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## ZAPATISTA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. ANALYSIS FROM GANDHIAN SELF- GOVERNMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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**Abstract:** Indigenous communities in general have been segregated by both civil society and public policies, although there has been government support, in most cases these populations have experienced various problems from persecution, dispossession of their lands, contamination of their assets common, even genocidal acts. At the same time, they have shown various manifestations of resistance, such as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, which over the course of 28 years of activism has had an impact on the consolidation of proposals for community life that has allowed them self-government, and in some cases, the path to food sovereignty. This article analyzes these struggles, the impact on their autonomy, as well as on the progress towards food sovereignty, based on the challenges they have faced and their achievements since the Gandhian self-government. The main points of fusion are identified, as well as those in which both perspectives distance themselves, because it is from its base, an armed conflict.

**Keywords:** Indigenous social movements, Gandhian self-government, food sovereignty.

## INTRODUCTION

Social movements, regardless of their place of management, have been characterized by achieving to a greater or lesser extent the transformation of the political and social life of their environment, from the search for changes to improve their living conditions through more equitable perspectives. On numerous occasions, government efforts to annihilate them have succeeded in making them disappear at a high cost of bloodshed.

The case of the social movement of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, is noteworthy given its survival, which dates back to its first official appearance in January 1994. This publication is cutting-edge. theoretically,

different sources of information are explored, both academic and the media, and directly from the communiqués and documents generated by the movement itself. For this reason, it is important to locate the sources from their various nuances: they imply their historical moments that are related to them, as well as the perspective, maturity and life history of the person who analyzes and interprets said contents. This allows an approximation from different perspectives to the interior of a reality with multiple faces, almost always connected and that can present a relative truth, which from ethics as a philosophical expression is provocative of reflection on moral acts based on their different contexts. where a static truth is impossible. This way, social movements can throw new visions and truths over time. In this sense, the article presents a series of events related to the EZLN movement, with main emphasis on the elements that it shares with the Gandhian ethical proposal, in the context of a more specific and basic theme: food sovereignty, already a priority issue. for peasant towns and indigenous communities in Mexico. The COVID-19 experience has confronted us with reconceptualizing life priorities, in which food stands out.

The sequence of this article begins with a brief location of the origin of the Zapatista movement, continues with the description and analysis of violence from Gandhism and its distance/closeness to the armed conflict; a fourth section addressed the construction of autonomy of the EZLN in parallel with the philosophy of Non-violence, the content that comes from it, focuses on food sovereignty, its achievements and its challenges in parallel with the aspects of health and education that are directly and indirectly related, it ends with a section of reflections.

## **INDIGENOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS CASE ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION (EZLN)**

There are multiple injustices and with it the different wars that all the peoples of the planet have experienced, sometimes those subjected are only subjected for a while, once they are freed they become colonizers/conquerors of other peoples with more defensive weakness, but with more covetable biodiversity, as indigenous peoples around the world have been. The question that arises for the peoples that have decided to emancipate themselves from the armed movement, as is the case of the EZLN: if they do not defend themselves and impose self-government, ¿could they survive? Ethnocides in modern history have been increasingly notable (Tamagno, 2011), the indigenous groups that survive is because they have fled (which is not a non-violent response either) or because they have decided to remain out of reach of Western white humanity. greedy.

The Zapatista movement, although its official appearance was in January 1994, has several antecedents that date back to 1969 in the city of Monterrey, in the state of Nuevo de León, as a response to the 1968 student movement (Baschet, 2018); an indigenous congress held in the town of Las Cañadas in the state of Chiapas in 1974 whose purpose was to make evident the “poverty, marginalization and injustice in which the indigenous peasants of Chiapas find themselves [...] and in which the indigenous participation. (Legorreta, 1996, s/p); and its foundation as the EZLN in November 1983, made up of the original group from Monterrey called the National Liberation Force, later subdued by the federal government, which led to the change of its headquarters to Chiapas (Baschet, 2018).

In the gestation of this first stage of the movement, the synergy between three important figures is key, one of course is the multicultural indigenous participation of Chiapas communities in the El Salto region; another, that of Bishop Samuel Ruiz who collaborated with the people long before the movement; and a third, the emblematic and controversial Subcomandante Marcos, with a profile of a challenging, educated, shrewd, rescuer leader and rescued by ancestral Mayan knowledge, as well as a communicative charisma both orally and in writing, characteristics that facilitated the links outward:

The character of Marcos has had the functions of disseminating the life of indigenous communities, the demands and needs of Zapatismo in the media, international meetings, academic circles [...] he embodies hope and the construction of a new political culture [...] the voice of indigenous resistance and their rights to conquer. (Ambrosi, 2018, p. 38-39).

