

Building ‘A World Where Many Worlds Fit’: Indigenous Autonomy, Mutual Aid, and an (Anti-Capitalist) Moral Economy of the (Rebel) Peasant

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Summary

This chapter provides an analysis of how the Zapatistas are constructing *Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos* (A World Where Many Worlds Fit) through autonomy as a response to injustices generated by neoliberalism. The piece is aimed at demonstrating how a moral economy comprised of Indigenous worldviews, decentralized governance, gender equity, anti-capitalist collective work, and place-based education can provide viable alternatives to our rapidly globalizing corporate food regime. I begin with a brief explanation of neoliberalism and continue by illustrating the consequences of its policies and discourse. I then transition into a short synopsis of the Zapatista Uprising by offering an overview of the exploitation, alienation, and dispossession that rural farmers in Mexico were facing because of free market economics, with a focus on NAFTA and Indigenous *campesinos*. I next describe how the Zapatistas are building an economy of solidarity that incorporates mutual aid, food sovereignty, and Indigenous traditions as a response to the debilitating products of global capitalism, state authority, and hetero-patriarchal repression. I finish by highlighting how both ‘Women’s Revolutionary Law’ and inclusive language have been implemented into Zapatista communities, thereby creating more fair and just social relations. The purpose of this chapter is thus to share, not to impose a model, how the Zapatista resistance is decolonizing a food system governed by the logic of neoliberal capitalism in hopes of possibly sparking ideas for solutions to similar problems, in other places.

Keywords: moral economy; gender equity; food sovereignty; rural geography; autonomy; resistance

¹ Throughout this piece I draw primarily from my experiences learning from the Zapatistas. Much of what I reflect upon throughout the essay emerges from listening to Zapatistas, not ‘researching’ them. Importantly, I neither speak for the Zapatistas, nor do my words do them justice. This piece is meant to raise awareness about what they offer in terms of alternatives. Any mistakes or errors are my own, and constructive clarifications are always welcome. Select content of this chapter originally appeared in *The Solutions Journal* Volume 7, Issue 4. Available: <https://thesolutionsjournal.com/article/food-sovereignty-in-rebellion-decolonization-autonomy-gender-equity-and-the-zapatista-solution/>. My gratitude to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation for the invitation to *La Escuelita*, as well as to the Coordinating Committee of the Zapatista Rebel Autonomous Education System of National Liberation (SERAZLN) for accepting me into their program. In addition, I offer my most sincere appreciation to *Bats’il K’op* and the Mexico Solidarity Network. I also extend thanks to The University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago) Campus Research and Publication Fund for their support.

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Prelude to a Rebellion

*Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.*
-Arundhati Roy-

*And it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary,
for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.*
-Frantz Fanon-

We need not turn any further than the words of Arundhati Roy (2003) and Frantz Fanon (1963) to gain insight into what most threatens life and dignity on this planet, as well as where the ground is most fertile for decolonization and widespread transformative change. Whether it be mutually recognizing the inherent worth of others, decentralizing governance, fostering communities of care, co-creating cultures from below, engaging in emancipatory violence, or effecting food justice, both Roy (2003) and Fanon (1963) rightfully suggest that we just might have something to learn from rural Indigenous peasants in identifying what lies at the roots of structural social problems, as well as how to intelligently confront and solve them. One of the greatest threats the world currently faces, particularly regarding food security, is neoliberalism. The logic of neoliberalism, which has become status quo over the past half century and valorizes global 'free market' capitalism, is made manifest through economic policies that facilitate privatization, deregulation, reductions in social spending, and economic liberalization (Mohanty, 2013).

In addition to strings-attached contracts and socially fragmenting agendas that are part and parcel to its purported 'open border' trade agreements, neoliberalism is also a discourse that promotes entrepreneurialism (defining one's identity/existence on capitalism's terms), individualism (placing oneself ahead of the community/collective whole), and self-capitalization (structuring relationships around potentials for earning profit, accumulating wealth, and acquiring social status) (Springer, Birch & Macleavy, 2016). Despite rarely being criticized or even mentioned by state officials and mainstream media, neoliberal programs, practices, and rhetorics continue to give rise to unprecedented levels of poverty, anxiety, and anguish.

