently has utopian potential, which I define as the ability to define specific goals and values of society and to be enabled to pursue them. Utopia is not a fixed ideal state, but rather the freedom and capability to constantly re-define and enact the practices and values that are agreed upon by a group of people. Utopian approaches require freedom from the limiting assumptions and subjectivities of the development discourse. Creative resistance that seeks to form an alternative discourse is thus primed to achieve this because it includes a process of redefinition and movements to put the new definitions into practice.

The Zapatistas take on utopia by redefining power, scarcity, common sense, autonomy, value, and expertise in their alternative discourse, which then acts as the basis for societal transformation by informing alternative ways of knowing and being to revoke consent to the hegemony of the dominant discourse. Here, I will analyze Zapatismo to demonstrate how it effectively defines alternatives to the development discourse in its ways of knowing, structures of power, and forms of subjectivity to provide the basis for creative resistance to dismantle the dominant discourse.

Knowledge

In the creation of their alternative discourse, it is important to note that the Zapatistas work outside of the binary between tradition and modernity. In some ways, the Zapatistas are arguably a modern social movement–their use of the internet in creating a transnational network, for example, has been vital (Khasnabish 2010). On the other hand, their revaluation of distinctly non-modern ways of knowing, often rooted from indigenous perspectives, seems to paint them as a sort of return to tradition. However, either designation would be inaccurate. The Zapatistas transcend the binary completely, making them distinctly transmodern.

Misoczyky (2011) describes transmodernity as a break from the modern universality of ways of knowing and being through a return of the repressed and historically depreciated cultures, knowledges, and subjectivities as world-actors. It is not an explicit departure from modernity to tradition, but rather an inclusive, alternative modernity that makes space for other ways of knowing. In this way, it rejects coloniality and its "practices of oppression, racial discrimination, and concentration of political and economic power" which are inextricably tied to the creation of modernity and its "rhetoric of progress, salvation, technology, and democracy" (Misoczyky 2011: 348). In order to reject the oppression and hegemony created by coloniality, modernity as a universal claim on knowing and being must be rejected. Transmodernity, then, with its revaluation of repressed forms of knowing and being, resists the universality of modernity and the coloniality that it is tied to and creates a more inclusive space for historically depreciated and discounted ways of knowing and being.

As such, Zapatismo acts a a transmodern discourse by elevating ways of knowing that have been excluded in the coloniality of modernity's claims to universalized knowledge while simultaneously accepting the contributions of modernity. Zapatismo resists the economic logic supported by rationalizing science and modernization narratives of the development discourse by revaluing non-dominant economic knowledges that have been historically devalued and depreciated and that directly oppose the dominant economic logics. Speaking on indigenous resistance in the context of the North American Nishnaabeg, Leanne Simpson theorizes the importance of cultural, political, and intellectual resurgence as resistance to "cognitive imperialism" that has worked as an "insidious mechanism to promote neo-assimilation and obfuscate the historic atrocities of colonialism" (2011: 32). She builds this argument through exploring the resurgence of traditional Nishnaabeg child rearing practices as a form of resistance because they form the basis for rooted cultural understandings of treaties, non-authoritarianism, and values of gentleness, kindness, and humility. The devaluation and subsequent abandonment of these practices from the colonial imposition (due to inability to take time off to raise children and the cultural clash of not disciplining children, for example), led to the dilution of traditional Nishnaabeg leadership that has reduced Nishnaabeg claims to sovereignty and contributed to their assimilation into the state government, and thus, to recover these practices is a political move to sovereignty (ibid.). Similarly, Zapatismo elevates non-dominant and alternative forms of knowledge and practices as a movement towards autonomy and as resistance to the development discourse, which works as 'cognitive imperialism.'

Leyva Solano (2016) offers another perspective on the importance of revaluing repressed knowledges. She defines 'epistemic justice' as the justice valued in pluricultural society that should guarantee all (especially the discriminated, the subalterns), the right to be recognized and treated as producers and creators of knowledge on their own terms and within their own languages. The Zapatistas, according to Leyva Solano, have clearly created a wealth of theoretical knowledge, but "all of that would be nothing more than a heap of bibliography to cite if it couldn't have the 'glocal' impact that it has, if it could not sustain the complex daily routine of full autonomy" (45). Thus, the lived practices of knowledge are important both in that they expand inclusivity of the production of knowledge and also connect knowledge to lived reality. The knowledge-practices of Zapatismo are exemplary of both of these qualities. Through the ways that it both builds upon people's knowledge and also capacitates them to form more knowledge about their own lives, Zapatismo presents an alternative to the hierarchical, top-down and exclusionary knowledge of dominant development discourse.

Milpa Agriculture

The Zapatistas' revaluation of knowledge and inclusive approach to it resists the dominant discourse to build autonomy. The *milpa*, as both an agricultural practice and accompanying logic of self-sufficiency, is one primary form of knowledge that the Zapatistas draw on to resist the push to modernize agriculture and incorporate into global capitalism. *Milpa* is a traditional agricultural practice stemming from the Mayas of cultivating a diverse variety of crops in small clearings within the jungle to mimic the natural jungle systems. The crops grown, primarily maize, beans, squash, and avocados, are both "nutritionally and

environmentally complementary" providing a balanced diet and a form of intercropping that maintains soil nutrients to avoid the need for fertilizers and pesticides (Mann 2005). The *milpa* is, by nature, small-scale, diverse, and cultivated by hand which supports self-sufficiency and ecological well-being (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

This contrasts sharply to large-scale, mono-crop, and mechanized modern agriculture that is promoted in development projects and defended by the dominant discourse. Modernized agriculture has been celebrated for its supposed ability to solve world hunger due to scientific and technological advancements and maximization of production efficiency and has thus been supported by the World Bank, international aid organizations, and corporations to serve this purpose. However, the advancements of modernized agriculture are based on an industrial, scientific rationalism that seeks to make agricultural production more legible to both the producer and the state to facilitate market production; they are not based on scientific studies of agricultural production (Scott 1998). The practices rooted in this ideology, then, ignore a scientific understanding of ecological principles, nutrient cycles, and soil health in the name of efficiency and high crop yield, leading to ecological disaster. Furthermore, the conversion of agriculture to a hyper-efficient system for producing a singular commodity for the global market eliminates agriculture's embeddedness in a network of relations between the land, producers, and consumers as well as its non-commodity valuation.

In contrast, the way that *milpa* production works within the ecological context of the tropical forests, clearing only small plots in rotation and leaving a canopy, promotes diverse ecosystems and retains good soil health. Its swidden-fallow method has been proven to

conserve and restore rainforests and maintain biodiversity in the Lacandon Jungle (Diemont et. al. 2005). Even regarding the modern ideal of efficiency, as an agricultural method, *milpa* production is more efficient than modernized agriculture. An extensive study from Robert Netting (1993) showed that "if efficiency is measured in terms of productivity of land, smallholders are in fact more efficient" (Earle and Simonelli 2005: 17). Despite scientific research like this that now defends the values of small-scale and traditional models of agriculture like the *milpa*, the domination of the development discourse has led to a unilateral spread of modernized agriculture, further showing that its value is primarily in its market efficiency.

Based on market logic and in an effort to promote development, officials from the Mexican government would travel to *ejidos* with a program to 'improve' their coffee production, supplying fertilizers and suggesting less shade on the coffee trees. Some communities, where the members were enculturated with Mayan tradition and *milpa* logic, found through small test areas that these practices did increase coffee production for a short period of time, but decreased the lifespan of coffee plants and made them more susceptible to blight, leading them to refuse this new technology (Earle and Simonelli 2005: 47-48). Examples like this show how locally-specific knowledges based on rooted understandings can be more reliable than an exclusive focus on market efficiency.

However, due to the neoliberalization of knowledge that privileges the creation of knowledges that are marketable and that maintains hegemony through a network of relations between corporations, universities, scientists, and government agencies, these alternate ways of knowing are systemically devalued (Burke and Heynen 2014). One way that the Zapatistas

resist the devaluation of these is through supporting *milpa* production, both to elevate

indigenous knowledge and for its role in supporting autonomy through its logic of

self-sufficiency.

Economic Logic

Milpa extends beyond an agricultural practice to a logic that "is part of a cultural

ethic backed by sound defensive economics that Maya men should have their milpa, even if it

did not suffice to feed a family all year. It expresses itself culturally in many domains of

thought and action, but its material logic, a very old one, says, as the Zapatistas do today, that

whatever else, grow most of your own food," (Earle and Simonelli 2005: 246). Inherently,

the *milpa* logic of self-sufficiency opposes a capitalist logic. This is because at its core,

capitalism relies on wage labor to create surplus value in the production of commodities so

that the capitalist, as the owner of the means of production, can make a profit. As a

precondition to wage labor, people must be unable to meet their basic needs on their own so

that they have to purchase goods on the market to do so, requiring that they sell their labor as

a commodity in exchange for money (Marx 1867). Thus, the *milpa* logic of self-sufficiency

resists incorporation into the wage economy by reducing the need for money and market

interaction.

However, this self-sufficiency is often challenged by corrupt government

patron-client relations that provide aid in exchange for votes which can disempower

communities by creating dependence, in addition to outright destruction of *milpas* as a

political attack on Zapatista autonomy (Earle and Simonelli 2005). Forcing economic

dependence like this through undermining self-sufficiency has historically been a colonial

tool to consolidate power, and a strategy for advancing the dominant development discourse. With this context, the Zapatistas vigilantly oppose government aid, recognizing that it undermines their autonomy which is so tied to their self-sufficiency. Stahler-Sholk provides an example of this interplay of power between the Zapatistas, the government, and non-Zapatista communities:

> My interviews in the region corresponding to the Caracol of La Garrucha suggested that those who remained in the movement derived pride and self-esteem from their ability to analyze and reject the government's carrot-and-stick approach. Their envy of the beneficiaries of government aid was mixed with pity for fellow indigenous peasants who were developing dependencies on a fickle patron and who in some cases had even stopped planting their own milpa (cornfield), a crucial marker of indigenous identity in this region . . . the impact was disempowering for the communities. (2010: 273)

This example demonstrates some of the complexities of the Zapatista struggle. It is by no means easy to maintain a *milpa*; it is a labor intensive process that requires specific seasonal attention. Especially in inter-mixed Zapatista and non-Zapatista communities where Zapatista community members see their neighbors receive "free" aid from the government, the dedication to (at least partial) self-sufficiency requires determination and a constant remembrance of values, as well as broader networks of non-state support to fill the gaps in meeting basic needs. However, the Zapatistas see that the alternative to this labor is to lose their autonomy through becoming dependent on a corrupt government which they cannot speak against for fear of losing resources. By situating their daily practices within a broader understanding of political power dynamics, the Zapatistas find strength to continue their traditional *milpa* and to preserve the *milpa* logic of self-sufficiency. The economic logic of

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the *milpa* is paired with broader Zapatista networks that serve as institutional support to their alternative discourse.