The internationalization of the movement is one of the elements that have helped its struggling survival so as not to succumb to the subjugation of the country's neoliberal forces, coupled with the visibility and dissemination from the lens of renowned academics and intellectuals from various national and international universities. The presence of the insurgent Subcomandante Marcos together with various indigenous commanders and commanders, in international forums, have been detonators to make the movement grow, in which others who share several ideals converge, such as ecofeminism, and movements for peace, in addition to the different solidarity nodes that already exist in the Mexican Republic, and that have become distributors of products produced in cooperatives (coffee, honey, crafts, among others) without leaving out the different spaces on social networks and

websites, multipliers of the principles and actions of the EZLN.

The EZLN assumes itself as an independent movement, without any connection to cultural or religious associations, in the words of Subcomandante Marcos:

Our ezln has no link whatsoever with Catholic religious authorities or any other creed... We have not received guidance or support from any ecclesiastical structure, nor from any diocese of Chiapas, nor from the apostolic nuncio, nor from the Vatican, nor from anyone else. Our ranks are mostly Catholics, but there are also other creeds and religions (Volpi, 2004: post 1847).

To maintain this independence is another aspect that marks a parallel with the Gandhian philosophy, without failing to recognize the contradictory aspects that distance the Zapatista movement from nonviolent social movements, which are described and analyzed in the next section.

## THE ARMED CONFLICT FROM GANDHISM

If the indigenous peoples assume non-violence to interrupt the chain of violence and achieve respect for their freedoms, could there be a risk that they, as occupants of the few healthy and prosperous lands on the planet, would disappear? Because often those who refuse to give up their territory are displaced or massacred to exploit their minerals, forests or springs. Muller focuses his attention on the war without accusing the warrior:

The heroism displayed by the warrior cannot erase the deadly nature of war. The warrior is not always a criminal. Instead of the war being legitimized by the courage of the warrior, he must be delegitimized by the crime of violence (2014, p. 109).

Likewise, it refers to the indigenous peoples of America, from the south to

Canada, as well as to the Scandinavian countries, in which, in addition to the colonialism of which they have been victims, the common practice of constitutional governments is also added, such as the rape of their rights and the destruction of their culture, which is why from the 1970s “many indigenous people began to use civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action in defense of their rights” (Muller, 2004, p. 197 -198), additionally they have mixed in their principles, self-government, self-sustainability, internal justice, among others, and in some cases with the armed uprising before the federal and state government, in this regard Parent affirms:

Let's note that there is counter-violence, which keeps violence alive because it resorts to the same mechanisms that we want to dismantle. It is not possible to accept it as an action against violence. Opting for Non-violence is choosing not to react with violence to the violence suffered. It is deciding to act to interrupt the chain of revenge and revenge. This choice is free and stems from already manifest convictions that demand a new education opposed to the teachings of social fear in which we operate (2011, p. 34).

Although, to decide the effectiveness or not of an action “is that it is beneficial or harmful for other consciences” (Muller, 2004, p. 168), one of the possibilities and major purposes of Non-violence is the impact that have in the awakening of the conscience: own, of the counterpart and of the community, in this sense, the current problem integrates the different crises in the three indicated levels, thus in the topic that concerns us, the impact on the conscience also includes the ecological crisis:

[...] It is not only a crisis of production, loss of self-sufficiency and food sovereignty, but also a crisis of peasants and rural society — which is reflected in poverty, hunger and

migration—, and of a ecological crisis. It is a global crisis that is putting the very survival of the planet at risk (Villafuerte-Solis, 2015, p. 15).

Precisely as Villafuerte-Solis points out, we must not lose sight of the fact that regardless of the fact that the indigenous movements that are in the process of defending their freedoms and basic rights are valid and necessary, it is also true that a part of Western society does not recognize the importance of indigenous peoples by themselves and their contribution in maintaining the balance of the planet, beyond this, the local and non-local population has been a partner in the provocation of their poverty, vexation and exploitation, from: policies public, including paternalistic, local and foreign tourism, universities little involved in community realities, urban consumers who do not question the origin and conditions of craft products and food from the countryside, etc. In the specific case of Chiapas, which is not the only one, its crisis has been dragged on for centuries “[...] the new poverty generated by neoliberal policies has added in recent decades. The destruction and deterioration of livelihoods, mainly land, forests and water” (Villafuerte-Solis, 2015, p. 21).