The consequences of neoliberalism are so acutely visceral that the Zapatistas (predominantly Indigenous Ch'ol, Tseltal, Tsotsil, Tojolobal, Mam, Zoque rebels in Chiapas, Mexico) called the 21st Century's most highly touted free trade policy, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a 'death certificate' for Indigenous people (Marcos & de Leon, 2002). This is because, under the agreement, imported surplus commodities (largely subsidized corn from the U.S.) would flood Mexican markets and devalue the food products of the country's rural *campesinos* (agrarian peasants). The socio-spatial fallout from the 'agricultural dumping' (exporting commodities to other countries at prices below those of the domestic products in recipient markets in order to eliminate local competition) that ensued displaced millions of working class/poor food producers from their homes in the Mexican countryside. Rapid urbanization followed as dispossessed farmers sought employment in *maquiladoras* (industrial factories where working conditions are often highly exploitative and dangerous) that were growing in number due to increases in foreign direct investment and the presence of multi-national corporations (Jordaan, 2012; Matsushita et al., 2015). Other Mexican growers rendered precarious by NAFTA were forced to try to cross borders to scratch out livings in family-fracturing temporary worker programs (e.g. Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program [SAWP]), or risk peril, border agent hostility, police aggression, indeterminate detention, incarceration, and dehydration/hypothermia in the Sonoran Desert by trekking to the United States as undocumented workers (Walia, 2010).

Free market agricultural dumping exposes Indigenous people in Mexico to more intense degrees of vulnerability than others in Mexico, largely because they are typically less socio-economically and geographically mobile since: 1.) They experience higher rates of systemic oppression, racist exclusion, and classist discrimination within the country (i.e. they were less likely to be hired for the degrading work that was available in urban sweatshops); and 2.) They are less likely to leave their ancestral territories given their kinship ties, origin stories, and living histories are situated within the geographies where they reside. In light of these realities, the Zapatistas responded to the impossible circumstances that had been levied against them 'with fire and blood' (EZLN, 2012). While the ratification of NAFTA appeared to be the direct cause of their uprising, the roots of their rebellion actually stem from being subjected to over 500 years of colonial persecution and capitalist exploitation. Their revolt in 1994 was thus only one part of a historical (and ongoing) response to the unjust subjugation Indigenous people were facing as a result of accumulation by dispossession, cultural ignorance, state repression, and, at that given moment, neoliberal incursions that were further privatizing once communally held lands (*ejidos*).

<TABLE 1 HERE>

A Brief Genealogy of the EZLN

We, the Zapatistas of the EZLN, rose up in arms in January of 1994 because we saw how widespread had become the evil wrought by the powerful who only humiliated us, stole from us, imprisoned us, and killed us – and no one was saying anything or doing anything.
-EZLN-

The emergence of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in its contemporary form dates back to November 17, 1983, when six university-educated militants (3 *mestizo* and 3 Indigenous, including one woman) journeyed into the Lacandon Jungle of Chiapas (Mexico's most impoverished state) to establish a guerrilla vanguard. Upon arriving, their efforts, which were being supported by an intricate network of sympathizers with links to Marxist radicals, Catholic liberation theologians, and grassroots socialists were subsequently transformed by the Indigenous communities they encountered (Marcos, 2005). What ensued thenceforth was over a decade of rural clandestine organizing, reciprocal learning, and community discernment.

Once prepared, upon the dawn of New Year's Day 1994 (the day NAFTA was ratified), insurgents from the EZLN threw down the gauntlet against capitalism. Under the cover of mask and fog, armed Zapatistas stormed out of the shadows to declare '*¡Ya Basta!*' (Enough!) to the violence that had been historically imposed upon them. During the insurrection, the EZLN laid siege to six cities, occupied government buildings, freed political prisoners, burned fabricated arrest records that criminalized Indigenous dissenters, announced Zapatista 'Women's Revolutionary Law,' expelled *hacienda*-owning field overseers, and exchanged bullets with the Mexican army (Ramírez, Carlsen & Arias, 2008). The fighting lasted for a total of only 12 days after which a ceasefire was negotiated.