    In order for the Zapatistas' discourse and *milpa* logic to function and navigate resistance to capitalism within a global capitalist economy, they employ a social solidarity economy with networks of social infrastructure for multi-scalar support. *Milpa* allows people to be mostly self-sufficient in their food production, but it is labor intensive, limiting to what can be produced, and leaves families vulnerable if something (paramilitary invasion, blight) were to destroy their *milpa*. Because of these challenges, it is not that economically viable or even desirable to exclusively produce for family consumption. As such, if the Zapatistas were to encourage *milpa* production without creating networks of support, it would likely fail and people would resort to purchasing on the market. Instead, they mobilize trade networks and cooperatives for both internal trade within Zapatista communities and between Zapatista municipalities as well as trade on the global market. This allows for some degree of specialization to production in addition to the *milpas*, with certain communities collectively purchasing materials to produce honey, bread, or coffee for trade. The family-based *milpa* is connected to networks of community support and community cooperatives, which engage in trade and support within the municipality, which in turn engages in the regional group of municipalities to create a distinct economy of scale without sacrificing the core Zapatista values of autonomy and government resistance (Earle and Simonelli 2005, 19). This network also provides the basis for production cooperatives, fair-trade coffee market networks, and agroecological workshops that build relational support with producers to recognize local control and fairly negotiate terms and prices while still opening access to resources. It also

supports regional cooperative stores that include cooperative purchasing and the construction of regional warehouses for purchased goods to avoid contact with intermediaries and centralization. This again demonstrates the transmodernity of the Zapatistas' movement: by elevating locally based, non-dominant agricultural practices and supporting them through distinctly modern economic networks, they challenge the binary between the modern and non-modern. Additionally, these economic networks, which are specifically put in place to support local autonomy, also challenge the binary between the local and global.

As a relational network, it is highly flexible because of its small-scale basis, but it is still able to benefit from collectivity and scale efficiencies (ibid.; Stahler-Sholk 2010: 281). Through this alternative economic model based in *milpa* logic, meaning prioritizing self-sufficient (or community-sufficient) production, that engages with the market without resorting to exploitation and wage labor, the Zapatistas oppose the economic logic of the dominant discourse. The trade networks are more of an expression of solidarity and mutual support to promote the autonomous project as a whole rather than a dehumanized market exchange. These multi-scalar relational networks are vital for the support of the implementation of the Zapatista discourse regarding autonomy, self-sufficiency, resistance to neoliberal capitalism and state control, and fair, dignified work. Regardless of the strength of the discourse or allure of its values, without networks of support that are distinct from the dominant institutions, the discourse is destined to have little real impact. This is because the dominant discourse is supported by structures of power and institutions that are based on and reinforced by its logic, creating a network that maintains its hegemony, so effective resistance requires similar networks of support. As just demonstrated, modernity's hegemony

over knowledge has devalued non-dominant ways of knowing in regards to agricultural practices and economic logics. Similarly, it has also devalued non-dominant temporalities.

Temporalities

Zapatismo is based on alternate temporalities in resistance to the ethnocentric temporality of the dominant discourse. In development discourse, time is conceived as linear and progressively unfolding, always from a less developed state to a more developed state. Rostow's path to modernization highlights the linear development temporality that assumes development is an inevitable and unidirectional process. On the basis of these assumptions, he determines five distinct phases of economic growth based on societal levels of consumption, income, mechanization, technology, and government structure that characterize the transition from a simplistic traditional society to a complex modern society (Rostow 1968). Since time is linear and progressive and development is inevitable, time takes on an almost material understanding in that phases of development can be identified and separated into segments based on certain characteristics.

Rostow's understanding of time is nothing new, when colonists and *conquistadors* arrived in new lands, they brought with them this hegemonic temporality that devalued indigenous temporalities. In situating the indigenous context as a background to the modernizing project, the colonists essentially disregarded the indigenous ways of knowing as both inferior and irrelevant to their goals of progress. Also, in positing indigenous ways at the most basic and primitive phase in their understanding of linear development, they anachronized indigenous ways, making them incommensurable with modern time which led

to a dichotomy of either exclusion from modernity or expectations of assimilation (Rifkin 2017; Hale 2007).

By recognizing a multiplicity of temporalities through drawing from indigenous temporalities, the Zapatistas resist this temporal violence that seeks to assimilate them into 'modern' time and condemn their ways of knowing as archaic and impossibly divergent from modernity (Rifkin 2017). The dominant temporality holds hegemony through peoples' compliance with its singular validity, so the maintenance of an alternative temporality inherently resists the dominant's hegemony by opening ways of knowing and being that are not limited to linear time.

Since the indigenous peoples of Chiapas are Mayan, the Zapatistas draw from Mayan temporality in their discourse. The Mayan calendar works as a cycle, representing an understanding of cyclical time like the moon cycle and the seasons, which is the sun cycle. An ancient Mayan symbol of time is the *caracol*, or snail shell, which also represents continuity (Earle and Simonelli 2005). This understanding of cyclical and continuous time directly opposes the linearity and implicit emphasis on progress within the hegemonic temporality by emphasizing a connection to the natural rhythms of life. In this way, it is consistent with Mayan (or at least, Highland Chiapas Mayan) values of harmony within the physical and social environment (Proochista 2012).

Additionally, *caracol* time creates a framework for understanding indigenous tradition in a modern context to oppose the anachronization of the dominant temporality. Just as the *caracol* spirals outward, time can be understood as a spiral rooted in a central history of tradition that is ever expanding, but always connected to that center. Rather than

positioning tradition and modernity as two separate positions on a linear history, the *caracol*

obfuscates this binary because it is always simultaneously based in the tradition of the center

of the spiral while connected to modern time at the opening of the shell.

Drawing inspiration from the sense of time and continuity that the name implies, the

reorganization of Zapatista government in 2003 arranged into autonomous zones called

caracoles. This new structure of governance (which will be explored in the section on the

practice of Zapatismo) stems from the recognition that their resistance is not a limited event

that will progress to a changed reality in the future, but rather that oppression is a recurring

season in the cycling of time and so resistance must design structures and tools that can

continually preclude domination when oppression (perhaps inevitably) occurs.

> The caracol is a living entity where community, history, and time continually interact.
> It is a remarkably conservative world view (*sic*), a concentric ethnocentrism that
> preserves tradition while rejecting any linear sense of [such]. It does not reject
> modernization, but it does provincialize modernity's colonial roots. It makes clear
> that a people's autonomy over their own material culture is at stake, and it
> demonstrates an understanding and solution to that problem without confusing
> exchange with imperialism, autonomy with isolation, tradition with essentialism, nor
> the past with history. (Bahn 2009, 552)

In this way, drawing from indigenous knowledge and traditions does not have to be a 'return

to the past,' nor do indigenous people have to be destined to the limited concept of

modernization, as both are violent assumptions of linear time that dichotomize indigenous

peoples. Instead, they can draw truth from both tradition and modernity as free agents in

determining their realities while retaining the understanding that their lives have been

irrevocably altered by the history of colonialism in a way that continues to affect their

present. Where linearity creates limits by proffering an inevitable path, the design of the

spiraling *caracol* infers both curving change, progressive expansion, and a central basis in tradition, opening possibilities for 'progress' beyond that of the limited understanding of modernization. The act of reclaiming tradition, history, and ways of knowing and situating them in the modern context empowers people to envision themselves as actively being able to dream of and enact new alternatives in their futures (Rifkin 2017).

Dream temporalities similarly upset the linearity of time; in Mayan tradition, dream is a prelude to reality and predictive dreaming is not uncommon (Earle and Simonelli 2005). In this way, too, there is power in the ability to dream of and imagine alternatives; it is the first step to creating a new reality. Thus, the *caracol* and dream temporalities become a form of resistance to the hegemonic temporality of the development discourse.

Zapatismo's basis in indigenous temporalities and ways of knowing is an inspiration and constant reminder of the fact that alternate ways and understandings other than the hegemonic discourse do exist–they existed before colonial contact and they exist today. The colonial legacy cannot be erased or ignored, but it does not need to consume all other ways into its homogenizing domain. Rooting back to the center of the snail shell, to the indigenous ways of knowing which inherently oppose the hegemonic discourse, can open up the imagination of alternatives to create new realities. The *caracol* structure of government mentioned above is one of these imagined alternatives and is an example of the alternative structures of power that the Zapatistas have adopted to counter the power structures of the dominant discourse. These alternative structures of power will be explored in what follows.

Power

In building an alternate world, the Zapatistas reject the dominant discourse in its expressions of power: the reinforcement of hegemonic knowledge including modernization, capitalism, and linear progress; the reproduction of colonial systems of exploitation and external control; and the paternalistic representations of indigenous peoples. Zapatismo resists this by contextualizing and historicizing their struggle and challenging the nature of power relations through proposing new structures of power based on alternate forms of knowledge, rejecting state legitimacy by practicing autonomous forms of governance based around *mandar obedeciendo* (leading by obeying), and reclaiming representation to expand the realm of possible actions.

The contextualization of their own subjection with the metanarrative of European history and hegemonic discourse has been vital to the creation of a new praxis to find alternatives to their struggle, leading them to question the basis of the hegemony–its limited knowledge, ways of governance, and representation–that had exploited them throughout their history, and to create a new form of governance to actively oppose this. Key to the creation of their alternatives is *mandar obedeciendo*, the most core principle of Zapatista power. It means 'leading by obeying' to convey that leaders serve the people in a form of radical governmental representation. It is designed to structurally question the legitimacy of authority and prevent hierarchical domination through demanding use of community consensus and is an integral part of all Zapatista governance structures.

The Zapatistas' rule-without-power denies domination on principle and permits the creation of pluralistic autonomy. Their refusal to participate in state elections, despite a

strong possibility of winning them, is an example of the rejection of that form of power on principle (ibid.: 205). The Zapatistas reject sovereignty, defined as the supreme power of a state's authority to self-govern, in favor of autonomy. Reyes and Kauffman trace the history of sovereignty to its basis on Aristotle's notion of 'natural slavery' in which there are some who were born to rule and some who were born to be ruled. As such, in the structure of sovereignty there always exists a ruler and a subject, a relationship that is reinforced by command obedience or *mandato-obedecer*. Thus, sovereign power is inherently based in domination. As such, the Zapatistas do not seek inclusion in sovereignty or to replace the existing sovereignty but rather seek autonomy to abandon the dominance-imperative (*mandato-obedecer)* in relations of sovereignty and promote *mandar obedeciendo* (Reyes and Kauffman 2011). These actions are revolutionary, and yet not by the common understanding of the word that means to overthrow and replace state power. A revolution that does not seek to take power seems like a paradox, but the Zapatistas see this positioning as an opportunity to create an alternative.

> What we have to relate is the paradox that we are. Why a revolutionary army is not aiming to seize power, why an army doesn't fight if that's its job. All the paradoxes we faced [have been] the way we've grown and become strong in a community so far removed from the established culture. (Marcos 2001 quoted in Bahn 2009)

In the Zapatistas' refusal to take power and in their practice of autonomy despite lacking state recognition, they both deny state legitimacy and also strengthen their own autonomous power.

Perhaps one of the most direct forms of Zapatista autonomy is in their self-governance, which has evolved throughout their lifespan. Their self-governance drew

inspiration from the assembly-based governance practices that existed in indigenous communities prior to the uprising in 1994 (Stahler-Sholk 2010). These Pluriethnic Autonomous Regions (RAPs) were created as a regional government based on community consensus between the level of the municipality and the state that intended to create a degree of autonomy to enable indigenous negotiation with the state. This emphasis on creating regional government is significant because a key colonial impact was to strip away regional governance to remove any threat to their domination, so reclaiming this space is an act of indigenous resurgence and resistance to the colonial legacy (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003). Drawing on the RAPs structure, the Zapatistas created Zapatista Autonomous Regions (RAZs), municipal authorities that have diverse approaches to governance and varying responsibilities, some drawing directly from RAP, and others taking on new forms (ibid.)

Since the 1994 militant uprising and creation of RAZ, Zapatista impact has been primarily in non-military organizing. They have worked to construct autonomous spaces that are locally rooted but still connected to transnational networks. This has been vital because in 1996, the Zapatistas chose to reject all government aid, recognizing the constraints that dependency made on their autonomous project. As such, negotiating with transnational organizations, NGOs, and support from civil society has become even more vital in order to meet their material development needs (Stahler-Sholk 2010). Both the movement to non-military governance and organizing as well as the need to negotiate with relationships with external actors led to a restructuring of governance in 2003 (ibid.; Martínez Espinoza 2006; Gledhill 2014)

Juntas de Buen Gobierno and Caracoles

In 2003, the Zapatistas established five regional structures called Caracoles that each have a rotating Council of Good Governance (Juntas de Buen Gobierno, JBGs). The distinction between the Caracol and the Junta is that the Caracol is a space, a community political center where meetings, exchanges, and civil decisions are held, whereas the Junta is the rotating council that is in charge of processes of autonomy, governance, and managing the roles of the community. Together, their purpose is to build autonomy, development, democracy, and resistance (Martínez Espinoza 2006) and to act as a place of encounter between the Zapatistas and external actors, and to specifically work against the rule of the state government, termed the 'mal gobierno' ('bad government').