From ahimsa, an armed demonstration is questionable even for such severe cases where the counterpart has committed genocide. The philosopher and non-violent activist Capitini states that physical force is not necessary, nor is weapons because its source of power is in the inner strength, and although his rejection of wars and the use of weapons was evident from his early experiences with them: “I had seen, in the post-war period... women in mourning... I knew of so many young people... sent to kill and be killed... and I wanted to make sure that this no longer happens, at least for the people of the land close to me” (Capitini in Pugliese, 2011: pos

355); However, his position is more linked to ethics as a reflection of the moral act, than as a dogma. Baldoli refers to Capitini’s thought from at least three aspects: the opportunities presented, the political reasons, and the social consequences of violent actions. or non-violent. For Capitini “it is a mistake to believe that nonviolence [sic] is peace, order, work, and sleeping in peace [...] nothing broken in the country, no bruises on the body. Nonviolence is not the literal and symmetrical antithesis of war [...] Nonviolence is war too, or rather, it is struggle, continuous struggle against the situations that surround us [...] it means being prepared to see the case around us [...]” (Baldoli 2018, p. 55).

Likewise, Muller refers to the philosophy of ahimsa as essentially dynamic: “it is never given in a finished and stereotyped form. It is only revealed in the creative act through which [one] enters into a relationship of benevolence with the other [...]” (2004, p.130), and that will be discovered and transformed at the moment of action, by the character asset of life itself, as Baldoli refers: for the opportunities, the political reasons and the action itself, in addition to the socio-political and economic conditions that contextualize it; However, Muller expressly does not accept any argument that justifies violence: although he affirms that absolute Non-violence does not exist: “[...] whoever opts for Non-violence knows perfectly well that it will not be possible for him to reach the zero degree of violence [ ...] But he is convinced that it is the implementation of the means of non-violent action that will allow him to reach the lowest possible degree of violence.” (2004, p. 163).

Achieving a non-violent movement requires training time and, therefore, discipline, Merton mentions: “The whole Gandhian concept of non-violent action and Satyagraha is incomprehensible if it is thought



of as a means to achieve unity and not as the fruit of internal unity already achieved” (1998, p. 21). The importance of the role of discipline within this active philosophy is such that it represents one of the pillars that promotes the growth of the strength of the spirit to which the Satyagraha alludes, and that can, from this base, create and sustain strategies for to face the conflict, from the management of anger, arrogance or fear, inherent to the human condition: “To say that nonviolence is not an ideology, but a philosophy, is equivalent to saying that it is a spirituality, a thought and a wisdom that guides behavior [...] Non-violence is an attitude; it is the ethical and spiritual attitude [...] that recognizes that violence is a denial of humanity and decides to refuse to submit to its domination (Muller, 2004, p. 130).

The discipline also implies the time dedicated to training in the ahimsa methodology, from dialogue to more complex actions such as boycotts, fasting, civil disobedience and non-cooperation, where any provocation from the opposing party is received without engaging in violence as a response. Without disciplined work, fear can paralyze, Bellinghausen mentions: “The strength of the Zapatistas lay, among other things, in the fact that they lost their fear. They left knowing that they were going to be killed. I saw how they were beaten and they never backed down. Always, carrying their dead, they went forward. Faced with that, faced with that value and moral dignity, the government had to stop [...]” (Bellinghausen in Sicily and Schultz, 2014, p. 21) adds: this force allowed them to recover their territories, and create organized groups and collective governments.

The action, therefore, is a presence and a consequence of the discipline, regardless of the certainty of their impacts, by virtue of the dynamism of any action or omission, both will have repercussions, and many of them are

not foreseeable in the short term; However, this does not mean reducing it to passivity, to pacifism, often perceived as non-action, on the contrary, it permanently invites us to question injustice, to create conditions so that both the violent party, society, the media massive groups and the victims become aware of the conditions that cause injustice, and perceive themselves to a greater or lesser extent as part of them.

The Gandhian vision admitted the possibility of violence before cowardice, a defensive violence, fleeing would not be acceptable (Rendón, 2011), in the words of Gandhi “I prefer a thousand times to take the risk of resorting to violence rather than see someone emasculated.” an entire race [...] Wherever it is necessary to choose between violence and cowardice, I will advise violence.” (Gandhi in Rendón, 2011: 77-78).

Precisely this can be a link with the vision and action of the Zapatista movement, although it is an armed movement, it is also defensive, in addition to the self-government practices that occur in the different communities in the search for transparency and the exercise of practices ethics from within.

In the case of civil resistance, Thoreau (2014) marks an important precedent for Nonviolence, which will be practiced by various social movements to this day: “By defending his attitude for reasons of conscience, Thoreau is at the center of the tradition of radical dissent. Instead, by refusing to profess allegiance of any kind to the American state ... and by refusing to pay taxes, he took his challenge further than most ... the crucial point is that he defended the idea that the violation of the laws for reasons of conscience was politically effective [...] to change the laws (Randle, 1998, p. 57). And although the EZLN began as an armed movement, after the San Andrés agreements,

the weapons would be lowered, these agreements represented another step forward product of the movement.