Since that time, and despite an ongoing counter-insurgency being spearheaded by the Mexican Government and paramilitaries it finances, the Zapatistas have concentrated their efforts on establishing a peaceful existence that centers their Indigenous notion(s) of *sts'ikel vokol. sts'ikel vokol* (from Tsotsil, a Mayan language), is a polysemic term that roughly translates to 'resistance,' but when explained means 'withstanding suffering,' or more precisely, withstanding the suffering generated by the dehumanizing products of capitalist social relations, state power, colonial hierarchies, racist and misogynistic mentalities, and xenophobia, to name a few. Broadly speaking, then, the Zapatista solution to the problems of alienation and dehumanization, exacerbated constituents of neoliberalism, has been autonomously constructing what they refer to as '*Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos*' ('A World Where Many Worlds Fit'). It is with a focus on the Zapatista creation of such a world that I address some of the key pillars of their resistance.

Building 'A World Where Many Worlds Fit'

Collective Work, Food Sovereignty, and a Moral Economy

*We agreed that if it wasn't possible to do it in this world, then we would make another world,
a bigger, better one where all the possible worlds fit, for the ones that already exist,
and the ones that we haven't yet imagined.*

-EZLN-

Imagination and critical thought are fundamental aspects of everyday life and daily work in Zapatista territory, meaning that neither envisioning new social relations, nor fostering

political consciousness function solely in the abstract. That is, the intellectual labor that goes into questioning the status quo, discussing ideas, seeking solutions, and learning new things is recognized as a necessary and material component of their struggle against exploitation, repression, and domination. Each are thus recognized as active, applied, and practical exercises of crafting a world/reality that mends the wounds (i.e. inequalities) inflicted by neoliberalism, as well as promotes a mutual recognition of dignity amongst people.

Part of building a ‘world for many worlds’ in the face of the ‘capitalist hydra’ (one of the metaphors the EZLN uses to describe neoliberalism) thus entails identifying threats to such an endeavor. The Zapatistas know their enemies and they do not pull punches with them. They refer to the government of Mexico (i.e. consolidated power and hierarchal state) as ‘*el mal goberino*’ (‘the bad/evil government’) and their analysis of capitalism is as follows:

Because it not just in one place or in one way that capitalism oppresses. It oppresses you if you’re a woman. It oppresses you if you’re a white-collar worker. It oppresses if you’re a blue-collar worker. It oppresses if you’re a *campesino* (peasant). It oppresses if you if you’re a young person. It oppresses you if you are a child. It oppresses you if you’re a teacher. It oppresses you if you’re a student. It oppresses you if you’re an artist. It oppresses you if you think. It oppresses you if you are human, or plant, or water, or earth, or air, or animal.

EZLN 2015

An education promoter in Zapatista territory elaborated upon this critique to me by underscoring the links that free market economics, the financialization of everyday life, and neoliberal social relations have with each other in the following statement:

Ideas and work that produce profit for corporations and capitalists are elevated over those that contribute to community health and the overall well-being of our people, of all people ...we are not going to live our lives on these terms.

Education promoter, 28-07-2016, Chiapas

Indeed, the Zapatistas took up arms against such terms, choosing instead to focus on Indigenous worldviews and the products of anti-capitalist collective work over the ephemeral ego-boosts of individualism and fleeting comforts of consumerism. Not coincidentally, solidarity and mutual aid now pervade their communities, day-to-day exchanges, and social interactions. This is especially true regarding their production and distribution of food; a marked effort in food sovereignty, which takes myriad forms. Some of these include seed saving, collectivizing harvests, refusing to use chemical products, maintaining Indigenous cultural ties with land and water, equitably distributing/sharing work, and even incorporating the tending of *milpas* (small fields of fertile land used in subsistence farming) into their autonomous education system.