The Juntas reclaim control over development by renegotiating the relationships with NGOs and civil society as a response to unequal power dynamics that have made aid about charity rather than solidarity. Aid to Zapatista communities has sometimes been unhelpful at best, like the donation of a "pink stiletto heel . . . without its mate[1]," and harmful to autonomy at worst. NGOs and international aid agencies have practiced a "sophisticated charity . . . in their deciding what the communities need, and, without even consulting them, imposing not just specific projects, but also the times and means of their implementation" (EZLN 2003). Aid in this form is disempowering imposition that denies the decision-making power of the autonomous governments. As such, the Juntas seek to reclaim power to self

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[1] Subcomandante Marcos writes: From what our people received in benefit in this war, I saved an example of "humanitarian aid" for the Chiapaneco indigenous, which arrived a few weeks ago: a pink stiletto heel, imported, size 6 1/2 without its mate. I always carry it in my backpack in order to remind myself, in the midst of interviews, photo reports and attractive sexual propositions, what we are to the country after the first of January: a Cinderella. These good people who, sincerely, send us a pink stiletto heel, size 6 1/2, imported, without its mate, thinking that, poor as we are, we'll accept anything, charity and alms. . . .The support we are demanding is for the building of a small part of that world where all worlds fit. It is, then, political support, not charity. (EZLN 2003)

govern, making it clear that they seek "political support, not charity" (ibid.). They negotiate

the terms of NGO activities and charge a ten percent tax on donated resources to spread more

evenly to less-favored communities to attend to the unequal attention of aid. They also

negotiate visitation and approval of research to maintain authority over their representation

(Stahler-Sholk 2010; Martínez Espinoza 2006; Speed 2008). The Juntas monitor community

works, laws, and projects and address conflict and dispute resolution within their jurisdiction.

They seek to ensure political, economic, and social development as well as promote

democracy as defined by the Zapatistas which includes *mandar-obedeciendo*, collective

consensus decision-making, respect to difference, total community participation, and the

denial of authoritative power (Martínez Espinoza 2006).

Because the Juntas exercise the authority to approve research and its publications as a

part of their negotiation with outsiders, Speed (2008) has noted there is a lack of

ethnographic description of the Juntas published due to the long approval process. Detailed

descriptions of their process of governance could be informative to counterinsurgents, so

Speed, like many others, describe the process generally without ethnographic detail. This

authority over research is what Simpson (2007), writing about anthropological research on

Mohawk Nation, explains as "ethnographic refusal." In an indigenous context, "the analysis

of difference" has always had political significance because it is bound up with a history of

colonial domination over representation. Ethnographic refusal, then, is a reclamation of

power over representation, intimately tied to their political rights which have so often relied

on cultural difference. Like this, the Zapatistas' power over research on their communities is

an affirmation of their autonomous authority. The lack of detailed ethnographic research,

then, is insightful in its absence; it shows that the Juntas are exercising this authority over

scholarly representation. As such, the description of the Juntas in what follows is more

focused on their general roles and structures than specific examples.

Each Junta is made up of seven to fifteen members who rotate on a weekly or

bi-weekly basis with alternate members always present at meetings to be engaged and

prepared for rotation. The governance style is true to the name of the Caracol, which means

snail, because of its "frequent rotations [and] rearticulation of justice and democracy to a

social dialogue in spiral rotation, rather than a linear monologue of political efficiency

[which] is designed to obviate political corruption while promoting autonomy and

self-governance" (Bahn 2009).

The Junta members all come from councils of autonomous townships that are chosen

by communities (Speed 2008). The key actors of the Juntas are the indigenous communities

as the creators of Zapatista institutions and the final decision-makers and beneficiaries, the

EZLN as the armed defense of autonomous territories to oppose the Mexican military or

paramilitary forces, and civil society as the provisioner of material development for the

autonomous regions and as assistance in resistance to the official 'bad' government

(Martínez Espinoza 2006).

The outcomes of the Juntas have been uneven–it is a complicated decision-making

process with diverse expressions and so is confusing to navigate and inconsistent (Speed

2008). This is because the Zapatistas have taken on a flexible model, an "autonomy of

autonomies" in that they have convoked "civil society to define their own demands and

modalities according to their local visions, rather than imposing a unified central mode of

self-governance" (Stahler Sholk 2010: 279). Additionally, the cycling of dialogue from the level of the Juntas to the municipalities to the communities and back around again, true to the spiraling of the *caracol,* is a slow process (also like the *caracol*), but it seeks to ensure the expression of true, Zapatista-defined democracy. The Zapatistas recognize that it is difficult and inefficient, but affirm its mission to creating "a new way of doing politics" (Bahn 2009). Its challenges and complexity in the name of true democracy draw the question of whether efficient politics should really be the goal at all if they ignore the voices of the people. In sum, the restructuring to the Juntas has allowed Zapatista autonomy to move onward by creating framework for practice of rights and autonomy (Speed 2008; Reyes and Kaufman 2011).

Though the results are uneven, the actual practices of the Juntas have affected the economic, political, and social realms of Zapatista life (Martínez Espinoza 2006). Economically, they have improved basic subsistence through providing support for food production, development of infrastructure, and the commercialization of products with effective and transparent management.

Socially, the Juntas have increased tensions between Zapatistas and anti-Zapatistas, but they have improved social relations within Zapatista communities without relying on the EZLN. They have instilled an effective justice system (which will be explored a bit later) and have improved cultural expression through autonomous radio and support for artistic endeavors such as videos, publications, and murals (Martínez Espinoza 2006). One shortcoming is that the Juntas have not eradicated women's rights violations. Though the Zapatista Revolutionary Women's Law has a progressive take on women's rights both in

relation to the state and to their families and communities, the implementation of these rights by women has been met with challenges and violence from both the state military and paramilitary forces as well as intimate partners. While the Zapatistas could do more to enforce the implementation of these rights, many Zapatista women do recognize that change is a process and that through improving awareness and education over time, the expression of women's rights will be implemented (Hernández Castillo 1997).

Politically, there has been improved participation of the communities in public matters and institutional communication through the more accessible structure of the Caracol. The structure has consolidated avenues for communication with external organizations and has reorganized strategies for conflict resolution, forest conservation, drug trafficking, and abuse of commercialization. Though there have been improved linkages between civil and military authorities, there is still a heavy presence of the EZLN and a lack of surveillance and control of them from the Juntas. The political turnover, in this sense, has been a gradual process (Martínez Espinoza 2006).

Autonomous Justice

The Juntas also manage the autonomous systems of vigilance, health, education, commerce, production, and justice which are practices of autonomy that do not wait on state recognition (Martínez Espinoza 2006). These systems and the practices of the Juntas as a whole create new social relations and establish political legitimacy by taking on roles that have typically been provided by the state and providing for the people in their jurisdiction (Stahler Sholk 2010). In fact, Zapatista systems have been so effective that their jurisdiction has extended beyond Zapatistas.

Specifically, the Zapatistas autonomous justice system has been successful in both improving justice within Zapatista communities and also in expanding Zapatista jurisdiction beyond their own communities, which serves to promote their project for autonomy. The justice system is more closely aligned with indigenous forms of justice that include mediation, damage repair, and reinserting the guilty back into society. It has arisen as a response to a lack of indigenous access to justice. This model has reduced the crime index in Zapatista communities (Burguete Cal y Mayor 2003; Martínez Espinoza 2006). Due to their alternative model, the autonomous justice system has also appealed to non-Zapatistas for conflict resolution, which Stahler-Sholk (2010) describes here:

> Most of the disputes brought to the Zapatistas' authorities for resolution were actually brought by non-Zapatistas. Their preference for the Zapatista authorities over state institutions may stem from a variety of factors–the perception that Zapatista authorities were more balanced, did not charge money for justice, offered the chance to conduct proceedings in indigenous languages, and generally remedied offenses with restitution rather than retribution– but whatever the reasons for the preference, it reflected the growing legitimacy and therefore empowerment of the Zapatista project. (276)

This coincides with Jean Dennison's work (2014) on the 'logic of recognition' in Osage Nation in which she claims that expanding jurisdiction to non-natives is way for native nations to assert independent self-governance. Similarly, opening the autonomous justice system to non-Zapatistas can serve to promote their project for autonomy by elevating their legitimacy over the state. Their autonomy has always been connected with a resistance to and rejection of state power and its networks of hegemony, and so establishing counter-power in the form of autonomous systems–justice and otherwise–actively works towards their goals by denying state legitimacy and transforming social relations based on their vision for society.

However, this expanded jurisdiction is also a point of conflict: Zapatistas have sometimes arrested non-Zapatistas for breaking their laws even when the culprits do not recognize the Zapatistas' jurisdiction, and this has led to military oppression from the state (Burguete Cal y Mayor 2003: 209). Earle and Simonelli describe one example of this conflict over jurisdiction in which the autonomous Zapatista community Tierra y Libertad apprehended two non Zapatistas according to their autonomous law. The Mexican government saw this as a threat to their legitimacy and used it as a basis for the invasion and attack of Tierra y Libertad. On May 1, 1998 (a national holiday), the government sent 1,500 people to destroy homes, schools, health clinics, *milpas,* and beehives. The conflict over legal jurisdiction was the basis for a disproportionately violent attack on all the systems that formed a basis for Zapatista autonomy, no doubt due to the general threat to state legitimacy that their autonomy poses. On a less overt note, the state has also attempted to deny Zapatista autonomy through a remunicipalization project to absorb Zapatista communities into the state governance (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

Relation to the State

The legal basis for Zapatista autonomy in relation to the state's stance on indigenous rights has changed over time, but has always existed within a restricted definition of rights and autonomy that worked within the interest of the state. The Revolutionary agrarian reform provided the basis for *ejidos* to assimilate indigenous peoples into mestizo peasants to suit the state's national identity (Gledhill 2014). However, in the 1990s under Salinas's presidency, the *ejido* structure was dismantled, removing legal protection for collective land and reducing government support for subsistence production in order to coincide with the

state's neoliberal project (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017). Another aspect of the neoliberal

project was an emphasis on neoliberal multiculturalism, which allows the practice of

indigenous rights only insofar as they do not interfere with the market (Gledhill 2014; Hale

2007). This prevents true self-determined exercise of indigenous rights by limiting the

exercise of rights within the state's framework and maintaining a cultural basis for rights

rather than a political one.

The multicultural legal recognition of indigenous rights has largely been ignored by

the Mexican Supreme Court, where there is no jurisprudence for upholding indigenous

peoples' claim to collective rights (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017). Following the uprising

in 1994, The Zapatistas counseled with civil society to establish a precedent for defending

indigenous rights which they codified in the San Andrés Accords. The San Andrés Accords

sought to break from the state limitation on rights by recognizing indigenous

self-determination and rights to communal autonomy, seeking a political basis for their

rights. After months of negotiating with the Mexican government, the president ruled the

autonomy in the Accords to be unconstitutional (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace

2003). The state has refused indigenous self-determination and instead restricted their

relationship to indigenous peoples as one of paternalism and cooptation as well as

militarization and repression, still with a perspective of indigenous peoples as culturally,

rather than politically, different (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017).