In order to establish a dialogue with the government, the EZLN requested a ceasefire on both sides; the withdrawal of all attacks from the federal forces to the rural communities, as well as the formation of a mediating commission, which results in another achievement of the insurgent movement: "The San Andrés Larraínzar Accords have a political and historical importance for Mexico, since after five hundred years a pact would be made with the indigenous peoples who had been politically marginalized in the construction of the Mexican nation" (Sámamo et al., 2010, p. 106), the recognition that was given from within the community promoted the political recognition of the government through direct action in the search for dialogue with the federation. These initial steps were gestating the process for the construction of autonomy and sovereignty, starting with food. The following section analyzes the elements that favored this process.

## **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AUTONOMY OF THE EZLN, A SEARCH FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FOOD AND LIFE. GANDHIAN ELEMENTS OF AUTONOMY**

Gandhian autonomy occurs within an ethical proposal that integrates religious principles, based on the interpretation of its sacred texts and from the ideas of thinkers who preceded Gandhi such as Thoreau, Tolstoio and Ruskin, (Vargas, 2018; Corona, 2011; Parent, 2010; López, 2009; Ameglio, 2005), as well as the antithesis of those dictators contemporary to him, whose method of governance was violence, all this and the desire to free his nation from the British empire was what gave rise to

the active philosophy of non-violence, the Ahimsa.

Gandhi's philosophy, therefore, not only implies a way of life from the individual, moreover, its emphasis is on community life, the relationship with nature and the claim that it was extended to the whole world as a model of a frugal, communal, autonomous life, of equitable justice: "[...] from the anarchist sources of the 20s and 30s [Gandhi] learned the need to free himself from state control, lead by example [...] the importance of what community and model villages, shared poverty and living on the bare minimum; the construction of conscience actions [...] the need for a consensual participation of the entire community in order not to allow the imposition of majorities over minorities" (Ameglio, 2005, p. 96), where exploitation of others was ruled out (Galtung, 2008).

Autonomy is defined by Galtung as the need for a:

[...] self-sufficiency in essentials to be independent; exchange in the non-essential to be interdependent. In practice this means that each village must be able to grow and produce, through agriculture, crafts and even small-scale industry to build what is necessary to maintain a reasonable minimum standard of housing [...] (2008, pp. 83, 86).

It is highly complex to conquer autonomy when the political and cultural system are those that have favored poverty, the lack of health and educational services, high levels of violence and insecurity, because when this violence comes from the superstructures, it is she the one who sustains the rest of the violence; however, its rupture is possible when the existing dogmas product of capitalism are questioned through various actors: "Applied nonviolence [sic] has meant seeking and developing alternatives to structural violence... it has promoted and made cooperation and non-violence emerge.

competition as the foundation and philosophy of its activities, giving priority in distribution to those most in need [...]” through various insurgent groups, local and international NGOs and anti-globalization movements (López, 2009, p. 285).

In relation to structural and cultural violence, external and internal racism (local and national) is considered, which promotes in western and westernized civil society, messages and symbols that allow it to believe that it possesses social, intellectual and even spiritual superiority, in such a way that it ends up endorsing the atrocities of governments and industrial leaders in the undermining of indigenous peoples. A racism that, in addition to openly or covertly expressing hatred of the indigenous, continues to disqualify their presence on a daily basis, and justifies the exploitation to which they are subjected and the poverty in which they live as a result of it, “There is racism regarding of indigenous peoples when they are sentenced to live in poverty after suffering the abrupt transformation of their existence in the face of the advancement of projects in which they do not participate and which are alien to them” (Tamagno, 2015, p. 6), and not only foreign but lethally harmful, where ethnocide can be the last consequence for them and consequences not yet visible for the rest of society and the planet.

On the economic level, it is possible to understand autonomy from an active training from childhood, both to minimize one’s own needs, and to leave room for coexistence and inner connection, also in the manual work of the production of goods that are consumed: “Reducing our needs, our desires, commercially fed is the starting point of a non-violent ethic for our time [...] In manual work we find balance in the individual and subsistence in the group [...] Thus, the presence of manual work in schools

is considered so that children pay for their studies and learn an activity that could be useful to them tomorrow [...]” (Parent, 2010, p. 21), this way, From childhood, autonomy and self-government begin to be built, common practices in indigenous communities, where children at an early age work in the fields.