Accordingly, food sovereignty for the Zapatistas, particularly when coupled with their perspectives on capitalism, means rejecting personal entitlements to wealth accumulation,

eschewing state-legitimated notions of private property, and severing themselves from dependency upon corporate agro-business (Bobrow-Strain, 2007). More simply, it means that reciprocated respect, selflessness, and teamwork drive the Zapatista economy, rather than the exploitation, alienation, and advantage-taking of capitalist economies. In light of these descriptions, one might ask what this looks like in practice. In addressing this, the same Zapatista education promoter summed up their economy by noting that it is ‘decentralized,’ one in which ‘everyone participates,’ and is generated and modified by community assemblies through basic questions like: ‘Is everyone okay?’, ‘Is anyone going hungry,’ ‘Is the community healthy?’, and ‘Is the soil nourished?’ to name a few. These were contrasted with the queries of ‘How can I gain an advantage over others?’ and ‘What can I do to get more?’, which were identified as fetishes and fixations that capitalists fret about. The economy constructed by the Zapatistas is thus one that works for the people, rather than vice versa. It foregrounds ethics, empathy, and the collective well-being, which was made clear for me when the education promoter finished by stating:

We are not preoccupied with self-interest, individual gain, or power like those ‘from above.’ Our economy, or whatever you want to call it, asserts the value of life. It recognizes the dignity in each, no matter how *otroa* (‘other,’ meaning different) they are.

Education promoter, 03-17-2014, Chiapas

In material terms, the Zapatista food system provides an opportunity for labor to abandon capitalist markets and profit-motives in order to position collective work and Indigenous notions of land/water/nature as essential in maintaining the cultural, spiritual, and environmental welfare of their bases of support (Lorenzano, 1998). This has come to fruition through their recuperation of colonially expropriated lands, which they reclaimed from wealthy *hacienda* owners during their 1994 uprising (Barmeyer, 2003). One way in which these sentiments take root and are made tangible is through the skills in organic agro-ecology the Zapatistas employ in moving towards food sovereignty. I experienced this at a rural community garden in a highland cloud forest of Chiapas where dozens of Zapatistas from the countryside, donning dry mud-splattered shoes and rubber boots, wielding worn steel-headed hoes and tenured machetes, gathered in an open area surrounded by steep rolling hills and low-hanging fog to plant vegetables. In fielding my many queries, an agro-ecology promoter explained:

Collective work like this did not exist when the landowners were in control. We were servants. We were beaten, scolded, and alone. There was much suffering. Now we organize to grow and share vegetables. That is why we are all here (working together at the community garden): adults, children, and elders. Everyone can contribute something. Everyone has value.

Agro-ecology promoter, 09-04-2014, Chiapas

Further illustrating this dynamic, a Zapatista *compa* (woman) later noted:

We were not in control of our food, which meant they (landowning capitalists and the ‘bad’ government) were controlling us. Now, we have our own projects. We started to plant and sow and work the land collectively, *like before*

[emphasis added]. You can see the results. We are planting beans and corn together, and eating radishes, cabbages, carrots, and cilantro. It is our work and we are happy. This is autonomy. You can see it in our garden.

Compa, 15-08-2013, Chiapas

Due to their refusal to become complicit with entrepreneurial capitalism, the commodification of nature, and the privatization of land; the Zapatistas have built a sustainable food system that functions as a moral economy and renews their Indigenous practices. One that takes into consideration the health of both individuals and communities, as well as local ecologies, and one they are breathing life into with each new seed they sow.

Autonomous (Place-Based) Education

To be Zapatista does not mean to hide one's face, but rather, to show one's heart.

-EZLN-

Because tending to crops, children, food production/distribution, collective self-determination, and a life of rebellion are inherently learning experiences, the Zapatistas have constructed an independent education system that emerges from the bioregional assemblages, socio-political/historical contexts, and cultural-environmental settings they exist in. This is evident in the emplaced 'from below' focus they take in their approach to teaching and learning, as well as how they consider everyday life and their ecological surroundings a 'classroom.' Local knowledge of land and food systems are so central in their communities that the vast majority of the *promotores de educación* (education promoters) and *promotores de agro-ecología* (agro-ecology promoters) in each school often come from the same communities as their students.