This cultural basis for rights is highly problematic. Latin America has typically

focused on a cultural basis for indigenous rights and autonomy which restricts legal rights to

an imposed colonial definition of authenticity which is a baseless binary created by

modernity. The legalization of 'indianness' thus restricts the change of cultural perspectives and practices because legal rights depend on their preserved authenticity (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017), which is especially harmful in respect to unjust indigenous customs. Indigenous women in particular have been vocal about challenging the traditional-modern binary and the basis of rights on culture because they recognize that there are traditional customs that exclude them from political, social, or economic rights such as the inability to inherit land or participate in government. They have asserted "their rights to maintain cultural differences while, at the same time, demanding the right to change those traditions that oppress or exclude them" (Hernández Castillo 1997). This upsets the traditional-modern binary that have so long formed the basis of indigenous movements by, like the San Andrés Accords, asserting self-determination of identity outside of a limited, state-imposed representation of culture.

The Zapatistas' structures of power enact an alternative discourse by basing governance on indigenous practices and knowledge, rejecting power both in the dominant state institutions and on principle in their own structures, and in reclaiming their identities from the violent representations of the dominant discourse. By critically analyzing their histories, the Zapatistas have identified critiques of the corruption of authority, hierarchical governance, oppressive control, and the potential for a single-party monopoly that the *caracol* structure is designed to prevent through its radical governance style of cycling representatives, dialogue and consensus, capacitation, and *mandar obedeciendo*.

In this new form of governance, the Zapatistas propose to lead not through claiming power but through true representation and capacitation, recognizing individual rights to

autonomy (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003, 186). By building autonomy on regional and community levels, they work to unite municipalities to replace official government structures and thereby make state politics irrelevant within their territories (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003: 188; Bahn 2009: 550; Stahler-Sholk 2010: 274). This denial of state government serves as resistance to the hegemonic discourse by refusing the basis of power that constantly reproduces the discourse, is reinforced by it, and promotes the homogenization of subjects due to the uniform approach to governance which shapes people to fit within its organizing, legibility-creating structures (Scott 1998). They enable autonomy by providing capacitation services like workshops and trainings to the communities rather than imposing control and just giving out resources that create dependence. Encouraging community capacitation over top-down control creates more pluralistic autonomous communities because each becomes the shaped by the people who live in it.

Subjectivity

The formation of alternative subjectivities is shaped by the knowledge and power preferences of a discourse and is vital to undoing values and perspectives from the dominant discourse. Subjectivities are social constructions and so are almost inevitably shaped to the hegemonic development discourse (Stahler-Sholk 2010, 277). In order to unleash utopian potential, people must be free to define their ideal realities without imposed limitations and assumptions about their capability to do so. So in order for the Zapatistas utopian movement to function, they require an alternative discourse that informs subjectivities that enable utopian imaginaries. Here, I will explore the Zapatistas' redefinition of scarcity through self-sufficiency and redefinition of expertise through self-capacitation as well as their

promotion of plurality and reclamation over representation to examine their utopian potential for reshaping subjectivities before exploring how these have played out in practice.

The development discourse is based on certain economic logics that are steeped in a subjectivity of helplessness and scarcity that creates economic value only by devaluing all non-commodities. The economic 'law of scarcity' does not denote an actual physical scarcity, but rather a crucial subjectivity of such that enables economic growth to continue. However, since this same economic system inherently creates impoverishment by commodifying basic needs while marginalizing masses to maintain a class of wage laborers at the brink of survival, the scarcity can become very real. Like this, people in Chiapas faced real scarcity from the neoliberal state-induced agricultural decline in the 60s and 70s which lead many Chiapanecos to seek land and form communities in the Lacandon jungle to meet their basic needs (Earle and Simonelli 2005).

Esteva highlights that "for people on the margins, disengaging from the economic logic of the market . . . has become the very condition for survival" (2010: 17). This is precisely the path that the Zapatistas have taken. Their focus on self-sufficiency, especially in regards to *milpa* cultivation and creation of autonomous schools and health centers, has developed alternatives to meet survival needs outside of the market's economic logic. Though there are challenges to the autonomous production of all basic needs and provision of services, moving towards self-sufficiency and self-capacitation takes steps towards creating a subjectivity that opposes scarcity, where wants and means become indistinguishable. A citizen of a Zapatista resistance community in Chiapas highlights this mentality:

> What do we need to live? We need food: we can grow it. We need clothes: our
> grandmas can make them. We need education: we already have our own autonomous

schools, teaching our values and history. We need houses: well, we can look for other means to build them, like adobe. (quoted in Earle and Simonelli 2005: 190)

The freedom to define needs and values in this way and to take action to pursue them is essentially a movement towards utopia. This perspective directly opposes the hegemonic discourse by refusing the subjectivity of scarcity that the economic logic creates. The Zapatistas help enable this subjectivity of self-sufficiency by supporting community measures towards pursuing these alternatives, both materially and discursively such as in their support for community cooperatives as explored earlier or the autonomous health and education systems that will be explored later on.

Since the goal of the autonomous project is to oppose the dominant system, this self-sufficiency is further important as preparation for the system's demise. From their interactions with Zapatista communities, Earle and Simonelli elucidate that "Zapatismo strives for this: if the global system went down, as the children assure . . . they would not be greatly inconvenienced except for the loss of machetes and maybe those plastic jugs for hauling water. It would not be life threatening" (2005: 290). A crucial aspect of creating self-sufficiency to resist the subjectivity of scarcity is through self-capacitation which resists professionalization and expertization of the development discourse.

Professionalization, in accordance with the economic logic of scarcity, leads to a learned helplessness that prevents action towards social mobilization and leaves communities with problems unaddressed. The Zapatistas resist the subjectivity of helplessness from professionalization through their practices in self-capacitation. They actively support the capacitation of their communities so that everyone can become skilled to support their community's needs without reliance on outsiders. For example, in the community of Cerro

Verde, integration with the Zapatistas led to an increased access to workshops to enhance

self-sufficiency practices, health and hygiene learning and instructor training, and the

designing of a primary school curriculum to serve the interests of the resistance and

emphasize knowledge that the community found to be most locally applicable. As a whole,

the community became more capacitated to help themselves in meeting their needs (Earle

and Simonelli 2005). This discourse of capacitation is a basis to the pursuit of utopia because

it opens the possibility to creating the best life of the community through the action of the

very same community members. It empowers people to take matters into their own hands.

Zapatismo as an alternative discourse does not neatly fit into existing indigenous or

modern discourses. Although some of the values defined in the discourse do draw from local

indigenous values and cultural traditions, it is not fitting to call it an indigenous discourse.

The Zapatistas do not restrict their understanding of utopia to a sort of idyllic rural

preservation of indigenous culture. That sort of anachronization that limits indigenous

identity to a pre-contact, traditional role has been the result of a racially violent state project

to assimilate indigenous people and marginalize those that resist the state (Hale 2007). In

their support for collective and individual rights and questioning of state-imposed definitions,

they do align with existing Latin American indigenous movements (Harvey 2016), but within

the process of defining values within the discourse, the Zapatistas critically analyze

problematic indigenous traditions like gender roles and hierarchical power (Torres Rojas

2012: 153; Shenker 2012; Hernández Castillo 1997). Additionally, the Zapatista discourse is

not a modernization discourse. While the Zapatistas do utilize modern technology like the

internet for promoting their cause on a global scale, they are not bound to the imperative of technological progress and recognize value in traditional practices and ways of knowing.

Post-colonial thinkers often define this third way that is neither modern nor traditional as a hybrid. Hybridity creates an alternative discourse through the self-directed adoption of certain aspects of modernity that creates a more natural process of adaptation. It both requires freedom (because people need to be able to self-determine which aspects of modernity to adopt), and creates freedom (because the hybrid space upsets the binary between modern and traditional) (Cesaire 1956). However, hybridity assumes two separate, static, and pure wholes that are combined to create a third space that, while different, is considered equally both static wholes in accordance with the biological understanding of hybridity.

Rifkin (2017) and West (2006) analyze this third way as a multiplicity instead. Multiplicity recognizes many distinct ways that are not always commensurable. Indeed, it recognizes that, in the interaction of discourses, there can be evolution from mutual influence without inherently changing or abandoning the original nor being completely incorporated into one dominant way. I would argue, following the ideas from Rifkin (2017) and West (2006), that Zapatismo is a multiplicity. It draws heavily from the local context and history of indigenous traditions and Mexican indigenous resistance centered around political collective rights and also works within the present-day context that includes modern technologies and finding creative ways to engage with the economy. The modernity of the movement does not make it any less about indigenous rights, nor does the emphasis on indigenous ways of knowing make it any less modern. Instead, it emphasizes the ability of an alternative

discourse to create self-defined utopia for social transformation because it provides freedom from the hegemonic discourse.

In this multiplicity and in the autonomous people-centered design of their governance, the Zapatistas step outside of the constraining limitations of the dominant discourse to create space for plurality. This appreciation for plurality is defined in the Fourth Declaration of the Zapatistas: "in the world we want, many worlds fit" (Bahn 2009). Plurality recognizes diversity in people and expands the support base of the movement by refusing rigid definitions that can be exclusionary. It is evident in the structures of government within the communities, where, in accordance to the diverse people that create them, have diverse styles of governance, names, degrees of autonomy, and influence over the communities (Rus, Hernández Castillo, and Mattiace 2003). Considering subjectivity as an individual's sense of identity and relating to the world, emphasizing diversity and plurality in this way is empowering because it opens space for self-defined identities, not forcing them to be shaped to a hegemonic discourse. Plurality also has the added benefit of drawing global support by allowing the world's subalterns to identify with the movement (Melenotte 2015). This, in part, comes from the refusal to identify as solely an indigenous movement. Though the Zapatistas have an obvious basis in the struggles of indigenous peoples in Chiapas, they see that their opposition to the exploitation of neoliberalism is a struggle that is shared widely. They also challenge the way that indigenous peoples have been represented in the development discourse through reclaiming that representation.

The Zapatistas reclaim power over indigenous representation and recognition to resist the dichotomizing practices of *indigenismo* that have been enforced by the state government

and further imposed through its policies of neoliberal multiculturalism. Essentially, *indigenismo* created two parts to the indigenous person–the vindictive, radical, violent, backwards, rural 'other,' as well as the separate, modernized 'indio permitido', who is allowed to exist in the eye of the state only because they adopt the dominant discourse and work with the government's neoliberal project to reinforce and endorse the divide (Hale 2007). The government both creates and rewards the 'indio permitido' and condemns the 'other' to racialized poverty and social exclusion (ibid.). This divide forces a specific definition upon indigenous peoples that also echoes the dichotomy created by anachronization; indigenous people are either rural, poor, disempowered, and racialized, or completely modern, urban, and not really authentically indigenous anymore and therefore unable to claim rights to land. In this way, it revokes indigenous power over identity. Above all, it is an expression of domination and oppression from the systems of power because it provides a limited standard that must be met and extorts assimilation into a 'superior' mass.

In opposition to *indigenismo* is *indianismo*, which aims for the liberation of indigenous society through recognizing indigenous peoples as political entities and opposing the neoliberal integration (Leyva Solano 2005). *Indianismo* holds that indigenous civilization can function as an alternative to the Western project while not being limited by cultural notions of 'authenticity' that prevent political consideration, and the Zapatistas built off existing networks of *indianista* organizations to form political alliances united under the common demand for constitutional recognition of indigenous rights (ibid.). In so doing, they have resisted the neoliberal discourse guiding the state assimilation project.

Hale suggests that resistance to neoliberal multiculturalism requires a process of rearticulation to redefine the terms of indigenous struggle and challenge the dichotomy to create a new basis for indigenous rights that are not limited to a return to rural culture. However, while Hale contends that the radical refusal of the EZLN can become an "othering" process that reinforces the dichotomy and instead calls for a renegotiation of the terms between the state and indigenous peoples of Mexico, I would argue that Zapatismo is essentially a process of rearticulation that imagines a new type of relationship and terms with the state–one that rejects state legitimacy after a history of failed negotiations and builds autonomy without seeking state recognition.