A common denominator in indigenous social movements is the need for their rights to be recognized and for their territory to be respected, and therefore to be able to exercise their freedom. It is not possible to be free if you depend on others for something so basic as food. Galtung refers to Gandhi’s anti-capitalism “because an individual cannot fully exercise free will if he is financially dependent. To be economically independent he must be able to support himself [...] he must have control over some basic means of production in such a way that he can obtain, at least, food, clothing and shelter.” (2008, p. 48).

## **CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS**

Western society tends to give exaggerated shelter to daughters and sons, sometimes generating a parasitic and demanding life towards parents who rather see them as slaves providing labor, food and material goods, which then teaches, when these are lacking, is to find other slaves that can perpetuate or “improve” the learned lifestyle, with the respective waste of resources and pollution of the planet. A social political system is reproduced from the family and vice versa, which is why we understand the Gandhian need to make important changes from the individual, family and community structure, where the latter will be the main focus of attention because it is where reciprocal support will flow. Additionally, the invitation that Gandhi makes to those who decide to adopt his proposal is important, which goes beyond the abstract level of a philosophy: “non-violence is a rule of action, it is a duty.



Its non-violence is not merely a philosophical principle; it is the rule of life” (Mathur, 1977, p. 7).

In the case of the EZLN movement, as mentioned, an important part of its principles and actions are in tune with Gandhian precepts, beginning because they integrate a way of thinking consistent with practice, as well as the search for autonomy in a system that they perceive to be authoritarian, in addition to working from and for the communities, highlighting self-government in such a way that it breaks away from agro-industrial productivism: “[...] to promote a revitalized peasant agriculture. In this perspective, the Zapatistas maintain the traditional polyculture of the milpa (corn, beans and squash), while appropriating new agroecological practices (vegetables, organic coffee, etc.) with special attention to the elimination of fertilizers and chemical pesticides, as well as in the defense of native seeds. This peasant agriculture, whose primary objective is family self-sufficiency, also seeks collective self-sufficiency, that is, the ability to materially sustain the construction of autonomy” (Baschet, 2018, pp. 57-58).

It is the first of January 1994, the date on which the EZLN makes its official appearance, when it announces the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, which stands out in its demands: the recovery and respect for their lands, the exercise of the right to work, housing, food, health, and education, among other aspects. In the same Declaration, it requests the suspension of the looting of its natural resources. After 28 years, the achievements they have obtained in terms of autonomy and sovereignty are notable, as detailed below; however, the movement reports that they continue to be subjected to attacks and harassment by paramilitary groups: “The Indigenous

Governing Council (CIG) and the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) denounced and repudiated the attack against Army support bases of National Liberation (EZLN) [...]” carried out on August 19, 2020. (Expansión, 2020), as well as a history of attacks reported over more than two decades.

In the celebration of the 26th anniversary, the movement expressed the pleasure of continuing to resist, acknowledging that they have made mistakes, as well as notable achievements in terms of autonomy: “[...] but every year we, we, we Zapatistas show ourselves and shout: Here we are! -And every time we are more. As anyone with an honest heart can see, we have a life project. Schools and health clinics flourish in our communities. And the land is worked collectively. And collectively we support each other. So we are community. Community of communities” (Subcomandante insurgente Moisés, 2019 s/n). The different areas expressed within the Gandhian autonomy proposal are observed, which also integrate other aspects defended by Gandhi such as the recognition of women, the self-sufficient presence in key areas such as health, education, community and respectful coexistence with the land: “Zapatista women have their own voice, their own path. And his destiny is not that of violent death, disappearance, humiliation. Zapatista children and youth have health, education and different options for learning and fun. And we remain firm in the fulfillment of our duty as guardian peoples of Mother Earth [...] And all this has also been thanks to the support of individuals, groups, collectives and organizations from all over the world”. (Insurgent Deputy Commander Moisés, 2019, s/n).

The territory has been mentioned as an essential element of autonomy and food sovereignty, the movement has also favored its defense. The EZLN’s land recovery is

considered to have a historical impact: in a national comparison, “based on the 1991 and 2007 Ejido Censuses, which record the total number of ejidos and communities nationwide, we can argue that no state in the Republic, after the reform of article 27, had a creation of ejidos and communities as intense as Chiapas [...] 752 agrarian nuclei were created, followed by San Luis Potosí with 158 ejidos and communities [...] (Nuñez, et. al, 2013, p.46).

A part of the lands that were recovered are used to promote collective work in the cultivation of corn and vegetables, in addition to livestock, which, in addition to promoting food sovereignty of their indigenous communities, contribute to the financing of the political activities of the movement “[...] and above all, to support the different aspects of autonomy... (education, health, government instances). In this regard, the Zapatistas insist that the recovery of land —their main means of production— is the basis that makes the construction of autonomy possible [...]”, which has been strengthened through the cooperatives, which have allowed to expand its production capacity (Baschet, 2018, p. 58).