The Zapatistas refer to teachers as 'education promoters,' as opposed to state-sanctioned 'experts,' to unsettle the rigid boundaries between 'those who know, and those who do not know.' This means children are not seen as static, empty vessels that need to be filled with information, but rather, are active agents of creativity, imagination, and knowledge in-and-of themselves, who are capable of learning and sharing knowledge with the community, as well as pursuing their own interests. The role of the education promoters is to share experience, provide context and information, offer guidance and direction, and foster a non-punitive environment as children follow their curiosities and ask questions. This awareness of the nuances of power in matters of taken-for-granted language, labels, and learning allows them to disrupt any individualistic claims to knowledge-production that could potentially fragment their non-hierarchical system of education. It is also a step towards undermining the notion that knowledge can be privatized (mirroring their viewpoints on land and food), and subverting the vertical relationships that arise from the regimes of credentialization, 'excellence,' and award cultures that now govern many state institutions and corporate entities. These lessons are not only integrated into Zapatista schools, but also the food system, making for a more holistic learning experience in which critiques of power are ever-present and embedded in the daily routines of life.

To further effectively incorporate the practical application of knowledge in their curriculum, Zapatista students are frequently educated outside the physical classroom. This is so they can sharpen their planting and harvesting skills through the use of organic, sustainable, and agro-ecological farming techniques, as well as learn Indigenous and revolutionary history while being with the land. Consequently, 'going to school' for Zapatista children consists of engaging their bioregional and historical surroundings, and may very well involve gardening, tilling, composting, feeding animals, and performing a skit about the life of Emiliano Zapata, all that nurture both the fertility of their local soils, as well as rebel spirits. Moreover, the Zapatistas have made the decision to eliminate the use of genetically modified organisms, chemical insecticides, herbicides, and pesticides in favor of utilizing biological deterrents and organic fertilizers (Vergara-Camus, 2007). This area of education stresses the importance of attaining the necessary applied skills to achieve food sovereignty for future generations, meaning their agro-ecological and education programs coincide with efforts they make in sustaining and revitalizing Indigenous knowledges (e.g. traditional ecological knowledge, companion planting, communal work, the celebration of Maya customs, etc.).

Land-based activities of this kind also end up providing children an incisive overview of how transgenic modifications and privatizations of seeds/plants/life are deemed to be overt threats to, and blatant attacks upon, their Indigenous ontologies because the Zapatistas are 'People of the Corn', a reality passed down from their Maya origin stories (Ross, 2006). Given their education system is independent from the state, and because it is rooted in defending, protecting, and preserving local Indigenous traditions, languages, and ancestral lands, the Zapatistas effectively practice decolonization in every aspect of their education, economy, and food system. What the Zapatistas reveal through their advances in sustainable farming and food sovereignty is that Indigenous autonomy, place-based education, and a moral economy can flourish outside of the neoliberal policies and corporate agro-industrial complexes that currently dominate the global food system. Consequently, what they have created is a world where anti-capitalist education and Indigenous worldviews not only fit, but thrive.

Women's Revolutionary Law and Gender Equity

...it was with the arrival of private property that men began to command.
-Guadalupe, Zapatista Education Promoter- ELZN 2013

One of the most groundbreaking aspects of the Zapatista Insurgency has been the advances it has made in destabilizing patriarchal social relations, as well as exposing their links to the logics of capitalism and controlling land. In explaining how 'women's work' (i.e. household chores, child-rearing, domestic labor, etc.) became devalued because it is typically neither attached to a wage, nor thought to directly increase revenue streams, a Zapatista *compa* (woman)/education promoter states: 'The capitalists had us believing this idea... ...that women are not valuable.' This dismissal of efforts that sustain communities/societies (i.e. socially reproductive work), tasks typically performed by women, was untenable for the

Zapatista women ...so they decided to organize against it. Hence, in 1993, just a few months before the word of the EZLN thundered across the globe, Indigenous women from the communities raised their voices and implemented what is known as 'Women's Revolutionary Law.'