Zapatismo's engagement with multiplicity and utopian ideals creates a strong allure that makes it more suited to enable wide social transformation. By creating a place for non-dominant ways of knowing and being, it becomes inclusive to the 'common-sense' or popular beliefs that are excluded from the dominant discourse. This inclusivity through multiplicity helps to build the strength of Zapatismo as an alternative discourse (Leyva Solano 2005; Harvey 2016). As Gramsci argues, a new common sense must be established to create social transformation (1988). Accordingly, the Zapatista uprising, by building a discourse that revalues indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and subjectivities more equally, has brought about massive social transformation and continues to influence non-hegemonic social movements today. Since development as a discourse informs action, solidifies structures of power, and maintains hegemony, resistance to that hegemony must originate at the discursive level as well. For true social transformation and the internalization of the alternative discourse, it must be put into practice.

Discourse in Practice: enabling autonomy and altering subjectivities

As Subcomandante Marcos has said "there is a time to ask power to change, there is a time to demand change from power, and there is a time to *exercise* power" (Reyes and Kaufman 2011: 514). The Zapatistas have exercised power by creating autonomous communities with autonomous social services to both deny state legitimacy and power; in this, they practice their alternative discourse to create social transformation. This approach is "a form of 'prefigurative politics' that involves acting on the new patterns of relations that are the ultimate goal" based on the recognition that "putting a new ideology into practice is the key to creating fundamental transformation and the internalization of the ideology" (Stahler-Sholk 2010: 275). To both serve the basic needs of their communities and to practice their non-hegemonic discourse, the Zapatistas have established autonomous education and health services. By examining these autonomous social services, I will explore how the discourse of the Zapatistas actually works to alter the lived realities of those in Zapatista communities.

Autonomous Education System

Education and literacy rates in Chiapas are abysmal. Census statistics show that in 2006, nearly half of Chiapas' population over 15 years old had not completed primary education and a fifth had never received any instruction at all (Torres Rojas 2012). The lack of formal education is even worse for indigenous populations. In 2005, 43% of indigenous adults in Chiapas were illiterate, with Chiapas holding the highest rate of illiteracy in Mexico (Shenker 2011; Torres Rojas 2012). I will note, though, that since literacy is by no means the sole signifier of education, which can take many forms including oral tradition and practical

knowledge, these statistics point to a lack of formal state schooling. Recent studies from the

National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy in Mexico show that there

are significant correlations between poverty, rurality, indigeneity, and educational

disadvantage (Khoo and Walsh 2016: 15).

The cause of such educational neglect is due to the very discourse that the Zapatistas

oppose. The government does not invest in education in Chiapas simply because there is no

'return on investment.' Since rural, indigenous poor are unlikely to contribute to the national

economy, Chiapas receives the least and the worst resources (Torres Rojas 2012: 138, 139).

Even when education is received, though, it is a tool of development to promote the

dominant discourse. It serves to work within the structure of neoliberalism and its

assumptions, reproduces inequality, and acts as institutionalized surveillance (Khoo and

Walsh 2016: 11). Furthermore, conventional state education acts as violence towards

indigenous peoples both directly and through undermining their language and traditional

ways of knowing. Teachers have been known to physically and verbally attack indigenous

children and call them racial pejoratives (Torres Rojas 2012). In government schools,

students are forced to learn Spanish to eradicate indigenous languages to assimilate them into

the national identity (ibid.: 137). Additionally, the schools are directly opposed to traditional

forms of knowing and ways of learning: indigenous learning is typically active through

engaging with the community whereas in government schools, students learn passively in a

classroom. The curriculum often reinforces negative stereotypes of indigenous peoples and

devalues indigenous knowledge and rural livelihoods, leading students to believe that the

only way to make a living is to find waged work outside of the community (Khoo and Walsh

2016). Thus, to combat illiteracy, violence, and the homogenization of the dominant

discourse, the Zapatistas created an alternative education based on Zapatismo.

The Zapatistas put their discourse into action through basing their education on a

critical pedagogy as resistance against oppression, drawing from the pedagogies of both

Freire and Che Guevara which align with their discourse. Freire argues that the social,

political, and economic domination of the poor prevents critical awareness of the world from

which they can only be liberated by a process of conscientization that situates their

oppression in its context and is led by a liberatory educator (Shenker 2012: 434). However,

Esteva, Stuchul, and Prakash (2005) argue that Freirean pedagogy actually serves the very

discourse that it claims to oppose. The pedagogy is still based on colonizing assumptions

about what makes a human being by focusing (like the very same development discourse that

he critiques) on rationalism, a modern sense of individuality, and the abstract thinking of

Western consciousness. It further serves the neoliberal discourse in the creation of a double

bind in which the problem of a domesticating education requires conscientization, but that

liberation must come from a liberating educator. In this way, it does not capacitate people to

free themselves of their own accord, but rather switches their dependence to a different

external figure (ibid.: 3). This is clearly counter to the Zapatistas' movement towards

autonomy and self-capacitation. Additionally, within Freirean pedagogy, rebellion never

transcends subjectivity; people are always just subjects who resist the system without

adopting new ways of thinking and acting that go beyond the dominant system (Esteva,

Stuchul, and Prakash 2005: 25). Again, this is quite different from the Zapatista movement

that focuses on creative resistance by building an alternate system. However, though Freire

created a pedagogy still based in Western assumptions, that is not to say that there are not

valuable lessons that can be taken away for creating a liberatory education. The Freirean

emphasis on participation, dialogue, and non-authoritarianism that enables students to shape

their education is especially relevant in the Zapatistas' autonomous school system.

The pedagogy of Che Guevara builds on some of these same lessons. According to

Che Guevara's pedagogy, education must work to change the subjectivities of students to

develop the values necessary for creating a new society. It emphasizes a participatory and

horizontal model in which all members of society learn together, through action, and free

from hierarchy (Shenker 2011: 434). This emphasis on working interactively in shaping

education encompasses the distinction between learning and education that Esteva, Stuchul

and Prakash use as a critique of Freire. They compare 'education' as a "passive dependence

on the system that provides education" to 'learning' as the "autonomous capacity for building

creative relationships with others and with nature, relationships that generate knowing and

wisdom," (2005: 28). Based on this distinction, the Zapatista autonomous education system

is more focused on 'learning' than it is on 'education.' They draw key lessons from both

Freire and Che Guevara including active participation, horizontality, dialogue, and

community connections to create a system of education informed by new structures of power

that works to both address the neglect and violence of state education and to instill Zapatista

subjectivities by providing capacitation to strengthen their communities to build further

autonomy. Next, I will explore how.

Drawing from their discourse and alternative pedagogies, the autonomous education

system of the Zapatistas works to rescue ancestral knowledge and historical memory and to

fuel political transformation to continue in the fight for autonomy (Torres Rojas 2012). The recognition of forms of knowing outside of the dominant scientific, economic rationality is vital to the practice of the alternative discourse. Just as state education reproduces the dominant discourse of individualizing and homogenizing neoliberalism to create subjects that engage in the global capitalist market, the autonomous education seeks to reproduce solidarity, collectivity, political ethic, and indigenous culture to create active, empowered subjects to strengthen autonomous communities. Shenker (2012) analyzes the success of the objectives of an autonomous school in Morelia which include goals to protect indigenous culture, values, and language, support indigenous rights, promote gender equality, develop education for the rural context, and strengthen community independence from external organizations.

To achieve this, the Zapatistas use a participatory, multilingual curriculum that is designed by each autonomous community and taught by education promoters through *enseñar aprendiendo*, which means learning while teaching. This echoes *mandar obedeciendo*, drawing a comparison between their non-hierarchical approach to both education and governance, and also shows how Guevara's participatory, non-hierarchical pedagogy has been implemented. The education promoters are able to promote the Zapatista discourse because they are chosen out of their own communities and thus are integrally connected to the community knowledge. They are capacitated to be educators by teachers, doctors, and university students that are brought in by the Zapatista base before returning to their communities to teach. Because they are part of the community, the promoters teach in their local language and are integrated into their local culture, avoiding the racial

discrimination and language violence of the government schools (Torres Rojas 2012;

Shenker 2012). Since the curriculum of the autonomous schools is designed by the

communities, its scheduling and material reflects each community's needs to enable the

promotion of their culture and values. In the Morelia school, the timetable and calendar

schedule of the schools are structured around agricultural commitments by not holding class

during crucial planting and harvesting seasons and by teaching agricultural methods as a part

of the curriculum. This includes communal work on the school's sugarcane plantation which

teaches students how to work cooperatively, a key skill to prepare them for living and

working in the communities (Shenker 2012).

Students also work to both rescue cultural knowledge and act as agents in their own

education by interviewing elders on their histories, stories, and culture. They emphasize the

importance of indigenous cosmology and identity but through a critical lens, recognizing the

need to adapt problematic traditions such as the oppression of women (Torres Rojas 2012).

The support of indigenous values and culture in this way serves to resist neoliberal

homogenization that globally creates a culture and set of values around capitalism. In

following Freirean ideas of conscientization, the curriculum also teaches an indigenous

perspective on history, studying the pre-conquest Mayan societies, indigenous resistance to

colonialism, and the Mexican Revolution to place Zapatista resistance within the broader

context.

Even from a young age, students are taught political concepts such as neoliberalism,

command authority, class division, communal decision making, and *mandar-obedeciendo* to

create a politically literate and aware population (Shenker 2011). To sustain the Zapatista

uprising into the future, they require the mobilization of the youth. In this sense, education is multifunctional: it provides a response to the lack or poor quality of state education, it supports the expression of autonomy by creating social services to prevent dependence on the state, and it also intends to inspire youth engagement in the Zapatistas' political project. Part of the work in achieving this is to create subjectivity changes through practicing the discourse. By actively participating in non-hierarchical education, working communally, and studying their own culture, history, and values, the young Zapatistas live out the discourse and thus are shaped by Zapatismo rather than the dominant discourse that the state education promotes.

Overall, the community autonomous education projects have been successful as a direct solution to the neglect and violence of state education, in furthering Zapatista autonomy, and in promoting new subjectivities that align with Zapatismo. The Zapatistas have created more than 500 autonomous schools in Chiapas, providing culturally relevant and non-hierarchical education to communities that had lacked appropriate or available education (Torres Rojas 2012). Shenker's analysis (2012) of the autonomous school in Morelia shows that they have been highly successful on most objectives including their goals to protect indigenous culture, values, and language, develop education for the rural context, and strengthen community independence from external organizations. Their language protection has been successful through teaching classes mostly in the Tojolabal language and creating innovative alternative methods to teach reading and writing Tojolabal through culturally relevant picture books. Additionally, the communal work in the curriculum and active participation in the learning process is successfully promoting Zapatista values and

preparing students for a variety of important roles in their communities. It is, essentially, a personalized preparatory school.

Other objectives have been less successful, but are still constantly improving. These include their support of indigenous rights and promotion of gender equality. Shenker cites that progress is still being made on educating the promoters so that they are able to speak to all sides of political debates, but it is successful in that students show interest and political consciousness and become confident to protect their rights. In regards to gender equality, the schools are gradually improving: the ratio of boys to girls in schools is nearly equal, even in secondary education. This is a stark improvement from the previous generation, where it was not uncommon for girls to never attend school or to leave at a very young age to help their mothers with domestic labor. This equalizing education is leading to equal qualification for positions of leadership and responsibilities in the communities, roles that many in the the older generations of women have not been able to take on because of their lack of education. However, there are still many gender roles that create an imbalance in labor like the women's intensive role of preparing tortillas each day (Shenker 2012).