Another point of singular importance in the Zapatista movement that has had a strong impact on its autonomy has been what they have called “Los Caracoles” and the Good Government Boards (JBG), established since 2003, both instances represent efforts organizational units distributed in five<sup>1</sup> regions of the Zapatista autonomous municipalities, with rotating officials elected by consensus. Some of its functions are focused on trying to adjust the imbalances within its municipalities, mediating both Zapatista and non-Zapatista inter-municipal conflicts, monitoring the follow-up of community projects, in addition, other faculties at the regional level

were considered, one of them, the one related to the surpluses of the commercialization through their cooperatives, which must be delivered to the Good Government Boards, so that the communities with the most needs can benefit (Díaz-Polanco, 2006, p. 46).

With respect to autonomy in health matters, they have achieved such an organization in this field, which covers all their communities with health promoters, giving special attention to the area of prevention. Depending on the size of each community, they can have micro-clinics or hospitals, care for surgeries or severe specialized health problems are attended by supportive professionals, and if necessary they are attended in other hospitals where they are commissioned by the Zapatista promoters., brings the advantage that it does not present itself to “the discrimination and lack of care suffered [...] often by indigenous patients” (Baschet, 2018, p. 59). It is worth noting the collective work they have done to compile and disseminate their knowledge and knowledge in herbalism and traditional medicine, embodied in an encyclopedic document for health promoters and promoters, which touches on topics and detailed explanations with didactic images on rules for harvesting. and drying of the plants, common forms of their preparation, criteria for use, preparation and use of tinctures, oils, ointments; design and installation of community botanical gardens of medicinal plants, as well as homeopathic treatments (Zapatista Organization, s/n).

The autonomous health that they practice in the communities includes care with traditional medicine and western medicine, from the context and internal needs: “Those who hold health positions in the communities continue to cultivate the land [...] It is an effort to build health practices thought from the very

1. The territorial delimitation of the five autonomous regions is known by the names: Selva Fronteriza, Tzots Choj, Selva Tzeltal, Zona Norte de Chiapas and Altos de Chiapas (Díaz-Polanco, 2006).

reality of collective life, which is that of the rebellious Zapatista indigenous communities” (Baschet, 2018, p. 59).

The same happens with education, there is a direct implication of this with the community, they have integrated educational promoters and promoters of the community itself, it is an education for life, which adapts according to the cycles of collective life in the countryside, the harvest time, in general of the community needs.

Zapatista education “It is an education for the people in search of emancipation from any tutelage, subordination, dependency or servitude... aspires to a school with a political pedagogy for peace [...] community power, self-government” (Silva, 2019, p.112).

Since 1994, the Zapatista communities have split from official education, considering it incompatible with the search for autonomy. Their Zapatista Autonomous Educational System of National Liberation was founded in 1997, they built, among other spaces, the Zapatista Rebels Secondary Schools, the Semillita del Sol School, and they operate at more advanced levels towards: understanding the movement, the why of their struggle and how of autonomy, they also give importance to training in the sustainability of the territory and the issue of agroecology, focused on food sovereignty, as well as the achievement of political autonomy (Silva, 2019).

Another important point that Zapatista education has defended and promoted is bilingual education, which recognizes the mother tongue and Spanish. Likewise, from the vision of Milagro Obando, he summarizes the Zapatista teaching as a critical pedagogy channeled towards autonomy, coupled with Freire’s thought: “the passage from oppression to hope, passing through indignation [...] Let’s look for those who have daring to take that turn towards autonomy, in an effort to build hope” (Obando, 2013, p. 87).

In the previous sense, the visions of Gandhi and Freire are found by focusing on education as a catalyst for the conscience of humanity in the exercise of its rights to freedom and justice, where risk is more than a limitation, it is a platform that can make emancipation possible “Critical pedagogy poses as a founding element the break with the practice of the traditional educator, who assumes the neutrality and human distancing of the group with which he works, referring to a merely technical educational work” (Carballo, 2008, p. 26), there are risks, they are not denied; However, not acting, remaining silent, freezing, also has them, and in the long term we would have to determine which ones are greater, passivity is also risky (Muller, 2004; Vargas, 2019).

Freire declares himself in favor of persuading education to take risks, daring to run them is what has catalyzed the changes and transitions in history: “risk is a necessary ingredient for mobility, without which there is no culture or history . Hence the importance of an education that, instead of trying to deny risk, encourages men and women to assume it... there is no human existence without risk [...]. (2012, p. 36-37).