Broadly speaking, Women's Revolutionary Law concretizes a woman's right to self-determination, bodily autonomy, and reproductive agency. More specifically, the laws mandate that women hold key positions in the guerrilla army (i.e. the EZLN), are equitably represented in the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* ('Councils of Good Government'), take part in land recuperation (agro-ecological projects/work outside of domestic labor), are freely able to enter/exit relationships, can choose when and how many children they will have, can speak out/seek justice against domestic abuse, and have the freedom to develop their own alternative-economic cooperatives (Klein, 2015). The laws have subsequently reconstructed the quotidian rhythms of Zapatista communities as it is now not uncommon to see women involved in all aspects of community life, in addition to seeing men participate in socially reproductive labor ('women's work'). Effectively, the Zapatista women have revived a world where women can exist without having to face condescension and shame simply because they are women.

Notably, when the revolutionary laws were being announced, many of the men were reluctant to accept and abide by them, but because resistance advances '*juntos y a la par*' ('together and side by side') in Zapatista territory, men eventually did consent to adopting Women's Revolutionary Law. This is due to a common recognition amongst Zapatistas that any struggle against colonialism and capitalism, is also a struggle against patriarchy. Even given this progress, the Zapatistas remain humble in their reporting about the revolutionary laws, as there is admittedly 'still much work to' with respect to equality and women's participation. Nevertheless, the steadfast determination of the Zapatista women often carries the day. And the tenacity they have regarding their own rights, which are acknowledged as contributing to the good of their communities, are reflected in a communiqué Subcomandante Marcos (now Galeano) released shortly after the 1994 uprising, in which he states: 'The first EZLN uprising occurred in March of 1993 and was led by the Zapatista women. There were no casualties – And they won (Marcos, 1993).' This social transformation, while often written about in abstract and figurative terms, has largely been born out of the collective work and indefatigable iron will of the Zapatista women (Ramírez, Carlsen & Arias, 2008). It is also not without sacrifice and complexity.

Part of Women's Revolutionary Law includes the collective agreement to refrain from using alcohol and drugs. This major commitment was made not out of sanctimonious conceit or moral superiority, but because alcohol has historically been used as a weapon of colonization. It also has the tendency to, as one education promoter notes, 'put people to "sleep" or lead to abuse.' Since its inception, the decision to abstain from alcohol has resulted in less gender based violence, less emotional abuse, less debt to landowners, and an overall improvement in the health and security of Zapatista communities, individuals, and even land. Because the Zapatistas also view their Indigenous culture as being evolving and

fluid, they recognize that jettisoning the patriarchal social relations that intensified during colonialism, and are being exacerbated by global capitalism, do not in any way diminish their indigeneity. This dynamic outlook has even seen the Zapatistas queer their discourse, as for several years now they have been releasing communiqués in which they blend the masculine and feminine spellings of Spanish pronouns (e.g. *otroas* - ‘others’, *humanoas* - ‘humans’, *todoas* – ‘everyone’, *muchoas* – ‘many’, etc.) so as to be inclusive of everyone along differing gender and sexuality continuums (i.e. men, women, transgender people, queer folks, etc.). Their efforts in constructing ‘A World Where Many Worlds Fits’ thus applies to a wide array of people, and a plurality of varying social axes of identification.

Furthermore, Women’s Revolutionary Law has merged with the way in which land and the local environment is viewed and tended to. As a result of up-ending rigid masculinist notions of what type of work women ‘should do’ and ‘could not do’, as well as obliterating regressive ideas that men are less capable of performing socially reproductive work and emotional labor, Zapatista communities now have women exercising greater decision-making power in developments pertaining to food cultivation and regional agro-ecology projects (Marcos, 2014). In attesting to the new reality the Zapatistas are constructing, Peter Rosset, a food sovereignty specialist with extensive experience in southern Mexico, indicates the impact of Women’s Revolutionary Law by stating:

Yesterday a Zapatista agro-ecology promoter was in my office and he was talking about how the young Indigenous women in Zapatista territory are different from before ...he said they no longer look at the floor when you talk to them – they look you directly in the eye (Rosset, 2014).