A further challenge of the autonomous education is that they are not recognized as legitimate by the state, so students that graduate cannot qualify for universities. Though many in the community do not see this as problem because they are primarily an agricultural community (ibid.), this still creates limitations to the opportunities of the students. However, even this limitation is being addressed by the autonomous university, Universidad de la Tierra (University of the Earth, or Unitierra), and autonomous tertiary education, Centro Indígena de Capacitación Integral (Indigenous Center for Integral Capacitation, or CIDECI).

Both work to facilitate the capacitation of students to work towards locally appropriate development alternatives to build community autonomy (Khoo and Walsh 2016). Their main goals are to strengthen collectivities, democratize education, politics, and social relations, and promote horizontality and plurality. Unitierra addresses this through practical learning on an individual and self-directed level and the recovery of traditional knowledge that has been devalued through state education programs. Unitierra and CIDECI are both associated with the Zapatistas, though CIDECI is more directly related, with the majority of their students coming from Zapatista communities and Zapatista autonomous primary and secondary schooling. CIDECI enables students to serve their communities by focusing education on training and instruction within workshop settings to learn artisanal and vocational skills to a higher professional level (ibid.). This degree of capacitation can help to build more autonomy in their communities through equipping community members with some of the higher level skills that usually require external dependence.

In all levels of the autonomous schools, the capacitation of students to develop solutions to their communities' problems and to critically engage with the political context that creates them combats the learned helplessness and dependence that the dominant discourse promotes through professionalization. This focus on capacitation upsets the power structures of the dominant discourse by distributing power horizontally and also promotes the Zapatistas' project of building autonomy. Furthermore, the education basis in traditional ways contributes to resisting neoliberal homogenization. By building off traditional forms of knowing and cultural values that are decided by each autonomous community, this structure of education works to defend plurality from being subsumed into the singular dominant

discourse with its specific forms of rational, scientific knowledge, hierarchical power structures, and subjectivities of professionalization and economization. However, for all of its successes, the autonomous education system still has challenges.

In striving to be an autonomous systems of education, the Zapatista schools struggle with negotiating their relationship to the state in regards to their political project. Since the Zapatistas eschew attempts at reform in favor of taking power on their own regardless of state recognition, they do not have a direct effect larger than their own autonomous communities. The growth of their schools has not prevented the continuing atrocities of state schooling that discriminate and assimilate indigenous peoples (Khoo and Walsh 2016, 22). This opens the continuing debate around weighing energy put into state reform and collaboration versus the rejection of the state and creation of autonomous alternatives to it. This same dilemma of state reform or rejection is a paradox in regards to the neoliberal agenda. Though the Zapatistas' rejection of the state is due to their opposition of its neoliberal discourse which, with its assumptions of the universality of free market global capitalism, led to the plight and continued exploitation of poor rural indigenous peoples in Chiapas, that very same rejection of state services suits the neoliberal agenda which aims to reduce the power of the state in favor of privatization to allow everything to come under the power of the efficient market. Thus, in their rejection of state services, the Zapatistas are, in a way, supporting the state's neoliberal agenda. However, the Zapatista discourse that provides the basis for the communities and autonomous education is inherently anti-neoliberal because of its promotion of self-sufficiency for a steady-state economy and communitarian principles (ibid.). Additionally, since their schools are not officially recognized, their ability to change

the state government from within is limited because graduates do not have technically legible qualifications. Even through the challenges though, the autonomous education provides an example to the the function of the discourse in practice.

In sum, autonomous education in Zapatista communities is both creating alternatives to the slow and direct violence of the state schools and also contributing to the promotion of Zapatismo through shaping alternative subjectivities in the youth. The capacitation of education promoters to serve their own communities and work with them to create a curriculum that is based on the needs of the community shows how the Zapatista emphasis on plurality and capacitation can be mobilized to create effective alternatives. Through basing the structure and curriculum of the autonomous schools upon Zapatismo, the community, and especially the children, put the discourse into practice which leads to the development of new subjectivities. Changing subjectivities is not an immediate or conscious decision, but in pointedly practicing alternatives in their schools, the students raised in the Zapatista communities are instilled with the values and subjectivities of Zapatismo. A valuable contribution to research, I think, would be a comparative study of subjectivities of children raised in Zapatista communities compared to similar non-Zapatista communities to qualify the difference and clearly see the effects of living out the discourse. Though Melenotte and Mentinis both argue that Zapatismo itself is not enough to create real change against the hegemonic system, autonomous education at least shows that the discourse is able to inspire real solutions and contribute to altering subjectivities. The process is gradual, but I think the existing successes of the autonomous education and the structural design that seeks to constantly improve, adapt, and further capacitate to increase autonomy shows that

Zapatismo is indeed contributing to the progress of the movement against hegemony. Now, I will similarly examine the Zapatista's autonomous health centers to offer another analysis of how Zapatismo has worked in practice and how it has contributed to both tangible outcomes and subjectivity changes.

Autonomous Health System

Health care in Chiapas has, like state education, inflicted both direct and slow violence against indigenous peoples and especially indigenous women due to neoliberal logic, racism, and classism, all embedded in coloniality. The neoliberal logic of the state has led to the privatization of health systems to reduce state costs and include everything into the logic of the market under encouragement from the IMF and World Bank (Amaroz Solaegui 2011). This privatization and subsequent segregation of health services by class has led to an increase in the rates of health disparity and preventable deaths (ibid.; Cuevas 2007). Chiapas in particular has some of the worst healthcare in the nation, with population to hospital bed ratios far more imbalanced than the global recommendations (Cuevas 2007). The lack of access to health services, exacerbated by state neoliberal policies, is a form of structural violence (Gupta 2012) because it permits the preventable deaths of the poor and especially the indigenous poor.

One of the most common preventable deaths is maternal death, making up 52% of preventable deaths, though it is even believed that 40-45% of maternal deaths go unreported (Williams 2012). These preventable deaths, especially maternal deaths, have multiple causes–people do lack access to health clinics, but also the violence that indigenous people (primarily women) face in state health clinics discourages them from seeking medical care.

According to one physician-anthropologist, "indigenous women from Chiapas preferred to die at home from childbirth than be exposed to the abuse exerted upon them in public hospitals throughout the state...[particularly] racist denigration, political interrogation and forced sterilization" (Williams 2012). Forced sterilization is a form of genocide, and when it is used specifically against indigenous populations is ethnocide.

Forced sterilization as well as other coerced birth control practices is one of the more sinister outcomes of the development discourse which has emphasized the importance of population control for poverty reduction (ibid.). Based on a Malthusian rationality, the World Bank under Robert McNamara promoted population control as a logical way to improve economic wealth. Like the development argument that growth improves living conditions by increasing the size of the pie rather than dividing it more evenly, this approach similarly avoids redistribution by instead reducing the number of people that want a slice. This same logic has been promoted by both Dwight D. Eisenhower and Lyndon B. Johnson in foreign policy and large development aid foundations, as well as by many Northern environmentalists. As Eduardo Galeano put it,

> [The] aim [of population control] is to justify the very unequal income distribution between countries and social classes, to convince the poor that poverty is the result of the children they don't avoid having, and to dam the rebellious advance of the masses . . . in Latin America it is more hygienic and effective to kill *guerrilleros* in the womb than in the mountains or the streets" (Galeano 1973)

Population control through forced sterilization is thus a highly political project because it is aligned with specific political positioning that rejects redistribution, and furthermore, has historically functioned to repress state dissent, making the Zapatistas more likely victims of this violence.

Forced or coerced sterilization is a major fear for women in Chiapas, and understandably so: "according to hospital records (in Comitán), of the 2,931 women who delivered children in the hospital in 1996, 866 were sterilized after delivery," (Williams 2012). Though the hospital stated that all of these sterilizations were consensual, there are concerns around the language barrier, coercive practices during painful labor, and lack of full procedural disclosure. A third party research team estimated that a third of women had not taken part in the decision to be sterilized (ibid.). Thus, sterilization is a direct, genocidal violence against rural indigenous women in Chiapas from the state health clinics that has both racial and development discourse origins.

The clinics also pose more indirect and slower forms of violence that prevent proper health care or discourage people from seeking care. State health clinics provide services exclusively in Spanish and do not recognize traditional medicinal practices which both discounts and devalues indigenous ways and creates barriers to proper care (ibid.). Mayan medicine has existed since 300 AD in a variety of practices including "the curandero [healer], hierbero [herb gatherer], pulsador [pulse taker], Ilol [physician], [and] partera [midwife]," (Cuevas 2007: 4). However, this traditional medicine has been severely discounted by the biomedical model of state healthcare which is steeped in the professionalization of the development discourse and so assumes that the expert opinion of the doctor is superior to any of the experiences or knowledge of the non-expert patient. Also a product of this discourse is the assumption that the rationally scientific approaches of modern medicine are the only valid approaches to medicine. This is exacerbated by racist

beliefs that posit indigenous people as inherently ignorant (Williams 2012). In this way, state health clinics are products of and promote the development discourse.

The logic of neoliberalism that has led to the privatization of healthcare and the growing health disparity as well as the related slow and direct violence from clinic physicians show how the development discourse has had real, tangible effects on the indigenous people in Chiapas. Furthermore, the racial denigration, mistreatment, and professionalization that devalues indigenous peoples and their practices show the related effects on subjectivity that stem from the biomedical model by treating people as though their traditional ways have no place in modernity and instilling a fear of state medicine due to violence and sterilization. However, the Zapatistas have found resistance to these violences and causal discourse by creating an autonomous health system which I will examine in the following to explore how Zapatismo can form a basis for alternatives to the dominant system.

Foucault speaks about biopower to explain the historical shift of politics that has repositioned power as a generative, life giving force through discipline over individual bodies and control of populations. Thus, in order to oppose power, resistance must work against the state's ability to administer life to begin with. In this sense, seeking reform by making demands of the state to provide life-giving services only reinforces the state's power (Foucault 1978). Resistance, then, as the Zapatistas have taken it in regards to their autonomous health clinics, must deny the life-giving power of the state by creating autonomous alternatives rather than seeking change from within the state.

The Zapatistas have developed the Zapatista Autonomous Health System (Sistema de Salud Autónomo Zapatista, SSAZ) to defend the right to health, which they have defined as

the ability "to live without humiliation," which includes living conditions, housing, nutrition, labour, justice, and education (Amaroz Solaegui 2011; Cuevas 2007). The Zapatistas believe that everyone is entitled to health care whether they are affiliated with the Zapatistas or not and that all patients should be treated with respect to their dignity, culture, beliefs, and in their own language. This is achieved because, like with their autonomous education structure, the health promoters come from the communities that they serve (Cuevas 2007; Williams 2012). Their healthcare structure has bases in both the aid intervention during the indigenous uprisings of the 1970s and 80s as well as Organization of Indigenous Medics in Chiapas (OMIECH). The aid intervention in the 70s and 80s from the Catholic Church, NGOs, universities, and National Institute of Indigenous Affairs brought allopathic medicine and methodologies to enable communities to self-treat, including first aid training and courses on common diseases (Cuevas 2007). OMIECH is neither a federal nor Zapatista organization, but has provided a foundation for Zapatista autonomous health by creating a framework for the autonomous organization of indigenous health practitioners and beginning the recuperation of indigenous Chiapan medical knowledge including birthing practices and herbal medicine (Williams 2012: 71).

Both of these influences left a legacy of self-capacitation and integration of a plurality of medicinal approaches. The health promoters are rural, peasant and typically indigenous peoples who are capacitated by the Zapatistas in diagnostic abilities, treatments, and preventative measures from the perspective of Western medicine in order to resolve the most common health problems and provide preventative healthcare. When they detect risks that require higher levels of attention, they do refer people to the state hospitals for more

intensive levels of care (Amaroz Solaegui 2011), but Zapatistas often face violence and harassment from state military that guards the entrance to public hospitals (Williams 2012). This capacitation is a key part of the Zapatistas project for autonomy and emblematic of the discourse that seeks to empower and enable people to have agency in altering their realities. It promotes a subjectivity of competence and independence by facilitating communities to meet their own needs which contrasts the development discourse that fosters a mentality of learned dependence.