Muller as a philosopher, educator and non-violent activist defends the idea that moral responsibility is not limited to a merely theoretical intellectual position, it goes beyond it to the extent that it commits itself to the risks of action in the field in which the unjust event it is brewing “[...] everything else is literature, although it is not without a certain importance” (2004, p. 1999).

Subcomandante Marcos (2003, s/n) when talking about the efforts achieved in education: “...in lands where there were not even schools, much less teachers, the Autonomous Councils (with the support of “civil societies” I will not tire of repeating it) built schools, trained education promoters

and, in some cases, even created their own educational and pedagogical content.” In addition to the preparation of literacy manuals and books from internal committees and civil societies. He adds the achievement that girls, whose access to school was marginalized before, can now attend classes, at least in some regions.

There are still serious situations that remain in the pipeline of the struggle: “Although it has been achieved that women are no longer sold and freely choose their partner, what feminists call «gender discrimination» still exists in Zapatista lands. The so-called ‘revolutionary law for women’ is still a long way from being fulfilled.” (Subcomandante Marcos, 2003, unnumbered).

In the Gandhian proposal, work, mentions Parent “[...] is a vital force that cannot be given with the exchange of money. Manual work is the path to social unity and equality among all.” (2010, p. 22), in this sense, adds: the value of work is based on the needs of people, which are limited to food and clothing. Western society has sold another idea of “food” and clothing, the food imposed through marketing is highly processed or with fruits and vegetables impregnated with pesticides, (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 2020), Therefore, the needs for healthy food are not covered, we have high rates of malnutrition and in parallel obesity, in addition to the accumulation of diseases as a result (Fernández, 2014, p. 82-84).

There are two concepts that address aspects related to healthy and sufficient food, one is from the institutional framework of FAO and the other is from the global collective La Vía Campesina. The FAO defines Food Security, at the World Food Summit (1996) as the possibility that every person, at all times, can have, “[...] physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their daily energy needs and food

preferences to lead an active and healthy life. (FAO, 2011). On the other hand, Food Sovereignty is an alternative concept in response to security, also coined since 1996, and subsequently adjusted “Food sovereignty incorporates the rights to choose policies related to the distribution and consumption of food and that of people to adequate foods from a healthy and cultural point of view, obtained through sustainable and ecological methods as well as defining their own food and agricultural systems” (Escalona-Aguilar, et al., 2015, p. 1218).

Sovereignty is a continuous work of self-government, it necessarily implies autonomy, or more specifically a healthy interdependence that does not enslave any of the parties. In the case of food sovereignty, it is not only about food, it is about access to common goods that allow both the person and their community to have clean water, their lakes and springs, the use of their territory and in of the conditions that facilitate the exercise of the right to food and a healthy environment to be able to sow and cultivate their food.

The Framework Law on the Right to Food, Security and Food Sovereignty, is considered the first legislative scene that recognizes the right to food beyond the national sphere, placing it at the level of international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its article 10°.- Right to Food is:

The right to adequate food is the human right of people, either individually or collectively, to have access at all times to adequate, safe and nutritious food with cultural relevance, so that it can be adequately used to meet their nutritional needs., maintain a healthy life and achieve comprehensive development. This human right includes accessibility, availability, use and stability in the adequate food supply (FAO, 2012).

Food sovereignty in the Gandhian context coincides in part with the content of article 10 of the Framework Law; however, it transcends it in the broad sense, although it seeks the eradication of hunger by its own means, the preceding article limits the autonomy of people and leaves them vulnerable to external aid: This human right includes accessibility, availability, use and stability in the supply of adequate food, does not refer to achieving adequate nutrition from within the community, these tasks must be accompanied by caring for nature — in a biocentric sense— with parallel care for personal health Starting from one's own diet, which implies a balance between quality and quantity, a sustained link with the community is also required.

In the same Law, in its articles 9, II considers food sovereignty as:

[...] the right of a country to define its own policies and sustainable strategies for the production, distribution and consumption of food, which guarantee the right to healthy and nutritious food for the entire population, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of systems production, marketing and management of rural spaces.

The importance of managing rural spaces is recognized, given that —as mentioned— without the territory it is not possible to create healthy conditions for sovereignty; However, it seems that there is a lack of greater recognition by public policies towards rural spaces and the countryside in general, civil society and industry also need to look at these spaces beyond the exchange value limited to financial gain, in general they are It has considered the inhabitants of the countryside as something retrograde that needs to be modernized, in such a way that it is justified to keep rural development subordinated to the economic projects of globalization: “[...] local rural development projects tend to be a replica of macroprojects formulated from

the international sphere or from government bureaucracies” (Herrera, 2013, p. 132), Herrera adds that the conception of rural development is -from public policies- linked to modernizing economic development, he also recognizes that this has generated some auxiliary benefits in raising the quality of life of the rural population; however, “[...] the number of projects without positive repercussions on the social base continues to amaze us” (Herrera, 2013, p. 133).