In moving towards gender equity the Zapatistas have rapidly turned hundreds of years of gender-based oppression on its head in a span of just over three decades (Klein, 2015). Their convictions regarding the struggle of women is perhaps best captured in quote often seen throughout their territories, which states: *Cuando Una Mujer Avanza, No Hay Hombre Que Retrocede* (‘When a Woman Advances, No Man is Left Behind’). This conviction has seen Indigenous women in Zapatista communities transition from being one of the most marginalized, subjugated, and disregarded groups in the world – to becoming a beacon of what it means to engender compassionate resilience, dignified rage, and unyielding resolve.

Conclusion

Everyone fits within Zapatismo...
There are no universal recipes, lines, strategies, tactics, laws, rules, or slogans.
There is only a desire – to build a better world, that is, a new world.
-EZLN-

When viewed in its historical and contemporary geo-political context, the Zapatista Insurgency has opened possibilities for a broad spectrum of emancipatory ways of re-organizing social relations, economies, education, governance, food systems, day-to-day activities, interpersonal interactions, and even thought. Given their resoluteness in foregrounding Indigenous worldviews, gender equity, mutual aid, and dignity, while

concurrently rejecting, outright, the logics of neoliberalism and assertions of a patriarchal status quo, the Zapatistas can arguably be viewed as one of the most radical and progressive movements of decolonization, social justice, and hope in history.

What they prove through their practices of gender equity, autonomous education, and participatory democracy is that a recognition of Indigenous people's right to self-determination, in conjunction with anti-capitalist communal work and efforts towards food sovereignty, can certainly provide viable alternatives to, as well as withstand the suffering of, our current globalized corporate food regime. More tellingly, what they are demonstrating is that collective resistance and autonomy can create pathways out of structural violence. To end, I harken back to the Zapatista metaphor offered at the beginning of the chapter and suggest that constructing *Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos* ('A World Where Many Worlds Fit') can, indeed, be a solution to the food insecurity, hunger, anxiety, and anguish induced by neoliberalism. And perhaps most encouragingly, what 'worlds' are imagined and eventually emerge – is up to us.

Recipe on how 'To Rebel and Struggle' (as shared by the EZLN)²

Ingredients:

1. Neither leaders, Nor bosses,
2. Nor messiahs, Nor saviors,
3. One only needs a sense of shame,
4. A bit of dignity,
5. And a lot of organization.
6. As for the rest, it either serves the collective or it does not.

Source: Between Light and Shadow (EZLN Communiqué 2014):

<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2014/05/27/between-light-and-shadow/>

This recipe is just that, a recipe. It is meant to be neither a prescription, nor doctrine. The implications of it, as with most recipes, is that it can be altered, added-to, and/or subtracted-from per one's needs, desires, tastes, contexts, situations, etc.'s. ...which provokes the question: What might your list of ingredients for revolution/social transformation be?

Questions

1. Capitalism can be compared to myriad different things, from a variety of perspectives (e.g. a virus, infection, hydra, monster, parasite, plague, answer, silver bullet, savior, etc.). What metaphor would you use to describe it? (Given there is danger in reifying it in such a manner, who is actually responsible for it continuing to be our dominant system?)
2. Much of what the Zapatistas have incorporated into their resistance is guided by what is known as a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Think of your

- local community, who would this apply to, and what might solidarity (which avoids turning into classist charity) with them look like?
3. Women's Revolutionary Law has transformed Zapatista territory in a variety of ways, with men in their communities (by and large) agreeing to incorporate the demands the women made. If you sat down and made a list of 'laws' regarding gender, sexuality, and bodily justice where you live – what might they be?
 4. Think of the geography and place you currently live in – what are its history/ies and how did you learn them?
 5. Pretend you and your closest friends are Zapatistas – what are some of the collective things you would do to make your community a better place?

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