Also in accordance with the Zapatistas' promotion of indigenous values, there is a movement in the SSAZ to integrate healthcare with traditional medicine from herbalists, curanderos (healers), hueseros (bone and muscle specialists), and especially parteras (midwives). The health promoters of the communities are also mobilized to recover knowledge of healing and medicine from elders in addition to their capacitation in Western medicine. There are moves now to realistically integrate natural and chemical medicines by starting with natural methods which are more preventative measures and work slower and then resorting to chemical medicines when necessary (Or 2014; Rodriguez 2013). This incorporation of traditional medicines resists the devaluation of indigenous knowledge and homogenization of the development discourse in regards to scientific knowledge. It supports the plurality of medical practices by recognizing the value of both traditional and modern medicines. The practice of self-capacitation for building autonomy in the Zapatista health systems demonstrate the enactment of the theory of Zapatismo, but the tangible results on lived experiences of health have been extremely powerful as well.

The Zapatista autonomous health clinics have significantly contributed to health in Chiapas and helps to promote their project of autonomy, though they do still face some challenges. The health rates in Chiapas, including of people, land, air, water, plants, and animals, are now even better than that of cities, and though this positive outcome as well as the ones that follow are difficult to distinguish from improved education, food, agricultural ecology, and housing support, it is evident that the autonomous health clinics have indeed contributed (Rodriguez 2013; Cuevas 2007). By 2007, there were already 200 community health clinics and 25 autonomous regional health clinics, some of which were over ten years old, as well as special clinics for dentistry, gynecology, and optometry (Cuevas 2007). Since these clinics are run by the communities themselves in a participatory manner, they are able to avoid the previous abuses of the state clinics including racism, lack of translation, and direct violence like forced sterilization, which encourages more people to seek medical attention and preventative health. One particularly successful case shows that in a jungle region where maternal mortality had been very high, the creation of two autonomous clinics successfully eliminated maternal deaths for spans of more than seven years through cooperation between health outreach workers and midwives and the recognition of women's traditional knowledge (ibid., 12). Thus, there have been very tangible positive outcomes from the creation of the autonomous health clinics, showing the strength of Zapatismo to create viable alternatives.

However, there are still challenges faced and progress to be made in the autonomous health model. Though there is some integration with traditional medicine (Or 2014; Rodriguez 2013; Cuevas 2007), the healthcare model itself is based on modern medicine and

has failed to fully develop a medical practice based on indigenous models of healthcare

(Cuevas 2007). The cooperation with traditional medicine practitioners has been minimal

with the exception of the midwives who have been more integrated (ibid.). Progress could be

made to critically compare the effects of traditional practices to chemical medicines and

modern practices on the health of people and the environment to establish a practice that is a

fair and critical multiplicity. Additionally, there are still challenges in finding funding and

negotiating with the national health services. The Zapatistas draw health funding from the

national and international community of sympathizers, from community cooperative

production, and some from charging medical fees for non-Zapatistas since they do not

contribute to the community work. Though the autonomous health system has three levels

(community, municipal, and caracol) of organization and care, the highest caracol level

works as more of a support committee to keep the other levels running rather than providing

a higher degree of care. For this, the autonomous health clinics still refer patients to state

medical establishments and also use vaccines supplied by state medicine (Cuevas 2007).

Reliance on the state in this regard is not ideal, but at the same time, this interaction is only

as a last resort, and the progression of the autonomous health clinic in such a short period

might point to further development of the system to establish more specialized levels of care

to reduce said reliance. However, taken as a whole, the relative success of the autonomous

health clinics speaks to the practicality of Zapatismo.

   The Zapatista autonomous health system demonstrates what results come out of

putting Zapatismo into practice, and in that, shows how it functions in creating utopian

alternatives. The autonomous health clinics work as more than a collective organization for

health–they also are an exercise in indigenous rights and autonomy by providing a platform for more culturally appropriate care and working as an acting defense against the violence of the state health clinics. Like in the autonomous education system, the capacitation of the health promoters and personalized care for each community counters both the learned helplessness and homogenization of the development discourse. The autonomous health system design, in the way it capacitates rural peasants to treat their own communities and creates networks of support, is a design that is resilient because it is flexible and decentralized. Due to its strong community basis, it can grow and expand to more services and wider populations without losing the rootedness of care that distinguishes it. Its effectiveness in reducing maternal mortality and providing preventative healthcare and education more broadly shows how the basis on Zapatismo drives the creation of autonomous alternatives based on new forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivity. Zapatismo, through enabling utopian pursuit of new realities, is indeed able to create viable alternatives that address real problems caused by neglect and mistreatment by the state. Autonomous health, like autonomous education, continues to prove that 'another world is possible'. Next, I will explore what the function of the Zapatista discourse, especially in regards to the autonomous health and education systems explored above, means for the broader anti-systemic, non-hegemonic project.

'A world in which many worlds fit': the Zapatistas and Global Resistance

Remember that the Zapatistas' uprising was first and foremost to counter neoliberal capitalism, and essentially the entire dominant system, by opposing it through the creation of

alternatives on the level of autonomous infrastructure and services and the level of discourse. Seeing that the dominant development discourse provides the base assumptions for the dominant system, an alternative discourse is necessary to resist. Zapatismo provides this alternative discourse, and in its emphasis on horizontality, *mandar-obedeciendo,* and integral recognition of pluralities and multiplicities, it acts as a non-hegemonic alternative because it outright denies the possibility for political or cultural dominance. Through putting people first and recognizing their power and further capacitating them to change their own realities, Zapatismo enables utopia, understood here as the self-definition and pursuit of alternative subjectivities and practices. The expression of this utopian capability in the creation of alternative systems such as the autonomous education and health systems shows how the discourse is in fact working towards the main goal of resisting the dominant system. These autonomous systems, along with Zapatista governance structures and production cooperatives, work independently from the hegemonic system and causal dominant discourse, engaging with state governments and global markets only insofar as it is still required to meet needs without seriously undermining autonomy.

Furthermore, over time the subjectivities, which are established through lived practices of the alternative discourse, shift to one in which the automatic response to a problem is to collectively imagine and then practice a solution, a stark comparison to the learned helplessness and incapacitation of the development discourse. Essentially, Zapatismo works as the ultimate opposition to the neoliberal mentality that 'there is no alternative' (Harvey 2005). However, all of this is not to say that the Zapatistas are changing, nor

intending to change, the world on their own. Rather, they seek to support and learn from others and let others learn from them:

> What we want in the world is to tell all of those who are resisting and fighting in their own ways and in their own countries, that you are not alone, that we, the Zapatistas, even though we are very small, are supporting you, and we are going to look at how to help you in your struggles and to speak to you in order to learn, because what we have, in fact, learned is to learn. (EZLN 2005)

Their emphasis on constant learning and solidarity helps build the foundation for an expansive network of related social movements. Because of their devotion to plurality that is exemplified in their statement "in the world we want, many worlds fit," the Zapatistas create the possibility to mobilize collectively, united under a common denial of the dominant system and a shared affirmation in the possibility of creating another way, though these other ways may differ (EZLN 1996; 2013). And truly, this mobilization is occurring all over. The Zapatistas recognize that "as there is a neoliberal globalization, there is a globalization of rebellion" (EZLN 2005). Sometimes these rebellions and movements explicitly draw inspiration from the Zapatistas and others express radical democracy and autonomy in independent ways. However, the Zapatista analysis that there is a 'globalization of rebellion' is evident. In what follows, I will explore some of these other anti-systemic movements towards autonomy to examine their common qualities with the Zapatistas and conclude by drawing lessons from the Zapatistas for the future of anti-systemic, non-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic social movements and uprisings.

In this final part, I will broaden the conversation on resistance by examining the Zapatistas through the lens of anarchist, non-hegemonic, and anti-systemic social movement theory and providing a few examples of other recent creative resistances to show that this is a

widespread movement. Escobar explains that "the contemporary crisis is a crisis of a particular *modelo civilizatorio*, or civilizational model, that of patriarchal Western capitalist modernity" (2018: ix). In layperson terms, "it's the system, man." Ecological disaster, exploitation, and social inequality (to name just a few) that make up this contemporary crisis are all just symptoms of the dominant system, or model of civilization, which has at its basis a particular discourse that sets the limits of possibility within that system by determining which forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivities reign supreme. The systemic nature of the present crisis can make resistance seem daunting and change, insurmountable–how does one change a discourse? Regarding this, the Zapatistas are encouraging because their model of creative resistance has created change at the discursive level. Here, I want to highlight certain aspects of the Zapatistas' model of resistance that are informative for social movements more broadly.

The Zapatistas' utopian, plural, and autonomous approach to resistance has been powerful and has, I would argue, successfully contributed to the systemic change that they desire both in its function in their own communities and in the way that it has inspired or informed other anti-systemic social movements. Their unique knowledge-practices and inspiration to others is a valuable contribution that Melenotte (2015) and Mentinis (2006) did not consider in their evaluation of the movement. The Zapatistas take a utopian approach to resistance in that they believe another world is possible and take steps to achieve that. A utopian approach requires both the imagination to dream of an alternative to the dominant system and also the capacity to build those alternatives as counter-power to the dominant.

The Zapatistas have, through the basis of their alternative discourse that supports

utopian imagination, built counter-power through their creation of autonomous communities

with infrastructure, social services, and networks of trade which have acted both as steps

towards creating the world that they wish to live in and also resisting the dominant systems

of neoliberalism and state control. Their approach to resistance in this way is insightful, too,

in that it addresses pressing survival issues like lack of healthcare and education while acting

as part of a greater political project. This is what Dixon (2014), writing about 'another

politics,' means when speaking of the importance of maintaining the idea of "in this world

but not of it" because it "emphasizes both the circumstances in which we struggle and our

capacity to collectively imagine and push beyond them" (126). To create utopia, there needs

to be, simultaneously, direct action now and planning for the utopian ideal. Additionally,

Dixon talks about creative resistance as working "against-and-beyond," both opposing

domination and building new forms of social organization. Subcomandante Insurgente

Marcos writes about this notion explicitly in one 2013 publication regarding the sixth

Zapatista declaration:

> 'Could it be another way?' This question could be the one that sparks rebellion and its broader acceptance. And this could be because there is a "no" that has birthed it: it doesn't have to be this way . . . What we want to say, compañeras, compañeros, compañeroas, is that what convoked us all in the Sixth was this rebellious, heretic, rude, irreverent, bothersome, uncomfortable 'no.' We have gotten to this point because our realities, histories, and rebellions have brought us to this 'it doesn't have to be this way.' This and also because, intuitively or by design, we have answered 'yes' to the question, 'could it be another way?' (EZLN 2013)

This commonly shared 'yes' is the utopian approach that stems from the opposition to the

dominant system, the shared 'no.' This commonality of sharing the "against-and-beyond,"

the opposition and the utopian hope, to form a basis of resistance is important in anarchist

theory as well. Graeber (2004) highlights how anarchists share "the rejection of certain types

of social relations, the confidence that certain others would be much better ones on which to

build a livable society, [and] the belief that such a society could actually exist," (4). Each of

these aspects are vital to utopian social movements: it begins with the 'no,' the rejection of

the dominant system, in order to open space for the 'yes,' the creation of another way. This

collective 'no' and diverse approach to 'yeses' is what Hardt and Negri (2004) call 'the

multitude' (Juris and Khasnabish 2013). Furthermore, for the Zapatistas, the new approaches

of the 'yes' must be consistent with the 'no,' as seen in the examples of their autonomous

governance, education, and health. These foundational beliefs are vital for action, and the

Zapatistas are an example of what that action can look like, especially in regards to power

relations, which I will explore next.