Another problem that is addressed from Gandhism is precisely justice directed at the social base, in which La Vía Campesina —an international organization that recognizes and gives visibility and voice to the problems of the countryside, as well as to its producing populations— places special attention to gender inequalities, and expresses recognition of women as protagonists in food production:

[...] food sovereignty values the knowledge of peasant women and farmers [...] Gender aspects are key here as women have a long and unrecognized history of protecting seeds and selecting plants in many regions of the world [...] The dilemma here is how to value the contribution of women to the family unit and to the local provision of food without reinscribing the traditional responsibility of women in the provision of food (Sachs and Patel-Campillo, 2014, p.263).

There are several related aspects that require attention from universities, populations and public policies. Transdisciplinary dialogue is important as a tool to achieve fair agreements; For this reason, they agree with Herrera in the necessary creation of conditions that make it possible —in the immediate future— to reassess the ways of life in the countryside, that allow establishing “[...] agreements that overcome the dispute between the modern and the traditional, as well as drawing up more inclusive, fair and ecologically responsible alternatives” (Herrera, 2013, p. 157).



The challenges that the society of the global South faces in terms of food sovereignty are complex. On the one hand, it is important to learn to identify needs and focus on meeting them, not from the perspective and manipulation of international agribusiness, which in a population This uncritical approach only encourages consumerism with the consequent impact on planetary health: “The culture of Food Sovereignty also faces the ignorance or unawareness of a large part of the population, who still do not give importance to planning [...] what eat” (Del Río et al., 2013, p. 13). It is also essential to incorporate clean energy, as well as maximized attention to the identification, conservation, improvement and defense of native seeds, which are the heart of food and life.

The land and territory as ways of life of the community of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, focus their community organization as “[...] a way of being that assumes that there is no life except in its collective dimension, which is built from reciprocity. This is materialized in the practice of the community assembly [...] in mutual aid and collective work for the care of common goods, in the importance of festivals and rituals, and—something decisive— in the different forms, ejidos or communal, of collective possession of the land.” (Baschet 2018, p. 55), in a complementary way, the author cites the words of Subcomandante Galeano who includes “[...] the attachment to the land, the cultivation of land and sciences and constant vigilance against the accumulation of wealth . That [...] and the arts are our guide” (Galeano in Baschet 2018, p. 55).

## REFLEXIONS

Toledo refers to the importance of global emancipatory movements, especially the political ecological ones, to the extent that they are more evolved both ideologically

and philosophically, in full consistency with practice. Like Muller, Gandhi and Freire, the author sustains a critique of intellectualism lacking in action:

We live in a reality that desperately cries out to the deaf ears of avant-garde intellectuals, stubborn in testing the theoretical assumptions inherited from an old tradition, instead of trying to understand the complex reality that contains us. As long as liberation thinkers remain tied to inherited glasses, they will continue to err in their interpretations of reality (Toledo, 2019, p. 16).

In this context of analysis, the Gandhian importance of community life and respect for nature are intertwined with the concept of political ecology “Political ecology tries to analyze conflicts from a perspective that articulates the relationships between nature and human beings. with social relations themselves and especially with power relations” (Toledo, 2019, p. 37), this situation is also an additional element to the many dragged down that gave rise to the EZLN movement and that it shares with other movements in both Mexico like Latin America.

As described in the preceding section, the evolution of the insurgent movement has made it possible to reap several shared achievements from the Gandhian principles in the construction of its autonomy, not only in the line of food sovereignty, but in the organizational level in general, fidelity of its principles strengthened through its internal education and health system, as well as agroecological agriculture and the community cooperative system that has allowed them to multiply their productive capacity, meeting the needs of the entire community.

This article closes with a paragraph from the bibliography that the EZLN has been generating, where sometimes the one who writes, as in this case, the insurgent

subcommander Marcos, always does so in non-academic language, in connection with the communities, Not only from Chiapas, because his dissemination work has taken him to various points in the national and foreign territory, the fragment of the story was presented at the National Forum against Repression:

... But there is one more thing and that is certain: in the image

that this dream contains, we are not the Zapatistas.

We knew it, we know it. That's what the Watchers told us.

We're fighting for a world we won't see

... in which we will not be.

And yet it is worth it. Not?

Voucher. Health and that justice becomes such a good thing

and everyday, like the sun that rises every day.

(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2007, p. 83-84)

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