One of the most central elements of the Zapatistas' project is autonomy, which they

have enacted both in creating communities that are self-ruling and self-servicing to deny the

state and also by rejecting oppression and domination as a rule by putting power in the hands

of the people. Their quest for autonomy is rooted from their denial of the exploitative power

relations that have plagued Chiapas for almost half a millennium and belief that society can

be built upon a structure in which the people have the power. The Zapatistas have built their

autonomy through horizontal structures of governance, employing *mandar obedeciendo* in all

leadership positions, and practicing consensus-style decision making, all of which have been

epitomized in the *caracol* governance structures that they established in 2003. By denying

power out right through these approaches to governance, their rejection of the state takes on

another level: not only are they rejecting the corruption and exploitation of the state government, but its entire structural basis.

Creating new social relations as a basis for resistance in this way is what Dixon (2014) calls "prefigurative politics," an approach in which the methods of resistance match the reality that the movement is seeking to create. As such, resistance becomes not only about the negative aspect of what it is resisting, but also the positive aspect of what is being created to replace it. These strategies from the Zapatistas, including horizontality, consensus, leading by obeying, and empowering capacitation in both political education and hard skills, are thus key lessons in creative resistance by providing some examples of the way that the process (social movement/resistance) can coincide with the desired product (utopian society).

Escobar (2018) also takes on the importance of autonomy in looking at it through the design lens. He explains that "autonomy is the key to *autopoiesis*, or the self-creation of living systems" (5). Design has typically been at the root of unsustainability, but the ability to create a new design, which he argues that everyone is capable of doing, is autonomy, which is sustainable because it supports a system of self-creation that can exist in perpetuity. Designing reality, as the Zapatistas have taken on in their discourse and autonomous communities, is powerful because designs shape people and create culture (Escobar 2018). As I argued earlier, the Zapatistas' emphasis on self-capacitation and self-sufficiency that is supported in the design of their communities creates new subjectivities that resist the dependence and helplessness subjectivities of the dominant discourse. Autonomy, then, is a key element of anti-systemic social movements both in that it prepares for systemic change and the fall of dominant powers, creates the opportunity to establish new forms of horizontal,

people-centered governance modeled on the future that is desired, and shapes subjectivities

through self-created designs of reality. This last aspect of self-created design also permits for

a multiplicity of designs to create a pluralistic reality, which is another key aspect of social

change.

Plurality is important for anti-systemic resistance because it creates the possibility for

more inclusive mass mobilization and also because it rejects the homogenizing dominant

discourse's violent devaluation of non-dominant ways. Autonomous design and a

non-hegemonic focus on power both help enable the creation of pluralistic alternatives for

"reimagining and reconstructing local worlds" (Escobar 2018: 4). A plurality of small local

worlds is strange to consider a mass movement, but when the oppositional force is

all-encompassing and homogenizing, it makes sense as a means of resistance. Emphasizing

people's power to design reality and capacitating them to do so is a movement to plurality

because people are inherently heterogeneous. This approach also is inclusive to a wide

variety of people and approaches, so it makes 'taking down the system' much more plausible

because it does not have to be unified. The Zapatistas have promoted this idea of plurality,

worded well by Marcos here:

> The Sixth [Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle] was convoked by the Zapatistas. To convoke is not to unite. We don't intend to unite under a single leadership, be it Zapatista or any other. We do not seek to co-opt, recruit, supplant, impersonate, simulate, trick, subordinate, or use anybody. Our destiny is the same, but the richness of the Sixth is its difference, its heterogeneity, the autonomy of distinct modes of walking, this is its strength. We offer and will continue to offer respect, and we demand and will continue to demand the same. The only requirement to adhere to the Sixth is the "no" that convokes us and the commitment to construct the "yeses" that are necessary. (EZLN 2013)

This refers back to the "against-and-beyond" approach above for its role in creating an inclusive plurality; the only stipulation to joining the fight of the Zapatistas is the agreement that the world does not have to be this way and the dedication to make another world possible. In this way, plurality works both as process and product–it is inclusive and widespread in the way that it extends an invitation to the whole world which builds movement power by encouraging a multitude of localized resistance as process, and also, in its actualization, resists the homogenization of the global, neoliberal system of oppression. This is key to the anti-systemic movement as a whole. If it can be taken up anywhere, by anyone, with any conception of utopia, and take steps to establishing autonomy then it becomes not-so-insurmountable of a task.

Essentially, this is a reiteration of my argument against Mentinis's and Melenotte's claims that the Zapatistas' discourse is insufficient to creating global change. The Zapatistas' multitude-based approach of unification around a common denial of a hegemonic system and openness to diverse responses has profound potential for creating widespread non-hegemonic change. And in fact, it's already happening all over the world. Next, I will give a cursory look at some of these other autonomous anti-systemic social movements to show some of the common approaches that they take.

Rojava is an autonomous rural region in Northern Syria that is based around democratic confederalism and has maintained autonomy since 2012 (Huff, Tasdemir, and Huff 2018). Like the Zapatistas, it too began with a militant aspect, though in Rojava, the military effort remains a major part of their society because of the pressing violence that they face from hostile states and jihadist groups (ibid., System D Media 2015). However, they are

also working towards a utopian future by returning power to the people through multiple

levels of decision making based around community deliberation and through emphasizing

community capacitation to address their own problems (Huff, Tasdemir, and Huff 2018).

They are building economic autonomy in operating community production cooperatives,

which are especially necessary because they are under a trade embargo, and collectivizing

resources, which was easier to do because of the vast number of people that fled the region

(System D Media 2015). Like the Zapatistas, in Rojava, as mostly Kurds, their resistance is

also due to centuries of ethnic oppression. Further, they have taken definite steps to

promoting gender equality including a 40% quota for women's participation in governance

and a women's army (the YPJ) that protects women in civil society. Rojava is an example of

creative resistance because of the way that they have sought to create utopia by building

autonomy through creating people-powered democracy, emphasizing the importance of

ethnic plurality, and creating a platform for community capacitation (ibid., Huff, Tasdemir,

and Huff 2018).

Another creative resistance movement is the Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil

(Trabalhadores Sem Terra or MST). The MST is a rural peasant land movement that settles

unused land to get the government to expropriate it to them and establish self-sufficient

communities as a response to the devastating landlessness that many Brazilians face as a

result of their colonial history and recent rise in neoliberal policy (Diniz and Gilbert 2013).

The movement emphasizes autonomy, solidarity, and social ownership and practices

cooperative production as a resistance to neoliberalism. They employ democratic decision

making based around consensus and provide free schooling based on critical pedagogy to

capacitate the youth. In their process of critical dialogue, inspired by Freire, to constantly reassess and improve their communities, the MST transitioned from a more capitalistically driven cooperative model to a production model based around peasant values and ways of life to recognize the desires of the people (ibid.). Their commitment to autonomy through people power and emphasis on flexibility through critical evaluation positions them to be sustainable in the long run, and their self-sufficient communities outside of the dominant system establishes them as a creative resistance movement.

Mutual Aid Disaster Relief (MADR) presents a different form of creative resistance than the other examples because they are an organizational network for disaster relief rather than a set autonomous community. They are based on principles of solidarity, mutual aid, and autonomous direct action and emphasize a grassroots, decentralized, and plural approach to disaster relief (Mutual Aid Disaster Relief 2018b). MADR draws directly from the Zapatistas, citing *mandar obedeciendo* as a core value to recognize the importance of non-hegemonic leadership. Their disaster relief programs function as temporary autonomous zones that build power from within and below to open up visions of a better world to those on the margins, a utopian vision. They seek to make change without state power or coercion.

Their focus on "solidarity, not charity" seeks to support people in disaster in whatever way they need it to acknowledge the autonomy of people in disaster. For example, following Hurricane Maria's disastrous hit on Puerto Rico, MADR's NGO status allowed them to give community leaders access to resources from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that were previously inaccessible due to bureaucratic hoops. By simply enabling

existing community organizations to help meet their communities' needs, they were able to bring more aid to many areas in desperate need.

Additionally, they emphasize the importance of community organizing as preventative disaster relief to create freedom from the "reflective impotence" that capitalism inspires and, instead, usurp survival mechanisms and facilitate peoples' capacitation to meet their own needs (Mutual Aid Disaster Relief 2018a). In this way, they are strategically meeting direct, crisis needs while facilitating capacitation and a subjectivity change away from that of the dominant discourse that often (directly or indirectly) causes the crisis. Furthermore, their decentralized network of organizations based on a local context allow for diverse approaches and, like the Zapatistas, seeks to mobilize many people broadly in a plurality of action towards a common goal.

These examples serve primarily to show that everywhere the dominant discourse has sought to spread its hegemony, it has been met with resistance. The current tide of social movements employing creative resistance are taking this to the next level by providing the foundation to build a plurality of alternate utopian futures free from hegemony–"a world in which many worlds fit."

Here, I have analyzed the discourse of development to provide an understanding of the basis of the hegemonic system in order to draw awareness to the underlying assumptions and preferences towards certain forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivity. This is crucial for understanding that, in order to change the dominant order, there must be change at the level of discourse. I then examined the Zapatistas' alternative discourse to demonstrate how it enables resistance both at the discursive level (through alternative knowledge, power, and

subjectivities) and also in the practices that the discourse inspires. To evince how this practical resistance has played out in reality, I examined the Zapatistas' autonomous governance and education and health systems which address community needs and build community autonomy to reject state legitimacy as a life-giving power and to solidify the alternative subjectivities of Zapatismo such as self-capacitation and the revaluation of traditional ways of knowing. Finally, I analyzed the Zapatistas through the lenses of anti-systemic, non-hegemonic, and anarchist social movements to establish their strength as a social movement and see how they have contributed to the conversation of strategies through implementing utopian creative resistance, autonomy, and pluralism. I then offered a cursory glance at other autonomous, non-hegemonic, and anti-systemic social movements to show that the Zapatistas are far from an insular movement in the corner of Mexico–there is common resistance everywhere. Many of the Zapatistas' strategies and knowledge-practices are widely shared in a variety of diverse approaches to social change and will be informative to future movements as well. This leaves us with clear reason to believe that there can be change from the dominant system. In conclusion, I want to offer a quote that I feel sums up the purpose of this work:

> The habit of thought which defines the world, or society, as a totalizing system . . . tends to lead almost inevitably to a view of revolutions as cataclysmic ruptures. Since, after all, how else could one totalizing system be replaced by a completely different one? . . . The easiest way to get our minds around it is to stop thinking about revolution as a thing–"the" revolution, the great cataclysmic break–and instead ask "what is revolutionary action?" We could then suggest: revolutionary action is any collective action which rejects, and therefore confronts, some form of power or domination and in doing so, reconstitutes social relations–even within the collectivity–in that light. Revolutionary action does not necessarily have to aim to topple governments. Attempts to create autonomous communities in the face of power . . . (ones that constitute themselves, collectively make their own rules or

principles of operation, and continually reexamine them) would, for instance, be almost by definition revolutionary acts. And history shows us that the continual accumulation of such acts can change (almost) everything. (Graeber 2004: 44-45)

Fighting a system is daunting until we realize that creative resistance in the face of power is inherently revolutionary. Take it from the Zapatistas, or the people in Rojava, or the Landless Workers in Brazil, or from Mutual Aid Disaster Relief: change is possible, and it is happening now. If I may, I want to make the prediction that there will come a time when autonomous alternatives that deny and disengage from the empire of hegemonic power and global capitalism will both outnumber and outweigh that dominant power, and the Zapatistas' belief that 'another world is possible' will be manifest.

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